Africa’s Crash and Burn

as authoritarian neoliberalism ebbs, resistance flows

recent essays on political economy and political ecology by Patrick Bond

Luxemburg's critique of capital accumulation, reapplied in Africa

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Abstract
Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* provided Africa's first known Marxist account of class, race, gender, society-nature and regional oppressions. She was far ahead of her time in grappling with the theory and practice of capitalist/non-capitalist relations that today not only characterise Western multinational corporate extraction but also that of firms from several contemporary 'emerging' economies. This article contends that in her tradition, two recent areas of analysis now stand out, even if they have not yet received sufficient attention by critics of underdevelopment: the expanded understanding of value transfers from Africa based on natural resource depletion; and the ways that collaborations between imperial and subimperial national powers (and power blocs) contribute to Africa's poverty. Using these two newly-revived areas of enquiry, several aspects of Luxemburg's *Accumulation* stand out for their continuing relevance to the current conjuncture in contemporary Africa: capitalist/non-capitalist relations; natural resource value transfer; capitalist crisis tendencies and displacements; imperialism then and imperialism/subimperialism now; and the need to evolve from protests to solidarities through socialist ideology.

European capitalist enclaves versus Africa's non-capitalist society and nature

Rosa Luxemburg's (2003 [1913]) *Accumulation of Capital* was her attempt at advancing Marxist theory at a time, just before World War I, when internecine competition between major capitalist powers was generating unprecedented tensions across Europe. The preceding years had already witnessed major political-economic analyses of imperialism, such those as by John Hobson (1902) and Otto Bauer (1907), focusing on capital export, and by Rudolf Hilferding (1981 [1910]) who argued that *Finance Capital* fused various fractions of capital under the influence of the half-dozen largest banks. In subsequent years, Nicolai Bukharin (1972 [1915]: 104) identified "increased competition in the sales markets, in the markets of raw materials, and for the spheres of capital investment" as the "three roots of the policy of finance capitalism." Vladimir Lenin (1986 [1917]) would contribute further aspects of inter-imperial rivalries that brought capitalist classes, their states and their hinterlands into conflict, in opposition to what Karl Kautsky (1914) envisaged would be a more peaceful stage of "ultra-imperialism" due to the self-interest the major corporate groups had in collaborating with each other across borders (for a survey see Brewer 1980).

Using a very different lens, Luxemburg watched imperialist processes unfold mainly by examining how capital super-exploited the non-capitalist spheres in Europe's colonies. For Luxemburg (2003: 426), "[i]mperialism is the political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment." Under conditions of overaccumulation crisis, she argued, capitalism would turn ever more frantically to extra-economic extraction of surpluses:

> Accumulation of capital periodically bursts out in crises and spurs capital on to a continual extension of the market. Capital cannot accumulate without the aid of non-capitalist relations, nor… can it tolerate their continued existence side by side with itself.

> Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist relations makes accumulation of capital possible. Non-capitalist relations provide a fertile soil for capitalism; more strictly: capital feeds on the ruins of such relations, and although this non-capitalist milieu is indispensable for accumulation, the latter proceeds at the cost of this medium nevertheless, by eating it up. Historically, the accumulation of capital is a kind of metabolism between capitalist economy and those pre-capitalist methods of production without which it cannot go on and which, in this light, it corrodes and assimilates. (Luxemburg 2003: 327)

For Luxemburg, imperialism was not a process simply of capital flowing into a region and setting up compatible class relations. Her orientation to Marx's reproduction schemas – notwithstanding the flaws therein (Hopfman 2007) – indicated how the ebb and flow of capital and the rise of crisis tendencies together generated and accelerated uneven development:

> Marx emphasises perpetual 'overproduction', i.e. enlarged reproduction, since a strict policy of simple reproduction would periodically lead to reproductive losses. The course of reproduction shows continual deviations from the proportions of the diagram which become manifest
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> (a) in the fluctuations of prices from day to day;
>
> (b) in the continual fluctuations of profits;
>
> (c) in the ceaseless flow of capital from one branch of production to another, and finally in the periodic and cyclical swings of reproduction between overproduction and crisis. (Luxemburg 2003: 76)

It is well understood – by Marxists (and a very few others) – how in today's crisis-ridden world, perpetual overproduction has caused a long stagnation since the 1970s, characterised by "periodic and cyclical swings of reproduction between overproduction and crisis" (Luxemburg 2003: 76). Capital's turn towards ever-more intense bouts of 'accumulation by dispossession' – the term used by Harvey (2003) to re-articulate Luxemburg's insights on capitalist theft from the non-capitalist spheres – means that observations she made in 1913 retain relevance today.

For example, Luxemburg (2003: 447) argued that capitalism "is the first mode of economy which is unable to exist by itself, which needs other economic systems as a medium and soil… In its living history it is a contradiction in itself, and its movement of accumulation provides a solution to the conflict and aggravates it at the same time." To illustrate, in *The Accumulation of Capital*, Luxemburg (2003) recounted several vital historical examples of simple commodity reproduction and capitalist/non-capitalist relations: ancient Germans (the mark communities); the Inca of Latin America; India; Russia; the French versus Algerians; the Opium Wars in China; mechanisation versus the interests of U.S. farmers; debt in late-19th century Egypt; and conditions of early 20th century resource extraction and socio-political organisation in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), i.e., the core sites of British-German-Belgian imperialism.

It would be 50 years before her focus on capitalist/non-capitalist relations were again pursued with Marxist rigour. In West Africa's Ivory Coast, French anthropologist Claude

Meillassoux (1925-2005) carried out studies on the Guro women's role in what he termed 'domestic economy,' especially its articulation with wage labour during the 1960s. During the 1970s, South African sociologist Harold Wolpe (1926-1996) applied Meillassoux's (1975) ideas to help revive and regenerate his South African Communist Party's tradition of race-class debate (Wolpe 1980). And in 1978 Anne-Marie Wolpe (1930-2018) contributed a much more gendered analysis of social reproduction within articulations of modes of production (Kuhn/Wolpe 1978).

In 1973, Egyptian political economist Samir Amin (1931-2018) published his theory of unequal exchange based on surplus value transfers associated with lower productivity (especially in Africa) in relation to the North's higher productivity outputs sold to the South, and his many subsequent books elaborated the geopolitical implications of imperial power. At one point soon thereafter, when reviewing early theories, Amin (1977: 258) claimed that "Luxemburg did not really understand imperialism" and "confused new imperialism with old expansionism." Nevertheless, later he reassessed her work and upgraded his view considerably, as noted below. At the same time, Ugandan Marxist Dani Nabudere (1929-2011) was critical of the "Luxemburgist thesis" that "is at the back of today's 'centre-periphery' ideology." Nabudere (1979: 12) insisted, "[f]or Luxemburg, imperialism is no more than the struggle by the capitalist countries 'for what remains of the non-capitalist world'," leading to a major "deviation from the Marxist thesis." However, the durability of capitalist/non-capitalist relations meant that value transfers and extreme uneven development would continue to be studied by Africa's applied economists, such as Malawian economist Guy Mhone (1943-2005) with his unique theory of 'economic enclavity' during the 1980s (Mhone 2001).

By the 1990s, a series of Marxist theorists working in Africa had brought into our world view, respectively, explanations of uneven development emphasising historic and world-imperialist processes (Luxemburg), patrilineal extraction (Meillassoux), labour productivity differentials (Amin), South African super-exploitation (the Wolpes) and regional Southern African labour migration (Mhone). In various ways, all generated fruitful engagements when considering the political economy of friction between capitalist and non-capitalist social relations. Unfortunately, the 1980s-90s experienced a relatively infertile scholarly terrain, so this tradition receded, given the debilitating environment of austerity and triumphant liberalism in Africa, especially in intellectual milieus including universities.

Nevertheless, the 21st century has witnessed a rebirth of Luxemburgist arguments about imperialism, as shown below. Partly this revival can be traced to renewed political-economic analysis by David Harvey, specifically *The New Imperialism* (2003), which re-introduced Luxemburg through the concept of accumulation by dispossession. By 2017, Harvey's *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason* had more forcefully acknowledged not only non-capitalist environmental goods and services as 'free gifts of nature' within the circuitry of capital, but also non-capitalist social reproduction (gendered by patriarchal socio-political culture) as vital 'free gifts of human nature' to capital (Harvey 2017: 96). The latter exist in all societies, given the way household and community relations draw upon women's unpaid labour power. However, it is the former – the natural resource depletion that Africa most relies upon – that helps explain Africa's unique impoverishment, a topic we turn to next.

From dispossession of natural economy to natural resource depletion

Luxemburg's (2003: 347) strategy for exploring accumulation in 1913 was concerned not only with the 'commodity economy' and 'the competitive struggle of capital on the international stage,' but also for 'natural economy,' a category that included pre-capitalist social relations as well as nature. "What is most important," Luxemburg (2003: 349) wrote, "is that, in any natural economy, production only goes on because both means of production and labour power are bound in one form or another," unlike capitalism in which machinery is often introduced at the expense of jobs, as production becomes increasingly capital intensive. She includes within the category 'natural economy' various features of the environment: "land, game in primeval forests, minerals, precious stones and ores, products of exotic flora such as rubber, etc." In such economies, she argued,

> The communist peasant community no less than the feudal corvee farm and similar institutions maintain their economic organisation by subjecting the labour power, and the most important means of production, the land, to the rule of law and custom. A natural economy thus confronts the requirements of capitalism at every turn with rigid barriers. Capitalism must therefore always and everywhere fight a battle of annihilation against every historical form of natural economy that it encounters, [...] (Luxemburg 2003: 349).

When capital gains possession of minerals, precious stones and ores, this represents the expropriation of the colonies' natural wealth:

> The most important of these productive forces is of course the land, its hidden mineral treasure, and its meadows, woods and water, and further the flocks of the primitive shepherd tribes. Since the primitive associations of the natives are the strongest protection for their social organisations and for their material bases of existence, capital must begin by planning for the systematic destruction and annihilation of all the non-capitalist social units which obstruct its development. (Luxemburg 2003: 350)

The relevance of these observations has never been greater, for hidden mineral treasure remains the main prize of imperialism in Africa. Luxemburg (2003: 339) observed that "[t]he economic basis for the production of raw materials is a primitive system of exploitation practiced by European capital in the African colonies and in America, where the institutions of slavery and bondage are combined in various forms." Likewise in his final book, Amin moved from a focus mainly on labour as the basis for value transfer, to natural resources:

> Capitalist accumulation is founded on the destruction of the bases of all wealth: human beings and their natural environment. It took a wait lasting a century and a half until our environmentalists rediscovered that reality, now become blindingly clear. It is true that historical Marxisms had largely passed an eraser over the analyses advanced by Marx on this subject and taken the point of view of the bourgeoisie – equated to an atemporal 'rational' point of view – in regard to the exploitation of natural resources. (Amin 2018: 86)

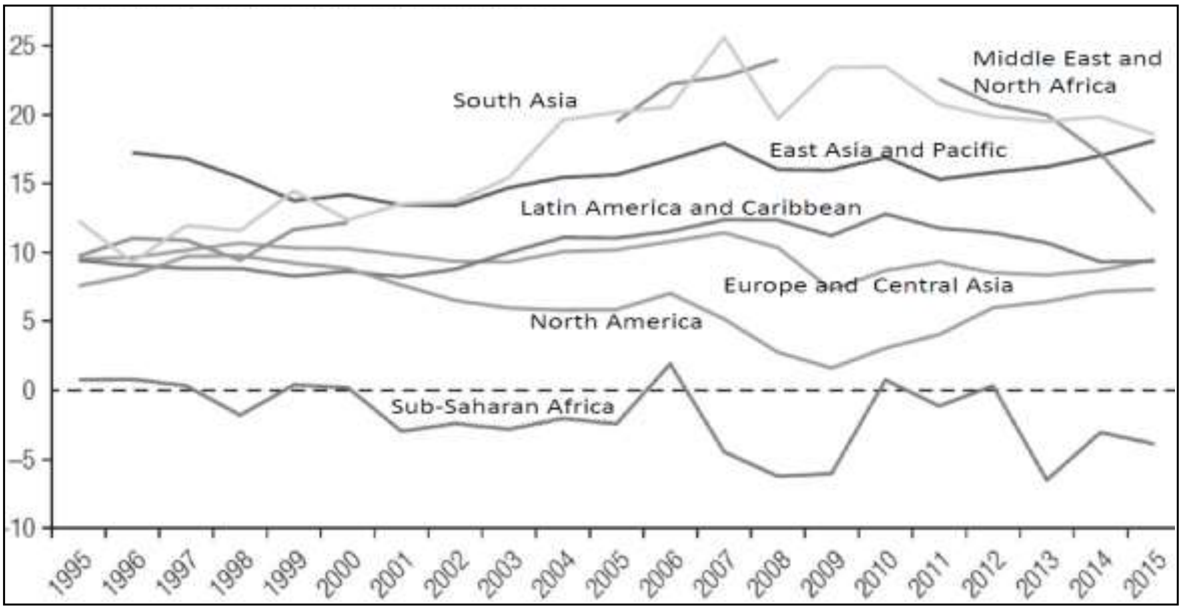
How great is this transfer of value? Empirically, there is growing evidence of Africa's net resource extraction losses due to 'natural capital depletion,' far in excess of what are known as the 'Illicit Financial Flows' and even licit flows of profits repatriated by transnational capital (Bond 2018). Luxemburg was concerned about the general extraction process, but it is in the sphere of non-renewable resource depletion that capitalist/non-capitalist power relations most aggressively generate imperialism. Before considering updates of Luxemburg's perspective in Africa, this feature of the natural economy deserves more explanation.

Increasingly sophisticated measurements of natural resource depletion are carried out by the World Bank in its series *The Changing Wealth of Nations*. Therein, Lange et al. (2018) calculate 'Adjusted Net Savings' (ANS) over time, to correct national income accounts, specifically the share of genuine savings within Gross National Income (GNI). The first step in this recalculation is to acknowledge shrinkage of fixed capital (wear and tear), which in Sub-Saharan Africa has been in the range of negative 10-12 percent annually over the past two decades. The second step is to add 'human capital' investments in the form of education expenditure, which in Sub-Saharan Africa has been in the positive 3-5 percent range. The third is measurement of natural capital depletion and fourth is subtraction of economic damage done by pollution, which together range from 8 to 15 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa (mostly resource depletion). The higher the price of resource commodities, such as in the 2008 and 2011 peak 'super-cycle' years, the more the shrinkage of a country's natural wealth. Lange et al. (2018: 47) calculate that nature constitutes 9 percent of world wealth, but in Sub-Saharan African countries, it amounts to more than a third of their wealth, so the looting process is even more acute, from a relative perspective.

Hence in Africa, it is especially pernicious that the shrinkage of natural wealth is uncompensated for by reinvestment of the profit drawn from that wealth, as a result of multinational corporations (from both the West and BRICS countries) extracting resources but providing the bulk of their returns on investment to overseas shareholders. In contrast, resource-intensive countries – including the likes of Canada, Australia, Norway and much of the Middle East – have a different accumulation process: home-based corporations or state mining or oil companies are responsible for extraction. The revenues from the resources extracted are thus to a much greater extent redistributed, leaving a positive ANS in many resource-rich countries outside Africa.

Applied to Africa, even the most rudimentary ANS analysis is devastating. In one count (World Bank 2014: 14), 88 percent of African countries are net losers from resource extraction once ANS is calculated. Using 1990-2015 data, Lange et al. (2018: 74) conclude that Sub-Saharan Africa loses a net $100 billion of ANS annually, albeit with data limitations: the platinum and diamond sectors, and a few countries with data gaps (including the resource-rich DRC and South Sudan) (Figure 1). If North African, the DRC and Sudan were added, along with the platinum and diamond depletion, it is likely that Africa's annual net loss is $150 billion. As Lange et al. (2018: 82) concede, "Especially for resource-rich countries, the depletion of natural resources is often not compensated for by other investments. The warnings provided by negative ANS in many countries and in the region as a whole should not be ignored."

Figure 1: Adjusted Net Savings as percentage of Gross National Income, 1995-2015



Source: Lange et al. 2018: 64.

In aggregate over 1995-2015, some African countries suffered extreme ANS 'dissaving': Angola lost 68 percent, the Republic of the Congo lost 49 percent and Equatorial Guinea lost 39 percent (Lange et al. 2018: 74). Especially in the 2006-10 and 2012-15 years, there were substantial ANS losses in Africa (Figure 1). Subsequently, commodity export values ebbed, along with aid, foreign investment and remittances, leaving most African countries back in their debt traps and growth crises, facing much more active rebellions (Bond 2018).

Capitalist crises beget imperialism *and subimperialism* in Africa

Recognising that, as Luxemburg (2003: 327) put it, "Accumulation of capital periodically bursts out in crises and spurs capital on to a continual extension of the market," Samir Amin (2018: 159) took the logic further:

> How is it that full-fledged industrial capitalism expanded victoriously throughout the 19th century, survived its first systemic crisis of senility during the 20th century, and faces apparently victoriously until this day its second long crisis of senility? The answer cannot be found in the abstract theory of capitalism, but on the ground of the concrete history of its deployment. These two sides of the analysis should not be confused and reduced to one. After Marx himself (for his time) Rosa Luxemburg was the first Marxist thinker who made a serious attempt to answer the question […]
> The fundamental – fatal – contradiction of capitalism resulted into continuous overaccumulation and therefore, faced a problem of outlet for capitalist production. On that ground Luxemburg is certainly right. How this contradiction has been overcome in history? Here also Luxemburg is right: capitalism expanded by destroying pre-capitalist modes of production both within the societies of the dominant centers and the dominated peripheries. Handicrafts are replaced by manufacturing industries, small shops by supermarkets etc. This process of accumulation by dispossession still goes on with the current privatization of former public services. Simultaneously these responses

> of capital to the problem of outlet constitute an efficient counterforce to falling rates of profits.

As Luxemburg (2003: 319) further observed, however, “The solution of one difficulty, however, only adds to another.” The solution isn’t really a *resolution*. Instead, it is better conceived of as an efficient counterforce that acts merely to displace not resolve the crisis tendencies. And to establish the geographical terrain on which capitalist crisis displacement unfolded a century ago – and still does today – meant Luxemburg had to criticise the geopolitics of a colonialism that fit her theory of imperialism so well.

That geopolitical terrain was carved out in her adopted city of Berlin, at a 77 Wilhelmstrasse mansion where the ‘Scramble for Africa’ took place in 1884-85. Not a single African was there to negotiate, but indeed that site – today a pub and block of nondescript flats after its post-war demolition – is a central reason why Africa is carved into 54 dysfunctional country units, splitting relatives from each other and imposing colonial-era languages in perpetuity. The Berlin conference’s codification of colonial power – mainly held by Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium and Germany – ensured the penetration of capitalist legal systems of property ownership, the settler’s monopoly of violence, and the introduction of monetary arrangements. With these capitalist innovations, colonial powers set up pseudo-states in Africa so as to more effectively loot the continent. But Luxemburg’s (2003: 447) great innovation was to prove how colonial-imperial accumulation used Africa’s natural “economic systems as a medium and soil.”

In South Africa, it soon became clear to the world’s colonial powers how valuable their conquests could be:

> British capital revealed its real intentions only after two important events had taken place: the discovery of the Kimberley diamond fields in 1869-70, and the discovery of the gold mines in the Transvaal in 1882-5, which initiated a new epoch in the history of South Africa. Then Cecil Rhodes went into action. Public opinion in England rapidly swung over, and the greed for the treasures of South Africa urged the British government on to drastic measures.
>
> The modest peasant economy was forthwith pushed into the background – the mines, and thus the mining capital, coming to the fore. The policy of the British government veered round abruptly. Great Britain had recognised the Boer Republics by the Sand River Agreement and the Treaty of Bloemfontein in the fifties. Now her political might advanced upon the tiny republic from every side, occupying all neighbouring districts and cutting off all possibility of expansion. (Luxemburg 2003: 394)

The period of the late 1800s in which colonial-imperial power consolidated was also one of a sustained world capitalist crisis, in which the City of London, the Paris financial markets and other financiers marshalled over-accumulated capital, directing its flows into the adventurous investments associated with Rhodes, Belgium’s King Leopold II and other larger-than-life accumulators-by-dispossession (Phimister 1992).

If we reconsider the relations between North and South a century later, as did Harvey in *The New Imperialism,* we relearn the relevance of Luxemburg's ideas. Harvey (2003: 185f) both echoes and expands her vision:

> The opening up of global markets in both commodities and capital created openings for other states to insert themselves into the global economy, first as absorbers but then as producers of surplus capitals. They then became competitors on the world stage. What might be called 'subimperialisms' arose… each developing centre of capital accumulation sought out systematic spatio-temporal fixes for its own surplus capital by defining territorial spheres of influence.

That dynamic, in turn, requires us to think of the way the BRICS – the coordinated network of heads of state and corporations from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – arose as subimperial allies of world capital's expansionism to "define territorial spheres of influence" (Harvey 2003: 186), especially after the 2008 crisis. Their new physical spaces include neo-colonial land grabs in Africa by voracious investors from India, China, South Africa and Brazil (Ferrando 2013). The gateway to Africa is South Africa – as was oft-repeated at the 2013 BRICS Durban summit and 2018 Johannesburg summit – and is facilitated by territorial expansion up-continent by Johannesburg capitalists who had been kept (by the apartheid laager) mostly within local boundaries until the early 1990s.

In addition to sources of food and biofuels, BRICS capital is highly engaged in African minerals and petroleum. Anglo American, Glencore and other (now Europe-rebased) manifestations of South African mining capital run roughshod in Africa. For example in 2005, after a Human Rights Watch expose, Anglo admitted working closely with Congolese warlords in a zone where several million people have been killed since the late 1990s. Then there is the $10 billion Lake Albert oil stake by former South African president Jacob Zuma's hapless nephew Khulubuse, working alongside Israel's main extractive-industry tycoon, the notorious Dan Gertler (Bond/Garcia 2015, Bond 2017).

There are just as worrisome tendencies in southern Africa from the other BRICS, e.g.: Vedanta's well-known (and self-confessed) looting of Zambian copper, India's move into Mozambican land expropriation in search of coal (after Rio Tinto's failure) alongside Brazil's giant Vale, China's Anjin working with Zimbabwean generals to loot the Marange diamond fields, and the Russian steel manufacturer Roman Abramovitch's (London-based) parasitical takeover of South Africa's second-largest steel plant (Evraz Highveld) in the same spirit as India's (Luxembourg-based) Lakshmi Mittal, who took over the largest set of steel foundries (ArcelorMittal). Both BRICS investors stripped South African assets, without reinvestment, hence leading in 2015 to massive chunks of the continent's main sites of steel capacity being deindustrialised with thousands of job losses. The central cause was cheap Chinese imports due to that country's overaccumulation of several hundred million tons of steel production capacity (Bond 2017). The advertised cooperation between the BRICS sometimes looks, in the harsh light of reality, like cannibalism.

In addition, the expansion is often explicitly subimperial, in the sense of lubricating capitalist relations in non- or less-capitalist geographical territories, often through multilateral power structures. One of the world's most powerful vehicles for this process is the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), in which the BRICS have played a greater role since 2015. After donating nearly $100 billion to recapitalising the IMF, four BRICS gained voting share reallocations: China up by 37 percent, Brazil by 23 percent, India by 11 percent and Russia by 8 percent. Yet to accomplish this required that seven African countries lose more than a fifth of their IMF voting share: Nigeria (41 percent), Libya (39 percent), Morocco (27 percent), Gabon (26 percent), Algeria (26 percent), Namibia (26 percent) and even South Africa (21 percent). Africa's suffering in multilateral fora included the 2015 World Trade Organisation summit in Nairobi, in which BRICS members allied with the European Union and U.S. to destroy food sovereignty by agreeing to forego agricultural subsidies (Raghavan 2015), and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in which Africa's interests were sacrificed so that the BRICS, EU and US could arrange the Copenhagen, Durban and Paris deals: there were no binding emissions cuts, accountability systems or recognition of the West's and the BRICS' climate debt (Bond 2016).

Commercial, retail and infrastructural expansion are also vital for penetrating African markets. South African retail capital's takeover of African supermarkets and nascent shopping malls is led by Makro, which is owned by Walmart, a reliable representative of both imperialism's unprecedented concentration of wholesale capital, and its exploitation of the ultra-cheap assembly line. Luxemburg would point out how that line stretches far to the east, into the super-exploitation of China's workers, rural women and environment, and the outsourcing of greenhouse gas emissions. But as the then SA deputy foreign minister Marius Fransman (2012) put it: "Our presence in BRICS would necessitate us to push for Africa's integration into world trade."

The BRICS states' intention here is to aid the extractive industries – especially BRICS firms – in stripping the continent further. Outside South Africa (by far the continent's largest holder of minerals, often estimated in the trillions of dollars), the other main African countries with extensive mining resources were Botswana, Zambia, Ghana, Namibia, Angola, Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Africa's oil and gas producers are, in order of reserves, Nigeria, Angola, Ghana, Gabon, Congo (Republic), Equatorial Guinea, Chad and Uganda. To further extract Africa's raw materials, planning began for a new $93 billion/year Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, and the BRICS New Development Bank was launched in 2015 with a view, in part, to provide financing for such mega-infrastructure projects. The first such loan (for $200 million) was for the expansion of a port-petrochemical complex in Durban, in spite of it encountering strong community opposition (D'Sa/Bond 2018). Many such projects will likely fit into Beijing's territorially-ambitious Belt and Road Initiative.

All of this is reminiscent of the ways colonial-backed capital penetrated the African continent, and resistance rose, as Luxemburg (2003: 447) described it in South Africa:

> The ultimate purpose of the British government was clear: long in advance it was preparing for land robbery on a grand scale, using the native chieftains themselves as tools. But in the beginning it was content with the 'pacification' of the Negroes by extensive military actions. Up to 1879 were fought nine bloody Kaffir wars to break the resistance of the Bantus. The more ruthlessly capital sets about the destruction of non-capitalist strata at home and in the outside world, the more it lowers the standard of

> living for the workers as a whole, the greater also is the change in the day-to-day history of capital. It becomes a string of political and social disasters and convulsions, and under these conditions, punctuated by periodical economic catastrophes or crises, accumulation can go on no longer.

Capitalist contradictions, subimperial ambitions and violence

The geopolitical and military tensions between subimperial South Africa and Africa (as a whole) began to heighten just as world commodity prices began to crash. From 2011-15, the slowing rate of Chinese growth and overproduction tendencies meant the decline of major mineral prices by more than 50 percent. In South Africa's case, the collapse of coal and platinum prices by more than half was devastating to the share values of major firms with local operations – Lonmin, AngloPlats and Glencore – whose net worth quickly plummeted by more than 85 percent (indeed by 99 percent in Lonmin's case, leading to the firm's demise and takeover in 2017). It is in this context of crisis plus super-exploitative relations between capitalist and non-capitalist spheres that the Luxemburgist theory of imperialism finds confirmation in contemporary Africa. In 2013, WikiLeaks published emails hacked by Jeremy Hammond from the files of Stratfor (known as the private-sector version of the Central Intelligence Agency), which quite correctly summed up the situation in the region as follows:

> South Africa's history is driven by the interplay of competition and cohabitation between domestic and foreign interests exploiting the country's mineral resources. Despite being led by a democratically-elected government, the core imperatives of SA remain maintenance of a liberal regime that permits the free flow of labor and capital to and from the southern Africa region, and maintenance of a superior security capability able to project into south-central Africa. (Stratfor 2009)

The democratically-elected government of the African National Congress (ANC) explicitly calls itself 'anti-imperialist', and yet in 2013, a century after Luxemburg explained the inner necessity of imperialism to turn to violence in search of extra-economic wealth (capitalist versus non-capitalist looting), a small but revealing example emerged in the Central African Republic (CAR). There, President Francois Bozize's special advisor Didier Pereira had partnered with 'ANC hard man' Joshua Nxumalo and the ANC's funding arm, Chancellor House, to establish a diamond export monopoly. According to *Mail&Guardian* newspaper investigators AmaBhungane (2013), "Pereira is currently partnered to the ANC security supremo and fundraiser, Paul Langa, and former spy chief Billy Masetlha."

The result was that both Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma deployed troops to first support Bozize at the presidential palace, and after he fled, to protect Johannesburg firms' operations in the CAR capital of Bangui. But the city was over-run by rebels on the weekend prior to the BRICS summit in Durban, and tragically, 15 of the 220 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops involved in a massive fire fight against the rebels lost their lives in Bangui, and were returned home in coffins just as the BRICS leaders also flew in. The incident very visibly demonstrated the limits of South Africa's "superior security capability to project into south-central Africa" (Stratfor 2009).

But SANDF wasn't alone in striving – even if failing – to serve capital's most excessive interests. For seven months before, in mid-August 2012, the local South African Police Service (SAPS) gained international notoriety for the massacre of 34 wildcat-striking Lonmin platinum mineworkers at Marikana. The police were called in via emails from Cyril Ramaphosa, the owner of 9 percent of Lonmin. He was the former mineworker leader in the late 1980s whose national strike breakthrough shook apartheid. Ramaphosa soon became a black billionaire capitalist and remained so close to the ANC elites – becoming deputy president of the ruling party in late 2012 and the country's deputy president in 2014 – that he carelessly told the police minister he wanted a "pointed response" to the "dastardly criminal" mineworkers, in an email on 15 August 2012. Within 24 hours, the police committed the Marikana Massacre (Farlam Commission 2015).

As Luxemburg (2003: 351) had predicted,

> The method of violence, then, is the immediate consequence of the clash between capitalism and the organisations of a natural economy which would restrict accumulation. Their means of production and their labour power no less than their demand for surplus products is necessary to capitalism. Yet the latter is fully determined to undermine their independence as social units, in order to gain possession of their means of production and labour power and to convert them into commodity buyers.

The necessity of resistance, solidarity and ideology

At this point, the South African working class and other activists in the 'natural economy' – e.g. women opposed to mining extraction (Womin 2018) – were fed up with the displacement of capitalist crisis tendencies into their households. By the 2010s, the South African worker suffered lower wages relative to capital's profits (by more than 5 percent compared to 1994); rising inequality, up to an exceptionally high "market income Gini Coefficient" of 0.77 (World Bank 2014); extreme poverty, rising to 63 percent of the population by 2011 (Budlender et al. 2015); and soaring financial obligations. The latter were important, insofar as deregulated loan-sharks had moved en masse to the Marikana platinum fields to find borrowers. The mineworkers soon had so many loan repayments stripping their income that, by 2012, they became absolutely desperate. Left with little in their monthly pay-checks, they insisted on a $1000/month wage (i.e., double the existing payment), since the lenders' 'emolument attachment orders' reduced their take-home pay to virtually nothing. Even after the massacre, the workers stayed atop the hillside in their thousands, on strike for a full month to win the $1000/month, and in 2014 more than 70,000 workers struck for five months across all the other platinum fields, before winning their salary demand, but at the expense of enormous misery and fury (Saul/Bond 2014).

It was all too reminiscent of Luxemburg's description of the same terrain a century earlier:

> The more ruthlessly capital sets about the destruction of non-capitalist strata at home and in the outside world, the more it lowers the standard of living for the workers as a whole, the greater also is the change in the day-to-day history of capital. It becomes a string of political and social disasters and convulsions, and under these conditions, punctuated by periodical economic catastrophes or crises, accumulation can go on no

longer. But even before this natural economic impasse of capital's own creating is properly reached it becomes a necessity for the international working class to revolt against the rule of capital. (Luxemburg 2003: 447)

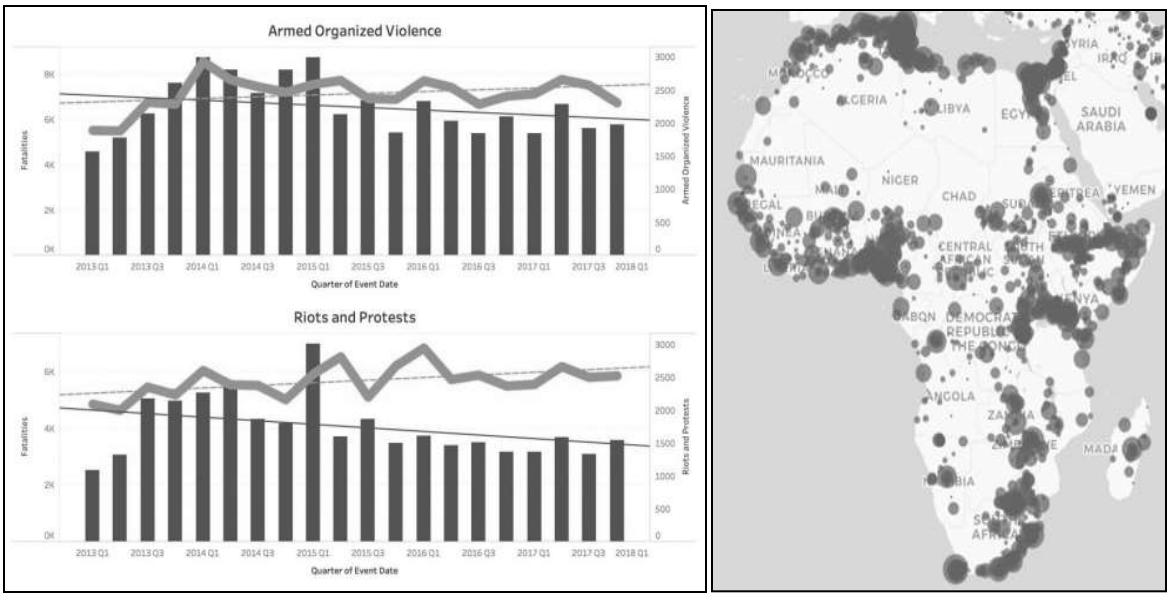
The necessity is felt in many African class struggles. The African working class is angrier than any other continent's, according to the World Economic Forum (2017) whose Global Competitiveness Index each year measures 'employer-labor cooperation.' Since 2012, the South African proletariat has had the leading position as the world's least cooperative working class (in 2011 the class was ranked 7th, reflecting the intensification of struggles such as Marikana). The 32 African countries included in the survey are by far the most militant of the 138 sites surveyed annually, for of these, 28 African proletariats score above the world median of militancy, and just four below. Of the most militant 30 countries' workforces in 2017, a dozen were African: South Africa (on a scale of 1 as most militant to 7 as least, scoring 2.5 in 2017) followed by Chad (3.5), Tunisia (3.6), Liberia (3.7), Mozambique (3.7), Morocco (3.7), Lesotho (3.7), Ethiopia (3.8), Tanzania (3.8), Algeria (3.8), Burundi (3.8), and Zimbabwe (4.0).

Communities are also engaged in unrest, especially in areas of resource extraction. In South Africa, the number of 'violent' demonstrations – mostly 'service delivery protests' recorded by the police – soared from fewer than 600 per year in 2002-04 to nearly quadruple that number by 2014 (Alexander et al 2018). As the case of Burkina Faso suggests – what with its popular 2014 overthrow of Blaise Compaoré and his subsequent in-exile prosecution for the murder of the great African Marxist revolutionary Thomas Sankara in 1987 – the anger occasionally boils over into local and national revolts. The tempo of revolt is apparently increasing, especially since the peak and then fall of commodity prices in 2011 (Figure 2). Protests have begun to exhibit patterns so stark they were even recognised in the African Development Bank et al.'s (2017: 135) annual *African Economic Outlook* (*AEO*) chapter on Governance. The 2017 *AEO* found that after protests over wages and salaries, "Dissatisfaction with political arrangements was among the main drivers of public protests in Africa from 2011 to 2016. The majority of these protests called for more accountability and justice in the public management systems and for fairer elections. This is an indication of demand for higher standards of integrity within public institutions."

Socio-economic grievances were evident in many of the uprisings. Indeed, the rise and contagion of generalised protests since 2011 (Figure 2) is remarkable. There were always major outbursts, and in some countries – Zambia (2001), Malawi (2002), Gabon (2003), Nigeria (2006), Cameroon (2008), Niger (2009) – they had a major impact on politics. But notably in 2011, the protest wave did not simply crest, briefly, as a result of North African turmoil, and then fall. The Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan uprisings caught the world's attention, but only Tunisia's outcome generated democracy and even then the next stage of socio-economic unrest began in 2018, as neoliberalism failed the country. Many protests subsequently led to such strong pressure against national power structures that just as with the once-invincible Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi regimes, long-serving leaders were compelled to leave office.

Nevertheless, higher levels of African protests persisted, moving across the continent (Brandes/Engels 2011, Ekine 2011, Manji/Ekine 2012, Dwyer/Zeilig 2012, Biney 2013, Mampilly 2013, Branch/Mampilly 2015, Wengraf 2018). The pressure was maintained in particular sites, including Senegal (2012), Burkina Faso (2014), Burundi (2015), Rwanda (2015), Congo-Brazzaville (2016), and DR Congo (2016). In 2017-18, leaders backed by similarly formidable state and political party apparatuses as enjoyed by Zuma (South Africa), Desalegn (Ethiopia) and Mugabe (Zimbabwe) fell surprisingly rapidly, in part due to mass uprisings with tens of thousands protesters massing in national capitals and other major cities, many of whom were furious about resource depletion and looted state funds.

Figure 2: Africa's uprising: Number of 'armed organised violence' (mainly by states) and fatalities (2014-18), and locations of 'riots and protests', 2007-18



Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2018). Conflict Trends. http://www.acleddata.com/

Other protests which have recently reflected strong community pressure on their governments include Togo (against the dictator Faure Gnassingbé), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (against Laurent Kabila), Cameroon (mainly against Paul Biya, some of which demanded Anglophone-Cameroonian independence), Somalia (against Islamic extremism), Morocco (against corruption and unemployment), Libya (against slave markets), Uganda (against Yoseri Museveni's overturning of term limits) and Kenya (against Uhuru Kenyatta's dubious election). In The Gambia, protests against Yahya Jammeh succeeded in ensuring the integrity of a December 2016 election, which the long-serving dictator lost.

Local opposition aimed at blocking mining and petroleum extraction has the potential to become far more effective. In 2015, Anglo American's CEO expressed concerned about the "$25 billion worth of projects tied up or stopped" across the world (Kayakiran/Van Vuuren 2015). According to the Johannesburg faith-based mining watchdog Bench Marks Foundation (2018: 2) at the 2018 Alternative Mining Indaba, "Intractable conflicts of interest prevail with ongoing interruptions to mining operations. Resistance to mining operations is steadily on the increase along with the associated conflict."

If we take these signs of dissent seriously, it is not only the removal of corrupt, unpatriotic regimes that is needed, though that is a pre-condition. What now urgently needs discussing in many settings, in the spirit of Luxemburg, is the replacement of neo-colonial African compradors and the corporations they serve, with a political party and programme of popular empowerment. An egalitarian economic argument will be increasingly easier to make now that world capitalism and the dynamics of deglobalisation are forcing Africa towards rebalancing. This will ultimately compel discussion of much more courageous economic policies, potentially including:

- in the short term, as currency and debt repayment crises hit, reimposing exchange controls will ensure control of financial flows, quickly followed by lowered interest rates to boost growth, with an audit of 'Odious Debt' before any further repayment of scarce hard currency, along with much better management of imports – to serve national interests, not the interests of elite consumers;
- as soon as possible, the adoption of an ecologically sensitive industrial policy aimed at import substitution (making things locally), sectoral re-balancing, meeting social needs and true sustainability;
- once finances are secure, it will be possible to dramatically increase state social spending, paid for by higher corporate taxes, cross-subsidisation and more domestic borrowing (and a looser money supply – known in the West as 'Quantitative Easing' – if necessary, so long as it does not become hyper-inflationary);
- the medium- and longer-term economic development strategies will reorient infrastructure to meet unmet basic needs, by expanding, maintaining and improving the energy grid, plus water and sanitation, public transport, clinics, schools, recreational facilities and universal access to the internet; and
- in places like South Africa and Nigeria that have an excess reliance on extraction and burning of fossil fuels, it will be vital to adopt what have been termed 'Million Climate Jobs' strategies to generate employment for a genuinely green 'Just Transition'.

These are the kinds of approaches requiring what the continent's greatest political economist, Amin (1990), long ago termed 'delinking' from global capitalism's most destructive circuits. He stressed that this is not a formula for autarchy, and certainly would gain nothing from North Korean-type isolation. But it would entail a sensible approach to keeping G20 states and corporations at bay as much as possible, while tapping into even more potentials for transformation.

The crash of oil and mineral prices starting in 2011 confirms that the commodity super-cycle and the era of 'Africa Rising' rhetoric is now decisively over. The period ahead will perhaps be known as Africans Uprising against Africa Rising. Looking at this continent a century ago, Luxemburg (2003: 394) found instances of non-capitalist, anti-capitalist resistance, just as the German government began its genocide of the Herero people of Namibia. From North Africa to South Africa, colonialism ran into trouble.

The same bloody wars are being fought against African uprisings. What was missing a century ago, and still is today, is a coordinated strategy so that when revolt rises as the capitalist system meets non-capitalist societies and nature in Africa, the resistance can be stronger and sturdier – and become genuinely anti-capitalist – than we have experienced to date. The anti-colonial but resolutely nationalist politics which Frantz Fanon warned about –

when writing of what he termed the ‘Pitfalls of National Consciousness’ exhibited by petit-bourgeois leaders – still prevail, and a genuinely radical pan-African anti-capitalism is still to be widely articulated.

As Fanon (1967) put it in *Toward the African Revolution,* “the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles, the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology.” In his speech “The Weapon of Theory,” Amilcar Cabral (1966) agreed: “The ideological deficiency within the national liberation movements, not to say the total lack of ideology – reflecting as this does an ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform – makes for one of the greatest weaknesses in our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all.”

Luxemburg points the way forward on ideology, flowing directly from the various experiences of proletarian and pre-proletarian uprisings that she so carefully observed – at a distance from Africa but with the most solidaristic concern – and that she organised in Europe until her 1919 murder, six years after writing these words to conclude *The Accumulation of Capital*:

> Even before this natural economic impasse of capital’s own creating is properly reached it becomes a necessity for the international working class to revolt against the rule of capital. Capitalism is the first mode of economy with the weapon of propaganda, a mode which tends to engulf the entire globe and to stamp out all other economies, tolerating no rival at its side. Yet at the same time it is also the first mode of economy which is unable to exist by itself, which needs other economic systems as a medium and soil. Although it strives to become universal, and, indeed, on account of this its tendency, it must break down-because it is immanently incapable of becoming a universal form of production.
>
> In its living history it is a contradiction in itself, and its movement of accumulation provides a solution to the conflict and aggravates it at the same time. At a certain stage of development there will be no other way out than the application of socialist principles. The aim of socialism is not accumulation but the satisfaction of toiling humanity’s wants by developing the productive forces of the entire globe. And so we find that socialism is by its very nature a harmonious and universal system of economy. (Luxemburg 2003: 447)

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Neoliberal liberalism -> African authoritarianism -> disorganized dissent

Research in Political Economy, 2019

ABSTRACT:
Neoliberalism's global scale crisis has been most acute in Africa, in terms of economic welfare, human suffering, ecological damage and policy sovereignty. Social opposition to the first rounds of dissent was quelled during the 1980s, and export-led growth strategies finally appeared to pay off when, during 2002-11, commodity prices soared and "Africa Rising" became the watchword. However, as commodity prices plateaued during 2011-14 and then crashed, authoritarianism has revived. The reimposition of neoliberal policies, a new round of unrepayable foreign debt (in part associated with Chinese-funded infrastructure), and renewed austerity are all bearing down. From internal elite circuits, this threatens to unleash a well-known combination of neoliberalism, neopatrimonialism and repression by authoritarian leaders. New rounds of protests, often arising as a direct result of these economic catalysts, were witnessed in some of the most famous sites of struggle such as Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, Nigeria in 2012, and South Africa at various points in recent years. Ongoing strife has also brought intense pressure on governing regimes in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe, leading to major political reforms and even changes in regimes. This article examines the dynamics of this process to expose the neoliberal foundations of rising authoritarianism accompanied by repression – and resistance – across the African landscape.

INTRODUCTION: NEOLIBERALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM AND RESISTANCE

New narratives and empirical evidence are emerging, regarding the failure of neoliberalism, the revival of authoritarianism and the intensification of social resistance in Africa. Complex relationships exist between economic suffering, state repression and socio-political unrest, many of which can be measured, albeit with caveats.[1] Consistent with Polanyi's (1944) "double movement" thesis, in which excessive marketization generates social reactions, what has become evident contrasts sharply with the "Africa Rising" claim, i.e., that rapid GDP growth in the 2002-11 era of soaring commodity prices generated a sustainable development trajectory (Perry 2012). The African Development Bank chief economist, Mthuli Ncube (2013), claimed the unprecedented emergence of an "African middle class" of one third of the continent's population (because he counted this 'class' as spending between \$2-\$20/day). Instead, what is obvious now is that with the commodity price plateau from 2011-14 followed by a crash and slight recovery, an intensified metabolism of extraction has occurred. On the one hand the reliance on commodities has resulted in an uncompensated depletion of "natural capital" that is in excess of \$100 billion per annum in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, even the World Bank (2018a) concedes (Bond 2018).

1 The role of Big Data in these sorts of articles is mixed, at worst leading to glib generalizations about causes. Distinguishing between causation and correlation is increasingly difficult. A full contestation of this literature and its shortcomings is beyond the scope of this article. One of the research sites to explore methodological and interpretive problems at the highest level of sophistication is the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Social Change: https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/csc

Macroeconomic conditions are not improving, and the 2019 downturn may well further punish export-dependent countries. On the other hand, the resistance component of the double movement is becoming ever more intense.

Moreover, this resistance is occurring against the backdrop of worsening authoritarianism. The extraction of raw materials by both multinational corporations and local elites makes the continent's most contested sites subject to state rule by strong-men compradors. In Africa this is a different kind of regime compared to the imperial and subimperial countries of the G20 (e.g. the U.S., Brazil, Turkey) or some middle-income (e.g. Hungary) or poor (e.g. Philippines) sites of resurgent authoritarianism. It is well suited for Africa's super-exploited role in the 21st century's global economy, and often appears impervious to change. But managing dissent is increasingly difficult given the return to austerity, and some of these leaders have begun to reach their own limits of consensual rule. That leads them to become increasingly repressive as temporary "growth" – based mainly on resource depletion and unaffordable mega-infrastructure projects – has now returned Africa to an era of debt crises and austerity. The question is whether the upsurge of protest can be maintained and directed into more hopeful outlets than has occurred to date.

After covering some of the systems of extraction that have amplified exploitation in the past decade, this article then turns to the political narratives associated with this process, especially those that blame Africans for the political-economy context inherent in global capitalism: super-exploitative trade and investment, financialization and capitalist crisis. Neoliberalism often includes the imposition of austerity, which in turn typically leads directly to authoritarianism. The interpretation of protest is, hence, very important; early indications are that grievance reports drawing on journalists' accounts translated into Big Data, are together both helpful and confusing. Finally, it has long been evident that when neoliberalism and authoritarianism are conjoined, there is a need for much better organized resistance movements.

LIMITS OF NEOLIBERAL EXTRACTIVISM

There is, first, a Polanyian story about the limits of neoliberal liberalism, i.e., the difficulties of following the Washington Consensus under conditions of democracy. The resurgence of authoritarianism is explained by Tanzania's leading radical intellectual, Issa Shivji (2019) of the Nyerere Resource Centre:

> The upsurge of "new nationalisms" is a backlash to neo-liberalism gone wild. Ironically, neoliberalism itself paved the path for the rise of "new nationalisms." Neoliberal ideologies did not have a long staying power but for some four decades of its rule it caused havoc. Market and monetarism were its mantra. Neo-liberalism attacked bourgeois liberalism in the [wealthy] Centres and assaulted post-colonial, radical and progressive nationalism in the Peripheries.

Africa's cases of neoliberal authoritarianism confirm the analysis of Polanyi (1944), who predicted, based on his studies of Europe (since Africa was then still colonized),

> The fascist solution of the impasse reached by liberal capitalism can be described as a reform of market economy achieved at the price of the extirpation of all democratic institutions, both in the industrial and in the political realm… In reality, the part played by fascism was determined by one factor: the condition of the market system. During the period 1917-23 governments occasionally sought fascist help to restore law and order: no more was needed to set the market system going. Fascism remained undeveloped. In the period 1924-29, when the restoration of the market system seemed ensured, fascism faded out as a political force altogether. After 1930 market economy was in a general crisis. Within a few years fascism was a world power. (Polanyi, 1944: 227, 242)

The reason for this reversal was the neoliberal character of the era's liberalism, Polanyi argues:

> The victory of fascism was made practically unavoidable by the liberals' obstruction of any reform involving planning, regulation, or control. Freedom's utter frustration in fascism is, indeed, the inevitable result of the liberal philosophy, which claims that power and compulsion are evil, that freedom demands their absence from a human community. No such thing is possible; in a complex society this becomes apparent. This leaves no alternative but either to remain faithful to an illusionary idea of freedom and deny the reality of society, or to accept that reality and reject the idea of freedom. The first is the liberal's conclusion; the latter the fascist's. (Polanyi, 1944: 257)

Polanyi warns against both private profiteering and the state imposition of neoliberal policies:

> The true criticism of market society is not that it was based on economics – in a sense, every and any society must be based on it – but that its economy was based on self-interest. Such an organization of economic life is entirely unnatural, in the strictly empirical sense of exceptional… Economic history reveals that the emergence of national markets was in no way the result of the gradual and spontaneous emancipation of the economic sphere from governmental control. On the contrary, the market has been the outcome of a conscious and often violent intervention on the part of government which imposed the market organization on society for noneconomic ends. (Polanyi, 1944: 249-50)

Similarly, to comprehend market failure in Africa today, we have a long post-colonial history to recall dating to the late 1950s, including continent-wide processes overdetermined from sites of power like the Bretton Woods Institutions in Washington, commodity exchanges and the New York credit ratings agencies. Perhaps most decisive, in retrospect, was the 1979-81 Volcker Shock of unprecedented interest rate increases, and the subsequent Third World Debt Crisis, which caused not only the demise of Africa's nascent industrial base, but resulted in nearly-universal policy control from Washington. In the early 1980s, in both the African Union and individual capitals, the World Bank's neoliberal Berg Report strategy defeated the more developmental-Keynesian Lagos Plan of Action proposed by the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa under Adebayo Adedeji's leadership, and as a result, since then, the continent has experienced massive drainage of wealth (Bond 2006, 2018).

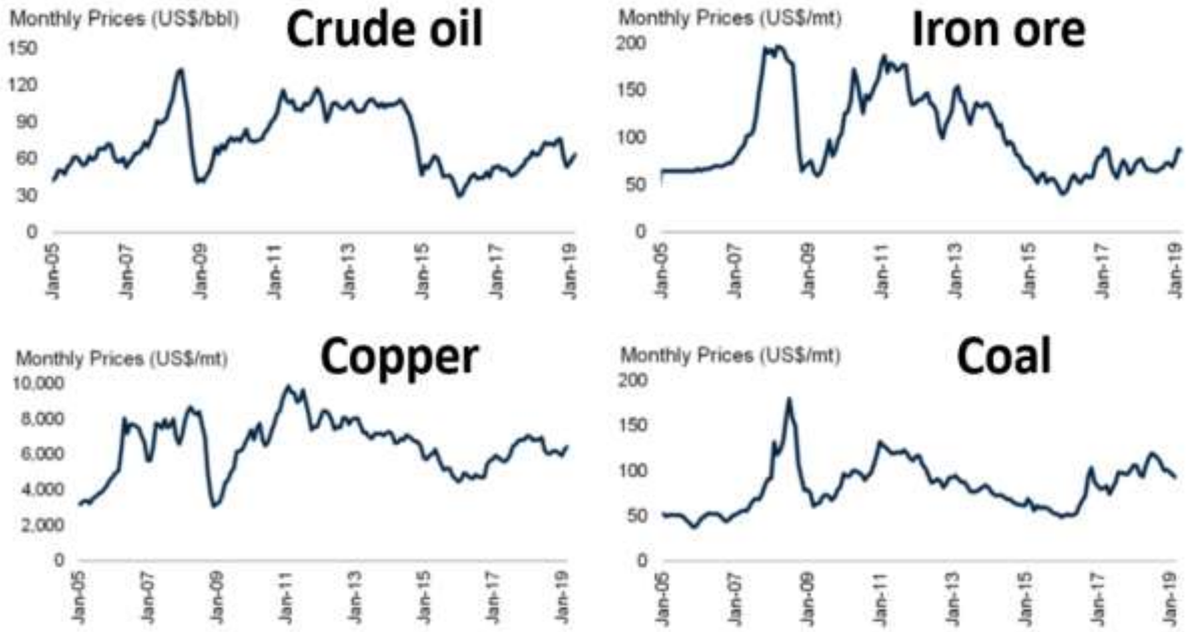
Without access to surpluses, the failure of the ten Washington Consensus strategies to kickstart sustainable growth was guaranteed. The result of widespread imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs was a series of “IMF Riots” that by the late 1980s threatened dozens of governments (Seddon and Walton 1994). This process in turn gave a brief hope for early-1990s democratization in many African countries, albeit of a “low intensity” type based on a neoliberal premise: that “dictators gave the debt to the democrats.” The latter, including Nelson Mandela, then had extremely limited policy and fiscal space with which to meet even basic needs. What financing was still available from the Bretton Woods Institutions and donor aid grants also strengthened the continental rulers’ policing power over its people.

The limits of the neoliberal export-led strategy are again evident, as commodity prices peaked in 2011, plateaued in 2014, and then fell rapidly through late 2015. From 2013 to 2016, for example, oil and iron ore fell by more than 70 percent, with copper and coal down more than 35 percent (See Figure 1). Debt was especially troublesome, for the prior Sub-Saharan African peak of absolute foreign indebtedness exceeded $250 billion in 2004, but after 2006 debt relief arranged by the G7 (mainly after African pay-downs of existing capital reserves), the outstanding debt shrunk to $170 billion. However, debt-fuelled mega-infrastructure projects and the commodity price crash then hit Africa (especially the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries), and the subregion’s external debt stock soared again, exceeding $530 billion after a 16 percent rise in 2017 alone (World Bank 2018b: 10) (See Figure 2).

Debt repayment stress drew the IMF (2017: 9) back to Africa, with a warning that oil-exporting countries faced “a seven-fold increase in debt service, from an average of 8 percent of revenues in 2013 to 57 percent in 2016,” with Nigeria (at 66 percent) and Angola (at 60 percent) worst affected. Across the continent, the higher interest rates translate into “a widespread increase in nonperforming loans, triggering higher provisioning, straining banks’ profits, and weighing on solvency” (IMF 2018b: 10). The IMF named 15 Sub-Saharan African countries as being in “debt distress” (or being at high risk of that label): Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe – as a result of “large primary deficits, which for many countries widened sharply with the commodity price collapse” (IMF 2018b: 10).

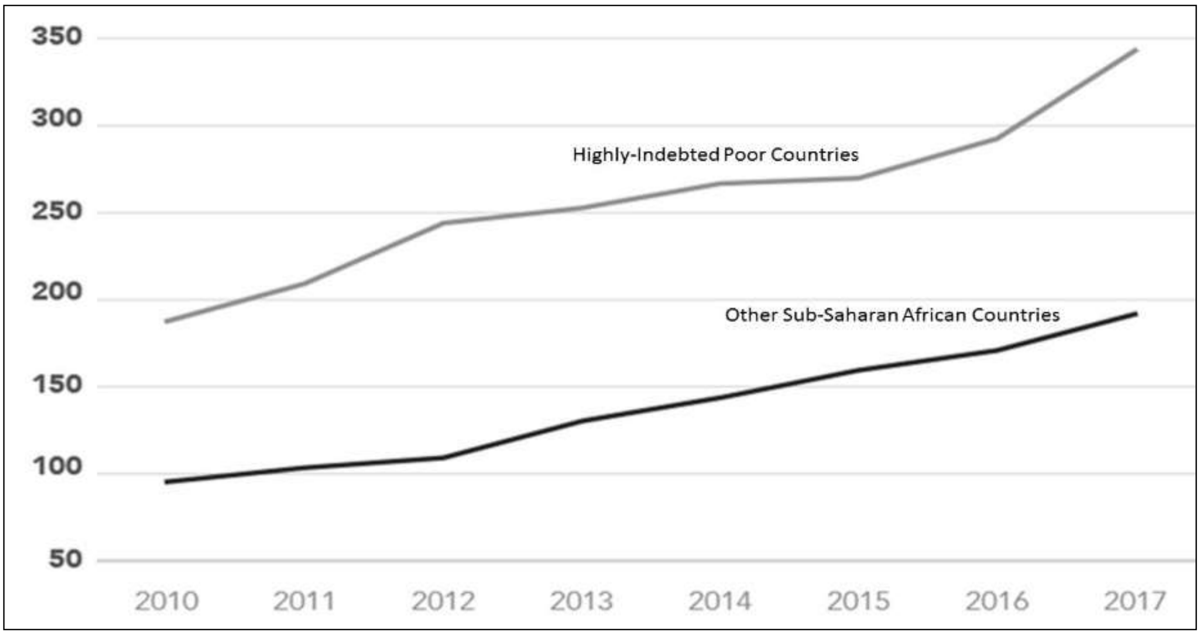
This was not merely an African debt crisis, for from a total of $3.09 trillion in 2007, the external debt owed by all low- and middle-income countries more than doubled to $7.07 trillion in 2017 (while high income countries’ foreign debt rose from $61.94 trillion to $75.72 trillion in the same period). As the World Bank warned in late 2018, “The increasing debt burdens of low- and middle-income economies come as concern rises about overall global debt, which by some estimates is 60 percent higher than before the 2008 financial crisis” (2018c). Austerity orders were commonplace; for example, in debt-stressed Central Africa, the IMF (2018a: 25) insisted on “streamlining” the budget through spending cuts in 2016-17: “overall primary spending declining from 27.5 percent of nonoil GDP in 2016 to 22.8 percent of non-oil GDP in 2018.”

Figure 1: Change in Selected Commodity Prices, 2013-18



Source: World Bank Group. 2019. *Commodity Markets Outlook*, *April 2019*. World Bank, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31549/CMO-April-2019.pdf

Figure 2: Sub-Saharan African External Debt Stocks, US$, 2010-17

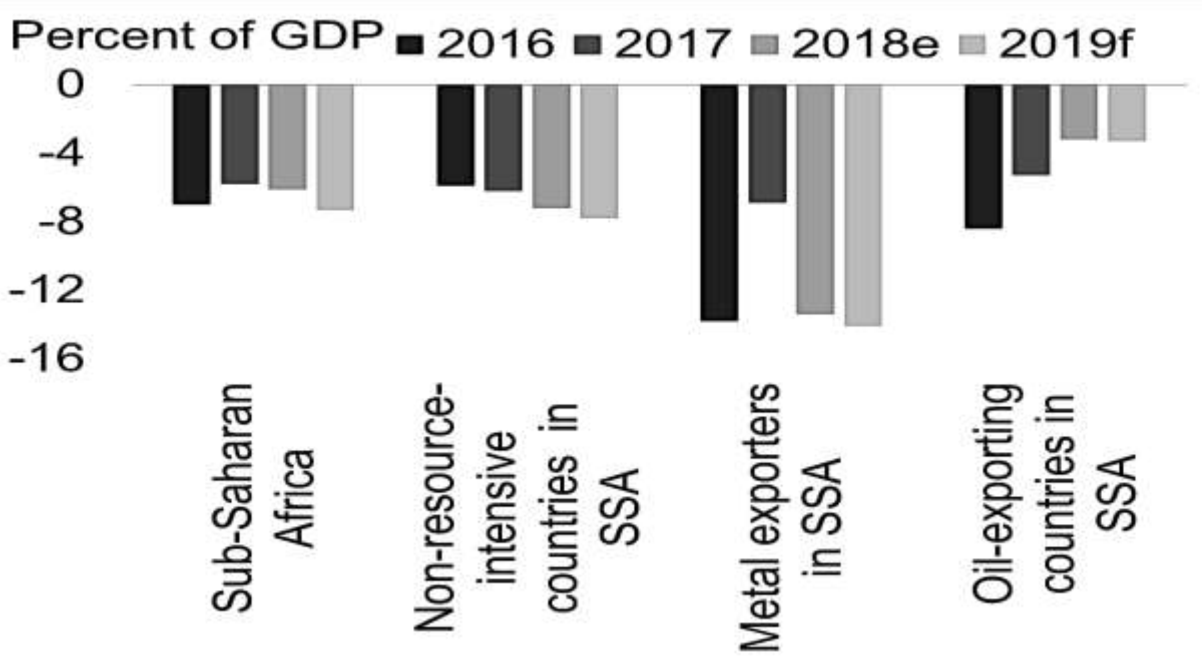


Source: World Bank Group. 2018. *International Debt Statistics 2019.* World Bank, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30851

South Africa's finance minister was pressured by the New York credit ratings agencies in 2017-19 to make sharp cuts in spending so as to reduce the budget deficit from just over 4 percent of GDP to just over 3 percent (Bond 2019). In Zambia and Kenya, debt repayment crisis resulted in widely-reported fears of Chinese collateral appropriation, including an international airport in Lusaka, Zambia and a port in Mombasa, Kenya. There appeared to be no prospect for simply increasing Sub-Saharan African exports, so as to trade each country's way out of its debt crisis, because current account deficits (combining net trade and outflows of profit repatriation and interest payments to multinational corporations) were already high, and would rise substantially in the near future, the World Bank (2019) projected (Figure 3).

Given the situation that Africa and the world faces today, more clarity is required about the current relationships of neoliberalism, authoritarianism and resistance, conjoining as they do the inclement global economic turbulence (World Bank 2019) – preceded by trade-investment-finance deglobalization processes, and in Africa, renewed debt stresses and austerity – and unpredictable geopolitical conjunctures (Garcia and Bond 2018). Some problems are new, but for many decades, neoliberalism has been a central cause of stress in Africa.

Figure 3: Sub-Saharan African Current Account Deficits, % of GDP, 2016-19



Source: World Bank. 2019. Global Economic Prospects, January 2019: Darkening Skies. Washington, DC, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31066 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO. Figure 2.6.1.D, p. 108.

For example, in 2011, Hosni Mubarak's downfall in Egypt followed by weeks the similar mass-popular overthrow of the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali tyranny in Tunisia, not long after Dominique Strauss-Kahn's International Monetary Fund (IMF) had praised Tunis for fiscal policies that directly profited corporate capital through a tax cut, at the expense of the citizenry, which suffered a Value Added Tax (VAT) increase (Bond 2011). Ben Ali had bestowed the Order of the Tunisian Republic upon Strauss-Kahn in 2008 because of his "contribution to the reinforcement of economic development at the global level." Returning the compliment, he applauded Ben Ali's dictatorship: "Economic policy adopted here is a sound policy and is the best model for many emerging countries" (Philips 2011). The *IMF Survey Magazine* praised Ben Ali for his mid-2010 commitment "to reduce tax rates on businesses and to offset those reductions by increasing the standard VAT rate" (Toujas-

Bernate and Bhattacharya 2010). Likewise in Egypt, in April 2010 the IMF (2010a) praised the Mubarak dictatorship: “The authorities remain committed to resuming fiscal consolidation broadly in keeping with past advice to address fiscal vulnerabilities… Such adjustment will be crucial to maintain investor confidence, preserve macroeconomic stability, and create scope for future countercyclical fiscal policy.” In addition to expanding Public Private Partnerships, the IMF (2010a) argued that Egypt should both adopt a VAT and limit pension and health benefits.

The IMF’s (2010b) pro-dictator, regime-transformation narrative was also repeated in Libya in October 2010, with specific praise for Muammar Gaddafi’s mass firing of 340,000 civil servants: “About a quarter have reportedly found other sources of income and are no longer receiving transfers from the state budget. The mission recommends that the retrenchment program be accelerated.” Just prior to the mid-February 2011 breakout of civil war, the IMF (2011) suggested that Gaddafi was safe from the Arab Spring: “Recent developments in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia have had limited economic impact on Libya so far.” Gaddafi was praised for the “ambitious program to privatize banks” and “for fostering private sector development and attracting foreign direct investment.” As *New York Times* reporters remarked, “The fund’s mission to Tripoli had somehow omitted to check whether the ‘ambitious’ reform agenda was based on any kind of popular support. Libya is not an isolated case. And the IMF doesn’t look good after it gave glowing reviews to many of the countries shaken by popular revolts in recent weeks.” Worse, they continued, “the toppling of unpopular regimes will make it difficult for their successors to adopt the same policies. In the future, the IMF might want to add another box to check on its list of criteria: democratic support” (Briancoin and Foley 2011).

Yet the increased insulation from democracy that the IMF desires was ultimately crucial for implementing neoliberal reform. In 2009, amidst the world financial meltdown, World Bank chief Africa economist Shanta Devarajan warned of “the specter of political instability and social unrest,” but his colleague the Vice President for Africa, Obiageli Ezekwesili, was unfazed: “It is precisely in a season of crisis like this that African governments must stay the course of market-based reforms” (see Bond 2011). By the time the reality of the North African revolts hit home, the Bank’s (2011) report to the G8 belatedly recognized malgovernance, but mainly blamed neoliberalism’s *partial* reforms: “in the context of declining state legitimacy, low levels of political participation, nepotism, perceptions of corruption and predation, and little accountability, reforms were too partial to take real hold or to transform sclerotic intuitions. Often they were perceived to increase inequality, and benefit the politically-connected elite” (World Bank 2011: 6).

This kind of (slightly) guilty conscience was mirrored in 2018 by Barack Obama’s discussion of liberal neoliberalism with James Baker (who was formerly both U.S. Secretary of State and of Treasury), in which Obama remarked of the 1990s-2010s (explaining Trump’s rise): “You have this period of great smugness on the part of America and American elites, thinking, ‘We got this all figured out.’ Remember there were books coming out that it’s the end of history.” Baker replied, “Yeah, ‘The End of History,’ Francis Fukuyama.” Concluded Obama, “Yeah, that came back to bite us” (Norton 2018).

Nevertheless, it is increasingly evident when considering the mainstream perspective on African politics, such awareness (or public acknowledgement) of neoliberalism's failure was fleeting. An honest consciousness of neoliberalism's systemic failures amidst rising social resistance still does not penetrate the mainstream liberal perspective when applied to Africa, no matter the uptick in struggles across the continent since the peak of the commodity super-cycle in 2011.

At that stage, mass uprisings not only overthrew Washington's allies in Tunis and Cairo, and the aspirant neoliberal in Tripoli, but in subsequent months threatened further bottom-up regime change in Washington-friendly Senegal, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria, where in each, major concessions were offered to protesters. Indeed African tyrants were formally replaced (albeit often by a reformer from within their own ruling party) following mass demonstrations in the capital cities in countries as diverse as Senegal (Abdoulaye Wade, 2012); Burkina Faso (Blaise Compaoré, 2014); The Gambia (Yahya Jammeh, 2016); Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe, 2017); South Africa (Jacob Zuma as well as powerful regional governor Supra Mahumapelo, 2018); Ethiopia (Hailemariam Desalegn, 2018); the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, Joseph Kabila, 2019); Algeria (Abdelaziz Bouteflika, 2019) and Sudan (Omar al-Bashir). Other authoritarian, corrupt or otherwise unpopular regimes and leaders who in recent years have also faced sharp grassroots protests openly demanding their resignation, but who remain in office at the time of this writing, include Cameroon (Paul Biya), Gabon (Ali Bongo Ondimba), Kenya (Uhuru Kenyatta), Eswatini (King Mswati), Togo (Faure Gnassingbé), Uganda (Yoseri Museveni), and Zimbabwe (Emmerson Mnangagwa).

THE NEOPATRIMONIAL DIVERSION

Few of these mass uprisings had an ideological mooring, even one as simple as the prior epoch's anti-colonial politics, much less the "Pink Tide" sentiment that reflected Latin America's 2000s rebellion against Washington's neoliberal agenda. So it is worth pausing to consider top-down explanations offered for such high levels of alienation. If the gaze of Western liberals on African polities is usually blind to problems caused by neoliberalism, the more appealing explanations for malgovernance and poverty come from "neopatrimonial" analysis, in which a Big Man's service to his small community or ethnic network is the core reason for the political and economic morass. Political immaturity is still typically cited as the reason Africa is witnessing both rising social unrest and state repression, not to mention rising religious extremism. One of the main vehicles for this narrative is South Africa's prolific Institute for Security Studies, especially as seen in its influential director Jackie Cilliers' (2018) explanation for dissatisfaction with the post-colonial *status quo:*

> Africa will remain turbulent because it is poor, young and badly governed, but also because it is growing and dynamic. Many African countries are experiencing a political awakening that is uncharacteristic of a continent that has long suffered silently at the hands of foreign intervention and autocratic exploitation from their own elites. Unlike the situation elsewhere, Africa is not experiencing a democratic regression and protest is more acceptable public behaviour in many countries since an increased number are electoral democracies.

There are many African activists who would dispute Cilliers' causal equation of poverty, youth and turbulence, as well as his exemption of Africa from the obvious global "democratic regression" trends, simply because *right-wing populist parties* are not as visibly rising as in, say, Europe or the subimperial powers. For even if protest is "more acceptable" to Cilliers, that does not make it acceptable to a growing African autocratic elite, as explored below. In Cilliers' (2018) reading of the continent's troubles, there should be "much greater attention by organizations such as the AU to the quality of governance on the continent. Democracy in much of Africa is constrained from delivering on its development potential because of the lack of governance capacity, the thin quality of electoral democracies and the extent to which neopatrimonialism undermines electoral democracy" (Cilliers 2018: 33).

Sweeping generalizations of this sort – which promote neoliberal economics and decry neopatrimonial politics (in a blame-the-victim manner) – have been offered by Western academics at every stage of post-colonial African history (Bond 2006). Their recent revival, in the form of cultural explanations for macroeconomic dysfunctionality, can be traced, according to an important critique by Thandika Mkandawire (2015), to Western intellectual roots. From France, the most famous explanation is Jean-François Bayart's (2000) "politics of the belly." As read scathingly by Mkandawire (2015: 572), it blames African elites' "insatiable greed and gluttony… tropical lasciviousness, excessive conviviality, ostentatiousness and sexual appetite." These elites' rule is possible, allege Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999: 39), because of African voters' "patrimonial reciprocity… On the whole they do not vote because they support the ideas, even less read the programmes of a particular party, but because they must placate the demands of their existing or putative patron," in the process maintaining the "instrumentalization of disorder."

In addition to these French thinkers, Mkandawire (2015: 567) complains of two interlocking (U.S.-based) liberal intellectual currents:

> the public choice view regarding rent seeking, formulated by Anne Krueger and seminally applied to Africa by Robert Bates, and the neopatrimonialism school view. In both cases, the answers point toward some form of malevolent state simply acting on behalf of, or at the behest of, ruling interests … neopatrimonialism can be interpreted as building on methodological communalism where the community serves as the foundational unit of analysis and from whence macrolevel phenomena are derived.

Assuming continent-wide merits of neoliberal economics and barriers of patrimonial politics, Bates (2008: 131) asks, "Why is it that African leaders refuse to implement what are obviously 'Good Policies' which have been fruitfully adopted by other parts of the world? Or why do they adopt policies that impoverish their citizens?" Mkandawire (2015) eviscerates such simplistic questions, which are largely devoid of curiosity about adverse macroeconomic conditions. But the liberal "Africa works" school has continued to promote this culturally-grounded explanation for the continent's deviance, while simultaneously advocating economically-"reforming" (liberalizing) states. Aside from the Bretton Woods Institutions, the most aggressive promoters of this narrative are based at the Oppenheimer mining tycoon family's Brenthurst Foundation in Johannesburg. Its prolific director, Greg Mills, is openly committed to cultural explanations (in this case when writing for a conservative-libertarian think tank, Washington's Cato Institute):

> This apparent passivity of the populace in the face of bad leadership must, at least in part, be attributed to a neopatrimonial culture. In that culture, the "big man" rules and dispenses favors. He uses all manner of tools to bolster his rule – from traditional governance structures and kinship ties to witchcraft and the church. The system that many African leaders have preferred thrives on corruption and nepotism… a primordial lust for wealth and power along crude racial, tribal, party, and familial lines (Mills 2010, 4).

This is an exemplary instance of what Mkandawire detests, yet there is one area in which patrimonial relationships deserve mention: what in South Africa is termed corporate "state capture" of politicians. Although there are many instances, given that the Johannesburg capitalist class is consistently rated the world's most corrupt in biannual surveys by PwC (2018), the most notorious involved Jacob Zuma. A notorious "big man" president who ruled from 2009 until a palace coup in early 2018, Zuma possessed stereotypical neopatrimonial features, including a rural palace (Nkandla) whose $20 million upgrade was paid for illicitly, through the state. His family's dealings with the three Gupta brothers, who immigrated to South Africa from India in the mid-1990s, are exemplary instances of patrimonial rule. Within a decade the Guptas had become extremely influential political players, starting with 1999-2008 President Thabo Mbeki's closest aide Essop Pahad, and moving seamlessly to the Zuma camp after Mbeki was overthrown in an internal party coup. By 2017 the Gupta empire was responsible for tens of billions of dollars' worth of dubious relationships with Zuma and his son Duduzane (confirming, at least in this case, the neopatrimonialists' concern with nepotism).

But resistance emerged, starting in earnest when enraged middle-class citizens (called "Save South Africa") and their (elite) British allies attacked the major London public relations agency Bell Pottinger. Many were catalysed by the firm's dubious political services to the brothers, such as spreading the meme "White Monopoly Capital." After a corporate boycott was launched by former Bell Pottinger client (and second-richest South African) Johan Rupert, the firm went into bankruptcy in 2017. Vast reputational damage was done to other multinational firms ensnared in the Guptas' procurement relationships, mainly driven by bribery (unveiled in a whistle-blower's 2016 leak of tens of thousands of emails): KPMG, McKinsey, SAP, T-Systems, Liebherr, Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries, China South Rail and several others. After extensive protest against the Guptas, the December 2017 ruling-party internal election was won by Zuma's deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa, in a very close electoral battle with Zuma's chosen successor (Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma – an ex-wife who had been African Union chairperson). Zuma was then dislodged from the national presidency 15 months earlier than he expected, in February 2018, as Ramaphosa set out, gingerly, to modernize the party and state by removing corrupt elements. But this was an extremely slow process, given Ramaphosa's desire to maintain sufficient unity, so as to win the 2019 national elections with more than 60 percent of the vote, the ruling party's post-apartheid standard. Ramaphosa's much tainted deputy president, his party's general secretary and chairperson, and numerous of the ministers he inherited from Zuma together made his anti-corruption rhetoric sound increasingly hollow.

Two interpretations are revealing: first, Zuma was a case of a deviant leader's culturally-grounded neopatrimonialism (many characteristics of which were obvious); and/or second, South Africa suffers a structural case of compradorism, of the sort Fanon would recognize as the intrinsic logic of a once-repressed "national bourgeoisie." After colonialism was defeated, Fanon (1963: Ch.3) suggested, the African elite

> will insist that all the big foreign companies should pass through its hands, whether these companies wish to keep on their connections with the country, or to open it up. The national bourgeoisie discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary. Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neocolonialism.
>
> The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative role, this cheap-jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolize the incapability of the national middle class to fulfil its historic role of bourgeoisie.

Just as much as Zuma, his replacement Ramaphosa became the intermediary for South Africa's most rampant capitalist enterprises. They included a mining house, Lonmin (whose platinum operation at Marikana hosted a 2012 massacre in which Ramaphosa played a communications role with the South African police, as embarrassing emails revealed); a massive cellphone firm (MTN) that is Africa's largest alleged practioner of Illicit Financial Flows (destined for its Mauritius tax-free branch, including during the period when Ramaphosa was chair); and various other leading functions with Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Standard Bank, Unilever, Glencore, Mondi and other firms (Bond 2019). Ramaphosa led the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Commission that set up a system for systemic compradorism, for as Moeletsi Mbeki (2016) described it:

> The first purpose of BEE was to create a buffer group among the black political class that would become an ally of big business in South Africa. This buffer group would use its newfound power as controllers of the government to protect the assets of big business. The buffer group would also protect the modus operandi of big business and thereby maintain the status quo in which South African business operates. That was the design of the big conglomerates. Sanlam was soon followed by Anglo American. Sanlam established BEE vehicle Nail; Anglo established Real Africa, Johnnic and so forth. The conglomerates took their marginal assets, and gave them to politically influential black people, with the purpose, in my view, not to transform the economy but to create a black political class that is in alliance

> with the conglomerates and therefore wants to maintain the status quo of our economy and the way in which it operates.

The pro-corporate ideology of South African political leadership is partly explained in this way. For example, through the neoliberal New Partnership for Africa's Development (Bond 2005) and its other influences on the continent, what can be termed a "subimperial" bias (Garcia and Bond 2018) is repeatedly reproduced from the Johannesburg-Pretoria capital-state axis. Returning to the think tank owned by the historic owners of the Anglo American Corporation, the Oppenheimer family, Brenthurst sponsored an important book in the cultural-neopatrimonial tradition. Published in 2017, *Making Africa Work* had four co-authors: Greg Mills (Brenthurst), Jeffrey Herbst (former president of Colgate University), Olusegun Obasanjo (the controversial former Nigerian president) and Dickie Davis (a former British military leader). They unabashedly sought a revived neoliberalism: "Reform necessitates fundamentally changing the way in which African economies work. It means being open to international trade and capital rather than aid, being reliant on enterprise rather than personalized and patronage-ridden systems, while the aim of government should be private-sector growth rather than public-sector redistribution" (Mills et al 2017: ix).

NEOLIBERAL CO-OPTATION OF ANTI-NEOLIBERAL, ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN PROTEST?

This is all relatively standard corporate propaganda. One of the main advocacy groups promoting liberalization along these lines – to rid Africa of neopatrimonialism – is the World Bank's "Doing Business" team. Its annual attempts to shift Africa from patronage-based crony capitalism and onto a more modern, level playing field are paying off, as the Bank (2019: 15) bragged of its power since at last 2004: "With 905 reforms, Sub-Saharan Africa holds the record for the highest total number of reforms captured by Doing Business over the past 15 years. Moreover, the region also recorded the highest number of reforms in 11 of those 15 years." For example, the time to start a business was reduced from 65 to 22 days, and the cost of getting an electricity connection halved in relation to income. Other improvements were recorded in acquiring construction permits, access to credit, registering property, protecting minority investors, the time required to paying taxes, ease of trading across borders, resolving insolvency and enforcing contracts (World Bank 2019). The Bank's critique of economic authoritarianism has the virtue of supporting not just multinational corporations, but the neoliberal populist agenda of micro-entrepreneurialism made famous by Hernando de Soto and Muhammad Yunus, no matter the resulting crisis of micro-debt and overtrading (Bateman 2010).

To advance this agenda, the West occasionally celebrates what are to capitalism useful forms of authoritarianism, of which Paul Kagame's in Rwanda remains most obviously in contradiction to Western pro-democracy propaganda. In 1998, U.S. president Bill Clinton praised the "new generation" of leaders, understood to encompass Kagame, Museveni of Uganda, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. For example, *The New York Times* reported at the time, Museveni's

> self-reliant government, fiscal discipline and free-market economics has made him the darling of United States diplomats, who are trying to remold

> America's role in Africa to replace costly and paternalistic aid programs with more trade and investment… As long as these African leaders, like Mr. Museveni, make some headway toward democracy, or show a willingness to keep working toward it, America can live with them, American officials said (McKinley 1998).

Against this group – most of whom the West had soured on by the early 2000s (Diamond 2008) – more explicitly illiberal African tyrants are generally painted as requiring profound "reform" (e.g. Mugabe from 1980-2017, except for the period 1991-96 when structural adjustment was aggressively imposed and Zimbabwe was celebrated by neoliberals) (Bond 1998) or outright regime change (e.g., al-Bashir in Sudan, targeted especially by Western powerbrokers during the Darfur genocide). But it is the evolution in West-African relations from political romance to dictatorial heartbreak that best reflects the untenability of fusing free markets and free politics in super-exploited Africa. With China's Belt and Road Initiative expanding to the continent's closest ports, rail lines and oil extraction infrastructure, the East African authoritarians' hands are strengthened, along with those of traditional Beijing allies in sites of repressive rule like Angola and Zimbabwe.

As a result, the likes of pro-Western neopatrimonial theorists Mills et al (2017) have recognized the new protest wave with opportunistic enthusiasm. Their new spin continues to disclaim the neoliberal causes of economic misery, but offers at least some degree of awareness that dissent is rising for economic reasons:

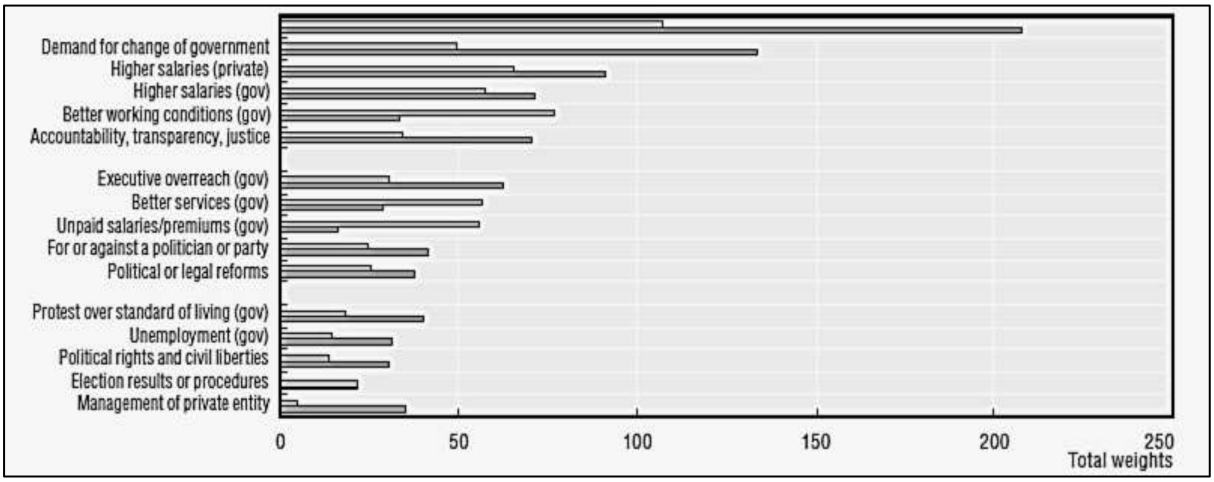
> Those rulers who perpetuate the old ways will see the further impoverishment of their nations and their own rule threatened. The Arab Spring, when youths who perceived that they had no future overthrew leaders and destabilized countries in a matter of weeks, highlights how quickly such tensions can spill over, even into political collapse. The threat is particularly severe now that power is increasingly in the hands of individual citizens enabled by the rapid spread of mobile communications… Africa has seen a 2.5 times increase in protests since 2000. And, not surprisingly, the protesters' top three demands are salary increases, better working conditions and calls for the dissolution of government (Mills et al. 2017: ix, 259).

The Brenthurst Foundation attempts to co-opt dissent (e.g. using "not surprisingly" to describe resistance to capitalism's African failures and the resulting austerity regime) so as to advance the neoliberal cause. This is revealing, even if we set aside the ill-informed remark about social media (for after the prolific use of Facebook and Twitter in Egypt's 2011 uprising, the subsequent ability of Africa's authoritarian regimes to switch off their internet grid is well practiced and now a relatively common occurrence).[2] Awareness of widespread dissent, as reflected in the final two sentences in the quote above, is drawn from increasingly widespread reporting, e.g., the African Development Bank's *African Economic Outlook (AEO)*, which in turn is based on collated Reuters and Agence France Press protest

2 In 2016 alone, there were 11 politically-motivated internet shutdowns: Ethiopia (four times), Gambia and Uganda (twice), and Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Mali, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Mukeredizi 2017). Surveillance of the internet is also a growing problem, as witnessed in the ways South African intelligence intervened repeatedly during Zuma's reign (Duncan 2016).

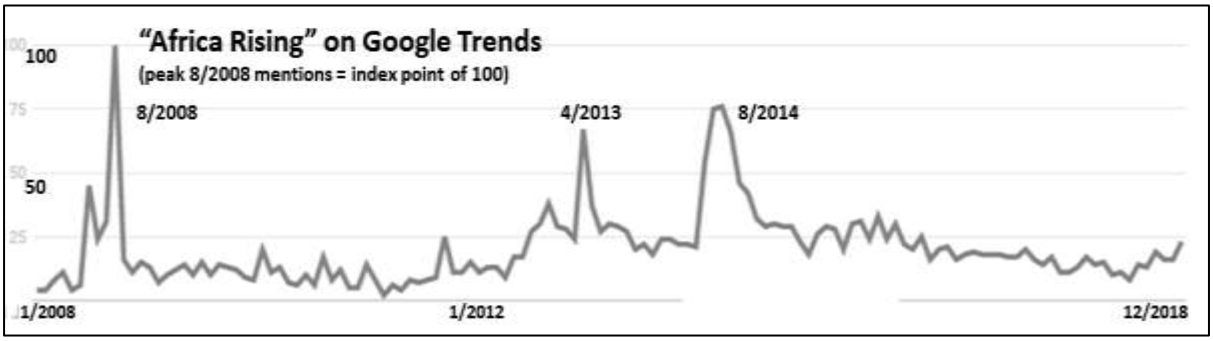
journalism, in Figure 4. Since these grievances have started to find articulation in the annual *AEO* chapter on governance (albeit a chapter mysteriously dropped starting in 2018), the liberal narrative has struggled to explain why the 2011 protest wave did not subside. Unrest data show protest continued to crest ever higher (although the *AEO* suggests a decline after 2015), even though pro-neoliberal "Africa Rising" rhetoric persisted in the ether at least through mid-2014, as reflected in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Main rationales for public protest in Africa (2014-16 at top, 2011-13 at bottom)



Source: African Development Bank, OECD Development Centre, UN Development Programme and Economic Commission for Africa (2017). *African Economic Outlook,* Tunis, Table 5.4, p. 132.

Figure 5: Citations of the Phrase "Africa Rising" in Google



Source: http://trends.google.com

The rationale for protests combines political and economic factors. For unrest incidents studied by Adam Harris and Erin Hern (forthcoming) in 2011-14,

> The majority of these protests were related to deteriorating economic conditions, poor service delivery, inadequate wages, and economic inequality. These protests, which we term "valence protests," do not fit easily into typical narratives about contentious behavior: they are neither social movements, nor revolutionary, nor a manifestation of organized labor – instead, many of these protests are a collective expression of a valence issue of which the government is well aware.

While protests may have been less acutely intense in other countries than the first few weeks of 2011 in North Africa, subsequent years witnessed extensive unrest, often spontaneous due to the rising social anger about a "valence" matter of common concern, e.g. corruption or crime. But while grievances are diverse, economic oppression and a desire for a new government are straightforward, especially when in so many cases there is a rapid overthrow of a discredited regime, such as those noted above that fell during 2011-18. In many other cases, though, protest is sustained for years. In eleven countries – Algeria, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, and Tunisia – there were bursts of citizen energy that generated at least fifty instances of protest in a given month. As noted below, the metabolism of dissent also coincided closely with an upsurge in authoritarian repression. In this context of bottom-up upheaval, the dilemma for continental and also global elites appears to be the maintenance of their neoliberal worldview, while simultaneously assimilating critics.

THE DANGERS OF IDEOLOGY-FREE PROTEST AND RE-ASCENDANT AUTHORITARIANISM

The danger of grassroots common-sense critiques of corrupt African power structures is that, as in so many sites of authoritarian emergence – the Philippines, Turkey, Brazil, and U.S. are striking – the electorate moves haphazardly from street protests or mass-based alienation at stagnant or worsening living conditions, to supporting neofascistic responses. Hence the more durable critiques of malevolent power in Africa require just as much attention as the overthrow of unpopular elites since 2011. There were other recent political protests with progressive undertones that should have generated more headlines, such as in Libya (against slave markets) or Morocco (against corruption and unemployment). In 2016, Nigerian militants fighting oil companies and their government resumed struggle and shrunk petroleum production by 1.6 million barrels a day (65 percent) under the mantle of the "Niger Delta Avengers." In South Africa, working-class residents of ghettoes engaged in what are termed "service delivery protests" at rising levels of frequency and anger, according to the University of Johannesburg Centre for Social Change (Paret et al. 2017).

The vast majority of grassroots protests lack a concrete political agenda (hence in South Africa they might be termed "popcorn" – because they rise and fall chaotically, sometimes turning xenophobic). Indeed, one internal reaction of dissenters is a sharp turn to the religious right (the kind that gave Duterte, Erdogan, Bolsonaro, and Trump such passionate supporters). In Somalia, mass popular protests were held in 2018 against Islamic extremism, another mode of authoritarian practice which has groundings in economic deprivation. The UN Development Program (2018: 5) studied recruitment into religious terrorist organizations in several African sites:

> The research unequivocally underscores the relevance of economic factors as drivers of recruitment. The grievances associated with growing up in contexts where multidimensional poverty is high and far deeper than national averages, with the lived reality of unemployment and underemployment, render "economic factors" a major source of frustration identified by those who joined violent extremist groups. This is a key dimension of individuals' vulnerability to narratives that invite them to channel such grievances and associated desperation into the cause of extremism.

Far-sighted imperialists have come to understand this relationship, as well. As former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, told *Voice of America* in 2018, the "root causes" of extremism are "poor governance and lack of economic development." Agreed the Pentagon's Africa Command field leader, Ramon Colon-Lopez, "When you have no options and here comes an extremist that is offering you a motorbike and a bride, what do you think you're going to do? Your family's starving, you can't provide for them and somebody's giving you an option" (Babb 2018). Similarly, a desperation ideology increasingly powerful in Africa, often aligned to authoritarian elites, is evangelical Christian fundamentalism.

In reality, the West's anti-terrorism strategy often entails the military strengthening of authoritarian regimes which exacerbate root-cause malgovernance and poverty, such as in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. In these countries, 2018 witnessed more than 2000 U.S. military forces battling Boko Haram, al-Qaida, Islamic State and al-Shabaab, with occasional scandals in the U.S. when word of the fighting (and casualties) was reported. By then, Africom had widened its operations to 34 bases across Africa, although its commander Thomas Waldhauser told the U.S. Congress, "Our posture network allows forward staging of forces to provide operational flexibility and timely response to crises involving U. S. personnel or interests without creating the optic that U.S. Africa Command is militarizing Africa" (Turse 2018).

Another source of anger born of economic oppression is the African labor force, and the poorest continent's confrontations with employers has long been considered the world's most serious, as measured in the World Economic Forum *Global Competitiveness Report* which surveys 14 000 employers annually.[3] Of 32 African countries included in the 2017 Report (out of 138 countries), 28 were considered above the world median of militancy, and just four below. Indeed of 30 most angry national proletariats that year, a dozen were African. South Africa was ranked as the world's most un-cooperative proletariat in 2017 (as was the case every year since 2012, although in 2018 fell to fifth in the world poll) followed by Chad, Tunisia, Liberia, Mozambique, Morocco, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Algeria, Burundi and Zimbabwe. In 11 of these, the number of events within the category of "violence against civilians" far outweighed the "riots and protests" category,[4] suggesting that there is a much more prevalent tendency to repression: Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

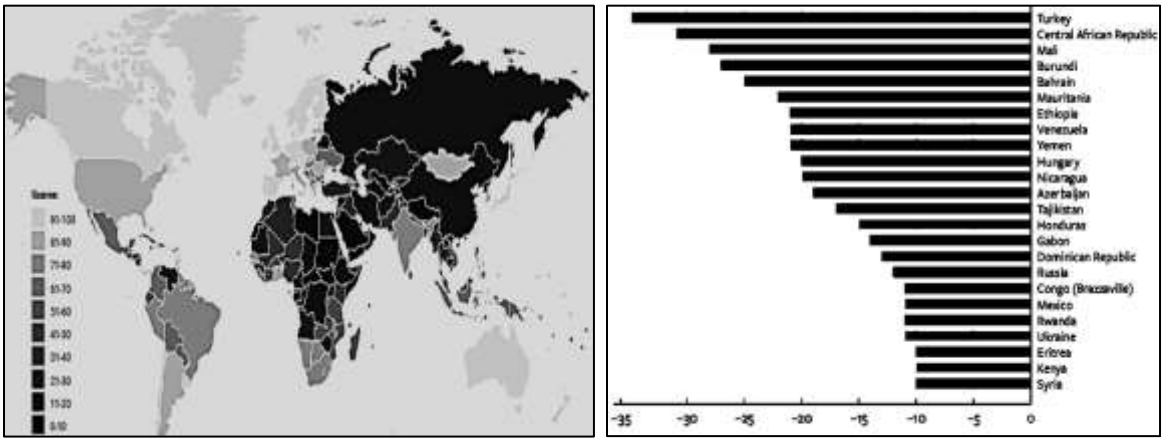
What, then, does the authoritarian landscape look like, and how do those top three reasons for grievances lead to protest, in a manner that can be comprehended even in sites where protest is banned, journalists are afraid (or too lazy) to report dissent, and the internet is

3 The measure is the category "Cooperation in labor-employer relations" in each country, on a scale from "generally confrontational" (1) to "generally cooperative" (7) (World Economic Forum 2017). South Africa led this list through most of the 2010s and was in the top five in 2017-19 ; in 2020 this question ceased to be posed by the WEF.

4 ACLED defines a riot as "a public demonstration by a spontaneously organized group that uses violence"; and a protest as "a public demonstration where the demonstrators are peaceful." For a much more nuanced analysis of how protests might be considered "disruptive" – between violent and non-violent – see Paret et al 2017.

shut down? As one example of a monitoring organization, Freedom House considers most of Africa unfree, with only South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia permitting fundamental civil and political rights. Of the 24 countries which Freedom House (2018) considered most rapidly degenerating over the decade 2009-18, nine were African: Mali, Burundi, Mauritania, Ethiopia (until its early 2018 reversal), Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Eritrea and Kenya (Figure 6).

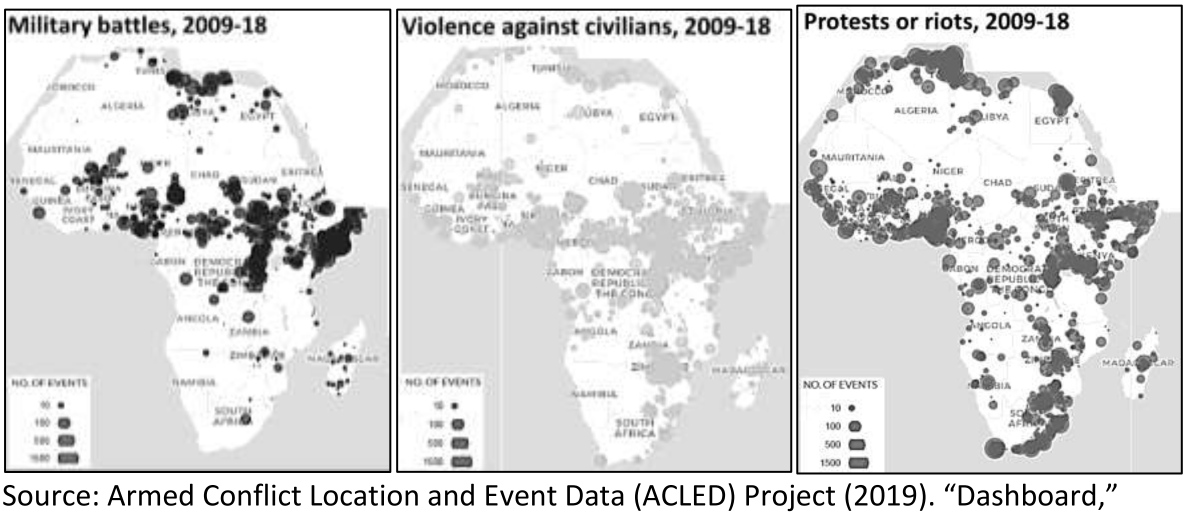
Figure 6: Political and Civil Rights (darker=less free); Most Rapid Falls in Freedom Index (2010s)



Source: Freedom House (2018). “Freedom in the World,” Washington, DC. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

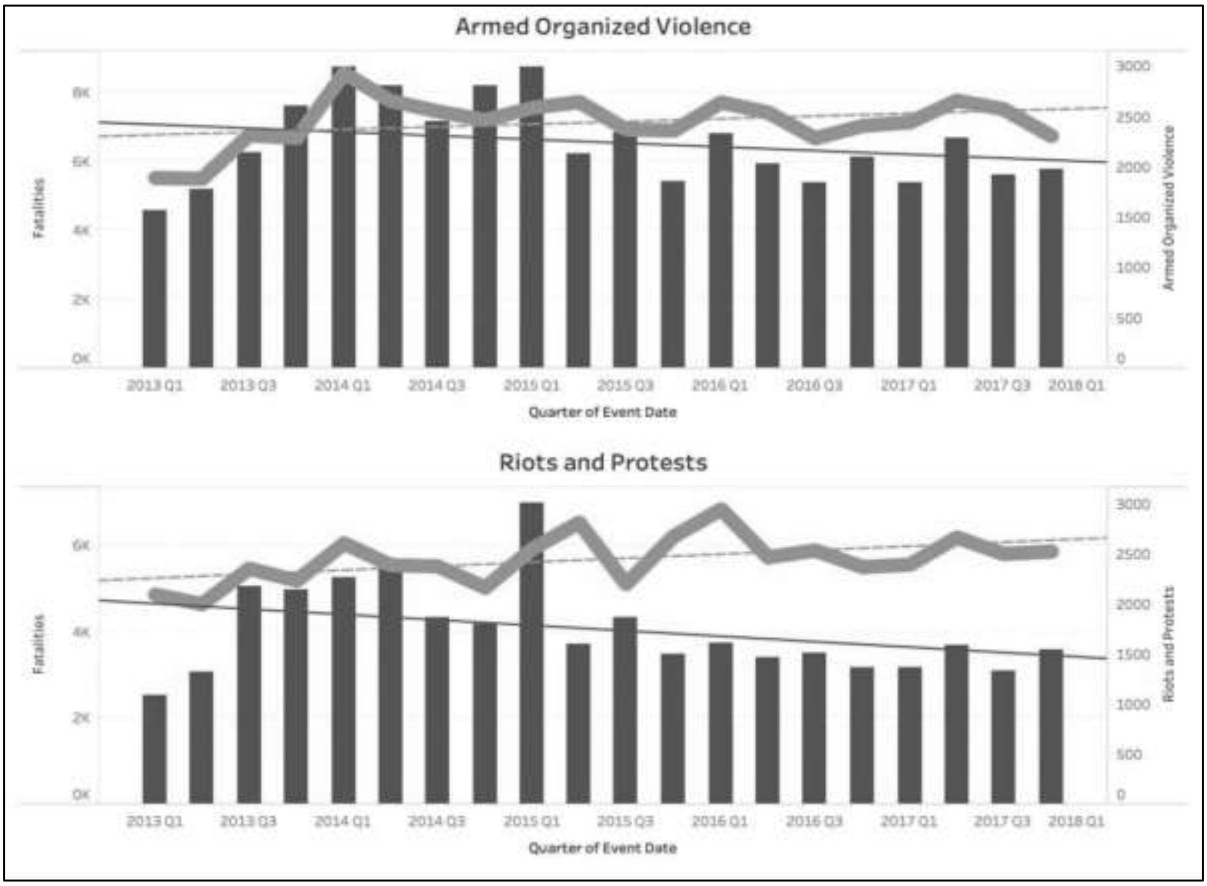
The degeneration of political freedom is confirmed by the rise of what a Sussex University research program funded by the U.S. Pentagon and State Department (‘Minerva’) – known as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) – terms “Armed Organized Violence,” which includes both state repression and paramilitary forces. Although fatalities fell from their peak highs in 2014-15, the recent number of repressive events is higher than even the hot years of 2011-13 (Figure 7). So although protests are more likely to be quelled by state violence, their numbers have steadily risen (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Africa’s Battles, Repression and Protests, 2009-2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project (2019). “Dashboard,” Brighton: University of Sussex. https://www.acleddata.com/dashboard

Figure 8: Africa's Incidents of Fatalities, Repression and Protest, 2013-18



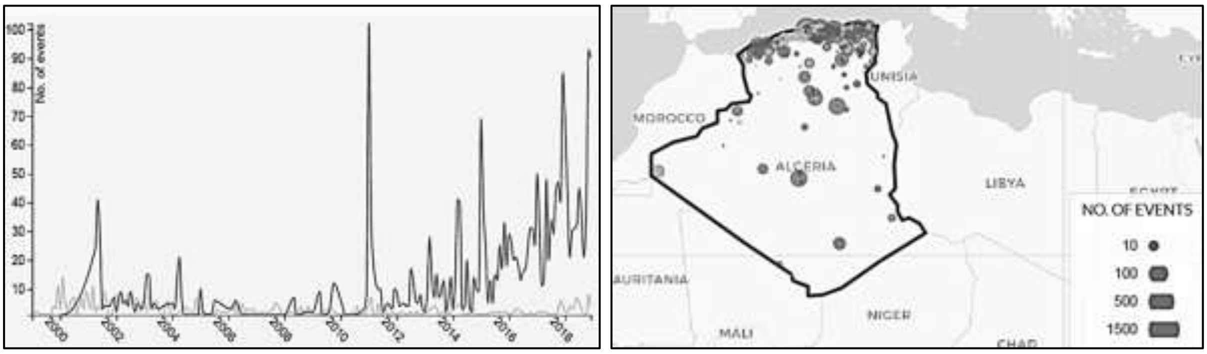
Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project (2019). "Dashboard," Brighton: University of Sussex. https://www.acleddata.com/dashboard

In the most recent two decades, rising levels of social protest across Africa are consistent with Polanyi-style 'double movement' activism. From above, the penetration of the commodity form combine with national neoliberal policies and fiscal austerity to undermine livelihoods, state services and social relations. Some counter-vailing activism had an immediate impact, and was sufficiently powerful to drive out hated leaders – although changing the driver didn't generally affect the vehicle's direction. Mostly, we are interested in more durable struggles, including the tipping points at which the subaltern activists are pushed too hard, too far, and decisively revolt.

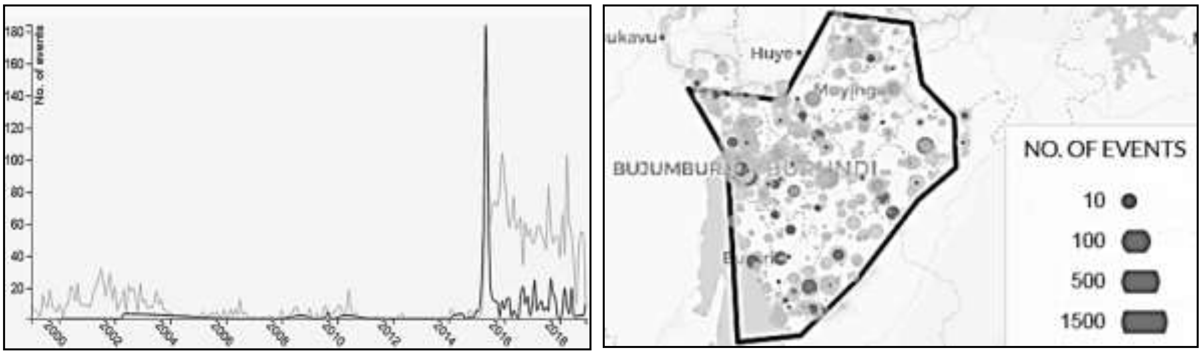
To measure such moments, ACLED provides temporally- and spatially-sensitive statistics and maps that reveal where both unrest and repression have occurred, over a two decade-long period. There were, in at least a third of Africa's countries, moments (or series of moments) where at least once, the peak of either category – top-down repression or bottom-up resistance – occurred more than 50 times within a single month (Figure 9). Alphabetically, the 18 countries are Algeria, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Indeed eight of them witnessed extremely high social-dissent peaks in the period 1998-2018, in which at least 100 riots or protests occurred in the course of a single month: Egypt: 250 in early 2013; Burundi: 180 in mid-2015; Tunisia: 175 in early 2011; South Africa: 170 in early 2017; Ethiopia: 160 in early 2016; Kenya: 140 in late 2017; Nigeria: 110 in early 2015; and Algeria: 100 in early 2011.

Figure 9: African countries which experienced, in at least one month, 50+ protests or acts of state repression, 1999-2018

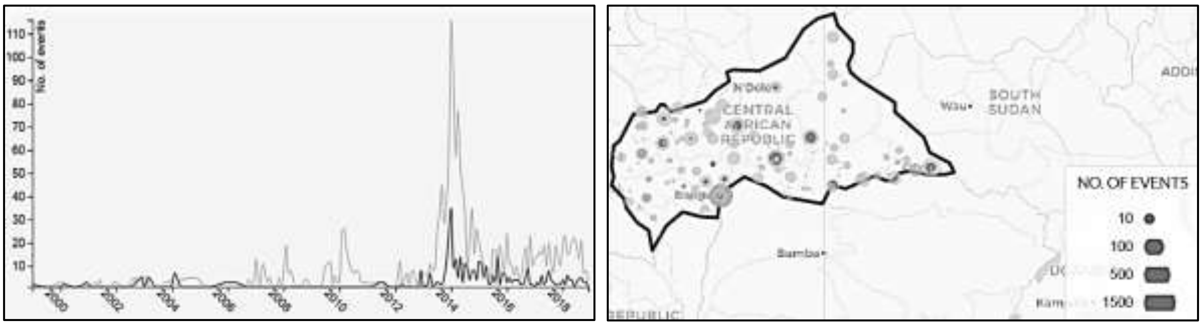
Algeria



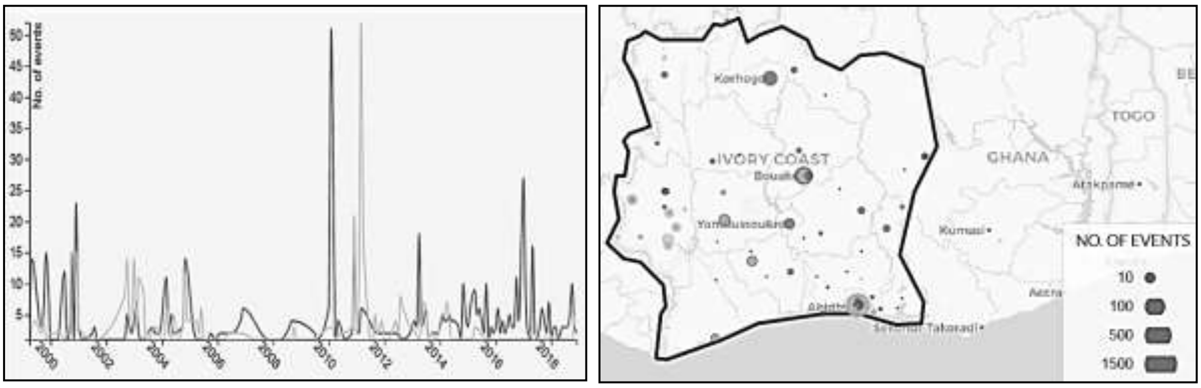
Burundi



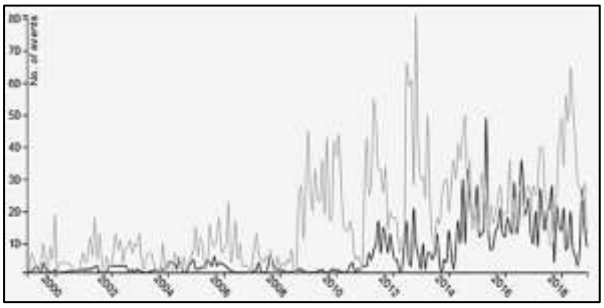
Central African Republic



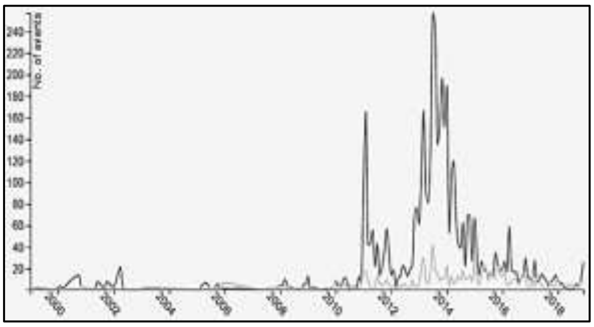
Cote d'Ivoire

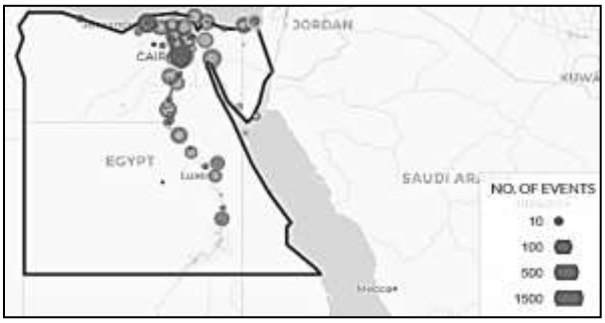


Democratic Republic of the Congo

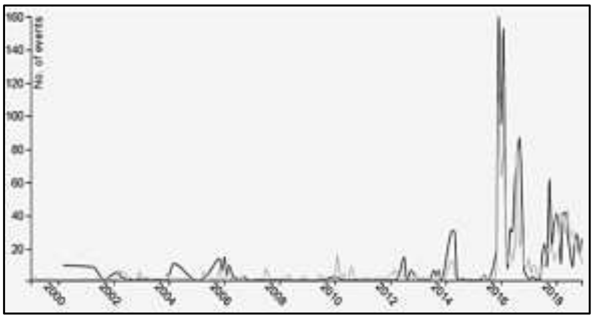


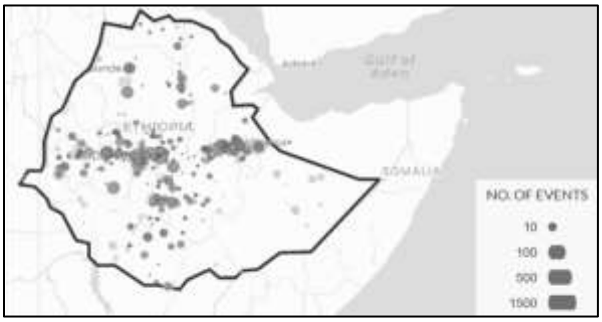
Egypt



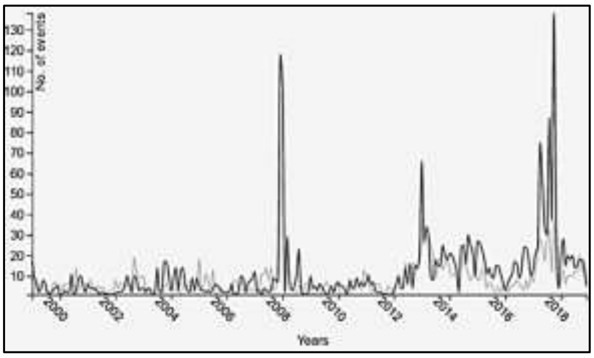


Ethiopia

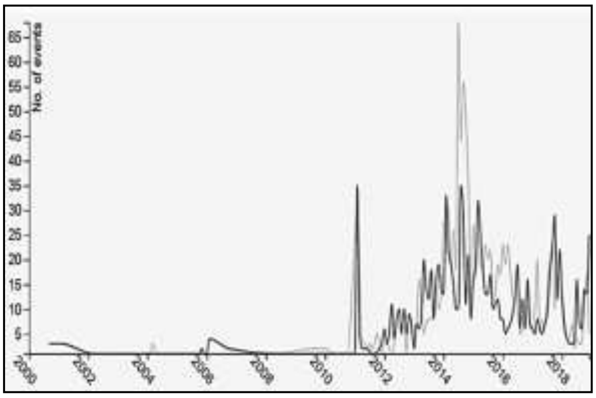




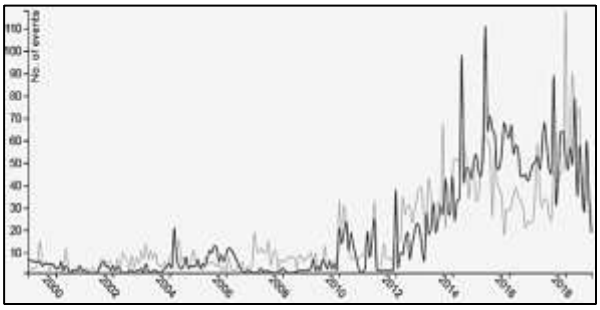
Kenya

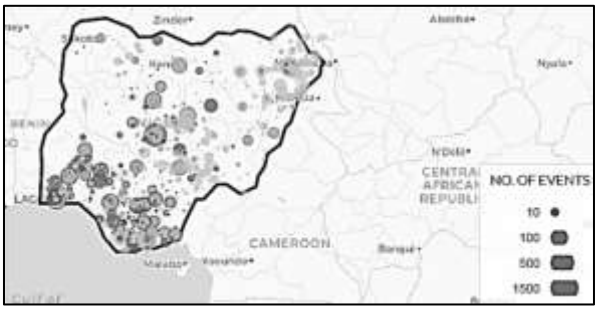


Libya

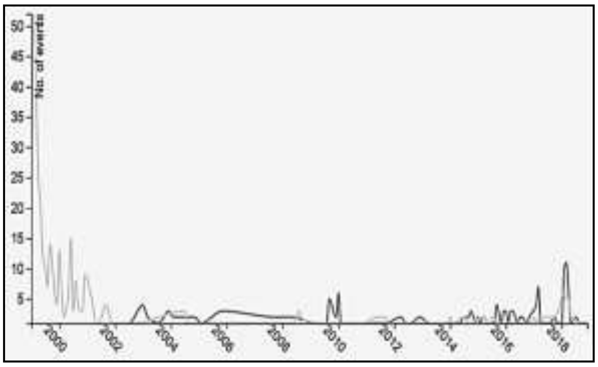


Nigeria

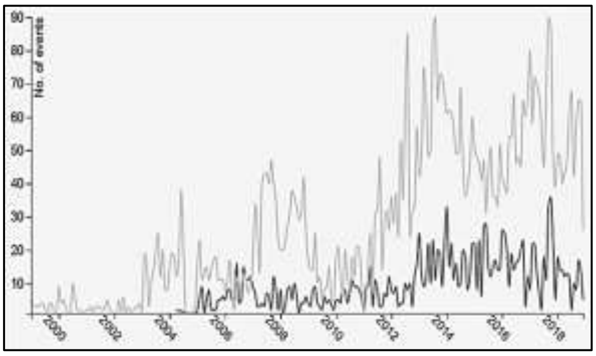


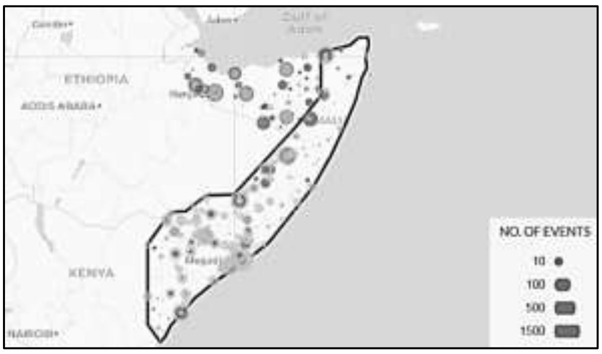


Sierra Leone

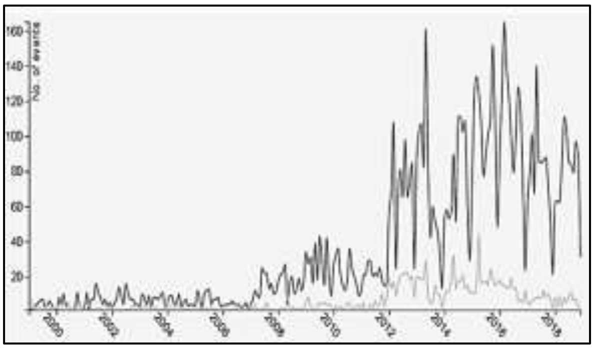


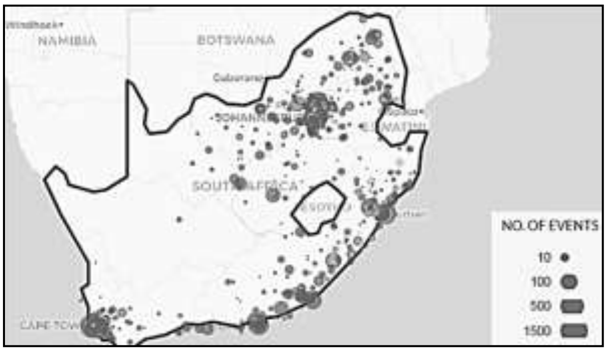
Somalia



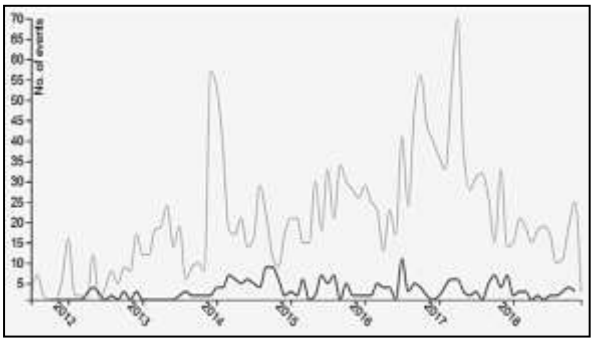


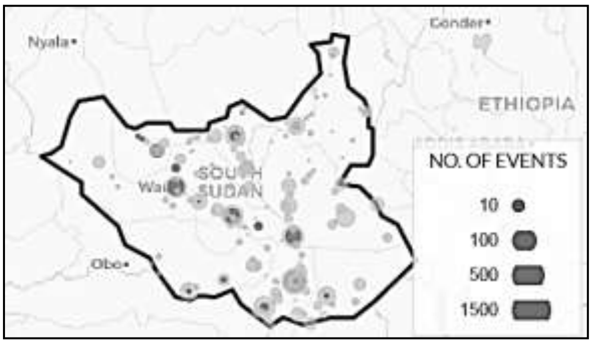
South Africa



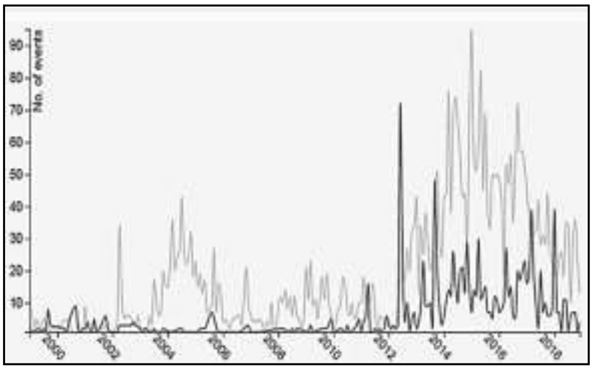


South Sudan

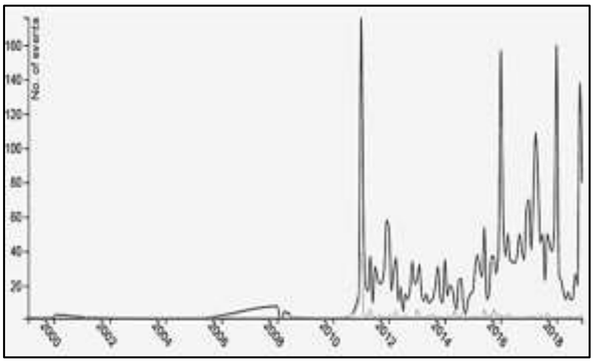




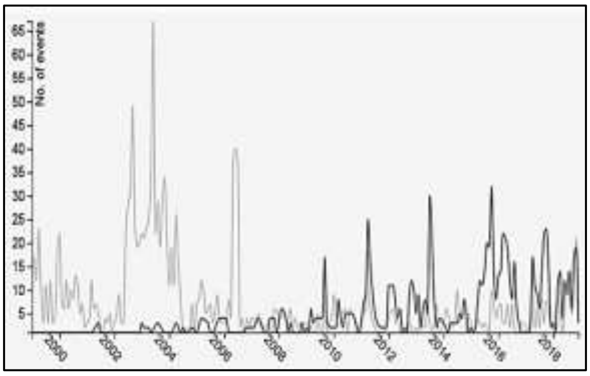
Sudan

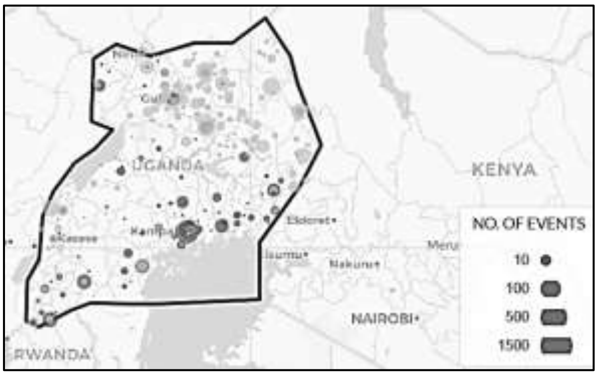


Tunisia

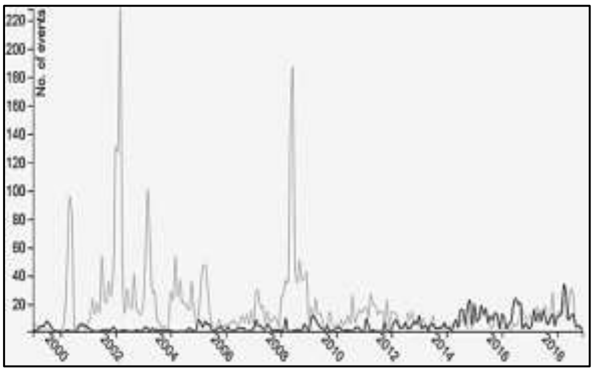


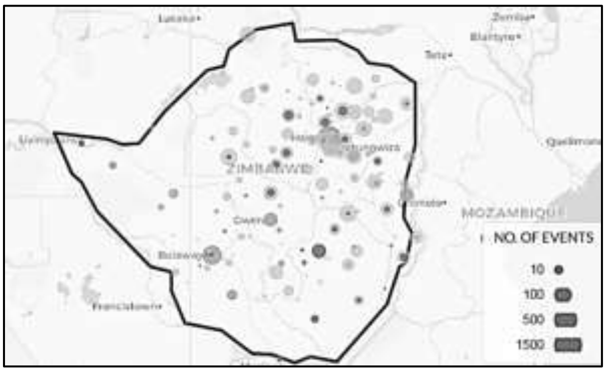
Uganda





Zimbabwe





Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project (2019). "Dashboard," Brighton: University of Sussex. https://www.acleddata.com/dashboard

CONNECTING AND DISCONNECTING THE DOTS WHEN RESISTING NEOLIBERAL-AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS

We have observed the empirical basis for concern about African economic crises persisting, and indeed amplifying under export-led, extraction-based neoliberal regimes. This is especially worrying because the period ahead offers many potential threats of economic, geopolitical and environmental catastrophes. Neofascistic social forces combining cultural revanchism and economic protectionism on the one hand, combined with neoconservative elites exhibiting traditional militarist-imperialist tendencies on the other, hold power in Washington, DC. The European Union continues fragmenting. In addition to nuclear build-up and missile technology advances in big-power theatres involving the U.S., Russia and China, various regional battlegrounds continue to fester in the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and South Asia, and potentially the Far East.

These conflicts also generate waves of refugees, as do ever more destructive processes of climate change (such as were witnessed in Sudan and Syria prior to their extreme socio-political conflicts). And economically, deglobalization tendencies and trade wars have fatally undermined faith that transnational corporate interlocks are an ever-expanding process that can civilize right-wing, populist governments. The 'centripetal' economic forces that Xi Jinping hoped for from the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa network are better described as centrifugal, as the world continues spinning apart (Garcia and Bond 2018).

As for the extremely vulnerable African continent, the challenge is obviously complicated by innumerable political, ethnic, community, generational and gender relations – through which neoliberal policies amplify underlying tensions. In some cases, such as the DRC, Zimbabwe, Algeria and Sudan, major protests erupted in early 2019 and were immediately met by police and army bloodshed, a typical mix of repressive politics and economics, although the latter two also witnessed leadership turnover as a result. The DRC suffered an apparently stolen election, and thus unending legitimacy problems for a new leader – Felix Tshisekedi – whose ties to the outgoing Kabila regime may explain his surprise victory.

In Sudan, according to the Associated Press (2019), "The protests, called for by professional and opposition groups, are part of a wave of unrest over a failing economy that has transformed into demands for the resignation of the autocratic al-Bashir, an Islamist who has run the country for nearly 30 years but brought little improvement to his people." In addition, there is a feminist component, with women making up an estimated half of protesters against al-Bashir, as described by Mel Plant (2019):

> Systemic legal discrimination, pervasive harassment and the use of rape as a weapon of war by regime forces are among the many reasons why people say they are protesting to overthrow the regime and build a state based on "freedom, peace and justice" – one of the protests' most common rallying cries. Women are leading the protests because they are demanding their stolen rights.

As a result, Al-Bashir was forced to resign in April 2019, but at the time of writing, early June, the Transitional Military Council not only had refused a rapid transition to civilian rule, but committed a massacre of at least 100 protesters among the thousands who had been camping outside their Khartoum headquarters.

Zimbabwe's 2019 revolt was even more explicitly a case of resistance to neoliberal authoritarianism, in the wake of Mnangagwa's November 2017 military soft-coup against Mugabe, a disputed mid-2018 election and the subsequent appointment of ultra-neoliberal finance minister Mthuli Ncube (the same economist who considers $2/day spending as entry to the middle class). Ncube immediately imposed a regressive 2% tax on all electronic financial transactions, cut major chunks from the state budget, granted mining companies much greater access to scarce hard currency, and announced he would prioritise repayment of $1.8 billion in debt arrears to the World Bank, African Development Bank and European Investment Bank – all under the unashamed rubric, "austerity for prosperity."

The contradictions mounted, however, and in mid-January 2019, when Mnangagwa and Ncube imposed a 150 percent increase in the petrol price, it was met by four days of intense protest. The army killed at least a dozen people, injured scores and abducted hundreds more. Speaking from the Davos World Economic Forum, these protests were blamed by Ncube on a 'pre-planned' conspiracy, and he robustly defended the government's internet and social media shutdown: "Things are going well. The theme is Globalization 4.0. It resonates with what Zimbabwe's trying to do in terms of global financial reengagement, raising capital, pushing our mantra that Zimbabwe's open for business. It really resonates. Zimbabwe is the best buy in Africa" (CNN 2019).

Algeria's mass February-March 2019 mass protests aimed not only at forcing the sickly Bouteflika (82) to cease running for president, but for a broader-based change. The anger was fundamentally also a reflection of the limits of semi-peripheral capitalism, as researchers Matt Herbert and Sofian Philip Naceur (2019) of South Africa's Institute for Security Studies report:

> Economic opportunities are limited, and even when jobs are available the wages are often not enough for youth to earn a living. For a growing number of young people, life steps like acquiring a house or marriage are put off. A despair exists: the common local phrase, '*la mal vie'*, ('the bad life'), describes the sentiment for many Algerians.

Predictably, the IMF (2018c: 1) was pleased with Bouteflika's "sizeable fiscal consolidation in 2017," but suggested more belt-tightening in late 2018, i.e. in the period witnessing the upsurge in protest rates to the highest level since 2011: "While welcoming the authorities' efforts to manage the adjustment process, Directors encouraged sustained fiscal consolidation and wide-ranging structural reforms to facilitate a more diversified growth model and support private sector development." The fall of Bouteflika and his closest allies, as well as Al-Bashir, reflected a 'Long Arab Spring,' as Gilbert Achcar (2019) put it:

> The uprisings in these two countries are the product of what I've been calling a long-term revolutionary process that started in 2011 for the whole Arab-speaking region. The main cause for this is the social and economic blockage brought about by the combination of IMF-sponsored neoliberalism and the rotten authoritarian political systems that impose it throughout the Middle East and North Africa. This blockage produces systematic social problems, the most important of which is enormous youth unemployment. The blockage produces many other deep grievances among the populations in the region that keep driving uprisings. In Sudan, the trigger of the revolt was the increase in bread prices after the state cut subsidies at the behest of the IMF.

In sum, does Africa fit Polanyi's (1944) model, in which the 'noneconomic ends' of authoritarianism fuse with the economic means of neoliberalism (what Ncube names as 'austerity for prosperity')? From the logical clash that results with the people, there could be generated new political space for a social-democratic ideology to emerge, termed by Polanyi 'economic freedom.' It is as relevant a vision today to the poorest African countries as to the impatient BRICS societies and degenerating Western democracies. For Polanyi,

> The passing of market-economy can become the beginning of an era of unprecedented freedom. Juridical and actual freedom can be made wider and more general than ever before; regulation and control can achieve freedom not only for the few, but for all. Freedom not as an appurtenance of privilege, tainted at the source, but as a prescriptive right extending far beyond the narrow confines of the political sphere into the intimate organization of society itself. (Polanyi, 1944: 256)

The return of Africa's democratic developmental-state vision, as so often demanded in the surge of African protests since 2011, reflects how today's neoliberal-authoritarianism has begun to hit limits in country after country. Across Africa, the still-forming ideological terrain is ripe for more discussion about these interrelationships. Dots between neoliberalism and authoritarianism are in place, but these can be – African activists show so regularly – disconnected in the broader social interest. It is in connecting the dots *between* protests in various national and continental settings that the next generation of discussions need to address.

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Ecological-economic narratives for resisting extractive industries

Research in Political Economy, 2018

ABSTRACT

The World Bank report *Changing Wealth of Nations 2018* is only the most recent reminder of how much poorer Africa is becoming, losing more than $100 billion annually from minerals, oil and gas extraction, according to (quite conservatively-framed) environmentally-sensitive adjustments of wealth. With popular opposition to socio-economic, political and ecological abuses rising rapidly in Africa, a robust debate may be useful: between those practicing anti-extractivist resistance, and those technocrats in states and international agencies who promote "ecological modernization" strategies. The latter typically aim to generate full-cost environmental accounting, and to do so they typically utilize market-related techniques to value, measure and price nature. Between the grassroots and technocratic standpoints, a layer of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) do not yet appear capable of grappling with anti-extractivist politics with either sufficient intellectual tools or political courage. They instead revert to easier terrains within ecological modernization: revenue transparency, project damage mitigation, Free Prior and Informed Consent (community consultation and permission) and other assimilationist reforms. More attention to political-economic and political-ecological trends – including the end of the commodity super-cycle, worsening climate change, financial turbulence and the potential end of a forty-year long globalization process – might assist anti-extractivist activists and NGO reformers alike. Both could then gravitate to broader, more effective ways of conceptualizing extraction and unequal ecological exchange, especially in Africa's hardest hit and most extreme sites of devastation.

INTRODUCTION: CONFLICTING NARRATIVES AGAINST AFRICAN RESOURCE EXTRACTION

How can we better know – *so as to better resist* – the widening extent of ecological extraction from South to North? Consider the concept of "natural capital accounting," in which the Net Present Values of ecological resources are estimated. The purpose behind this, in most cases, is more efficient environmental management, within the strategic tradition of "Payment for Eco-System Services." The grounding for this strategy is the "ecological modernization" philosophy that views rational management of the environment as based largely upon scientific, technical and economic criteria. While current practices of applying natural capital accounting are often dubious, its potential for radical political ecology is enormous, especially in Africa, although traversing the minefields requires careful attention to the concept's critics.

As is true everywhere, a variety of African discourses have emerged about the "Resource Curse" faced by citizenries whose elites and transnational corporations (TNCs) extract natural wealth against broader socio-ecological interests. Countervailing narratives are deployed against such extraction, drawing attention to specific harms. Ecological and climatic narratives stress the degradation and pollution of local land, air and water and fossil fuel emissions (including for mineral smelting) that also affect the global scale. Advocates for labour and health emphasise workplace safety, disease and migrant labour relations. There are spiritual, traditionalist and socio-psychological narratives that decry damage to sacred sites and common spaces, and oppose community displacement and gendered violence. Critiques of extractivism from a political standpoint (ranging from local to national scales) usually highlight elite formation, compradorism and clashes over resources within and between imperialisms and/or sub-imperialisms. There are also narratives against extraction based on their maldevelopmental impact, through "Dutch Disease" economic skews, and Illicit (and Licit) Financial Flows to offshore sites with little reinvestment. Finally, a rare narrative – though the one motivating *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018* report by the World Bank – is ecological-economic, based upon the depletion of natural capital wealth without sufficient returns.

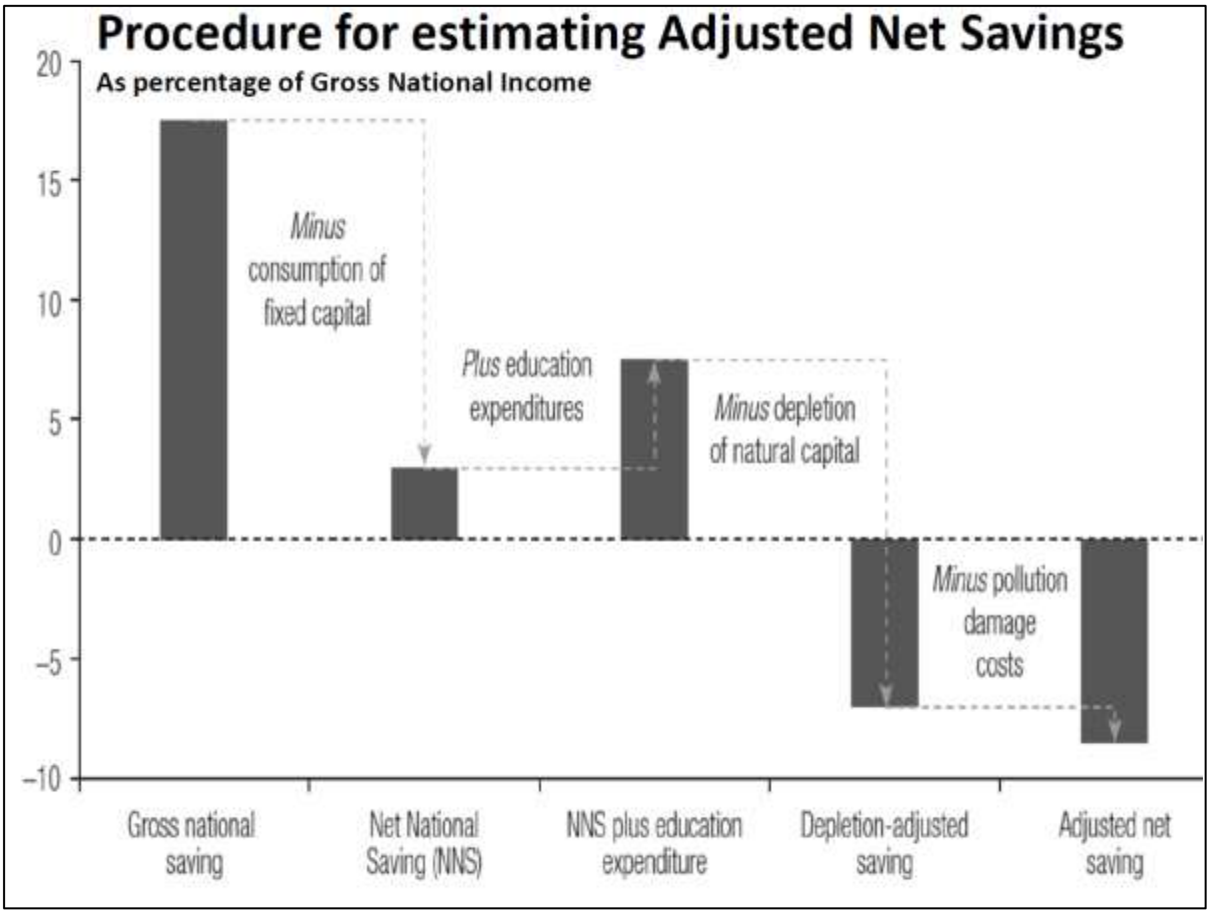
These critiques of resource extraction gain traction subject to the balance of forces in particular locales. Categories such as climate change, geopolitics and the latter economic curses have much greater scalar import than place-based micro-struggles, or what are sometimes termed "militant particularisms." The pages that follow focus on ecological-economic processes associated with non-renewable wealth depletion, in part because resistance forces in Africa have begun to identify the winners and losers from resource extraction. Their protests target specific injustices at the sites of extraction or transmission, which are in many cases, rural. But in urban and peri-urban areas, too, the evidence of African elites having appropriated or mismanaged royalties from resource extraction, has helped generate a new round of resistance, as discussed below.

On the other side of the class, racial, gender and ecological divides are the TNCs – often Western, but also often based within the Brazil, India, Russia, China and South Africa (BRICS) bloc – which extract Africa's resources but offer little or no reinvestment. They typically claim to provide benefits by way of jobs for local unemployed people; an infusion of Foreign Direct Investment in the form of fixed capital (usually mining head gear, smelters and drilling platforms); upstream and downstream purchases of goods and services; increased infrastructural investment (roads, rail lines and systems providing greater inflows of water and electricity) that is potentially of use to local people; and export earnings. Therefore it is vital for critics of extraction who deploy the other (non-economic) narratives to also consider critical analysis of non-renewable resource depletion, even natural capital accounting. This might be considered a complementary critique, if indeed the objective of extraction opponents is to slow or even halt the process.

THE WORLD BANK'S PARTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTING

Ironically, a major ally in counting natural capital depletion is the World Bank (most recently, the Lange et al 2018 report referred to as *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018*, which is the third in the Bank's series, following similar studies published in 2006 and 2011). At a time the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is under attack more generally, a team at the Bank has generated an "Adjusted Net Savings" (ANS) measure to track changes in economic, ecological and educational wealth "of nations" (to play on the Adam Smith title) (Figure 1). The first step is to subtract from income the wear and tear on machines (the shrinkage of fixed capital), followed by a second step: add "human capital" investments by way of the education budget (public and private). The third step is the ever more sophisticated bean-counting of nature's values, as discussed below, and the fourth is to subtract the economic damage done by pollution.[1] The Bank calculates that nature constitutes 9 percent of world wealth, but in poor countries more than a third of their wealth (Table 1).

Figure 1: Procedure for estimating Adjusted Net Savings.



Source: Lange et al 2018

1 By way of a brief methodological explanation, when arriving at ANS, Lange et al (2018) calculate "consumption of fixed capital" (wear and tear on machines), educational expenditure ("human capital"), depletion of non-renewable resources ("natural capital") and pollution damage. In the world's poorer countries, the natural capital component of total wealth is typically more than a third, while for the world as a whole it is just 9 percent (Table 1). In the calculation above, "About half of gross national saving is used for the consumption of fixed assets (depreciation), with a similar negative contribution (with some variation over the years) resulting from natural resource depletion (Fig. 1). The losses from pollution are smaller, as is the positive contribution of spending for education" (Lange et al 2018).

It is important to recognise that the negative contribution to ANS from mining is a highly conservative estimate, especially in Southern Africa, because "some important resources are still not included because of a lack of data, notably platinum group minerals, diamonds, and other minerals." While three of South Africa's major mineral exports are calculated – coal, iron-ore and gold – the country's reserves of 85 percent of the world's platinum are not included. Vast levels of diamond extraction in Zimbabwe, Botswana, the DRC, Sierra Leone and Liberia are also ignored, so the 3 percent annual decline in the region's wealth is likely to be far worse.

North African countries which do not effectively recycle their oil wealth through state companies also contribute to the decline for the continent as a whole, though the World Bank's old-fashioned category "Sub-Saharan Africa" leaves these out these countries. Calculations that involve Libya's depleted oil resources will be increasingly important, given how the Obama and Sarkozy regimes replaced its dictatorial Gaddafi regime in 2011 with extreme extraction and chaotic malgovernance.

Table 1. Global wealth by type of asset, 1995 and 2014

	1995		2014	
	Billion US$	Percent	Billion US$	Percent
Produced capital	164,781	24	303,548	27
Natural capital	52,457	8	107,427	9
Forests and protected areas	14,515	2	18,290	2
Agricultural land	25,859	4	39,890	3
Energy resources (fossil fuels)	11,087	2	39,094	3
Metals and minerals	997	<1	10,154	1
Human capital	475,594	69	736,854	64
Net foreign assets	–2,890	<1	–4,581	<1
Total wealth	689,942	100	1,143,249	100

Source: Lange et al 2018

The reason the Bank became the driving force behind ANS and natural capital accounting reflects institutional contingencies. One of the leading voices in ecological economics, Herman Daly, came to his profession's attention when he edited the seminal *Toward a Steady State Economy* (1973). Twenty years later Daly (1996, 220) was advancing his arguments as a staff economist within the World Bank, attempting to instrumentalize this definition of sustainable development: "development without growth beyond environmental carrying capacity, where development means qualitative improvement and growth means quantitative increase." It was a framework that, he admitted, "just confirmed the orthodox economists' worst fears about the subversive nature of the idea, and reinforced their resolve to keep it vague." To avoid such vagueness, Daly (1996, 88-93) proposed four environmental policy recommendations for both the Bank and governments, centered on the accounting of natural capital. Drawing down natural resources was considered purely as a positive GDP 'credit' rather than also as a 'debit' from any given country's genuine wealth, so he admonished,

1. stop counting natural capital as income;
2. tax labor and income less, and tax resource throughput more;
3. maximize the productivity of natural capital in the short run, and invest in increasing its supply in the long run; and
4. move away from the ideology of global economic integration by free trade, free capital mobility, and export-led growth – and toward a more nationalist orientation that seeks to develop domestic production for internal markets as the first option, having recourse to international trade only when clearly much more efficient.

Such advice was anathema to a Bank dedicated to the expansion of world capitalism, especially once the neoliberal era entered its most aggressive period during the 1990s. Daly was ignored (just as is the work of Lange et al in 2018). Bank policies and practices continued to enforce foreign loan repayments and TNC profit repatriation. Nevertheless, in the Bank's interstices, Daly's colleague Robert Goodland had persuaded the authorities to initiate a unit specializing in natural capital. The "Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services" (WAVES) project began the difficult task of measuring non-renewable and renewable resource depletion. By 2017, the Bank (2017) claimed that 21 African countries were engaged in some form of ANS research, but implementation of natural capital accounting for the sake of a more efficient capitalist extraction process has been slow. Even in sites with strong advocates, e.g. Maryland (one of the richest U.S. states with per capita income of nearly $60,000), it was only in 2010 that far-sighted governor Martin O'Malley agreed to fund a Genuine Progress Indicator (Hayden and Wilson 2018).

While these concepts are widely endorsed within the sub-discipline of ecological economics, their application within radical political ecology and political economy is controversial. Natural capital accounting is readily dismissed as within the ambit of "neoliberal nature," Bram Büscher (2018) explains, because the idea "only has meaning in a capitalist growth context." In 2012, just as the Gaborone Declaration was circulated, Nigerian environmental justice activist Nnimmo Bassey warned, "The bait of revenue from natural capital is simply a cover for continued rape of African natural resources." Because of inadequate state protections against market abuse, "The declaration will help corporate interests in Rio while impoverishing already disadvantaged populations, exacerbate land grabs and displace the poor from their territories" (cited in Bond, 2012a). Sian Sullivan (2013) agreed, especially regarding the danger of business' surveillance skills: "By making the category of nature more and more legible to capital and market logics we may in fact be enhancing its exposure to market failures… [because] 'nature' can be put to work as a value-generating asset, just like any other unit of capital." Sullivan (2017) updates her critique of a variety of green financial instruments thanks to "the increasing legibility, through numbering and (ac)counting practices, of natural capital as an apparently exterior 'matter of fact' that can be leveraged financially."

Büscher*,* Bassey and Sullivan are correct to question the underlying philosophy, motives and techniques of nature's bean counters, especially at the Bank and especially in sites like Zambia where the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services project has been particularly pernicious in its choice of counting priorities. (Indeed the WAVES team's more general failure to incorporate platinum and diamonds in natural capital accounts is just one reflection of data-gathering weakness.) *Büscher,* Bassey and Sullivan point to a larger terrain on which nature is the next frontier of capital accumulation, especially its securitization through financial instruments (see also Bracking 2016).

Indeed there is very good reason to fear that once the 'value' of natural capital is estimated, this in turn will catalyse market-based schemes, such as the carbon trading and offsetting that have both proved damaging in Africa. Simultaneously, for example, there emerged powerful African critiques of climate-offset financing schemes: Clean Development Mechanism and Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) projects and a "No REDD in Africa" network of NGOs based at Friends of the Earth's

Mozambique affiliate, Justi*ça Ambiental* (Bond et al 2012). These groups' 2015 Durban Declaration on REDD was emphatic:

> We are united to oppose and reject the commodification, privatisation and plunder of Nature, which include REDD+ and other market-based mechanisms including biodiversity and conservation offsets that put profit above the wellbeing of humanity and the planet. These mechanisms include the "financialization of nature," which commodifies, separates and quantifies the Earth's cycles and functions of carbon, water, forest, fauna and biodiversity – turning them into "units" to be sold in financial and speculative markets.

These are intellectually rigorous and politically heartfelt warnings about risks associated with neoliberalized nature. The potential for the emergence of such markets should be kept firmly in mind in discussions of natural capital. Nevertheless, at a time that TNCs from the BRICS (as well as from Turkey and several East Asian countries) have joined traditional Western transnational corporations in a renewed "Scramble for Africa" based on the extractive industries (Bond 2017), there is a need for economic argumentation to contribute to a more universal, unified and coherent resistance, including on the hotly contested terrain of ideas. So far, the intellectual power of the existing narratives about the Resource Curse have not been sufficient, so these additional arguments are meant to assist forces opposed to TNC expropriation, or indeed any extractive industries in which (like Ramaphosa at Lonmin) the local elites' practices have the same effect.

Mostly, as discussed below, such resistance has been felt through direct action: rising direct and indirect micro-protests against countless destructive mining and oil extraction projects across the world. To illustrate, in 2015 Anglo American Corporation CEO Mark Cutifani conceded that due to community protests, "There's something like $25 billion worth of projects tied up or stopped," a stunning feat given that all new mines across the world were valued that year at $80 billion (Kayakiran and Janse Van Vuuren 2015). Yet all too often, the basis for such resistance is localized, without a unifying thread.

As a result, this article updates a long-standing concern I have (Bond 2006) that in Africa, dismissive critiques of ANS from the left, such as those by *Büscher*, Bassey and Sullivan, may be premature. This is an ever more important debate in a context of relatively low minerals and oil prices following the 2011 plateau and 2015 crash, and as a result, even more intense extraction metabolisms. Another reason to embark upon the counting of natural wealth is that the concept of "ecological debt" requires some sort of valuation, even approximation, even if all political ecologists agree that nature is priceless (Martinez-Alier 2003). And notwithstanding the danger of marketization that might follow more rigorous counting of natural values, ANS based on natural capital accounting is surely preferable to "Gross National Income" (GNI, a minor variant of Gross Domestic Product). The latter simply ignores the depletion of non-renewable natural resources and pollution, not to mention unpaid women's and community work and a variety of other factors (Fioramonte 2017).

Underlying the surface rhetoric of the international environmental debate – such as shifting focus from GDP to ANS for the sake of sustainability – are policy narratives with divergent philosophical roots. The dominant approach is often termed ecological modernization, what with its reliance upon technological innovation, market-driven efficiencies and the management of externalities aimed at improving environmental outcomes in a rational manner (see Harvey 1996 for a critical discussion). After initial argumentation by researchers based in Berlin and Amsterdam (especially Joseph Huber, Martin Jänicke and Udo Simonis) the approach was advanced by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development, established by Swiss construction billionaire Stephan Schmidheiny. Today, commodification of nature occurs increasingly under the rubric of Payment for Ecosystem Services, aiming to "put a price" on the environment for the sake of valuing and hence conserving nature. Indeed, full-fledged financialization is underway, as carbon markets and other forms of emissions trading and virtual water sales are increasingly packaged within exotic trading investment instruments, most of which do not hold up under scrutiny (Bond 2012b, Bracking 2016).[2]

This micro-economic approach offers no hope for addressing macro political-ecological crises, including those most affecting Africa. The Club of Rome (1972) had, four decades earlier, warned of planetary boundaries, of which the most serious threat is the diminishing carrying capacity for greenhouse gases (GHGs) that cause climate change. Africa has produced and consumed the fewest GHGs and yet is the continent that will be most adversely affected by climate change (Bond 2012b). There are other crises: rapid biodiversity loss (a "sixth mass extinction" now underway), oceanic degradation and acidification, crises in the biogeochemical nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, other resource input constraints, chemical pollution, freshwater adulteration and evaporation, and shortages of arable land (Magdoff and Foster 2011). Scholarship on planetary boundaries emphasizes "maintenance of the Earth system in a resilient and accommodating state" and identifies current system threats through overshooting of climate change, biosphere integrity, biogeochemical flows, and land-system change (e.g. Steffen et al 2015, Raworth 2017).

Africa is least able to defend against eco-systemic catastrophes given the substantial drainage of resources discussed below. Inadequate climate adaptation is evident in even the most admired local governments, as witnessed in 2018 when drought-stricken Cape Town neared a so-called "Zero Day" for residential water access (when household taps would go dry), in the context of sustained water apartheid (Environmental Monitoring Group 2018). The continent's second wealthiest city, Cape Town is also the world's fifth most unequal city (Johannesburg ranks first in both categories in a late 2017 survey) (*Euromonitor* 2017).

From such examples it is obvious that greater urgency is required to address the structural causes of both economic and ecological crises in Africa. Effective elite leadership of the quality some Africans briefly witnessed in prior decades – e.g. Amilcar Cabral in Cape Verde, Patrice Lumumba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Samora Machel in

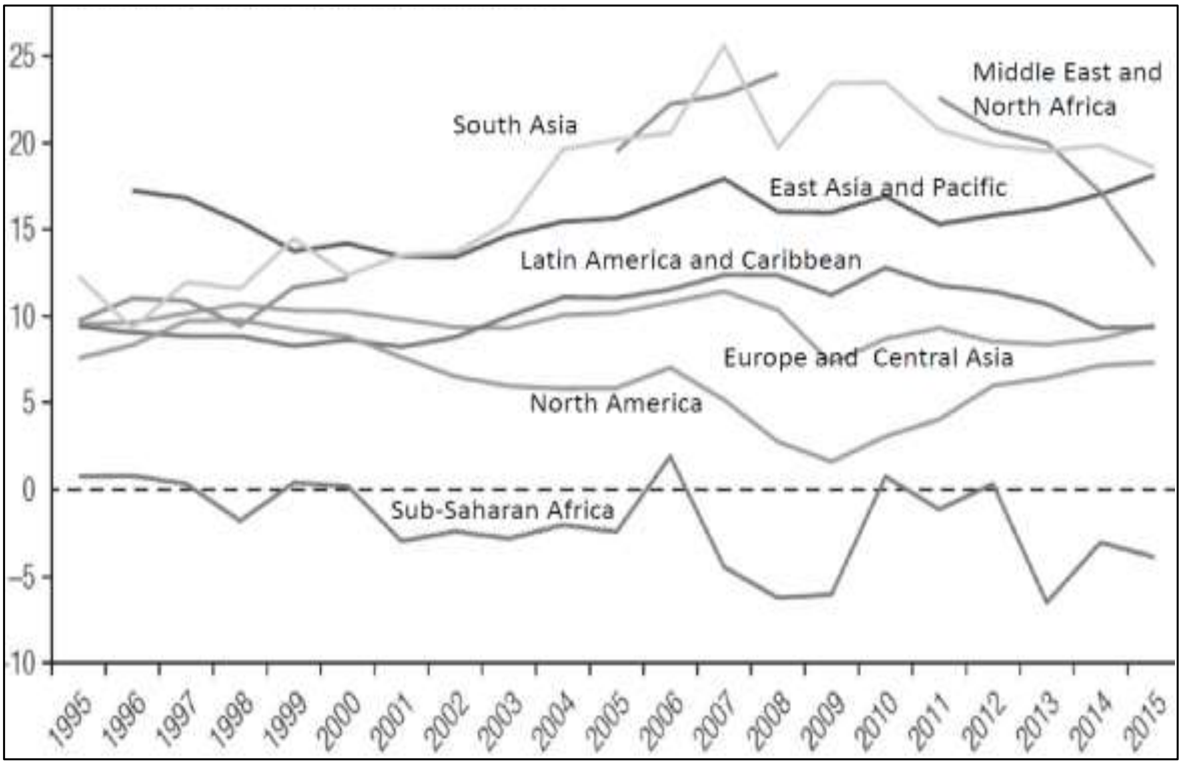
2 In ecological modernization's most advanced form, Deutsche Bank's Pavan Sukhdev initiated "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (2018) within the UN Environment Program to "make nature's values visible" and thus "help decision-makers recognize the wide range of benefits provided by ecosystems and biodiversity, demonstrate their values in economic terms and, where appropriate, capture those values in decision-making." In the same spirit, the World Bank's (2012) *Inclusive Green Growth* mandated "that cities and roads, factories and farms are designed, managed, and regulated as efficiently as possible to wisely use natural resources while supporting the robust growth developing countries still need… [to move the economy] away from sub-optimalities and increase efficiency – and hence contribute to short-term growth – while protecting the environment."

Mozambique, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso – is impossible to identify at present. Yet since 2017, several of Africa's most important dictators, tyrants and corrupt rulers – Hailemariam Desalegn in Ethiopia, Eduardo dos Santos in Angola, Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Jacob Zuma in South Africa – have lost their grip on power, in part due to social protest, as discussed below. (In early 2018, uprisings continued such that this list might extend to Paul Biya in Cameroon and Faure Gnassingbé in Togo.) Some of that protest emanates from the adverse economic conditions associated with the massive outflow of African wealth, including so-called natural capital.

AFRICA'S NATURAL CAPITAL DEPLETED

Applied to Africa, even the most rudimentary ANS analysis is devastating. It is damning that, in one count (World Bank 2014), 88 percent of African countries are net losers from resource extraction once ANS is calculated. In the Bank's latest world survey of *The Changing Wealth of Nations* 2018 (using 1990-2015 data), Glenn-Marie Lange et al (2018) conclude that Sub-Saharan Africa loses roughly $100 billion of ANS annually (not including the platinum and diamond sectors): "It is the only region with periods of negative levels – averaging negative 3 percent of GNI over the past decade – suggesting that its development policies are not yet sufficiently promoting sustainable economic growth… Clearly, natural resource depletion is one of the key drivers of negative ANS in the region."

Figure 2: Adjusted Net Savings as percentage of Gross National Income, 1995-2015.



Source: Lange et al 2018

Lange et al (2018) ask, "How does Sub-Saharan Africa compare to other regions? Not favorably" (Figure 2). Contrary to pernicious "Africa Rising" mythology (Perry 2012) that appeared at the peak of the commodity super-cycle, the ANS decline for Sub-Saharan Africa was worst from 2001-09 and 2013-15. Other regions of the world scored strongly positive

ANS increases, in the 5-25 percent range. Richer, resource-intensive countries such as Australia, Canada and Norway have positive ANS resource outcomes partly because their TNCs return profits to home-based shareholders.

Essentially, Lange et al (2018) concede, the neoliberal development policies that attracted Foreign Direct Investment are counter-productive: "Especially for resource-rich countries, the depletion of natural resources is often not compensated for by other investments. The warnings provided by negative ANS in many countries and in the region as a whole should not be ignored." African policy-makers do ignore ANC, but Lange et al (2018) insist, "The measure remains very important, especially in resource-rich countries. It helps in advocating for investments toward diversification to promote exports and sectoral growth outside the resource sector."[3]

Top-down applications of natural capital accounting to Africa continue to be explored by the Bank and Conservation International (an NGO), which together persuaded Botswana's President Ian Khama to host ten national leaders from the continent in May 2012.[4] There they signed the "Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa" a month before the Rio+10 Earth Summit, itself characterized by extensive discussions of the "Green Economy." The representatives to Gaborone agreed that because of "limitations that GDP has as a measure of well-being and sustainable growth," they would begin "integrating the value of natural capital into national accounting and corporate planning" (Gaborone Declaration, 2012). However, in spite of this being advertised as an "African-led initiative for sustainable development," it is difficult to envisage a major political shift in statistical prioritization within each signatory country, aside from the revealing case of Zambia which began a partial accounting of its natural capital in 2017 – leaving out copper, notwithstanding that mineral's vast contribution to the country's declining wealth.

ZAMBIA'S NATURAL CAPITAL DEPLETION BY WASHINGTON BANKERS AND AN INDIAN TNC

In early 2017, the Bank appointed Zambia the first "core implementing country" within the World Bank Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (2017) project. Zambian forests, wetlands, farmland and water resources were considered to be the "priority accounts." Conspicuously missing was copper, the main component of Zambia's natural wealth, responsible for a 19.8 percent decline in annual ANS as a share of GNI according to the Bank's (2011) prior *Changing Wealth of Nations* study. The World Bank WAVES (2017) website confirms the objective: "ensuring that natural resources are

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3 Diversification is generally not underway. The share of Africa's manufacturing industry within GDP continues to shrink, aside from rare cases such as Swaziland which has a large (35 percent) share due to a super-exploitative Export Processing Zone, and Ethiopia where after bottoming at 4 percent, sweatshop factories have been constructed by Chinese firms (African Development Bank 2018). World Bank data record that manufacturing's share of GDP fell steadily from more than 15 percent in the early 1980s to below 11 percent since 2005. The continent's former industrial powerhouse, South Africa, was submerged by international competitors and witnessed manufacturing shrink from 24 percent of GDP in 1990 to 13 percent today (and that has been artificially bolstered by vast electricity subsidies to base metals producers, especially aluminum and steel). Even in the largest national market, Nigeria, manufacturing is less than 10 percent of GDP.
4 Other agencies which began to assist in Africa after Gaborone included the United Nations Statistical Division, United Nations Environment, and the main German aid agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

mainstreamed in development planning and national economic accounts." According to WAVES program manager Stig Johansson, "The Government of Zambia is very interested in having a better understanding of how natural capital – water, forest, minerals and ecosystems – interact with the economy and contribute to the country's progress and wealth." Yet only three aspects of natural capital were chosen for research (World Bank WAVES 2017):

- Land accounts, including forests, wetlands and agricultural lands;
- Water accounts, including water supply, use and quality; and
- Forest accounts, including production of timber and non-timber forest products.

According to the World Bank WAVES (2017) discussion of Zambia, "These accounts will be used to inform issues like deforestation, land use planning, and water allocation. There was a remarkable consensus among the working groups on the importance of starting with these three areas." But were sub-soil assets, especially copper, neglected in WAVES because such accounting would show a substantial net loss? After all, were such data widely discussed, it might compel a rethink of Zambia's privatization of mines and export of unprocessed ore.

Notwithstanding WAVES rhetoric, most World Bank staff work not in Zambians' interests, but on behalf of other international banks and TNCs. This compels them to seek foreign exchange: first, so TNCs can take profits home in US dollars; and second, so Lusaka repays loans (including to the World Bank) no matter how unaffordable, how irrational or how corrupt the borrowing government. Hard-currency payments are especially difficult from African countries when their currencies crash; Zambia's kwacha declined from levels of one to the U.S. dollar (K1/US$) during the 1990s, to around K5/US$ from 2003-15, to the K9/US$-K12/US$ range since.

From 2002-08, the government led by Levy Mwanamasa (1948-2008) came under severe pressure from the Bretton Woods Institutions and major donors to sell Zambia's most valuable state assets to repay older loans. These included loans contracted by his predecessor Frederick Chiluba (1943-2011), who was later convicted of widespread corruption. Instead of the debt having been cancelled on moral and economic-sustainability grounds, according to finance minister Edith Nawakwi, it became a neoliberal policy lever:

> We were told by advisers, who included the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that not in my lifetime would the price of copper change. They put production models on the table and told us that there was no copper in Nchanga Mine, Mufulira was supposed to have five years life left and all the production models that could be employed were showing that for the next 20 years, Zambian copper would not make a profit (Sinyangwe and Silwamba 2007).

The advice was incompetent, for the copper price rose from a low of $1500/ton in 2002 to $3000/ton at the time of the main 2005 privatizations. Reflecting global commodity volatility, copper then soared to $9900/ton in 2011 before dropping to $4500 in 2015 and rebounding to nearly $7000/ton by 2018. The Zambian government should have held onto the asset. However, Mwanamasa faced intense pressure from the Bretton Woods Institutions in 2005, when selling Africa's largest copper mine (Konkola). Mwanamasa was expected to ensure at least $400 million went into Zambia's treasury. But the buyer, Vedanta chief executive Anil Agarwal, bragged to a 2014 investment conference in Bangalore how he tricked Mwanamasa into accepting only $25 million: "It's been nine years and since then every year it is giving us a minimum of $500 million to $1 billion!" (Foil Vedanta 2014). Zambia's foreign debt rose from less than $1 billion at that time, to $9.2 billion today.

AFRICA'S RENEWED ECONOMIC CRISIS: UNBALANCED TRADE, DISINVESTMENT, DEBT

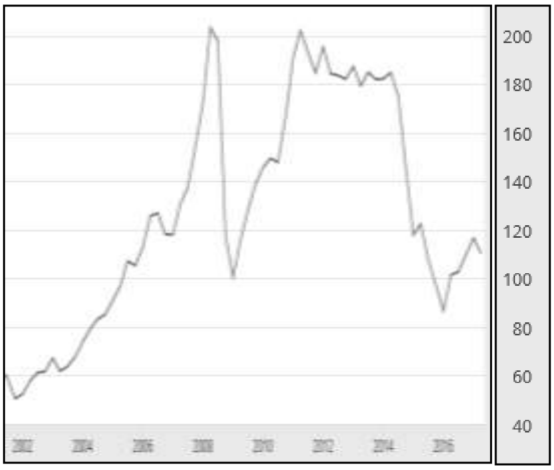
Zambia is not alone in seeing its wealth evaporate without sufficient reinvestment into areas of economic diversification. The Bank reports that from 1990-2015 many African countries suffered massive ANS shrinkage (a process the Bank terms "dissaving"): Angola lost 68 percent, the Republic of the Congo lost 49 percent and Equatorial Guinea lost 39 percent of their wealth. As commodity prices peaked in the 2007-13 super-cycle period, resource depletion was the major factor for Africa's wealth shrinkage (Figure 3). At the same time, Africa suffered net outflows of income. Commodity export values ebbed along with aid, foreign investment and remittances (Figs. 4-8).

Some of the largest economies in Africa – South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Angola – fared very badly in this process, but the fate of Africa's 32 "Least Developed Countries" (LDCs[5]) is even more revealing. In addition to Zambia, these LDCs include the well-populated countries Angola, the DRC, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan and Tanzania. At the end of the commodity super-cycle upswing in 2011, African LDCs' terms of trade plateaued in 2011-14 before suffering a substantial drop. Export revenue from these countries peaked at levels 360 percent higher than in 2000, but imports continued rising to 570 percent of the 2000 level by 2014 (Figure 4).

Sub-Saharan Africa's current account balance – incorporating both the trade deficit and outflows of interest, profits and dividends – then fell to negative $55 billion per annum (Figure 5). Incoming flows of overseas development aid (ODA), remittances from workers and new foreign direct investment (FDI) declined in absolute and relative terms (Figs. 6-8). African LDCs were hardest hit of all poor countries in these categories, reports UNCTAD (2018, 2). All LDCs witnessed a decline in export revenues: from $255 billion in 2014 to $190 billion in 2016 due to "weak global demand and low commodity prices," a 13 percent decline in FDI inflows to LDCs from 2015-16, and total North-South ODA disbursement of just $43 billion in 2016, far below the UN Sustainable Development Goal target range of $75-96 billion.

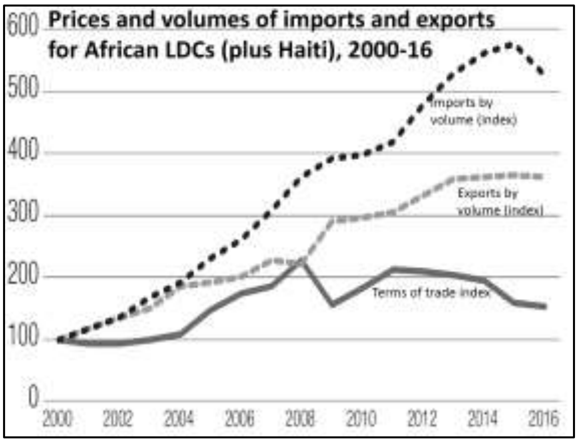
5 Africa's LDCs in 2018 are Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, DRC, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The illogical UN statistical habit of including Haiti with African countries continues in the 2018 UNCTAD report.

Figure 3. Commodity Prices Index, 2001-18 (2005=100)



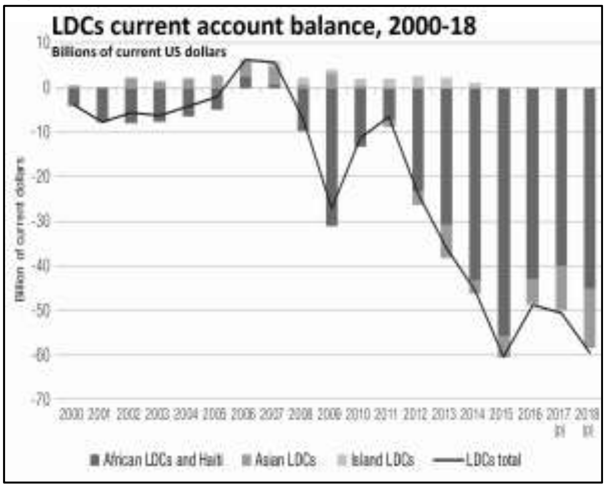
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis

Figure 4. Prices and volumes of imports and exports for African LDCs (2000 = 100)



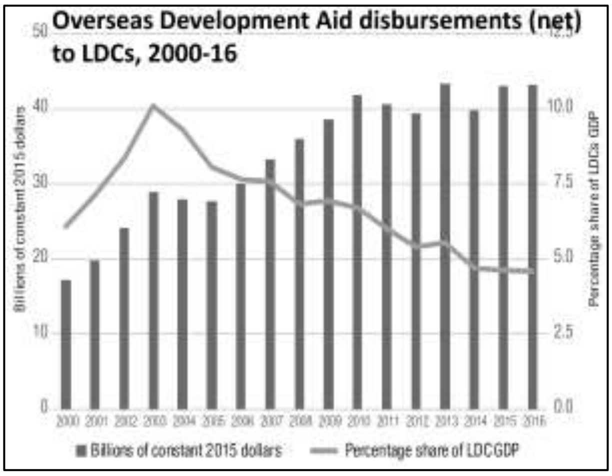
Source: UN Conference on Trade and Development, *2018.*

Figure 5. LDCs current account, 2000-18



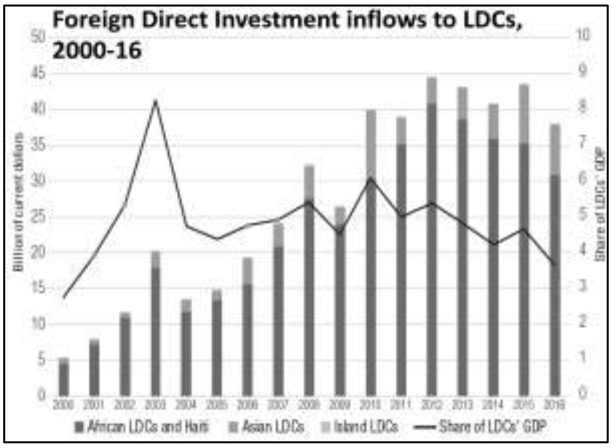
Source: UNCTAD, 2018

Figure 6. Overseas Development Aid to LDCs, 2000-16, US$ billions and % of GDP



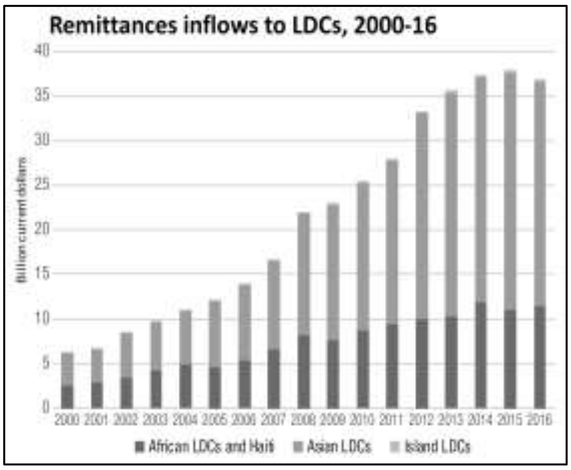
Source: UNCTAD, 2018

Figure 7. Foreign Direct Investment inflows to LDCs, 2000-16, US$ bns and % of GDP



Source: UNCTAD, 2018

Figure 8. Remittances inflows to LDCs, 2000-16, US$ billions



Source: UNCTAD, 2018

Adding to Africa's 31 poorest countries the other 17 in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals even gloomier estimates of looting. The London-based campaigning NGO Global Justice Now and its allies estimate that exploitative economic processes – not including the $100+ billion in resource depletion – were responsible in 2015 for a net outflow of $41.3 billion. According to their report, "African countries received $161.6 billion in 2015 – mainly in loans, personal remittances and aid in the form of grants" (Curtis 2017). Against that, outflows that year amounted to $203 billion, including $68 billion in illicit financial flows (TNCs "deliberately misreporting the value of their imports or exports to reduce tax"), $32 billion in repatriation of profits and dividends (licit financial outflows), and $18 billion in debt servicing. Curtis (2017) also recommends adding other costs imposed on Africa: $37 billion in damages related to climate change; and $29 billion in illegal logging, fishing and trading in wildlife and plants. The net negative $41 billion in 2015 would have been much larger were it not for the dramatic commodity price decline in 2014-15.[1]

From mid-2016, commodity prices then rose an average of 11 percent, but this made little difference to macro-economic balances by early 2018, when the ordinarily upbeat *African Economic Outlook* issued by the African Development Bank (2018) (AfDB) admitted that current account ratios "are not sufficiently robust; dollar interest rates are expected to edge up, bidding up the cost of capital; and external debt ratios have begun to rise across the region." To repay debt and TNC dividend and profit outflows requires a steady inflow of hard-currency investments, including FDI, portfolio investment, remittances, official development assistance, and external debt. The AfDB (2018) continued,

> Unsustainable current account deficits are an indicator of a poor state of the economy. They discourage foreign investors from holding assets denominated in African currencies. Large current account deficits also increase the probability of a currency crisis. They lead to the accumulation of foreign debt, which has to be repaid at some point, triggering expectations by domestic investors of higher taxes to service and repay the debt.

Sub-Saharan Africa's external debt was in the $170–210 billion range from 1995 to 2005, at which point the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative returned the high stock of debt to more sustainable levels by writing off unrepayable debt, albeit with sometimes extreme conditionality.[2] However, the IMF compelled Africa's lowest income countries to increase their rate of debt payment in the period immediately after the 2006 debt relief. Then came a slew of Chinese loans worth at minimum $86 billion from 2000-15; a third of these were collateralized by commodities.[3] By 2015 Sub Saharan African debt had reached nearly $400

1 The 2014-15 crash decimated not just Africans, but also many foreign investors in Africa. Platinum mining house Lonmin's London listing had peaked at a value of $28.6 billion in 2007 and then fell 99.4 percent to a near-bankruptcy level of $172 million in late 2015, before a fire-sale to a Johannesburg firm at the end of 2017 for $383. Anglo American's share value fell 93.6 percent from a 2008 peak to 2016 trough, and the world's largest commodity trader, Glencore, fell 86 percent from a 2011 high to its 2016 low (Bond 2017).
2 These include the forced rise in the debt repayments/GDP ratio for African low-income countries, confirming that while stocks of debt were indeed reduced, the *outflows* increased. Another odd example was Nigeria's enforced liquidation of $12 billion in foreign reserves so as to retire $30 billion in Paris Club loans (Bond 2006).
3 For details, see Brautigan 2016, although her figures are underestimates. They do not contain many billions of dollars worth of 2013-17 South African parastatal debt to the Chinese Development Bank, much of which has been questioned because it is tied to corrupt suppliers via the notorious Gupta family.

billion. Adding North Africa, the *Economist Intelligence Unit* (2017) counts $560 billion in foreign debt for the continent as a whole, up from $240 billion in 2006.

In addition to Beijing's credits, there were also numerous Eurobonds subscribed by private investors that represented a substantial share (percent) of the total public debt stock in some countries: Gabon (48), Namibia (32), Côte d'Ivoire (26), Zambia (24), Ghana (16), Senegal (15), and Rwanda (13). Africa's oil-based economies witnessed an increase in debt servicing from an average of 8 percent of revenues in 2013 to 57 percent in 2016, led by Nigeria (66 percent) and Angola (60 percent). The continent's most relatively indebted countries to foreign lenders are Mozambique (79 percent external debt to GDP ratio), Zimbabwe (77 percent), Mauritania (76 percent), Djibouti (71 percent), Namibia (64 percent), The Gambia (61 percent), Tunisia (56 percent) and South Africa (49 percent). Not including Mauritius – due to its complicated status as a tax haven – the highest level of African foreign debt is owed by South Africa: $163 billion in late 2017 (up from $25 billion in 1994) followed by Egypt ($80 billion), Sudan ($45 billion) and Angola ($45 billion). By 2014, the danger of such high foreign debt was already a source of concern to *The Economist* (2014):

> The continent has been deep in debt before, and is in danger of a rerun… This time is different – and could be worse. Africa used to borrow from official lenders: governments, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the IMF. Today most of its borrowing is from private sources. Government loans and "assistance" are out of fashion. Instead it is private investors that are betting on Africa's future ability to pay, with bond funds, private-equity and individual investors (including African ones) buying government debt… If governments get into trouble and need to reschedule their debts or borrow more even while they pay less, official lenders typically oblige. Private lenders are less forgiving.

Though more than 70 percent of Africa's foreign debt is privately sourced, one public lender – Beijing – may also be unforgiving, if the warnings of ideologically-conservative critics are to be taken seriously. From Texas, the private intelligence agency Stratfor (2018) issued a warning about Chinese financial geopolitics. Given that African state debt "has increased markedly since the 2008 financial crisis… widespread default could create opportunities for outside powers that covet the region's natural resources." As Stratfor notes,

> China has used a form of financing that functions like a bartering system: In return for investment capital and infrastructure development projects, some sub-Saharan African countries grant China resource concessions. (Such was the case with the Sicomines copper project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in various oil projects in Angola.) The arrangements differ. Sometimes Chinese entities take an ownership stake in the newly constructed infrastructure project. Sometimes loans are secured against resources as a form of collateral. Sometimes debt service is paid in resources instead of money.
>
> But just because a loan is backed with an asset – in this case, commodities – doesn't mean loans can't turn sour if the borrower struggles to extract or sell enough of its natural resource to service the debt. These terms can also leave the borrowing country with little left over from their commodity production to generate their own revenue. Angola and Congo have both encountered this problem.

> Africa is a minor player in geopolitics. Unfortunate as it may sound, its relevance stems from how stronger countries interact with it and manipulate it. So while its current indebtedness may not shape the course of international affairs directly, it may, in fact, benefit China. Defaulting on their debt would cause foreign investment to dry up. China's willingness to accept repayment in commodities would leave it as one of the few remaining options for countries struggling to build infrastructure. Beijing could, therefore, drive as hard a bargain as it wanted. China will continue to mine Africa for its resource needs. The only thing that will constrain its behavior in that regard is its own capital needs.

One key testing ground for whether this strategy will be useful for China is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), not only because of enthusiasm that a renewed construction boom similar to the 2009-13 urban and transport construction boom, will revive demand for raw materials. There is also the matter of rising debt levels in the recipient countries, such as Kenya where the Mombasa-Nairobi rail line financed and built by the Chinese has already added a crippling debt load. Likewise, the BRI is extremely unpopular with Indian elites, who view China's Kashmir rail, pipeline and road corridor through Pakistan on land Indians believe is theirs. Critiques of Chinese "creditor imperialism" made by Brahma Chellaney of the Delhi-based Center for Policy Research are hard hitting:

> Just as European imperial powers employed gunboat diplomacy, China is using sovereign debt to bend other states to its will… As [the bankrupt Sri Lankan port of] Hambantota shows, China is now establishing its own Hong Kong-style neo-colonial arrangements. Like the opium the British exported to China, the easy loans China offers are addictive. And, because China chooses its projects according to their long-term strategic value, they may yield short-term returns that are insufficient for countries to repay their debts… China can force borrowers to swap debt for equity, thereby expanding China's global footprint by trapping a growing number of countries in debt servitude… Kenya's crushing debt to China now threatens to turn its busy port of Mombasa – the gateway to East Africa – into another Hambantota. (Chandra 2017)

Like the 1980s when Western loans were the source of a debt crisis catalysed by a massive U.S. interest rate increase, this debt allows its holders to gain substantial power. But like the 1980s, social tensions will also rise, as discussed below. As Stratfor (2018) warns, "A debt crisis would have social implications that would make doing business extremely difficult, limiting the upside to China and decreasing the likelihood of other powers opting to compete with it." The implications of the worsening debt crisis – rising anti-austerity protest – are considered later. However, one vital point in the analysis must still be developed, for when economic justice campaigners such as Jubilee 2000 talked of illegitimate wealth outflows from Africa, it is often with a slogan, "*Who owes what to whom?!*"

AFRICA AS BOTH VICTIM AND FOSSIL-EXTRACTION VILLAIN IN THE CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

There is no better place to consider the narratives about natural capital flight than when the Adjusted Net Savings (ANS) technique is applied to climate change. But here, the moral responsibility that the North owes to climate change victims in the South – the so-called "climate debt" – is simply ignored by powerful institutions, including the World Bank in its

Changing Wealth of Nations 2018. Still schizophrenic, however, the Bank at least recognises another vast African financial liability: for damages caused by the weather and in turn by mainly Northern polluters. But in framing the merits of more rapid fossil fuel extraction mainly through the natural capital narrative, those involved in coal, petroleum and gas make Africa not just a victim but – at least partially – a villain.

The richer (higher-GHG-emitting) countries owe a climate debt to the vast majority of Africans who face worsening environmental devastation. This includes droughts, changing growing conditions (especially as soils dry), and more extreme storms and floods. The African people are, in this instance, especially badly represented by their elites. There are numerous ways to make this case (Bond 2018). But in *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018,* the Bank treats the question of rapidly-shrinking natural capital due to climate change with a similar flippancy to that revealed in Zambia's ANS. On the one hand, the Bank official responsible for the Gaborone Declaration, Kim Reuter (2017), shows how natural capital accounting assists in understanding the vast damages to Africa, as natural assets like soils which the majority of direct producers (who are women) depend upon, become less resilient:

> In the future, the need to measure, value, and account for nature will only become greater – this is particularly true for Africa. For example, while the continent has contributed little to the causes of climate change, it will be increasingly hard hit as the climate begins to impact the availability and quality of freshwater, the spread of disease, the integrity of coastal ecosystems and settlements, and agricultural productivity. As a result, it is expected that there will be a dramatic reduction in the productivity of crops, livestock, and fisheries; this could cost Africa as much as $50 billion a year.

On the other hand, when Lange et al (2018) discuss Africa's own substantial fossil fuel reserves, they advocate more rapid extraction. Global climate governance would ideally identify the necessity of preventing these reserves' exploitation, and instead paying the African people directly by way of compensation (as has been suggested based on pilot arguments in Ecuador, Namibia and South Africa) (Bond 2018). The vast majority of this particular form of natural capital – often termed "unburnable carbon" – should *never* be extracted. Indeed on the one hand, Lange et al (2018) first correctly observe,

> meeting the goal of keeping the rise in global ground temperature to less than 2° Celsius by 2050 requires leaving 80 percent of coal deposits, 50 percent of oil reserves, and 40 percent of gas reserves in the ground. In other words, most of the stock of commercially viable fossil fuels may have to remain in place, potentially wiping away a large portion of total wealth in carbon-rich nations. Most oil-rich nations hold more than 21 years of reserves at current rates of depletion, meaning they may see the value of these reserves fall, or these subsoil assets may even be stranded if extracting them is no longer economically viable.

Then on the other hand, Lange et al (2018) dismiss the prospect for rigorous global climate governance to prevent climate catastrophe:

> The concept of *stranded assets* resulting from climate change policies has received widespread attention from academics, nongovernmental organizations, and the media in recent years. However, the concept is often predicated on a hard carbon budget constraint imposed globally. At present, there is little evidence that this will occur. Furthermore, even if such a budget constraint were imposed, the effects on the valuation of private companies – which discount future profits at commercial rates and hold relatively few years' worth of booked reserves on their balance sheets – may be modest. Some argue that, even under a sharp decline in the value of fossil fuels, many firms face low operating costs for existing deposits, while higher-cost deposits become unprofitable (Lange et al 2018).

But without a hard carbon budget constraint, the earth faces climate catastrophe. One reason to anticipate the worst, Lange et al (2018) suggest, is that to avoid losing wealth, a "race" will ensue in which fossil fuel "producers speed up extraction while prices decline." Although they do advocate diversification away from fossil fuels, Lange et al (2018) even endorse this self-destructive logic of competition: "To realize the benefits of this wealth, carbon-rich nations should follow three steps. First, countries should maximize the revenues from fossil fuels through efficient extraction… "

This scenario reflects a profound desperation – an intensified metabolism of extraction – by carbon-rich countries, especially those in Africa which suffer systemic resource depletion by TNCs without requisite reinvestment. The elites in the most resource-cursed African countries abused the natural wealth, Lange et al (2018) admit. Yet, in the interests of economic growth, they argue that petroleum, gas and coal extraction should continue, in large part because global policy-makers will never become serious about penalizing carbon-intensive economies. Local elites in countries with large reserves, Lange et al (2018) agree,

> have failed to use their fossil fuel wealth sustainably over the long term. Few carbon-rich countries have successfully followed the Hartwick rule by converting their carbon wealth into produced and human capital.
>
> The problem for policy makers is that a decline in fossil fuel demand is not at all certain. A permanent drop in fossil fuel prices could be many decades away. Fossil fuels could continue to be sold by countries for many more years. For many developing countries, the rents and economic possibilities from fossil fuel extraction may continue to play a critical role in meeting development objectives, including domestic financing for the Sustainable Development Goals.
>
> However, the longer the consumption of fossil fuels continues, the more likely many of these countries will face severe negative effects of a changing climate (Lange et al 2018).

Even in the face of "severe negative effects" such as $50 billion annual losses to Africa's wealth (not to mention the priceless loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives annually), the Bank's refusal to fully acknowledge the catastrophic threat of climate change does have a certain rationale. There are four deep problems anyone working within multilateral climate policy must admit. First, the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 negated effective global climate governance by not requiring permanently-binding emissions cuts – including in the unmentionable military, maritime and air-travel sectors – of a sufficient depth to ensure average temperature increases by 2100 stay below 1.5 degrees. Second, the agreement fails to offer any penalties against the deal's saboteurs (e.g. Donald Trump, which could have been accomplished through a global carbon tax on all tradeable US goods and services). Third, the deal allowed a *de facto* default on the climate debt that the Global North owes the Global South, by invoking a no-liability clause (the Green Climate Fund is no substitute in part because of failure to pay even a small fraction of the $100 billion anticipated by 2020). Finally, the Paris deal ignores the need to leave fossil fuels underground.

Another aspect of world elites' failure to address climate change is ongoing mega-project construction aimed at fossil fuel extraction, petroleum refining and transport in Africa. Some of this follows China's BRI mega-infrastructure projects, touted for restoring some market demand for construction-related commodities. As Xin Zhang (2016) explained, "Although there is an element of US-China competition for global hegemony behind the BRI, the main driving force is the pressure from 'over-accumulation' in a typical capitalist economy when it approaches the end of a major cycle of capitalist cyclical change."

In Africa these mega-projects include "Maritime Silk Road" investments such as a (delayed) $11 billion port at Bagamoyo, Tanzania which may one day be Africa's largest. To the north, in Kenya, the $5 billion Lamu port may eventually provide oil pipelines stretching to South Sudan and as far as Uganda. But there is rising protest by three groups – Save Lamu, Cordio East Africa and Muslims for Human Rights – against the proposed $2 billion coal fired power plant at the same port, on grounds of climate change. The local movement is backed by 350.org's deCOALanize Africa campaign (*Business Daily Africa* 2017).[4] A $3.6 billion Uganda-Tanzania oil pipeline and drilling in the vicinity of Lake Albert has also attracted protest from militant civil society organisations including the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (Gaia Foundation 2014). The controversial, fossil-centric mega-projects follow a series of mishaps by Chinese power plant firms in Botswana, Zambia and Angola (*Wall Street Journal* 2014), as well as the cancellation of a massive aluminium plant by BHP Billiton next to China's proposed $100 billion Inga Hydropower Project on the Congo River. (Were it to be built, such a dam would also contribute to climate change through rotting tropical riverine plants, generating methane.) Beijing's efforts to raise funds for Inga alongside U.S. and South African financiers and energy firms have so far failed.

Chinese financing and equipment supply are also evident at South Africa's two main ports: the massive coal export terminals at Richards Bay – with current capacity of 90 million tonnes to be upgraded to 120 million in coming years – and Durban. At the former, in addition to hosting a proposed Chinese ship repair yard, a major new rail line is proposed in order to extract 18 billion tonnes of South African coal (followed by tens of billions more from Botswana) on 3-kilometer long trains. This is the country's first-priority Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) project in the National Development Plan co-authored by the new President, Cyril Ramaphosa. The anticipated cost is $70 billion, an expense which seemed feasible when coal was $170/tonne in 2011. By 2018 it had slipped to half that price in dollar terms (although the local currency also crashed in half). Project

4 The 350.org and related divestment networks have begun to make inroads into Western stock markets for their laudable campaigning, but sites like the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and other securities markets in the BRICS are fair game.

work has continued albeit more slowly than expected. The South African company Shanduka Coal that Ramaphosa founded in 2001 (but that is now partially Chinese owned) will be one of the main beneficiaries (along with Glencore, BHP Billiton, AngloCoal, Exxaro and Sasol). In the second PICC mega-project, Durban will host a doubling of oil refining and transport capacity and an oft-delayed $20 billion expansion of what is now the continent's largest container port, with 2.5 million per annum. The original plan to raise this throughput to 20 million per annum by 2040 was postponed 16 years (Bond 2016a).

Notwithstanding all the reversals so far, mega-project infrastructure now being built mainly by China and potentially subsidized by the G20's Compact With Africa – a programme developed by the German finance ministry for the benefit of TNCs from both the West and BRICS – will increasingly be oriented to the extraction or transmission of oil, gas and coal (Bundesministerium der Finanzen 2017). But all non-renewable mineral resources will potentially be more readily extracted through the African Union's donor-supported Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. One countervailing strategy is to reform the extractive industries, including fossil-intensive sectors, top-down; another is to block them, bottom-up. To move from the former (ineffectual) approach to the latter with confidence and social solidarity, may require a more complete oppositional narrative, one that incorporates natural capital accounting.

AFRICANS ASSESS UNEQUAL ECOLOGICAL EXCHANGE – WITH INCOMPLETE NARRATIVES

The approaches that Africans are using to challenge TNCs capture of Africa's non-renewable wealth can roughly be divided into two: top-down through reforms mainly arranged at the multilateral and national scales, and bottom-up through community-based direct actions which block extraction.[5] First, the most far-reaching top-down reform proposals were, in the spirit of *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018,* based on measuring and then incorporating natural capital accounting into national plans, as mandated in the Gaborone Declaration. However, since 2012, Gaborone gained little of the traction expected within national accounting and corporate planning processes. As a result, the main reform approach has been to challenge what many reformers ultimately see as the primary reason for the Resource Curse: the corruption of Africa's rulers by TNCs.

This narrative took on greater urgency in 1999, when a Global Witness (1999) report unveiled Angolan oil revenue leakage, thus providing an opportunity to raise concerns about Western oil company bribery of the ruling Dos Santos regime. Several other major international NGOs soon began to more actively tackle high levels of corruption associated with resource extraction, including Human Rights Watch, Oxfam and the Open Society network's Revenue Watch Institute. One major sponsor, liberal financier George Soros, then assisted in the establishment of a global "Publish What You Pay" (PWYP) network of NGOs. Soros' theory is that transparency shines a spotlight on TNC activity sufficiently strong so as to disinfect the corruption. For that to happen, strong civil society and journalistic watchdogging of resource flows is critical. The PWYP NGOs typically research outflows of

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5 This article does not address Corporate Social Responsibility within the extractive industry. To illustrate its foibles, recall that the World Bank considered Lonmin's Marikana operation the poster-child example just before the massacre. For a full critique of this strategy based on lessons from Marikana, see Bond 2014.

capital due to illicit accounting strategies, and then lobby their respective governments to address the outflows.

To legitimize this strategy, reformist ideas were promoted at the highest levels of the economics profession. Joe Stiglitz's 2001 Nobel Economics award brought to the world's attention the importance of reducing "information asymmetries" and ending opacity. Further intellectual credibility for pro-transparency interventions in resource extraction and finance followed books by Terry Lynn Karl (1997) and Ian Bannon and Paul Collier (2003). But their diagnoses were limited, shying away from the deep-seated critique of value transfers that followed path-breaking work on "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" by Walter Rodney (1974), or "unequal development" by Senegal-based scholar Samir Amin (1976), or unequal ecological exchange (*Hornborg and Martinez-Alier* 2016).

Revealingly, however, economists generally eschewed the new natural capital accounting data. For example, even when economists James Robinson, Ragnar Torvik, Thierry Verdier (2006, 447) included the idea of 'over-extraction' in their analysis, it was set within what they presumed to be four *localized* political-institutional causes of the Resource Curse (with no mention of TNCs accumulation in their diagnosis):

1. politicians tend to over-extract natural resources relative to the efficient extraction path because they discount the future too much;
2. resource booms improve the efficiency of the extraction path;
3. resource booms, by raising the value of being in power and by providing politicians with more resources which they can use to influence the outcome of elections, increase resource misallocation in the rest of the economy; and
4. the overall impact of resource booms on the economy depends critically on institutions since these determine the extent to which political incentives map into policy outcomes.

In another version of blaming Africans, Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey Sachs and Stiglitz (2007) cited purely institutional causes of the Resource Curse: asymmetric bargaining power, limited access to information, failure to engage in long-term planning, weak institutional structures and missing mechanisms of accountability. Hence their prescriptions were limited: recommendations for contracting with oil companies and allocating revenue, guidelines for negotiators, models for optimal auctions, and strategies to strengthen state-society linkages and public accountability.

In practice, the liberal commitment to transparency provided very few if any benefits to Africa, even as the value of commodities extracted soared during the super-cycle price explosion. The main concrete strategy deserves mention: a 2003 effort by the Third Way regime of Tony Blair known as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Using the British government's overseas aid muscle, Blair attracted initial collaboration in the EITI from Azerbaijan, Ghana, the Kyrgyz Republic, Peru, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Sao Tome e Principe, Timor Leste, and Trinidad and Tobago. The G8, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the Norwegian social democratic government followed up with $60 million in financial encouragement and technical assistance, while on the civil society side Soros built PWYP into a formidable network of talented middle-class NGO campaigners.

But from this effort, it was relatively rare for meaningful legislation or even sustained consciousness to result, even after 2009 when the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) gathered both rich and poor countries into a "Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes." Ultimately nearly 150 countries joined the OECD forum, but reformers generally failed to turn research and policy recommendations into action, even after hacked revelations about Illicit Financial Flows created embarrassment in many countries. Emails and documents were liberated by anonymous whistle-blowers from HSBC bank in 2015 and from two law firms whose accounts became known as the Panama Papers in 2016 and Paradise Papers in 2017.

The one place, ironically, where legislation appeared to make progress was the U.S. Already, prosecutors were using the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a by-product of the Watergate scandal and subsequent mid-1970s flurry of idealism. Moreover, after the 2001 Islamic extremist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, U.S. investigators more actively probed foreign bank accounts and imposed sanctions against institutions assisting in terrorist financing. And following the 2008 U.S.-catalysed world banking meltdown, Wall Street financiers suddenly found themselves weaker, as the U.S. Congress passed the 2010 Dodd-Frank legislation to slightly reregulate banking. Dodd-Frank included clauses aimed at increasing transparency of payments by oil, gas and mining companies to governments wherever they operate. And in 2011, Barack Obama's government even formally joined EITI.

However, these limited reform victories never translated into a reversal of the extreme natural capital-driven outflows identified in Africa, or even an obvious slow-down in Illicit Financial Flows by the same TNCs extracting profits through various tax dodges, such as 'misinvoicing' which entails recording imports, exports, revenues, costs and payments inaccurately usually so as to take advantage of divergent tax codes in different locations (Kar and Spanjers 2015). Africa's Illicit Financial Flows of more than $50 billion annually – as highlighted in research especially by the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa and by Leonce Ndikumana (2015) – became the subject of the African Union's 2012-15 Mbeki Commission (2015). Financial outflows were soon targeted up by the Ford-related philanthropy, TrustAfrica, alongside Third World Network Africa, the African Network on Debt and Development, the International Trade Union Council-Africa, Femnet and other campaigners under the rubric "Stop the Bleeding."

There often seems in this kind of reform agenda, no matter how talented the civil society activists, a fashionability that too quickly fades under duress. One example of the flimsiness of these reforms was the U.S. government's unilateral withdrawal from EITI in 2017, at the same time Congress began gutting Dodd-Frank of measures that annoyed powerful TNCs. The sponsors of the law's resource-transparency provision, former Senate Foreign Relations chair Richard Lugar and a lead Democrat, Ben Cardin, were furious that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made excuses (e.g. a biased read of corporate privacy laws) amounting to

> a front meant to mask Big Oil and Gas' money and influence, the real reason fueling this sad day in the movement toward greater global sunlight and transparency in extractive industries… U.S. participation was both bipartisan and welcomed by private industry and civil society. It demonstrates that Americans 'walk the talk' of good governance. What

> will those countries, or countries planning to join say now at this American retreat from transparency and accountability? (Lugar and Cardin 2017)

Meanwhile in Africa, a similar reform process – albeit much weaker – was aimed at strengthening domestic regulation of mining. The African Union and UN Economic Commission on Africa (2009) developed an African Mining Vision (AMV) in 2008-09, near the peak of the cycle. Symbolic of its assimilation into world capitalism, the AMV proclaimed, "arguably the most important vehicle for building local capital are the foreign resource investors – TNCs – who have the requisite capital, skills and expertise." Without any reference to natural resource depletion and natural capital accounting, the AMV considered several aspects of the Resource Curse problem: resource rents, collateral use of resource infrastructure, downstream value addition, upstream value addition and technology/product development.[6]

The South African branch of ActionAid (2017) opposed the reformist logic in a 2017 report, *The AMV: Are we repackaging a colonial paradigm?:* "By ramping up models of maximum extraction, the AMV once again stands in direct opposition to our own priorities to ensure resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice. It is downright opposed to any type of Free Prior and Informed Consent. And it does not address the structural causes of structural violence experienced by women, girls and affected communities." Moreover, one of the most crucial reforms won within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in 2008. As ActionAid (2017) complained, "The AMV recognizes the need for broader participation but it is specifically unclear and downright opposed to any type of FPIC. This concept of consent does not feature in the AMV at all and thus runs directly contrary to our own stated priorities."

In contrast to top-down reformism, local opposition aimed at blocking mining and petroleum extraction could become far more effective. As noted, Anglo American's CEO was concerned about the "$25 billion worth of projects tied up or stopped" in 2015 (Kayakiran and van Vuuren 2015). According to the Johannesburg faith-based mining watchdog Bench Marks Foundation (2018) at civil society's 2018 Alternative Mining Indaba, "Intractable conflicts of interest prevail with ongoing interruptions to mining operations. Resistance to mining operations is steadily on the increase along with the associated conflict." In this context, the Alternative Mining Indaba typically faced a difficult choice: either embrace this

6 The AMV solutions were seven mild-mannered reforms set within the context of extractivism:
1) Equitable share of the resource rents;
2) Flexible fiscal regime which is sensitive to price movements and stimulates national development;
3) Third-party access to the resource infrastructure (particularly transport, energy and water) at non-discriminatory tariffs;
4) The development of the local resource supplier/inputs sector where feasible (particularly capital goods, services & consumables), through the use of flexible local content milestones;
5) The establishment of resource processing industries through the use of flexible value-addition (beneficiation) milestones & incentives and the upfront stipulation of competitive pricing of resource outputs/products in the domestic market, for the life of the project;
6) The development of local requisite human resources and technological capacity through stipulated investments in training and R&D, preferably in partnership with the state (joint or matching funding); and
7) Provisions that safeguard transparency and good governance as well as enforce internationally acceptable safety and health standards, environmental and material stewardship, corporate social responsibility, and preferential recruitment of local staff.

resistance, or retreat into reformist NGO silos, promoting transparency and the AMV even though these were obviously failing. By choosing the reform option, the Indaba participations generally were compelled to ignore mining's adverse impact on energy security, climate and resource depletion (Bond 2015, Maguwu and Terreblanche 2016).

Figure 9: African riots, protests and state violence against civilians

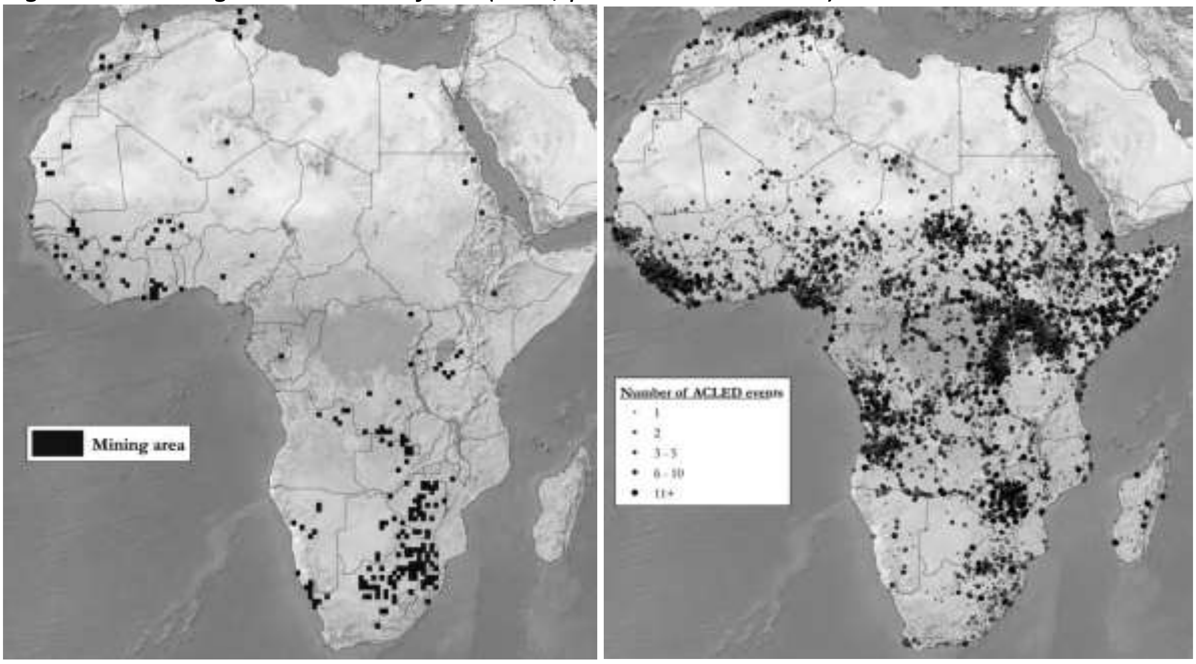
Source: ACLED 2018

Another quandary was that the fast-rising African protest wave after 2011 was limited to specific sites of struggle, rather than forming an interconnected 'contagion' of dissent (Figure 9).[7] There were very few attempts to draw out commonalities, either conceptually or

7 For more on these protests, see Brandes and Engels 2011, Ekine 2011, Ekine and Manji 2012, Dwyer and Zeilig 2012, Biney 2013, Mampilly 2013, Branch and Mampilly 2015.

in linking organizations engaged in protest. Important exceptions include Nigeria's Environmental Rights Action (hosting Oilwatch Africa) and the Health of Mother Earth Foundation; Ghana's institutes and advocacy projects around Third World Network; in Mozambique, *Justiça Ambiental including* Friends of the Earth International's climate unit; and in Africa's most prolific site of profit-taking from extractive industries, South Africa, the three major cities (Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban) host impressive civil and uncivil (protest-oriented) society groups fighting the same companies that are also under pressure elsewhere on the continent.[8]

Figure 10. Mining areas and conflicts (riots, protests and battles)



Source: Berman et al 2017 based on the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset.

Whether or not organic community protests became linked or were mediated through NGOs, they continued increasing across Africa after 2011, not just in cities but also rural sites of extraction (Figure 9). According to the most rigorous of at least five continent-wide on-line databases monitoring social unrest, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED), so-called "riots and protests" in Africa ratcheted up in number over the past decade.[9]

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8 At the time of writing these include a People's Permanent Tribunal on Transnational Corporations in Southern Africa at the Alternative Information and Development Center, a site which also hosts the Million Climate Jobs research and organizing project for alternatives to fossil fuel extraction (AIDC 2017); the Mining Affected Communities United in Action (supported by ActionAid SA, with major struggles underway against various mines at any given moment); several anti-extraction NGOs and lawyers organizations, including groundWork, Earthlife Africa, the Center for Environmental Rights, Legal Resources Center and Lawyers for Human Rights; long-lasting community-based organizations including the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance and Frack Free South Africa; and the Women in Mining network offering a continent-wide radical eco-feminist perspective (Womin 2018).

9 Other databases – the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Geo-referenced Events Dataset (UCDP GED), the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD), and the *Global Database* of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) – suggest similar trends, while the final one of the five – the African Development Bank's *African Economic Outlook (AEO*) chapter on governance – ceased publication in January 2018. It should be noted that ACLED is funded by the U.S. Pentagon's Minerva program, indicating a strong interest in these movements by a regime

As one example of linkage between resource extraction and conflict, researchers using the ACLED database considered 1997-2010 incidents associated with mining conflict. Berman et al (2017, 1564) identify how "riots and protests" can become more serious "battles" that involve warlords and rebel groups (Figure 10):

> mining activity does not only increase the scope for localized protests and riots, but it also systematically fuels larger-scale battles… gaining the territorial control of a mining area leads rebel groups to intensify and spread their fighting activity elsewhere in the territory in the successive periods… mines spread conflict across space and time by making rebellions financially feasible. More precisely we first show that spikes in the price of minerals extracted in the ethnic homeland of a rebel group tend to diffuse its fighting operations spatially outside its homeland… the *commodities super-cycle* (i.e., the steep increase in mineral prices during the 2000s) accounts for 14 percent to 24 percent of the average violence observed in African countries over 1997–2010.

But making such explicit linkages between extraction and resistance is rare even in research. In these instances, the rebel warlords' objectives in taking control of mining – for financial benefit (there are few if any ideological struggles akin to those of the 1990s when right-wing rebels like UNITA took Angolan diamond sites for political purposes) – contrast sharply with dissent which is often aimed at *preventing* mining. In yet other cases there are religious-extremist "terrorist" activities financed by resource extraction (which are not considered in this analysis). Again the difference between a top-down reformist and bottom-up resistance perspective is obvious. As Berman et al (2017, 1601) conclude,

> It is likely that mineral extraction relaxes the financing constraints of rebels, because armed groups can sell minerals illicitly on the black market through the benefit of tacit or active support in various areas of society. Our empirical results suggest that one way for domestic governments to dampen rebellion feasibility effects would be to put in place more stringent anti-corruption policies, and to support transparency/traceability initiatives in the mining industry.

The main dilemma here is not that resistance to systematic plundering generates warlordism, although that danger exists in some parts of Africa. It is that the protests are too often focused on the most immediate socio-economic and environmental injustices and do not address the larger levels of political power in society. One example of how such linkages can be made is through expressing opposition to fossil fuels, in ways that are also clearly aimed at slowing climate change. The 'Blockadia' mapping within the Environmental Justice Atlas (EJAtlas.org) (Figure 11) is an example of preliminary analysis with that aim, beginning with a Nigerian site of struggle:

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increasingly exposed on the African continent (Turse 2017). Finally, there is a potential bias in ACLED's figures insofar as the methodology changed in 2012, at which point they gathered more protest information based on active coding. However in my view, the sharp jump of protests observed in 2011 corresponds to not only the explosive North African upsurge of social anger. The 2011 protest spike in Fig. 9 also corresponds to *AEO* data which are drawn from Reuters and Agence France Press reports.

> On every continent there is an increasing frequency and intensity of resistance movements against fossil fuel projects. These interwoven spaces of resistance are Blockadia. Originating from movements such as the Ogoni People against Shell in the Niger Delta since the 1990s and the Yasuni initiative in Ecuador to leave the oil in the soil, local people and activists are demanding we keep fossil fuels in the ground. Today there are diverse and widespread resistances such as the Ende Gelände mass civil disobedience in Germany; the indigenous-led Standing Rock camp against the Dakota Access Pipeline; the movement in Kenya to "deCOALonize"; and, amongst many others, the campaigns #BreakFree and #SaveTheArctic. Naomi Klein popularized the term Blockadia in the book *This Changes Everything* describing the "roving transnational conflict zone [...] where 'regular' people are stepping in where our leaders are failing" along the whole fossil fuel chain, from extraction to transportation to combustion. These struggles are not only against the local impacts of such projects, but also against their impacts on the climate. (EJAtlas 2018)

For the EJAtlas (2018) mappers,

> By bringing together inspiring case studies, the diversity of the movements can be celebrated whilst the connectivity between them can be strengthened and the real 'glocal' threats of fossil fuel extractivism can be better understood. The local causes of resistance vary case by case, but many include the violation of human rights, contamination of water, land dispossession, loss of livelihoods, poor working conditions, biodiversity loss, cultural loss, severe health impacts and inadequate compensation. The Blockadia Map serves as a tool for activists to unite their struggles and build a stronger movement against the multitude of injustices presented by fossil fuel projects. When we come together in acts of defiance, our struggles become part of a bigger movement. Just as these resistances are real spaces where people and causes are connected, the Blockadia Map is a space for movement-building and international solidarity.

However, whether in the cases of top-down reformism or bottom-up resistance, only partial narratives are involved in addressing extractivist projects and policies. As noted at the outset of this paper, narratives opposed to the Resource Curse usually include local-ecological, climate change, labour safety and health, spiritual and traditional, socio-psychological, political and geopolitical, mal-developmental and financial arguments. And as noted, the latter includes rising concerns about Illicit Financial Flows to offshore sites with little reinvestment. But as for objecting to the depletion of natural capital wealth without sufficient returns, i.e., an ecological-economic argument, this opportunity to justify non-extraction has only been utilized rarely. What, finally, is the scope for a deeper engagement with natural capital accounts such as the World Bank's *Changing Wealth of Nations*?

CONCLUSION: NATURAL CAPITAL AND RESISTANCE TO UNEQUAL ECOLOGICAL EXCHANGE

The answer, in conclusion, comes from both activists and intellectuals. The former have driven public policy in all spheres of life, and anti-extractivism is one of the most powerful recent trends. While few activists have publicly grappled with the enormity of the continental resource depletion problem – i.e. the conservatively-estimated \$100 billion drawn down from Sub-Saharan Africa's natural wealth (not including the platinum and diamond sectors) – at least at the local level, their anti-extractivism is enhanced by showing how economic degeneration results from the net decline in natural capital.

To illustrate, in eastern Zimbabwe's Marange diamond fields, bottom-up resistance has generated not only courageous protests, but also arguments against extraction that deploy natural capital accounting. According to Marange's main civil society watchdog, Farai Maguwu (2017) of the Center for Natural Resource Governance, "mining is a disaster unfolding across Zimbabwe. Mining is creating an enclave economy full of white-collar criminals, who make virtually no positive linkages to the broader Zimbabwean economy. They simply deplete our natural capital and provide an inconsequential return." Even a generally pro-extraction reform organization, the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, argued that "Diamond revenue represents natural capital depletion and, therefore, its expenditure should be judicious" (Sibanda and Makure 2014). In reality, natural capital depletion in Marange appears to have taken place in a manner as injudicious as anywhere on earth.[10]

Following the logic of natural capital's depletion, *Financial Times* writer Tom Burgis (2015), told CNN in 2018,

> There is a troubling possibility that it's not possible to put natural resources in these countries to work for the common good."… He suggests another option is to keep resources in the country and implement high tariffs to protect domestic industries, but African leaders have been reluctant to adopt such measures. "We have a world trading architecture with strict rules on imposing tariffs," says Burgis. "African countries have adopted the market orthodoxy that led them to pare down states and embrace global economic competition – in which they are overwhelmingly the losers." (Monk 2018)

In Western solidarity circuits, there are well-established routes to punish firms and multilateral institutions for their roles in oppressing Africans, the most successful of which

10 Robert Mugabe admitted in 2016 – after his 36 years in power facilitated the emergence of a massive neo-patrimonial system – "We have not received much from the diamond industry at all. I don't think we have exceeded $2 billion, yet we think more than *$15* billion has been earned… Lots of smuggling and swindling has taken place and the companies that have been mining, I want to say, robbed us of our wealth" (Magaisa 2016). During Mugabe's overthrow in a relatively peaceful coup by Emmerson Mnangagwa in November 2017, poster-board signs appearing in the supportive crowds of tens of thousands in Harare carried the message, "Police arrest the $15 billion thieves." Mnangagwa was Defence Minister when the army signed diamond joint venture deals, especially with Sino Zimbabwe Development, Anjin Investments, the Hong Kong firm Queensway owned by the mercurial billionaire Sam Pa (Burgis 2015), and other firms which were responsible for the extraction. Mugabe's former spokesperson claimed that the $15 billion figure was 'metaphorical,' but opposition parties "repeatedly called for Mnangagwa to launch an investigation into the missing money, calling for an audit into the country's diamond and mineral revenue" (*Business Report* 2017). Some of the same firms attempted to re-enter the Marange diamond fields after Mugabe's removal in late 2017. In January 2018, Mugabe – living as a quiet retiree after the coup – was requested to testify about the depleted diamond fields by his own ruling party's chairperson of Parliament's Mines and Energy Portfolio Committee, but refused. Mnangagwa offered a February 2018 amnesty for rich Zimbabweans to return illicit outflows to the country. But this appeared a futile, hypocritical gesture, at a time the cash shortage was so severe that banks only allowed daily withdrawals of $5 (the U.S. dollar has been Zimbabwe's official currency since 2009). The point of this reckoning, is not merely that billions of dollars of diamond revenues remained unaccounted for, but that the natural capital is now gone forever.

was to pull medicines out of the WTO in 2001. Another was the Jubilee debt relief movement, which was important in raising consciousness in the late 1990s and early 2000s about the urgency of cancelling unrepayable loans (even if the campaign was not successful) (Bond 2003). Solidarity movements with anti-apartheid and anti-colonial struggles also revive warm memories of North-South collaborations, to the benefit of ordinary Africans (Bond 2003).

What is also needed, now, is a more rigorous narrative specifying the ecological debt the North owes the South. Perhaps this will get underway in a parallel discussion about the climate debt owed Africa and other hard-hit sites (GermanWatch 2009, Klein 2014), an idea that was sufficiently threatening that U.S. State Department officials banned its discussion in the UN climate negotiations. What is also needed is much more advanced South-South solidarity, so the likes of Marange diamond dealer Sam Pa (who was apparently jailed in Shanghai in 2015) can be contested when Zimbabwe's billions of dollars' worth of diamonds simply disappear.

These are sites where activists are calculating natural capital, first to prevent extraction (in Maguwu's case), and second so as to strengthen the demand that ecological debt be paid to its victims, also as a disincentive to polluters to continue the environmental damage. But it is here that the intellectual conclusions also require being subjected to critical scrutiny. And so when it comes to framing arguments for maximum political-ecological solidarity, it may be helpful to consider four compelling mandates offered by some of the world's finest radical thinkers.

First, as Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein (1989) pointed out in their book *Anti-Systemic Movements*:

> The more that popular struggles focus in each national setting on whatever regime is in office, and so become focused on who speaks in the name of that national people as a whole, the more will such struggles weaken the workings of the world-scale class-forming process and strengthen the interstate system. The more, on the other hand, the popular movements join forces across borders (and continents) to have their respective state officials abrogate those relations of the interstate system through which the pressure is conveyed, the less likely they are to weaken, and the more likely they are to strengthen, the pivotal class-forming process of the world-economy.

The strengthening of a continental and international "class-forming" political-ecological resistance to world capitalism obviously requires, above all, more effective resistance against TNCs. When TNCs are repeatedly encouraged to view the African continent as a site for extreme extraction, it becomes vital to "abrogate those relations of the interstate system through which the pressure is conveyed." Institutionally, such relations are diverse, but in terms of the most adverse political-ecological impact, they include the Bretton Woods Institutions – especially after innovations at the World Bank and in the World Trade Organization (WTO) which give TNCs greater investor protection at the cost of environments and societies – and other financial and trade regimes of a multi-lateral and bi-lateral nature. For even the BRICS have developed oppressive bilateral investment treaties in Africa (Garcia 2016).

Countervailing power is sometimes conceptualized at sites where popular struggles join forces across borders, at alternative counter-summits, e.g. the World Social Forum, the Alternative Mining Indaba, the People's Economic Forum (against the World Economic Forum-Africa), the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (against the Southern African Development Community) and BRICS-from-below events. These are just some of the instances in which strategic work is done to contest several of capital's interstate relations that draw in far too many African officials as enthusiastic compradors. In some cases, the pressure from popular struggles compels African elites to make major breaks with the interstate system.

Examples include the WTO summits in Seattle and Cancun (whose failures were due to Africans denying consent), and in the most important case, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) of South Africa mobilized activists from the continent and the world to insist on the decommodification of AIDS medicines within the 2001 Doha WTO summit. This activism removed essential medicines from the tyranny of the WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property System, and applies not only to AIDS but also to subsequent pandemics including the Zika virus and Ebola. Since that breakthrough, the resulting supply of medicines – in part through a major United Nations fund that purchases generic not branded versions of the AIDS drugs – has raised life expectancy by at least a dozen years in most of the African countries hardest hit by AIDS (Bond 2014).

These are terrains upon which some well-networked international activists make phenomenal breakthroughs, e.g. in fighting intellectual property rights in the case of AIDS medicines. But they are not fully successful until they contest the realm of ideas, for there, too, we might seek further ways of abrogating interstate pressures. So as a second set of mandates that relate to both activists and intellectuals, recall that in books by leading anti-corporate intellectuals – such as Samir Amin's (1990) *Delinking,* Susan George's (2004) *Another World is Possible – If,* Walden Bello's (2012) *Deglobalization* and Vandana Shiva's (2016) *Earth Democracy* – the objective of localisation and meeting social and environmental needs follows closely the Daly (1996) suggestion to "move away from the ideology of global economic integration by free trade, free capital mobility, and export-led growth ." Daly recovered that from Keynes (1933), who in a similar period of irresponsible corporate over-reach and over-accumulation crisis, argued for a strategic delinking of productive capacities from the world market, "whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible."

These narratives should also include natural capital accounting, for when such an exercise shows net loss of national wealth, as in nearly all of Africa, this helps make the case against extreme extractivism. In a third powerful mandate from a leading radical thinker, David Harvey (1996, 401) proposes that environmental justice movements engage with those ecological modernization proponents who currently dominate the emerging field of natural capital accounting:

> Such a movement will have no option, as it broadens out from its militant particularist base, but to reclaim for itself a non-coopted and non-perverted version of the theses of ecological modernization. On the one hand that means subsuming the highly geographically differentiated desire for cultural autonomy and dispersion, for the proliferation of tradition and difference within a more global politics, but on the other

> hand making the quest for environmental and social justice central rather than peripheral concerns. For that to happen, the environmental justice movement has to radicalize the ecological modernization discourse.

A core process within that radicalization, Harvey (2014, 168) argues, is articulating how unequal ecological exchange generates not just exploitation but also resistance: “Capital’s ecosystem is riddled with inequalities and uneven geographical developments precisely because of the uneven pattern of these transfers. Benefits pile up in one part of the world at the expense of another. Transfers of ecological benefits from one part of the world to another underpin geopolitical tensions.”

As should be evident, the geopolitical tensions we have reviewed in various parts of Africa in the pages above cannot be resolved from the top down, especially not through transparency-oriented reforms (though these can sometimes be useful in clarifying oppositional power). Instead, more active strategic and intellectual linkages and a more explicit ideology are required. However, before any such ideology – ultimately eco-socialism – might take hold, it would need testing at the site of struggle.[11]

Yet as noted above, many excellent political ecologists – e.g. *Büscher,* Bassey and Sullivan – are still hesitant to engage in the challenge Harvey (1996) sets out, namely to confront the internal contradictions within ecological modernization that natural capital accounting brings to the surface in Africa (e.g. Lange et al 2018). As a fourth mandate from a leading critical analyst, Alberto Acosta (2013) had many disputes with both Western/BRICS extractivism and Latin America’s “Pink Tide” neo-extractivism. The visionary Ecuadoran political ecologist has summed up what is probably the most appropriate framing:

> Economic objectives must be subordinate to the laws that determine how natural systems operate, without losing sight of respect for human dignity and the need to improve the quality of life of people and communities. This makes it obligatory to maintain (avoid destroying) those territories that possess a wealth of environmental and social values, where the highest levels of biodiversity are concentrated: the Yasuní-ITT Initiative in Ecuador is a global example.
>
> It also leads to establishing the concept of strong sustainability (economic capital must not wholly replace “natural capital”), as a new paradigm for how to organize society. And it also implies replacing conventional macroeconomic calculations with new indicators and indices of sustainability. Likewise, it requires widespread and genuine social participation to confront the challenge of large-scale extractivism.

One way to do so, now deserving much more attention, is a more explicit intellectual confrontation with those engaged in the depletion of resources, so that the very phrase “natural capital” can be eventually eradicated from what must become a new vocabulary for a new way of organizing life: eco-socialism. That new vocabulary would, dialectically,

11 Elsewhere, the natural capital narrative has emerged slowly in anti-extractivist analysis. Hilary Bambrick (2017) writes of how “Extractivism of local resources in small islands in Oceania has contributed to environmental degradation locally through pollution and loss of natural capital… Extractivism depletes natural resources and causes environmental degradation, leaving those exposed increasingly dependent on external income…”

emerge from growing opportunities to set the contradictory narratives in conflict, i.e. when, to follow Harvey, "the environmental justice movement radicalizes the ecological modernization discourse." It would perhaps only then be clear that instead of simply anti-extractivism motivating those activists defending against resource grabs, a more durable ideology of eco-socialist planning would reveal its usefulness.[12]

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12 The case for building eco-socialism in the most opportune African setting, South Africa, is made in Bond 2016b. However, the crucial missing link is a more actively red-green labor movement, and while there have been extremely impressive rhetorical statements by the likes of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa in recent years, when put to the test in potential closure of coal-burning power plants and supplier mines in 2018, the statements proved far weaker than the necessity its leaders felt to save jobs. Thus in the concept's early stages, eco-socialism has been limited to the realm of utopistic vision.

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East-West/North-South – or imperial-subimperial?
The BRICS, global governance and capital accumulation
Human Geography, 2018

Abstract
Two leading critics of imperialism – John Smith and David Harvey – have engaged in a bitter dispute over how to interpret geographically-shifting processes of super-exploitation and power. Missing, though, is consideration of 'subimperialism,' a category drawn from Ruy Mauro Marini's 1960s-70s dependency theory, with its focus on Brazil's relationship with the West: a fusion of imperial and semi-peripheral agendas of power and accumulation with internal processes of super-exploitation. The risk is that by splitting hairs on geographically-generalized categories, Smith and Harvey obscure crucial features of their joint wrath, which is the unjust accumulation processes and geopolitics that enrich the wealthy and despoil the world environment. The concept of subimperialism can resolve some of the Smith-Harvey disputes, but only if read through Marini and Harvey in a more generous way than does Smith. One of the best examples of the phenomenon is the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc, which for a decade from 2009-18 has increasingly asserted an 'alternative' strategy to key features of Western imperialism, while in reality fitting tightly within it. This fit works through amplified neoliberal multilateralism serving both the BRICS and the West, the regional displacement of overaccumulated capital, financialization, and persistent super-exploitative social relations: the spatio-temporal fixes and accumulation by dispossession that amplify global crisis tendencies.

Introduction: super-exploitative capitalism and the apartheid metaphor

A revival of debates about imperialism is underway, partly at the *Review of African Political Economy* website (http://roape.net) where in early 2018 John Smith forcefully challenged David Harvey's accumulation-based perspective. But a set of false geographical dichotomies – of an East-West or North-South character – soon emerged there, as a result of the way that imperial power is interrogated: without sufficient attention to the shift from globalization to deglobalization. In the course of this process, powerful semi-peripheral processes of accumulation and disaccumulation appear, as the limits of capitalism are being reached, which deserve the name 'subimperial.' This article sets out the underlying aspects of both the bottom-up analysis of super-exploitation favoured by Smith and the top-down spatial flows of capital favoured by Harvey, suggesting instead that the subimperial concept – as formulated in the work of the Brazilian Ruy Mauro Marini – can integrate both necessary processes.

To begin with super-exploitation, Smith's book *Imperialism in the 21st Century* – winner of *Monthly Review's* 2017 Paul Sweezy Award – has as its foundation this formula:

> the imperialist division of the world into oppressed and oppressor nations has shaped the global working class, central to which is the violent suppression of international labor mobility. Just as the infamous pass-laws epitomized apartheid in South Africa, so do immigration controls form the lynch-pin of an apartheid-like global economic system that systematically denies citizenship and basic human rights to the workers of the South and

which, as in apartheid-era South Africa, is a necessary condition for their super-exploitation (Smith 2016:104).

This is a start. But a rounded Marxist-feminist-ecological-race-conscious critique of imperialism needs a stronger foundation. Smith's problems begin with the South Africa metaphor and extend to the unconvincing binary of oppressed and oppressor nations, whose main shortcoming is that it underplays national ruling classes aspiring to shift from the former to the latter. The analysis also fails to incorporate aspects of 'deglobalization' now increasingly apparent in this conjuncture (even before the Trump trade war fully breaks out and recent financial market mini-crashes build up to another generalized meltdown). Neglect of multilateral power relations and geopolitical bloc formation also characterizes the debate Smith (2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) strikes up with Harvey (2018). The main missing links in contributions from both Smith and Harvey relate to processes of *subimperial* accumulation and class struggle, especially at a time that so-called global governance (multilateralism) has successfully assimilated the potential challenge by the main bloc of semi-peripheral countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS). To be sure, this category was at least briefly deployed by Harvey (in his 2003 book *The New Imperialism*):

> The opening up of global markets in both commodities and capital created openings for other states to insert themselves into the global economy, first as absorbers but then as producers of surplus capitals. They then became competitors on the world stage. What might be called 'subimperialisms' arose … Each developing centre of capital accumulation sought out systematic spatio-temporal fixes for its own surplus capital by defining territorial spheres of influence (Harvey 2003:185-86).

And in his debate with the Patnaiks (2016:169) on imperialism, Harvey also refers in passing to subimperialism (but only in relation to productive circuitry outsourcing to Taiwan and South Korea). This is perhaps the most vital component: the displacement of overaccumulated capital into geographically-dispersed sites, especially the BRICS. For there it is apparent that the re-deployment of this capital ultimately finds returns in *even more super-exploitative sites of surplus extraction,* including BRICS hinterlands, especially the extractive industries of Africa. Hence with the rise of the BRICS since 2009, new strategies for (generally more extreme) global management of these processes have also emerged in imperialism's multilateral system – the Bretton Woods Institutions, World Trade Organization and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change which successfully assimilated the BRICS – even if downplayed by Smith and Harvey in this recent debate.

In short, the power structures of global neoliberalism seamlessly drew in the BRICS over the past decade, in relation to world finance, during the 2010-15 International Monetary Fund vote restructuring; trade, at the World Trade Organization in 2015; and climate policies, at the United Nations from 2009-15 (Bond and Garcia 2015; Bond 2016; Luce 2015). The multilateral 'reforms' promoted by subimperial powers extend their own corporations' accumulation and displace their own class, social and ecological backlashes – again albeit with profound contradictions. And there are few places where these kinds of processes are more obvious than in South Africa.

However there are some important problems with Smith's framing, not least its aspatial character. First, any South African metaphor needs more nuance than the typical white-black super-exploitation narrative. The apartheid system super-exploited workers, not merely by denying citizenship and basic human rights at the point of production. There were also profound geographical relationships: urban segregation (the "Group Areas Act" regulating residency); national and regional scales of migrancy regulated by the Pass Laws and Southern African military-enforced political power over labor supplies; and South Africa's role in the global division of labor and geopolitics.[1] These all allowed the supply of black bodies to serve not only transnational corporations, but also locally-grounded processes of capital accumulation (e.g. the Oppenheimer and Rupert family fortunes), class formation, racism, gendered power relations and ecological stress.[2]

Smith's point here, correct but incomplete, is that apartheid supplied labor power below the cost of reproduction across what is normally a worker's life-cycle: the childhood rearing of workers is in a typical advanced capitalist country subsidized by day-care centres and schools; their illnesses and injuries are covered by medical aid systems whether public or private; and their retirement expenses are the result of savings, pensions and social security, all supported by employer programmes or taxation of corporations. During apartheid's prime, none of these aspects of social reproduction were provided to black workers.

That left women in the homelands to look after retired workers, sick workers and pre-workers – children – aside from the few schools run by religious missions. As a result, corporations paid much lower taxes and benefits. Indeed they enjoyed super-profits, amongst the world's highest, until the system began to experience severe stresses during the 1970s, mainly due to skills shortages and social unrest (Saul and Bond 2014). Other related features of gendered oppression that generally contribute to lower social reproduction costs include several areas – healthcare, discrimination, cultural traditions, sexual and non-sexual violence, and human trafficking – in which a 2018 Thomson Reuters poll of experts found India to be overall 'most dangerous' for women (Narayan 2018).

Smith uses the apartheid metaphor properly at a rudimentary level, insofar as the migrant relationship witnessed tens of millions of black male workers moving (11 out of 12 months each year) to the white-controlled and spatially-delineated cities, mines and plantations, as 'temporary sojourners' on the stolen land. But he might have pointed out that payment for their labor power below the cost of its reproduction was subsidized by the oppression of women displaced to rural areas by apartheid and regional colonialism, with consequent stresses to local ecologies – often to the point of breakdown and the formal destruction of the once self-sufficient peasantry. In the Marxist literatures on South Africa's "articulations

1 Smith also mentions in passing but does not theoretically elaborate one crucial feature of apartheid: regional military hegemony, in which Pretoria served as local gendarme of Western imperialism during the Cold War, until the Cuban-Angolan victory at Cuito Cuanovale in 1988 which he correctly judges as a profound moment in the power-shift that enabled the deracialization of South African subimperialism.

2 It is a shortcoming that Smith – whose work is so impressive on labor super-exploitation – is so very weak in incorporating gender, environment and the political sphere into the core of his analysis (the way Harvey does in his 2017 book *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*). All these go hand in hand, and in that respect his critique of Harvey (disclosure – Bond's doctoral supervisor) could be strengthened, and their analyses at least partially reconciled.

of modes production" (Wolpe 1980) and its "uneven and combined development" (Bond and Desai 2006; Ashman, Fine and Newman 2010), this geographical aspect of super-exploitation is a central theme (although in both literatures more could still be done to draw out the gendered and environmental aspects) (Kuhn and Wolpe 1978).

What Smith does not consider properly either in this case or globally, was the obvious *political relationship* between the Pretoria regime and its patrimonial allies. This relationship assured a broader systemic reproduction of cheap labor in both the internal Bantustans[3] and the neighbouring colonial and later neo-colonial regimes which facilitated this super-exploitative labor relationship until 1994. To write of apartheid simply as a racialized capital-labor relationship, without these gendered aspects, or the ecological stress associated with Bantustan overcrowding, or the overarching state apparatus that arranged and maintained super-exploitation, is to leave out the bulk of the story. Also, in the process, such neglect implicitly negates a major part of the anti-apartheid resistance movement.

Today, South Africa's rejuvenated (post-1994) modes of super-exploitation deserve similar attention. Strong evidence about new varieties of super-exploitation, including within a usurious micro-credit system, was available in August 2012 at Marikana, a two-hour drive northwest of Johannesburg. There, three dozen migrant mineworkers were shot dead and scores more seriously wounded, many crippled for life one afternoon; they were amongst four thousand engaged in a wildcat strike against Lonmin platinum corporation, demanding $1000/month for rock-drilling. They were treated by police as "dastardly criminals" at the explicit (emailed) request of Cyril Ramaphosa, who was the London firm's main local owner (Saul and Bond 2014; Bond 2018). In 2014 he became Deputy President and in February 2018 replaced Zuma as president in a palace coup, 15 months before Zuma's retirement date.

Such super-exploitative conditions sometimes create extremely militant resistance. The World Economic Forum (WEF) (2017) annually polls 14,000 business executives from 137 economies for its *Global Competitiveness Report.* One question concerns the state of class struggle (or 'employer-labor relations), with answers on a spectrum from most 'confrontational' to most 'cooperative.' Three BRICS – South Africa (first), Brazil (32nd) and Russia (42nd) – rated in the 2017-18 survey amongst the most confrontational third of the world's national workforces. Indeed, South Africa has ranked as having the world's most militant proletariat since 2012, the year of Marikana. The other two BRICS, India and China, are measured as having amongst the world's more cooperative half of national workforces, ranking 82nd and 88th, respectively.

Bearing all this in mind, Smith's book makes only a half-hearted effort to scale up the useful apartheid metaphor to the present mode of imperialism, including resistance. To scale up more convincingly requires extension of Harvey's conceptual apparatus to the level of subimperial power relations that are so well personified by Ramaphosa. For like the old Bantustan tribal warlords which the Pretoria regime escalated to power, there is now a global-scale buffer elite emerging which the imperial powers generally find useful in terms

3 These were ethnic-based black 'homelands', e.g. KwaZulu, the Transkei, the Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and several others to which at peak about half the black population was forcibly removed. In 1994 they were reincorporated within South Africa's borders.

of legitimation, financial subsidization and deputy-sheriff duty – even when anti-imperial rhetoric becomes an irritant, e.g. as under Zuma's 2009-18 rule.

From local to global apartheid – BRICS as subimperial 'Bantustan elites'

Claudio Katz (2018) has, simultaneous with the Smith-Harvey debate, reminded of Marini's (1965) contribution: the subimperialism category (see also Luce 2015). Today, consistent with his theory, "two variants – appropriation of natural wealth and exploitation of employees – define the strategies of transnational corporations and the location of each economy in the global order." For Katz (2018), "This relegated positioning is corroborated even in those economies that managed to forge their own multinational companies (India, Brazil, South Korea). They entered a field that was monopolized by the centre, without modifying their secondary status in globalized production."

Appropriation of natural wealth is vital; to his credit, Smith utilizes the convincing analysis of mining scholar-activist Andrew Higginbottom (2011) in which South African apartheid super-exploitation is considered in theoretical terms. From there he reminds us of powerful aspects of Samir Amin's Africa-centric dependency theory and Ruy Mauro Marini's Brazilian-based analysis. Both stress super-exploitation, but both do much more. Amin (2018) has always been concerned with the overall geopolitical balance of forces at global scale – not just in terms of South-to-North value transfers – and he regularly takes special care to work out how neoliberal global governance has emerged to accompany Washington's neoconservative military prowess. Marini (1965:14-24) focused on the elaboration of subimperial power wielded by states that are incorporated into the Western system as regional agents of imperialism, in which, Smith (2016) agrees, "dependent economies like Brazil seek to compensate for the drain of wealth to the imperialist centres by developing their own exploitative relationships with even more underdeveloped and peripheral neighboring economies."

Smith is correct to remind of these writers' (and others') commitment to a "dependency thesis" based on "the reality of the extreme rates of exploitation in Bangladeshi garment factories, Chinese production lines, South African platinum mines, and Brazilian coffee farms." But aside from the tokenistic nod to Marini – followed immediately by a confession, "not discussed here" – at only one point in the book does Smith consider the ownership and accumulation processes associated with these sites of subimperial surplus value extraction. Sadly though, it comes in a dismissive footnote after he attacks Ellen Wood for:

> reducing imperialism to interstate rivalry between great powers before extinguishing it entirely: The "new imperialism [is] no longer … a relationship between imperial masters and colonial subjects but a complex interaction between more or less sovereign states." Alex Callinicos has the same idea: "The global hierarchy of economic and political power that is a fundamental consequence of the uneven and combined development inherent in capitalist imperialism was not dissolved, but was rather complicated by the emergence of new centres of capital accumulation" (Smith, 2016:352).

Aside from including some countries that don't quite fit, Callinicos' descriptions of power relations are perfectly reasonable, as are Woods', coming at a time of heightened multilateral neoliberal imperialism, as the Clinton-Bush-Obama neolib-neocon era gathered strength and assimilated its opponents. That assimilation process is critical, and the main site for it is global governance in relation to political, economic, social and environmental contradictions. It would be impossible to talk about post-War imperialism without its multilateral economic grounding in the 1944 Bretton Woods System. Indeed, Smith is entirely conscious of the many complicated ways that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations agencies still today manage global imperial power relations to the benefit of major corporations.

So why adjustments in such arrangements so difficult to conceptualize in the 21st century, at a time Xi Jinping earnestly promotes corporate globalization against the Trump spectre of retreat from liberalized trade, global climate management and other uses of the U.S. State Department's soft-power arsenal? A profound shortcoming of *Imperialism in the 21st Century* is Smith's inability to grapple with 21st century global governance institutions, especially the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the G20 and G8 (until 2014, and now G7 without Putin's Russia). Had he considered these, Smith might have found his way beyond the old-fashioned binary of oppressed and oppressor nations. For example, the BRICS bloc's role in legitimating imperialist multilateralism requires careful treatment, yet the bloc gets not one mention by Smith.

China's long trajectory is the most important, as Xin Zhang (2017:317) explains, for since the

> forced opening and encounter with multiple western imperial powers after the Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century, China has lost a series of wars and has been forced to pay indemnities and make significant territorial concession… Until 1949, due to a series of foreign invasion, revolutions, domestic warlord combats and civil wars, China did not succeed in her attempted economic modernization… Starting from a semi-peripheral status at the onset of the reform period in the late 1970s, Mainland China managed to integrate into the international value chain and division of labour at the right moment alongside tacit acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the US-led liberal world order.

Given China's failure to combine political liberalization with its economic opening, as well as competition resulting from its own overaccumulation crisis, questions have been raised as to Beijing's reliability to help maintain that world order. In 2014 Barack Obama revealed to *The Economist* (2014) his agenda for incorporating China into imperialism's pseudo-multilateral system.

> *The Economist*: "… that is the key issue, whether China ends up inside that [global governance] system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times, I think."
>
> Mr Obama: "It is. And I think it's important for the United States and Europe to continue to welcome China as a full partner in these international norms. It's important for us to recognize that there are going to be times where there are tensions and conflicts. But I think those are manageable. And it's my belief that as China shifts its economy away from simply being the low-cost manufacturer of the world to wanting to move up the value chain, then suddenly issues like protecting intellectual property become more relevant to their companies, not just to US companies."

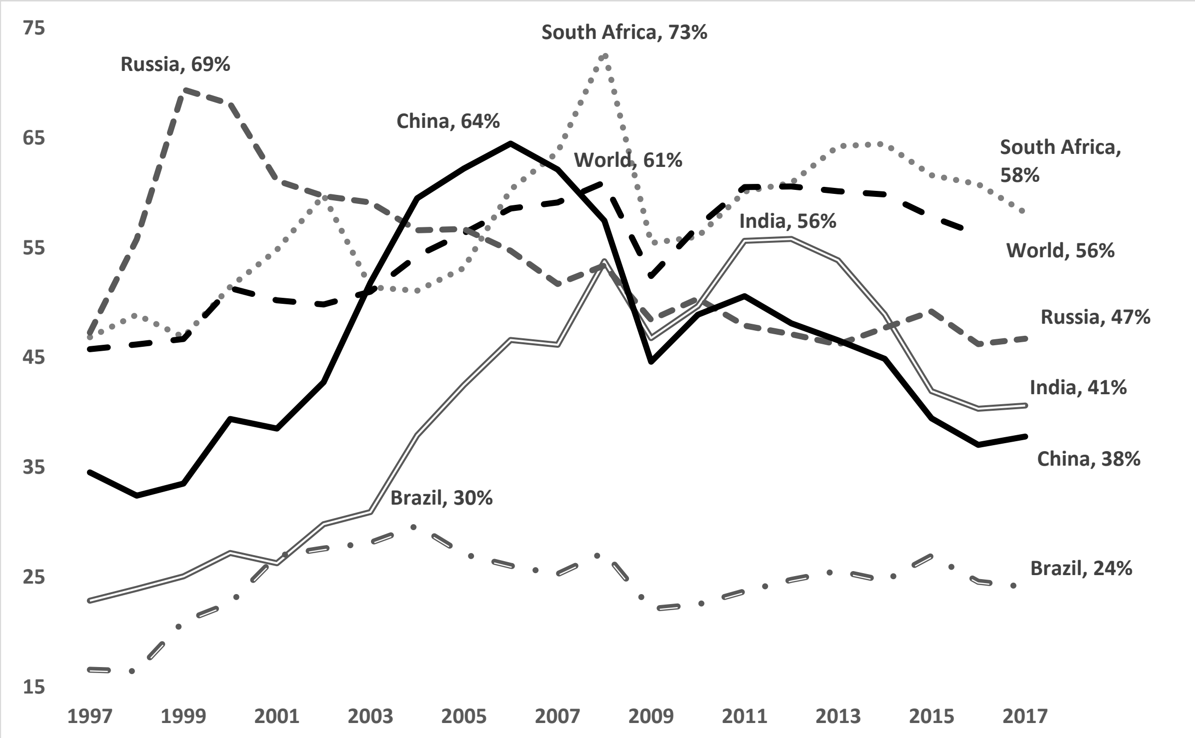
Though Smith ignores the BRICS as either a unit of analysis or marker of ascendant economic power, the bloc's assimilation into imperialism has amplified unfair and inequitable world order processes, especially when pursuing global finance, trade and climate governance. First, the IMF's 2010-15 board restructuring left four of the BRICS much more powerful (e.g. China by 37 percent) but most African countries with a much lower voting share (e.g. Nigeria's fell by 41 percent and South Africa's by 21 percent). BRICS directors thrice (in 2011, 2015 and 2016) agreed with Western counterparts to endorse leadership by IMF managing director Christine Lagarde, even though she was prosecuted – and in 2016 declared guilty of negligence – in a €400 million criminal corruption case dating to her years as French finance minister. Moreover, the BRICS €84 billion Contingent Reserve Arrangement strengthens the IMF by compelling borrowers to first get an IMF loan before accessing 70 percent of their quota contributions during times of financial emergencies, while leaders of the BRICS New Development Bank – which has no civil society oversight – brag of co-financing and staff sharing arrangements with the World Bank (Bond 2017b).

Second, the 2015 Nairobi World Trade Organization summit essentially ended agricultural subsidies and hence food sovereignty thanks to crucial alliances made with Washington and Brussels negotiators, from Brasilia and New Delhi representatives, with China, South Africa and Russia compliant (Raghavan 2015). Third, the 2015 UNFCCC Paris Climate Agreement left Africa without any 'climate debt' options against the West and BRICS, since legal claims for signatories' liability are prohibited. As was prefigured by four of the BRICS' role (with Obama) in the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, the Paris commitments to emissions cuts are too small and in any case non-binding. Military, maritime and air transport emissions are not covered, while carbon markets are endorsed. Thus climate catastrophe is inevitable, mainly to the benefit of a residual profit stream for high-carbon industries in the rich and middle-income countries (Bond 2017a).

BRICS elites were vital allies of the West in each recent site of global governance, serving power much the way South Africa's Bantustan leaders did during apartheid. However, the short-term victories such as at the IMF, WTO and UNFCCC that today benefit their neoliberal, pollution-intensive corporations and parastatal agencies come at a difficult time, given deglobalization processes: the relative decline in trade and Foreign Direct Investment (Figure 1) and in trade even pre-Trump (Figure 2). Likewise, the commodity super-cycle's 2011 peak and then the crash of world minerals and petroleum prices in 2015 not only ended Africa Rising rhetoric (Bond 2018). Just as importantly, since there were fewer profits to be had from high prices, many transnational corporations made up for this by increasing the volume of extraction so as to seek a greater mass not rate of profit.

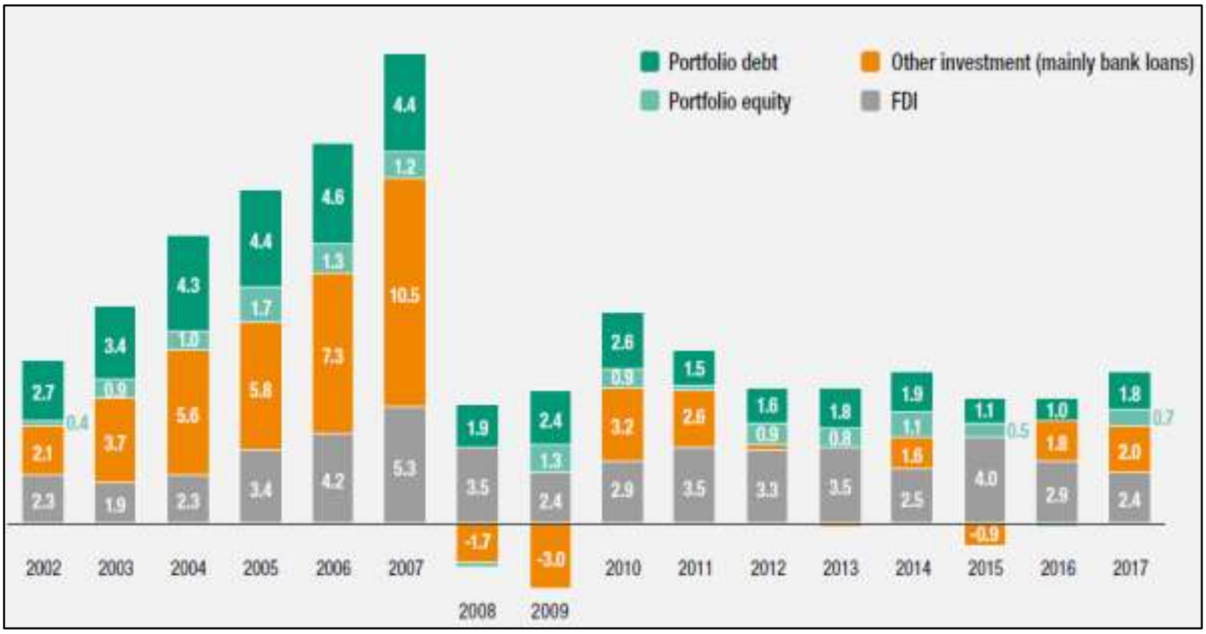
One impact of this process was to confirm that gross dividend payments that go to international firms, from the BRICS and other semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, far exceed the gross dividend receipts that are returned to headquarters of BRICS firms which operate internationally. In those economies which the South African Reserve Bank highlighted as illustrative (Figure 3), the net profit flows from abroad ranged in three broad categories: above 100 percent were Western countries; in the 15-60 percent range were large middle-income countries; and below 15 percent were poor, exploited countries. The BRICS were all in the 18-20 percent range, except South Africa whose ratio was closer to 45 percent. This is a consistent indicator of the surplus extraction process, although misinvoicing and other tax dodges make the outflow from the BRICS even worse, as discussed further, below.

Figure 1. Rise and fall of BRICS and world trade (imports and exports), 1997-2017: High point ratio and 2017 ratio, as percent of GDP



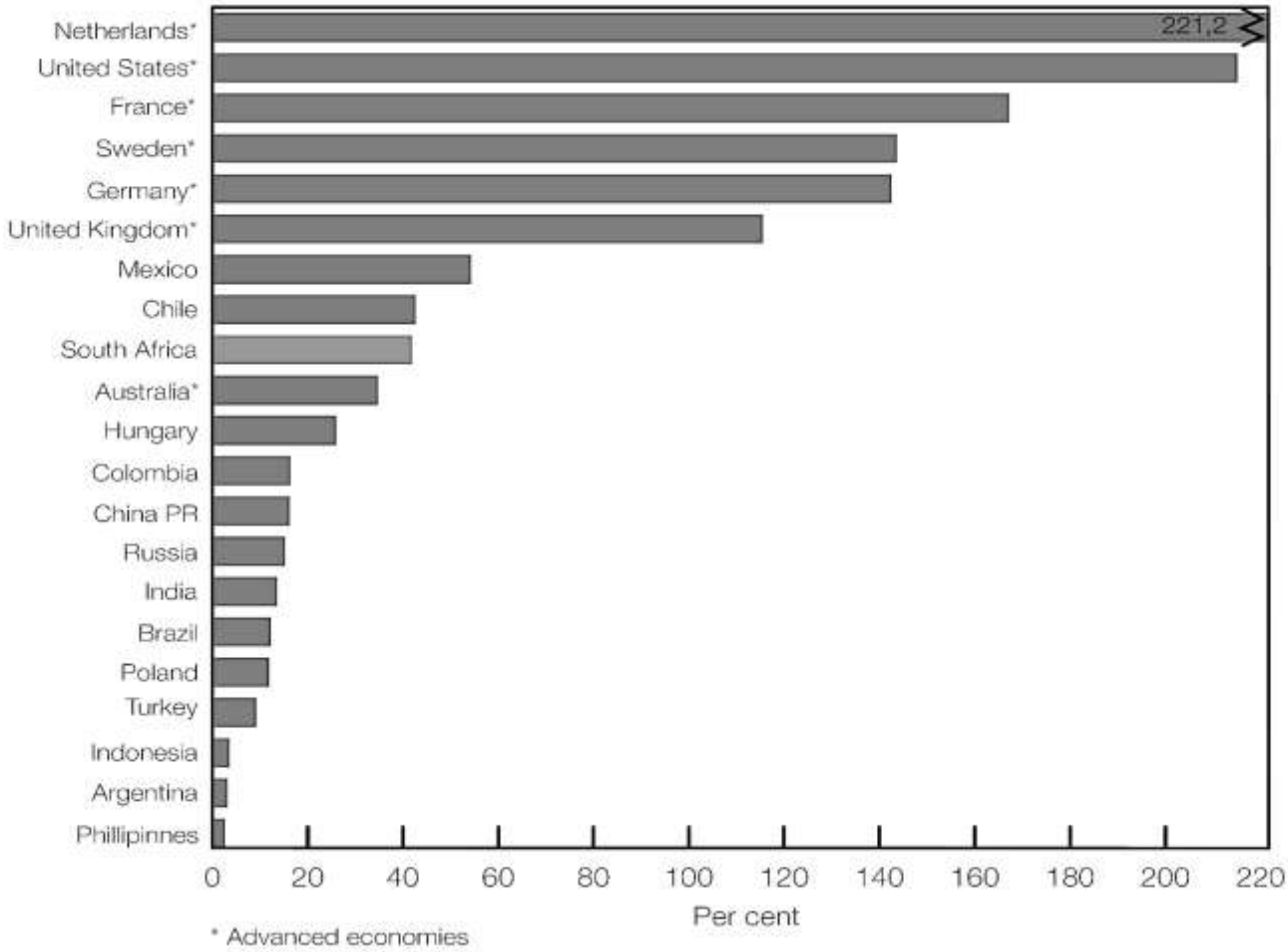
Source: World Bank Data Catalogue: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?end=2017&locations=CN-BR-ZA-IN-RU-1W&start=1997&view=chart

Figure 2. Falling FDI and financial flow rates (percent of GDP), 2002-17



Source: UNCTAD (2018:11)

Figure 3: Net profit flows, 2012-14 (average dividend receipts as percent of dividend payments)



Source: South African Reserve Bank (2015:39)

BRICS corporates exemplify super-exploitation

BRICS firms became some of the most super-exploitative corporations engaged in accumulation not only on their home turf but also in Africa. Notwithstanding recent relative decline in trade rates, to illustrate the extraction of surpluses, from 2000 to 2014 the value of Africa-BRICS trade rose from $28 billion to $377 billion, before falling in 2015 by 21 percent due to the commodity price crash (le Pere 2017). The bilateral investment treaties that facilitate these transfers from Africa to the BRICS are just as notoriously one-sided as those with Western powers, according to the main scholar of this problem, Ana Garcia (2017).

To take the example of Mozambique, Carlos Castel-Branco (2015:30-31) shows how its rulers aimed for “maximization of inflows of foreign capital – Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or commercial loans – without political conditionality” (much of which came from the BRICS as well as Portugal) in a super-exploitative context: “the reproduction of a labor system in which the workforce is remunerated at below its social cost of subsistence and families have to bear the responsibility for maintaining (especially feeding) the wage-earning workers by complementing their wages," a common phenomenon across the continent. While there may occasionally be an exception,[4] consider a few of the most egregious examples involving the BRICS.[5]

Brazil's major subimperial construction firm Odebrecht admitted paying bribes of $51 million to officials in Angola and Mozambique (but the actual amounts are likely to be much higher), and both Odebrecht and the world's second-largest mining company, Rio-based Vale, have faced regular protests over mass displacement at construction projects and coal-mining operations in Tete, Mozambique, as has the Brazilian government (dating to Workers Party rule) over its ProSavana corporate-agriculture land-grab (BBC 2017, Marshall 2016, Ntauzi 2015).

Russia's Rosatom nuclear reactor deals across Africa – in South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria and Zambia – are increasingly dubious, especially after the only country with an existing nuclear reactor, South Africa, witnessed an intense debate due in part to widespread corruption at the implementing agency (Eskom). As a result of growing fiscal crisis, the Rosatom deal appears to have fallen away (Allison 2016; Al-Youm 2018).

Indian companies in Africa have been especially exploitative, led by Vedanta chief executive Anil Agarwal – caught bragging to investors of having bought the continent's largest copper mine for just $25 million after fibbing to Zambian president Levy Mwanawasa and each year returning $500 million to $1 billion in revenues. ArcelorMittal's Lakshmi Mittal's major African steel operation, South Africa's former state-owned ISCOR, was accused by even Pretoria's trade minister of milking the operations. Jindal's super-exploitative arrangements in Mozambique and South Africa are regularly criticized. But the most egregious state and private sector mode of accumulation by Indian capital in Africa must be the combination of the Gupta brothers and (state-owned) Bank of Baroda, whose corruption of South Africa's ruling political elite led first to massive looting of the public sector (and illicit financial flows via Bank of Baroda) and then the fall of Jacob Zuma and allied politicians, as well as other South African and international firms caught up in the Gupta web (including western corporations Bell Pottinger, KPMG, McKinsey and SAP) (Bhorat et al 2016; Bond 2017; Foil Vedanta 2014; Madonsela 2016).

Chinese firms – both state-owned and private – have been accused of major financial, human rights, labor and environmental abuses in Africa, perhaps most spectacularly in the case of Sam Pa whose operations included mining diamonds in eastern Zimbabwe. In 2016, even President Robert Mugabe alleged that of $15 billion in revenues, only $2 billion were accounted for by the state, due to looting of mines mainly controlled by the local military

4 The best-known exception to this process of super-exploiting Africa was the acquisition – for tens of millions of HIV+ people – of generic AIDS medicines, initially from the Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla, assisted by Intellectual Property violations by the Brazilian government. But instead of being a coordinated semi-peripheral attack against the WTO, this was a case in which decommodification of a vital basic need was driven by South African activists in the Treatment Action Campaign (working against the Mbeki government's opposition to supply of the medicines). The activists compelled the WTO to make medicines an exemption. Both the Indian and Brazilian governments subsequently became much more conservative in relation to protection of corporate property rights.

5 Prior to 2015, there were many other cases, as documented in Bond and Garcia (2015). These cases are discussed in Bond (2015, 2017c, 2017d).

and Chinese companies. (In late 2017, coup leader Constantino Chiwenga travelled to Beijing and received permission from the Chinese military to proceed with Mugabe's overthrow). In South Africa, the China South Rail Corporation played a major role in the Gupta corruption ring, in relation to multi-billion dollar locomotive and ship-loading crane contracts with the parastatal railroad Transnet (amaBhungane and Scorpion 20217).

South African businesses have a record of looting the rest of the continent dating to Cecil Rhodes' (19th century) British South Africa Company, the Oppenheimer mining empire, and more recently current President Ramaphosa's pre-2012 chairing of Africa's largest cell-phone company, MTN. The latter was exposed – along with two other companies he led, Lonmin and Shanduka – in 2014-17 for having offshore accounts in Bermuda and Mauritius used to illicitly remove funds from Africa. South Africa's corporate elites regularly rank as the most corrupt on earth in the biannual PwC Economic Crimes survey, with one recent report showing that "eight out of ten senior managers commit economic crime" (PwC 2016).

Once profits are gained in this process, they are systematically removed through accounting techniques as misinvoicing and other tax dodges. Illicit financial flows that accompany FDI, Smith observes, are Net Resource Transfers (NRT) "from poor countries to imperialist countries in 2012 exceeded $3 trillion." Specifically, the NRTs from Africa "to imperialist countries (or tax havens licensed by them) between 1980 to 2012 totalled $792 billion" (about $25 billion annually) (Smith 2016). But the sleight of hand here is the ability of *local* elites – not just Western or BRICS corporations – to accumulate offshore in places like Mauritius (the African continent's leading hot money centre).[6]

This part of the outflow is not a function of 'imperialism' (as Smith suggests), but of local greed and higher profits gained by an unpatriotic bourgeoisie who can hold funds offshore (even idle), instead of investing in African economies whose currencies are often rapidly declining in value.[7] Naturally the City of London, Wall Street and Zurich are crucial sites for parking illicit flows. But so too are the BRICS. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa estimated that $319 billion was transferred illicitly from Africa during the commodity super-cycle, from 2001 to 2010. The United States was the leading single destination at $50 billion; but China, India, and Russia were responsible for $59 billion (Brazil is not recorded in the top 17 and South Africa is not included) (Mevel, Ofa and Karingi, 2013). One of Smith's rebuttals is that China is also a victim of illicit financial outflows, not just a villain. This is true, for capital flight is one reason China's peak $4 trillion in foreign reserves in 2013 fell to $3.3 trillion by 2016, at a pace rising to a record $120 billion/month outflow by the end of 2015. Beijing's imposition of tighter exchange controls in mid-2015 and early 2016 slowed the process. But with the ambitious One Belt, One Road (OBOR) Initiative to move westward, there will be many more projects in which surplus capital will identify opportunities for reinvestment outside China.[8]

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6 Perhaps most notorious in South Africa is Cyril Ramaphosa; see McCune and Turner (201??); McKune and Makinana (2014); Reddy, Rose, Fitzgibbon, ICIJ and amaBhungane (2017).
7 South Africa's peaked at R6.3/$ in 2011 but fell to R17.9/$ in 2016 before recovering to the R13.5/$ range recently.
8 The NGO Global Financial Integrity measured annual illicit financial flows from China at an average $140 billion from 2004-13. The point, however, is that these flows are not necessarily transfers from 'China' to the 'imperialist' countries, although Western firms no doubt transfer as much as possible to the home countries

Unfortunately, both Smith and Harvey ignore another vital outflow of poorer countries' wealth, in the form of non-renewable resources whose extractive value – termed "natural capital" – is not compensated for by reinvestment. The volume of the losses to Africa here far outstrips the financial outflows, and a great deal goes to firms from the BRICS. This category includes the net value of extracting minerals, oil, gas and other non-renewable resources which, from 1995-2015 were measured by the World Bank in *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018* at more than $150 billion annually from Africa (Bond 2018). (This figure does not include North Africa nor the diamond and platinum accounts due to regional definitions for the former and measurement difficulties for the latter). The net outflow is above and beyond the increased Gross National Income and direct investment generated in the extraction process, and far outstrips all the other financial mechanisms through which Africa's wealth is drained. Indeed, in relation to depletion of non-renewable resources, one corrective to the Smith-Harvey debate comes from Amin's latest book, *Modern Imperialism, Monopoly Finance Capital, and Marx's Law of Value,* in which both super-exploitation and environmental appropriations are restated by Amin as the two core processes within world capitalism:

> capitalist accumulation is founded on the destruction of the bases of all wealth: human beings and their natural environment. It took a wait lasting a century and a half until our environmentalists rediscovered that reality, *now become blindingly clear. It is true* that historical Marxisms had largely passed an eraser over the analyses advanced by Marx on this subject and taken the point of view of the bourgeoisie – equated to an atemporal 'rational' point of view – in regard to the exploitation of natural resources (Amin, 2018:86).

Capitalist rationality is to exploit without reference to the depletion of labor and resources over time. That China and India are now the most important purchasers of Africa's raw materials requires a rethinking of the ways super-exploitation of labor and environmental destruction are being amplified by capitalism's widening out from the historic European, U.S. and Japanese core. Altogether, these processes generate a form of subimperial accumulation that is implicit in Harvey's rebuttal to Smith, when recognizing "complex spatial, interterritorial and place-specific forms of production, realization and distribution." The extraction of resources from Africa is undertaken by such firms, Harvey (2018) continues,

> even as the final product finds its way to Europe or the United States. Chinese thirst for minerals and agricultural commodities (soy beans in particular) means that Chinese firms are also at the centre of an extractivism that is wrecking the landscape all around the world... A cursory look at land grabs all across Africa shows Chinese companies and wealth funds are way ahead of everyone else in their acquisitions. The two largest mineral companies operating in Zambia's copper belt are Indian and Chinese.

(often through royalties and licenses). The illicit flows measured are, in part, Chinese elites' own strategies for accumulation (Spanjers and Kar, 2015).

Perhaps it is Smith's old-fashioned binary North-South line of argument that prevents him mentioning – much less comprehending – the BRICS' amplification of both super-exploitation and ecological crises, especially those relating to Africa, including the net natural capital losses. Still, to his credit, Smith's (2016) book acknowledges other crucial aspects of imperialism briefly discussed next: overaccumulation crisis, financialization and remilitarization. Nevertheless, without exploring these aspects of imperialist political economy and geopolitics in a way that incorporates subimperialism, the potential for Smith to engage Harvey's overall concern about uneven geographical development is truncated.

Deglobalization, overaccumulation and financialization

Crucially, the ebb and flow of capital across the world is not merely one of spatial extension, but also contraction – including of over-extended mega-projects and BRICS corporations. From 2008-17, global trade/GDP declined from its high point of 61 percent to 56 percent. But the BRICS' trade ratios dropped much faster: China's trade/GDP rate fell from a high of 65 percent in 2008 to 38 percent in 2017; India's from a high of 56 percent in 2012 to 41 percent in 2017; South Africa's from 73 percent in 2008 to 60 percent in 2017; Russia's from 69 percent in 1999 to 47 percent in 2017; and Brazil's from 30 percent in 2004 to 24 percent in 2017 (Figure 1). In the first two BRICS, that decline was due to rebalancing through higher domestic consumption rather than export-led growth, whereas falling trade shares for South Africa, Russia and Brazil reflect peaking commodity prices just before the global financial meltdown that year, followed by subsequent recessions.

As for FDI, according to the latest UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) *World Investment Report*, the BRICS accounted for 19 percent of global investment inflows and 23 percent of the world GDP in 2017. But FDI into the BRICS fell in 2017 to $266 billion, a decline of $10 billion from 2016, amidst a global decline of 23 percent, to $1.43 trillion (Figure 2). UNCTAD (2018) acknowledged the role of falling profits: "A decrease in rates of return is a key contributor to the investment downturn. The global average return on foreign investment is now at 6.7 percent, down from 8.1 percent in 2012. Return on investment is in decline across all regions, with the sharpest drops in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean." As a result, FDI into Africa fell 36 percent from its $66 billion peak inflow in 2008 to a 2017 level of $42 billion. As for profits on FDI, the "steady decline recorded over the preceding five years" meant this was not a brief problem but instead a structural contradiction, UNCTAD (2018) recognized: "Even discounting the volatile financial flows, large one-off transactions and corporate restructurings that inflated FDI numbers in 2015 and 2016, the 2017 decline was still sizeable and part of a longer-term negative cycle."

That long 'negative cycle' is indeed an overall crisis of overaccumulated capital, to a large extend due to excessive expansion of capitalist relations in China, beyond its workers' and the world's capacity to consume the output. As Ho-fung Hung (2015) has argued, "Capital accumulation in China follows the same logic and suffers from the same contradictions of capitalist development in other parts of the world… [including] a typical overaccumulation crisis, epitomized by the ghost towns and shuttered factories across the country." In a London School of Economics lecture, Harvey (2015) remarked of China, "There is a tale to be told here about the overaccumulation of capital… and surplus capital and labor which had to be absorbed in order to keep stability within the global system of capital accumulation." A recent International Monetary Fund (2017(report confirmed China's overcapacity levels had reached more than 30 percent in coal, non-ferrous metals, cement and chemicals by 2015 (in each, China is responsible for 45-60 percent of the world market). The subsequent need for overcapacity shrinkage was the central reason for the massive crash of raw materials prices in 2015. *The Guardian's* Larry Elliott (2017) summarized IMF concerns over "methods used to keep the economy expanding rapidly: an increase in government spending to fund infrastructure programmes and a willingness to allow state-controlled banks to lend more for speculative property developments."

One technique or crisis displacement is the expansion of financial markets to mop up the capacity – the "temporal fix" – but this has become dangerous, with Chinese banks' high-risk ratio rising from 4 percent in 2010 to more than 12 percent since early 2015. Financialization is one symptom of global overproduction, in China and many other sites. Even though cross-border financial assets fell from 58 percent of world GDP in 2008 to 38 percent in 2016, the fast-rising domestic flows into high-risk (high-return) emerging markets and notwithstanding soaring overall indebtedness. In 2018, the Institute of International Finance announced that global debt that was 276 percent of world GDP in 2007 had, by the end of 2017, reached 318 percent, driven fastest by vulnerable emerging markets (including two of the BRICS countries, Brazil and South Africa), whose debt ratios rose from 145 percent to 210 percent over decade (Evans-Pritchard 2018). The early-2018 gyrations in world stock markets, including losses of $4 trillion in a matter of days, signal that nothing was done after the 2008 meltdown to halt the bursting of financial bubbles. Trump's financial deregulation only adds fuel to the fire. Likewise, in China, "the elite who control the state sector seek capital flight, encroach on the private sector and foreign companies, and intensify their fights with one another," explains Hung (2018):

> The post-2008 boom was driven by reckless investment expansion funded by a state-bank financial stimulus. This created a gigantic debt bubble no longer matched by commensurate expansion of the foreign-exchange reserve. Between 2008 and late 2017, outstanding debt in China skyrocketed from 148 percent of GDP to over 250 percent, and is now (mid-2018) approaching 300 percent, exceeding the level in the US and most other developing countries. China's foreign-exchange reserve ended its long, uninterrupted rise and started to stagnate, or even shrink, in 2014, and that decline could only be contained via draconian measures that restricted capital outflow after 2015. In the meantime, the many redundant construction projects and infrastructure resulting from the debt-fueled economic rebound are not going to be profitable, at least not any time soon. The repayment and servicing of the debt is going to be challenging, and a major ticking time bomb of debt has formed. This overaccumulation crisis in the Chinese economy is the origin of the stock market meltdown and beginning of capital flight that drove the sharp devaluation of Chinese currency in 2015–16. Stability came in 2016 only with extreme measures to stem capital flight and a new round of loan surge, at the price of further build-up of indebtedness throughout the economy.

With respect to the geographical recourse that capital requires during crisis, Zhang (2017:321-22) explains Chinese capitalism's

> restructuring as the result of overaccumulation. Often jointly with various representatives of Chinese capital, the Chinese state is compelled to reconfigure Chinese capitalism on a much larger spatial dimension so as to sustain the capital accumulation and expansion. Hence it must engage in a "spatial fix" on an unprecedented scale... Meanwhile, the Chinese state has also behaved in the manner of what Giovanni Arrighi called a "territorialist ruler", who tends to expand the size of her "power container" through commercial expansion.[9]

But contradictions emerge within the spatial fix, for contrary to Xi's ambitions for centripetal BRICS, the Standard Bank of South Africa (which is 20 percent Chinese owned) issued a June 2018 critique of the fraying and increasingly centrifugal linkages, arguing that,

> the BRICS must find ways to elevate their commercial relevance to one another. Unfortunately, the commercial relevance of the BRICS to one another is minimal. Intra-BRICS trade has actually fallen, from $342 billion in 2013 to $312 billion in 2017. Furthermore, taken as a share of their respective trade, the BRICS share has plateaued, after doubling from 6 percent 2003 to 12 percent 2011. In fact, it fell sharply in 2016.The trade data is simple; for each of the BRICS, China is a large trade partner; just 20 percent of BRICS trade excludes China. The trade relation is therefore unbalanced. China is exporting manufactured goods to the other BRICS in proportions consistent with their relative GDP, whilst importing mineral products from Russia, Brazil and South Africa, and prepared foodstuff from Brazil (Stevens 2018).

For example, OBOR is touted for restoring some market demand for construction-related commodities. However, at a deeper structural level, China suffers from the apparent exhaustion of prior sources of profitability. The OBOR appears as a potential $1 trillion mirage, and one that may in the process even crack the BRICS, in the event the Kashmir OBOR routing continues to cause extreme alienation between Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi.

Another challenge to China comes from within: the ebbing of super-exploitative opportunities because of rising wages. Smith (2018b) is incredulous: "It is true that ultra-low wages in southern nations are being used as a club against workers in imperialist nations, but it is preposterous to suggest that the North-South gulf in wages and living standards has been substantially eroded." Yet global income studies and the "elephant curve" distribution by Branco Milanovic (2015) reveal a rise of these workers' wages compared to the stagnant labor aristocracies of the North.[10]

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9 Zhang (2017:22) lists "firms purchasing or leasing agricultural land in Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia, oil and gas fields and mining rights in Central Asia, Africa and Latin America, etc. Among the Maritime Silk Road Initiative projects, notable examples include: the establishment of China's first overseas navy logistics hub in Djibouti, China Ocean Shipping Company purchasing the Greek port of Piraeus, China gaining management rights of Gwadar Port in Pakistan; the presence of a more assertive stance in disputed territories in the South China Sea."

10 To be sure, Milanovic has been criticized on two grounds by C.P. Chandrasekhar and Jayati Ghosh (2018):

> First, the "elephant curve" is based on proportionate increases in per capita incomes of each percentile – and obviously, the proportionate increase will be greater the lower the initial income. If incomes are lower to start with, a higher proportionate increase may amount to much less increase in absolute terms… When

In this context, the status of subimperialism is fluid, especially within the deeply-divided BRICS. This was evident in July 2018 when the bloc met in Johannesburg. The South African host was no longer the faux anti-imperialist Zuma, who was pushed out by Ramaphosa in a February 2018 coup within the ruling party in spite of begging to stay six more months so as to chair the BRICS, which he believes is his major legacy. For years, Zuma complained that he was 'poisoned' by Western agents – working through his fourth wife in mid-2014 – due to his support for the BRICS (he was indeed poisoned and then recovered in Russia, but it is not yet certain why this occurred) (McKenzie 2017).

Brazilian leader Michel Temer was due to be replaced as president, in a society with rampant elite self-delegitimation once the most popular candidate, Lula da Silva, was framed on bogus corruption charges, jailed and prevented from running in the October 2018 election. From India, Modi has openly embraced the Trump regime. The Chinese and Russian leaderships are remarkably stable: Xi's lifetime premiership was awarded in early 2018, just prior to a Russian electoral landslide won by Putin (after his main opponent was prohibited from contesting) which appears to extend his 18th year in power for many more. In this context, at least, Smith (2018b) makes valid political points about the class character of Chinese expansionism:

> Imperialism is inscribed in the DNA of capitalism, and if China has embarked on the capitalist road, then it has also embarked on the imperialist road… developing a strategic challenge to Japanese, European and North American dominance in key industries... Class-conscious workers must maintain independence from both sides in this looming conflict … [by] opposing Chinese capitalist expansion and the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to forge an alliance with reactionary capitalist regimes in Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other countries.

The rise of subimperial powers and their domination of hinterlands are taking place decidedly *within* and not *against* imperialism, and not just in terms of those multilateral processes discussed above. The world is much more dangerous since the BRICS took their present form in 2010: in Syria and the Gulf States, Ukraine, the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea. Even the Chinese-Indian border is rife with confrontations: mid-2017 fighting between the two giants at an obscure border post in Bhutan nearly derailing the BRICS annual meeting, and Modi's boycott of the OBOR summit in May 2017 was due to Beijing's mega-project trespassing on what New Delhi considers its own Kashmir land now held by Pakistan. For Xi it is the crucial turf linking western China to the Arabian Sea's Gwadar port. There is no resolution in sight.

> absolute changes are considered, the middle hump of the elephant disappears: the graph looks more like a hockey stick, with very little increase except for the top groups, which show very sharp increases.

Second, they argue,

> There are many reasons to believe that PPP measures overstate the incomes of people in poor countries, thereby underestimating global inequality… By 2015, the difference between the two estimates had doubled to ten percentage points – which means that that the PPP measures increasingly underestimated global inequality over this period.

Acting as a geopolitical bloc, the BRICS' public security interventions have occurred strictly within the context of the G20: first, to prevent Obama from bombing Syria using pressure at the larger group's September 2013 summit in St Petersburg, and then six months later in Amsterdam, supporting the Russian invasion (or 'liberation') of Crimea once the West made threats to expel Moscow from the G20 – just as the U.S. and Europe had thrown Putin out of the G8, now G7. However, when Trump arrived at the July 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, the BRICS leaders were extremely polite notwithstanding widespread calls to introduce anti-U.S. sanctions (e.g. carbon taxes) due to his withdrawal from global climate commitments just a month earlier.

Fortunately for Southern Africa, remilitarization is not a major factor in the region's geopolitics today, in part because the apartheid regime gave way to a democracy in 1994 and ended destabilization policies. More than two million people were killed by white regimes and their proxies in frontline anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles during the 1970s-80s. More millions died in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during the early 2000s' period of extreme resource extraction, a process that continues at low levels. The two recent armed interventions by Pretoria in the region were to join United Nations peacekeeping troops in the DRC (2013-present) and aid the beleaguered authoritarian regime in the Central African Republic (2006-13). These are considered political-military failures insofar as violence continues in both sites. In the latter's capital city Bangui, more than a dozen South African troops were killed defending Johannesburg firms pursuing lucrative contracts, just days before a BRICS 2013 "Gateway to Africa" summit in Durban (Bond 2017c).

Conclusion

The imperial-subimperial features of global capitalism described above go some way towards resolving the contradictions Smith and Harvey raise in their accounts. Most importantly, by more clearly naming the BRICS threat as an *amplifier* of imperialism, not an alternative bloc, a critique of the subimperial location will pave the way for a better understanding by the world's anti-capitalist forces, so that no further confusion need spread about the potentials for allying with BRICS elites – or for that matter, for world elites agreeing to a Kautsky-style global new deal (about which Harvey concedes his mistake to Smith).

Although in some cases (such as South Africa and China) there is an 'anti-corruption' veneer, the democratic space for progressive politics is closing in most of the BRICS, alongside intensified economic exploitation, tightened surveillance and rapidly-worsening environmental conditions. The first weeks of 2018 witnessed the arrest of Brazil's popular former President Lula da Silva as he appeared likely to win the October election; the failure of Putin to allow credible electoral competition; growing state-sponsored fascism within India; the ending of term limits in China at the same time as worsening surveillance and repression; and a (popular) regime change in South Africa immediately followed by budgetary austerity and an attack on workers' right to strike.

One of the crucial questions is whether the subimperial bloc – so full of chaos, including between the two largest countries, at sensitive borders – will solidify and achieve something like a shift into inter-imperial power. Indications of that, so far, are illusory. Instead, as Amin (2015) puts it, “the BRICS, at best walk on only one leg: they reject the geopolitics of imperialism but accept economic neoliberalism.” While Trump’s militarist agenda is now being somewhat more effectively balanced by the likes of China’s navy and Russia’s missile systems – both of which are capable of engaging in debilitating strikes that would evade U.S. prevention – this is largely defensive and regional. For even while rejecting imperialist geopolitics in rhetorical terms, it is the BRICS’ assimilation into neoliberal multilateral politics that stands out even more.

More analysts are finding the BRICS’ potential has now passed. As Vijay Prashad (2018) argues, “The BRICS bloc – given the nature of its ruling classes (and particularly with the right now in ascendency in Brazil and in India) – has no ideological alternative to imperialism.” Vivek Chibber (2018) also sees BRICS elites as assimilationist, in a 2018 South African interview: “what we are seeing happening is the convergence of ruling classes in the global south and the global north into a common committee of global capitalist interests.” These are all subimperial traits consistent with the Marini-Harvey theses.

In the last week of July 2018, the BRICS bloc heads of state met in Johannesburg’s Sandton business district, with a counter-summit of radical activists and intellectuals gathering under the banner of ‘Break the BRICS.’ This is one annual event – as also occurred in Hong Kong in 2017, Goa in 2016, Fortaleza in 2014 and Durban in 2013 – in which activists and allied intellectuals advance their critiques of local and regional systems of super-exploitation, ecological threats and democratic deficits. But also of concern are the global process that create BRICS subimperialism. While still operating in a largely irrelevant manner within these five countries and internationally, independent Marxist theorists should consider how recognition of these processes can be advanced in both practice and through a broader theory of imperialism, one sensitive to the ways subimperialism has been conceptualized in recent decades.

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‘Africa Rising’ in retreat: Signs of new resistances

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At the very moment that Africa’s GDP ceased its rapid 2002–11 increase, a profound myth took hold in elite economic and political circles, embodied in the slogan “Africa Rising.”[1] That myth persists. Deutsche Bundesbank president Jens Weidmann claimed in June 2017 at a Berlin conference, “Africa stands ready to benefit from an open world economy. Its economic outlook is positive.”[2] The conference was arranged by German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble to promote his G20 “Compact with Africa,” whose “main aim is to lower the level of risk for private investments” (but in the run-up to the German election, he and Angela Merkel were obviously also concerned to give the impression the strategy would reduce Europe’s African refugee crisis).[3]

In reality, after the 2011 peak of the commodity super-cycle and subsequent price crash, it was simply illogical to proclaim that Africa was prospering in “an open world economy”, given that so many of the continent’s economies depend on mineral and oil deposits whose extraction is dominated by transnational corporations (TNCs) and whose prices have been on a roller-coaster since 2002. A brief commodity price recovery in 2016 and ongoing drop in the value of most African currencies did not set the stage for renewed competitiveness, business confidence, or TNC investment, but instead catalyzed another round of fiscal crises, extreme current account deficits, sovereign debt defaults and intense social protests.

There is no hope of a decisive upturn on the horizon, despite hype surrounding China’s “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) mega-infrastructure projects, touted for restoring some market demand for construction-related commodities.[4] As Xin Zhang explained, “Although there is an element of US-China competition for global hegemony behind the OBOR, the main driving force is the pressure from ‘over-accumulation’ in a typical capitalist economy when it approaches the end of a major cycle of capitalist cyclic change…. However, in China, there is also an ongoing debate about whether it is economically rational to pour such huge amounts of money into low-return projects and high-risk countries, especially in the case of

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1 E.g., *The Economist,* “Africa Rising,” December 3, 2011; Alex Perry, “Africa Rising,” *Time,* December 3, 2012; Charles Robertson, “Why Africa will Rule the 21st Century,” *African Business*, January 7, 2013.
2 Jens Weidmann, “Improving the Investment Climate in Africa,” Keynote speech at the Berlin conference, “G20-Africa Partnership: Investing in a Common Future" (June 13, 2017).
3 Bundesministerium der Finanzen, “Compact with Africa”, G20 Finance Ministers Meeting, Baden Baden (March 30, 2017). The only African G20 member, South Africa, was fully assimilated into the program by the time of July’s conflict-ridden heads-of-state summit in Hamburg, in spite of beleaguered President Jacob Zuma’s regular anti-Western pronouncements. Neither Merkel, Zuma nor any others there could reverse U.S. President Trump’s threats to trade deals such as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, dramatic budget cuts to foreign aid (including food and medicines to Africa), or Trump’s intention to raise greenhouse gas emissions and discontinue United Nations Green Climate Fund payments.
4 China suffers from the apparent exhaustion of prior sources of profitability, i.e., “an expanding external market, a relatively large reserve army of labor, and a low debt-income ratio,” according to Hao Qi (“Dynamics of the Rate of Surplus Value and the ‘New Normal’ of the Chinese Economy,” University of Massachusetts-Amherst Political Economy Research Institute Working Paper, June 22, 2017). The prior (2009-12) spatial fix of massive urban infrastructure and housing construction was also soon exhausted, leaving hundreds of Ghost Cities. The OBOR also appears as a potential $1 trillion mirage, and one that may in the process even crack the BRICS, in the event the Kashmir OBOR routing continues to cause extreme alienation between Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi, adding to severe new Sino-Indian military tensions at Bhutan’s Doka La Plateau border.

massive infrastructural projects."[5] The largest of China's "Maritime Silk Road" enterprises reaching into Africa was Tanzania's $11 billion Bagamoyo port, planned in 2013 to handle ten times more containers than nearby Dar Es Salaam harbor. The project, *Forbes* observed, was "vying to become the largest port in Africa upon completion," but was cancelled in 2016 due – according to Deloitte and Touche – "to austerity measures introduced in Tanzania in order to reduce the widening budget deficit."[6]

At the same time in Durban, the $20 billion expansion of the continent's current main container port (which had also aimed at increasing containers 8-fold to 20 million per annum by 2040) was delayed until at least 2032. Corruption in lending and locomotive acquisition (both from China) implicating the South African parastatal Transnet is one factor; rising social resistance to port expansion is another; but the overarching problem was the post-2011 collapse of the Baltic Dry Index, signifying a profound crisis across world shipping.[7] Although the $5 billion Lamu port construction in Kenya now underway not far from the Somalia border will link to South Sudan's oil fields, between civil war there and Al-Shabaab's attacks on Kenya (including kidnapping of a top official when she was unveiling Lamu's spatial plan in July), the project is extremely risky, and 2017 also witnessed widespread community protest, including against a $2 billion coal fired power plant at the port, on grounds of climate change.[8]

Although a $3.2 billion Nairobi-Mombasa rail line was recently built and a $3.6 billion Uganda-Tanzania oil pipeline is planned, and although Ethiopian sweat-shop manufacturing is booming and can now be exported directly via n a $4 billion Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad, all with Chinese aid, the downturn halved the value of East Africa's large infrastructure projects under construction last year. Southern Africa also faced a 22 percent fall in project numbers (to 85 in 2016), down from a cumulative $140 billion in 2015 to $93 billion in 2016, Deloitte also reported. Other recent mega-project reversals associated with Chinese over-reach or outright failure, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, include canceled railway initiatives in Nigeria ($7.5 billion) and Libya ($4.2 billion), petroleum expansion in Angola ($3.4 billion) and Nigeria ($1.4 billion), an irreparably damaged coal-fired powerplant in Botswana ($1 billion), and metal smelting investments in the DRC and Ghana ($3 billion each).[9] The world's largest dam, the $100 billion Inga Hydropower Project on the Congo River (three times the size of China's Three Gorges), is also on indefinite hold after the World Bank pulled out last year and after Obama Administration officials rejected Beijing's 2014 appeals for a joint venture.

5 Xin Zhang, "Chinese Capitalism and the New Silk Roads," *Aspen Review,* 4, 2016.
6 Wade Shepard, "These 8 Companies are Bringing the 'New Silk Road' to Life", *Forbes,* March 12, 2017; Kennedy Kangethe, "East Africa Mega Projects Reduce by Half in 2016: Deloitte Report," *Capital Business,* February 2, 2017.
7 Patrick Bond, "Red-Green Alliance-Building against Durban's Port-Petrochemical Complex Expansion," in L.Horowitz and M.Watts (Eds), *Grassroots Environmental Governance: Community Engagements with Industry* (London: Routledge, 2017).
8 *Business Daily Africa,* "Activists Demonstrate against Centum's Coal Project," May 12, 2017. Courageous citizens' groups facing police harassment as a result include Save Lamu, Cordio East Africa and Muslims for Human Rights.
9 *Wall Street Journal,* "Beijing Shows More Caution on Africa Deals," May 7, 2014.

The crisis of the extractive industries is also witnessed in the plummeting share prices of most mining houses, by more than 75 percent from their early 2015 levels, led by those with African exposure. Neither the entry of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS)[10] bloc nor the G20's meagre new aid promises – mainly aimed at subsidizing TNCs – can disguise the generalized stagnation within the circuits of the world economy most important to Africa or indeed to global prosperity and ecological sanity.[11]

Even before the 2011 commodity peak and 2015 crash, the neoliberal export-oriented strategy had done enormous damage to human development, gender equity, and the natural environment.[12] Although rates of poverty, mortality and morbidity, and education have improved somewhat (especially after the West's G7 debt relief package in 2005 which allowed the phase-out of what had been prohibitive user fees for basic state services), the conditions for reproduction of daily life in Africa have not, especially since the onset of global recession in 2008.[13]

Africa's per-capita GDP levels did indeed rise rapidly from 1998 until then, but with very little trickling down. In 2013, the African Development Bank's chief economist, Mthuli Ncube, made the spurious claim that "one in three Africans is middle class." In 2017, the bank reiterated that "one of the main drivers of the surge in consumer demand in Africa is the continent's growing population (currently 1 billion) and expanding middle class (estimated at 350 million)." But Ncube had defined "middle class" as those who spend anywhere between $2 and $20 per day, with 20 percent in the $2–4 range and 13 percent from $4–$20. Both categories represent poverty incomes in most African cities, whose price levels make them among the world's most expensive. The share of those spending above $20 per day was less than 5 percent and shrinking, Ncube's own data revealed. [14]

A central reason for the disparity between official talk of "Africa Rising" and the deep poverty of most of the continent's people is sheer looting: illicit financial flows (IFFs) as well as legal financial outflows in the form of profits repatriated to TNC headquarters. The most exploitative channels of foreign direct investment (FDI) tend to be those that come in search of raw materials. After the commodity crash, annual FDI inflows to Africa slowed by 15 percent from 2008 to 2016, but despite the reversal, the extractive industries' existing pressures on people and environments intensified, as corporate desperation heightened site-specific industry malpractices, ecological degradation, social abuse, and labor

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10 Patrick Bond and Ana Garcia (Eds) *BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2015); Patrick Bond, "Can BRICS Re-open the 'Gateway to Africa'?," in C. Mutasa and D.Nagar (Eds), *Africa and External Actors,*
(London: IB Tauris, 2017).
11 David Harvey, *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason* (London: Profile Books, 2017); Michael Roberts, *The Long Depression* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2016); Richard Walker (2016), "Value and Nature: Rethinking Capitalist Exploitation and Expansion," Capitalism Nature Socialism.
12 Samir Amin, *Delinking* (London: Zed Books, 1990); Patrick Bond, *Looting Africa* (London: Zed Books 2006).
13 Vusi Gumede (Editor) *The Great Recession and its Implications for Human Values: Lessons for Africa* (Johannesburg: Real African Publishers, 2016).
14 Mthuli Ncube,"The Middle of the Pyramid" (Tunis: African Development Bank, 2013); African Development Bank, OECD Development Centre, UN Development Programme and Economic Commission for Africa, *African Economic Outlook* (Tunis, 2017).

exploitation. The metabolism of capital versus nature and society has amplified to the point even the mining houses' Corporate Social Responsibility is in profound retreat.

That desperation was most obvious during 2015. The British mining firm Lonmin's London listing plummeted from a high price of 427,800c per share in 2007 to just 41c in early 2016, mostly during late 2015 in a fall that was far faster and further than even in the wake of the firm's 2012 massacre of 34 striking platinum mineworkers at Marikana, South Africa. The value of the Anglo American Corporation (a 1917 joint venture of Ernest Oppenheimer and JP Morgan), which for much of the twentieth century was the largest firm on the continent, shrivelled by 93.6 percent from a 2008 peak (3540c per share) to a 2016 low (227c), promptaaing the company to slash mining employment by more than half and begin selling African assets to the Indian entrepreneur Anil Agarwal of Vedanta. Even the world's largest commodity trading firm, Glencore (formerly owned by apartheid oil sanctions-buster Marc Rich and then by his protégé, the South African Ivan Glasenburg), fell 86 percent from its 2011 initial London listing price of 532c per share, to a low of 74c.

As shareholders demanded restoration of their wealth, such crisis conditions generated pressure for more intense extraction. In mid-2017, London-based Global Justice Now and several allies released a study by Mark Curtis estimating that forty-eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are "collectively net creditors to the rest of the world, to the tune of $41.3 billion in 2015." According to Curtis:

> African countries received $161.6 billion in 2015 – mainly in loans, personal remittances and aid in the form of grants. Yet $203 billion was taken from Africa, either directly – mainly through corporations repatriating profits and by illegally moving money out of the continent – or by costs imposed by the rest of the world through climate change.
>
> African countries receive around $19 billion in aid in the form of grants but over three times that much ($68 billion) is taken out in capital flight, mainly by multinational companies deliberately misreporting the value of their imports or exports to reduce tax.
>
> While Africans receive $31 billion in personal remittances from overseas, multinational companies operating on the continent repatriate a similar amount ($32 billion) in profits to their home countries each year.
>
> African governments received $32.8 billion in loans in 2015 but paid $18 billion in debt interest and principal payments, with the overall level of debt rising rapidly.
>
> An estimated $29 billion a year is being stolen from Africa in illegal logging, fishing and the trade in wildlife/plants.[15]

As Curtis's figures and the following pages show, regardless of whether Western or BRICS TNCs are to blame, the excessive profits exiting Africa take many forms. Below we consider IFFs, legal financial outflows, FDI flows, foreign indebtedness, South African sub-imperial accumulation, new subsidies used for infrastructure financing, and uncompensated mineral and oil and gas depletion. The continent is further threatened by land grabs, militarization, and climate change. Multilateral management like the Compact With Africa, Bretton Woods

15 Mark Curtis, *Honest Accounts* (London: Curtis Research, 2017).

loans and United Nations climate finance aren't helping; only rising social resistance can halt and reverse these trends.

Illicit Financial Flows

First, IFFs reflect many of the corrupt ways that wealth is withdrawn from Africa, mostly in the extractive sector. TNCs employ a myriad of crooked tactics in this regard, including mis-invoicing inputs, transfer pricing and other trading scams, tax avoidance and evasion of royalties, bribery, "round-tripping" investment through tax havens, and outright theft of profits. Examples abound: in South Africa, Sarah Bracking and Khadija Sharife reported that De Beers mis-invoiced $2.83 billion of diamonds over six years.[16] A report by the Alternative Information and Development Centre in Cape Town showed that Lonmin's platinum operations have spirited hundreds of millions of dollars offshore to Bermuda since 2000.[17] And Vedanta chief executive Agarwal bragged at a Bangalore meeting that in 2006 he had spent $25 million to buy Zambia's Konkola copper mines, Africa's largest, and went on to reap at least $500 million profits from it annually, apparently through an accounting scam.[18]

Studies of IFFs by the Washington-based NGO Global Financial Integrity and by economist Leonce Ndikumana and his University of Massachusetts colleagues show how they have helped produce an Africa that is both "more integrated but more marginalized" in world trade. Ndikumana subsequently authored a 2016 UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) critique of extractive industries, and his accounts of South African and Zambian operations provoked angry rebuttals from mining industry representatives who objected to the poor quality of statistics provided by the two country's governments. While this has required some recalculations, especially in copper and gold exports, the larger truth of these critiques of IFFs remains.[19]

There are also policy-oriented NGOs working against IFF across Africa and the South, including several with northern roots like Trust Africa's "Stop the Bleeding" campaign, Global Financial Integrity (GFI), Tax Justice Network, Publish What You Pay and Eurodad. (A large share of the credit for making this a major African and world policy matter is due to GFI's Raymond Baker, a U.S. businessman active in Nigeria before moving to the Brookings Institution where he began advocacy on the issue.) Localization has also occurred through NGOs which demand more accountability, including Trust Africa's "Stop the Bleeding" campaign. Linking radical and liberal critiques of TNCs and African elites, the new-found visibility of IFFs gives hope to many who want Africa's scarce revenues to be recirculated inside poor countries, not siphoned away to offshore financial centers. Nevertheless, the head offices of some NGOs remain wedded to the dubious theory that that the bright light

16 Sarah Bracking and Khadija Sharife, *Rough and Polished* (Manchester University: Leverhulme Centre for the Study of Value, 2014).
17 Alternative Information and Development Centre, "Lonmin, the Marikana Massacre and the Bermuda Connection" (Cape Town: AIDC, 2014).
18 *Lusaka Times,* "Video – Vedanta Boss Saying KCM makes $500 million Profit per Year," May 13, 2014.
19 Dev Kar and Josepth Spanjers, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2004-2013* (Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity, 2015); Leonce Ndikumana, "Curtailing Capital Flight from Africa," University of Massachusetts/Amherst Political Economy Research Institute, Amherst, June 2017; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Trade Misinvoicing in Primary Commodities in Developing Countries,* Geneva, 2016.

of transparency can uncover, disinfect and deter corruption. Their main task is to make capitalism "cleaner," by bringing problems like IFFs to light.

Consider the case of Tanzanian NGOs, whose neo-colonial outlook was remarked upon by local Marxist scholar Issa Shivji more than a decade ago.[20] In June 2017, Tanzanian President John Magufuli demanded that Canadian mining giant Barrick Gold pay billions of dollars in taxes that had been illegally exported: "We are in an economic war," he declared. "Billions in revenue have been lost. It's something that is very painful and shameful for Tanzania." In response, the NGO network HakiRasilimali – an affiliate of George Soros' Publish What You Pay (PWYP) – praised Magufuli for standing up, but also warned the government to be mindful of the legal conundrums that could arise from "international legal commitments [under which] the government is bound with guaranteeing companies protection from nationalization and safeguards against retrospective legal applications." The group further emphasized "the need to continue being an investor friendly country where both the investor and government engage in a win-win situation."[21]

Such a mindset is not unusual in PWYP circuits. Still, to their credit, many NGOs, allied funders, and grassroots activists have put enough pressure on governments and corporations to compel the African Union and UN Economic Commission on Africa to at least commission an IFF study, led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki.[22] Published in mid-2015, his report used a conservative methodology to estimate that IFFs from Africa exceed $50 billion every year.

This IFF looting originates largely but not entirely in extractive industries. According to an even narrower accounting than Mbeki's, the African Development Bank and allies' African Economic Outlook report estimated $319 billion was robbed from 2001–10, with the most theft in metals, totalling $84 billion; oil, $79 billion; natural gas, $34 billion; minerals, $33 billion; petroleum and coal products, $20 billion; crops, $17 billion; food products, $17 billion; machinery, $17 billion; clothing, $14 billion; and iron and steel, $13 billion.[23] These data reaffirm the common charge that Africa is "resource cursed."

From IFFs to LFFs

Even if IFFs were reduced, FDI would continue to impoverish African countries, in the form of Licit Financial Flows (LFFs). These are legal profits and dividends sent home to TNC headquarters after FDI begins to pay off. The payments of such outflows, along with interest and the net trading position, are termed the "current account." According to the most recent International Monetary Fund Regional Economic Outlook, the last fifteen years or so have witnessed trade surpluses between Sub-Saharan African nations and the rest of the world reach 5.6 percent of GDP in 2011, followed by smaller net surpluses, and then in

20 Issa Shivji,"The Silences in the NGO Discourse," *Africa Development,* 31, 4, 2006.
21 HakiRasilimali, "Position on Presidential Committees' Reports on Mineral Exports", Dar es Salaam, June 16, 2017.
22 Thabo Mbeki, *Track it! Stop it! Get it! Illicit Financial Flow, Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa*, United Nations Economic Commission on Africa, Addis Ababa, 2015.
23 African Development Bank, OECD Development Centre, UN Development Programme and Economic Commission for Africa, *African Economic Outlook 2013,* Tunis, 2013.

2015-16, deficits of 3.1 and 2.0 percent of GDP, respectively, with more deficits projected by the IMF.[24]

The current account measures not only the balance of imports and exports, but also the flows of profits, dividends, and interest. During the long commodity boom, Sub-Saharan Africa maintained a fair balance, and in 2004–08 even had an average surplus of 2.1 percent of GDP. But since 2011, it has plunged into the danger zone, with a current account deficit of 4.0 percent of GDP in 2016, led by Mozambique (–38 percent) the Republic of the Congo (–29 percent) and Liberia (–25 percent). Including North African countries, the full continent's current account deficit was 6.5 percent of GDP in 2016, as a result of the fall in oil prices to a low of $26 per barrel in early 2016. Of fifty-four African countries, twenty had double-digit current account deficits in 2016. For context, the 1998 crash of leading East Asian economies was catalyzed by current account deficits of only 5 percent.

To cover a current account deficit, inflows of external finance are required. Such flows to Africa amounted to $178 billion in 2016, which was $5 billion less than 2015, largely as a result of a 60 percent decline in portfolio capital inflows (i.e., purchases of shares in debt or stock market investments, especially in the three major markets of Johannesburg, Cairo, and Lagos). Overseas development aid to Africa declined 2 percent in 2016, and remittances were virtually unchanged. Foreign Direct Investment is somewhat more complicated, however.

FDI in Retreat

Third, partly due to the prolonged slump in commodity prices, the difficulty of raising new hard currency to pay profits and dividends rises as FDI falls. From a $66 billion peak annual inflow in 2008 to a 2016 level of $56 billion, FDI remains the second major inflow of hard currency to Africa, trailing only labor remittances. This is not only an African phenomenon: globally, annual FDI was $1.56 trillion in 2011, fell to $1.23 trillion in 2014, rose to $1.75 trillion in 2015, and then dipped to $1.52 trillion in 2016. As UNCTAD reported, 2016 "FDI flows to Africa continued to slide, reaching $59 billion, down 3 per cent from 2015, mostly reflecting low commodity prices."[25] The anticipated 2017 uptick to $65 billion would still be less than 2014's $71 billion.

The countries that saw the largest inflows of FDI in 2016 were the United States, with $385 billion; China (including Hong Kong), with $231 billion; and Britain, with $179 billion. Each outstrips Africa's $59 billion. The single largest African FDI project in 2015–16 was an Egyptian property deal worth $20 billion, sponsored by the China Fortune Land Development company, but even this will create only about 3,000 jobs. Elsewhere in Africa in 2015–16, foreign investment funded only a few other mega-projects, including a Doha real estate development worth $8.5 billion, five Italian oil drill projects worth $8.1 billion, and a Chinese oil pipeline costing $6 billion.[26] Taken together, they suggest an extreme concentration of capital flows which will amplify Africa's uneven development, following a

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24 International Monetary Fund, *Regional Economic Outlook: Africa, 2017*, Washington DC, 2017.
25 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *World Investment Report 2017,* Geneva, 2017.
26 African Development Bank, OECD Development Centre, UN Development Programme and Economic Commission for Africa,*African Economic Outlook 2017,* Tunis, 2017,

pattern that anthropologist James Ferguson describes as "hopping and skipping" across the continent, instead of smoothly "flowing."[27]

Curtis argues that inflows to Sub-Saharan Africa are far lower once both FDI outflows (such as the $11 billion from Angola alone in 2016) and corporate lending associated with FDI are subtracted. Hence in 2015, gross FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa totaled $41.2 billion, but outward FDI was $9.3 billion, leaving a net of $31.9 billion. Moreover, as Curtis shows, "figures from the World Bank suggest that 78 percent of private lending is FDI. This means there was $16.1 billion of loans. Removing this from $31.9 billion leaves $15.8 billion of FDI equity." By comparison, Curtis estimates the entire set of capital inflows to Sub-Saharan Africa Curtis for 2015 at $162 billion, and the outflows at $203 billion (although natural capital accounting, discussed below, would show a far larger net deficit).[28]

The failure to sustain accumulation through FDI is due in part to shrinking commodities markets and the ebbing of the surge in Chinese fixed capital investment of 2009–12. UNCTAD also records "an overall increasing share of regulatory and restrictive policies in total investment policy measures over the last decade," as a result of "a new realism about the economic and social costs of unregulated market forces" – although this may also be a symptom of "investment protectionism."[29] The latter applies less in Africa, although South Africa has become more restrictive on trade as a result of deindustrialization (for example, by applying steel tariffs against Chinese dumping in 2015–17), and has cancelled some bilateral investment treaties because they conflict with the country's Black Economic Empowerment policy.

Foreign Debt Explodes

The current account deficit in turn requires that state elites attract yet more FDI, so as to have hard currency on hand to pay back old FDI (usually as profit and dividend outflows), or if new investment is unavailable, as now appears the case, to take on new foreign borrowings. Because of these efforts to cover its payments deficits and slight trade deficit, Africa's foreign debt is soaring. For Sub-Saharan Africa, what was a foreign debt in the $170–210 billion range from 1995 to 2005 (when G7 debt relief lowered it by 10 percent) has risen to nearly $400 billion by 2015.[30] Not only Chinese lending, but also a spate of Eurobonds became debilitating burdens in several countries, where by 2016 they represented a substantial share of the total public debt stock: 48 percent in Gabon; 32 percent in Namibia; 26 percent in Côte d'Ivoire; 24 percent in Zambia; 16 percent in Ghana; 15 percent in Senegal; and 13 percent in Rwanda.

The 2017 African Economic Outlook observed that "tighter financing conditions and increased debt financing have started to worsen debt service burdens, with an upward trend in both the debt-service-to-revenue ratio and the external debt-service-to-exports

27 James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
28 Curtis, *Honest Accounts.*
29 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,*World Investment Report 2015,* Geneva.
30 IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook: Africa, 2017.*

ratio."[31] For petroleum-based economies, the report continued, there was a "a seven-fold increase in debt service, from an average of 8 percent of revenues in 2013 to 57 percent in 2016," with Nigeria (at 66 percent) and Angola (60 percent) worst affected. Another fear is domestic debt, since the slowdown has also generated "a widespread increase in nonperforming loans, triggering higher provisioning, straining banks" profits, and weighing on solvency."

In the case of the continent's largest debtor, South Africa, foreign debt rose from $25 billion in 1995 to $35 billion in 2005, then soared to approximately $150 billion today, that is, doubling from 20 percent of GDP in 2005 to more than 40 percent now. The last time this ratio was reached was in 1985, with the result – thanks also to anti-apartheid sanctions–that South African president P. W. Botha defaulted on $13 billion in short-term debt and imposed exchange controls. The move signaled to the Anglophone capitalist class that the end of apartheid was near, and thus they should hasten to make favorable post-apartheid arrangements with the African National Congress, then in exile. Unfortunately, those arrangements entailed drawing South Africa much deeper into the world economy, and thus, as the current account deficit rose, deeper into foreign debt.[32]

Exploitation from Within

A more nuanced account is needed of which firms are doing the looting. Western TNCs and governments have of course exploited Africa for centuries, and continue to do so. But Africa's single biggest national source of FDI stock comes from within the continent, from South Africa. A dozen companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange draw steep levels of FDI profits: British American Tobacco, SAB Miller breweries (which in 2016 became a subsidiary of ABI, based in St. Louis), the MTN and Vodacom cellphone networks, Naspers newspapers, four banks (Standard, Barclays, Nedbank and FirstRand), the Sasol oil company, and the local residues of the Anglo American Corporation empire. Their profit rate drawn from South African assets has been 5 percent below the rate earned by the same firms in the larger region.[33]

The result is the systematic internal exploitation of the rest of Africa by South African capital, especially as the main retail chains – such as the Walmart-owned Massmart and its affiliates – use the larger market in the South to achieve production economies of scale that then overwhelm Africa's residual basic-needs manufacturing sector. This too is a form of looting, also based on the IFF strategies used against South Africa by TNCs. Among others, South Africa's MTN cellphone service was reported by the Amabhungane investigative journalist network to have Mauritian and Dubai financial offices which systematically skim profits for dubious tax-avoidance purposes from high-profit operations in Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa (corporate income tax rates in Mauritania are 3 percent, with no tax on capital gains).[34] This practice was most blatant under MTN chairperson Cyril Ramaphosa, who has been South Africa's deputy president since 2014. Ramaphosa also held a 9 percent stake in Lonmin when similar sham "marketing" operations in Bermuda were used to fund

31 African Development Bank, et al, *African Economic Outlook 2017.*
32 Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid* (London: Zed Books, 2003).
33 International Monetary Fund, "2016 Article IV Consultation: South Africa", Washington DC, 2016.
34 Amabhungane, "Ramaphosa and MTN's Offshore Stash," *Mail&Guardian,* October 8, 2015.

tax avoidance.[35] A World Bank credit line worth in excess of $100 million, raised by Lonmin in 2007, was meant to sponsor the construction of more than 5,000 housing units, but only three were built – all under Ramaphosa's direct responsibility.[36] When MTN was fined $4 billion by Abuja authorities in November 2015 for failing to disconnect more than 5 million unregistered Nigerian customers during the state's attempted crackdown on cellphone use by Boko Haram terrorists, the firm had few defenders. The fine was reduced to $1 billion only after South African President Jacob Zuma personally intervened during a 2016 state visit on MTN's behalf.

Zuma has also stepped in militarily to defend the interests of South African capital. The oil operations of Zuma's nephew Khulubuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were said to be worth $10 billion when the concession was acquired in 2010 (although there were unconfirmed reports he sold these interests). Not far away, 1,350 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops were stationed as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force (MONUSCO), but by early 2016, it became apparent that these troops were hardly keeping the peace, as a massacre occurred in their immediate vicinity.[37] Instead, as Belgian Royal Museum for Central Africa analyst Theodore Trefon explained: "Deployment of South African troops in the Intervention Brigade set up by the United Nations in March 2013 to reinforce MONUSCO in eastern DRC is an indication of President Zuma's motivation to stabilize the region for economic reasons."[38]

In a neighboring country to the north, the Central African Republic (CAR), the ANC's "Chancellor House" investment arm sought a diamond monopoly in 2006, codified by Thabo Mbeki and CAR dictator Francois Bozizé. The latter was rejected by his former French sponsors a few years later and, facing a Chadian-backed uprising by the Seleka rebels, won military support from Pretoria. Justifying a five-year commitment to a military presence costing more than $100 million, South African deputy foreign minister Ebrahim Ebrahim explained, "We have assets there that need protection."[39] But on March 25, 2013, more than a dozen corpses of South African soldiers were recovered in Bangui, after a two-day battle in which hundreds of local fighters and bystanders were killed. Two hundred SANDF troops were apparently trying to guard South African assets while Bozizé fled to safety. Seleka invaded his presidential compound, seizing power that day despite resistance from the SANDF men they labeled "mercenaries." Two reporters for the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* reporters recorded the accounts of SANDF troops who made it back alive:

> Our men were deployed to various parts of the city, protecting belongings of South Africans. They were the first to be attacked. Everyone thought it was those who were ambushed, but it was the guys outside the different buildings – the ones which belong to businesses in Jo'burg... We were lied to straight out... We were not supposed to be

35 Alternative Information and Development Centre, "Lonmin, the Marikana Massacre and the Bermuda Connection."
36 John Saul and Patrick Bond, *South Africa's Present as History: From Mrs Ples to Mandela and Marikana* (Oxford: James Currey, 2014).
37 Simon Allison, "South African Peacekeepers accused of Failing to Prevent DRC Massacre," *Daily Maverick*, January 21, 2016.
38 Theodore Trefon, "DRC in the Panana Papers," *Congo Masquerade*, April 5, 2016.
39 Khadija Patel, "SA Troops Killed in Central African Republic: Why, Mr President?," *Daily Maverick,* March 23, 2013; Amabhungane, "Is This what our Soldiers Died For?," *Mail&Guardian,* March 28, 2013.

> here. We did not come here to do this. We were told we were here to serve and protect, to ensure peace.[40]

Sometimes, when South African capital flows elsewhere in Africa, it carries the baggage of its nation of origin. When xenophobic unrest broke out in 2015, there were many branch plants of Johannesburg firms that became targets of protest by Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Malawians, Mozambicans, and Zambians concerned for their relatives' safety. Hostility to Johannesburg capital is well-founded; in 2014 and 2016, its leadership was named the world's most corrupt according to several key metrics (money-laundering, bribery and corruption, procurement fraud, asset misappropriation and cyber crime) compiled by PricewaterhouseCoopers.[41]

At the same time, since the late 1990s, South Africa's current account deficit has soared, as nearly all of the country's biggest companies have relocated to London or New York, taking their LFFs with them, including Anglo American and its historic partner De Beers, as well as SAB Miller, Investec bank, Old Mutual insurance, Didata IT, Mondi paper, Liberty Life insurance, Gencor (BHP Billiton), and a few others. As a result, in 2015, the South African Reserve Bank revealed that Johannesburg firms were in 2012–14 drawing only half as much in internationally sourced profits ("dividend receipts") as TNCs were taking out of South Africa. But that was an improvement over the 2009–11 period, when local TNCs pulled in only a third of what foreigners took out.[42] One reason is that Johannesburg firms have been busier in the rest of Africa in the past few years, as mining, cellphones, banking, brewing, construction, tobacco, tourism, and other services from South Africa became more available up-continent.

Public Subsidization and Private Financing

Another continual threat to the continent is ever more frenetic mining and petroleum extraction, notwithstanding falling prices, as a result of state subsidies. In 2017, the G20 proposed a Compact with Africa (CwA) to assure state support for so-called public-private partnerships across the continent, and to attract institutional investors with state guarantees. As leading financial analyst Helmut Reisen explained, given the anticipated asset base of "$100 trillion by 2020, institutional investors (pension, funds, life insurers and sovereign wealth funds) would need to invest one percent of their annual new inflows to fund Africa's infrastructure gap, estimated at $50 billion per year."[43] But according to the C20 group of civil society watchdogs, this strategy will translate into

> higher costs for the citizens, worse service, secrecy, loss of democratic influence and financial risks for the public and the multinational corporations involved demand that their profits be repatriated in hard currency – even though the typical services contract entails local-currency expenditures and revenues – and that often raises African foreign debt levels, which are now at all-time highs again in many countries.

40 Graham Hosken and Isaac Mahlangu, "'We were Killing Kids'," *Sunday Times,* March 31, 2013.
41 PricewaterhouseCoopers, "Global Economic Crime Survey," Johannesburg, 2016.
42 South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin* (June 2015), Pretoria, 2015.
43 Helmut Reisen, "The G20 'Compact with Africa' is Not for Africa's Poor," Berlin, *Shifting Wealth*, June 8 2017.

> The Compact also is silent regarding problems with (and popular resistance to) investor protection, such as the vague "fair and equitable treatment" clause in investment agreements and investor-to-state dispute settlement.[44]

The Harare-based African Forum and Network on Debt and Development and the Africa Development Interchange Network offered an even more stinging critique: "There is reason to fear that slavery and colonization may strongly come back. In any case, to use public money to protect private investment would equal to taunting the African populations. This can easily be understood only from the perspective of colonization or neoliberal exploitation. This is quite serious when we know that some African leaders hold fortunes outside their countries, to the benefit of Western banks."[45]

Until the G20's recent focus on just seven pro-Western African countries (Tunisia, Ethiopia, Morocco*,* Rwanda, Senegal*,* Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire), it was generally assumed that the largest donor subsidies would go to the African Union's Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The continent-wide trillion-dollar PIDA is mainly aimed at extraction.[46] New roads, railroads, pipelines and bridges are planned, but they largely emanate from mines, oil and gas rigs, and plantations, and are mainly directed towards ports. Electricity generation is overwhelmingly biased towards projected mining and smelting needs, although the case of the parastatal mining firm Eskom, in South Africa is illustrative, as demand for its product fell at least 5 percent in late 2015, once adverse economic conditions forced mine shafts and foundries to close. In 2015, Eskom suffered regular brownouts, but after winter ended, a substantial surplus developed, leading the company to announce major coal-fired power station closures in 2017.

Subsidies of the sort envisaged in the CwA and PIDA could bring back the worst of FDI, especially from BRICS companies, such as the predatory South African firms mentioned above. Other companies with dubious records include Brazil's Vale mining, responsible for mass displacement in Mozambique; Russia's Rosatom, planning a proposed $100 billion nuclear reactor deal with Pretoria, as well as anticipated deals in several other African countries; India's Vedanta, which has an extremely exploitative record in Zambia; and various Chinese parastatals and firms.[47] One channel through which they anticipate receiving indirect financing subsidies, in the form of loans at preferential rates, is the BRICS New Development Bank.[48]

The new wave of BRICS investment already appears to many in Africa as an intensified version of Western TNCs' exploitative experiences, especially considering the pro-corporate arrangements contained in their Bilateral Investment Treaties with Africa.[49] There was initially hope expressed by commentators on the left – including Walden Bello, Horace

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44 C20, "The G20's Compact with Africa," *Pambazuka,* May 4, 2017.
45 African Forum and Network on Debt and Development and the Africa Development Interchange Network, "The G20 Compact With Africa and the Germany Proposed Marshall Plan For Africa," Harare, July 16, 2017.
46 African Union, *Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa*, Addis Ababa, 2012.
47 Patrick Bond, "The BRICS Re-scramble Africa." in R.Westra (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Emerging Markets,* (London: Routledge, 2017).
48 Patrick Bond, "BRICS Banking and the Debate over Sub-Imperialism," *Third World Quarterly,* 37, 4, April 2016.
49 Ana Garcia, "BRICS Investment Agreements in Africa," *Studies in Political Economy*, 98, 1, 2017.

Campbell and Radhika Desai – that the new BRICS financial institutions would break the Bretton Woods stranglehold.[50] Yet their arguments have not confronted such contradictions as their financing of destructive African energy and infrastructure projects, or their upholding of the dollar-centric Western monetary system, or the woefully inadequate climate change policies in which the BRICS are implicated. The BRICS $100 billion Contingent Reserve Arrangement, for example, requires any of the five member countries which fall into financial trouble (such as South Africa no doubt will be when its short-term foreign debt payments become unsustainable) to apply to the IMF for a structural adjustment loan and policy support once they have exhausted 30 percent of their borrowing quota, thus amplifying IMF leverage.[51] And the 2015 round of IMF shareholder restructuring gave substantial voting increases to China (up by 37 percent), Brazil (23 percent), India (11 percent) and Russia (8 percent), yet to accomplish this required that seven African countries lose more than a fifth of their IMF voting share: Nigeria (41 percent), Libya (39 percent), Morocco (27 percent), Gabon (26 percent), Algeria (26 percent), Namibia (26 percent) and even South Africa (21 percent).

Uncompensated Natural Capital Depletion

Dependency-inducing financing arrangements and the continuation of FDI aimed mainly at extraction are responsible for Africa's excessively rapid, poorly-compensated depletion of non-renewable resources. In Africa, this depletion occurs without the kinds of reinvestment that are more common in sites such as Norway, Australia and Canada, whose economies are also resource-based but not nearly so resource-cursed as Africa's, in large part because they host the headquarters of mining and petroleum TNCs. Many BRICS corporations appear only too eager to continue this rapid depletion of Africa's "natural capital," as economists call natural resource endowments. Although the end of the commodity super-cycle will mean a lower rate of extraction measured in global price terms, this should not blind Africans to the continent's residual colonial bias toward the removal of non-renewable minerals, oil, and gas, whose exploitation leaves Africa far poorer than anywhere else on earth.

That bias towards non-renewable resource depletion without reinvestment has caused the continent's net wealth to fall rapidly since 2001. Even the World Bank admits that 88 percent of Sub-Saharan African countries suffered net negative wealth accumulation in 2010.[52] In absolute terms, the bank also acknowledges that this depletion of wealth amounted to 12 percent of the sub-continent's $1.36 trillion GDP in 2010 alone, i.e. $163 billion (and far more if the major North African oil-rich countries are included).

Estimates of the depletion of Africa's wealth should be part of every critique of "extractivism," to make the case that until countries achieve local control of their own resources, minerals and oil should be left in the soil. (For example, grassroots activists critical of diamond extraction in eastern Zimbabwe, oil in Nigeria, and coal, platinum, and

50 Walden Bello, "The BRICS: Challengers to the Global *Status Quo." Foreign Policy in Focus,* August 29, 2014; Horace Campbell, "BRICS Bank Challenges the Exorbitant Privilege of the US Dollar," *TeleSUR,* July 24, 2014; Radhika Desai, "The BRICS are Building a Challenge to Western Economic Supremacy," *Guardian*, April 2, 2013.
51 BRICS, "Treaty for the Establishment of a BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement," Fortaleza, July 15, 2014.
52 World Bank, *Little Green Data Book 2014,* Washington, DC, 2014; World Bank, *The Changing Wealth of Nations,* Washington, DC, 2011.

titanium in South Africa regularly insist on leaving resources in the ground.) For oil, the compensation due from the North – as a down-payment on “climate debt” owed Africa – simply on grounds of climate change mitigation would be substantial. Such a strategy was attempted in the Ecuadoran Yasuni National Park, and while it did not succeed in the short run (2007–13), it deserves to be revitalized, as a means of compensating historically-exploited fossil fuel-rich countries.

Land Grabs, Climate Change, and Militarization

Finally, contemporary African political economy and ecology are characterized by a trio of destructive phenomena: land grabs, militarization, and climate change. The most immediate threats face the African peasantry, especially women, and especially those in areas attractive to foreign investors. Already, small farmers are being displaced in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and elsewhere as a result of land grabs by Middle Eastern countries, India, South Africa, and China.[53] The growing role of the U.S. military’s Africa Command in dozens of African countries attests to Washington’s overlapping desire to maintain control amid rising Islamic fundamentalism, from the Sahel to Kenya – which are, coincidentally, theaters of war in the vicinity of large petroleum reserves.[54]

Climate change will affect the most vulnerable Africans in the poorest countries, who already suffer extreme stress from war and displacement in West Africa, the Great Lakes, and the Horn of Africa. Although Clionadh Raleigh of the Armed Conflict Location Events Data (ACLED) project at Sussex University argues that climate change does not directly cause protests and social unrest, in part because of the role mutual aid systems, there is nevertheless no doubt that worsening agricultural conditions accelerate migration to urban areas, which in turn puts more strain on the social fabric of Africa’s cities.[55] At the same time, the further application of neoliberal state-shrinking public policy is bound to generate yet more social stress, as was the case in Syria prior to the 2011 uprising.

Rising Social Resistance

Largely because of these worsening socioeconomic conditions, African activists and “uncivil society” groups – that is, those willing to express frustration by means other than what are often termed the “invited spaces” of official participation – have been protesting and resisting at rising rates across the continent. There are various ways to measure this power, including police statistics, journalistic accounts, and business executive surveys. According to research by scholars at the universities of Sussex and Texas, protest incidents rose dramatically in 2010–11 and have stayed at remarkably high levels in many African cities.[56]

In 2010, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data database recorded scores of protests (especially those that turned violent, typically facing police repression) in Cairo and

53 Thomas Ferrando, “BRICS, BITs and Land Grabbing,” Paris, Sciences Po Law School, 2014.
54 Nick Turse, “Africom Becomes a War-Fighting Combatant Command,” *TomDispatch,* April 13, 2014.
55 Clionadh Raleigh, “Climate Violence?” Lecture to the Oxford Martin School, Oxford, May 11, 2017.
56 ACLED, Armed Conflict Location Events Data, Sussex; Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, “Final Program Report on Climate Change and African Political Stability,” Austin, University of Texas, 2016.

Alexandria, Mogadishu, Nairobi, the cities and towns on the Gulf of Guinea – especially in Nigeria – and in the four largest South African cities: Johannesburg-Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. In 2011, dozens of protests broke out in these cities. Tunis, Algiers and Cairo were measured as hosting more than one hundred protests each.

In 2015–16, the continent witnessed even more intense protests across North Africa, Nigeria, and South Africa. In addition, Southern Africa witnessed high levels of resistance in Harare, Kinshasa, and Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in Zambia and Madagascar, where the capitals of Lusaka and Antananarivo recording substantial increases compared to 2011. East Africa and the Horn witnessed scores of protests in Nairobi; Kampala; Bujumbura; Khartoum, and Addis Ababa and surrounding towns. West African protests were led by Nigerians, but there were many other scattered sites of unrest in the Gulf of Guinea. 2016 saw new rounds of protests in North Africa, most in the major 2011 sites: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. Although the counter-revolution had since prevailed in most of these countries, the activists were not deterred from expressing grievances. State repression has accordingly intensified in many countries as a response to the protest upsurge.[57]

The African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development also measure protests with data based upon Reuters and Agence France Press reports, and in 2017 observed that higher wages and better working conditions consistently ranked as the main motives for protests in recent years.[58] A good share of the turmoil in Africa prior to the 2011 upsurge took place near sites of mineral wealth.[59] Subsequently socioeconomic protests included the famed Tunisian revolt in 2011 catalyzed by Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation. Both Tunisia and Egypt generated such intense revolutionary bursts of energy because their independent labor movements were also ascendant. Notwithstanding extreme unevenness across and within the continent's trade unions, Africa is ripe for a renewed focus on class struggle.

Indeed, as socioeconomic conditions continue to deteriorate, the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report – an annual survey of 14,000 business executives in 138 countries – has ranked the continent's workers as the least cooperative on earth. In 2016, workforces from South Africa (ranked as the world's most militant every year since 2012), Chad, Tunisia, Liberia, Mozambique, Morocco, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Algeria, and Burundi were among the top twenty-five most confrontational proletariats.[60] (Meanwhile, the most cooperative workers are in Norway, Switzerland, Singapore, Denmark, and Sweden.)

With GDP growth declining to just 1.4 percent in 2016 and commodity prices still low, and with declining levels of transnational corporate investment seeking desperately to exploit the continent, Africa's current contradictions may well spark more socio-political explosions. The idea of a Polanyian "double movement" – i.e., social resistance against marketization–

57 David Kode and M.Ben Garga, "Activism and the State," *Pambazuka,* May 11, 2017.
58 African Development Bank et al, *African Economic Outlook 2017.*
59Nicolas Berman, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner and Mathias Thoenig, "This Mine is Mine! How Minerals Fuel Conflicts in Africa," Oxford: Oxford Centre for the Analysis of Resource Rich Economies, 2014.
60 World Economic Forum, *Global Competitiveness Report, 2016-17,* Davos, September 2016.

has long applied to Africa. IMF austerity and subsequent riots spread across the continent during the 1980s, and to some extent catalyzed democratization movements during the early 1990s, but mainly failed to establish durable liberal political regimes. With the spoils of exuberant commodity markets accruing to unaccountable elites, another intense protest wave began in 2011, sparked in North Africa by increasingly urgent economic grievances.[61]

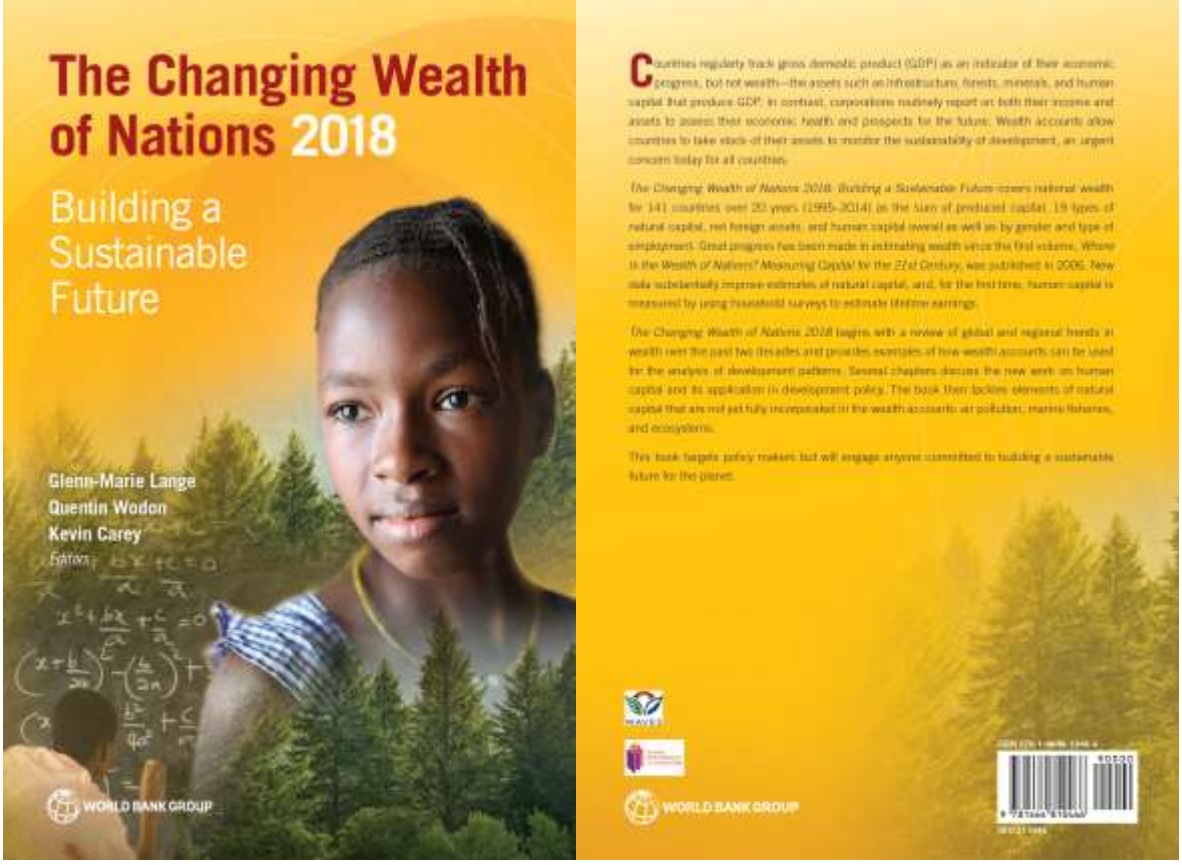
However, an old problem arises. Frantz Fanon complained in *Toward the African Revolution* that “the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles, the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology.” In a speech titled “The Weapon of Theory,” Amilcar Cabral agreed: “The ideological deficiency within the national liberation movements, not to say the total lack of ideology – reflecting as this does an ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform – makes for one of the greatest weaknesses in our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all.”[62]

Samir Amin and other radical political economists have argued for an ideology and economic strategy of “delinking” since the 1960s. Today we might term such an effort the “globalization of people and de-globalization of capital,” a slogan that captures the soundest short-term economic strategy for what could become a post-FDI world, at a time the rates of growth of trade (especially shipping), FDI and North-South financial and aid flows are stagnant or even shrinking. It is high time that these arguments, long dismissed under the neoliberal ascendancy, be dusted off and put to work, to help Africans continue to rise against the chimera of “Africa Rising.” Those who would dispute this line of argument must confront evidence of the futility of Africa’s export-led economic fantasies, whether via the West or BRICS economies, three of which – South Africa, Brazil and Russia – have seen negative growth in 2016-17. And as a final clarion call for a radical reimagining of African political economy, there is also the political-ecological imperative to restructure the fossil fuel-addicted sectors of economy, as the world necessarily moves toward post-carbon systems. Reversing the “Africa Rising” project, then, is the major challenge for Africans who rise up against injustice, especially in those forms in which they can build solidarity with the rest of the world’s oppressed peoples. For example, the struggle for AIDS medicines, once costing $10,000/year per person but now supplied free on a generic basis, was won since the early 2000s thanks to internationalist activism, and has raised life expectancy by more than a decade where applied. At this critical juncture, as the commodity super-cycle’s denouement now makes obvious the need for change, at least it is clear to all that Africans are not lying down.

61 Samir Amin, “An Arab Springtime?,” *Monthly Review,* June 2011; Rabah Arezki and Marcys Brückner,“Food Prices, Conflict, and Democratic Change,” University of Adelaide School of Economics Research Paper No. 2011-04, 2011; Jumoke Balogun, “Africa is Rising. Most Africans are Not,” *Compare Afrique,* February 15, 2013; John Beieler, “Protest Mapping,” State College, Penn State University, 2013; Ama Biney,“Is Africa Really Rrising?” *Pambazuka*, July 31, 2013; Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly, *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change* (London: Zed Books, 2015); Sokari Ekine, “Defiant in the Face of Brutality: Uprisings in East and Southern Africa,” *Pambazuka,* 532, June 2, 2013.
62 Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967); Amilcar Cabral, “The Weapon of Theory,” Address to the first Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Havana, January 1966.

New evidence of Africa’s systematic looting, from the increasingly conflicted World Bank

Pambazuka, 8 February 2018



A brand new World Bank report, *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018,* offers evidence of how much poorer Africa is becoming thanks to rampant minerals, oil and gas extraction. Yet Bank policies and practices remain oriented to enforcing foreign loan repayments and transnational corporate (TNC) profit repatriation, thus maintaining the looting.

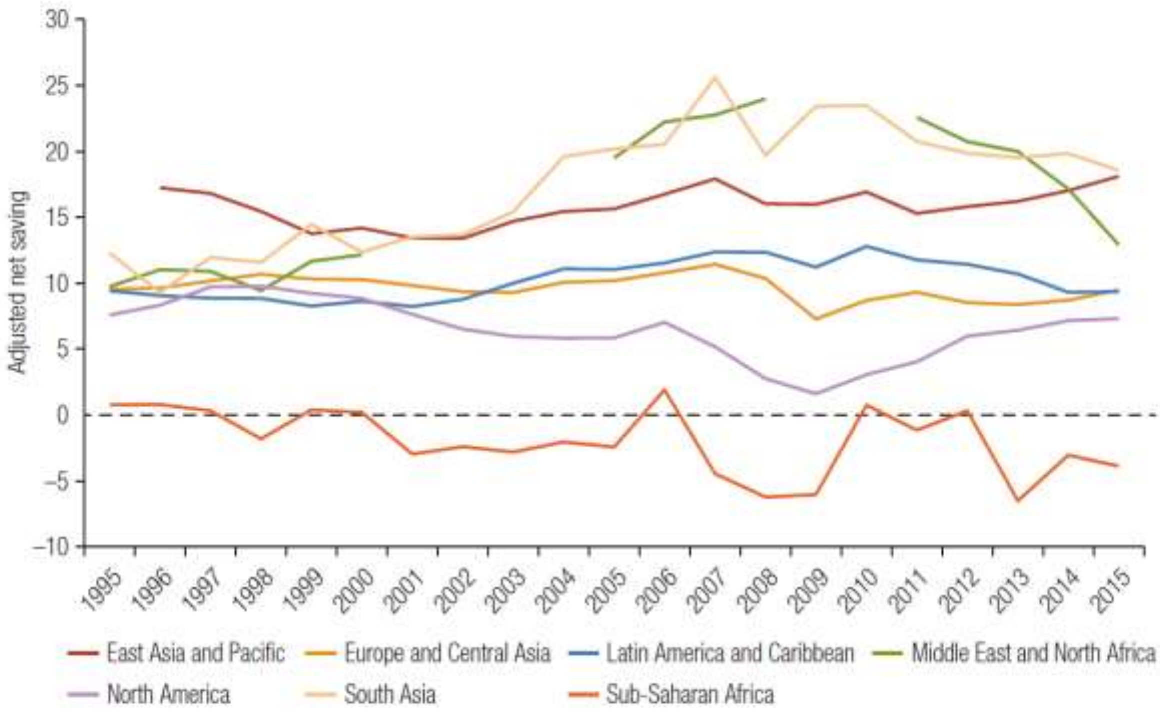
Central to its “natural capital accounting,” the Bank uses an “Adjusted Net Savings” (ANS) measure for changes in economic, ecological and educational wealth. This is surely preferable to “Gross National Income” (GNI, a minor variant of Gross Domestic Product), which fails to consider depletion of non-renewable natural resources and pollution (not to mention unpaid women’s and community work).

In its latest world survey (with 1990-2015 data), the Bank concludes that Sub-Saharan Africa loses roughly $100 billion of ANS annually because it is “the only region with periods of negative levels – averaging negative 3 percent of GNI over the past decade – suggesting that its development policies are not yet sufficiently promoting sustainable economic growth… Clearly, natural resource depletion is one of the key drivers of negative ANS in the region.”

The Bank asks, “How does Sub-Saharan Africa compare to other regions? Not favorably.” Contrary to pernicious “Africa Rising” mythology, the ANS decline for Sub-Saharan Africa was worst from 2001-09 and 2013-15. Other regions of the world scored strongly positive ANS increases, in the 5-25 percent range. Richer, resource-intensive countries such as Australia, Canada and Norway have positive ANS resource outcomes partly because their TNCs return profits to home-based shareholders.

FIGURE 2.12 Adjusted Net Saving, by Region, 1995–2015

percentage of gross national income



Source: World Bank calculations.

Note: There is a break for Middle East and North Africa because of a lack of data for many countries in the region for those years.

Africa's smash-and-grab 'development policies' aiming to attract Foreign Direct Investment have, even the Bank suggests, now become counter-productive: "Especially for resource-rich countries, the depletion of natural resources is often not compensated for by other investments. The warnings provided by negative ANS in many countries and in the region as a whole should not be ignored."

Such warnings – including the 2012 Gaborone Declaration by ten African governments – are indeed being mainly ignored, and for a simple reason, the Bank hints: "The [ANS] measure remains very important, especially in resource-rich countries. It helps in advocating for investments toward diversification to promote exports and sectoral growth outside the resource sector."

Africa desperately needs diversification, but governments of resource-cursed countries are instead excessively influenced by TNCs intent on extraction. Even within the Bank such bias is evident, as the case of Zambia shows.

Zambia's missing copper

Last year, the Bank appointed Zambia the main pilot country study within the project "Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services" (WAVES). Zambian forests, wetlands, farmland and water resources were considered the "priority accounts." Conspicuously missing was copper, the main component of Zambia's natural wealth.

WAVES

Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services

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Zambia joins WAVES+, identifies priority accounts during stakeholder consultation

In January 2017, the Government of the Republic of Zambia submitted a formal expression of interest (EOI) to join the WAVES Program. The country is intent on promoting sustainable development by ensuring that natural resources are mainstreamed in development planning and national economic accounts. Zambia is the first country to be adopted as a core implementing country (CIC) in this second phase of the WAVES Program, known as WAVES+. In this capacity, Zambia will be able to benefit from the experience of the current eight WAVES countries.

According to the Government's EOI, *"natural capital that includes ecosystem services such as provision of clean water, sediment retention and erosion control, eco-tourism, pollination services and carbon storage, are not explicitly recognized in national accounts at all. This is a misnomer because natural capital is a critical asset, especially for developing countries like Zambia where it makes up a significant share (36%) of total wealth."*

A project identification mission took place from February 20-24, 2017 to discuss possible future activities with stakeholders. The consultation provided an opportunity to share knowledge about other WAVES countries, notably Botswana and Rwanda; to select the types of accounts Zambia will focus on; and to identify priority actions under the program. The mission also enhanced collaboration across departments and paved the way for an effective coordination mechanism and working groups.

About 25 representatives from 18 government agencies and other organizations participated in the workshop. Participants examined key questions and operational challenges, including issues related to policy and planning, institutions and capacity, data availability, and technical feasibility. Through this process, participants were able to identify which policy area accounts should be prioritized during the first year of Zambia-WAVES.

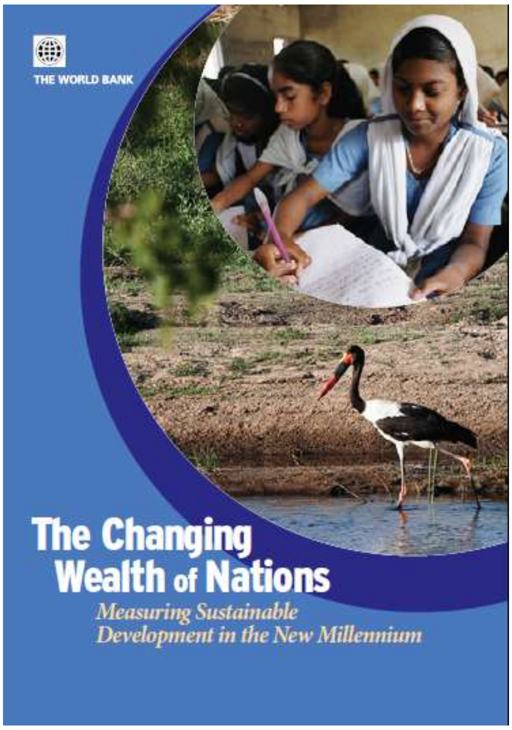
Out of the six priority natural resources identified in the Government's EOI, three primary accounts were designated:

- Land accounts, with a focus on changes in land cover including forests, wetlands and agricultural lands;
- Water accounts, including water supply, use and quality; and
- Forest accounts, including production of timber and non-timber forest products

These accounts will be used to inform issues like deforestation, land use planning, and water allocation. There was a remarkable consensus among the working groups on the importance of starting with these three areas.

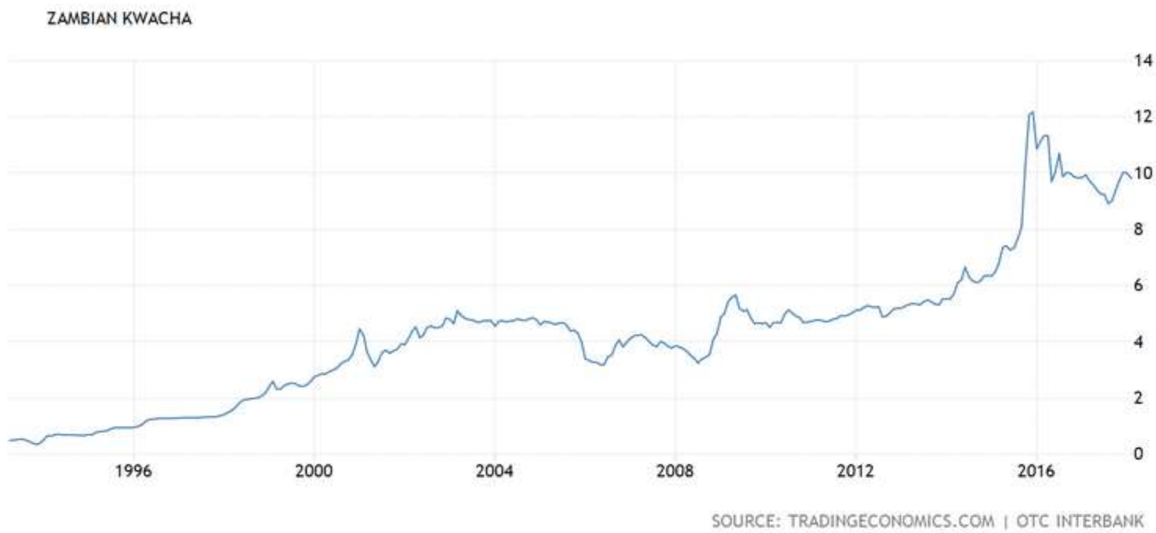
Mrs. Chunga, Agricultural Director at the Ministry of Development Planning and the focal person for WAVES, laid out the context for natural capital accounting in Zambia

Was copper neglected in WAVES because such accounting would show a substantial net loss? One Bank estimate of copper's annual contribution to Zambia's declining mineral wealth a decade ago put it at a huge 19.8 percent of GNI. Were such data widely discussed, it might compel a rethink in Zambia's desperate privatisation of mines and export of unprocessed ore.



	Percent of GNI
Gross savings	26.2
– Consumption of fixed capital	10.7
= Net national savings	15.5
+ Education expenditure	2.1
– Energy depletion	0.1
– Mineral depletion	19.8
– Net forest depletion	0.0
– Carbon dioxide damage	0.2
– Particulate emission damage	0.6
= Adjusted net savings	-3.0

Naturally most World Bank staff work not in Zambians' interests, but on behalf of other international banks and TNCs. This compels them to squeeze Zambia's scarce foreign exchange: first, so TNCs can take profits home, and second, so Lusaka repays loans no matter how unaffordable and no matter how corrupt the borrowing government. Repayment is now especially difficult given that the kwacha declined from a level around 1 to the US$ in the 1990s to around 5 to the US$ from 2003-15, to the 9-12/US$ range since.



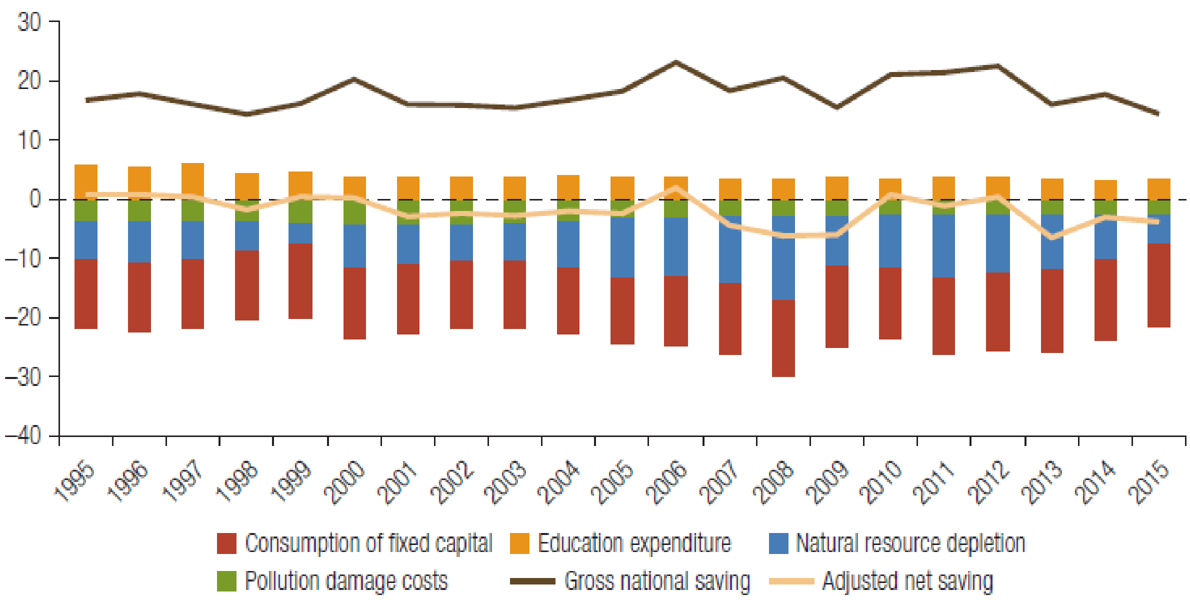
From 2002-08, the Zambian government led by Levy Mwanamasa (1948-2008) came under severe pressure from the World Bank to sell the most valuable state assets to repay older loans, including those taken out by his corrupt predecessor, Frederick Chiluba (1943-2011). That debt should have been repudiated and cancelled.

Even then, when selling Africa's largest copper mine at Konkola, Mwanamasa should have ensured at least $400 million went into Zambia's treasury. But the buyer, Vedanta chief executive Anil Agarwal, laughed wickedly when bragging to a 2014 investment conference in Bangalore, India, that he tricked Mwanawasa into accepting only $25 million. "It's been nine years and since then every year it is giving us a minimum of $500 million to $1 billion." (Agarwal is now in the process of buying Anglo American's South African mining assets, having purchased 20 percent of the firm in 2016-17.)

Against the looting of Africa: top-down or bottom-up?

Zambia is not alone. The Bank reports that from 1990-2015 many African countries suffered massive ANS shrinkage (a process termed 'dissaving' as a polite substitute for 'looting'), including Angola (68 percent), the Republic of the Congo (49 percent) and Equatorial Guinea (39 percent). As commodity prices peaked in the 2007-14 super-cycle period, resource depletion was the major factor for Africa's wealth shrinkage.

FIGURE 3.2 Trends in Adjusted Net Saving for Sub-Saharan Africa, 1995–2015
percentage of gross national income



Source: World Bank calculations.

What can be done? There are really only two ways to address TNC capture of African wealth: bottom-up through direct action blocking extraction, or top-down through reforms.

The futility of the latter is exemplified by the African Union's 2009 Alternative Mining Vision (AMV). It proclaims (without any reference to natural resource depletion capital accounting), "arguably the most important vehicle for building local capital are the foreign resource investors – TNCs – who have the requisite capital, skills and expertise"

South African activist Chris Rutledge opposed this neoliberal logic last year in an ActionAid report, *The AMV: Are we repackaging a colonial paradigm?:* "By ramping up models of maximum extraction, the AMV once again stands in direct opposition to our own priorities to ensure resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice. It is downright opposed to any type of Free Prior and Informed Consent. And it does not address the structural causes of structural violence experienced by women, girls and affected communities."

The first strategy – community-based opposition – could be far more effective. According to a pamphlet prepared by Johannesburg faith-based mining watchdog Bench Marks Foundation for the civil society Alternative Mining Indaba in Cape Town this week, "Intractable conflicts of interest prevail with ongoing interruptions to mining operations. Resistance to mining operations is steadily on the increase along with the associated conflict."

The Indaba's challenge is to embrace this resistance, not retreat into reformist NGO silos – and not continue to ignore mining's adverse impact on energy security, climate and resource depletion as it often has.

Indeed, three years ago, Anglo American CEO Mark Cutifani conceded that due to community protests, "There's something like $25 billion worth of projects tied up or stopped," a stunning feat given that all new mines across the world were valued that year at $80 billion. (A map of these can be found at the Environmental Justice Atlas, http://ejatlas.org.)

Meanwhile, the World Bank's lending staffers (distinct from the *Changing Wealth of Nations* researchers) are still subject to protests over mining here. Women living in the Marikana slums, organised as Sikhala Sonke, remain disgusted by the $150 million financing commitment made to Lonmin, which from 2007-12 the Bank bizarrely considered its 'best case' for community investment – until the police massacre of 34 workers there during a wildcat strike. (Bank president Jim Yong Kim even visited Johannesburg two weeks after that, but didn't dare mention much less visit his institution's 'best case' mining stake.)

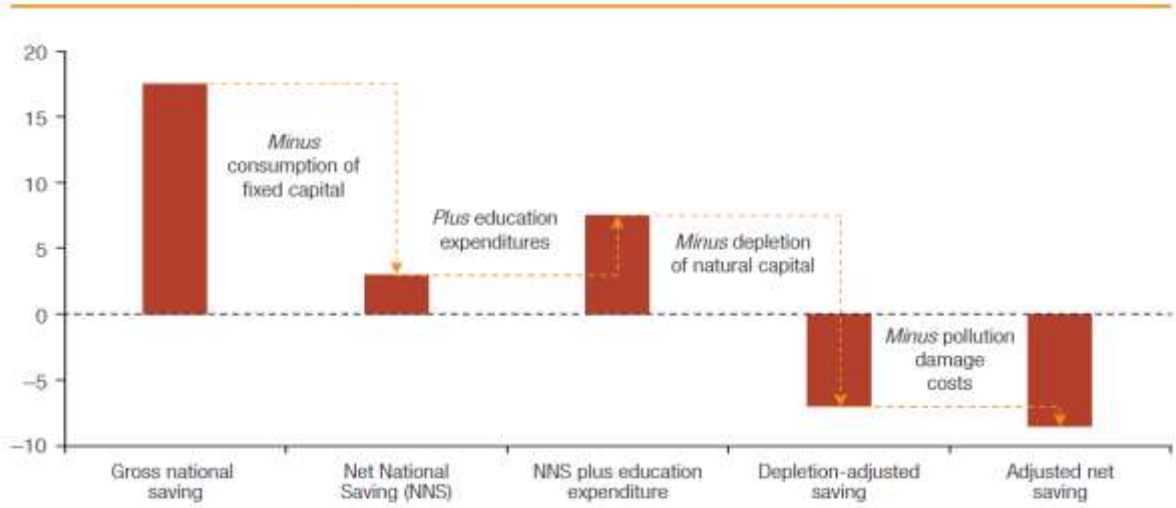
The Bank's other notorious South Africa operations included generous credits to the apartheid regime, relentless promotion of neoliberal ideology after 1990, a corrupt $3.75 billion Eskom loan in 2010 (the largest-ever Bank project loan, which still funds the most polluting coal-fired power plant under construction anywhere in the world), and ongoing lead-shareholder investments in the CPS-Net1 rip-offs of South Africa's 11 million poorest citizens who receive social grants.

To top it all off, in spite of the embarrassing revelations about TNC exploitation unmistakeable in *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2018,* the Bank is a financial sponsor of this week's African Mining Indaba at the Cape Town convention centre. Each year, it's the place to break bread and sip fine Stellenbosch wines (though perhaps not water in this climate-catastrophic city) with the world's most aggressive mining bosses and allied African political elites, conferring jovially about how to amplify the looting.

(Patrick Bond teaches political economy at the Wits University School of Goverance in Johannesburg, and is author of, among other books, *Looting Africa: The Economics of Exploitation,* Zed Books, 2006)

On Bank methods for bean-counting nature

FIGURE 2.10 Procedure for Estimating Adjusted Net Saving
percentage of gross national income



Source: World Bank.

By way of a brief methodological explanation, the Bank calculates 'consumption of fixed capital' (wear and tear on machines), educational expenditure ('human capital'), depletion of non-renewable resources ('natural capital') and pollution damage. In the calculation above, says the Bank, "About half of gross national saving is used for the consumption of fixed assets (depreciation), with a similar negative contribution (with some variation over the years) resulting from natural resource depletion. The losses from pollution are smaller, as is the positive contribution of spending for education."

The negative contribution from mining is a conservative estimate, because "some important resources are still not included because of a lack of data, notably platinum group minerals, diamonds, and other minerals." Hence while three of South Africa's major mineral exports are calculated – coal, iron-ore and gold – the trillions of dollars represented here by 85 percent of the world's platinum are not included. Vast levels of diamond extraction in Zimbabwe, Botswana, the DRC, Sierra Leone and Liberia are also ignored, so the alleged 3 percent annual decline in the region's wealth is likely to be far worse.

Uneven development and resource extractivism in Africa

in C.Spash (Ed), *Ecological Economics: Nature and Society*
New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017

Introduction

As neoliberal ideology has expanded into environmental management and Africa has suffered as a result. The most serious eco-social contradiction may well be the extraction of non-renewable resources – minerals, oil, gas and old-growth forest resources – at a pace far in excess of returns to source countries, especially in the wake of the catastrophic commodity price crash from 2011-2015. Even during the 2002-2011 commodity super-cycle, extraction left a net negative 'adjusted net savings' once natural capital accounting is applied; in other words, countries are demonstrably poorer the more they face resource extraction by multi-national corporations. Most serious of all environmental problems is the extreme vulnerability Africans face due to human induced climate change, with estimates of unnecessary deaths approaching 200 million and large parts of the continent expected to be unliveable by the end of the 21st Century, if not well before. In addition, African climate justice advocates and progressive conservationists have often found themselves confronting the adverse impacts not only of resource 'extractivism' and neoliberal socio-economic policies, but also of specific market-environmentalist strategies such as Clean Development Mechanism projects, forest offsets and proposed trading systems for rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory (Bond 2012).

Signs of dissent across Africa are the main hope – far greater than top-down Sustainable Development Goals or the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate – for a dramatic reversal in Africa's eco-social development prospects. Though there are few ecological economists and political ecologists in Africa doing research and developing a pedagogy at present (aside from the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa and a few non-governmental organisation (NGO) initiatives mainly aimed at resource-related transparency), such intellectual work is urgently needed by grassroots dissidents. The period ahead requires revitalised political economy research, with more sensitivity to gender [Chapter 5], race and identity as central facets of uneven development [Chapters 4 and 15], alongside a critique of capitalism's widespread environmental damage (Bond 2006).

This chapter will introduce the reader to some of the central problems facing Africa today. The next section gives a brief general background to the political, social and economic situation. This is followed by a more specific account of debates over eco-social development in which ecological economics concepts are usefully invoked.

Background

The conditions for reproduction of daily life, sustainable economic development and ecological conservation in Africa have not improved as a result of the frenetic expansion of global capitalism over the past third of a century. In many ways conditions have worsened. The period has been characterised by the fall, rise and crash of commodity prices; the Soviet Union's collapse and hence the 1990s' dramatic shrinkage of overseas development aid (earlier so closely tied to the Cold War); persistent civil wars and regular cross-border conflicts; structural adjustment austerity imposed by the Bretton Woods Institutions, carried out by dictatorships or at best semi-democratic regimes; the intensification of export-oriented macroeconomic policy; deepening of extractive industry super-exploitation, in which profits are captured by local rentiers and multi-national corporations, both using tax-avoidance techniques known as 'Illicit Financial Flows' (IFFs); worsening relative deindustrialisation; AIDS, Ebola and other preventable diseases; and the resulting amplification of vaious political, economic and ecological injustices.

Simultaneously, though paradoxically, a cacophony of 'Africa Rising' rhetoric emerged from business journalists, mainstream think tanks and financial institutions. Some of the rhetoric was based on the post-2000 arrival of new fixed capital investment, including mega-infrastructure projects, emanating from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries. Some was based upon microeconomic innovations, such as cellular telephony 'leapfrog technology,' or micro-credit's role in 'financial deepening' (i.e. higher domestic debt loads). Some celebration was justified by the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, which initially appeared relatively unscathed by the 2008-2009 'Great Recession'. In 2015 there were also partial celebrations of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievements, including nominal declines in the numbers of people suffering 'poverty' (depending upon definitions). Minor progress on the social welfare front in some African countries can indeed be traced to slightly more generous public education and health system spending – including free AIDS medicines that before 2000 cost $10,000/year, until desperate health activists compelled change (hence resulting in dramatic African life expectancy increases from the mid-2000s) – as well as cash transfer redistribution schemes. However, while some have 'developed', others still suffer dramatic declines in living standards and ecological conditions, for the African continent remains the world's most extreme site of uneven development.

A period of even more extreme uneven development lies ahead, not least due to the growing contradictions within and between markets, States, societies and the environment. The 2011 peak of world commodity prices followed by crashes of 50 percent or more for many African raw materials by 2016, left most of Africa suffering from global capitalism's vicissitudes. Symptoms included fast-rising current account deficits and foreign debt. Yet there are many residues of 'Africa Rising' rhetoric that remain to be contested.

African eco-social development, from above

Overconfidence in a top-down 'development' model coincides with pressure on Africa to further extract and export raw materials, tighten State budgets as revenues shrink, and continue financial and trade liberalisation, ultimately emphasising GDP growth above all else. To define development as GDP leaves out factors that are especially vital in Africa: non-renewable resource depletion, the pollution of air and water, loss of farmland and wetlands, unpaid women's and community work, and family breakdown due to widespread migrant labour systems (Fioramonti 2014).

Technocratic interventions promoting Keynesian and basic-industrial strategies, such as the 1980 *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa* and 1989 *African*

Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes, were useful as semi-official reform proposals. These were ignored in practice as neoliberalism dominated policy-making, but in any case did not highlight environmental values. As a result, subsequent debate centred on whether the export-oriented, resource-intensive strategy could be improved by new counting techniques, greater transparency, attention to IFFs ,and the incorporation of Nature into the market. Advocating the latter, the World Bank (2012:12) argues that: "green growth is about good growth policies – addressing market failures and 'getting the price right' by introducing environmental taxation, pricing environmental externalities (such as carbon pricing), creating tradable property rights, and reducing inappropriate subsidies."

Environmental considerations are apparently a lower priority, however, now that the commodity price super-cycle is definitively over. As a result, foreign investors are more frenetically extracting resources from existing mines, oil fields and plantations across the continent, raising output levels where possible to offset the commodities' lower profitability. There is limited incentive to reinvest, to engage seriously in Corporate Social Responsibility or environmental protection, or to open new production facilities. Tens of thousands of Africa's resource-sector workers have lost their jobs in several of the countries most adversely affected, These contradictions may well lead to more social and political explosions.

Debates over Africa's resource dependency

The most powerful statements concerning uneven eco-social and cultural development in contemporary Africa are from the diaspora's critical intellectuals and political visionaries (e.g. Ake 2001, Amin 1976, Fanon 1963, Nkrumah 1966, Onimode 1988 and Rodney 1974). Many such works reflected on how Africa's comprador classes emerged to lubricate transnational corporations' value transfers to the West. These transfers included not just undercompensated labour values, but also under-priced natural resources, as commodity prices fell steadily after the 1973 oil price spike, through the early 2000s. Moreover, the continent's residual pre-capitalist patriarchal, ethnicist, xenophobic, homophobic and other oppressive narratives were often amplified during the post-colonial transition (Mama 2002).

Reflecting the lost decades associated with structural adjustment, three International Monetary Fund (IMF) economists (Salinas, Gueye and Korbut 2011:3) recognised the reality of post-colonial economic decline:

> "The apparent stagnation of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (the poorest region in the world) in an era of freer markets has fuelled strong criticisms against market reforms. Indeed, condemnation of economic liberalization has become part of mainstream development thinking, and several commentators urge SSA countries to accelerate growth by modifying their comparative advantage on natural resources. But does SSA stagnation imply the failure of market reforms and of the natural resource-based model in the region?"

Reflecting the dominant discourse, however, they answered firmly in the negative:

> “SSA countries can *grow sustainably without changing their comparative advantage in natural resources*. The growth experience of SSA countries that dismantled the Import Substitution Industrialisation model and avoided major political instability provides further evidence that a natural resource-based model can be consistent with sustained economic growth.” [emphasis added] (Salinas, Gueye and Korbut 2011:3)

This ideologically-charged claim was made in 2011, at the peak of the commodity price cycle, and entailed a misleading characterisation of high-growth African countries to include those that were recovering (rapidly in GDP terms) from ubiquitous civil wars, while the majority of the continent still suffered (Weeks, 2010). Similarly, a decade earlier, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) strategy adopted by the African Union also decried historic underdevelopment processes and, as a solution, proposed even more integration into the world economy (Bond 2005). According to standard liberal doctrine, this was meant to be accompanied by democratisation, but in 2016 the African Peer Review Mechanism – a continental agreement promoting freedom and human rights that was meant to undergird NEPAD’s economic strategy – was also at risk of “breathing on life-support in a coma, while effectively brain-dead”, according to one of its main NGO supporters (Fabricius 2016). In other words neither neoliberalism nor its liberal political veil were suitable frameworks to prevent the rise of resource-related super-exploitation during the commodity super-cycle, nor to prevent adverse exposure to global economic volatility and crashing markets in the subsequent period. Moreover, notwithstanding claims to the contrary about a ‘rising middle class’ in Africa, there was a decline in the proportion of Africans spending at least $20/day, from 6.5 to 4.8 percent of the population from 2000-2010 (African Development Bank 2011). Claims made by advocates of the MDGs and Sustainable Development Goals are just as misleading (Amin 2006, The Rules 2015).

The case for export-led growth is further weakened when ecological economists introduce calculations of Africa’s changes in ‘natural capital’, i.e., physical resource endowments. The removal of non-renewable minerals, oil and gas – and the failure to reinvest profits from these resources – leaves Africa far poorer in net terms than anywhere else on Earth. That bias towards non-renewable resource depletion without reinvestment meant the continent’s net wealth fell rapidly after 2001. Even the World Bank (2014:vi) admits that 88 percent of Sub-Saharan African countries suffered net negative wealth accumulation in 2010. (In contrast, what is termed ‘Adjusted Net Savings’ rose in Latin America and East Asia.) Although the end of the commodity super-cycle means a lower rate of value extraction, this should not blind Africans to the dangers of extractivism where transnational corporations primarily benefit, in contrast to Australia, Canada and Norway, whose resource extraction generates profits to home-based corporations, and hence reinvestment.

The failure of the resource-based model is reflected in declining African exports after 2011, a (small) trade deficit, a near doubling of foreign debt from $200 billion in 2005 to $400 billion a decade later, and an annual current account deficit in excess of $50 billion by 2015 (largely driven by the payments account, i.e. export of profits and dividends). Most aspects of the neoliberal model covered below – Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), IFFs and also *licit* (legal) financial flows, manufacturing deindustrialisation, land grabs, climate change and militarisation – still prove destructive to any reasonable expectations the African citizenries may have about their eco-social development prospects.

Current Assessment of Major Issues

The situation facing an Africa increasingly dependent upon the world economy after 2000 became dire once the commodity crash gathered pace in 2014. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2016), “FDI inflows to Africa fell by 31% in 2015 to an estimated $38 billion, due largely to a decline of FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa”. Subtracting mergers (i.e., not the more desirable ‘greenfield’ investments) from FDI, the 2014-2015 drop was from $50 billion to $18 billion. The most developed economy, South Africa, in 2015 witnessed only $1.5 billion in new FDI, a 74% decline from 2014 levels.

On the other hand, the slowing of FDI inflows mean the extractive industries’ extreme pressures on people and environments will probably slow, although in some cases, corporate desperation will intensify site-specific extractive industry malpractices, more extreme forms of ecological degradation, social depravity and labour exploitation. Traumatic job losses were announced in 2015 – with the Anglo American Corporation (the largest on the continent over most of the prior century) revealing it would scale down mining employment by more than half – but on the positive side, that could also mean less financial disinvestment from Africa and hence less pressure on the balance of payments from profit repatriation (as occurred in 2008-2010 when prices and profits were also lower).

However, aside from licit profit outflows facilitated by the relaxation of exchange controls across the continent, there are huge IFFs – thanks to transfer pricing, mis-invoicing and various other tax avoidance gimmicks – which an African Union commission headed by Mbeki recorded at a minimum of $80 billion annually (Mwiti, 2016). Global Financial Integrity (2015:8-9, 23) measured annual average IFFs from 2004-2013 at $21 billion in South Africa alone (rising to $29 billion in 2013) and $18 billion in Nigeria. Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole lost at least 6 percent of GDP annually to IFFs, more than 50 percent higher than the rate for other continents’ poor countries. Out of every dollar in capital flight, 80 percent comes from: metals (26 percent); oil (25 percent); natural gas (11 percent); minerals (10 percent); and petroleum and coal products (6 percent). Specific examples abound:

- In South Africa, Sarah Bracking and Khadija Sharife (2014) reported that De Beers mis-invoiced $2.83 billion of diamonds over six years, while even Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe claimed $15 billion in missing revenues from diamonds mainly mined by Chinese capital and local military officials from 2008-2015 (Saunders and Nyamunda 2016).
- The Alternative Information and Development Centre (2014) showed that Lonmin’s platinum operations – notorious at Marikana not far from Johannesburg, where the firm arranged a massacre of 34 of its wildcat-striking mineworkers in 2012 – has also spirited hundreds of millions of dollars offshore to Bermuda since 2000.
- The Indian mining house Vedanta’s chief executive arrogantly bragged at a Bangalore meeting how in 2006 he spent $25 million to buy Zambia’s Konkola Copper Mines, which is Africa’s largest, and then reaped at least $500 million profits from it annually (*Lusaka Times* 2014).

Sustained analyses of IFFs at continental scale have been carried out by Leonce Ndikumana, James Boyce and Adeth Ndyiaye (2014), demonstrating how Africa is both more integrated but more marginalised in world trade due to exploitation. There are also policy-oriented NGOs working against IFF across Africa and the South, including several with northern roots like Trust Africa's 'Stop the Bleeding' campaign, Global Financial Integrity, Tax Justice Network, Publish What You Pay, Open Society and Eurodad. Such institutions' studies of IFFs are a source of economic critique that gives hope to so many who want Africa's scarce revenues to be recirculated inside poor countries, not siphoned away to offshore financial centres. Nevertheless, the implicit theory of change adopted by the head offices of some such NGOs is dubious to the extent that they argue that because transparency is like a harsh light that can disinfect corruption, their task is mainly a matter of making capitalism cleaner by bringing problems like IFFs to light (a notable exception is the WoMin – African Women Unite Against Destructive Resource Extraction – which explicitly opposes extractive industries from eco-feminist and anti-imperialist standpoints).

Africa's growing current account deficit requires that State elites attract yet more new FDI or foreign debt, so as to have hard currency on hand to pay back profits and dividends on prior FDI, to overseas Transnational Corporate headquarters. Foreign debt in Sub-Saharan Africa was in the $170-210 billion range during 1995-2005, and was then reduced 10 percent by G7 debt relief in 2006. However, when China stepped in as creditor, it rose to nearly $400 billion by 2015. Neoliberal conditionalities by the IMF never stopped, in spite of successful demands to give more voting power to leaders of the Global South in late 2015: China received a 37 percent greater weight, Brazil 23 percent, India 11 percent and Russia 8 percent. Simultaneously, every African State lost voting power, with six losing more than a quarter, including Nigeria at 41 percent and even BRICS member South Africa lost 21 percent (Bond 2016).

In spite of rising Chinese corporate investment, the single biggest country-based source of FDI in Africa is internal, from the continent's largest foreign debtor (at nearly $140 billion), South Africa. A dozen companies with Johannesburg Stock Exchange listings draw out profits from the rest of the continent: British American Tobacco, SAB Miller breweries, the MTN and Vodacom cell phone networks, Naspers newspapers, four banks (Standard, Barclays, Nedbank and FirstRand), the Sasol oil company and the local residues of the Anglo American Corporation empire. The main retail chains – such as Walmart-owned Massmart and its affiliates – use the larger market in the south to achieve economies of scale in production that then swamps and destroys Africa's remaining basic-needs manufacturing sector.

As another reflection of 'sub-imperial' accumulation, South Africa's MTN cell phone service was reported by the Amabhungane (2015) investigative journalist network to have Mauritian and Dubai financial offices which systematically skim profits for dubious tax-avoidance purposes from high-profit operations (Mauritian company taxes are 3 percent with no capital gains). This was a blatant practice when MTN's chairperson was Cyril Ramaphosa, subsequently South Africa's deputy president from 2014 and the likely president in 2019. In November 2015, MTN was fined $4 billion by Abuja authorities due to its failure to disconnect more than 5 million unregistered Nigerian customers during the State's crackdown on Boko Haram terrorists' cell phones. There were few MTN defenders and indeed, as South African corporations advance further in Africa, they carry the baggage of home: when xenophobia broke out in 2015, branch plants of Johannesburg firms became targets of protest by Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Malawians, Mozambicans and Zambians concerned about their relatives' safety.

Hostility to Johannesburg capital is logical because South African corporate leadership was named the world's most corrupt by the auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (2016) on two occasions since 2014. That year, 80 percent of managers admitted that they commit economic crimes, making them the "world leaders in money-laundering, bribery and corruption, procurement fraud, asset misappropriation and cyber crime" (Hosken 2014). The profits do not stay in South Africa. Since the early 2000s the current account deficit has soared because nearly all the country's biggest companies relocated to London, New York or Melbourne, including: Anglo American and its historic partner De Beers, SAB Miller, Investec bank, Old Mutual insurance, Didata IT, Mondi paper, Liberty Life insurance and Gencor (now BHP Billiton). As a result, the South African Reserve Bank (2015: 39) revealed that Johannesburg firms were by 2012-2014 drawing in only 45 percent as much in internationally-sourced profits (dividend receipts) as TNCs were taking out of South Africa.

Is this withdrawal of Africa's surplus sustainable? In assessing the current direction of African eco-social development, a critical factor is the degree of popular discontent with the *status quo*. The end of the commodity super-cycle coincided with major public protests across Africa, rising from an index level of 100 in 2000 to nearly 450 in 2011, as measured by Agence France Press and Reuters (AfDB et al 2016). Even after the end of the North African uprising ('Arab Spring') – especially in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco – the index of Africa-wide protests rose still higher, to 520 in 2012 and 550 in 2013. In 2014 the protest rate fell back just slightly (to 540) and in 2015, according to the African Development Bank, there were several reasons for a substantial decline (to an index of 300). According to the Bank, "Ebola in West Africa and terrorist attacks in several countries led to reduced tolerance for public demonstrations by authorities. Temporary bans or restrictions were imposed on rallies in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and in the context of officially declared states of emergency in Chad, Egypt, Mali, Niger and Tunisia" (AfDB et al 2016:118).

A good share of the social turmoil in Africa prior to the 2011 upsurge took place in the vicinity of mines and mineral wealth, as reflected in mappings of 'Armed Conflict Location Events Data' (Berman et al 2014) and the Environmental Justice Organisations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT) project (http://ejatlas.org). The World Economic Forum (2015) regularly cites African countries as having amongst the most militant workforces, including South Africa as the proletariat least cooperative with employers from 2012-2015.

Future directions

The central question for Africa's eco-social development in coming years is whether the world economy will continue to stumble – leading to further commodity price deterioration – in part because the Chinese infrastructure boom that required such bountiful raw materials from Africa has come to a grinding halt. If so, while new mining and petroleum projects are likely to be cancelled or postponed, there is a serious threat to the continent, of even more frenetic extraction from existing mines and wells. However, if, partly as a result of State subsidies, a new series of mines and oil rigs are financed, this will probably occur within the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The donor-supported, trillion-dollar strategy is mainly aimed at providing new roads, railroads, pipelines and bridges, but they largely emanate from mines, oil/gas rigs and plantations, and are mainly directed towards ports. Electricity generation is already overwhelmingly biased towards projected mining and smelting needs. One route for further indirect financing subsidies to corporations (i.e., loans at preferential rates) is via the BRICS New Development Bank (Bond 2016). The first loan in Africa, made in 2016, is to connect privatised electricity supply from solar plants that the State-owned firm Eskom refused to finance in spite of consistent advocacy by climate activists (and opposition to privatised supply by organised labour). Eskom's most influential customers are the Energy Intensive Users Group of 33 companies in the carbon-intensive mining and smelting sectors which consume nearly half the country's electricity, so the benefits of renewable supply are quickly overwhelmed by the extractive character of production.

That the first BRICS loan was 'green' in that limited sense would not be typical of a future portfolio anticipated to stress extractive-industry accumulation. Already, as the climate campaigning group 350.org Africa (2014) points out: "South African banks are greenwashing their work while funding Africa's growing addiction to fossil fuels at the same time, [through financing] massive coal power stations, oil refineries and drilling rigs." These include Nedbank, Barclays (owner of ABSA) and Standard Bank which together invested more than $1 billion in coal projects from 2005-2013. It is fair to predict that the BRICS bank and PIDA will amplify the problems of resource extractivism, given the prevailing power structure (Bond and Garcia 2015).

The resulting intensification of climate change will affect the most vulnerable Africans in the poorest countries, who are already subject to extreme stress as a result of war-torn socio-economic fabrics in West Africa, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. The Pentagon-funded Strauss Center of the University of Texas (2013) is acutely concerned about the extent to which social unrest will emerge, as a result. There is some potential for African leaders to access the United Nations Green Climate Fund for adaptation funds, though the fund will have nowhere near the $100 billion annually that was promised by USA's, then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton in 2009 (Bond 2012). However, hopes that claims for climate-related 'loss and damage' could be claimed against those with the highest historic emissions were dashed at the Paris climate summit in 2015 when African leaders agreed to a 'no liability' clause insisted on by the USA and Europe. They were also pushed to accept non-binding and non-accountable emissions targets that in any case fall far short of addressing the crisis or reaching the 2°C maximum temperature increase, let alone 1.5°C aspirations (Spash 2016).

Finally, land grabs and militarisation are also threats to eco-social development, most urgently when faced by the African peasantry, especially women, and especially those in areas attractive to foreign investors whether in agri-corporate or extractive sectors (Hargreaves 2014). Already, small farmers are being displaced in sites like Ethiopia and Mozambique as a result of land grabs by Middle Eastern countries and Brazil, India, South Africa and China, a problem likely to be amplified as food shortages worsen (Ferrando 2012). The growing role of the USA military's Africa Command in dozens of African countries bears testimony to Washington's overlapping desire to maintain control amidst rising

Islamic fundamentalism from the Sahel to Kenya, sites which are, coincidentally, theatres of war in the vicinity of large petroleum reserves (Turse 2014).

Concluding remarks

Africa's eco-social development is marred by numerous forces that reflect the continent's subordinate political-economic power relations. Excessive profits exit Africa as IFFs and as licit (legal) financial flows. FDI continues to leave Africa poorer in part thanks to the need to pay foreign corporations their profits and dividends in hard currency, a factor which recently raised Africa's foreign debt to unprecedented heights. Other emerging adverse factors include South African and other BRICS countries' sub-imperial accumulation; new State and donor subsidised extractive-oriented infrastructure and financing that will exacerbate African underdevelopment; uncompensated mineral and oil/gas depletion; and land grabs, militarisation and climate change. Finally, on all fronts ranging from economy to climate to militarisation, global governance has failed.

Only *social* resistance [Chapter 17] can halt and reverse these trends. In most countries, the African people are not allowing these processes of eco-social underdevelopment to proceed without opposition. However, if protesters continue to challenge specific projects and sectoral problems without drawing links, and making common cause with others in their home countries and across their region, then the cycles of extraction, capitalist crises, heightened accumulation-by-dispossession and repression of dissent will continue. If the protesters do join forces with new movements and political parties, and adopt some form of post-extractivist developmental ideology, then there are indeed prospects for overthrowing the current eco-social system, that offers most Africans underdevelopment and environmental destruction, and replacing it with one more attuned to Ubuntu, the idea that "we are who we are through others".

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Who wins from "climate apartheid"?
African climate justice narratives about the Paris COP21

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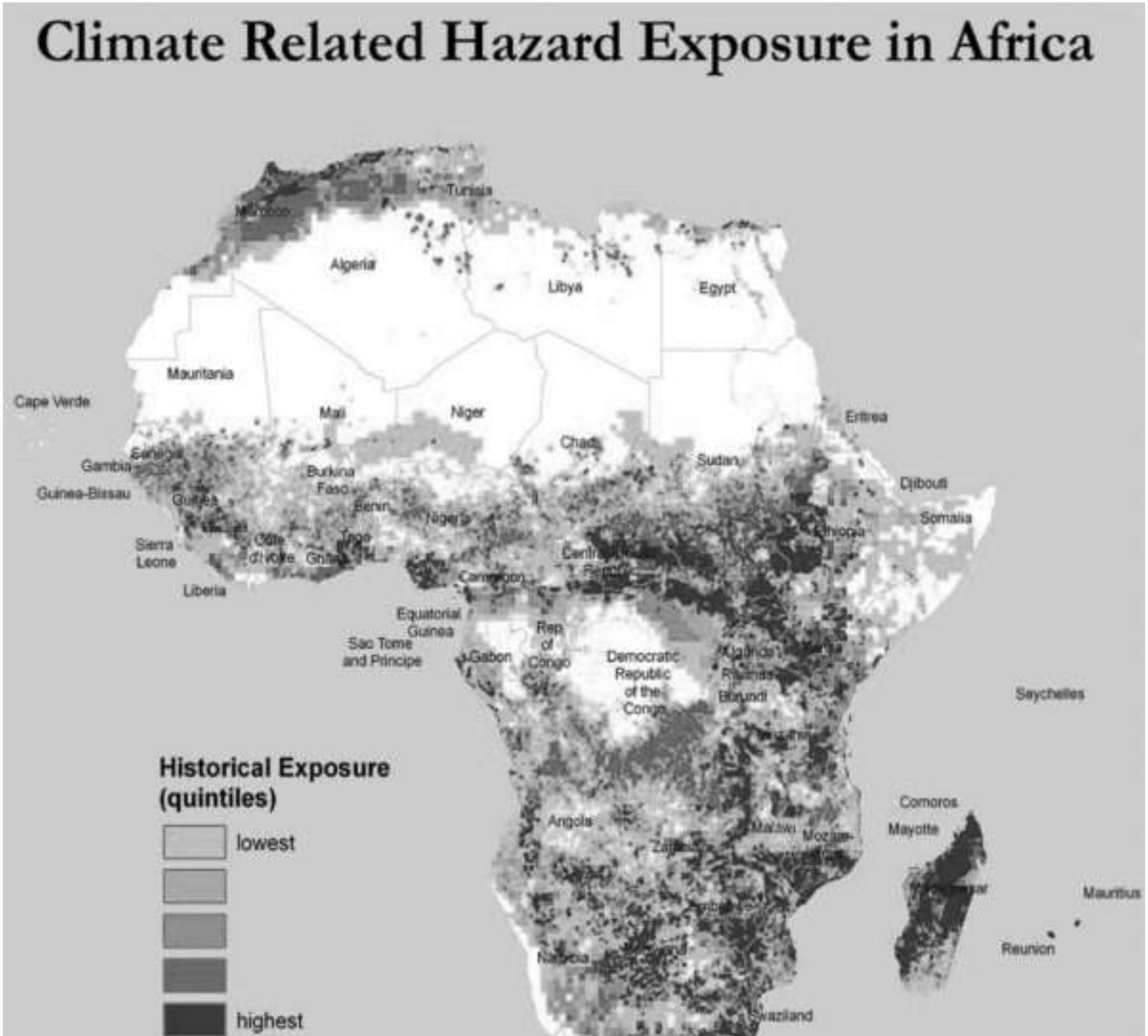
The billion residents of Africa are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change in coming decades, and of special concern are high-density sites of geopolitical and resource-related conflicts: the copper belt of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and mineral-rich Great Lakes stretching into northern Uganda, western Ethiopia (bordering the Sudanese warzone), Madagascar and smaller Indian Ocean islands, the northern-most strip of Africa and West Africa including Liberia and Sierra Leone (recent sites of diamond-related civil war and then Ebola epidemics). In other words, the African terrains hardest hit by war and economic looting are going to be sites of climate stress and socio-political unrest, according to the University of Texas project researching vulnerability for the US Pentagon (Busby et al, 2013).



Source: Busby et al 2013

The lost opportunity to change this map at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) summit in Paris is tragic. In the 2015 Pew Research world public opinion survey, a near majority of those surveyed – 46 percent – identified climate as a threat about which they were "very concerned," the highest score of any issue in the poll (economic crisis was second). But where it counts most, in the top two polluting countries, the percentage of people who name climate as a major threat is just 42 in the US and 19 in China (Carle 2015). And even if consciousness rises faster from below, global elites apparently remain paralyzed to take necessary actions to keep temperature increases below 1.5 degrees, the point at which runaway, catastrophic climate change is likely to take off (Bond 2012, Klein 2014). Going into the Paris COP21, the declarations of voluntary commitments were estimated by the French hosts to warm the planet by 3 degrees this century, but this is a vast understatement given the likelihood of runaway climate change once a 2 degree tipping point is reached.

The annual UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) had been held in Africa thrice: in 2001 in Marrakech, 2006 in Nairobi and 2011 in Durban. But the critical moment that defined Africa's future climate crisis was in December 2009 in Copenhagen. The negotiations at COP15 were diverted one night into a room where five leaders – from the US and the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) group – agreed on a side deal, the Copenhagen Accord. That was the source of Africa's major problems in climate negotiations for years thereafter, including at the Paris COP21.

The fortnight-long COP talk-shops are typically sabotaged by US State Department negotiators, recently joined by brethren governments in Australia and Japan, with Canada a loyal co-polluter prior to the October 2015 election (and probably long after given the national elites' commitment to exploiting the Alberta tarsands). Initial hopes that the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc might make a difference in world climate policy as well as address undemocratic global financial governance have since been dashed, not only because of BASIC's 2009 alliance with Barack Obama (Bond and Garcia 2015). Individually, they are each failing to grapple with new responsibilities to decarbonize their economies.

The world's largest single emitter is China, even if in per capita terms it is far lower than the Northern countries. Beijing claims to have recently reduced coal consumption are dubious given notorious undercounting (probably by 15 percent). The Communist Party leadership decided upon an upward trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions at least through the 2020s. The Chinese standpoint that they need more emissions to 'develop' is contradicted by a stark reality: recent US and European claims to be slowing their emissions rely upon their corporations and consumers *outsourcing* large amounts of emissions to new production sites mostly in East Asia. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: "A growing share of CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion in developing countries is released in the production of goods and services exported, notably from upper-middle-income countries to high-income countries" (Hawkins 2014). In the case of China, the amounts of such outsourcing are vast, having risen from 404 million tons of CO_2 in 2000 to 1.561 billion tons in 2012.

Moreover, BRICS leaders have all either endorsed carbon markets, the capitalist strategy for offsetting local emissions by buying someone else's. Initially, from 2005-12, these took the form of United Nations 'Clean Development Mechanism' (CDM) opportunities to sell often-corrupt and gimmick-ridden as contributing to emissions mitigation (Bond, Dada and Erion 2009).

In recent years, after the BRICS no long qualified for CDMs, seven Chinese cities started their own carbon markets, with Brazil and South Africa likely to follow in a few years. Moreover, China's attempts to control emissions in future appear certain to foster faith in dangerous techniques such as nuclear energy, hydropower and untested Carbon Capture and Storage technology.

The strongest efforts to address climate change from the North are in Europe, where in October 2014 a new goal of 40 percent greenhouse gas reduction from 1990 levels (not including the carbon outsourcing of hundreds of millions of tons per year) was sought for 2030 – far too low according to most scientists, but far ahead of other historic pollution sites. In a late-2014 deal between China and the US, the latter's goal was only 15 percent reduction by 2025 (from 1990 levels).

In short, very little reason for hope on climate or other aspects of environmental stewardship can be found in any of the major countries' governments. There is, of course, the exception of Cuba, which by compulsion began a strong decarbonization strategy once Russian subsidized oil was no longer available after 1990. But the good examples that were anticipated in 2008-11 from left-leaning Latin American countries – Bolivia, Ecuador and even oil-rich Venezuela – were subsequently dashed, as each turned to more intense hydro-carbon 'extractivism' albeit with nationalist redistributive ends (instead of multinational corporate profiteering).

When the September 2014 United Nations special leadership summit on climate was preceded by a march of 400,000 citizens with strong messages of anger about elite procrastination, nothing more than vague promises were offered. The array of global and national power appears as difficult to affect as ever, what with unprecedented corporate influence – including fossil fuel companies – over policy-makers, and with further awareness that major restructuring of vast industries will be needed.

Going back to 2009, the US+BASIC meeting in Copenhagen not only "blew up the UN," as Bill McKibben (2009) of 350.org put it, in terms of evading the more democratic process. The Accord promised only inadequate and voluntary emissions cuts. Japan, Russia, Canada and Australia subsequently announced they would withdraw earlier commitments made under the Protocol.

By November 2015, the (voluntary) Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) statement of the G20 countries confirmed huge barriers to reaching the required emissions cuts. According to the NGO Climate Action Tracker (2015), "None of the G20 INDCs are in line with holding warming below 2°C, or 1.5°C." The agency rated the following as 'inadequate': Argentina, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey, with the INDCs of another set – Brazil, China, India, the EU, Mexico and the USA – also "not consistent with limiting warming to below 2°C either, unless other countries make much deeper reductions and comparably greater effort."

Four reasons Paris failed

The INDC strategy was itself flawed because it is voluntary with no accountability system sufficiently strong – such as economic sanctions, expulsion from the United Nations, etc. Hence the first reason for the Paris COP21's failure was that the ambition required to cut emissions to survivable levels never materialized. As explained by Pablo Solon (2015), formerly Bolivia's Ambassador to the United Nations and the man who attempted to block consensus at the Cancun COP16 in 2009, all negotiators since Copenhagen failed to table the need leave 80 percent of known fossil fuels reserves under the ground and make deep emissions cuts: 44 Gigatons (Gt) of CO2e by 2020, 40 Gt by 2025 and 35 Gt by 2030.

Second, the reduction of CO2 agreed upon in Paris – as a vague pledge to keep warming below 3°C – will partly occur through 'financializing' the climate via carbon markets and offsets. Although this strategy has failed in the main markets to date – the European Union's Emissions Trading System (EMS) and Chicago Climate Exchange (which completely collapsed in 2010) – it was reasserted the month before the Paris summit in a preparatory conference. New language emerged to the effect that these markets deliver 'real, permanent, additional and verified' emissions reflect awareness of bad publicity stemming from prior mishaps (Carbon Market Watch 2015). The Kyoto Protocol and all subsequent COPs allowed large polluting firms to buy the right to pollute (from other companies) at extremely low cost, and relied on financiers to set up carbon markets and offsets rather than make direct cuts.

The only effective means of cutting emissions is to use state controls to compel deep cuts by the major polluters, as was accomplished with the UN's 1987 Montreal Protocol with chlorofluorocarbons, in order to halt widening of the ozone hole.

Third, a "Just Transition" can be achieved only by rebooting each sector of the world economy with a central role for labour and affected communities, but such radical change was off the Paris table, with the partial exception of renewable energy. Such a strategy would not only ensure medium-term post-carbonization (as the G7 leaders agreed would be done by 2100, about 50 years too late), but in the short term, a saner way of relating to the natural environment and to other human beings.

Indeed the UN has not yet considered the wide-ranging decarbonization, environmental planning and economic restructuring proposals from climate activists (Klein 2014). Instead, the only strategies adopted will make shifts at the margins, especially those using carbon pricing in attempt to nudge markets with incremental taxation or worse, carbon trading incentives. To address the crisis forcefully, a Just Transition is overdue in the world's energy, transport, extraction, urbanization, agriculture, manufacturing production, consumption, disposal and financing systems. But while these continue to be driven by the profit motive, most externalities – i.e., ecological and social damage not incorporated as market costs – remain as damages foisted onto the powerless.

Fourth, large parts of Africa as well as low-lying islands, the Latin American and Asian mountain chains and sites like the Bay of Bengal are already owed reparations for the massive damage done to local climates. But Paris failed to substantively advance the cause of ‘climate debt’ payment by the North to the South. This is damage far worse than the effects that will be felt in France and other sites in the industrialised world where CO2 emissions per person are greatest. While being a climate creditor gives African negotiators the moral high ground, unfortunately it took until 2012 (at the Doha COP18) for the UN to recognise ‘loss and damage’ (the UN’s technical term) suffered in weather-related crises.

But the voluntary nature of Copenhagen and its Green Climate Fund means there is no legal liability on the part of climate debtors in the Global North. As Washington’s lead negotiator, Todd Stern, famously explained in Copenhagen, “We absolutely recognize our historic role in putting emissions in the atmosphere up there that are there now. But the sense of guilt or culpability or reparations, I just categorically reject that” (Broder 2009).

What are Africa and other vulnerable sites facing, in the wake of the COP21? In Paris, binding emission cuts were not made on the scale required. Market mechanisms were reaffirmed. A Just Transition for the world economy towards genuine sustainability was rejected. The climate creditors – especially Africans – continue to be stuck with the bill for most damage done, though they did not cause the crisis. The Paris COP21 process did not allow the power change required to address these four major challenges. Those in the mainstream NGO circuits who entered Paris claiming that the conditions were in place for a planet-saving deal (e.g. Avaaz’s Ricken Patel 2015) were profoundly mistaken.

Climate apartheid cooks Africa, and Pretoria stokes the flames

Hence Paris merely continued what is being termed climate apartheid. According to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s Global Humanitarian Forum (2009), already more than 300 000 current deaths per year are attributable to climate change, mostly in the Global South. With the present trajectory of warming anticipated to break 4 degrees above normal by 2100, with inland Africa heating up by 6 to 7 degrees, not only are humans threatened, but so too is nearly every living species – biodiversity itself – reliant upon water and a stable eco-system.

With the world insurance industry already facing a rise in annual liabilities associated with extreme weather events from $10 billion during the 1980s to $50 billion since 2000, and with even larger damages simply not covered, even the conservative Bank of England governor Mark Carney (2015) admitted, “currently modelled losses could be undervalued by as much as 50 percent if recent weather trends were to prove representative of the new normal.”

As a result, Africa anticipates worsening weather chaos, and 182 million Africans dead this century, early and unnecessarily, due to climate related disease (Christian Aid 2006). The first ‘climate war’ is often said to be Darfur’s conflict between water-starved peasantry and migratory herders backed by a brutal Sudanese government. In this context, the delegate leading the G77+China group of 130 to Paris, Nozipho Joyce Mxakato-Diseko, put it most starkly at October’s pre-negotiations in Bonn: “It is just like apartheid.”

Mxakato-Diseko is South African, and knows of what she alleges first-hand: "We find ourselves in a position where in essence we are disenfranchised" (Doyle 2015). And yet Mxakato-Diseko's own principals let her down in the end. South Africans are especially adept at 'talk left, walk right' posturing (Bond 2006), and so it is interesting to consider the stance Pretoria takes on climate at home. To change the world balance of forces requires changing national environmental policy in every country, and South Africa is one of the world's great battlegrounds (Bond 2002).

The large mining-smelting-shipping corporations – whether local, Western or BRICS in origin – still appear to have inordinate influence in Pretoria (surely as much as enjoyed in Washington by the Koch Brothers and others in the oil and gas lobby). Against them, the Department of Environmental Affairs has a minister, Edna Molewa, who did nothing to shift power relations in defense of the climate, in spite of a relatively high profile in international negotiations. She played a central role in Durban's COP17 (Bond 2011, 2012), and in 2012, she was visible at the Rio+20 UN Earth Summit.

Yet when it counted, in regulating South African polluters, Molewa knew how to avoid conflict. She was silent about the vast bulk of national infrastructure spending on carbon-intensive activities: three major coal-fired power plants, expanded coal exports via a $25 billion rail budget in the first Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (PICC), and in the second PICC project, the $20 billion expansion of Durban's port and petrochemical complex, aiming to raise container throughput capacity by a factor of eight by 2040 (Bond 2014a). Government also gave permission in 2013 for Shell Oil to begin the process of 'fracking' the arid Karoo. This was followed in mid-2014 by President Jacob Zuma's Operation Phakisa ('speed up') ocean-economy strategy, including $5 billion worth of deep-sea oil and gas exploration, especially by ExxonMobil. Other carbon-intensive state policies include ever-worsening suburban sprawl, facilitated by the doubling of the Durban-Johannesburg oil pipeline at nearly four times the initial budget of $500 million. Pretoria also granted approval for a new $6 billion state oil refinery, and has plans for more smelter-intensive minerals beneficiation including a new Chinese steel factory (in spite of steel imports from China decimating the two main existing producers in 2015).

Facing this intensification of South Africa's capital-carbon metabolism, Molewa's 2014-15 budget ($400 million) was revealing. In addition to an 8.3 percent real cut in overall climate change programming, her $1.5 million spending cut from the SA Weather Service's budget meant, according to Parliament's Environmental Oversight Committee (2014), "South Africa would be unable to meet its international obligations regarding the monitoring of greenhouse gases through the Global Atmospheric Watch station… The country would also be unable to formulate baselines and monitor emissions versus set targets."

Writing in the *Mail&Guardian,* Molewa's (2014) reply to concerns expressed (by this author, Bond 2014b) about such developments was defensive:

> Contrary to Bond's analysis, South Africa is not at risk of not meeting its international obligations regarding climate change or its attendant priority, greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reduction. Our national climate change response policy

> guides the government's approach to climate change impacts and the country's transition to a climate-resilient, low-carbon, mitigating economy (Molewa 2014).

Yet as the Environment Oversight Committee (2014) had warned, "As a country, we must be seen making our fair contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change by ensuring that we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions below the business-as-usual by 34 per cent by 2020 and 42 per cent by 2025." In mid-2015, the next opportunity arose for Pretoria to commit to the COP21, but the South African office of Greenpeace (2015) was scathing about what Molewa offered:

> The '*Discussion Document: South Africa's INDC: 1 August 2015'* avoids quantifying any contribution to mitigation and fails to meet the very basic generic requirements agreed for the mitigation component of the INDC. If not rectified, such blatant evasiveness will undermine South Africa's credibility and any claim to moral authority in leadership of developing country negotiators.

This lack of ambition is consistent with Pretoria's approach when seen from the perspective of civil society, which argues that the government turns a blind eye to pollution violations especially from coal mining, electricity generation and oil refineries (all associated with climate change) (groundWork *et al* 2014). Molewa's (2014) rebuttal confirmed an inappropriate degree of state modesty: "We are constantly addressing issues to do with climate change – mostly behind the scenes."

Staying 'behind the scenes' can be explained by the durable power of South Africa's so-called Minerals Energy Complex (Fine and Rustomjee 1996). That power was unveiled when her cabinet colleagues Nathi Mthethwa and Cyril Ramaphosa assisted London-based platinum firm Lonmin in August 2012, by deploying the police against striking workers, for the sake of maintaining corporate mining profits. Ramaphosa, later to become deputy president of South Africa, was a 9 percent owner of Lonmin, and it was his emails that brought massacre-minded troops to end the wildcat strike (he called it 'dastardly criminal'), leaving 34 corpses of workers, many of whom were trying to surrender. Testimony Ramaphosa gave to the Marikana Massacre commission in mid-2014 confirmed his loyalties: he admitted that instead of building 5500 houses for Lonmin workers, as promised, the corporation's Transformation Committee he oversaw built just three. He also facilitated the off-shore 'illicit financial flows' of Lonmin profits to Bermuda.

Ramaphosa's massive coal mines and similar dirty coal corporations were, according to insiders, long pampered by Molewa's water officials. At least forty major new mines are now being dug or planned to provide coal to two new power plants, not to mention new export-oriented coal digs to supply China and India. The coal-producing province of Mpumalanga was by 2014, quite literally, wheezing (groundWork *et al,* 2014). Yet Eskom applied to Molewa for 'rolling postponements' on pollution reductions required by law at 14 power plants there. Eskom's assumption was that its own crises – and regular load-shedding that struck fear into the society – would persuade Molewa of the need for forbearance. By February 2015, Molewa had agreed to a five year extension on air pollution regulatory forbearance for Eskom, Sasol and dozens of other firms whose emissions both harmed local workers and residents and contributed to climate change.

With the South African population recording 47 percent awareness that climate change is the world's greatest threat in the 2015 Pew survey (Carle 2015), the possibility for turning awareness into activism remains the only hope, given that Pretoria's elites appear unwilling to change course.

Conclusion

The South African case illustrates how difficult it is for the world to solve the climate crisis, even while its highest-profile delegate offers claims of 'climate apartheid' as heard during the Paris COP21. The genuine victims of climate apartheid did not make it to Paris (and not only because of the severe impact of terrorism on EU visa availability). But they will continue to make their voices heard at national and local scales, where after all the war against emission sources will be won or lost.

Terrorist attacks that left more than 130 mainly young Parisians dead on November 13 remind us of blowback hazards that will be faced by future stubborn governments of the North and the BRICS. Refugees will arrive in faster, higher waves to their shores, initially from North Africa and the Middle East – which will heat to unliveable temperatures by mid-century – illustrating how mass migrations from many climate-creditor sites are driven by weather-related conflict. Climate refugees from Syria's extreme 2006-10 drought – treated so carelessly by the Assad regime, compelling popular rebellion in 2011 – and the simultaneous difficulties faced by migratory herders in western Sudan's Darfur give these sites the dubious honor of witnessing the first climate wars.

Future COPs will make efforts at enforcement of the non-binding Paris summit agreement. But top-down, this is likely to remain futile, for already in Washington, Obama faces Republican efforts to undue his 2015 Environmental Protection Agency rulings against coal. In Morocco at the December 2016 COP22, conditions for social mobilization will be far more adverse than even Paris. So looking back on Paris, even if the climate marches across the world on November 28-29 played a salutatory role in raising consciousness, it was the December 12 protest *against* the COP21's weak outcome that sets the stage for climate justice activism in years ahead.

Evidently, nothing useful to solve this crisis will come from world elites. The action will continue to be at the coal-face local sites of 'Blockadia' (Klein 2014) and then an aggregation of these, to make national contestations – such as over South African government economic policy – the battlegrounds where activists can muster strength to change the balance of power.

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African climate justice: Articulations and activism

with Mithika Mwenda, in B.Tokar and T.Gilbertson (Eds), *Climate Change Resistance and Renewal: Campaigns and Strategies from the Frontlines.* London, Routledge, 2020

Introduction

Among several million climate protesters during the global Climate Strike of September 20, 2019 were thousands of Africans. Among two dozen African cities hosting protests, the youthful activists marched in Nairobi, Kenya, in Kampala, Uganda, in Dakar, Senegal, and in South Africa's Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban (Gdelt 2019). The latter country, by far Africa's most carbon-intensive, included protests against government and the major polluter Sasol, and began to unite South Africa's powerful but fragmented traditions of environmental justice activism. To understand the trajectory, in which until recently, the necessity of climate justice advocacy was foiled by a disarticulation between mainstream "climate action" and radical grassroots campaigning, requires a return to the point a decade earlier when vocal Africans made the case that the North was preparing Africa for a climate "holocaust": Copenhagen's 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-COP15).

The word holocaust was used by a leading African negotiator, Lumumba Di-Aping, in December 2009 after the leaders of the United States, Brazil, South Africa, India and China conspired to sabotage existing UN process in a small side-room. The Copenhagen Accord was adopted outside the parameters of the main negotiations; hence this "league of super-polluters blew up the United Nations," according to Bill McKibben (2009) of 350.org. Emissions-reduction targets agreed upon by Barack Obama (US), Lula da Silva (Brazil), Jacob Zuma (South Africa), Manhohan Singh (India) and Wen Jiabao (China) – and then foisted onto the rest of the conference – were weak: no more than what will bring a catastrophic 3-degree Celsius (or more) increase in temperature by 2100. Moreover, there were no *binding* provisions, thus denuding the 1997 Kyoto Protocol of its main merit: a semblance of accountability and nominal enforceability (Vidal and Watts 2009).

However, it was also at this summit that, from the floor ten days earlier, a spontaneous protest occurred. Impatient with the leaders' negotiations, more than one hundred members and supporters of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (Pacja) temporarily disrupted the formal event, addressing a rally at a makeshift podium at Copenhagen's Bella Centre. The attention of hundreds of media and conference participants was grabbed with a chant: "Two Degrees is Suicide: One Africa, One Degree!" Proclaiming, "No to Climate Colonialism, No to Climate Genocide!," the Pacja activists not only demanded much greater emissions cuts from the gathered leaders, but also offered a scathing critique of the continent's most visible official representative, Ethiopian leader Meles Zenawi, who had unilaterally reduced earlier African demands for the Global North's annual climate debt payments to the Global South from $400 billion to just $10 billion (Klein 2009, Bond 2012a).

The Pacja protest immediately followed a frank input to a strategy session of Africans by Di-Aping, the Sudanese diplomat who was formally the leader of the G77+China delegation. As he briefed Pacja and other civil society gropus, Di-Aping "sat silently, tears rolling down his face," according to a report (Welz 2009). "We have been asked to sign a suicide pact," he said, explaining that in his home region, it was "better to stand and cry than to walk away." For much of the continent, said Di-Aping, 2 degrees Celsius globally meant 3.5 degrees C: "certain death for Africa", a type of "climate fascism" imposed on Africa by polluters, in exchange for which the Third World was promised fast track funding. But this funding promise was merely a carrot dangled to vulnerable countries as a compromise, a trick which worked to break the solidarity of the G77+China group.

Di-Aping was already posing an unprecedented threat to the rich counties' stranglehold on the UNFCCC. Their initial offer of an annual $10 billion "was not enough to buy us coffins" (Welz 2009). Di-Aping argued that the Copenhagen deal on offer was "worse than no deal… I would rather die with my dignity than sign a deal that will channel my people into a furnace." As for the US president, Di-Aping was furious: "What is Obama going to tell his daughters? That their [Kenyan] relatives' lives are not worth anything? It is unfortunate that after 500 years-plus of interaction with the West we are still considered 'disposables'" (Welz 2009).

Di-Aping's critiques were also, according to a witness, aimed inward: "Many African negotiating delegations were unprepared and some members were either lazy or had been 'bought off' by the industrialized nations. He singled out South Africa, saying that some members of that delegation had actively sought to disrupt the unity of the bloc" (Welz 2009). Di-Aping was roundly attacked by both Pretoria's and the North's negotiators for his rhetoric, and was not allowed to return to the UNFCCC negotiations. Yet his critique resonated, and at the same time, anti-apartheid South African Anglican Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (2009) wrote to the UNFCCC leadership, "We are facing impending disaster on a monstrous scale… A global goal of about 2 degrees C is to condemn Africa to incineration and no modern development."

Two years later, the 2011 UNFCCC summit was held in Africa, but even worse power relations prevailed, as the host South Africa played into the hands of the U.S. State Department. In Durban, instead of a major demonstration inside, Pacja – having brought three busloads of activists from as faraway as Uganda – was outside marching with the main climate justice protest movement. But even that protest of 10,000 was watered down, because of collaboration with more conservative groups like the World Wildlife Fund (Bond 2012b).

The inability to emphasize either rapid action or climate justice meant that in 2015, the major emitters – the US, Europe, China, India, South Africa, Brazil, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Canada, Australia and Kazakhstan – agreed on new ways to undermine global climate governance in Paris. For example, not only was the voluntary character of the Copenhagen Accord reaffirmed, there was no accountability mechanism nor attempt to punish those countries which backslid. When in June 2017, just over four months after taking power, U.S. president Donald Trump announced he would withdraw the largest historic emitter from the deal, there was no punishment, notwithstanding calls across the spectrum (from Naomi Klein to Joseph Stiglitz to Nicolas Sarkozy) for anti-US sanctions or a "border adjustment tax" (Bond 2019b).

Together with its fundamentally voluntary character, another fatal flaw in the Paris Climate Agreement is that the costs of climate-related "Loss and Damage" from climate change are being disproportionately borne by Africans and others who did the least to cause the problems. Thanks to a Paris provision, they have no recourse to claiming "climate debt" and polluter liability in lawsuits (Bond 2016). The Agreement also reintroduced the unworkable carbon trading gimmick, which failed miserably over the prior fifteen years, through the back door. Moreover, Paris negotiators neglected to include several major categories of emitters, especially militaries, air transport and shipping. There was no attempt to penalize fossil fuel companies, incentivize their Just Transition to post-carbon energy supply, nor even rhetorically endorse the need to leave fossil fuels underground. No progress was made to enhance African acquisition of climate-friendly technologies that have long been protected by Intellectual Property. And the negotiators back-slapped each other for this awful deal so loudly that critical activists' objections simply could not be heard (Bond 2016). Against the euphoria of Paris, Pacja and a few other climate justice movements (e.g. Friends of the Earth International) provided lonely defiance at the COP21 media centre, denouncing the Paris Climate Agreement as another historic multilateral deceit.

At the 2018 UNFCCC summit in Katowice, Poland, implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement included requests for countries to formally submit "transparency reports" about their emissions as well as analysing the Loss and Damage they were experiencing. But there are still no payment provisions, since the dysfunctional Green Climate Fund did not gather even five percent of its $100 billion per year objective by 2020, as Obama had promised when selling the Copenhagen Accord to those who were skeptical.

Contesting climate justice

Nevertheless, there are some climate activists – mainly associated with the global Climate Action Network (CAN) – who resignedly consider Paris a first step in the right direction. In contrast, climate justice activists generally agree with climate scientist James Hansen, who called the deal "bullshit" (Milman 2015). Instead of constantly comparing to the low bar of Paris, many activists believe it is much more appropriate for Africans to heap scorn on the Paris Climate Agreement. One reason for doing so is to ensure that a future group of much more serious international negotiators will not continue these fatal mistakes. Another is that those who aim to drag their feet on emissions cuts, or avoid any climate debt liability, enthusiastically promote Paris. Thus, to legitimize the deal only encourages current and future elites to continue along this path, removing the urgency to make the substantial emissions cuts required, and slowing the necessary reconstruction of economies and societies in a manner consistent with survival and justice.

But while there is climate action paralysis from above, there are exciting new forms of climate justice movement-building from below, many of which can be found in Africa, including within

Pacja. Even the fragmented South African sites of struggle provide a degree of optimism for future unification once they impose much more substantial pressure on the carbon-addicted government of Cyril Ramaphosa, himself a former coal tycoon. Although Pacja defends its participation in UNFCCC and mainstream intergovernmental processes as a strategy to fight from within – so as to entrench climate justice narratives within both official and African civil society discourse – there is also a hybrid strategy based on building a mass movement from below. Struggles are being waged by Indigenous communities and local people in various African locations, especially where carbon-intensive, high-pollution extractive activities are taking place.

This mirrors climate justice activism internationally, where the most spectacular new post-Paris movements barely register the UNFCCC as a relevant force. Instead, they are committed to direct actions that block high-CO_2 activities and corporate polluters, e.g. Ende Gelände in Germany, Extinction Rebellion in Britain, and the US Sunrise Movement, as well as the Indigenous water protectors at Standing Rock. .

Meanwhile, the younger generation is already explaining to their elders why UN deal-makers and other high-carbon elites should stand aside. “I want you to panic,” Swedish youth activist Greta Thunberg (2019a) insisted at the Davos World Economic Forum in early 2019: “Either we choose to go on as a civilization or we don’t.” Addressing the UN Climate Summit in September 2019, Thunberg (2019b) was even more furious: “We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you.”

This new development is overdue: a universal inter-generational rage, from which the youth can legitimately warn the older elites that Climate Strikes will join other forces for justice, telling us quite correctly and ever more loudly, “You’re stealing our future!” But as the most militant of climate activists begin to explore the two-decade old set of climate justice principles, analyses, strategies, tactics and alliances, a new problem arises: co-optation of the *language* of climate justice, without adherence to the *politics.* One example can be found in the way scholars have mainly ignored the single most formative site of popular, bottom-up articulation of climate justice: the April 2010 World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba. (The scholar.google.com citations for that conference since 2010 number just 657, as opposed to 16,100 for “climate justice.”) Another was the attempt to conjoin climate justice with schemes for carbon trading and offsets, as we see below.

Pacja rises

Founded in 2008 in Johannesburg during a meeting of Africa’s environmental ministers, Pacja initially emerged in part thanks to the prodding and financial support of a continental organization often considered to have a neoliberal orientation: the African Union’s

New Partnership for Africa's Development (Bond 2005). A second founding organization is also sometimes accused of using Africans, especially in civil society, for its own ends: Oxfam International (Bond, Brutus and Setshedi 2005, Ogunlesi 2013). Nevertheless, the network immediately developed an independent leadership team capable of fundraising without fear of state or international NGO manipulation.[1]

Another network of funders and supporters associated with the World Council of Churches – with Britain's Christian Aid, Germany's Diakonia, Finn Church Aid and Norwegian Church Aid prominent – gave support, followed by the Swedish International Development Agency and United Nations Environment Programme. Some Global North partners harbor expectations that the Global South's desperate civil society groups will follow an ideological and programming agenda consistent with that of funders (Wrong Kind of Green 2019). The most controversial of Pacja's partners were Mary Robinson's Foundation for Climate Justice (based at Trinity College in Dublin) and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, for the reason that both insisted on pursuing market-oriented strategies – carbon trading and offsets – that were not working in Africa (CCS and Dartmouth 2012).

The entire terrain of global climate governance is riddled with "climate action" strategies of this sort, even if in some cases the word justice is invoked. And yet some of the most constructive networking was done in partnership with ClimDev Africa, a program of the African Development Bank (one of the main fossil financiers), Africa Union Commission and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA). Personalities sometimes play an outsized role, such as that of UN ECA African Climate Policy Center director James Murombedzi, a Zimbabwean rural development scholar and experienced manager within the UN. He continually presses his agency to be cognizant of politics and especially justice. This perspective allows Pacja a great many opportunities, including the logistical support required to regularly assemble its members, e.g. within ClimDev or annual meetings of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, without losing its orientation to climate justice, not merely climate action.

As for Pacja's own membership and their local orientation, Todd Beer and Mwenda (2016) surveyed more than 1,000 members from forty-five African countries in 2015. They included environmentalists, climate specialists, religious denominations, NGOs and CBOs, trusts and foundations, and farmers and pastoralists' groups. Youth movements also began to join up. According to Pacja (2019), there is wide diversity in approaches, but in common, "over three-quarters of them indicate that the communities they work with have already been negatively impacted by climate change either a great deal or quite a lot." A quarter of the members have a base in rural areas, but two-thirds are engaged in agriculture and food security and sixty percent address deforestation. Nearly half of the members are engaged in national-level advocacy, and another seventeen percent work at the global scale.

There were certainly forces operating in Africa aiming to co-opt Pacja's (2019) policy and practical framings, e.g. "pro-poor development," "human rights," and "a global environment free from the threat of climate change with sustainable development, equity and justice for

[1] By way of disclosure, the chapter's first author was involved in leadership of Pacja from the outset. The second author has been active with several of the South African organisations mentioned, including the Durban counter-summit and South Durban Community Environmental Alliance.

all.” Such language has become quite common in what are otherwise *status quo* institutions, captured in the idea of “talk left, walk right.” However, the difficulty these institutions faced in assimilating Pacja into the conventional climate action and eco-modernization camps reflected the organization’s commitments to values such as gender responsiveness and inclusiveness, professionalism, fairness and justice, and participatory democracy (Pacja 2019).

In Andre Gorz’s (1967) *Strategy for Labor* terminology, the climate advocacy scene is dominated by those arguing for “reformist reforms,” as opposed to the climate justice movement’s “non-reformist reforms.” In the former category, dominant reformist strategies generally accept and legitimize *status quo* institutional forms, endorse market mechanisms, and neglect to incorporate analysis highlighting class, race, gender, generation and geographical power relations. To illustrate the latter, the climate justice movement would typically make non-reformist demands upon their own local governments and the national negotiators who were involved in climate negotiations, if such reforms weaken the corporate power structure and continue its delegitimization, and in the process empower activists to demand further-reaching changes.

The strength of Pacja’s advocacy is in part based on hostility to the high-emissions countries and corporations. When it comes to cutting emissions sufficiently for the world to remain below 1.5 degrees Celcius, Pacja’s member poll found trust in the European Union to be only thirty-one percent, in China, twenty percent and in the US, seventeen percent, during Obama’s presidency (Beer and Mwenda 2016). Also of interest are Pacja members’ views on the Third Worldist developmental debate with the North, especially over whether the Southern countries should use their own high-carbon activities – e.g. fossil fuel extraction – to “develop.” More than seventy-one percent disagree that “fossil fuels should be a primary avenue for development,” and fifty-nine percent “disagree that their nations should develop any fossil fuel resources discovered within their borders.”

One crucial question still to be fleshed out, however, is whether Pacja and its members will advocate for financial compensation to the communities and countries which *do* restrict their current and future fossil fuel extraction. One precedent is the demand made by Ecuadoran eco-feminist and Indigenous activists to forego extraction of $10 billion worth of oil discovered in the Yasuní National Park (the world’s greatest biodiversity hotspot, within the Amazon forest). The demand for the oil to be left “under the soil” was to be in exchange for the North’s climate debt downpayment of $3.6 billion to the Ecuadoran people, via grant-based social policy financing (Bond 2012a). Although the strategy was sabotaged by the German government in 2013, following which Ecuadoran president Rafael Correa permitted Chinese and Ecuadoran oil firms to begin drilling, “Yasunidos” advocacy continues (Leave Fossil Fuels Underground, 2018).

Another indication of Pacja members’ ideology is the extent to which members “believe that a radical shift away from capitalism is the best way to address climate change,” as Beer and Mwenda (2016) posed the question: “Over three quarters (77.7 percent) of respondents supported this position compared to less than a quarter (22.3 percent) who reported that global warming is best addressed within a system of capitalism.”

The case of South Africa is especially worth exploring for more consideration of ideological disputes regarding climate justice. As shown explicitly during the UN Secretary General's climate summit in September 2019, the national government was in the same league as the US, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Australia, in failing to make the cuts required for civilizational survival – hence not allowed to take the speaker's podium. But one reason for Pretoria's poor showing is the lack of unity by climate activists, including climate justice groups which continued to stumble instead of confidently marching forward.

South African climate justice versus the fossil economy

In spite of the excellent conditions for mobilization since the end of apartheid and notwithstanding many environmental struggles, South Africa has been one of the most difficult places to advocate for climate justice. The average resident emits nine tons of CO_2 annually, which is the eleventh highest among countries with at least 10 million residents. And measured in CO_2 per capita/GDP – in order to assess an economy's carbon intensity – South Africa has the world's third highest level, behind only Kazakhstan and the Czech Republic (World Bank 2019).

There is no *average*, though, because after the racial Apartheid system ended in 1994, what might be called "class Apartheid" processes took its place: wealthy white males still today retain enormous power and wealth, and they vastly over-pollute. Two thirds of the country's citizens – mostly black and women – live in poverty, below the official line of $3.30/day (Budlender et al 2015). With the rise in electricity prices, their power supplies are increasingly, dangerously dirty: wood, coal or paraffin for heating, lamps and stoves. They have 'energy-switched' backwards in time, unable to pay the parastatal corporation Eskom's retail electricity bills. The price of a kilowatt hour quadrupled in price from 2009-18 due to a decision to build the world's two largest coal-fired generators, both now under construction (Bond 2012a). Corruption, delays and the incompetent boiler manufacturer Hitachi doubled the construction costs of the two 4800 megawatt plants from $8 billion each when financing was arranged in 2010 (primarily by the World Bank, in its largest ever loan) to $15 billion each today (Bond 2014).

Can these contradiction-riddled conditions at the national scale give rise to a deeper climate justice movement, drawing on local strengths, and adding the renewed power of the youth? This is the question posed by many of the country's environmental-justice and eco-socialist strategists, after a quarter-century of political liberation. But freedom has been profoundly distorted by neoliberal-nationalist ideology and crony-capitalist practices, including periodic repression of socio-economic rebellions. In the process, environmental justice has been side-lined.

Locally, however, fossil fuels are facing opposition. A petrochemical complex regularly poisons the third largest city, Durban, founded by white settlers on the east coast in the mid-nineteenth century. There, Africa's largest oil refinery comes under repeated attacks for both local and global pollution by the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA). The quarter-century battle heated up in 2019 because, 1200 km down the Indian Ocean cost, 45 billion cubic meters (300 million barrels worth) of new offshore oil and gas condensate were discovered by Total. Announced by excitable politicians with great fanfare, doubts have subsequently developed about the extremely difficult conditions for extraction.

In the other direction, 2800 km up the coast at Rovuma in northern Mozambique, are even greater quantities of gas ($128 billion worth is thrown around). Older gas fields at Pande and Temane are being drained by Sasol, of which twenty percent creates energy for local consumption and eighty percent is pumped 900 km to South Africa's main inland refinery in Secunda. There, drips of liquid petroleum are squeezed with such an intense application of energy that this small city of 40,000 is the world's single largest CO_2 emissions point source (Ashton 2011). Local activists fighting hard here are led by the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance. In between, in Durban, oil companies are swarming two miles offshore with exploratory drills nearly three miles deep in the Agulhas Current, which is considered the world's second most turbulent ocean waterway, after the US Gulf Coast. But notwithstanding all the anti-oil activism – divestment, "unburnable carbon" and stranded asset pressures, as well as direct-action protests – against the oil majors, four of them anticipate billions of dollars in profits once they set up rigs: ExxonMobil, Statoil, Eni and Sasol, the largest operators from the US, Norway, Italy and South Africa, respectively.

Durban is already the regional oil hub for refiners Shell and BP, alongside Malaysian-owned Engen. Nearby, within Africa's largest container harbour, are more massive oil storage facilities. On South Africa's cold Atlantic coast at Saldanha, Saudi Arabia's Aramco is also considering a major investment in oil storage. And two hours north of Durban at Richards Bay – home to one of world's largest coal export terminals – the parastatal port manager, Transnet, aims to set up an LPG terminal. In all this seaside ecological risk-taking, the corporations are being encouraged by the government's "Blue Economy" propaganda in which commodification of the ocean is financially attractive and supposedly ecologically benign, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding (Bond 2019a).

South Durban's SDCEA, the country's leading anti-oil campaigning force, regularly links local health and ecological damage to climate change, and opposes ocean degradation on behalf of local residents, thousands of fisherfolk, coastal small farms and even surfers. Victories have included lowering refinery sulphur emissions and delaying the nearby port-petrochemical complex's $25 billion expansion. The asthma rate in the Settlers Primary School, between the two mega-refineries, had peaked at 52 percent of children in attendance in 2004, but is now substantially lower. But the group hasn't yet shut down the refineries – SDCDEA's objective – nor even lowered their 350,000 barrels/day capacity. And while SDCEA insists that no more offshore oil and gas exploration occur, the parastatal firm Transnet doubled the size of an oil pipeline from Durban to the main consumption site, Johannesburg, in a controversial $1.8 billion project from 2005-18 (Bond 2017).

Joining SDCEA, which is based in Durban's black communities of Wentworth, Merebank, Clairwood and Umlazi (and to some extent also the Bluff, a formerly white residential area), are conservationists from Oceans Not Oil and Wild Oceans. SDCEA has taken the lead, alongside its groundWork NGO allies, in working against offshore oil and gas, up and down the coastline from Mozambique to Cape Town. Inland, there is also courtroom guerrilla warfare by farmers and environmentalists to counteract threats by the U.S. firm Rhino to frack in the Drakensburg mountain range and nearby KwaZulu-Natal farmland. In the semidesert Karoo, Shell's fracking division is retreating after a courtroom setback. Nevertheless, still lacking climate consciousness, the government's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research is planning a massive gas pipeline across the country.

'Coalonization' continues

The main contributions to emissions from South Africa are from coal mines which supply ninety percent of Eskom's generation inputs, as well as around eighty million tons of exports (*Mining Review*, 2019). The main battles against coal occur because of its local damage to public health, water, land and air. Although communities, NGOs and lawyers regularly raise climate-related objections to destructive coal mining and power plants, organized labor has been mainly pro-coal in its advocacy, although that could change.

In general, local anti-coal activists are not yet as militant and effective in changing the national consciousness as, for example, Germany's Ende Gelände annual protests, in part because the society is still poorly organized for understanding and acting on climate politics. So progress currently relies upon pressure against financiers, legal strategies on difficult terrain, and mainly localistic protests. Some community disruptions occur in the immediate vicinity of coal mines and coal-fired power plants, such as road blockages. In two other battles, activists and lawyers used the courts and anti-financing campaigns to prevent privatized coal-fired plants from being built on schedule in 2018-19: the Japanese/Korean 'Thabametsi' (557MW), and Saudi-owned 'Khanyisa' (306MW) (Centre for Environmental Rights 2018).

However, the two biggest plants under construction anywhere in the world during the 2010s, Eskom's 'Medupi' and 'Kusile' (both 4800MW), were partially completed by 2019, running years behind schedule and massively over-budget, with serious operating flaws, amidst regular labor, community and environmental protests. Finally, another brand new Chinese plant near the Zimbabwe border, 'Musina-Makhado' (3300MW) was still scheduled for construction at the heart of a new Special Economic Zone announced by Ramaphosa in mid-2018.

Fragmentation prevented the emergence of a general movement against climate change, although the 2010s witnessed the arrival of international NGOs with strong anti-coal agendas. Greenpeace Africa, for example, issues important research against the industry's air and water pollution, and periodically engages in direct actions against the main electricity company and state officials, although these are mostly small-scale and symbolic. The South African branch of 350.org specifically targets coal industry financiers – and has been successful against several local banks – as part of a broader "decoalonize Africa" campaign. Its main success was claimed in 2019 in Lamu, Kenya, against a Chinese coal-fired power plant with anticipated South African coal imports until Kenyan mines are developed. Unfortunately, the climate *justice* angle is quite weakly articulated by these NGOs, whether because they are so single-issue in nature or simply not yet sufficiently sensitive to race, class, gender, generational and other inequities.

Those with a forthright climate justice orientation include local NGOs who have their own community-based partners. The most prominent is Life after Coal, consisting of the hard-working groups Earthlife Africa and groundWork, and progressive lawyers at the Centre for Environmental Rights. Sometimes they attempt creative objections to Environmental Impact Assessments on grounds that climate change is not properly incorporated into planning, and they harass state agencies for disclosure and stronger enforcement of environmental regulations. Sometimes their partners are involved in mass-based protest, although the last substantial one was when Durban hosted the 2011 UN climate summit. That counter-summit was messy, as it revealed persistent splits between the two philosophies: climate justice, led at the time by the Democratic Left Front (which is now dormant), and climate action consisting of mainstream NGOs such as WWF.

Today, the most militant network of grassroots anti-coal activists is Mining Affected Communities United in Action. Others include the Mining and Environmental Justice Community Network of South Africa and Women from Mining Affected Communities United in Action. Their highest-profile battles against coal are waged in sites like Somkhele and Fuleni – villages on the border of Africa's oldest wildlife reserve, and in the coal-rich Mpumalanga province, especially around the most affected two towns, Witbank and Carolina. There, the Southern African Green Revolutionary Council has had an important impact, both in organizing and in motivating an eco-socialist ideology. However, no major victories can yet be claimed. There is also a very active Johannesburg-based eco-feminist fusion of continent-wide women farmers, environmentalists and sophisticated NGO critics: African Women Unite against Destructive Extraction, better known as WoMin. They are the most explicit in fighting coal using climate change narratives.

Movements fighting against coal on grounds of climate change are sometimes working at cross-purposes with a different set of NGOs whose aim is to merely ameliorate local damage from mining, and who rarely if ever consider climate change. Their "Alternative Mining Indaba" is an annual Cape Town meeting occuring at the same time the mining industry gathers for their Mining Indaba (Consultation). But it is an NGO-driven event which generally fails to connect the dots between micro-mining grievances and bigger-picture problems like climate, energy choices and general resource looting (Maguwu and Terreblanche 2016). As a result, the November 2018 Thematic Social Forum on Mining and Extractivism in Johannesburg offered a much more critical perspective, demanding "the right to say no!" to corporate land and mineral grabs (Bond 2018). Climate justice was a consistent theme there, too. But as the strength of communities grew, the conflicts with workers became increasingly vital to resolve.

Red and green fragments, not fusions – but in future?

As a final and perhaps most important consideration, South Africa also reveals age-old conflicts between environmentalists and organized labor over employment. Often insensitively, Greenpeace fought periodically with two of the largest trade unions, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and National Union of Mineworkers, whose members include workers in carbon-intensive sectors. Their struggles for better wages in the electricity plants, auto factories, mines, smelters and other heavy industries were openly waged since unions re-emerged in South Africa during the 1970s, and their strength of purpose was vital to ending apartheid. But they remained opposed to the loss of 100,000 jobs in the main coal district, Mpumalanga, because the government never provided details on what it meant by the oft-repeated mantra, calling for a Just Transition.

Numsa's staff were once visionary advocates of renewable energy democracy, and by the early 2010s, the union had developed one of the world's most ambitious Just Transition statements. But Numsa then turned in 2017-19 to fighting against "climate action" environmentalists over the 10,000 MW of privatized solar and wind projects being installed mainly by European corporations. As the union's deputy leader Karl Cloete (2018) explained, "the mandate of Renewable Energy projects must be to achieve service provision, meet universal needs, decommodify energy and provide an equitable dividend to communities and workers directly involved in production and consumption of energy."

The president of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, Joseph Mathunjwa (2018), agreed that the privatized model should be discarded: "If we leave it to the market, we will not get to the roots of the climate and environmental crisis and workers will be discarded in the existing mining and energy sectors." The 800,000-strong SA Federation of Trade Unions held a mid-2018 Working Class Summit with similar rhetoric: "We must mobilize for a deep transformation of the current economic system of production and consumption, while at the same time including protecting workers' shop-floor concerns. We have to find a way of reconciling the interests of workers in energy-related industries and those of the working class facing the impacts of climate change" (Vavi 2018).

In short, the battle lines between labor and climate activists were drawn across five fields of action: speed, scale, scope, space and the state:

- The unions – especially Numsa – wanted a *slower* transition to renewables due to fear the state won't protect jobs.

- Their ideal of the appropriate *scale* for electricity generation, grid transmission and distribution was always national, not the decentralized, "small scale embedded generation" strategies favored by Climate Action neoliberals (the latter approach makes wide-scale electricity redistribution from rich to poor more difficult).

- The *scope* demanded by unions is often narrower – in protecting existing dirty-energy jobs – but in Numsa's case, it has also advocated for a more expansive post-capitalist vision.

- The geographical dilemma – *'space'* – is thorny, since the sunny, windy and tidal-power areas of South Africa generally don't overlap with the inland coal fields and power plants, so climate justice advocates found themselves challenged to address this disjuncture more explicitly.

- Finally, there were diverging views of the role of the *state*, particularly the parastatal Eskom, since Numsa and other unions insisted on rescuing it as part of their explicitly socialist political agenda, while many citizens and climate justice activists had already given up as a result of the energy agency's deep-rooted corruption and pro-coal bias.

There are very few encouraging sites of joint work where these five divides in emphasis can be reconciled. Whereas a team at the Alternative Information and Development Centre (2017) put together a 2017 *Million Climate Jobs* booklet and campaign to support decarbonization, including in the coal fields, this particular approach to a Just Transition did not take root. Unions were too defensive. Many environmentalists – especially from the white middle classes – were unconscious of justice concerns.

Although in 2015 a major summit between Numsa, environmentalists and social movements addressed energy and climate change with great promise, at a time of consistent shortages and blackouts, there was no follow up. The summit declared opposition to "false solutions such as the introduction of nuclear energy on a huge scale, fracking, agrofuels/biofuels, carbon trading, clean coal and carbon sequestration" (Numsa 2015). But the need for unifying, joint demands on the state for a Just Transition has, since then, yet to be explored, much less realized.

The working class does have a few cases where, if not production, at least the consumption of coal-generated power is being politicized. Perhaps the most climate-conscious urban social movement of the post-apartheid era was the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, fighting a two-decade long struggle for energy justice. In part they were popular through encouraging 85 percent of the huge township's residents to think of power as a 'commons,' hence illegally connecting electricity supply. They justified this in part because their visionary leaders regularly critique and protest Eskom's coal-based generation. "For as long as Eskom uses coal, I won't pay," Cleopatra Shezi told MSN news in 2019, refusing to change her stance "unless they connect us to the solar system grid" (Lindeque 2019).

Two cyclones and a rain bomb

In mid-2019, the contradictions and limits of all these approaches came into focus when hundreds of regional activists in the Southern African People's Solidarity Network held their annual meeting at the national museum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Rural Women's Assembly members offered testimonials from cyclone-affected sites in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa. It was their mutual aid against flooding, during the terrifying weeks of March-April 2019, that allowed for survival.

Idai and Kenneth were the worst cyclones on record in this region, and in between was a 'Rain Bomb' on Easter Monday that devastated South Durban and areas further down the coast. Scientists agree that these storms were more vicious due to climate change, for the temperature of the Indian Ocean offshore Beira, Mozambique was higher than normal by more than 2 degrees, the impact of which was to make Idai much more intense. With sustained winds of 195 kph at peak, Idai was the Southern Hemisphere's third most destructive storm in recorded history, following cyclones in Madagascar in 1892 and Indonesia in 1973.

Governments estimated Idai's fatalities at 1,078, with more than two million people suffering other loss and damage, and sustained threats of cholera. Two thirds of Mozambique's and Zimbabwe's staple maize crop was destroyed, not only by the flooding but also drought that hit elsewhere. Zimbabwe's lack of rainfall from 2017-19 was unprecedented, and the main power source, the Zambezi River, dropped sufficiently low as to extinguish hydropower supply by October 2019 at the Kariba Dam, the world's largest artificial lake. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2019) confirmed that "Mozambique ranks third among African countries most exposed to multiple weather-related hazards and suffers from periodic cyclones, droughts, floods, and related epidemics"

The links between Cyclone Idai and climate change were acknowledged by those with a social conscience. In mid-March, the South African government mainly sent their armed forces and technicians to help rebuild fallen pylons so as to restore the main electricity supply from Mozambique, from the Cahorra Bassa mega-dam on the Zambezi River. Eskom suffered a major set of blackouts the week Idai hit, due to the disruption of more than a megawatt of supply. The main agency assisting was a highly reputable South African charity, Gift of the Givers, which provides relief support across the world.

Five weeks later, on April 22, 17 cm of rain fell on Durban and its southern hinterlands, leaving seventy-one people dead. The prior record was October 2017 when only 10.8 cm fell in a day. And the following week, Cyclone Kenneth hit Mozambique – near the newly-discovered northern oil and gas fields – at the scarcely-populated border with Tanzania, so although winds reached 225 km/hour, there were only a few deaths.

The cyclones and rain bomb revealed the region's terrible vulnerabilities, as did the 2019 drought in South Africa's, Mozambique's and Zimbabwe's main food producing areas and Cape Town's water shortage from 2015-18, which left the city's residential taps nearly bone dry.

What is also much clearer after the 2019 extreme weather, is South Africa's "subimperial" role in the region, including as a central force behind environmental damage. It is increasingly important – and easy – to show that the wealthiest South Africans have a climate debt liability for this damage. Fewer than three dozen corporations operating in South Africa – led by BHP Billiton, Sasol, Glencore, Anglo American, Arcelor Mittal and other smelting and mining houses in the Energy Intensive Users Group – are responsible for forty percent of the electricity consumption. In general, as University of Manchester climate scientist Kevin Anderson points out, "Almost 50 percent of global carbon emissions arise from the activities of around 10 percent of the global population", an indicator of how extreme climate injustice has become (Sefali 2018).

This point was made after Cyclone Idai by the Rural Women's Assembly (2019): "The three countries now affected by this unfolding disaster – Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi – have among the world's lowest emissions rates. We demand that rich countries who continue to pollute the Earth's atmosphere with greenhouse gas emissions commit to pay compensation for the damage and loss of life resulting from this latest storm". As expressed by Anabela Lemos (2019), director of Justiça Ambiental! (Friends of the Earth Moçambique), "People in Mozambique know this is climate chaos. They know what's going on. They are going to come and challenge everyone in northern countries and ask: why are you continuing to do this to us? Stop this genocide."

The Harare-based Centre for Natural Resource Governance (2019) in Harare released a statement specifying how reparations could be made:

> the rich countries must pay their climate debt to the Zimbabwean people – but the Zanu PF government and Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube cannot be trusted to manage the payments. Instead, we need trusted agencies in civil society to receive aid and direct transfers to the ordinary people affected. This could be done simply by arranging payout systems in the affected parts of Zimbabwe, so that everyone living in those areas would get a reparations payment. There is need to compensate families for loss of lives, destruction of homes and even loss of food, livestock and domestic utensils. The situation is dire in fragile states where governments have misplaced priorities – which relegates human security to humanitarian work of NGOs and well-wishers.

This doesn't yet change *every*thing – but could and should

Even though these extreme incidents of climate damage are becoming more obvious, the construction of a South African climate justice movement has been elusive. One reason is the philosophical differences between the environmental justice and conservation movements. Occasionally these movements come together in specific sites of unity, such as defending against coal mining on the border of the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi reserve where the white rhino was saved from extinction.

But there are several missing links before they can generate a national movement with equivalent weight to, say, the Treatment Action Campaign which demanded that generic AIDS medicines be universally available. Their victory raised life expectancy from 52 to 64 years from 2005-15, by getting life-saving drugs to five million South Africans who previously could not afford them.

One gap in climate activism is the failure to reframe climate change the way Naomi Klein did in 2014: *This Changes Everything.* That would entail conjoining all manner of struggles over energy, transport, agricultural, production, suburbanization and waste disposal processes that cause climate change. But as labor movements such as the 1980s US Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers under the legendary Tony Mazzocchi have long pointed out, each step of the way there must be a set of *genuine* 'Just Transition' policies and projects that switch workers from dirty to clean jobs with no loss of pay, and with sensitivity to geographical impact.

The climate movement would then need more unity of purpose in everything from popular education, to militant activism, to media advocacy, to watchdogging the national policy process to lobbying legislatures, to filing regulatory objections – since Pretoria's environment and mining ministries generally behave as if they were in the pockets of the polluters – to building up climate-conscious case law in the courts. It would require more support from the various foundations and funding organizations that currently amplify infighting, turf wars and "silo" politics. Also required is stronger youth leadership, where signs included several local manifestations of the 2019 Climate Strike: strongest in Cape Town and Johannesburg, but with potential to spread across the country and continent with more leadership from the promising network, the South African Youth Climate Change Coalition.

Strategically-minded intellectuals were occasionally involved in climate justice activism, particularly the group of eco-socialists assembled by University of the Witwatersrand political economist Vishwas Satgar to develop a *Climate Crisis* critique. Satgar (2019) also helped mobilize the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign which in 2018 established a People's Climate Justice Charter. Some of the best anti-coal research comes from groundWork. Investigative journalists with a climate focus can be read regularly at *Daily Maverick* (led by Kevin Bloom) and the *Mail & Guardian* (especially Sipho Kings).

South Africa's climate justice ideas are recognized as being very different than the typical climate action approach, thanks to 1990s traditions of environmental justice and the 2004 founding of the international Durban Group for Climate Justice, which in the initial stages of global carbon trading offered the most systemic critique (Lohmann 2006). However, South Africa remains the world's most unequal society and cultures of activism differ dramatically from the components that would need to fuse for a proper national climate justice movement to emerge: environmental justice advocates (including within the conscientized middle-class), low-income communities, women, labor and especially the youth.

Conclusion

This then was the unsatisfying hybrid-climate justice politics unfolding in Africa in 2020, especially in a South Africa whose leaders chaired both the African Union and African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. While leading activists have demanded that fossil fuels should be phased out and solar access made universal as general policy standpoints, Africa's community struggles against the exploration, extraction, refining and combustion of coal, oil and gas resonate from the Niger Delta to Kenya's Lamu Port to KwaZulu-Natal coal fields and petrol refineries. While leftist trade unions increasingly propose radical versions of eco-socialism, they still defend carbon-intensive employment with an understandable desperation. A burgeoning youth and ecologically-aware middle-class feinted towards climate justice, but their stamina had not been tested. The mainstream climate action scene remained predictably tame and unambitious.

In this context, the vast majority of citizens were apathetic, and the upper-income elites lived in conditions akin to the richest First World habitats. These were the men and a few women who occupied the commanding heights of fossilized power, where profits and new discoveries were too sweet to kick their addictions – unless those promoting climate justice politics became much better organized, and brave enough for the conflagrations that inevitably lie ahead.

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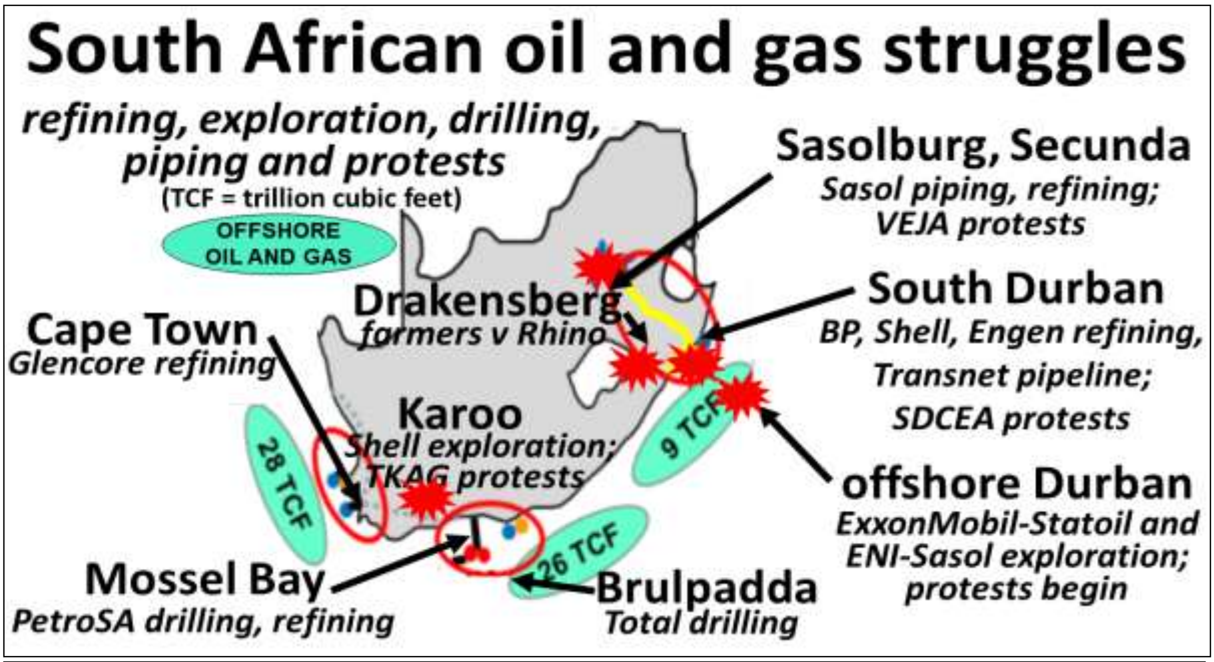
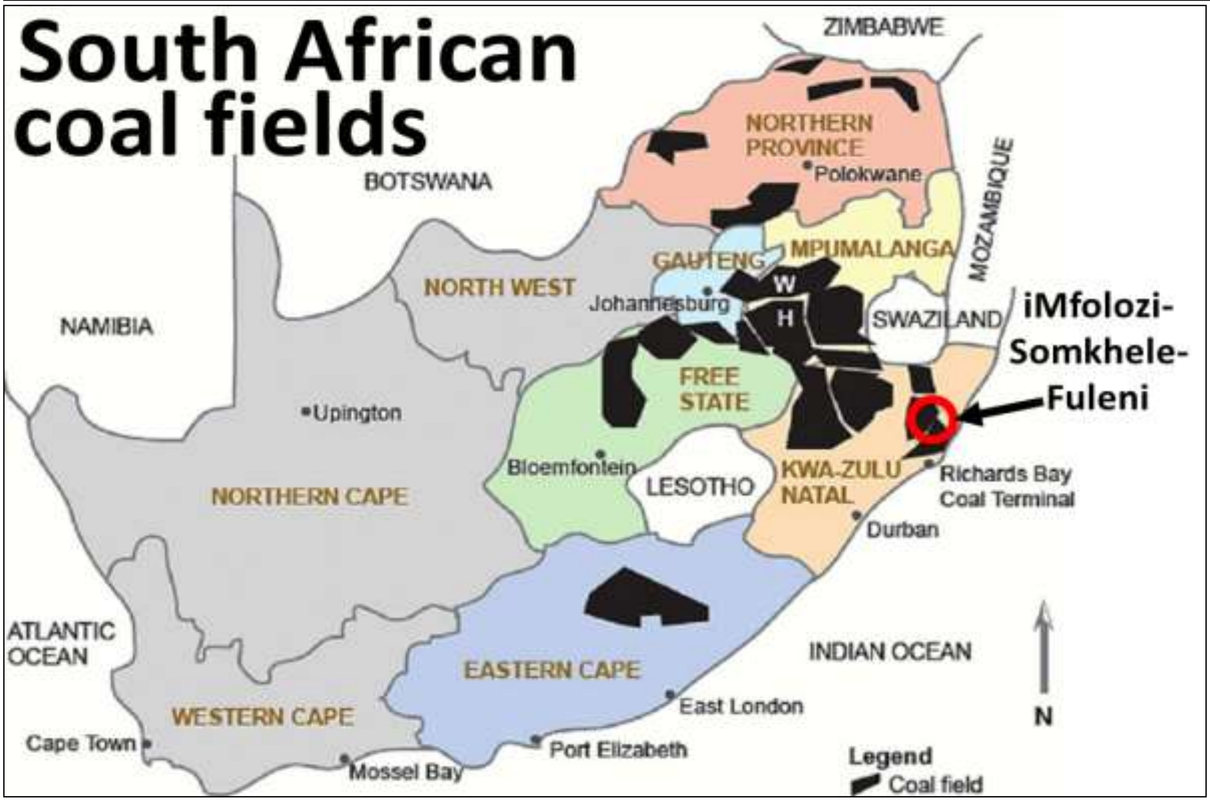
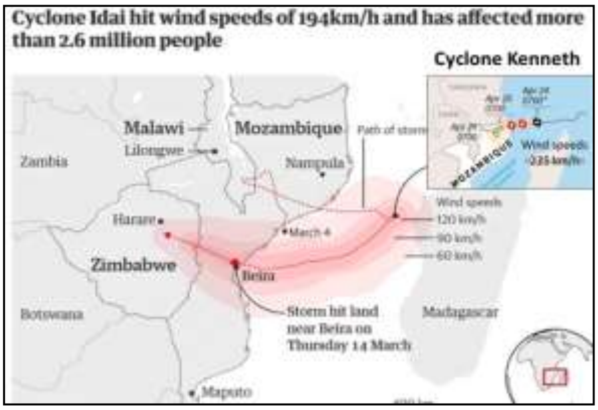

South African oil and gas struggles
refining, exploration, drilling, piping and protests
(TCF = trillion cubic feet)
OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS
Sasolburg, Secunda
Sasol piping, refining; VEJA protests
Drakensberg
farmers v Rhino
South Durban
BP, Shell, Engen refining, Transnet pipeline; SDCEA protests
Cape Town
Glencore refining
Karoo
Shell exploration; TKAG protests
28 TCF
9 TCF
26 TCF
offshore Durban
ExxonMobil-Statoil and ENI-Sasol exploration; protests begin
Mossel Bay
PetroSA drilling, refining
Brulpadda
Total drilling


South African coal fields
ZIMBABWE
BOTSWANA
NORTHERN PROVINCE
Polokwane
MOZAMBIQUE
MPUMALANGA
GAUTENG
NORTH WEST
Johannesburg
W
H
SWAZILAND
iMfolozi-Somkhele-Fuleni
NAMIBIA
FREE STATE
Upington
Bloemfontein
LESOTHO
KWA-ZULU NATAL
Richards Bay Coal Terminal
NORTHERN CAPE
Durban
ATLANTIC OCEAN
EASTERN CAPE
INDIAN OCEAN
N
WESTERN CAPE
East London
Cape Town
Port Elizabeth
Mossel Bay
Legend
Coal field

Scenes from Somkhele mine, Fuleni resistance and a 2018 showdown at court

Source: Global Environmental Trust (Rob Symons)



Sub-imperial ecosystem management in Africa: Continental implications of South African environmental injustices

in R.Holifield, J.Chakraborty and G.Walker (Eds), *Handbook of Environmental Justice,* New York, Routledge, 2018, https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Environmental-Justice/Holifield-Chakraborty-Walker/p/book/9781138932821.

INTRODUCTION

The South African government was democratised in 1994, but since then has not responded effectively to either inherited or new environmental injustices (Cock 2016, Satgar 2016, Bond 2016a). The resulting footprint of ecological destruction reaches thousands of kilometers north into the African continent. Both Pretoria-based politics and Johannesburg-based economics are responsible for such extreme damage to the continent's environmental sustainability, as to warrant the label 'sub-imperialist.' As the theory of sub-imperialism (Marini 1965, Harvey 2003, Bond and Garcia 2015) would suggest, this occurs in at least three ways:

- first, South Africa's long settler-colonial traditions of facilitating ultra-exploitative ecosystems management as promoted by imperial powers, namely the avaricious use of free environmental space for the purpose of *externalising pollution* (i.e., without paying environmental and social liabilities especially where these have racial, gender and class bias);
- second, South Africa's homegrown-neoliberal systematisation of that power through *intensified ecological modernisation*, in the form of supposedly-corrective 'Green Economy' governance strategies that commodify nature so as to save it; and
- third, the role of South African corporations in amplifying capital-nature exploitation in other African settings, aided by Pretoria's diplomatic, financial and military support.

The era of neoliberalism since 1994 affected both global and local elite strategies for environmental governance: 'market solutions for market problems.' As this strategy became generalised in the early 21st century thanks to the United Nations, World Bank and associated institutions, the metabolism of capital-nature relations intensified. This was partly a function of the rhythms of capitalist crisis and global uneven development – most obviously China's role in rapidly shifting both capital accumulation and pollution from West to East – and specifically the 2002-11 commodity super-cycle.

But the minerals and petroleum upturn and subsequent 2011-15 crash left a devastating impact upon African economies and environments. The incentive for firms to produce higher volumes of commodities was one driving force before 2011, but also as the price fell, many firms' shareholders demanded even higher volumes of output to make up for lower prices, which in those instances intensified the already extreme metabolism of extraction. With the heightened metabolism, researchers began noticing upturns in social protests across Africa (ACLED 2016, African Development Bank 2016), as described in the conclusion.

The combination of neoliberal economic policies (imposed since the early 1980s) and resource-extractive dependency (especially since 2002) left Africa much more exposed than it should have been, by the time of the commodity price downturn. Many minerals and petroleum fell more than 50 percent in price after 2011, with the most dramatic declines during 2015. Once-powerful multinational corporations dependent upon commodities lost more than 85 percent of their London Stock Exchange share value from their 2009-11 peak to 2015-16 trough, including Glencore (87 percent), Anglo American (94 percent) and Lonmin (99 percent). By mid-2016 the World Bank had downgraded the continent's overall annual GDP growth from the 2000-10 period's 5.4 percent average to the 2010-15 period's 3.3 percent average to just 1.6 percent for 2016, the lowest in two decades.

Such over-exposure not only reflected the Bretton Woods Institutions' policy power, with its export-oriented dogmatism. It was also a function of Pretoria's sub-imperial location as the legitimator and often amplifier of imperial power on the continent. For example, the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which Pretoria – joined by leaders from Nigeria, Algeria and Senegal – pushed into the African Union, was described by the US State Department as "philosophically spot on" because it relegitimised orthodoxy (Gopinath 2003, Bond 2005). NEPAD soon housed the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa, a trillion-dollar strategy mainly aimed at providing roads, railroads, pipelines and bridges that, like the colonial era, largely emanate from mines, oil/gas rigs and plantations, and are mainly directed towards ports. Electricity generation is overwhelmingly biased towards multinational corporate mining and smelting needs.

Simultaneously, environmental injustices associated with helter-skelter extraction of minerals (see Chapter 30) and petroleum still worsen under imperial control, with the increasing dimension of sub-imperial legitimation. The 'Africa Rising' myth followed logically (e.g., Perry 2012), as the continent's much higher 21st century Gross Domestic Project (GDP) initially appeared to justify the renewed export orientation and overall commitment to liberalisation (no matter how misleading the GDP data).

Part of the critique of sub-imperialism is Pretoria's role in multilateral processes that are objectively unjust in relation to Africa, and that are becoming more so over time. In addition to a variety of world and regional economic summits, since 1994 South Africa hosted:

- the 1998-2001 World Commission on Dams, which two leading South African water experts subsequently fatally undermined (Briscoe 2010, Muller 2014);
- the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, which generalised the practice known as 'neoliberal nature' (Bond 2002);
- the 2011 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate conference, which was celebrated by the US State Department (Stern 2011) for ending core justice principles (Bond 2012); and
- the 2016 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), where South Africa joined a few owners of large stockpiles of rhino horn and elephant ivory to attempt to overturn trade bans, against a huge majority of countries which wanted them strengthened (Lunstrum and Bond 2016).

Most importantly, in Paris at the UNFCCC's decisive 2015 summit, a South African chaired the G77 delegation, arguing there that 'climate apartheid' required a strong global response, and yet the South African government celebrated the outcome notwithstanding such fatal deficiencies that the world's leading climate scientist, James Hansen, labelled the Paris outcome 'bullshit' (Bond 2016b). At the same moment, destructive sub-imperial power over Africa was reflected in South Africa's role in other controversial multilateral bodies, such as the World Trade Organisation's December 2015 Nairobi summit (which decisively attacked poor countries' food sovereignty) and the 2010-15 restructuring of International Monetary Fund (IMF) voting power, leaving Africa profoundly disempowered (e.g. Nigeria losing 41 percent of its share). Pretoria represented Africa in the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) network, which aimed to have the latter play a 'gateway' function in Africa for capital's benefit (Bond and Garcia 2015).

In a context of global governance that is so adverse to Africa's interests, it is not surprising that South Africa's micro-economic, socio-political and environmental interventions are also contributing to the continent's problems, as documented in the next section.

SOUTH AFRICAN SUB-IMPERIALISM, FROM CORPORATE TO MILITARY TO FINANCIAL

The framing for environmental injustices that best reflects the South African economy's and state's power in Africa is the theory of sub-imperialism (Bond and Garcia 2015). Prior to 1994, there were three modes of apartheid's 'constellation of states' in the region that exemplified this power:

- the pull of inexpensive male migrant labour from regional sites to the South African mines, fields and factories, dating to the late 19th century;
- the extension of South African mining conglomerates up-continent, starting with Rhodes' British South African Company in 1890; and
- the security capability of the Pretoria regime, especially in fighting border wars (Angola, Namibia and Mozambique) that left millions dead in the course of attacks against African National Congress (ANC) guerrilla operations in neighbouring countries, especially during the era of armed, decolonisation struggles in Southern Africa from the 1960s-80s.

But after 1994, instead of offering cessation and reparations to the region, the new ANC rulers in Pretoria mainly amplified existing sub-imperial power relations. Legalisation of (apartheid-era) resident migrant workers' status in South Africa went hand-in-hand with wider-scale crises in the sub-region that brought in millions more economic refugees from Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and political refugees from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Together, one impact was a lowering of the cost of unskilled and semi-skilled labour power which, together with intensified internecine competition amongst poor people in township retail and housing markets, generated xenophobic tendencies amongst South Africans.

South African over-accumulation processes date to the 1970s, but the early-1990s capitalist crisis helped facilitate a political power transfer that included the continental legitimation of Johannesburg and Cape Town corporations (Bond 2014). They began to move much more decisively up-continent following the apartheid-era investment drought, at a time most whites were shunned in the rest of Africa. After 1994, social, economic and environmental change followed new waves of South African retailers, financiers, cellphone operators, infrastructure construction firms, tourism companies and mining houses. The latter sector was often characterised by extreme exploitation of nature and society:

- At the eastern DRC's Mongbwalu mine, Johannesburg-based AngloGoldAshanti closely collaborated – in a context of approximately six million civilian deaths and extreme environmental damage – with notorious warlords (the Nationalist and Integrationist Forces), and when criticised by Human Rights Watch (2005) in *The Curse of Gold*, the firm's CEO Bobby Godsell (2005) remarked, "Our central purpose is to find and mine gold profitably… [but] mistakes will be made."
- The Johannesburg mining house Mvelaphanda and associates (e.g. Mark Willcox and Walter Hennig) of a leading ANC politician, Tokyo Sexwale, were implicated during the US Securities and Exchange Commission's prosecution of a major ($39 billion) New York financier, Och-Ziff, which in 2016 pled guilty to mining- or petroleum-related bribery of state officials from Libya, the DRC, Chad, Niger, Guinea, Zimbabwe (AmaBhungane 2016).
- The diamond mining house De Beers was charged by two academics, Khadija Sharife and Sarah Bracking (2016), with systematic misinvoicing of more than $2.8 billion in diamonds over a seven year period, including batches from Botswana and Namibia.
- A year after South African President Jacob Zuma took power, his nephew Khulubuse and lawyer Michael Hulley gained access – thanks to assistance from Zuma's ally DRC President Joseph Kabila and the Israeli 'blood diamonds' tycoon Dan Gertler – to a $10 billion oil concession at Lake Albert that originally had been controlled by Ireland's Tullow (Congoleaks 2011).

These were just a few of the highest-profile adverse incidents involving South African mining corporations in Africa. In many other cases associated with resource extraction from Africa, Illicit Financial Flows ('IFFs') were specifically national in character. An example is the documented tax avoidance strategies of Lonmin, Angloplats and Impala Platinum, discovered in 2014 by labour-aligned researchers during the 5-month mineworkers' strike, but similar allegations were made against Implats' Zimbabwe subsidiary. More generally, such IFF profits are mainly drawn from minerals and oil ripped from the African soil. In 2015 Global Financial Integrity measured the IFFs alone from 2004-13 as costing $21 billion per year in South Africa and $18 billion in Nigeria, while Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole lost 6.1 percent of GDP annually to IFFs, more than 50 percent higher than the rate for poor countries in general (Kar and Spanjers 2015: 8-9, 23).

These environmentally unjust outflows are not merely the result of accounting gimmicks; they are enforced by the sheer might of regional military power. Pretoria's security capacity was tested in the case noted above involving Khulubuse Zuma's eastern DRC investment, worth $10 billion (although in 2016 he claimed to be near penniless when faced with repayment of overdue salaries to his bankrupted Aurora mining house workers). In 2013 at Jacob Zuma's request, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) deployed more than 1300 'peace-keeping' troops near his nephew Khulubuse's oil stake. A variety of scandals beset the force there, including wild drunken (and sexual) rampages by the SA troops, who also ignored a 2016 massacre by warlords just a kilometre from the SANDF base (Allison 2016).

Pretoria's military commitment to defending mining and petroleum interests in the DRC echoed the earlier deployment (by Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Zuma) of hundreds of SANDF troops in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR). That decision followed a 2006 deal for diamond market monopoly control signed by Mbeki and the CAR dictator Francois Bozizé. By early 2013, socio-political and ethnic tensions in CAR had become extreme, as the French government and military switched support from Bozizé to opposition rebels. But as Bozizé was ousted by a coup during a March 2013 Bangui firefight – a few days before the BRICS had their Durban heads-of-state summit – there were 15 SANDF fatalities. Some SANDF survivors were furious with their role as mercenaries, they told senior Johannesburg reporters (Hosken and Mahlangu 2013): "Our men were deployed to various parts of the city, protecting belongings of South Africans. They were the first to be attacked… outside the different buildings – the ones which belong to businesses in Jo'burg."

Lesotho's attempted army coup in mid-1998 was another example, as the SANDF killed two dozen Basotho soldiers at the wall of the Katse Dam that supplies Johannesburg and Pretoria with water, fearing the rebels would *blow up the dam* (Bond 2002). Added to South Africa's periodic military incursions up-continent, these political, economic and environmental influences contribute to a sense that leading officials in Pretoria amplify rather than reduce the continent's degradation.

This is especially true in light of Pretoria's cooperation with the US military's Africa Command (AFRICOM), which is active in dozens of countries. AFRICOM bears testimony to Washington's overlapping desire to maintain control over core African conflict sites amidst rising Islamic fundamentalism from the Sahel to Kenya, which are, coincidentally, theatres of war in the vicinity of large petroleum reserves (Turse 2014). US Air Force strategist Shawn Cochran (2010: 111) relayed the words of a 'US military advisor to the African Union' whom he interviewed in 2009, "We don't want to see our guys going in and getting whacked… We want Africans to go in." Jacob Zuma (2014) was content with this arrangement, for at a 2014 African leaders' summit in Washington, he announced, "As President Obama said, the boots must be African."

Financing is another area where sub-imperial relationships would be important. The BRICS New Development Bank entered into a collaborative arrangement with the World Bank in 2016, and its much-anticipated launch of a regional centre in South Africa soon afterwards had a precedent: financing by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). In 2013-15 the DBSA was given an additional $2 billion in working capital in large part to pave the way into the sub-continent. Many major DBSA corporate beneficiaries in Johannesburg and Cape Town have played a predatory role in African sites of extreme environmental injustice, and by 2016, 14 percent of DBSA assets were in Africa (outside South Africa), with plans for an additional $400 million in semi-privatised infrastructure investment.

However, profound contradictions soon emerged. The main DBSA regional lender was Mo Shaik, the former head of state intelligence and brother of a man convicted of bribing Jacob Zuma in the late-1990s arms deal, and of another state official most responsible for that notorious $5 billion deal. By 2015, Shaik was disarmingly open about the limitations of his brief. In a talk to the main strategic leadership seminar held at South Africa's foreign ministry (at which this author took notes), he conceded that, in the rest of the continent, he sometimes "felt like an economic hit man… [selling] projects they don't need and they can never pay for, but my job is to sell them these projects." He named the largest proposed infrastructure work on earth, the Congo River's Inga Hydropower Project ("who would invest $80 billion in the DRC?") and other random development finance disasters from the Sahel to Southern Africa (Bond 2016c).

Given the unreliability of African conditions for multinational corporate investment and development finance, the DBSA and BRICS New Development Bank will stumble to fulfil the sub-imperial function. They will require much closer cooperation with corporations from Brazil, Russia, China and India. The BRIC bloc had welcomed South Africa in 2010, and in 2013 in Durban, the heads of state planned more of the 'gateway' role that the New Development Bank might play in Africa (Bond 2016c). In this and other settings, South Africa often attempts to 'speak for' Africa in multilateral strategies; e.g., it is the only African state in the G20. But this means in several crucial environmental management functions – climate change, mining, commercial agriculture, wildlife, timber and water (ranging from oceans to household sanitation) – South Africa exhibits power relations based on state policy and regulatory processes biased towards pro-corporate standpoints.

SOUTH AFRICA'S POLLUTION AND NATURAL CAPITAL DEPLETION

South Africa's own economy – which since the early 2000s has been increasingly directed by transnational corporations and international commodities and financial markets – generates exceptionally high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, minerals-related toxics, land and bulk water degradation, solid waste, and maritime pollution. The results include myriad injustices in the way climate change, air pollution, declining land capacity, and household water constraints affect low-income black people. A new 'Blue Economy' oceans management strategy features oil and gas exploration, beachfront tourism and commercial mariculture (in contrast to subsistence fishing), and will exacerbate environmental injustice locally but potentially also in neighbouring sites.

The spillover impacts of all these policies and practices on regional African and even global ecologies is increasingly obvious, especially in terms of climate change, trans-boundary rivers, commodified and genetically-modified food provision, and oceans. Indeed, since the end of apartheid in 1994, various aspects of South African ecosystems management have degenerated: water and soil quality, greenhouse gas contributions to global warming, fisheries and other aspects of the maritime environment, industrial toxics, genetic modification, Acid Mine Drainage, fracking and offshore oil and gas drilling. The South African Government Communications and Information Service (2007) conceded that in the state's most thorough self-assessment, a dozen years after liberation, there was "a general decline in the state of the environment."

There were many ways this localised ecological destruction was experienced regionally, in Africa. As a prime example of an overly large carbon footprint, the threat of water scarcity and water table pollution worsened dramatically after 1994 in the country's main megalopolis, Gauteng. With 12 million residents stretching from the Vaal steel and petro-chemical complex through Johannesburg to northern Pretoria's sprawling townships, Africa's largest industrial and commercial complex required new mega-dams known as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The first two, Katse and Mohale, were built during the late 1990s, and featured the world's highest-profile construction-corporation corruption cases, the (uncompensated) displacement of indigenous people, loss of scarce fertile farmland due to dam impounding, and other destructive environmental consequences downriver.

Moreover, the extremely high costs of Lesotho water transfer across the mountains (five times the existing marginal price) deterred consumption by the poorest people in Gauteng townships, since they paid a disproportionate share (see also Chapter 27). One result was an upsurge of social protest and Africa's main early-2000s "water war," between Soweto residents and their municipal supplier (outsourced to a Paris water company, Suez, whose construction subsidiary was one of the firms prosecuted for corruption in Lesotho). This followed higher prices and a commercialised system of water delivery via pre-payment meters and water-limiting sanitation. The wealthiest urban (mainly white) families continued to enjoy swimming pools and English gardens in Johannesburg and Pretoria, which meant that in some of the most hedonistic suburbs water consumption was 30 times greater each day than in low-income townships (some of whose residents continue doing gardening and domestic work for whites) (Bond 2002).

In spite of market-based management strategies in water catchment areas, there remains a growing need for state command-and-control systems (e.g. water rationing) to shift systems associated especially with commercial agricultural irrigation, mining degradation of the water table, the cooling of coal-fired power plants, commercial timber's impact on groundwater, as well as a few million high-income urban South Africans' hedonistic lifestyles in even Lesotho-supplied Johannesburg. Neither traditional Riparian rights (water drawn from owned land) nor market-centric water pricing strategies have proven effective in incentivising change. Nor has a tokenistic 'Free Basic Water' strategy adopted nationally in 2001 supplied sufficient water to poor people, as witnessed by ubiquitous illegal water connections across the low-income areas of South Africa.

There are other examples of wide-ranging environmental injustices within South Africa, including numerous unresolved conflicts over access to energy (highly class segregated), natural land reserves (where in minerals-rich sites, displacement of indigenous people continues), deleterious impacts of economic activity on biodiversity, insufficient protection of endangered species, and state policies favouring genetic modification for commercial agriculture. Marine regulatory systems have become overstressed and hotly contested by European and East Asian fishing trawlers, as well as by local medium-scale commercial fishing firms fending off new waves of small-scale black rivals. Expansion of gum and pine timber plantations, largely for pulp exports to East Asia, remained extremely damaging, not only because of grassland and organic forest destruction – leading to soil adulteration and far worse flood damage downriver, such as Mozambique suffered in 2000–1 – but also due to the spread of alien invasive plants into water catchments across the country. A constructive state program, "Working for Water", slowed but did not reverse their growth.

Thanks to accommodating state policies, South African commercial agriculture remained extremely reliant upon fertilisers and pesticides, with Genetically Modified (GMs) crops increasing across the food chain while virtually no attention was given to expanding organic farming. The huge US agri-corporation Monsanto used Makhatini Flats in KwaZulu-Natal as a high-profile ‘success story’ to draw small (black) farmers into GMO cotton after 1999, but by 2005, the strategy had become an embarrassment. Monsanto and the Gates Foundation advanced pro-GM advocacy to the rest of the continent from South Africa, which proved an easy site to establish the strategy, given the preponderance of medium- to large-scale farming (by white landholders and corporations). Tellingly, although the Monsanto Bt maize variety MON801 failed to halt pest resistance in South Africa it was marketed elsewhere in Africa through the Insect Resistant Maize for Africa strategy (African Centre for Bio-Safety, 2015).

The South African government’s failure to prevent toxic dumping and incineration (see Chapter 25) led to a nascent but portentous group of mass tort (class action) lawsuits. The victims included asbestos and silicosis sufferers who worked in or lived close to the country’s mines, and by 2016 they were on the verge of winning tens of millions of dollars in damages. Other legal avenues and social activism were pursued by residents who suffered persistent pollution in extremely toxic pockets like South Durban and, just south of Johannesburg, the industrial sites of Sasolburg, Secunda (the world’s single biggest emission site for CO_2) and Steel Valley. In these efforts, the environmental justice movement almost invariably fought both corporations and Pretoria. From 1994, progressive-sounding environmental statements were regularly made by officials, yet in reality they regularly downplayed ecological crimes (a Green Scorpions anti-pollution team did finally emerge but with subdued powers that barely pricked). Exemplifying Pretoria’s approach was the 2015 decision to avoid enforcement of an Air Quality Act on grounds that the largest polluting corporations required further exemptions.

The explanation for Pretoria’s lack of concern about environmental injustices at home and abroad is obvious: a national economic structure in which wealth and political influence remained vested in the so-called Minerals-Energy Complex. One result, obvious to even the World Bank by 2000, was the way South Africa’s reliance upon non-renewable resource extraction gave the country a *net negative per capita income*, once adjustment to standard GDP is made. The typical calculation of ‘growth’ adds GDP for the extraction and sale of minerals, but does not take into account pollution or depletion of mineral wealth (i.e. the transaction only receives a credit, not a debit in spite of the mineral’s depletion).

The Gaborone Declaration (2012) – signed by officials from Botswana, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania – recognised “the limitations that GDP has as a measure of well-being and sustainable growth.” The signatories committed to “integrating the value of natural capital into national accounting and corporate planning.” But as such corrections begun to be made, it became apparent that South Africa (and most of Africa) suffered a net *dis*accumulation of wealth. The Bank’s (2011) *Changing Wealth of Nations* calculated a 25 percent drop in South Africa’s natural capital and by 2008, according to the Bank (2011), the average South African was losing $245 per person per year. Although methodologies are subject to debate, the overall message is fairly straightforward, namely that even relatively industrialised South Africa had become overly dependent upon natural resources. The more platinum, gold, coal and other metals are dug from the soil, the poorer South Africa becomes. Many other African countries had far worse ratios of net to gross wealth.

CLIMATE INJUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The extraction, transport and smelting of minerals and metals remain South Africa's major contributor to climate change (see Chapter 29), mainly because of the extremely high amounts of electricity required. Most of the three dozen corporations comprising South Africa's Energy Intensive Users Group (EIUG) are the largest mining and smelting firms, which together consume 44 per cent of the electricity supplied by Eskom, a parastatal which relied 93 percent upon coal-fired generation during the early 21st century. Although South Africa has the world's third greatest potential for harnessing solar capacity, and although a rapid roll-out of private-supplied renewable energy – wind and solar – raised the proportion of the country's grid to more than 10 percent from 2010-16, Eskom's chief executive Brian Molefe in 2016 announced he would no longer purchase further amounts. In search of more 'base load' (for the EIUG's benefit) he would instead began a nuclear energy procurement process that would in the short term cost the company at least $10 billion (along with anticipated corruption, not to mention longer-term cost estimates of $100 billion).

Yet aside from long-delayed maintenance, the country's short-term grid expansion was unnecessary in the period after 2015 due to the severity of the commodity price crash. South Africans had feared a lengthy period of potential electricity black-outs ('load-shedding'), a phenomenon that began in 2006 because Eskom had delayed new construction following a 1980s-90s oversupply of as much as one third (in turn premised on a high gold price following a 1979-81 blip). At the time, excessive demand from EIUG mining and smelting firms was apparent, continuing after the 2009 economic crisis until the commodity super-cycle peaked in 2011.

This is not an unusual configuration in 'resource-cursed' Africa, where vast amounts of electricity are delivered via high-tension cables to multinational corporate mining houses for the sake of extraction and capital-intensive smelting (McDonald 2008). Meanwhile, below those wires, most African women slave over fires to cook and heat households: their main energy source is a fragile woodlot, their transmission system is their (and often a child's) back, and their energy consumption is often done while coughing thanks to dense particulates in the air. The transition from HIV-positive status to full-blown AIDS is just one opportunistic respiratory infection away, again with gendered implications for care-giving. In addition to these hazards, in 2006 Christian Aid (2006) estimated that 182 million Africans were at risk of premature death due to climate change this century.

Amongst the conventional neoliberal strategies to address climate change is carbon trading, especially the Clean Development Mechanism (Bond 2012). Moreover, also in the interests of 'internalising externalities' (like pollution), South Africa is gradually implementing a carbon tax, but one far lower than what is required to switch high-carbon economic activities towards post-carbon trajectories. In 2014, the Treasury's proposed tax was cut from the equivalent of a $5.50/tonne to $14.90/tonne range which "would be both feasible and appropriate to achieve the desired behaviourial changes and emissions reduction targets," to much lower levels: "When the tax-free threshold and additional relief are taken into account, the effective tax rate will range between $0.89 and $3.55 per ton of CO_2e (and zero for Agriculture and Waste)" (South African Treasury 2014). And even more beneficial to corporations, "one of the ways to recycle the expected carbon tax revenue is by reducing other taxes. One such tax that could be reduced is the existing electricity levy on electricity produced from non-renewable sources (e.g. coal) and nuclear energy."

By 2015, in spite of leadership of the G77 at the UNFCCC Paris summit, Pretoria's delegates defended a (voluntary) Intended Nationally Determined Contribution that was deemed by the NGO Climate Action Tracker (2015) to be 'inadequate' (the lowest level of ambition). At the time, in spite of its 2009 announcement of post-2020 greenhouse gas emission cuts of 34% below "growth without constraints" (an imprecise concept), the South African state was:

- building two of the world's four largest coal-fired powerplants for an estimated $20 billion at Kusile and Medupi, with a third planned, each anticipated to add 35 million tonnes of CO_2 to the air;
- planning the export of 18 billion tonnes of coal from the northeastern South African provinces via the Richards Bay terminal, following $20 billion in new rail line expansion (the single highest priority infrastructure project in the country's National Development Plan);
- preparing for an $18 billion port-petrochemical complex expansion in South Durban (which in 2016 was delayed until 2030 though it remained the second highest priority infrastructure project) and a new $6 billion heavy-oil refinery in another port city, Port Elizabeth;
- offering shale-gas fracking exploration rights to South African, Norwegian and US firms in the fragile Drakensburg mountain range and arid Karoo region;
- hastily supporting coal mines in ecologically-sensitive Mpumalanga province (the most fertile land and a tourist zone) even ignoring water licensing requirements, as well as a controversial coal mine on the border of the ancient Mapungubwe national heritage site;
- investing in Carbon Capture and Storage technology, which aims to compress carbon dioxide from the petro-chemical and energy complex into potentially unstable underground storage sites, even though its boosters were rapidly retreating from Norwegian and US pilot projects, and in spite of the fact that it violates the Precautionary Principle, increases energy to produce power by 25 percent, is an unproven technology, is at least a decade away from implementation, and prolongs the extraction of coal;
- building or refurbishing ten World Cup stadiums and revising local economic strategies towards sports tourism in spite of the universally-acknowledged 'white elephant' character of these investments;
- doubling the capacity of the Durban-Johannesburg oil pipeline, including its redirection from the traditional route (through white suburbs) so that black peri-urban residential areas suffer pipeline breakage risks, at a cost which was ultimately at nearly triple the original estimates;
- subsidising the national airliner with more than $100 million annually as it proved incapable of turning a profit; and

- approving offshore oil and gas exploration drilling prospects to ExxonMobil, Norway's Statsoil and other controversial firms in the dangerous Agulhas Current (near Durban) as part of re-envisaging South Africa's 3000 km-coastline share of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans through the 'Operation Phakisa' Blue Economy strategy.

These and other features of capital accumulation and state infrastructure mega-project construction have far-reaching implications for African climate and water management. Blowback can be expected, for once the desertification of neighbouring states, food crop failure and sustained droughts – or sometimes extreme floods as were witnessed in 2000-01 in Mozambique – hit the continent with full force, often combined with localised warfare, the result will be a profusion of 'climate refugees': migrants who cross the long South African border in a desperate search for livelihoods. One facet of this blowback is the likely amplification of local working-class xenophobia, which already due to a post-apartheid influx of political and economic refugees, occurred in three major upsurges that left dozens dead and thousands displaced in 2008, 2010 and 2015. These are the indirect aspects of South Africa's prolific environmental injustices, amongst many more direct aspects of sub-imperialism.

CONCLUSION

The effects of South African sub-imperial economic, financial, infrastructural and military activity – especially in the interests of the extractive industries – include severe pollution and environmental degradation. What can be done by way of mitigation? There are usually two routes that open up once the damage is recognised: managerial 'ecological modernisation' strategies strongly premised on market rationality; and environmental justice campaigning. The countervailing strategies for environmental protection favoured by global, by South African and by most African national leaders are typically based upon market principles (with some important exceptions such as banning trade in elephant ivory and rhino horns, in which African countries defeated CITES proposals by Swaziland, South Africa, Nambia and Zimbabwe in 2016). But to date, like carbon trading, they do not appear to be effective (Bond 2012).

The one area of market-related valuation of ecosystems in which implementation might lead to economic transformation is natural capital accounting, but attempts to adjust GDP calculations in this manner – e.g. the Gaborone Declaration of 2012 – were stymied, with no progress to report four years later. As noted above, South Africa recorded a net negative wealth once non-renewable resource depletion is considered, and for the rest of Africa, the situation is even worse. The World Bank's (2014) *Little Green Data Book* recorded 88 percent of Sub-Saharan African countries suffering net negative wealth accumulation in 2010, because a net 12 percent of GDP was lost once this adjustment is made. This suggests an indisputable *economic* case for leaving minerals and petroleum underground, until Africa's resource curse is ended.

What can be done to halt the uncompensated depletion of wealth, to address climate change properly (e.g. with systematic demands for 'climate debt' reparations to be paid to African climate victims) and to prevent South Africa and its BRICS allies from adopting explicitly sub-imperial accumulation strategies? These tendencies might be dampened by global capitalist crisis, but the ebb and flow of accumulation often has the effect of intensifying extraction: as commodity prices fall, increased volume is demanded by shareholders who insist on steady net revenue.

On the other hand, there is always the bottom-up factor: class and eco-social struggle. During this stage of increasingly intense extractivism, there have never been more recorded African protests. The African Development Bank (AfDB) commissions measurements based upon journalistic data, and these suggest that major public protests rose from an index level of 100 in 2000 to nearly 450 in 2011. Instead of falling back after the Arab Spring – especially acute in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco – the index of protests rose higher still, to 520 in 2012, as Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda maintained the momentum of 2011 (African Development Bank 2013). In 2013, the index rose still higher, to 550 (African Development Bank 2014). In 2014 it fell back just slightly, but as in the earlier years, the main causes of protest were socio-economic injustices (African Development Bank 2015). For 2015, the Sussex University Armed Conflict Location Events Data (2016) project found even higher levels of dissent. There are all manner of reasons, but according to Agence France Press and Reuters reports, the vast majority since 2011 were over inadequate wages and working conditions, low quality of public service delivery, social divides, state repression and lack of political reform (African Development Bank 2015: xvi). But a fair share of the turmoil in Africa prior to the 2011 upsurge took place in the vicinity of mines and mineral wealth (ACLED 2016). As the super-cycle is now definitively over and as corporate investment more frantically loots the continent (as argued below), the contradictions may well lead to more socio-political explosions.

The scale of the problems that have emerged, and worse problems that lie ahead, do not only offering sobering considerations about Africa's adverse power relations and the limits of existing managerialist strategies. When viewed from below, they also allow for optimism that once society begins to recognise the threats, a more visionary approach can be established by some of the continent's leading environmental justice organisations. That in turn will likely entail direct confrontation with South Africa and a more active search for solidarity from progressive South African environmentalists. As Naomi Klein (2014) has posited, *This Changes Everything*. The climate crisis can force a broader recognition of society's need for radical restructuring in virtually all capitalist sub-systems of social reproduction, in areas including energy, transport, agriculture, urbanisation, production, consumption, disposal and financing. To these it will be important to add: the system of imperial power that maintains Africa as a victim of environmental injustice, one in which South Africa continues to play a sub-imperial facilitating role.

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The BRICS re-scramble Africa

in R.Westra (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Emerging Markets: Varieties of BRICS in the Age of Global Crises and Austerity,* London: Routledge (Frontiers of Political Economy Series), 2017

Introduction

Systems of capital accumulation left Africa 'scrambled' long before the infamous 1884-85 border carve-up was completed in Berlin. There, negotiators from the colonial powers Britain, France, Portugal, Germany and Belgium created scores of dysfunctional national units without reference to prior indigenous social organization. Setting the stage for colonial domination, the transatlantic enslavement of approximately twelve million Africans from the 15th-19th centuries was followed by the first systematic Western extraction projects: Kimberley diamonds (1867), Johannesburg gold (1884) and the myriad other mineral and petroleum outflows that followed. Then, over the next century, came repeated disasters for Africa: the colonial project's catastrophic distortions; the 'false decolonization' and neo-colonial power relationships after 1950s-70s independence struggles were won; the durability of settler colonialism especially in Southern Africa through the late 20th century; the Cold War machinations until 1990; the foreign debt enslavement and structural adjustment policies of the neoliberal era, especially the lost decades of the 1980s-90s; calamities associated with ongoing wars and terrorism; scores of African dictatorships supported by Washington, London and Paris; the looming destruction posed by climate change; and the resource cursing alongside 'Africa Rising' myth-making of recent years. All these largely resulted from capital accumulation processes that favoured Western corporations and their African comprador partners. The geopolitical arrangements and multilateral economic management strategies associated with this historic trajectory have – since even before Rosa Luxemburg wrote the seminal text in 1913 – earned the tag "imperialism," because it is (as she showed using Africa as her main research base) in the combination of periodic global capitalist crises, the expansion of corporations' geographic reach, the growing ambitions of financiers, and the fusion of capitalist/non-capitalist exploitative prowess that Western-dominated accumulation continues to underdevelop Africa.

Would the advent of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) 'bloc' (or network) herald a dramatic change in these arrangements? After all, since 1990 when the Cold War ended, formidable changes have beset African political economy. With the USSR becoming (an initially impoverished) Russia during the 1990s, the dramatic decline of Western overseas development aid to Africa reflected new power balances and geopolitical calculations. The liberation of South Africa from apartheid in 1994 portended a more aggressive economic role – which has ebbed and flowed, with Johannesburg firms still the largest source of FDI in Africa – as well as Pretoria's PanAfrican political leadership, in the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), the 2003 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), in the controversial election to the African Union's chair of President Jacob Zuma's ex-wife Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma from 2012-16 and in Zuma's 2015 push for a military-oriented 'African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises.' South Africa intervened to 'keep peace' in nearly a dozen African sites (but with mixed results and occasional disasters).

Simultaneously, other BRICS increased their footprint in Africa. The 1990s-2000s rise of Chinese trade and parastatal investment (albeit with uneven flows) raised the continent's level of GDP – apparently justifying $200 billion in new Sub-Saharan African foreign indebtedness from 2006-16 (a 50 percent increase, mostly to China) – at the same time the continent's overall wealth shrunk dramatically due to (net negative) natural capital depletion in nine out of every ten countries (World Bank 2014). The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation met every three years from 2000-15, and at the last summit in Johannesburg announced notional Chinese commitments of $60 billion, along with a 'reindustrialization' strategy for light manufacturing enterprises with Ethiopia in the vanguard. From 2003-16, Brazil's Workers Party leaders made encouraging sounds about a benign approach by its corporations and development aid mechanisms in Lusophone Africa (Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde). In New Delhi, an India-Africa Forum Summit to promote interstate and business relations was held in 2008, and again in Addis Ababa in 2011 and New Delhi in 2015, with the latter meeting generating a $10 billion Indian commitment before 41 heads of state in attendance (up from 10-15 in the prior two). Even the least active of the BRICS, Russia, was meanwhile promoting nuclear energy, arms, transport, mining and petroleum deals in more than a dozen African countries. (In competition, Barack Obama's 2014 meeting with most African leaders in Washington had a $37 billion deal-making headline.)

In short, prospects for an ever-greater BRICS role in Africa were the source of enormous optimism. But reality has begun to set in. From 2011, the crash in commodity prices signified the exhaustion of Chinese Keynesian infrastructure expansion and left African materials exporters with enormous excess capacity and debt (mostly to China). The BRICS countries' role in world trade amplified economic and political contradictions associated with generalized world capitalist overproduction and global governance failure; this was evident at the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) revitalization in December 2015, as the Nairobi summit had devastating implications for food sovereignty in Africa as well as in the BRICS themselves. The same month in Washington, International Monetary Fund (IMF) vote restructuring featured four BRICS countries' increases (led by China with 35 percent) but also dramatic setbacks for Nigeria (-41 percent) and South Africa (-21 percent) as well as smaller economies which were not as capable in supporting the institution's recapitalization. Finally, the December 2015 Paris Agreement confirmed Africa's victimization by climate change, mainly because the BRICS allied with historic greenhouse gas emitters, especially the United States and European Union, in a deal celebrated by polluters because not only are (weak) emissions cut commitments non-binding (with no legal accountability for violations), there is no longer a prospect of legal liabilities (the 'climate debt') against the wealthy countries for their role in what are likely to be 200 million additional African deaths this century due to extreme weather, droughts and increased temperatures.

In this context of worsening political economic and political ecological devastation traceable to both the BRICS and Western powers, there are also worrying socio-cultural backlashes against BRICS firms and citizens operating in Africa (and likewise within BRICS against Africans – especially African immigrants to South Africa). The one example of constructive intra-BRICS solidarity, which has saved millions of lives of HIV+ Africans already, is the Indian and Brazilian violation of Intellectual Property on AntiRetroViral (ARV) medicines that South

African activists and allies forced to become available as generic supplies through protest against Big Pharma, the WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property System and the South African and US governments. That model of 'brics from below', which will be required to link hinterland-African anti-extraction and debt activists to South African and other BRICS counterparts, is probably the only positive feature of the transition of the 'emerging powers' into what now appear to be, at least in the cases of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa, *submerging*, albeit still explicitly *sub-imperial* powers (Bond and Garcia 2015).

In nearly all African countries, infrastructural and productive investments are desperately needed, along with life-saving medicines and access to new technologies. Development aid, trade, loans and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are considered vital for these purposes, yet indisputably, the world's main political-economic and political-ecological processes have been hostile to the continent since slavery, unequal trade, colonialism, durable settler-colonialism and neo-colonial modes of extraction began in the 15th century. Nearly without respite, Africa has witnessed external actors whose imperial, colonial and now multilateral institutional power bases have largely drawn surpluses from the continent without reinvestment (aside from the 20th century's settler colonial societies – South Africa, Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola – which prospered from the 1930s-60s). There have been exceptions to the despair, including two high-growth, high-investment countries (Botswana and Mauritius). And there have been inspiring, victorious resistance struggles in many African countries and international solidarity campaigns against slavery, colonialism, apartheid and illegitimate debt.

But writing in mid-2016, the main forces drawing Africans into the world economy appear uniformly destructive. The 2002-11 commodity super-cycle peaked just at the point that Africa Rising rhetoric was ramped up, apparently so as to encourage the continent's elites to continue trade and investment liberalization aimed at more intense extractivism, even when this was obviously not in their economies' interests. In part because the value of minerals and petroleum exports shrunk, the continent's foreign debt doubled to more than $400 billion after the West's (partial) debt relief in 2006. FDI flowed into Africa more rapidly until a 2015 reversal, but was mostly directed at the extraction of primary commodities in a process that (unlike Australia, Canada and Norway with similar commodity export orientations) left African countries 'resource cursed,' losing far more in depleted minerals and petroleum than regained via the capital account (World Bank 2014). The West's foreign aid to Africa shrunk dramatically after the Cold War ended in 1990, and subsequent increases after 2000 translated only into marginal gains (e.g. in education and health). However, the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation has recently heralded a dramatic increase in aid and credit availability, though not without complications discussed below.

As these apparent shifts in world power unfolded, in March 2013 Durban hosted the heads of state summit of the BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The BRICS have been heralded not only as major 'emerging markets' in terms of their GDP growth – although at least from 2014-16 three were economically *sub*merging (Brazil, Russia and South Africa) – but as the main forces reshaping multilateral institution governance. To illustrate, just before the G20 meeting in China in mid-2016, an experienced journalist for a major Johannesburg Sunday newspaper, Godfrey Mutizwa (2016), applauded the BRICS:

> From a desire in 2009 to advance the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions – the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – the group has moved from cooperation to a commitment in 2015 to act jointly on key international issues ranging from UN Security Council reform to global conflict and climate change.

To be sure, this is conventional wisdom in mainstream South Africa, especially in the wake of the Durban summit. Yet in reality, such 'joint action' (albeit rarely with all five BRICS aligned) has *amplified* not ameliorated the underdevelopment of Africa, *where it has been effective,* e.g. in the December 2015 decisions taken in Paris, Nairobi and Washington.[1] To make this case, the structure of the argument that follows is that the BRICS have risen up to a point in the global division of labor, then suffered intense fall-out from the broader crisis of capital accumulation (reflected in Africa most spectacularly in the end of the commodity super-cycle), and have as a result intensified the metabolism of exploitation. This exploitative role in Africa is worsening in part through the BRICS' current strategy of assimilating into (not offering genuine alternatives to) the multilateral finance, trade and climate systems, all of which have devastating implications for this continent.

In part this strategy of weakening many African countries is entirely coherent, as seen through the predatory actions of BRICS' corporations. This is especially obvious in the extractive sectors where to a large extent the BRICS' corporate reaction to falling commodity prices is increased volumes of output in search of a stable supply of profits. Space constraints do not permit a cataloguing of these experiences (see, e.g. Burgis 2015, Carmody 2013). But revealing cases of BRICS-based looting have emerged, such as:

- Chinese entrepreneur Sam Pa's Queensway Group in Marange, Zimbabwe where in 2016 Robert Mugabe alleged $13 billion in diamonds extracted over the prior decade are unaccounted for (only $2 billion of revenues were officially recorded);
- Vedanta's purchase of Africa's largest copper mine (Zambia's Konkola) for $25 million followed by at least $500 million in externalized profits *annually*;
- AngloGold Ashanti's collaboration with Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) warlords during a period in which five million civilians were killed;
- displacement by Brazil's Vale mining house of thousands Mozambican villagers during its search for coal;
- sales pitches for Russian Rosatom nuclear power plants to corruption-prone governments in South Africa, Zambia, Uganda, Egypt and Nigeria;
- tax-dodging in various African countries (using Mauritius as a hot money centre) by South Africa's cellphone giant MTN (when chaired by subsequent deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa), as well as MTN's failure to cut off Boko Haram's Nigerian cellphone accounts in 2015 which led to a $1.9 billion fine;
- the dubious roles of South African politicians Tokyo Sexwale and Khulubuse Zuma – both in league with Israeli mining tycoon Dan Gertler – in central African deals; and

1 Where joint action has *not* been effective or not been attempted – e.g. where Russia and China join the US, France and Britain to *deny* UN Security Council seats to the other three BRICS in spite of a decade-plus campaign to democratise that body (for fear of diluting their own power), or in the BRICS' failure to even propose a candidate from their ranks to replace two disgraced IMF Managing Directors (Dominique Strauss-Kahn in 2011 and Christine Lagarde in 2016) and poorly-performing World Bank presidents (Paul Wolfowitz in 2007, Robert Zoellick in 2012 and Jim Yong Kim in 2016) – this chapter does not have the scope to delve.

- the 2013 South African National Defence Force armed intervention to support the authoritarian regime of Francois Bozize in Bangui, Central Africa (leaving more than a dozen fatalities but also more than 800 rebel deaths) on behalf of Johannesburg businesses.

But these are some of the more extreme cases of corporate-driven under-development, and what this chapter dwells on instead is the broader context in which the BRICS are re-scrambling Africa.

Stressed BRICS on uneven global economic and geopolitical terrain

Together as a bloc, the five BRICS control 26 percent of the earth's land mass but 42 percent of its population. Although hosting 46 percent of the global workforce, the BRICS are responsible for just 14 percent of world trade and 19 percent of world Gross Domestic Product, which rises to 27 percent if measured in purchasing power parity (PPP). In per capita GDP (also in PPP terms), only Russia has a higher figure than the world average ($11,800). The bloc was, however, initially named and celebrated – as BRIC, without South Africa until Beijing invited Pretoria to join in 2010 – by Goldman Sachs Assets Management chair Jim O'Neill in 2001. The first formal BRIC event was in 2006 when foreign ministers met at the United Nations, followed by heads-of-state summits in Yekaterinburg in 2009, Brasilia in 2010, Sanya in 2011, New Delhi in 2012, Durban in 2013, Fortaleza in 2014, Ufa in 2015 and Goa in 2016. There is usually a degree of pageantry and back-slapping associated with these events though they last just two days, typically. And there are parallel, often overlapping conferences of business leaders which have access to the state officials, as well as meetings of labor (since Durban in 2013) and 'civil BRICS' (innocuous civil society groups, starting in Russia in 2015). Dozens of other BRICS-related events occur in between on different schedules, including meetings of ministers responsible for economies, security, agriculture, health and municipal government, as well as the alliance of think tanks and interested academics. There have been three counter-summits (and protest marches) dedicated to expanding the terrain of critical analysis, in Durban, Fortaleza and Goa.

In Durban, 'gateway to Africa' rhetoric was justified by the dedication of a half-day discussion between BRICS and more than a dozen heads of state from the continent. (This strategy of drawing in the host's friendly neighbours was repeated in Brasilia in 2014 and Ufa in 2015.) Then deputy foreign minister Marius Fransman (2013) expressed conventional wisdom just before the 2013 summit: "South Africa presents a gateway for investment on the continent, and over the next 10 years the African continent will need $480 billion for infrastructure development." The Durban event's focus on Africa undergirded the renewed local emphasis on mega-project economic development strategies focusing on an 'aerotropolis,' the Dube Trade Port, harbour widening and deepening in what is already Africa's largest container port, and a new 'Dig Out Port' anticipated to cost hundreds of billions of rands. In the latter cases, however, Durban's leaders believe their main competition is from African ports, e.g. Maputo in Mozambique which is more favourably suited to eventually supplying the huge Johannesburg market and northerly transport routes.

As a bloc, BRICS issues periodic communiques and occasionally acts in concert, for example successfully lobbying against the proposed expulsion of Russia from the G20 Brisbane summit following sanctions imposed on Moscow by the West after the March 2014 transfer of power over Crimea. But BRICS will ultimately be known not for its generally anti-Western rhetoric, but for what it does, concretely, to change the world. The most important institutional innovations – discussed below – are the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) for project loans, and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) which stands ready to augment the IMF in the event bail-out credits are required by BRICS members. There was also talk of an internet cable rerouting to avoid United States interference and a credit rating agency alternative to Moody's, Fitch and Standard&Poors, but these have not come to fruition.

Starting in mid-2013, the 'tapering' of US Federal Reserve 'Quantitative Easing' (i.e. slightly tighter monetary policy) lowered the value of four BRICS currencies (all aside from the yuan). Full-fledged economic depression has characterized Brazil and Russia since 2014, partly because commodity prices plummeted, and South Africa was pushed to the brink of recession in 2016. India's extreme uneven and combined development threatens to leave the vast majority of citizens behind, notwithstanding the world's fastest growth rates in what will soon be the world's most populous country. China's lower growth rates, much-reduced commodity imports and stagnation of major new investment (as a result of massive overcapacity) became the world's main economic threat by 2014. The Beijing-Shanghai-Shenzhen capitalist and state elites themselves stand vulnerable, having suffered:

- stock market crashes of 7 percent+ that caused 'circuit-breaker' panics on two days in the first week of 2016 trading, with panicky trading forcibly halted within a half hour on the second occasion, after mid-2015 market crashes costing an estimated $3.5 trillion over the course of a fortnight;
- capital flight that reduced China's peak $4 trillion in foreign reserves in 2013 to $3.3 trillion by 2016, at a pace rising to a record $120 billion/month outflow by the end of 2015 (in contrast, the average annual 'illicit financial flows' from China were $140 billion from 2003-14, according to a study by the NGO Global Financial Integrity);
- massive industrial and commodity overcapacity especially in coal, steel and cement, requiring a new round of subsidies to avoid massive local bankruptcies;
- an inability by many Chinese borrowers to repay the fast-rising $27 trillion domestic debt, given the profusion of zombie companies and individuals who over-borrowed;
- such an over-saturation of commodities that the dependency generated elsewhere during China's import splurge is now the cause of many exporters' collapse;
- real estate overbuilding in an even more maniacal fashion, resulting in a 20 percent crash in 2014-15, a problem far worse in the provincial cities (the ratio of real estate to GDP – 23 percent – in China had reached a level three times higher in 2016 than the US at its most property-bubbly in 2007);
- several attempts at devaluing the yuan – in late 2015 named an IMF 'reserve' currency – that could start a currency war;
- bouts of regulatory incompetence and other corporate-captive maladies that include extreme urban pollution,
- the rejection of worker rights including occupational health and safety, the banning of non-sweetheart trade unions, an apartheid-style rural-urban migrant labor system,

and marketing prowess (pioneered in the US) to foist consumption of especially shabby products, whose planned obsolescence is even more rapid than US corporations' slovenly standards; and

- a willingness to continue putting down citizen and worker uprisings with police violence and arrests of a couple of dozen key labor leaders here, a few hundred human rights lawyers there, thousands of environmentalists here, 15,000 internet activists there, and more hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities.

These are some of the main socio-economic and environmental contradictions in just one BRICS country. Another debilitating financial meltdown is likely to arrive while the BRICS are suffering severe economic stresses. At the global scale, capital had, by 2016, become dangerously 'overaccumulated' due to overcapacity in production, especially the basic materials Africa exports such as petroleum, iron ore (and steel and aluminium in South Africa's case), coal, platinum and nickel, all of whose prices had fallen drastically from 2011-15 peaks to trough, as well as in labor-intensive manufacturing. The backlash in the world market was reflected in the one-third drop in the value of world trade from early 2014 to late 2015. The peak in trade was in 2008, when the Baltic Dry Index – the main measure of world shipping prices – exceeded 12 000; it subsequently fell to less than 300 by early 2016.

Profit rates are another symptom of the overaccumulation crisis, and at the global scale they fell steadily from mid-20th century levels of around 30 percent to 20 percent since the neoliberal age began in the 1980s. During the years 2006-08 and 2010-15, year-on-year profit rates fell precipitously. Once a substantial problem of overaccumulation arises in production (from the mid-1970s), it inexorably moves to finance. The system reacts to overcapacity pressures by attempting to displace them through credit creation. After the 2008-09 meltdown destroyed vast financial assets, the world's debt markets rose again thanks to loose monetary policy and bailout loans, adding $15 trillion to the 2008 total debt stock of $165 trillion, but on the basis of only $8 trillion in new GDP (from $62 trillion in 2008). World stock markets continued bubbling at unprecedented levels, far out of any relation to real underlying asset values.

By July 2016, the G20 (2016) trade ministers diagnosed the overaccumulation crisis at their Shanghai meeting: "We recognize that the structural problems, including excess capacity in some industries, exacerbated by a weak global economic recovery and depressed market demand, have caused a negative impact on trade and workers. We recognize that excess capacity in steel and other industries is a global issue which requires collective responses." With such excess capacity at the global scale, ameliorative moves to cut Chinese output in steel and coal were marginal. Even former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers (2016) declared that the world suffered "secular stagnation… an increasing propensity to save and a decreasing propensity to invest" notwithstanding inordinately low interest rates. But the best way to way to understand this 'propensity to save' was because of capitalist crisis tendencies. As explained by Richard Westra (2016), "With the disarticulating of production through globalization, there existed no possibility for bloating funds to ever be converted into real capital with determinate, socially redeeming use. Instead, systemic rule changes empowered big banks, big investment firms and finance wings of giant corporations to unleash vast oceans of funds in a global orgy of money games."

Loose monetary policy had encouraged the reflation of financial bubbles and by 2013, the president of the US Federal Reserve System's Dallas bank branch, Richard Fisher, identified this contradiction in his Fed colleagues' third Quantitative Easing (QE). Central banks in the US, EU, UK and Japan can print money to bail out fragile financiers no matter how foolish the cause and corrupt the recipient bankers, or run a Negative Interest Rate Policy and devalue currencies to spur investment or compete with other economies. Though he described QE3 as "monetary Ritalin" on that occasion (losing the Fed vote by 1 to 11), Fisher had supported QE the first two times, in 2008 and 2012 due to the extreme dangers of financial meltdown. As he conceded to a stunned CNBC (2016) reporter, **"**What the Fed did, and I was part of it, was front-load an enormous market rally in order to create a wealth effect." The $15 trillion in QE paper wealth loaded into the world's largest banks trickled upwards to the top 0.1 percent of the richest societies, i.e. to enterprises where speculation has replaced production. Thanks to the hollowed-out Western economy that resulted from the repeated QE fix, financial crisis is again brewing. "An uncomfortable digestive period is likely now" because "The Fed is a giant weapon that has no ammunition left," Fisher remarked.

The resulting indigestion – what David Harvey (1982) termed the "devalorization of overaccumulated capital" – ebbs and flows in what appear as unpredictable surges of capital to and fro. Rising inequality plays a major role in assuring that devalorization is resisted by the wealthier markets and costs imposed on the poorer regions. BRICS are particularly susceptible to having large shares of their paper wealth devalued, especially in currency runs. There are defence mechanisms, to be sure, and the two most forward-thinking BRICS economic management teams – in China and Russia – began preparing for a coming collapse in several ways: tighter financial regulation (China ordering major international commercial banks to cease dealing in early 2016, for example); de-dollarization (e.g. in their bilateral energy relations, although Chinese T-Bill holdings still exceeded $1 trillion); purchasing gold (the world contains 35 000 tonnes of gold, of which China and Russia have together bought 5 000 in recent years); and shifting towards IMF Special Drawing Rights (especially China), which may become the global economic managers' next edition of the QE strategy (similar to April 2009 when $750 billion were issued to spur global demand).

Until recently, China has been immensely functional to Western capitalism, what with its banning of trade unions from western corporate factories, its rural-urban migration controls that cheapen labor supplies, and its local ecological despoliation. Together these shifted substantial costs of production to workers, to women left in the countryside, and to nature. Yet as Johns Hopkins University sociologist Ho-fung Hung (2015) argued, "Capital accumulation in China follows the same logic and suffers from the same contradictions of capitalist development in other parts of the world. To understand the recent booms and busts of Chinese capitalism, we first have to understand capital's international trends and cycles." In a 2015 London School of Economics lecture (2015), Harvey remarked on how China served the world economy during the last decade: "There is a tale to be told here about the overaccumulation of capital… and surplus capital and labor which had to be absorbed in order to keep stability within the global system of capital accumulation." Hung (2015) agreed that this is "a typical overaccumulation crisis, epitomized by the ghost towns and shuttered factories across the country."

Not only has the unevenness of capital accumulation never been more obvious, so has extreme ecological damage risen, e.g. in Chinese and Indian cities to the extent that pollution-related health warnings are now commonplace. With China and India also representing the main threat to the world's planet due to growing greenhouse gas emissions – albeit at per capita rates far lower than the industrial countries – it has never been more important to reconcile capitalism and catastrophic climate change (and if that is impossible, then to reach beyond the former to prevent the latter). African countries (aside from South Africa) have done the least to create greenhouse gases yet are anticipated to be the ones that will suffer most from extreme weather, enduring droughts, flooding, sea-level rise and acidification, and coming carbon taxes that will lower exports. The inadequacy of the BRICS countries' inadequate Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs) correlates to their role in global climate policy, which as codified in Paris cannot address the likelihood of catastrophic damage, with Africa the most adversely affected continent.

Political dynamics in the BRICS are diverse at the time of writing, with one head of state – Dilma Rousseff – suspended in an impeachment vote in May 2016 (generally seen as unfair given the circumstances, with impeachment and an appeal likely to follow in late 2016), while three others have strong mandates from democratic elections – Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin and Jacob Zuma (albeit the latter suffered a frightening 8 percent decline in his party's electoral support between 2014 and 2016) – and one is a Communist Party dictatorship, led by Xi Jinping. The potential for solidarity between Brazil's Workers Party and other BRICS was dashed when the Indian foreign ministry immediately signalled that the 'coup' president, Michel Temer, would be perfectly welcome at the October 2016 Goa summit.

Africa also suffers extreme political turmoil and occasionally this is reflected in tense BRICS relations. South Africa has the most active set of African interventions underway, as discussed below, but China's placement of troops in South Sudan is also a harbinger of the overlap between commercial and military interests. China's recent roles in the South African foreign affairs and finance ministries also undermine Beijing's advertised neutrality and non-interference, for Chinese officials regularly bragged about forcing the South African foreign minister to deny an entrance visa to the Dalai Lama (Bond 2013). And the Chinese were allegedly instrumental in reversing the appointment in December 2015 of finance minister Desmond van Rooyen (widely seen as a dangerously ill-equipped crony of Zuma), according to *Business Day* publisher Peter Bruce (2016): "I have reliably learnt that the Chinese were quick to make their displeasure known to Zuma. For one, their investment in Standard Bank took a big hit. Second, they've invested way too much political effort in SA to have an amateur mess it up. Their intervention was critical." The overarching political importance of the BRICS to Africa is propping up undemocratic regimes, just as do political leaders from the US, Britain and France (Bond 2013).

But it is the economic logic that is most worthy of examination in the sections below regarding BRICS' assimilation into world capitalism, and the adverse implications for the African continent. Leonce Ndikumana (2015) argues that because of the adverse power relations, Africa is both "more integrated but more marginalized." The marginalization associated with IFFs is well established, and this occurs particularly when Western and

BRICS corporations externalize profits from mining. The United Nations Economic Commission on Africa (2013) showed how $319 billion was transferred illicitly from Africa during the commodity super-cycle (from 2001-10), with the most theft in Metals, $84 billion; Oil, $79 billion; Natural gas, $34 billion; Minerals, $33 billion; Petroleum and coal products, $20 billion; Crops, $17 billion; Food products, $17 billion; Machinery, $17 billion; Clothing, $14 billion; and Iron & steel, $13 billion. During this period, African FDI fell from its $66 billion peak annual inflow in 2008 to a level of $50 billion by 2015, but each year, in addition to *illicit* financial outflows, there were licit flows in the form of dividend expatriation that created extreme balance of payments deficits in many countries.

Some of the deficits follow from debt repayment on mega-projects that failed to realise the returns that were promised. Chinese projects in particular have been criticized, e.g. Botswana's coal-fired power-plant failed, and Zambia's disastrous hydro-electricity expansion suffered allegations of sub-standard Chinese equipment that excessively reduced the Kariba Dam's water level. Other notorious mega-project failures, according to the *Wall Street Journal* (2014), include China Railways in Nigeria ($7.5 billion) and Libya ($4.2 billion), Chinese petroleum in Angola ($3.4 billion) and Nigeria ($1.4 billion), and Chinese metal investors in the DRC and Ghana ($3 billion each). The renewal of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December 2015 did nothing to assuage critics of the type of Chinese investment and credits, and their appropriateness in a post-commodity super-cycle environment.

Even though the soured deals should offer a warning, and though commodity prices began falling in 2011, Africa has recently witnessed a dramatic increase in infrastructural project investment – real and planned – to support extraction. It was logical for BRICS leaders to identify port, bridge, road, rail, hydropower, thermal coal, nuclear energy and other infrastructure projects for subsidized investment, given that their countries' corporations would benefit from the associated extraction of minerals, petroleum and crops. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) was the coordinating system. In 2016, the most ambitious of the PIDA projects included the Inga Hydropower Project in the DRC, which at $100 billion will be the most expensive development project in history if taken to fruition with 43 200 megaWatts of electricity (compared to the second largest, China's Three Gorges Dam at less than half that). But with commodity prices crashing, even China attempted in mid-2014 – on the eve of Obama's summit with African leaders in Washington – to get Washington's support. Two years later, the World Bank withdrew its financing, on grounds of the DRC's (and other Inga project participants') failure to comply with socio-economic and environmental agreements. Another controversial form of BRICS investment in Africa was in land, a process that has often been caricatured as 'land grabbing.' Thomas Ferrando (2013) developed a database to track this, discovering extensive holdings especially by Indian and Chinese firms.

These top-down processes are not uncontested. Seen from below, resistance initiatives by many African grassroots communities and shopfloors – most spectacularly in the three largest economies (Nigeria in 2012, Egypt in 2011 and South Africa throughout) – have intensified in recent years. These protests are regularly repulsed by states hostile to democracy, mostly with Western backing (although successes in Tunisia in 2011 and Burkina Faso in 2014-15 put dictatorships onto the retreat). But Western hypocrisy is not the only factor. In many cases when African tyrants face popular critique, notably Zimbabwe, social unrest also threatens the stability of investments made by BRICS countries and corporate interests; indeed in several important African sites of struggle, the primary battle was between BRICS mining interests and affected communities and workforces. Other modes of resistance to either political tyranny or economic misery include refugee status or migrancy; in the case of South Africa, either path has been enormously difficult for Africans, as a result of malgovernance at the Department of Home Affairs and SA Police Services, as well as in working-class communities which have hosted immigrants but which periodic sites of xenophobic upsurges (2008, 2010 and 2015).

Only in the sole case of access to anti-retroviral (ARV) medicines did concerted international support dramatically improve African life expectancies, as expensive branded medicines were replaced by generics in the early 2000s. Two of the BRICS were exceptionally important allies of Africa's HIV+ community and health officials: Brazil and India had provided innovative pharmaceutical development of generic ARVs, and were unintimidated by Western corporations whose patents they abused. However, this may be seen in retrospect as an exception that proves the rule, for in 2016 right-wing governments in both countries heralded a new era of respect for intellectual property rights at the expense of their sick citizenries, with Modi pressured by Obama to retract Indian opposition to a new round of intellectual property protections that aid Big Pharma at a time many treatable diseases continue to ravage Africa. It is in this sense that the sub-imperial role of BRICS, assimilating into international capitalism, is obvious, given the alternative that the ARV case presented. This sort of power reversal – from one genuinely anti-imperial instance to a pattern of sub-imperialism – is explained with theoretical inputs that draw especially upon Brazilian intellectuals.

Sub-imperial and anti-imperial stances

Given the intense contestation underway across these issue areas, this uneven record of Africa-BRICS relations deserves a theoretical explanation as well as strategic insights for the sake of social, economic and environmental justice. These are values regularly expressed by BRICS' own lead officials in their communiques, sometimes in opposition to critical analysts (including this author) as well as analysts and journalists from competing Western powers. In Durban, for example, *Business Day* newspaper ran a non-stop barrage of hostile commentaries about BRICS in March 2013. One reaction was a talk given to the Academic Forum that month, by South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane (2013):

> The emergence of BRICS has not been well received by all of us. There are those who do not have a positive appreciation of BRICS because they believe that its continued existence will threaten the status quo and tamper with the current international balance of forces. At the other end, we find critics of BRICS who see it as a body of what they call 'sub-imperialist' countries that are joining the club of traditional powers. These critics talk of what they call a 'new scramble' for Africa, comparing the growing interest on our continent by BRICS countries to the late 19th century when European colonial powers partitioned Africa among themselves.

What these two groups of critics have in common is their lack of appreciation of multi-polarity for the geopolitical health of our international system. The first groups views multi-polarity in a negative sense, as a threat; while the second group would rather remain in the old system than to see it being shaken by emerging players from the South.

> To see BRICS countries as 'sub-imperialists' is the result of a dogmatic application of classical notions of imperialism and Immanuel Wallerstein's centre-periphery model to a situation that is fundamentally different from what these theories were trying to comprehend and explain. Our scholars have to be innovative and courageous enough to develop new tools of analysis and theoretical models when history challenges us to do so. I am reminded here of a warning Franz Fanon made in his *The Wretched of the Earth* that, and I quote: "It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps." The tragic mishap in this case is that such intellectuals will be left behind and rendered irrelevant by history.

These reflections by Nkoana-Mashabane (and her then-speechwriter Eddie Maloka, subsequently head of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism) reflect a classic problem in analysing South African public policy: 'talk left, walk right' (Bond 2006). What, then, are the theoretical framings associated with sub-imperialism that upset her so much? The term originates in Brazil with the *dependencia* argument by that after 1964, when a US-supported dictatorship was installed, Brasilia served as a strong US ally. According to Ruy Mauro Marini (1965:22), "It is not a question of passively accepting North American power (although the actual correlation of forces often leads to that result), but rather of collaborating actively with imperialist expansion, assuming in this expansion *the position of a key nation*." Mathias Luce (2015) is one of the contemporary followers of Marini:

> Sub-imperialism is considered the result of the laws of dependent capitalism in combination with the world economic system configured by post-World War II capital movements. The arrival of a few socio-economic formations at the highest stage of dependent capitalism along with the rise of intermediate links in the imperialist chain made room for a new hierarchical level in the global order. In this way these formations turn into countries that do not just transfer surplus value to imperialist centres but also succeed in appropriating weaker countries' surplus value by displacing some of the contradictions specific to dependent capitalism. And they develop a policy of antagonistic cooperation with the dominant imperialism… Every sub-imperialist country is part of what used to be called the semi-periphery but not every semi-peripheral country is a sub-imperialist socio-economic formation.

For Marini (1974), three key features of a sub-imperial society were regional economic extraction, the export of capital typically associated with imperialist politics, and internal corporate monopolization. Having read Rosa Luxemburg's 1913 *Accumulation of Capital* analysis of Africa's underdevelopment (using case studies from South Africa, Namibia and the DRC), Harvey (2003:185-186) added another feature to what he termed the *New Imperialism*:

> The opening up of global markets in both commodities and capital created openings for

other states to insert themselves into the global economy, first as absorbers but then as producers of surplus capitals. They then became competitors on the world stage. What might be called 'sub-imperialisms' arose … Each developing centre of capital accumulation sought out systematic spatio-temporal fixes for its own surplus capital by defining territorial spheres of influence.

Updated, consider these four features:

- *the systemic processes of imperialism,* within which sub-imperialism facilitates accumulation, rely upon extra-economic coercion found in relations between capitalist and non-capitalist spheres, i.e. what Harvey (2003) calls "accumulation by dispossession," under conditions of capitalist crisis;
- those *capitalist crisis conditions* become evident within the sub-imperial economies in the form of overaccumulated capital, specifically overproduction and resulting excess capacity given that demand cannot match supply, intensified uneven geographical development (in Harvey's terminology, the 'spatial fix' because it displaces the crisis across space) and financialization (the 'temporal fix' insofar as the day of reckoning is postponed through the credit mechanism which displaces the crisis over time);
- as crisis conditions mature and cannot be resolved internally, the sub-imperial powers turn increasingly to their *regional spheres of influence*, and their Treasuries, central banks and allied state and capitalist institutions facilitate and legitimate multilateral trade, investment and financing relationships which both serve to strengthen the *regional platform for accumulation* (even as sub-imperialist manufacturing exports destroy hinterland productive capacity and economic sovereignty) and require *a regional gendarme role* to enforce business contracts and to extract needed raw materials (and sometimes workers who lower the cost of labour); and
- the *super-exploitation* of the internal labor market intensifies which, given the limits of consumption that result, in turn "would require external markets for the resolution of its profit realization crisis," as Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros (2011) remark. Likewise, sectoral biases exist within BRICS economies, Steffen Böhm, Maria Ceci Misoczky and Sandra Moog (2012:1629) observe: "the sub-imperialist drive has remained the same: while domestic capital continues to invest heavily in extractive and monocultural industries at home, it is increasingly searching for investment opportunities in other peripheral markets as well, precipitating processes of accumulation by dispossession within their broader spheres of influence."

There are, in the process, occasional territorial disputes, and it is always tempting for Western powers to provoke incursions in the BRICS' regional sites of accumulation and geopolitical influence (of which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's conflicts with Russia in Georgia, the Ukraine, Syria and Turkey, and the US with China in the South China Sea, have been most important in recent years). Although the US dominates military spending, with $610 billion in direct outlays in 2014 (and myriad other related expenses maintaining imperial order), four of the five BRICS also spent vast amounts on arms: $385 billion in 2015 (of which 55 percent was China). There are various other sites of contestation, e.g. over Washington's (and its 'five eyes' allies') capacity to tap communications and computers through the internet. After revealing the US National Security Agency's (NSA) snooping capacity in 2013, whistle-blower Edward Snowden has an apparently safe Moscow exile, after fears of extradition to the US or worse (on 15 August 2016, Snowden tweeted, "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated"). A few months later, Rousseff cancelled the first visit by a Brazilian head of state to Washington in 40 years, as a way to protest Snowden's revelation that the NSA was tapping her phone.

But seen in these macro geopolitical terms, the Zuma government's initial endorsement of the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011 was the most egregious case of sub-imperial reach into Africa, against the African Union's wishes (and to be fair, Pretoria did reverse course and opposed further intervention). But behind the scenes, US journalist Nick Turse identified the Pentagon's "war fighting combatant command" in dozens of African states. It soon transpired that there was a blunt division of labor at work between Washington and its deputy sheriff in Pretoria, as a strategist from the Africa Command explained why they are training so many African militaries, including SA National Defence Force soldiers: "We don't want to see our guys going in and getting whacked" (Cochran 2010). At the conclusion of his 2014 meeting with Obama as part of a US-Africa heads-of-state summit, Zuma (2014) offered a veritable sub-imperialist manifesto:

> There had been a good relationship already between Africa and the US but this summit has reshaped it and has taken it to another level… We secured a buy-in from the US for Africa's peace and security initiatives… As President Obama said, the boots must be African.

Still, to those who believe BRICS are anti-imperialist, Rousseff's impeachment in May 2016 confirmed a sustained attack on the bloc by Washington. According to *Counterpunch* commentator Eric Draitser (2016), "what's unfolding in Brazil is a multi-pronged effort to destabilize the country via a variety of political and economic means, with the ultimate goal of bringing to heel a key member of BRICS." The former Assistant Treasury Secretary in the Reagan Administration, Paul Craig Roberts (2016), wrote even more explicitly, "This is Washington's move against the BRICS. Washington is moving to put into political power a right-wing party that Washington controls in order to terminate Brazil's growing relationships with China and Russia." Venezuelan Vice President Vice-President Aristobulo Isturiz warned South African leaders during a May 2016 visit to Pretoria: "Obama is using his remaining time in office to destabilize all progressive countries and undermine their emancipation movements. It is [Washington's] intention to weaken the BRICS countries" (Ebrahim 2016).

This remark coincided with revelations that a Central Intelligence Agency operative bragged about assisting the apartheid state's 1962 arrest and twenty-seven-year imprisonment of Nelson Mandela. (The US State Department kept Mandela on its terrorist watch list until 2008, and there was close collaboration between Washington and Pretoria throughout the 20th century.) African National Congress spokesperson Zizi Kodwa (VOA, 2016) charged that the CIA "never stopped operating here. It is still happening now. The CIA is still collaborating with those who want regime change." Another version of the anti-imperialist framing was heard at the South African Black Consciousness movement's Black First Land First launch conference two days after Rousseff's impeachment: "Brazil and South Africa are seen by the Western imperialist forces as the weak link in the BRICS chain. The strategy of imperialism is to get rid of presidents who support the BRICS process."

Likewise, a founder of Brazil's Movement of Landless Workers (MST), João Pedro Stedile, was asked by *Il Manifesto* (2016) about why "a group of deputies from right-wing organizations went to Washington before the last elections." He replied, "Temer will arrange his government in order to allow the US to control our economy through their companies... Brazil is part of the BRICS, and another goal is that it can reject the South-South alliance." As WikiLeaks cables revealed*,* Temer was a mole for the US State Department a decade earlier, but merely playing what Washington considered to be an incompetent, ideology-free role as a political "opportunist."[2]

But as concrete evidence of a US-led coup in Brazil, this fact seems insufficient. Moreover, Rousseff herself denied the role of imperialism a week after the impeachment, during a *Russia Today* (2016) interview: "I don't believe external interference is a primary or a secondary reason for what's happening now in Brazil. It's not. The grave situation we see now has developed without any such interference." She repeated this when pressed by the interviewer, so it was crystal clear that she blamed the old oligarchs for her downfall. This point was reinforced by subsequent revelations about the coup plotters' local motivations: the key men involved were aiming simply to derail the 'Car Wash' and other corruption investigations that threatened to sweep a large share of the Brazilian legislature into jail.

Nevertheless, insisted widely-read Brazilian geopolitical analyst Pepe Escobar (2016), "The most important angle as far as I'm concerned is the global angle. What will happen in that next BRICS meeting in four or five months, and what happens to the BRICS projects, including the development bank that features collaboration between Brazilian, Russian, and Chinese executives?" The answer came the day after the coup from Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup, who said Temer was welcome and the summit would "take place as scheduled."

In spite of the evident contradictions, all these (and other) contingencies sometimes call forth the claim of "anti-imperialism" for BRICS and this is nowhere more apparent when it comes to multilateralism. Endorsements of the BRICS' international financial agenda by progressive analysts highlight the potential for the bloc's resistance to the long, destructive US-European hegemony at the Bretton Woods Institutions (for a critique of arguments by Walden Bello, Radhika Desai, Horace Campbell, Mark Weisbrot, Mike Whitney and others, see Bond 2016). For example, Sunanda Sen (2015) of the Levy Economics Institute supported the BRICS' "alternative sources of credit flows, aiming for financial stability, growth, and development. With their goals of avoiding IMF loan conditionality and the dominance of the US dollar in global finance, these new BRICS-led institutions represent a much-needed renovation of the global financial architecture." And according to *Review of International Political Economy* writers Cornel Ban and Mark Blyth (2013), the BRICS' "autonomy relative to the coercive apparatus of the International Financial Institutions has enabled more state-led development interventions than would have been the case otherwise… [with] ever-widening policy space created by the growing weight of the BRICs in

2 South Africans witnessed a similar problem when Chelsea Manning released US State Department cable transcripts in 2010 revealing that the country's then lead spy, Moe Shaik, regularly offered the same sort of tell-all function to US embassy officials. He later switched jobs to become a key liaison to the BRICS New Development Bank (Bond 2016).

the global economy." Just after the coup against Rousseff, South African Institute for Global Dialogue director Siphamandla Zondi (2016), wrote,

> The [BRICS] platform has become the most powerful platform for the pursuit of global reform… Brazil has been a crucial voice in global debates about the reform of global governance, including the IMF and World Bank, and about fair and just outcomes for the developing world in world trade negotiations… Brazil is an important part of the effort today to shift global power from the former colonial powers and their diaspora in North America to all regions of the world. It is a key partner in South-South co-operation.

BRICS assimilation into the IMF and World Bank

These claims about the BRICS' alternative agenda are ambitious but are not shared by either progressive critics (this author included) or the technocrats who designed the CRA and NDB, for the latter repeatedly assured the international financial community that assimilation and collaboration is the best approach, e.g. in the words of BRICS NDB Vice President Leslie Maasdorp: "We will and should benefit from the long years and decades of experience of these [Bretton Woods] institutions" (Mnyandu 2015). Indeed, when it comes to global finance, instead of establishing an alternative reality (e.g. as anticipated by Hugo Chavez's Bank of the South, which Brazil sabotaged), the BRICS are financing the old one. Vast quantities of US Treasury Bills are held by BRICS countries (especially China) as their main foreign reserve holding. While the NDB may eventually move to financing projects in local currencies, the articles of agreement specify contributions in US dollars. The CRA is anticipated to be a dollar lender, since repayment of most foreign debts the BRICS countries have incurred will be in dollars.

To illustrate, while the first NDB loans – in April 2016 – promoted 'sustainable' energy, they were rife with contradictions insofar as the $250 million (in dollars not rands) to expand Eskom's grid so as to draw in more renewable energy, reflected the Independent Power Producers' privatization of electricity generation (long opposed by South African progressives who insist on state-supported renewables). Yet a month later, Eskom's chief executive Brian Molefe announced he would no longer buy renewable electricity, as for long-term baseload supply especially to serve mining houses and smelters, Eskom would focus instead on nuclear. In mid-2015, NDB director Tito Mboweni had told Bloomberg news that the proposed $100 billion South African nuclear deal, probably with Russia, "falls squarely within the mandate of the NDB," in spite of enormous local controversy surrounding Zuma's corruption-prone deal-making regarding not only Putin but the Gupta family, whose firm Oakbay would be the main uranium supplier.

Other items on Molefe's BRICS Business Council (2015) project wish-list included new coal-fired generators, off-shore oil drilling, and Durban's $25 billion port-petrochemical complex expansion. These infrastructure mega-projects are all rife with social, economic, governance and environmental dilemmas (Bond 2014), which South Africa does not have a strong history of resolving in the public's interest. In another mega-dam project, what may be the world's most infamous case of construction company bribery in World Bank lending history occurred in Lesotho, where more than $2 million flowed from a dozen multinational corporations to the Swiss accounts of the leading dam official, Masupha Sole, who served 9 years in jail but was then, to everyone's astonishment, reinstated thanks to his political influence. Lesotho's dam water flows to South Africa, even in times (such as 2016) when the country faces ruinous drought. Although the World Bank debarred some of the most corrupt companies (in the process catalysing the bankruptcy of Canada's once formidable civil engineering firm Acres International), nothing was done to punish the firms by Pretoria officials.

BRICS NDB Vice President Maasdorp (Mnyandu, 2015) discussed his own role at the helm of the institution responsible: "I served for example as chairman of TransCaledon Tunnel Authority, which is a state-owned enterprise with a mandate to finance and implement bulk raw water infrastructure projects in South Africa, and played an oversight role from a governance perspective for seven years of large infrastructure projects." Several of the same construction firms that were implicated in Lesotho reappeared in notorious collusion cases involving white-elephant World Cup 2010 stadiums and other mega-projects in which billions of dollars were stolen from South African taxpayers. *South African firms are obviously not alone;* in 2014, the World Bank debarred the China Three Gorges Corporation's subsidiary building dams in Africa after extreme corruption was identified in another African project.[3]

In what is the most revealing case of BRICS assimilation into this system, in 2012 the IMF was recapitalized (through a credit mechanism) with $75 billion from the BRICS: China gave $43 billion; Brazil, Russia and India gave $10 billion each; and South Africa gave $2 billion. In return, in December 2015, four of the five received major increases in their voting power: China by 37 percent, Brazil 23 percent, India 11 percent and Russia up 8 percent. Yet the US still won't give up veto power – it is the only country with more than 15 percent required – and the BRICS' total vote is now just 14.7 percent. Worse, the restructuring deal that made this rise possible was detrimental to seven African countries which lost more than a fifth of their IMF voting share: Nigeria lost 41 percent of its voting power, along with Libya (39 percent), Morocco (27 percent), Gabon (26 percent), Algeria (26 percent), Namibia (26 percent) and even South Africa (21 percent).

One facet of Africa's decline at the IMF is its inability to maintain currency strength in the face of the commodity crash. This was especially apparent in the period after mid-2011 when, for example, the South African rand peaked at R6.3/$. By January 2016, after a run apparently begun by Goldman Sachs, the rate was R17.9/$, although by mid-year it recovered to R13.4/$. Other African currencies collapsed during 2014-15, with Zambia losing half the kwacha's worth, and the values of currencies from Angola, Namibia, Uganda and Tanzania down more than a fifth over 12-month period.

But aside from the quantitative loss of power, the loss of African 'voice' (as it's known) at the IMF is important given the critiques often expressed about the institution's dogmatic neoliberal ideology and its qualitative power over Africa, dating back to the 1980s. Even Jacob Zuma voiced these concerns in mid-2015 in a *RussiaToday* interview: "They want to dictate what you should do. You can't utilize that kind of assistance the way you want. So, in

3 The World Bank 'Vice President – Integrity' (*sic*) responsible for the decision, Leonard McCarthy, was himself declared in 2015 by the finest South African newspaper editor, Ferial Haffajee (2015), to have "ruined our criminal justice system" because of his own political corruption when serving as lead prosecutor of Zuma.

a sense, it has conditions that will keep you dependent all the time. That's what we're trying to take ourselves out of." Perhaps unwittingly, Zuma was reiterating the criticism offered by his nemesis, former Minister of Intelligence Ronnie Kasrils, of the IMF's $850 million loan to South Africa six months before democracy dawned, in December 1993. Kasrils had in 2013 described this deal as "the fatal turning point. I will call it our Faustian moment when we became entrapped – some today crying out that we 'sold our people down the river'." Mboweni had a central role in the IMF deal and subsequent neoliberal strategies such as record-high interest rates and exchange control liberalization. As Mboweni (2004) once explained, he knew that "the apartheid government was trying to lock us into an IMF structural adjustment program via the back door, thereby tying the hands of the future democratic government." But, he claims, "We did not sell out!" Sampie Terreblanche (2012, 64), a former economist who worked in the apartheid government's highest echelons, firmly disagrees, arguing that the deal "committed the Transitional Executive Council to the ideologies of neoliberalism and market fundamentalism."[4]

Also in mid-2015, just before the Ufa summit, hopes were raised in Greece that its prime minister Alex Tsipras could persuade BRICS to advance credit to the indebted country so as to avoid an IMF and EU austerity deal: budget cuts (especially on pensions), higher Value Added Tax on poor people's consumption, privatization, labor casualization and deregulation. Tragically, because of the vast Greek foreign debt, Tsipras had already agreed to privatize one of Greek's main ports to Chinese merchant capital (against the wishes of port workers), so there was hope for Beijing's support. And according to Greek Environment and Energy Minister Panagiotis Lafazanis (ANA-MPA, 2015), "During my (May 2015) meeting with Russian Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Storchak, we secured the decisive Russian support to Greece's request for participation in the BRICS NDB… right after operations begin, it will be able to accept financial support." However, at the crucial moment in July 2015, when BRICS credit would have been vital to Tsipras' potential survival outside the IMF and EU's power, the BRICS failed to provide an alternative credit line. As a result, Tsipras won a 61 percent "No" vote on the IMF/EU austerity plan, but without the alternative, the fear of the financiers' ability to immediately bankrupt Greece by freezing its commercial bank accounts with the rest of the world compelled an historic U-turn by Tsipras.

Instead of searching for an alternative to the IMF, the BRICS CRA actually empowers the IMF to impose conditionalities. According to the articles of agreement adopted in Fortaleza, a CRA member is in need of more than 30 percent of its borrowing quota, it must first go to the IMF for a structural adjustment loan and conditionality before accessing more from the CRA. For South Africa, whose foreign debt rose from around $30 billion in 2003 to more than $140 billion a dozen years later – i.e. more than 40 percent of GDP, which puts it in the debt-crisis danger zone – this would mean that only $3 billion is available from the CRA before recourse to the IMF would be necessary.[5] Other BRICS have a strong repayment

4 Even personnel conditions were attached to the deal: Mboweni had to wait an extra five years to become central bank governor because IMF head Michel Camdessus insisted informally in a January 1994 meeting with Nelson Mandela that apartheid-era neoliberals Chris Stals at the Reserve Bank and finance minister Derek Keys be reappointed to their jobs (Bond 2014).
5 In 1985, the last time this debt ratio was hit, the then leader of apartheid South Africa, P.W.Botha, found it necessary to default on $13 billion in short-term debt payments coming due, to close the stock exchange and to impose exchange controls (Bond 2014).

commitment, even the leader most feared as a world rogue. Tellingly, at a December 2015 press conference highlighting the role of international financial sanctions in Russia's economic depression, Putin (2015) announced proudly, "Despite all limitations, we complied with all our commitments to our partners, including international credit institutions. We pay everything due on time and in full."[6]

It was the fear of non-assimilation into the Bretton Woods Institutions that most animated Obama when discussing BRICS in Africa with *The Economist* (2014):

> *The Economist*: One of the big factors in Africa and the economy's emergence has been Chinese investment. And they bring a different model. Is that something that you need to confront?
>
> Mr Obama: My view is the more the merrier. When I was in Africa, the question of China often came up, and my attitude was every country that sees investment opportunities and is willing to partner with African countries should be welcomed. The caution is to make sure that African governments negotiate a good deal with whoever they're partnering with. And that is true whether it's the United States; that's true whether it's China. And I do think that China has certain capacity, for example, to build infrastructure in Africa that's critical. They've got a lot of capital and they may be less constrained than the United States is fiscally in helping roads get built and bridges and ports. On the other hand, China obviously has a need for natural resources that colours their investments in a way that's less true for the United States. And so my advice to African leaders is to make sure that if, in fact, China is putting in roads and bridges, number one, that they're hiring African workers; number two, that the roads don't just lead from the mine to the port to Shanghai, but that there's an ability for the African governments to shape how this infrastructure is going to benefit them in the long term.
>
> *The Economist*: You see countries like China creating a BRICS bank, for instance – institutions that seem to be parallel with the system, rather – and potentially putting pressure on the system rather than adding to it and strengthening it. That is the key issue, *whether China ends up inside that system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times, I think.*
>
> Mr Obama: *It is.* And I think it's important for the United States and Europe to continue to welcome China as a full partner in these international norms. It's important for us to recognize that there are going to be times where there are tensions and conflicts. But I think those are manageable. (emphasis added)

BRICS assimilation into the WTO

The WTO was the second multilateral institution whose neoliberal power was amplified in December 2015 thanks largely to the BRICS, at a ministerial summit in Nairobi that achieved a breakthrough in negotiations to great relief for the world's elites. A vital feature was that three of the BRICS are in formal alliance with the EU and US as the 'G5,' the most important bloc, one generally opposed to what in 2003 formed as the trading-bloc G20, comprising the

6 The contrast with his predecessor Boris Yeltsin is obvious, for on the eve of his $40 billion default in 1998, Yeltsin's pro-Western government had borrowed $5 billion from the Bretton Woods Institutions, which disappeared without a trace. Nevertheless, the IMF quickly advanced a $20 billion bail-out loan, which if it occurred today would probably be vetoed by the US government's IMF representative (Bond 2003).

larger poor and middle-income countries which traditionally opposed the West's power. The BRICS' own divisions are legion, starting with Russia's role as a 'developed' not developing economy (Skrzypczyńska 2015). For many years South Africa acted decisively in opposition to the interests of Africa, with Pretoria's trade minister Alec Erwin even nominated by *Foreign Policy* journal to become the WTO's leader after he performed to the North's satisfaction in various of the insider 'Green Rooms' and as a 'Friend of the Chair' (Bond 2006). In 2013, after fruitless efforts by Director General Pascal Lamy to restart the stalled 2001 Doha Agenda, the WTO was given a new leader: the Brazilian negotiator Roberto Azevêdo, who pro-trade bias was just as strong.

Moreover, according to the (ordinarily pro-BRICS) Malaysian NGO Third World Network (TWN) (2015), Brazil conspired with the United States and the European Union at the WTO to ensure "that India did not get the language it proposed" to maintain vital food subsidies, a defeat which in coming years will lead tens of millions of Indian peasants to suffer. As TWN's Chakravarthi Raghavan (2015) put it, "on the eve of Nairobi, Brazil unilaterally abandoned the G20 alliance to join the US and EU, in trying to act against China and India," not to mention against the world's poor. Azevêdo and Kenya's hosting chairperson agreed, according to Horace Campbell (2016), "to exclude 'African issues' from the agenda while simultaneously pushing through the Expansion of the Information Technology Agreement, which benefits US corporations." The WTO thus became far more hostile to African interests thanks in part to a few of the BRICS countries' interventions.

Is there scope for change? South Africa's main WTO negotiator, Faizal Ismail (2015), has described world trade "a deeply asymmetrical system in favour of its main architects, the US and the EU [that] requires fundamental reform." The WTO reform strategy favoured by Ismail (and his then trade minister Erwin) was the Doha 'Development' Agenda of 2001. But the Doha Agenda was soon a victim of the institution's overall paralysis. Indeed the "new trade narrative", according to Ismail, is: "Doha dead! Emerging markets should 'graduate'… The emergence of Global Value Chains as a new reality of international trade where goods are no more manufactured in one country but are made in the world and the large share of intermediate goods exports provide a compelling reason for countries to have more open trade policies." Ismail blames the strength of this narrative on US officials, especially Susan Schwab (2011), backed by business lobbies and Washington think-tanks. But he then blames a fellow BRICS ally: "The Russian G20 Presidency has been persuaded to continue with the theme of Global Value Chains and to discuss its policy implications for Trade Liberalization."

Nevertheless South Africa signed on to the Nairobi WTO deal, in yet another case of talk-left walk-right. Reflecting Pretoria's tendency towards assimilation not opposition, Azevêdo (2016) remarked in March 2017 at the University of Cape Town,

> South Africa remains a central player in the system today, as a leading voice in the African Group of WTO members, and in all aspects of our work. In fact, your current representative in Geneva, Ambassador Xavier Carim has recently been appointed as chair of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body. This is one of the most prominent positions in the organization… It stands testament to South Africa's leadership in the trade debate today.

African reactions to the WTO debacle were muted, but at least in the wake of the mid-2016 Brexit vote by United Kingdom, there appeared to be increasing resistance to European Union neoliberal penetration in the form of Tanzanian and Ugandan state retraction of commitments to join the European's Economic Partnership Agreements. The other 2016 incident that showed a rethink of Africa's persistent trade deficit with a more advanced industrial power, namely South Africa, was a ban imposed on many imports that typically moved across the Zimbabwe border. The policy kicked in as Zimbabwe ran short on US dollars, so was less a strategic than desperation strategy to preserve the country's currency and reduce the trade deficit. South Africa also came under pressure from both local steel companies and trade unionists to bloc steel imports from China (whose net exports soared from -35 million tonnes to 100 million from 2005-15 as China raised its share of world production from 30 to 50 percent over that decade), and as a result, trade minister Rob Davies imposed a 10 percent special tariff in 2015.

These were small initiatives by countries with highly erratic leaders known more for zig-zagging in diverse ideological directions than any consistent policy stance. Still, in opposition to the persistent ideology of free trade, such desperation-protectionism might in future years be repeated and become the basis of an import-substitution industrialization strategy. But that in turn would require new governments opposed to neoliberalism, whereas the trends in the BRICS were basically in the other direction, especially in Brazil and India, with South Africa still obeying the dictates of the major credit ratings agencies more than its own people. The other important development in the wake of the post-Cancun WTO malaise was the rise of bilateral trade and investment treaties. Ana Garcia (2016) clarifies how damaging these have been to Africa, especially where BRICS countries have dominance.

BRICS assimilation into the UNFCCC

A third multilateral agreement in December 2015 was the Paris UNFCCC agreement. According to Oscar Reyes (2015), seven fatal flaws in the agreement stand out:

1) the targets are ambitious, but unlikely to be met (hence serving as a greenwash)
2) there are no legally-binding targets to cut emissions
3) there was no new money promised to developing countries
4) reparations are now legally off limits (no 'climate debt' can be sued for by victims)
5) oil, gas and coal producers are not compelled to leave fossil fuels unexploited
6) the deal opens the same carbon-trading loopholes that undermined prior climate deals
7) sources of greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping and flights, and from military-related emissions, aren't included

Summing up Paris, the world movement of peasants and landless people Via Campesina (2015) was clearest: "There is nothing binding for states, national contributions lead us towards a global warming of over 3°C and multinationals are the main beneficiaries. It was essentially a media circus." Concluded the world's leading North-South CJ organization, Friends of the Earth International (2015): "The reviews [of whether INDCs are adhered to and then need strengthening] are too weak and too late. The political number mentioned for finance has no bearing on the scale of need. It's empty. The iceberg has struck, the ship is going down and the band is still playing to warm applause." Reyes (2015) singles out the role of Brazil in combining forces with the EU – against Bolivia – to "open the same carbon trading loopholes that undermined the last global climate deal." Finally, not forgetting the voice of climate science, James Hansen (2015) bluntly described Paris, simply, as "bullshit."

Since 2009, the BRICS were vital participants in the degeneration of global climate policy, as four of their leaders ("BASIC") were the original co-signatories (along with Obama) of the Copenhagen Accord. Perhaps by mistake, John Kerry (later US Secretary of State) labelled Zuma, Lula da Silva of Brazil, Wen Jiabao of China and Manmohan Singh of India the 'four horsemen'; the tag is accurate, in terms of climate damage to Africa caused by the 2009 deal and its successors. The Copenhagen Accord was mainly authored by the US State Department and then, as leaks by the US military-intelligence whistle-blower Chelsea Manning in early 2010 proved, was adopted by many poor and climate-vulnerable countries in Africa only thanks to bribery and bullying by the State Department's Todd Stern (Bond 2012). Only one of the BRICS has hosted a COP, Durban in 2011, and Washington immediately claimed victory. As documented by WikiLeaks (after liberating Hillary Clinton's private email server), Stern (2011) bragged to Clinton that in relation to the Green Climate Fund, "We left Durban with virtually everything we sought." His team had destroyed the 'firewall' between rich and poor countries (the latter were not, in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, required to make emissions cuts), so as he reported to Clinton in a memo worth quoting at length:

> The main action here was to beat back efforts to undermine the parallel structure of mitigation commitments for developed and developing countries that we negotiated in Copenhagen… The developing countries insisted on another Kyoto "commitment period," largely because Kyoto embodies the firewall. The EU was the only major player willing to consider that, but insisted that the quid pro quo had to be assurance from other major emitters that they would commit to negotiate a legal agreement to follow the second Kyoto period. For our part, we said that we could not do that unless China and other majors also agreed, but prior to Durban they had never indicated any willingness to do so. So there appeared to be a stalemate. The open questions for us going into Durban were (1) whether the EU would stick to its guns in demanding a future legal agreement in exchange for a second Kyoto period, and (2) what the 'BASIC' group of China, India, Brazil and South Africa would do if the EU did hold firm.
>
> As it happened, the EU hung tough, while *the BASICs, evidently influenced by the intense push for a legal agreement from the poorest and most vulnerable countries, especially the small island states, showed unexpected flexibility. Brazil led the way on this issue for the BASICs, and we engaged intensively with them.* Two long trilateral meetings (EU-US-BASIC) were held in the middle of the second week, which pushed the ball forward. The final two-page agreement, dubbed the Durban Platform by the South Africans, was negotiated over many hours Friday and Saturday in a group of around 35 countries, with the EU and the island states pushing hardest for strong language and the earliest possible start. The new agreement is to be completed by the end of 2015 and start to be implemented from 2020 onward.
>
> The key points for us, each of which we insisted upon, are:
>
> • "Applicable to all Parties." This language is a singular breakthrough – the first time China and other emerging economies have agreed that they too would be bound by legal obligations.

• The Bali Roadmap. The agreement sunsets the 2007 Bali mandate at the end of next year's COP. This is important because Bali is consistently read as enshrining the firewall and we thus could not allow it to become the basis for negotiating the new legal instrument.
• "Common but differentiated responsibilities." This phrase is read (not by us, but by most developing countries) to denote the firewall, but the phrase is conspicuously absent from the Durban agreement.
• 2020 implementation date. The 2020 date is also important. The EU and its small island allies pushed very hard to have the agreement take effect as early as possible. But this didn't work for the BASICs, who are determined to keep their Kyoto protection all the way to 2020; and it couldn't work for us to start earlier than 2020 if the BASICs did not, since such asymmetry would be lethal to developing political support in the U.S.

Taking all these points together, I think Durban amounts to a significant achievement.

For Africa, the implications of multilateral climate imperialism, amplified by BRICS/BASIC sub-imperialism, are catastrophic. According to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's Global Humanitarian Forum (2009), already more than 300 000 current deaths per year are attributable to climate change, mostly in the Global South. With the present trajectory of warming anticipated to break 4 degrees above normal by 2100, with inland Africa heating up by 6 to 7 degrees, not only are humans threatened, but so too is nearly every living species – biodiversity itself – reliant upon water and a stable eco-system. African scientists anticipate worsening weather chaos, not to mention 182 million Africans dead this century, early and unnecessarily, due to climate related disease (Christian Aid 2006).

Some on the continent will profit from ongoing emissions, especially South African capital. Accommodatingly, the Department of Environmental Affairs has a minister, Edna Molewa, who did nothing to shift power relations in defence of the climate, in spite of a relatively high profile in international negotiations. She played a central role in Durban's COP17 (Bond 2011, 2012), and in 2012, she was visible at the Rio+20 UN Earth Summit. Yet when it counted, in regulating South African polluters, Molewa knew how to avoid conflict. She was silent about the vast bulk of national infrastructure spending on carbon-intensive activities: three major coal-fired power plants, expanded coal exports via a $25 billion rail budget in the first Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (PICC), and in the second PICC project, the $20 billion expansion of Durban's port and petrochemical complex, aiming to raise container throughput capacity by a factor of eight by 2040 (Bond 2014a). Government also gave permission in 2013 for Shell Oil to begin the process of 'fracking' the arid Karoo. This was followed in mid-2014 by President Jacob Zuma's Operation Phakisa ('speed up') ocean-economy strategy, including $5 billion worth of deep-sea oil and gas exploration, especially by ExxonMobil. Other carbon-intensive state policies include ever-worsening suburban sprawl in Gauteng province (and other metropolitan areas), facilitated by the doubling of the Durban-Johannesburg oil pipeline at nearly four times the initial budget of $500 million. Pretoria also granted approval for a new $6 billion state oil refinery, and has plans for more smelter-intensive minerals beneficiation including a new Chinese steel factory (in spite of steel imports from China decimating the two main existing producers in 2015). The South African office of Greenpeace (2015) was scathing about the INDCs Molewa offered in Paris:

The ‘Discussion Document: South Africa’s INDC: 1 August 2015’ avoids quantifying any contribution to mitigation and fails to meet the very basic generic requirements agreed for the mitigation component of the INDC. If not rectified, such blatant evasiveness will undermine South Africa’s credibility and any claim to moral authority in leadership of developing country negotiators.

This lack of ambition is consistent with Pretoria’s traditional post-apartheid approach. When seen from the perspective of civil society, government turns a blind eye to pollution violations especially from coal mining, electricity generation and oil refineries (all associated with climate change) (groundWork *et al* 2014). Confirming an inappropriate degree of state modesty, Molewa’s (2014) once remarked in a rebuttal to this author, “We are constantly addressing issues to do with climate change – mostly behind the scenes.” Also behind the scenes, South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa’s massive coal mines and similar dirty coal corporations were, according to insiders, long pampered by Molewa’s water officials. At least forty major new mines were proposed to provide coal to at least two new power plants, not to mention new export-oriented coal digs to supply China and India. Residents of the coal-producing province of Mpumalanga was by 2014, quite literally, wheezing (groundWork *et al,* 2014), as the National Development Plan called for 18 billion tonnes of coal to be dug and exported through the Richards Bay port in the country’s largest infrastructure project. In addition, Eskom applied to Molewa for “rolling postponements” on pollution reductions required by law at 14 power plants there. Eskom’s assumption was that its own crises – and regular load-shedding that struck fear into the society – would persuade Molewa of the need for forbearance. By February 2015, Molewa had agreed to a five year extension on air pollution regulatory forbearance for Eskom, Sasol and dozens of other firms whose emissions both harmed local workers and residents and contributed to climate change.

With the South African population recording 47 percent awareness that climate change is the world’s greatest threat, according to the 2015 Pew Research Centre survey (i.e., the greatest international problem of local concern, ahead of second place “international financial instability”) (Carle 2015). Turning that awareness into activism remains the only hope, given that Pretoria’s elites appear unwilling to change course (Bond 2012). The same is true for the other BRICS countries, whose companies are not only carbon-intensive when operating in Africa, but also structurally committed to the continent’s resource exploitation.

Conclusion

The BRICS stand accused of underdeveloping Africa in several respects, a process amplified by roller-coaster commodity price changes during the period 2002-16. The BRICS are, according to the information and analysis developed above, best understood as a new, more malevolent force within a general framework of neoliberal extractivism, amplifying the already extreme uneven and combined development so damaging to Africa. There are exceptions, of course, in which African leaders have helped their countries raise productivity and convert their natural resource wealth into investment (the main one being Botswana although the citizenry have witnessed very little trickle-down). But as the World Bank (2014) notes, mostly the African continent is losing natural capital and in only a very few countries

(12 percent) can a net benefit can be calculated from extraction, even by the (pro-extractivist) Bank. The BRICS capacity to take advantage of Africa's weaknesses justifies the use of the term sub-imperialism. Whatever name one might use, South Africa's own National Planning Commission (2012) sheepishly conceded a "perception [*sic*] of the country as a regional bully," such that the "gateway to Africa" logic often comes up against the harsh reality of extraction and exploitation (especially in March 2013).

Still, the most important reasons for Africa's prone position in the world economy are not the fault of the BRICS – which simply amplify pre-existing problems instead of offering alternatives – but of the West. The latest manifestation of Western imperialism in Africa is indicative: when the World Economic Forum (WEF) came to Kigali in May 2016, the organization highlighted "Fourth Industrial Revolution cyber-physical systems" as central to Africa's future: the continent is "the world's fastest growing digital consumer market" (though fewer than four Africans in ten have electricity). For good measure, the WEF's main speaker, (the as-yet-unindicted war criminal) Tony Blair, celebrated the dictatorship of his host Paul Kagame. At the same time, the IMF's (2016) *Regional Economic Outlook for Africa* suggested that "a substantial policy reset is critical in many cases... Because the reduction in revenue from the extractive sector is expected to persist, many affected countries also critically need to contain fiscal deficits and build a sustainable tax base from the rest of the economy." This is the Western solution: a policy reset that represents more of the same, a reboot of an infected computer suffering Western-installed malware, rehacked by the BRICS so as to empty Africa's bank accounts.

The danger is, Obama agreed with *The Economist* (2014), quite straightforward: whether the BRICS institutions are "potentially putting pressure on the system [of Western capitalism] rather than adding to it and strengthening it… [and] whether China ends up inside that system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times." There are always contingencies, as noted earlier, and the Chinese geopolitical and economic strategy is known to shift dramatically from generation to generation. Still, under Xi Jinping, the tendency of talking left while walking right will continue. The alternatives are obvious, but so far the main BRICS have only begun to exert defensive mechanisms – e.g. banning certain foreign exchange transactions (especially China in early 2016) and imposing desperately defensive tariffs – while the bigger-picture reforms attempted by others remain essentially unexplored:

- default on unpayable, unjustifiable debt – taken out by corrupt elites – as did Argentina and Ecuador in 2002 and 2009;
- evict World Bank personnel, as did Ecuador in 2007;
- impose exchange controls against elites, as did Malaysia (1998), Venezuela (2003), Cyprus (2013), Greece (2015);
- establish new common currency in order to avoid US$ transactions;
- provide solidarity financing for governments resisting financial imperialism, as was offered (by Russia's deputy finance minister) to Greece but then never materialized;
- adopt socially- and ecologically-conscious financing strategies tied to compatible trade (like ALBA), such as were proposed and seed-funded by Venezuela in the still-born Bank of the South.

Instead, the BRICS have chosen the course of undergirding multilateral agencies (the Bretton Woods Institutions and UNFCCC) whose role is disastrous for Africa. What that means for BRICS in the years ahead, it is fair to predict, is more top-down scrambling within Africa, and more bottom-up resistance (Bond 2016). Where African governments emerge that have more patriotic instincts, there will be scope for campaigning on matters of economic justice: e.g. against mining and petroleum extraction, IFF (and *licit* financial flow) extraction, and illegitimate debt. With the profits of so many Western firms in Africa hitting new lows and their share value nearly wiped out (e.g. the 2011-15 cases of Lonmin, Anglo and Glencore, which each lost more than 85 percent of value), there are imperialist precedents for what BRICS firms now may find logical: yet more extreme metabolisms of extraction and more desperation gambits to keep BRICS-friendly regimes in power, at the expense of the reproductive needs of society and nature. But resistance is already evident, as the Africa Uprising against 'Africa Rising' proceeds.

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Can BRICS re-open the 'gateway to Africa'? South Africa's contradictory facilitation of divergent Brazilian, Russian, Indian and Chinese interests

in Charles Mutasa and Dawn Nagar (Eds), *Africa and External Actors,*
London: IB Tauris, 2018

Several features of global political economy and political ecology are definitively ending "Africa Rising" myth-making, resetting world geopolitics, and requiring a much more realistic assessment of conflict resolution on the continent for the years ahead. The United States (US) presidency of Donald Trump from January 2017, multiple signals of extreme European political stress with the exit vote by a United Kingdom (UK) majority in June 2016 from the European Union (EU), and ongoing Japanese economic stagnation leave the "metropole countries" much less capable of ordering global governance (and especially relations with Africa) to their advantage. Partly as a result, the "semi-periphery" – especially the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) – is central to the political economic processes of the "peripheral" states, notwithstanding the BRICS internal contradictions. Multi-national corporations and state firms based in the BRICS countries may find the so-called "gateway" function in Africa offered by South Africa to be of diminishing utility. Structural economic conditions are increasingly adverse to South Africa and the continent as a whole, with extremely high debt levels and relatively low commodity prices compared to the 2007–2011 peak years. From below, on the other hand, the concept we can term "Africans Uprising against Africa Rising" appears more relevant with each passing global crisis.

The essential power relationship that binds together the state leaderships and large corporations, ranging across spaces from the Western metropoles to the farthest African mine or agricultural field, is a nested hierarchy that includes imperialist and sub-imperialist relations. Elites (the "1 percent") from the metropoles have traditionally used the multilateral institutions they control to reach deep into the furthest periphery, a process that continues through various well-known extractive systems and institutions.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the semi-peripheral economies – especially the BRICS – amplify those power relations in Africa, even while claiming to be offering an "alternative" multilateralism.

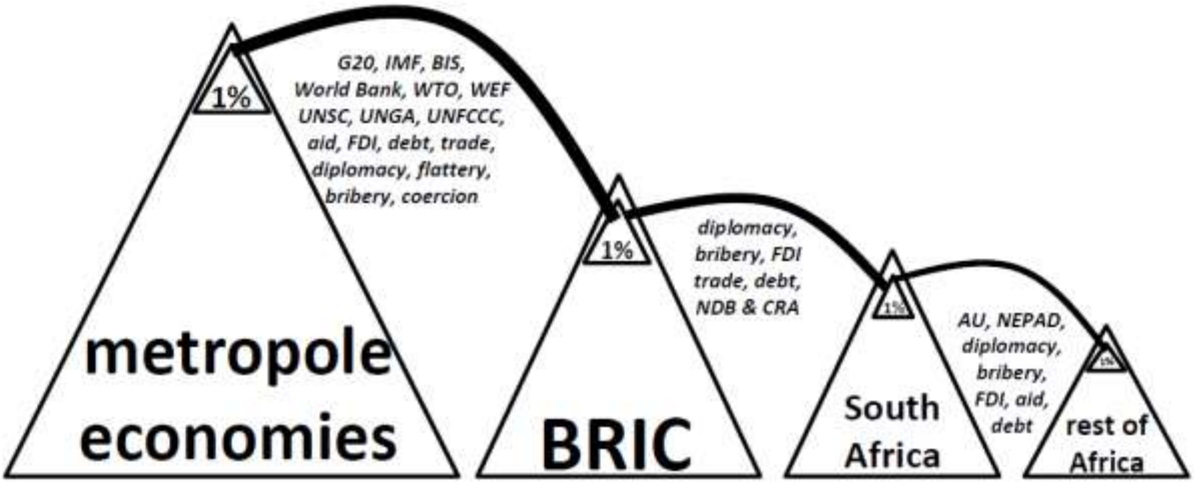
In brief, the metropole economies draw the BRICS much deeper into exploitative institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), United Nations institutions – including the General Assembly (UNGA), Security Council (UNSC) in the cases of China and Russia, and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – as well as the private sector-led World Economic Forum (WEF) talk-shop, effectively making them junior partners in the under-development of Africa. Simultaneously, elites from the four BRIC countries use South Africa as a wedge into the continent, and when financial power is required in coming

1 See for example Patrick Bond, *Looting Africa* (London: Zed, 2006). For background on the framing, *see also* Immanuel Wallerstein, *Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis* (New York: Academic, 1974); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

years, the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) will be available.

Within the Group of 20 (G20) largest economic powers, both the West and BRICS have more ambitions for looting Africa, especially through the 2017 Compact with Africa which is co-chaired by the German hosts and the South African finance minister, and which will intensify the provision of public subsidies for corporate investment. In turn, South Africa has amplified its own powers over African economies, with its recent leadership of the African Union (AU) and a major ongoing role in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which Pretoria launched in 2001. Throughout the power chain, diplomacy and flattery are exercised. But the bottom line is the amplification of exploitation and extraction by multi-national corporations – both Western and BRICS – using the oft-touted benefits of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as well as debt, trade, aid and corrupt relationships (Figure 1). As the elites link up through these institutions and process, the contradictions scream out, as do new generations of social activists in resistance.

Figure 1. Power Cascades from the Metropole to the Periphery



Source: Patrick Bond

Will the BRICS crack under new stresses?

It must be acknowledged at the outset that the BRICS are not an omniscient and all-powerful bloc. Contradictions within the BRICS are obvious enough, for example where Russia and China join the US, France, and Britain *deny* UNSC seats to the other three BRICS, in spite of a decade-plus campaign to democratise that body (for fear of diluting their own power). Another example is the failure of the BRICS even to propose a candidate from their ranks to replace two disgraced IMF managing directors – Dominique Strauss-Kahn in 2011 following a sexual harassment charge, and Christine Lagarde in 2016 following her corruption conviction in the French courts – and three poorly performing World Bank presidents – Paul Wolfowitz in 2007, Robert Zoellick in 2012, and Jim Yong Kim in 2016. In addition, Donald Trump's presidency heralds extreme chaos in BRICS geo-politics, as Trump seeks to divide the conservative rulers of three BRICS – Russia's Vladimir Putin, India's Narendra Modi, and Brazil's Michel Temer – from China's Xi Jinping and South Africa's Jacob Zuma. The conflict between India and Pakistan is another wedge issue, which became apparent when the former boycotted Beijing's Belt and Road summit in May 2017 as a result of the large Pakistani role in the infrastructure strategy, especially on contested Kashmir territory.

In addition to the likelihood of further military conflict in the South China Sea, Beijing will certainly face worsening economic problems with Trump, given the latter's propensity to blame trade competition – specifically subsidised Chinese exports and currency devaluation, as well as alleged Chinese commercial computer hacking – for US de-industrialisation. Advised by the notorious Sinophobe economist Peter Navarro, Trump's answer is a series of localisation-oriented policies that will allegedly benefit its US manufacturing industry by increasing protection from foreign imports with what – he threatened during his campaign – could be a 45 percent tariff on China and 10 percent on goods from other overseas sources. Centre-left economist Joseph Stiglitz warns against Trumponomics, in part because of the lack of redistribution that might make such high import tariffs feasible:

> Higher interest rates will undercut construction jobs and increase the value of the dollar, leading to larger trade deficits and fewer manufacturing jobs – just the opposite of what Trump promised. Meanwhile, his tax policies will be of limited benefit to middle-class and working families – and will be more than offset by cutbacks in health care, education, and social programs.[2]

A trade war is just as likely an outcome, reminiscent of the protectionist Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930, which is credited with contributing to the Great Depression. Like that period, the major question is in which direction populist sentiments channel working-class politics. Momentum in most sites is enjoyed by right-wing leaders: the US (Trump), Britain (UK Independence Party and Brexit supporters), France (National Front, led by Marine le Pen), Germany (Alternative for Germany), and the Netherlands (Party of Freedom, led by Geert Wilders), with the latter three holding elections in 2017, along with Italy, whose Five Star Movement (led by comedian Beppe Grillo) also has right-populist support. But a left alternative might also arise: in the US as indicated by Bernie Sanders's popularity (greater than any other politician), and Britain if the Jeremy Corbyn–led Labour Party gains more support. In Spain, Podemos gained more than a fifth of the vote in 2016 – in Portugal the Left Bloc is part of government – while in Greece the once-radical then-tamed Syriza was elected to run the state in 2015.

If the former prevails, we can expect what is often termed a "fascist" regime: that is, when the populist sentiments of working-class people are revealed as nativist, racist, misogynist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, ablist, and anti-ecological; when imperialist and militaristic sentiments are acted upon by this bloc within the state; and when the socio-cultural agenda of the right is conjoined with corporate power and a charismatic head of state. Were Trump not so incompetent, his US state appears to have the ingredients of a dangerous fascism, with the leaders of three BRICS countries potentially in tow.

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2 Joseph Stiglitz, "Trump Economy Hurts Workers", Project Syndicate, 12 December 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/trump-economy-hurts-workers-by-joseph-e--stiglitz-2016-12> (accessed 25 February 2017).

In contrast, the left version of populism stresses economic justice, social equality, state-centric redistributive strategies, and ecologically -sensitive industrial localisation. Earlier examples include the US "New Deal" of the 1930s and subsequent Latin American "import-substitution industrialisation" strategies, European social welfare regimes, South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the mid-1990s (mostly not implemented), the Brazilian Workers Party agenda of the 1980s–1990s, and in Greece, Syriza's 2015 promises. Cuba's economic policies foundered on the economic rocks of isolation after the Soviet Union's demise, but progressive social policy remained intact, as did the project of ending addiction to Soviet oil and emphatically beginning a transition to a post-carbon society.

In the period 2017–2020, the dominant alignment appears to be a combination of far-right socio-cultural politics with mega-corporate interests, at least in the US. In Britain, however, the City of London's financial-corporate agenda conflicts more explicitly with the far-right's Brexit strategy. It became clear immediately after the 2016 US election that Wall Street's giddy investors expect military, financial, and fossil fuel industry stocks to prosper far more than any others, as the Dow Jones index hit a new record. Trump promises to lower corporate taxes from 35 to 15 percent and rapidly inject what might be called "dirty Keynesian" spending on airports and private transport infrastructure, heralding a new boom in US state debt. Along with the Federal Reserve's rise in interest rates, this in turn will at least initially draw more of the world's liquid capital back into the US economy, similar to the 2008–2009 and post-2013 shifts of funds that debilitated all the BRICS currencies aside from the Chinese yuan. So while there may be a slight uptick in demand for commodities such as copper and steel, the broader process of Trumponomics appears highly unfavourable to Africa.[3] Moreover, as the world becomes more geo-politically dynamic and economically dangerous – what with ongoing Chinese overcapacity, unprecedented global corporate debt while profit rates continue falling, worsening stagnation, and rising financial meltdown risks emanating from weak European banks such as Germany's Deutsche as well as several Italian banks – the political coherence of the BRICS bloc is thus in question.

Trump's election heralded a period ahead in which the aim of the BRICS to build a counter-hegemonic world politics will falter even faster. Two leaders – Temer and Modi – have strong ideological affinities as conservative nationalists. Temer's government, installed under extremely dubious circumstances in May 2016, has come under intense pressure. Ongoing popular de-legitimation of his constitutional-coup regime stems in part from unions that had supported the predecessor Workers Party as well as anti-austerity protesters. Temer's closest allies include, for example: Renan Calheiros and Eduardo Cunha, who arranged former president Dilma Rousseff's downfall in the congress (along with six of her cabinet ministers), were repeatedly exposed as far more corrupt than the prior president, thanks in part to plea-bargain confessions by 77 officials of the Odebrecht construction companies involved in political bribery. In December 2016, Temer's government imposed a new 20-year austerity regime that generated unrest, especially as new revelations emerged of an alleged hush-money payoff strategy involving Temer and Cunha in May 2017. Temer's two 2016 trips to Asia – to appear with the Group of Twenty (G20) countries and especially

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3 Patrick Bond, "Taking down Trumpism from Africa," *Pambazuka,* 9 February 2017, https://www.pambazuka.org/democracy-governance/taking-down-trumpism-africa-delegitimation-not-collaboration-please (accessed 25 February 2017).

with other BRICS leaders at the Goa summit – represented one means of distraction from such troubles.

In India, just six weeks before hosting the October 2016 BRICS summit, the country witnessed a strike of an estimated 180 million workers who demanded both higher wages and an end to Modi's neo-liberal (austerity-oriented, pro-corporate) economic policies. Although his Hindu nationalism ensures a strong base, Modi soon became even more unpopular with the non-sectarian working class and poor (among others) due to his chaotic banning of large currency notes (500 and 1,000 rupees) that make up 86 percent of the money in circulation. This left many rural areas virtually without cash and hence without economic activity, and banks were compelled to restrict funds withdrawals to small daily amounts. Modi also attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to use the Goa summit for intense "anti-terrorist" lobbying. The economic and political links that China and Russia have built with the Pakistani government – as it has progressively de-linked from Washington in the wake of the 2011 Osama bin Laden execution – remain more attractive than remaining in India's favour within the South Asian rivalry.

Another BRICS leader, South Africa's Jacob Zuma, seems to require anti-imperialist myth-making to shore up internal legitimation. For example, in November 2016 Zuma explained BRICS to party activists in the provincial city of Pietermaritzburg: "It is a small group but very powerful. [The West] did not like BRICS. China is going to be number one economy leader … [Western countries] want to dismantle this BRICS. We have had seven votes of no confidence in South Africa. In Brazil, the president was removed." The following week in Parliament, Zuma was asked by an opposition member of parliament which countries he meant, and he replied: "I've forgotten the names of these countries. How can he think I'm going to remember here? Heh heh heh heh!", he chuckled.[4]

It is evident that Zuma will continue to use the BRICS as a foil for such defensive sentiments, even though his government's initial endorsement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) bombing of Libya in 2011 was the most egregious case of the geo-political role of the BRICS in Africa, against the African Union's wishes (and to be fair, Pretoria did reverse course and oppose further intervention). But at the conclusion of his 2014 meeting with then–US president Barack Obama as part of a US-Africa heads-of-state summit, Zuma identified a chilling conclusion that reflects sub-imperial service: "There had been a good relationship already between Africa and the US but this summit has reshaped it and has taken it to another level … We secured a buy-in from the US for Africa's peace and security initiatives … As President Obama said, the boots must be African."[5]

4 "I Know Who Are the Witches at Work", *Politicsweb*, 19 November 2016, <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/i-know-who-are-the-witches-at-work--jacob-zuma> (accessed 25 February 2017); "Watch He-He-He: Zuma Forgets BRICS Enemies in Parly", *Citizen*, 25 November 2016, <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-eish/1356987/watch-he-he-he-zuma-forgets-brics-enemies-in-parly> (accessed 25 February 2017).

5 Patrick Bond, "The Washington-Pretoria-TelAviv Relay", *Counterpunch*, 15 August 2014, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/08/15/the-washington-pretoria-tel-aviv-relay> (accessed 25 February 2017).

As for the African continent's prospects, they were relatively weak as the millennium dawned, even before the BRICS were conceptualised (in 2001 by Goldman Sachs), much less in their current form (in 2010 South Africa was added to the BRIC group). The liberation of South Africa from apartheid in 1994 portended a more aggressive economic role for Johannesburg capital in Africa, with these firms still the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) on the continent. Also playing an accommodating role were the Pretoria government's Pan-Africanist political leadership in the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the 2003 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the controversial election to the African Union's (AU) Chair of President Jacob Zuma's ex-wife Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma from 2012–2016, and Zuma's 2015 push for a military-oriented African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) troop-contributing force. South Africa intervened to "keep peace" in nearly a dozen African sites, but with mixed results and occasional disasters such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic.[6] But as we will see, it in is the "gateway" function for BRIC allies that South Africa's role in lubricating sub-imperialism has been most devastating. And the global economic context for that role is equally vital.

As world economy stagnates, Africa again falls into crisis

Three core processes behind globalisation and then neo-liberalism together created depression in Africa during the 1980s–1990s and then a 2002–2011 "resource cursed" revival that confused many superficial observers into declaring "Africa Rising!" First, dating to the early 1970s, the durable, recurring problem of overproduction was witnessed in huge gluts in many markets, declining increases in per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth (from 3.6 percent during the 1960s to 2.2 percent during the 1970s to 1.2 percent during the 1980s to 1.1 percent during the 1990s and 1.3 percent during the 2000s), and falling corporate profit rates. The result was a series of periodic crises. But these were displaced and mitigated by shifting the problems around using new geographical flexibility, and also by deploying credit so as to stall problems into the future, at the cost of much more severe tensions and potential market volatility in different places and over the years ahead.

What this meant for Africa, as we will observe, was a sudden increase in demand for ever higher-priced commodities after 2000, as the world's uneven development required new infrastructure investment especially in China. But the super-cycle led to Africa's addiction to export-led growth, whose profits were captured by trans-national corporations prone to non-declaration of assets (with a small amount channelled to local rentiers, especially politicians and military officials as the case of Zimbabwe's Marange diamonds illustrates so well). With the collapse of the commodity super-cycle bubble in 2011–2015, there were deep-seated crises for Nigeria, Angola, and many other countries suffering of such extreme primary-product dependence.

Second, the temporary dampening of global crisis conditions was also achieved through increased credit resulting in the expansion of financial capital – especially in real estate but other speculative markets based upon trading paper representations of capital "derivatives"

6 Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, "A Review of South Africa's Peace Diplomacy Since 1994", in Chris Landsberg and Jo-Ansie van Wyk (eds.), *South African Foreign Policy Review* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa: Pretoria; and, Midrand: Institute for Global Dialogue [IGD], 2012).

– far beyond the ability of production to meet the paper values. Regular financial meltdowns reflected this profound contradiction, exemplified by the 2008 crash and the 2009–2011 reflation of the economy through bank bailouts and the printing of paper money known as “quantitative easing.” Flooding markets with liquidity was accompanied by negative real interest rates. Meanwhile in Africa, the impact of Group of Seven (G7)–country debt relief in 2005–2006 was suddenly offset by a large increase in Chinese-supplied credit, which was often associated with minerals or petroleum extraction as collateral. Sub-Saharan Africa’s foreign indebtedness doubled to $400 billion by 2016.

Third, geographical shifts in production and finance continue to cause economic volatility and regional geo-political tensions. These have contributed to unevenness in currencies and markets as well as pressure by trans-national corporations to delve into not only more intense market relations, but also non-market spheres of society and nature, in search of restored profitability. When profits made from brand-name controls and intellectual property royalties were sent to the trans-national corporate headquarters, they partially made up for the declining industrial production and growing trade deficits in many countries (especially English-speaking). Africa was also in deficit for most of the era, although the 2002–2011 commodity super-cycle provided some relief. The trade-surplus countries were mostly Japan, China, South Korea, and other Asian exporters; Germany; and the Middle Eastern oil-producing economies. However, these trade-surplus countries’ trading and profit flows began to diverge widely and wildly, and only in 2008 began to rebalance matters as a result of a crisis and subsequent “de-globalisation” process.

By 2011, the main contributors to recovering global growth were the BRICS countries. Aside from a brief 2009 recession in South Africa, all had continued to grow at world-leading rates through the 2002–2011 commodity super-cycle. But most benefits of growth in this era went to the global corporations as they took advantage of minerals, petroleum, production, and retailing networks, all of which were interconnected by the world’s largest financial institutions. Increasing power was witnessed in capital’s financial circuits as well, as the credit ratings agencies Moody’s, Fitch, and Standard and Poor’s gave Brazil and Russia junk economic status, and South Africa also succumbed to junk status in 2017, in the wake of the firing of a finance minister popular with investors.

Not only did this network succeed in de-regulating large areas of world finance (especially with “shadow banking” securitisation techniques after 2000). At the same time, borrowing by states, corporations, and households rose to unprecedented heights: from 125 percent of world GDP in 1980 to 200 percent in 2008 and then, with the global bailout, to 240 percent by 2015. Financial assets increased from 220 percent of world GDP during the early 1990s to 350 percent by 2014, leading logically to the next round of economic crises.

The major question, then, would be whether multilateral institutions would help Africa adjust, in contrast to the post–Cold War era’s control of those institutions by the metropole countries, when they were held back by structural adjustment programmes. As ever, the problem arose as to whether the role of the BRICS in multilateralism attenuated or amplified the underlying adverse power relations.

The BRICS and multilateral assimilation

Simultaneously, South Africa and the other BRICS countries increased their footprint in Africa. The 1990s and 2000s witnessed the rise of Chinese trade and parastatal investment – albeit with uneven flows that went mainly to resource-rich countries – raising the continent's level of GDP, while at the same time the continent's overall wealth shrank dramatically owing to (net negative) natural capital depletion in nine out of every ten countries. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) (see Liu in this volume) met every three years from 2000 to 2015, and at the last summit in Johannesburg announced notional Chinese commitments of $60 billion, along with a "re-industrialisation" strategy for light manufacturing enterprises, with Ethiopia in the vanguard.

From 2003 to 2016, Brazil's Workers Party leaders made encouraging sounds about a benign approach by its corporations and development aid mechanisms in lusophone Africa (Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde). In New Delhi, an India-Africa Forum summit to promote inter-state and business relations was held in 2008, and again in Addis Ababa in 2011 and New Delhi in 2015. The latter meeting generated India's commitment to $10 billion, with 41 African heads of state in attendance (up from ten to 15 heads of state at the prior two forums). Even the least-active of the BRICS – Russia – was promoting nuclear energy, arms, transport, mining, and petroleum deals in more than a dozen African countries. Meanwhile, in competition, Obama's 2014 meeting with most African leaders in Washington resulted in a $37 billion deal-making headline.[7]

In short, prospects for an ever-greater BRICS role in Africa created enormous optimism. But reality has begun to set in. Starting in 2011 and speeding up in 2015, the crash in commodity prices has signified the exhaustion of Chinese Keynesian infrastructure expansion and left African materials exporters with enormous excess capacity and debt. The role of the BRICS countries in world trade has amplified economic and political contradictions associated with generalised world capitalist overproduction and global governance failure. This was mostly evident at the WTO's revitalisation in December 2015, as the Nairobi summit had devastating implications for food sovereignty in Africa as well as in the BRICS bloc.

The WTO was the second multilateral institution whose neo-liberal power was amplified in December 2015 with credit largely to the BRICS, at a ministerial summit in Nairobi that achieved a breakthrough in negotiations, to great relief for the world's elites. A vital feature is that three of the BRICS countries – Brazil, India and China – have been in formal alliance with the EU and US as the Group of Five (G5), the most important bloc and one generally opposed to what in 2003 formed as the G20 trading bloc, comprising the larger poor and middle-income countries, which traditionally are opposed to the power of the West. To be sure, Trump's cancelation of the Trans Pacific Partnership offered a sense that the period starting in 2017 would be very different.

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7 Patrick Bond, "The Washington-Pretoria-TelAviv Relay", *Counterpunch*, 15 August 2014, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/08/15/the-washington-pretoria-tel-aviv-relay> (accessed 25 February 2017).

The divisions within the BRICS inside the WTO are legion, starting with Russia's role as a "developed" and not developing economy.[8] (Initially in 1994, South Africa entered the WTO as a "transitional" economy after unsuccessfully having sought "developing" status.) For many years South Africa acted decisively in opposition to the interests of Africa, with Pretoria's former trade minister Alec Erwin even nominated by the journal *Foreign Policy* to become the WTO's leader after he performed to the North's satisfaction in various of the insider "green rooms" and as a "friend of the chair".[9] In 2013, after fruitless efforts by former WTO director-general Pascal Lamy to restart the stalled 2001 Doha Agenda, the WTO was given a new leader, Brazilian negotiator Roberto Azevêdo, who pro-trade bias was just as strong.

Moreover, according to the (ordinarily pro-BRICS) Malaysian non-governmental organisation (NGO) Third World Network (TWN), Brazil conspired with the United States and the European Union at the WTO to ensure "that India did not get the language it proposed" to maintain vital food subsidies, a defeat that in coming years will lead tens of millions of Indian peasants to suffer, according to TWN's Chakravarthi Raghavan.[10] He continued, "on the eve of Nairobi, Brazil unilaterally abandoned the G20 alliance to join the US and EU, in trying to act against China and India", not to mention against the world's poor. Azevêdo and Kenya's hosting chairperson agreed, reports Horace Campbell, "to exclude 'African issues' from the agenda while simultaneously pushing through the Expansion of the Information Technology Agreement, which benefits US corporations".[11] The WTO thus became far more hostile to African interests thanks in part to interventions by a few of the BRICS countries.

Nevertheless, South Africa signed on to the Nairobi WTO deal, in yet another case of talk-left walk-right. Reflecting Pretoria's tendency towards assimilation not opposition, Azevêdo remarked in March 2017 at the University of Cape Town:

> South Africa remains a central player in the system today, as a leading voice in the African Group of WTO members, and in all aspects of our work. In fact, your current representative in Geneva, Ambassador Xavier Carim has recently been appointed as chair of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body. This is one of the most prominent positions in the organisation … It stands testament to South Africa's leadership in the trade debate today.[12]

African reactions to the WTO debacle were muted, but at least in the wake of the mid-2016 Brexit vote by the United Kingdom, Europe was itself never more dividedThere appeared to be increasing resistance to EU neo-liberal penetration in the form of Tanzanian and

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8 Joanna Skrzypczyńska, "BRICS' Stance in WTO", *R/evolutions: Global Trends & Regional Issues* 3, no. 1 (2015), pp. 46–62, <http://www.academia.edu/22838328/Joanna_Skrzypczyńska_BRICS_STANCE_IN_WTO> (accessed 25 February 2017).
9 Patrick Bond, *Talk Left Walk Right* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006).
10 Chagravati Raghavan, "Doha SU Diminished, Not Dead, and Retrievable", *Third World News Network*, 23 December 2015, < http://www.twn.my/title2/wto.info/2015/ti151222.htm> (accessed 25 February 2017).
11 Horace Campbell, "The Deathbed of the WTO", *CounterPunch*, 1 January 2016, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/01/01/the-deathbed-of-the-wto/> (accessed 25 February 2017).
12 Roberto Azevedo, "The Future of the WTO Doha Round of Trade Negotiations and the Implications for Africa's Regional Integration", University of Cape Town seminar, <https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/spra_e/spra114_e.htm> (accessed 25 February 2017).

Ugandan state retraction of commitments to join the EU's economic partnership agreements (EPAs) (see Khadiagala in this volume). In Zimbabwe, a persistent trade deficit with a more advanced industrial power, namely South Africa, led to a ban imposed on many imports that typically moved across the Beitbridge border. The policy kicked in as Zimbabwe ran short on US dollars, and so was less an act of strategy than desperation to preserve the country's currency and reduce the trade deficit. South Africa also came under pressure from both local steel companies and trade unionists to bloc steel imports from China (whose net trade soared from a deficit of 35 million tonnes to a surplus of 100 million from 2005 to 2015, as China raised its share of world production from 30 to 50 percent over that decade). As a result, Trade Minister Rob Davies imposed a ten percent special tariff in 2015, with higher rates anticipated in 2017.

These were small initiatives by countries with highly erratic leaders known more for zig-zagging in diverse ideological directions than for any consistent policy stance. Still, in opposition to the persistent ideology of free trade, such desperation-protectionism might in future years be repeated and become the basis of an import-substitution industrialisation strategy. But that, in turn, would require new governments opposed to neo-liberalism, whereas the trends in the BRICS countries are basically in the other direction, especially in Brazil and India, with South Africa still obeying the dictates of the major credit-rating agencies more than its own people. The other important development in the wake of the post-Cancun WTO malaise was the rise of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and bilateral trade deals. Brazilian scholar Ana Garcia's critiques of BITs clarify how damaging these have been to Africa, especially where BRICS countries have dominance.[13]

As the Nairobi WTO deal was concluded, during the same month in Washington (December 2015) the 2010–2015 IMF restructuring negotiations were also finalised, with the US Congress approving a new voting regime. Four BRICS countries won major increases in "voice". Three years earlier, in 2012, the IMF had been recapitalised (through a credit mechanism) with $75 billion from the BRICS: China gave $43 billion; Brazil, Russia, and India gave $10 billion each; and South Africa gave $2 billion. In return, in December 2015, four of the five BRICS countries received major increases in their voting power: China by 37 percent, Brazil by 23 percent, India by 11 percent, and Russia by eight percent. Yet the US still would not give up its veto power – being the only country with more than the 15 percent required for veto – and the BRICS countries' total vote is now just 14.7 percent. Worse, the deal that made this rise possible was detrimental to seven African countries that lost more than a fifth of their IMF voting share: Nigeria lost 41 percent of its voting power, along with Libya losing 39 percent, Morocco 27 percent, Gabon 26 percent, Algeria 26 percent, Namibia 26 percent, and even South Africa, which lost 21 percent (see Jinadu in this volume).

One facet of Africa's decline at the IMF is its inability to maintain currency strength in the face of the commodity crash. This was especially apparent in the period after mid-2011 when, for example, the South African rand peaked at R6.3 per US dollar. By January 2016, after a run apparently begun by Goldman Sachs, the rate was R17.9 per US dollar, although by mid-year it recovered and stabilised around R13.4 per US dollar. Other African currencies

13 Ana Garcia, *BRICS in Africa: More of the Same?* (Rio de Janeiro: Oxfam Brasil and PACS, 2016), <https://issuu.com/pacscomunicacao/docs/publicao_africa-brics-en> (accessed 25 February 2017).

collapsed during 2014–2015, with Zambia's kwacha's losing half its worth, and the values of currencies from Angola, Namibia, Uganda, and Tanzania down more than a fifth over a 12-month period.

Finally, the December 2015 Paris Agreement confirmed Africa's victimisation by climate change, mainly because the BRICS countries allied with the historically dominant greenhouse gas emitters, especially the United States and European Union, in a deal celebrated by polluters, given that the (weak) emission-cut commitments are non-binding (with no legal accountability for violations), and also that there is no longer a prospect of legal liability (the "climate debt") against the wealthy countries for their role in what are likely to be 200 million additional African deaths this century due to extreme weather, droughts, and increased temperatures. According to Oscar Reyes, seven fatal flaws in the agreement stand out:

- The targets are ambitious, but unlikely to be met (hence serving as a greenwash).
- There are no legally-binding targets to cut emissions.
- There was no new money promised to developing countries.
- Reparations are now legally off limits (no "climate debt" can be sued for by victims).
- Oil, gas, and coal producers are not compelled to leave fossil fuels unexploited.
- The deal opens the same carbon-trading loopholes that undermined prior climate deals.
- Sources of greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping and flights, and from military-related emissions, aren't included.[14]

Reyes singles out the role of Brazil in combining forces with the EU – against Bolivia – to "open the same carbon trading loopholes that undermined the last global climate deal". Since 2009, the BRICS countries have been crucial participants in the degeneration of global climate policy, as four of their leaders (the "BASIC" countries) were the original co-signatories (along with Obama) of the Copenhagen Accord. Perhaps by mistake, John Kerry (later US secretary of state) labelled Jacob Zuma, Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva of Brazil, Wen Jiabao of China, and Manmohan Singh of India the "four horsemen".[15] The tag is accurate, in terms of climate damage to Africa caused by the 2009 deal and its successors. The Copenhagen Accord was mainly authored by the US State Department and then, as leaks by US military-intelligence whistle-blower Chelsea Manning in early 2010 proved, was adopted by many poor and climate-vulnerable countries in Africa only due to bribery and bullying by the State Department's Todd Stern.[16] Only one of the BRICS countries has hosted a Conference of the Parties (COP) summit of the UNFCCC, held in Durban in 2011, to which Washington immediately claimed victory. As documented by WikiLeaks (after liberating Hillary Clinton's private email server), Stern bragged to Clinton that in relation to the Green

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14 Oscar Reyes, "Seven Wrinkles in the Paris Climate Deal", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 14 December 2015.<*http://fpif.org/seven-wrinkles-paris-climate-deal/* > (accessed 25 February 2017).
15 Susan Galleymore, "The World Bank and the Four Horsemen of Climate Change: Apocalypse Now?", *The Oil Drum,* 5 April 2010, http://www.theoildrum.com/node/6357 (accessed 25 February 2017).
16 Patrick Bond, *Politics of Climate Justice* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012).

Climate Fund: "We left Durban with virtually everything we sought." His team had destroyed the "firewall" between rich and poor countries (the latter were not, in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, required to make emissions cuts).[17]

In this context of worsening political, economic, and ecological devastation traceable to both the BRICS countries and Western powers, there are also worrying socio-cultural backlashes against BRICS firms and citizens operating in Africa (and likewise within the BRICS against Africans – especially African immigrants to South Africa). The one example of constructive intra-BRICS solidarity and multilateral institutional reform, a struggle that has saved millions of lives of HIV-positive Africans already, is the violation of intellectual property rights on anti-retroviral medicines by Brazil and India starting in the late 1990s. South Africa's activists and allies forced the world to accept that these should become available as generic supplies so as to improve access to these life-saving medications for more than 40 million HIV-positive people, including six million in South Africa.[18] This required protest against Big Pharma, the WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property System (TRIPS), and governments in Pretoria and Washington. The campaign was successful in 2001 at the WTO and in 2004 within South Africa. The model of "BRICS from below", which will be required to link hinterland-African anti-extraction and debt activists to South Africa and other BRICS counterparts in that spirit, is probably the only positive feature of the transition of the "emerging powers" into what now appear to be, at least in the cases of Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, *submerging*, albeit still explicitly *sub-imperial*, powers.[19]

In short, the main forces drawing Africans into the world economy and multilateral institutions appear uniformly destructive. The 2002–2011 commodity super-cycle peaked just at the point that "Africa Rising" rhetoric was ramped up, apparently so as to encourage the continent's elites to continue trade and investment liberalisation aimed at more intense extractivism, even when this was obviously not in the interests of their economies. In part, because the value of minerals and petroleum exports shrank, the continent's foreign debt doubled. FDI flowed into Africa more rapidly until a 2015 reversal, but was mostly directed at the extraction of primary commodities in a process that (unlike in Australia, Canada, and Norway with similar commodity export orientations) left African countries "resource cursed" and losing far more in depleted minerals and petroleum than regained via the capital account.[20] The West's foreign aid to Africa shrank dramatically after the Cold War ended in 1990. Subsequent increases after 2000 translated into only marginal gains, for example in education and health. However, FOCAC has recently heralded a dramatic increase in aid and credit availability, though not without complications. One of these is the way companies from China and other BRICS countries ruthlessly exploit the continent.

BRICS corporations and the under-development of Africa

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17 Todd Stern, "Durban Wrap-Up: United States State Department Email to Hillary Rodham Clinton", WikiLeaks, 31 December 2011, <https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/emailid/24887> (accessed 25 February 2017).
18 Patrick Bond, *Elite Transition* (London: Pluto Press 2014).
19 Patrick Bond and Ana Garcia (eds.), *BRICS* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2015).
20 World Bank, *The Little Green Data Book* (Washington, D.C., 2014).

Africa has been overwhelmed by the attention of BRICS corporations seeking investment, trade, and financing opportunities on the continent that, before the commodity price crash, provided the world's highest rate of return.[21] The rate of trade between Africa and the major emerging economies – especially China – rose from five percent to 20 percent of all commerce from 1994 to 2014. But China is not alone in spurring this growth. In 2010, 17 out of Africa's top 20 companies were still South African, even after extreme capital flight from Johannesburg a decade earlier, which saw Anglo American, De Beers, SA Breweries, and Old Mutual relocate to London. From 2000 to 2014, the rate of imports from sub-Saharan Africa as a share of total imports rose from two percent to 12 percent.[22]

As South Africa's then–Deputy Foreign Minister Marius Fransman put it before the BRICS Durban summit in 2013: "South Africa presents a gateway for investment on the continent, and over the next 10 years the African continent will need $480 billion for infrastructure development."[23] Still, the huge push of South African FDI up-continent occurred prior to the peak of the commodity super-cycle in 2011, at which point several sub-Saharan African countries witnessed contraction in South African firms' share of the FDI-host country's GDP in the period 2010–2014: Angola, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria and Swaziland, . Other countries witnessed even greater domination of their markets by South African firms in this period:Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.[24]

In part because of illicit financial flows, Leonce Ndikumana argues, Africa is both "more integrated but more marginalised".[25] The marginalisation associated with illicit financial flows is well established, and this occurs particularly when Western and BRICS corporations externalise profits from oil, mining, and metals. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimated that $319 billion was transferred illicitly from Africa during the commodity super-cycle (from 2001 to 2010), with the most theft in metals, $84 billion; oil, $79 billion; natural gas, $34 billion; minerals, $33 billion; petroleum and coal products, $20 billion; crops, $17 billion; food products, $17 billion; machinery, $17 billion; clothing, $14 billion; and iron and steel, $13 billion. As destinations for this wealth, the US was the leading single destination at $50 billion; but China, India, and Russia were responsible for $59 billion of the $319 billion flow identified as illicit (Brazil is not recorded in the top 17 and South Africa is not included).[26]

21 Padraig Carmody, *The Rise of the BRICS in Africa* (London: Zed, 2013); Tom Burgis, *The Looting Machine* (London: William Collins, 2015).
22 John Saul and Patrick Bond, *South Africa: The Present as History* (Oxford: James Currey Press, 2014).
23 Marius Fransman, "South Africa: A Strong African Brick in BRICS,"Stellenbosch University, 20 November 2012, http://www.gegafrica.org/news/south-africa-a-strong-african-brick-in-brics.
24 International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Article IV Consultation – South Africa 2016* (Washington, D.C., July 2016).
25 Leonce Ndikumana, *Integrated Yet Marginalised: Implications of Globalisation for African Development* (Amherst: Political Economy Research Institute, 2015), p. 1.
26 Simon Mevel, Siope Ofa, and Stephen Karingi, "Quantifying Illicit Financial Flows from Africa Through Trade Mis-Pricing and Assessing Their Incidence on African Economies", United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) presentation to the African Economic Conference, Johannesburg, 28–30 October 2013, <http://www.afdb.org/en/aec/papers/paper/quantifying-illicit-financial-flows-from-africa-through-trade-mis-pricing-and-assessing-their-incidence-on-african-economies-945> (accessed 25 February 2017).

Other studies have similar findings. Thabo Mbeki's celebrated 2015 UNECA report estimated that illicit financial flows drained Africa of $80 billion per year.[27] The NGO Global Financial Integrity estimated South Africa's illicit financial flows alone accounted for $21 billion annually from 2004 to 2013.[28] As the commodity super-cycle ended decisively by 2015, African FDI fell from its $66 billion peak annual inflow in 2008 to a level of $50 billion by 2015, yet each year, in addition to *illicit* financial outflows, there were tens of billions of legal flows in the form of dividend expatriation that created extreme balance-of-payments deficits in many countries.[29]

South African firms' profits drawn from the rest of Africa are revealing. Although "return on assets" as a measure was slightly lower, the profit margins of South African corporate subsidiaries in sub-Saharan Africa were far higher from 2006 to 2014 (ranging from 15 to 22 percent) than either those firms' domestic subsidiaries within South Africa (10–15 percent) or their subsidiaries in other destinations (5–10 percent). According to a 2016 International Monetary Fund report (the *Article IV Consultation*), only in 2015 did the profit margin for Africa fall below the others, as the commodity crash became decisive, as currencies crashed, and as austerity was rapidly imposed on many citizenries. Led by the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN), and Vodacom cell phone networks, more South African companies are operating in the services and information sector (36 percent of all investment) than any other, followed by finance (23 percent); wholesale and retail trade (16 percent); construction, utilities, and transport (9 percent); real estate (7 percent); and then mining and oil (7 percent).[30]

Newspaper investigators from London's *Mail & Guardian* also tracked MTN's profit flows, and it appeared that the continent's leading cell phone company drew out hundreds of millions of dollars from African countries and externalised them to Mauritius bank accounts, and at which time the chair of the company was Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's Deputy President).[31] By 2014 he had divested his shares as he took up that post. MTN was also fined $1 billion by the Nigerian government in 2016, because in August 2015 it had failed to disconnect more than five million customers who had not registered their details for surveillance purposes, followed by a Boko Haram kidnapping the following month utilising an MTN account with a burner cell phone. Zuma had intervened with the Nigerian government on MTN's behalf, apparently succeeding in reducing the fine from $3.9 billion, but MTN lost a third of its stock market value in the process. Nigeria's desperation to raise

27 Thabo Mbeki, "Track it! Stop it! Get it! Illicit Financial Flow, Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa", UNECA, 2015, <http://www.uneca.org/iff> (accessed 25 February 25).
28 Dev Kar and Joseph Spanjers, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2004–2013*, Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity,
29 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *World Investment Report 2015*, <http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdiaepcb2013d11_en.pdf> (accessed 25 February 2017); IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook: Africa 2015*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/afr/eng/pdf/sreo0415.pdf> (accessed 25 February 2017).
30 IMF, *Article IV Consultation – South Africa, 2016* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, July 2016).
31 Kar and Spanjers, "Illicit Financial Flows". *See also* Emmanuel Mayah, Jeff Mbanga, Francis Kokutse, and Nick Mathiason, "Ramaphosa and MTN's Offshore Stash", *Mail & Guardian* (London), 8 October 2015, <http://amabhungane.co.za/article/2015-10-08-ramaphosa-and-mtns-offshore-stash> (accessed 25 February 2017).

funds for the state – from $145 to $26 per barrel from the 2008 peak to the 2016 trough – reflected the crash in the oil price.

Another equally dubious high-profile South African operation up-continent, partly run through Mauritius and other offshore financial centres, was the oil operation of Zuma's nephew Khulubuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), said to be worth $10 billion when the concession was given to Zuma in 2010 (although there were unconfirmed reports he had sold the interests by September). Not far away, 1,350 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops were stationed as part of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and in early 2016 it became apparent that these troops were not necessarily there only for "peacekeeping" against warlords, as a massacre occurred that month under their noses. Their proximity to Zuma's Lake Albert oil concessions may be worth considering as an alternative explanation, for as Belgian Royal Museum for Central Africa analyst Theodore Trefon put it: "Deployment of South African troops in the Intervention Brigade set up by the United Nations in March 2013 to reinforce MONUSCO in eastern DRC is an indication of President Zuma's motivation to stabilise the region for economic reasons."[32]

Such linkages between military and corporate power were identified as structurally logical within a 2009 report by the intelligence firm Stratfor (as revealed by WikiLeaks):

> South Africa's history is driven by the interplay of competition and cohabitation between domestic and foreign interests exploiting the country's mineral resources. Despite being led by a democratically-elected government, the core imperatives of South Africa remain the maintenance of a liberal regime that permits the free flow of labour and capital to and from the southern Africa region, as well as the maintenance of a superior security capability able to project into south-central Africa … [T]he ANC government knows that it can bring its influence to bear to present South African companies favorably to gain mining concessions.[33]

The entire range of deals involving Khulubuse Zuma remains opaque, notwithstanding the 2016 Panama Papers revelations, in part because his firms were responsible for the three billion–barrel DRC oil deal. Also, Caprikat and Foxwhelp are allegedly owned by Dan Gertler, the Israeli mining billionaire with extremely close ties to DRC president Joseph Kabila, and Jacob Zuma's lawyer, Michael Hulley. Two other linkages are Tokyo Sexwale, the former housing minister and premier of the wealthiest South African province, Gauteng, and his longtime associate Mark Willcox. Sexwale is a mining tycoon following his first stint in government (1994–1999); in 2016 he unsuccessfully attempted a run in an election to lead

32 Theodore Trefon, "Congo Masquerade: DRC in the Panana Papers", *Congo Masquerade*, 5 April 2016, <http://congomasquerade.blogspot.com/2016/04/drc-in-panana-papers.html> (accessed 25 February 2017). See also
Simon Allison, "South African Peacekeepers Accused of Failing to Prevent DRC Massacre", *Daily Maverick*, 21 January 2016, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-01-21-south-african-peacekeepers-accused-of-failing-to-prevent-drc-massacre/#.WLFrPvl95PY> (accessed 25 February 2017).
33 Stratfor, "Monography for Comment: South Africa", 5 May 2009, <http://search.wikileaks.org/gifiles/?viewemailid=951571> (accessed 25 February 2017).

the world soccer federation – the International Football Federation (FIFA) – in the wake of its multiple leadership corruption scandals. Willcox and Sexwale are on record as giving "strategic advice" on investment strategies in Africa to Khulubuse Zuma.

In August 2016, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) prosecuted New York fund Och-Ziff Capital Management Group for bribery in several African locales, implicating South Africans with close associations to both Khulubuse Zuma and Sexwale. Just as in the eastern DRC, the Och-Ziff (imperialist) project of advancing risk capital at high rates required a fusion of finance with (sub-imperialist) mining and security capacities. According to the SEC, Cape Town–based Walter Hennig's Palladino Holdings joined Och-Ziff Capital Management Group and Sexwale's Mvelaphanda Holdings in 2008 to invest in natural resources across Africa. Hennig and his associate Samuel Mebiame (whose father was a former Gabonese Prime Minister) are alleged by the SEC to have bribed Guinea's President Alpha Condé as well as officials from Chad.[34] Och-Ziff reached a settlement, anticipating a $414 million fine from Washington, but Pretoria's prosecution of corruption is notoriously lax, and indeed the Economic Crimes Surveys of Pricewaterhouse Coopers have named the South African corporate elite as the world's most corrupt in its last two reports, in 2014 and 2016.[35]

According to analyst Gary Busch of Chunguza Associates, Caprikat and Foxwhelp continued their nominal ownership and control, and used Mvelaphanda Holdings for a legal address:

> This is a pattern of Sexwale's business style. He allies himself with white European oil professionals and with some outside financial institution whose money he uses. He adds a political presence and, in the case of South Africa, blackness which gives points under the Black Empowerment rules.
>
> Whatever the tie-ins it is clear that Sexwale is deeply involved in this business. This is generally the way he works. The individual managers of his companies are professionals and competent. However, they are employees, not principals. Much of the money backing Sexwale originates from overseas investors and the difference is made up by access to the investment funds of the ANC [African National Congress]. So the DRC projects should be seen as a continuation of these practices.[36]

Another case of extremely questionable behaviour in Africa was the Indian mining house Vedanta, whose extreme profiteering in Zambia represents the amplification by the BRICS countries of Western extraction systems. Vedanta's chief executive, Anil Agarwal, bragged to a large audience in 2014 that he had bought Africa's largest copper mine, Konkola, from the Zambian government for $25 million after privatisation pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions (the IMF and World Bank). Every year since, amid growing controversy

34 Stefaans Brümmer and Craig McKune, "US Probe Links Cape Tycoon to Mining Rights Bribery in Africa", *Mail & Guardian* (London), 8 August 2016, <http://amabhungane.co.za/article/2016-08-18-00-us-probe-links-cape-tycoon-to-mining-rights-bribery-in-africa> (accessed 25 February 2017).
35 Richard Poplak, "Chronicle of a Banking Scandal Foretold", *Daily Maverick*, 21 February 2017, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-02-21-trainspotter-chronicle-of-a-banking-scandal-foretold/#.WK0UEPJWK6I> (accessed 25 February 2017).
36 Gary Busch, "Black Empowerment and African Oil and Mining Projects", unpublished paper, 10 October 2015 <http://www.academia.edu/16621610/Black_Empowerment_and_African_Oil_And_Mining_Projects> (accessed 25 February 2017) .

over ecological and social damage in the mining zone, Agarwal exported *profits* of $500 million to $1 billion.[37]

Other Indian mining and smelting firms (Arcelor Mittal, Tata, Jindal, Coal India) were also aggressive, but were also victims of generalised overproduction in steel and coal. Arcelor Mittal closed several South African foundries as the steel oversupply hit hard in 2015–2016, with Tata's losses driving it to bankruptcy in several settings, including Britain. South African authorities regularly accused Mittal of inappropriate corporate behaviour in what was formerly the giant ISCOR state steel company, especially overpricing and failing to reinvest its profits in South African operations.[38] In 2015, the second largest South African steel firm, Evraz Highveld (formerly owned by Anglo American), was placed into bankruptcy by Roman Abramovich (the Russian tycoon who owns the UK-based Chelsea soccer team), with similar state and trade union allegations that the South African branch plant was being milked of profits and ultimately asset-stripped.[39] In short, membership in the BRICS did not prevent South Africa from the kinds of the internecine capitalist competition that can prove so ruinous.

In at least one case, Zimbabwe's Marange diamonds, the extraction of billions of dollars by Chinese-linked firms provided a classic "resource curse" for example, one that even Robert Mugabe in March 2016 complained had cost Zimbabwe $13 billion in unknown revenues, with just $2 billion in documented extraction. The key figure was Hong Kong–based entrepreneur Sam Pa, China's most prolific deal-maker in Africa. In 2014, the *Financial Times* revealed that Pa's Queensway Group had operations "worth tens of billions of dollars" mainly in repressive regimes.[40] In 2013, Pa had channelled vast sums to Mugabe's victorious election campaign via Zimbabwe's military. During the country's 2009–2013 "unity" government, the treasury was controlled by Mugabe's enemy, Finance Minister Tendai Biti, of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), who long complained about lack of revenue. Pa was jailed in 2015 for reasons that are still mysterious. From 2003 onwards, Mugabe had established a "Look East" philosophy after Western sanctions were imposed on more than a hundred top politicians linked to human rights violations. To be sure, China-Zimbabwe fraternal anti-imperialist rhetoric remains strong, based on Beijing's admirable support for the 1966–1979 liberation war led by Mugabe against white Southern Rhodesian colonialism. But in the diamond fields, the contemporary record includes repressive territorial control by a dictatorship state, mass murder (hundreds of artisanal miners killed in November 2008), the displacement of thousands of residents, labour exploitation, and enormous environmental damage. The South African firm De Beers had previously begun to

37 "VEDANTA Resources Chairperson, Anil Agarwal Renders Full Apology to Zambia", *Lusaka Voice*, 18 July 2014, <http://lusakavoice.com/2014/07/18/vedanta-resources-chairperson-anil-agarwal-renders-full-apology-zambia> (accessed 25 February 2017).
38 Rob Davies, "The Steel Industry in Crisis", *Politicsweb*, 29 August 2015, <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/the-steel-industry-in-crisis--rob-davies> (accessed 25 February 2017).
39 Kevin Crowley, "Evraz Opposes Highveld Steel Rescue Through Court Application: Business-Rescue Practitioners Will Oppose Evraz's Application", *Reuters*, 23 October 2015, <https://www.moneyweb.co.za/news/companies-and-deals/evraz-opposes-highveld-steel-rescue-through-court-application> (accessed 25 February 2017).
40 Tom Burgis, *The Looting Machine* (London: William Collins, 2015).

operate the same fields but in 2006 failed to persuade Mugabe's mining officials that Marange was being suitably developed.[41]

Other Chinese projects have been criticised, for example Botswana's coal-fired power-plant at Morupule failed.[42] Other notorious mega-project failures, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, include China Railways in Nigeria ($7.5 billion) and Libya ($4.2 billion), Chinese petroleum in Angola ($3.4 billion) and Nigeria ($1.4 billion), and Chinese metal investors in the DRC and Ghana ($3 billion each).[43] The renewal of FOCAC in December 2015 did nothing to assuage critics of the type of Chinese investment and credits, and their appropriateness in a post-commodity super-cycle environment.[44]

Simultaneously, with the dubious FDI, Africa witnessed a dramatic increase in infrastructural project investment – real and planned – to support extraction. It was logical for BRICS leaders to identify port, bridge, road, rail, hydropower, thermal coal, nuclear energy, and other infrastructure projects for subsidised investment, given that their countries' corporations would benefit from the associated extraction of minerals, petroleum, and crops. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) was the coordinating system. In 2016, the most ambitious of the PIDA projects included the Inga Hydropower Project in the DRC, which at $100 billion will be the most expensive development project in history if taken to fruition, with 43,200 megawatts of electricity (compared to the second largest, China's Three Gorges Dam, at less than half of that). But with commodity prices crashing, even China attempted in mid-2014 – on the eve of Obama's summit with African leaders in Washington – to get Washington's support. Two years later, the World Bank withdrew its financing, on grounds of the DRC's (and other Inga project participants') failure to comply with socio-economic and environmental agreements.[45] In addition to controversial mega-hydro, the Russian parastatal firm Rosatom promoted nuclear power plants to corruption-prone governments in Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia, signing tentative contracts, for example, with Zuma, in a manner that would leave Russia with no liability in the event of an accident.[46]

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41 Farai Maguwu, "Marange Diamonds and Zimbabwe's Political Transition", *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 8, no. 1 (2013), pp. 74–78; Patrick Bond and Khadija Sharife, "Zimbabwe's Clogged Political Drain and Open Diamond Pipe", *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 132 (2012), pp. 351–365; African News Agency, "Zimbabwean President Mugabe Announces 15 Million in Diamonds Looted", *Sowetan*, 4 March 2016, <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2016/03/04/zimbabwean-president-mugabe-announces-15-billion-in-diamonds-looted> (accessed 25 February 2017).
42 Reuters, "Botswana to sell struggling Chinese-built power plant",Gaborone, 5 November 2016 http://www.reuters.com/article/us-botswana-power-idUSKBN1300EQ (accessed 25 February 2017).
43 "Beijing Shows More Caution on Africa Deals", *Wall Street Journal*, 7 May 2014, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/05/07/beijing-shows-more-caution-on-africa-deals> (accessed 25 February 2017).
44 Patrick Bond, "China's Path into Africa Blocked", *TeleSUR*, 13 December 2015, <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Chinas-Path-into-Africa-Blocked-20151213-0004.html> (accessed 25 February 2017).
45 International Rivers, "Grand Inga Hydroelectric Project: An Overview", Berkeley, 2017 <https://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/grand-inga-hydroelectric-project-an-overview-3356> (accessed 25 February 2017).
46 Lionel Faull, "Exposed: Scary Details of SA's Secret Russian Nuke Deal", *Mail & Guardian* (London), 12 February 2015, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-02-12-exposed-scary-details-of-secret-russian-nuke-deal> (accessed 25 February 2017).

Another form of BRICS investment in Africa has been in land, a process that has often been caricatured as “land grabbing”. Thomas Ferrando developed a database to track this, discovering extensive holdings especially by Indian and Chinese firms.[47]

Congolese scholar Baruti Amisi sums up the sub-imperial power relations:

> First, BRICS countries present important opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) which impoverish the same people that they should empower. Impoverishment occurs through dispossession of natural resources with little or no compensation, unequal shares of the costs and benefits of mega-development projects, repayments of debts incurred to build these projects, and structural exclusion from accessing the outcomes of these initiatives.
>
> Second, BRICS countries share the same *modus operandi* at their different stages of imperialism, either as countries that have been active in Africa for a very long time (Russia and China); newly arrived (India); or playing their traditional sub-imperialist countries (Brazil and South Africa). The pattern is similar: accumulation by dispossession is taking place through abuse of local politics, national elites, warlords, and war economies, as in the eastern side of the DRC where, between BRICS and the West as consumers of the resulting mineral outflows, six million or more deaths have been the result.
>
> Third, BRICS countries share the same interests in natural resources including but not limited to mining, gas, oil and mega-dam projects for water and for electricity to meet their increasing demands for cheap and abundant electricity. They are also actively involved in the search for new markets, and hence they promote construction of roads, railways, bridges, ports and other infrastructure. But this infrastructure is often indistinguishable from colonial-era projects, meant to more quickly extract primary products for the world market.
>
> Fourth, BRICS countries have poor records of environmental regulation. There is virtually no commitment to mitigate climate change and invest in truly renewable energy, to take environmental impact assessments seriously, and to consult with and compensate adversely affected communities.[48]

Conclusion: BRICS from Below

These top-down processes are not uncontested. Seen from below, resistance initiatives by many African grassroots communities and shopfloors – most spectacularly in the three largest economies (Nigeria in 2012, Egypt in 2011, and South Africa throughout) – have intensified in recent years. These protests are regularly repulsed by states hostile to democracy, mostly with Western backing (although successes in Tunisia in 2011 and Burkina

47 Thomas Ferrando, “BRICS, BITs, and land grabbing”, unpublished paper (Paris: Sciences Po Law School, 2013), <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2174455> (accessed 25 February 2017).
48 Baruti Amisi, “BRICS Corporate Snapshots in Africa”, *Pambazuka*, 4 April 2014, <https://www.pambazuka.org/global-south/brics-corporate-snapshots-africa> (accessed 25 February 2017).

Faso in 2014–2015 put dictatorships onto the retreat). But Western hypocrisy is not the only factor. In many cases when African tyrants face popular critique, notably Zimbabwe, social unrest also threatens the stability of investments made by BRICS countries and corporate interests. Indeed, in several important African sites of struggle, the primary battle has been between BRICS mining interests and affected communities and workforces. Other modes of resistance to either political tyranny or economic misery include refugee status or migrancy; in the case of South Africa, either path has been enormously difficult for Africans, as a result of malgovernance at South Africa's Department of Home Affairs and the government's Police Services, as well as in working-class communities who have hosted immigrants, but with periodic sites of violent xenophobic upsurges (2008, 2010, 2015, 2017).

Only in the sole case of access to anti-retroviral medicines has concerted international support dramatically improved African life expectancies, as expensive branded medicines were replaced by generics in the early 2000s. As noted earlier, two of the BRICS were exceptionally important allies of Africa's HIV-positive community and health officials: Brazil and India provided innovative pharmaceutical development of generic anti-retrovirals, and were unintimidated by Western corporations whose patents they abused. However, this may be seen in retrospect as an exception that proves the rule, for in 2016, right-wing governments in both countries heralded a new era of respect for intellectual property rights at the expense of their sick citizenries. With Modi pressured by Obama to retract Indian opposition to a new round of intellectual property protections that aid Big Pharma at a time many treatable diseases continue to ravage Africa. It is in this sense that the sub-imperial role of the BRICS, assimilating into international capitalism, is obvious, given the alternative that the anti-retroviral case presented.

The BRICS stand accused of under-developing Africa in several respects, a process amplified by roller-coaster commodity price changes during the period 2002–2016. The BRICS are, according to the information and analysis developed here, best understood as a new, more malevolent force within a general framework of neo-liberal extractivism, amplifying the already extreme uneven and combined development so damaging to Africa. There are exceptions, of course, in which African leaders have helped their countries raise productivity and convert their natural resource wealth into investment (the main one being Botswana, although the citizenry have witnessed very little trickle-down). The capacity of the BRICS to take advantage of Africa's weaknesses justifies the use of the term "sub-imperialism". Whatever name one might use, South Africa's own National Planning Commission sheepishly conceded a "perception [*sic*] of the country as a regional bully" (a perception often matched in reality), such that the "gateway to Africa" logic often comes up against the harsh reality of extraction and exploitation (especially in March 2013).[49]

Still, the most important reasons for Africa's prone position in the world economy are not the fault of the BRICS – which simply amplify pre-existing problems instead of offering alternatives – but of the West. The latest manifestation of Western imperialism in Africa is indicative: when the World Economic Forum (WEF) came to Kigali in May 2016, the organisation highlighted "Fourth Industrial Revolution cyber-physical systems" as central to

49 South African National Planning Commission, *Our Future – Make It Work: National Development Plan* (Pretoria: Ministry in the Presidency, 2012), <http://www.npconline.co.za/pebble.asp?relid=25> (accessed 25 February 2017).

Africa's future: the continent is "the world's fastest growing digital consumer market"[50] (though fewer than four Africans in ten have electricity). For good measure, the WEF's main speaker, (as-yet-unindicted war criminal and former British prime minister) Tony Blair, celebrated the dictatorship of his host, Paul Kagame. At the same time, the IMF's *Regional Economic Outlook for Africa* report suggested that "a substantial policy reset is critical in many cases ... Because the reduction in revenue from the extractive sector is expected to persist, many affected countries also critically need to contain fiscal deficits and build a sustainable tax base from the rest of the economy".[51] This is the Western solution: a policy reset that represents more of the same, a reboot of an infected computer suffering Western-installed malware, rehacked by the BRICS so as to empty Africa's bank accounts.

The danger, as Obama agreed with *The Economist* in a 2014 interview, is quite straightforwardly whether the BRICS institutions are "potentially putting pressure on the system [of Western capitalism] rather than adding to it and strengthening it … [and] whether China ends up inside that system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times".[52] This is also the problem Donald Trump now introduces, namely whether there will still be a "system" in a few years' time.

If that system breaks under pressure of all the centrifugal forces noted here, would African countries be in a position to "de-link", as Samir Amin has long advised?[53] The alternatives are obvious, but so far the main BRICS have only begun to exert defensive mechanisms – such as banning certain foreign exchange transactions (especially China in early 2016) and imposing desperately defensive tariffs. The bigger-picture reforms attempted by others remain essentially unexplored:

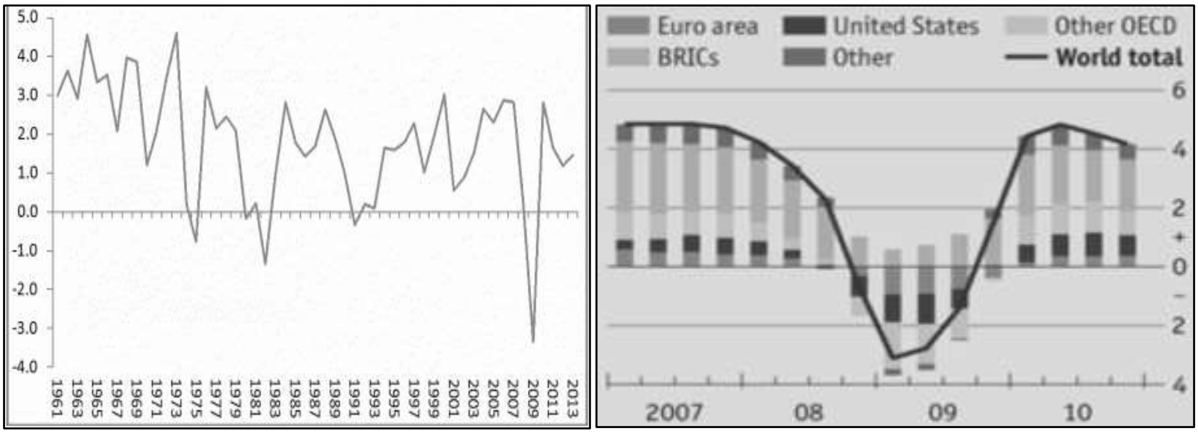
- Defaulting on unpayable, unjustifiable debt – taken out by corrupt elites – as did Argentina and Ecuador in 2002 and 2009.
- Evicting World Bank personnel, as did Ecuador in 2007.
- Imposing exchange controls against elites, as did Malaysia in 1998, Venezuela in 2003, Cyprus in 2013, and Greece in 2015.
- Establishing new common currency in order to avoid transactions in US dollars.
- Providing solidarity financing for governments resisting financial imperialism, as was offered (by Russia's deputy finance minister) to Greece but then never materialised.
- Adopting socially and ecologically conscious financing strategies tied to compatible trade (like the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America [ALBA]), such as were proposed and seed-funded by Venezuela in the still-born Bank of the South.

Instead, the BRICS have chosen the course of undergirding multilateral agencies (the Bretton Woods institutions and the UNFCCC), whose role is disastrous for Africa. What that

50 World Economic Forum, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution", Davos, 2016 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/ (accessed 25 February 2017).
51 IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook: Africa 2015*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2016/afr/eng/pdf/sreo0415.pdf> (accessed 25 February 2017).
52 "The President on Dealing with China", *The Economist*, 2 August 2014, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2014/08/economist-interviews-barack-obama-1> (accessed 25 February 2017).
53 Samir Amin, *Delinking* (London: Zed, 1990).

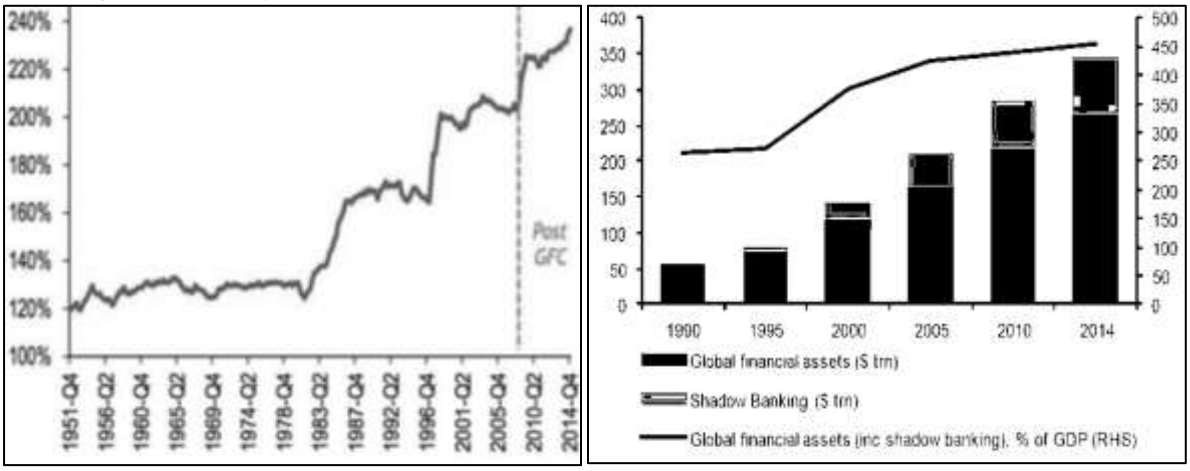
means for BRICS in the years ahead – it is fair to predict – is more top-down scrambling within Africa, and more bottom-up resistance. Where African governments emerge that have more patriotic instincts, there will be scope for campaigning on matters of economic justice: for example against mining and petroleum extraction, extraction of illicit financial flows (and licit financial flows), and illegitimate debt. With the profits of so many Western firms in Africa hitting new lows and their share value nearly wiped out (such as the 2011–2015 cases of Lonmin, Anglo, and Glencore, which each lost more than 85 percent of their value), there are imperialist precedents for what BRICS firms now may find logical: yet more extreme metabolisms of extraction and more desperation gambits to keep BRICS-friendly regimes in power, at the expense of the reproductive needs of society and nature. But resistance is already evident, if not yet among policymakers then at least in the form of "Africans Uprising against Africa Rising".[54]

World real GDP per capita growth (per cent); and GDP as BRICS led during last crisis



Source: Michael Roberts and *The Economist*

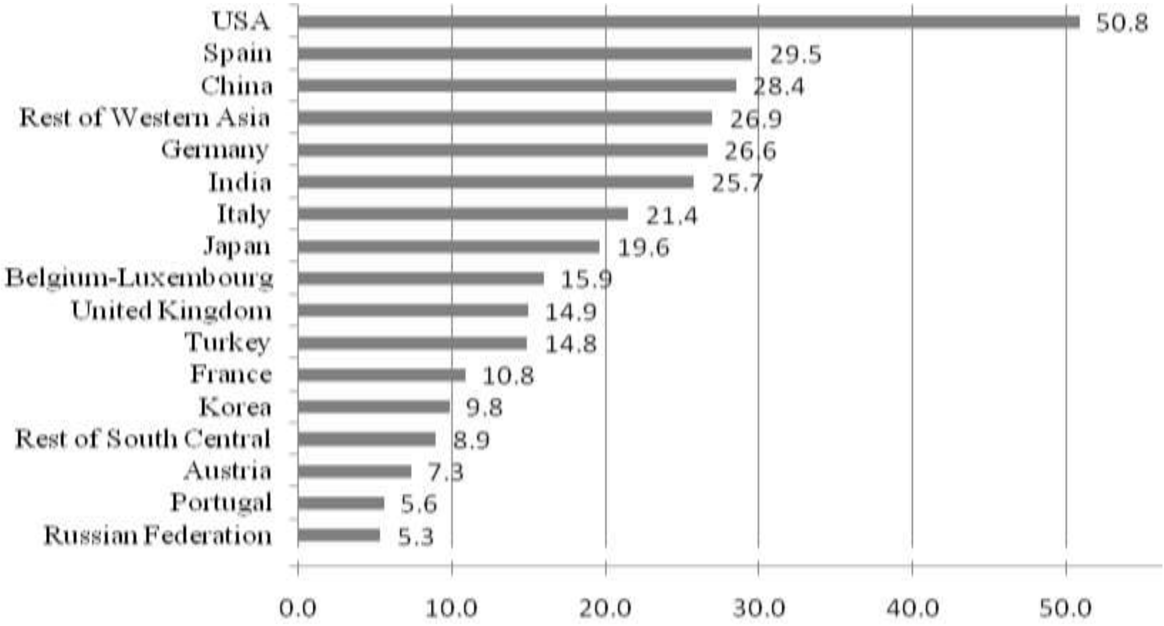
Rise in global debt (per cent of GDP) and of financial assets

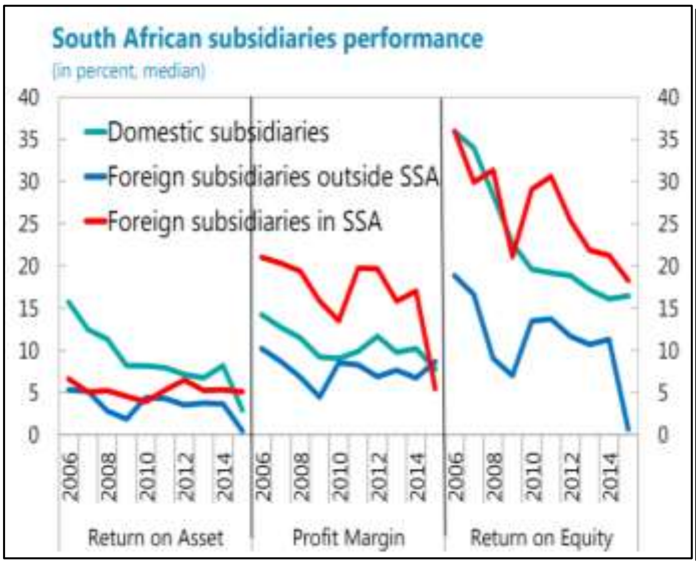


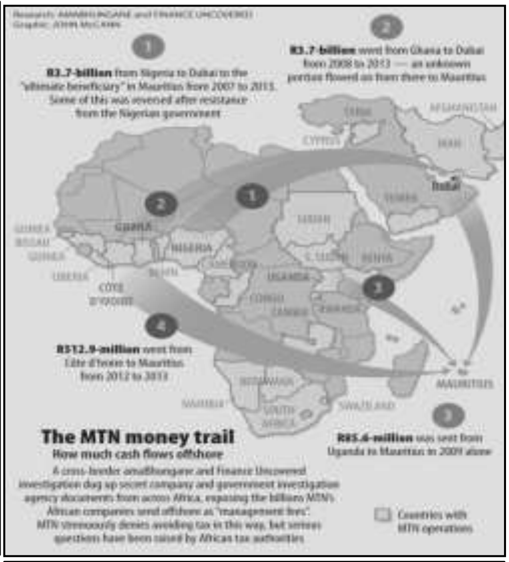
Source: IMF and Credit Suisse

54 Patrick Bond, "As Global Commodity Super-Cycle Ends, Africans Continue Uprising Against 'Africa Rising'", in Iraj Abedian, Patrick Bond, Charlotte du Toit, Akpan Ekpo, Lorenzo Fioramonti, Pali Leholhla, Thabo Mbeki, *Lumkile Mondi, Joel Netshitenzhe, Samuel* Oloruntoba, Devan Pillay, *Great Recession and Its Implications for Human Values: Lessons for Africa* (Johannesburg: Real African, 2016), pp. 122-145.

Cumulative IFFs from Africa by destination, 2001-10







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Khulubuse Zuma's R100bn oil deal

2014-05-18 15:01

City Press

Controversial business tycoon Khulubuse Zuma is sitting on a R100?billion oil fortune in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC),?which he allegedly obtained with the help of his uncle, President Jacob Zuma.

A City Press investigation has discovered that President Zuma played a crucial role in a 2010 decision by DRC President Joseph Kabila to allocate two oilfields in the northeast of the country to his nephew.

DAILY MAVERICK

South African peacekeepers accused of failing to prevent DRC massacre

Video reveals Agarwal's $500 million a year profit at KCM!

May 12, 2014 · Uncategorized · Anil Agarwal, copper, Corruption, Foil Vedanta, KCM, London, Mining, Pollution, protest, Repression, solidarity, worker's deaths, Zambia · lankoid

12th May 2014. A video released by activists from Foil Vedanta today, shows Vedanta boss, and 69% owner, Anil Agarwal, telling a large audience how he bought Konkola Copper Mines in Zambia for just $25 million, rather than the $400 million asking price, and receiving loud cheers when he states that the company brings in $500 million in profit each year. Foil Vedanta had previously released figures from Vedanta's annual reports showing that the company made $362 million in 2013, but Vedanta CEO Tom Albanese had disputed this during his visits to Zambia in February, repeating the previous claim that KCM was making a very low profit or a loss due to high operational costs and taxes.

Zambian villagers take mining giant Vedanta to court in UK over toxic leaks

Fears of environmental catastrophe as report finds 'constant contamination' of streams around copper mine while locals report health problems and failed crops

Water from a borehole drilled by KCM at Shimulala village, Zambia. Photograph: John Vidal for the Observer

A London-listed mining giant has been polluting the drinking water of villages in Zambia and threatening a wider health disaster, the *Observer* has found.

Leaked documents and a confidential internal report commissioned from Canadian pollution control experts show that Vedanta Resources' giant mine in Zambia's Copperbelt region has been spilling sulphuric acid and other toxic chemicals into rivers, streams and underground aquifers used for drinking water near the mining town of Chingola.

Undone | Top 10 stalled, failed or canceled China-Africa deals

Announcement	Investor	Invested country	Sector	Deal value, in billions
2006	China Railway Construction	Nigeria	Transport	$7.5
2011	China Railway Construction	Libya	Transport	4.2
2007	Sinopec	Angola	Energy	3.4
2009	Ex-Im Bank	D.R. Congo	Metals	3.0
2012	Sinomach	Gabon	Metals	3.0
2011	China Development Bank	Ghana	Energy	3.0*
2011	Sinohydro	Libya	Real estate	1.8
2007	Gezhouba	Nigeria	Energy	1.4
2008	Sinoma	Nigeria	Real estate	1.4
2011	China State Construction Engineering	Libya	Real estate	1.3

*Only $600 million of the $3 billion was paid out.

The Wall Street Journal

Country and Total Land	Total Land and Regional Areas	Target Countries
Brazil 28,000 ha[19]	Eastern Africa 28,000 ha	Brazil; Mozambique, Ethiopia
India 1,924,509 ha	Central Africa: 15,000 ha Eastern Africa: 1,761,800 ha Northern Africa: 8,020 ha South East Asia: 139,689 ha	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Philippines, India, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sudan
China 1,140,683 ha	Central Africa: 10,000 ha Eastern Africa: 126,171 ha South America: 348,972 ha South-East Asia: 628,139 Western Africa: 26,000 ha	Cambodia, China, Sudan, Lao, Philippines, India, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo,

Costs and benefits of China's role in Southern Africa

in D.Degterev (Ed), *Africa and the Formation of the New System of International Relations: Rethinking Decolonization and Foreign Policy Concepts.* London: Springer Nature, 2021.

Summary

The Southern African Development Community countries are grappling with the complex problem of Chinese state and corporate involvement in divergent societies, politics, economies and ecologies. There is enormous concern rising now about these relationships, in part because of the continuation of the new Cold War between Beijing and Washington, leaving Southern Africa torn, divided and subject to new forms of exploitation. After centuries of slavery, colonialism and imperialism, a degree of political 'independence' was won between the 1960s-90s, with a terrible loss of life due to white supremicism. But since then, the region has still suffered: from neo-colonialism, inter-imperial rivalries, sub-imperialism, neoliberalism, sustained patriarchy, resource-looting and now also the global climate meltdown and differential access to Covid-19 treatment and vaccines. China's role is often an amplifier of these forms of oppression, but not always. It is vital to distinguish between functions that may assist the region in autonomous, sovereign self-development, on the one hand, and those that have negative implications for the region's relationship to the world economy on the other. Social activists often provide guidelines to help make these distinctions.

1. Introduction: Trends in Chinese-Southern African relations during economic crisis

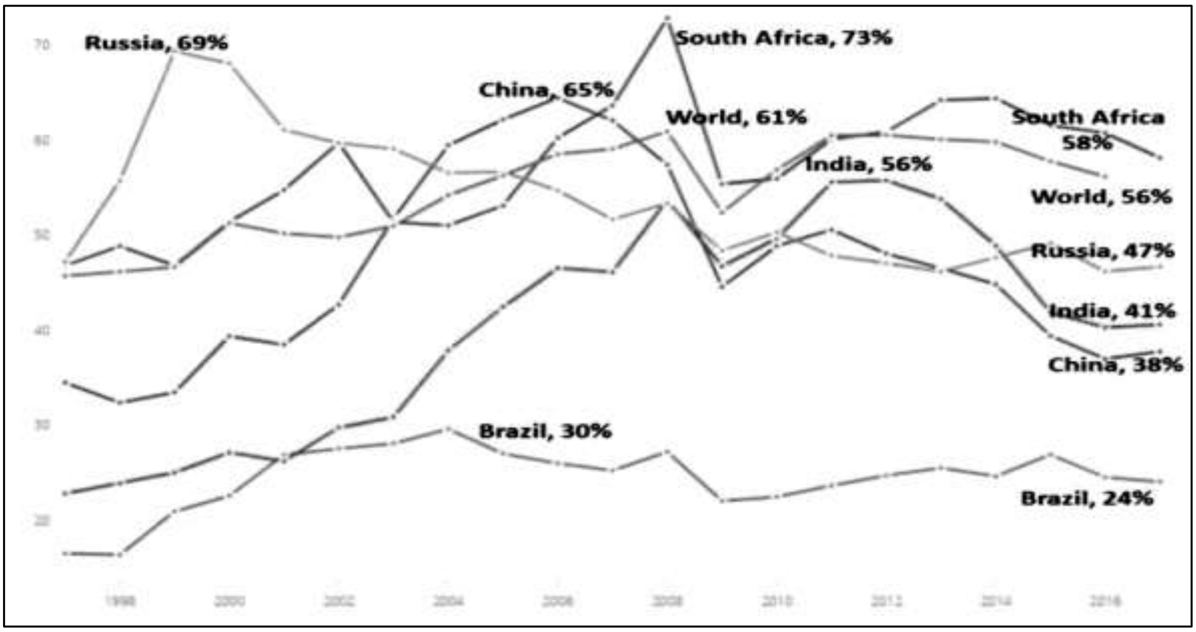
The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region consists of 14 countries: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In dealing with the main countries and issues areas, what is the role of China, given not only massive recent investments, loans and trade relationships with SADC countries, but also its new Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? After all, BRI's reach is exceptionally ambitious, reaching even as far off the beaten track as Southern Africa. Still, several SADC countries have *not* yet joined BRI: Mauritius, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana, Malawi and the DRC. And Eswatini's long-standing Taiwan relations remain a source of growing tension with Beijing.

The main Chinese investments and loans in South Africa require unpacking because they are both within the BRI, conceptually, but due to systemic corruption and ecological destruction, social resistance has arisen to the main projects: port expansion in Durban (already Sub-Saharan Africa's largest), rail expansion to export coal from Limpopo province, an auto factory in Nelson Mandela Bay, the largest coal-fired power plant under construction in the world (Kusile), and the largest Special Economic Zone in South Africa (Musina-Makhado).

These projects – begun during the 2010s with most continuing into the 2020s – can be understood as a function of a plenary talk at the World Economic Forum in early 2017, just before Donald Trump took power, in which Xi Jinping clarified his ideology: "We must remain committed to developing global free trade and investment, promote trade and investment liberalisation" (Xi, 2017). In a 2015 talk, Xi insisted on the merits of trade among his key partners, the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa BRICS bloc. These economies must "boost the centripetal (unifying) force of BRICS nations through cooperation in innovation and production capacity to boost competitiveness" (Xi 2015). However, as argued below, the '*centripetal*' economic strategy referred to within the BRICS – i.e., that as the world turns, it becomes more tightly integrated – was, in reality, increasingly *centrifugal,* given tendencies to *deglobalisation* underway already by 2007, the peak of internationally-integrated trade, finance and investment.

Indeed, the trade that now occurs is increasingly *disconnected* from what are known as value chains: i.e., globally-integrated production systems. McKinsey Global Institute's 2019 'global flows' analysis confirms that "…a smaller share of the goods rolling off the world's assembly lines is now traded across borders. Between 2007 and 2017, exports declined from 28.1 to 22.5 percent of gross output in goods-producing value chains" (McKinsey 2019). The decline in trade intensity is led by China, where gross exports as a share of gross output in goods fell from 18 percent to 10 percent from 2007-17.

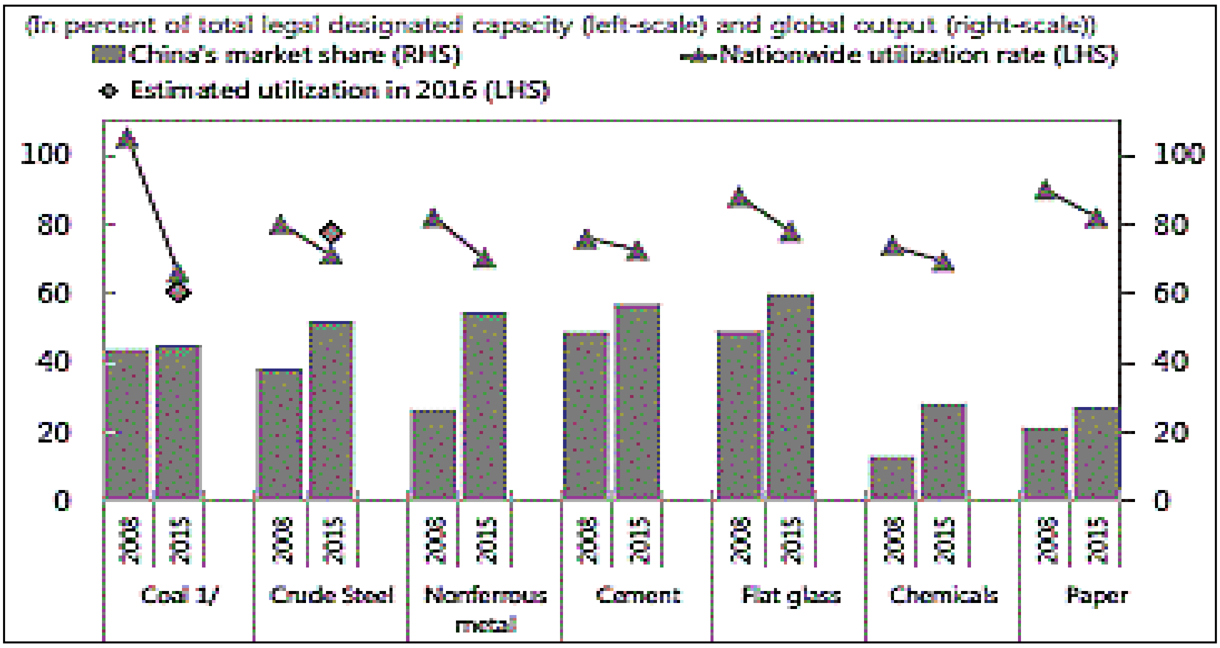
Pre-Covid-19 Deglobalisation: the rise and fall of BRICS and world trade, 1997-2017 (high point ratio and 2017 ratio, as percent of GDP)



Source: World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?end=2018

The centrifugal process entails outward stresses on a system as it turns, pushing an object away from the centre, potentially leading to its disintegration. Ironically, even before Covid-19 wrecked the global economy, the recent decline in world trade/GDP ratios was led by the BRICS group; i.e., the economies that once were considered by Goldman Sachs manager Jim O'Neil (2001) to be what he called the 'building BRICS' of 21^{st}-century capitalism. Not only was South Africa hit hard – as trade fell from 73 percent of GDP in 2007 to 58 percent in 2017, compared to a world trade/GDP decline over that period from 61 percent of GDP to 56 percent. All the BRICS witnessed reduced trade in much greater degrees than the global norm, and three spent parts of 2015–19 in recession: Brazil, Russia and South Africa. In 2020, only one (China) recorded positive GDP growth.

Chinese overaccumulation: capacity underutilisation in sectors with high global share



Source: IMF 2017 Article IV Consulation

One reason is a classical symptom of economic crisis that since the early 2010s, has emanated mainly from Chinese companies: what can be termed the overaccumulation of capital, reflecting systemic overcapacity. China has over-invested in its plant, equipment and machinery, so much, that the ability to continue to generate growth is limited. This overaccumulation of capital is recognised by left-wing and right-wing economists alike. For leftists, overaccumulation has various symptoms. Given the intercapitalist competition within and between industries which leads to ever rising capital intensity and hence overproduction, there is a tendency for gluts to develop: high inventory levels, unused plant and equipment, excess capacity in commodity markets, idle labour and bubbling financial capital. Because profits are higher in the banking sector and stock markets, corporations that had been accumulating within the productive economy find it more lucrative to shift from reinvestment in fixed capital, into purchasing 'fictitious capital' (financial, paper assets) (Bond 2019).

Among orthodox economists, staff at the International Monetary Fund (IMF 2017) studied Chinese capital overaccumulation and found that in major sectors – coal, steel, nonferrous metals, cement, chemicals and others where Chinese demand is between 30-60 percent of the world market – there exists at least one third overcapacity in production. And due to overindebtedness, a financial crisis can break out at any time, causing domestic and global growth to fall and worsening the living conditions of hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

This problem is not unusual, because according to sociologist Ho-fung Hung (2015), "Capital accumulation in China follows the same logic and suffers from the same contradictions of capitalist development in other parts of the world . . . [including] a typical overaccumulation crisis, epitomised by the ghost towns and shuttered factories across the country". Well before Covid-19 amplified economic stress, these conditions were becoming acute. According to political economist Xia Zhang (2017, 321-22), they reflect Chinese capitalism's "restructuring as the result of overaccumulation. Often jointly with various representatives of Chinese capital, the Chinese state is compelled to reconfigure Chinese capitalism on a much larger spatial dimension so as to sustain the capital accumulation and expansion."

Progressive activists understand this too; as articulated by the 2017 Hong Kong People's Forum on BRICS and the BRI,

> Instead of offering an alternative, the BRICS actually offer a continuation of neoliberalism. On top of BRICS there is also China's new mega project, the BRI whose main purpose is to export China's surplus capital, and in this process seek the cooperation and 'mutual benefit' of big foreign TNCs and regimes which are often authoritarian. The price of these investments is often borne by the working people and the ecological balance. (Borderless Hong Kong 2017)

2. From overaccumulation to a "New Scramble" and resurgent geopolitical tensions

The economic crisis conditions are also playing out in a manner they have in past confrontations, in the late-19th century era of imperialism that led to World War I. Geopolitical influences are today being acutely felt, in the tug of war between West and East. There is enormous concern about whether Sino-African relationships will become the source of Western-African conficts, in part because of the post-Trump continuation of the new Cold War between Beijing and Washington, leaving SADC countries torn, divided and subject to new forms of exploitation. Under Trump, there was practically no effort to woo African countries – which he infamously termed s*&!-holes – to the U.S. side, but this will change under the Biden Administration.

The original 'Scramble for Africa' – when the continent's borders were carved – occurred in 1884-85 in a Berlin conference room, and divided peoples as a result of the whims of representatives from Britain, Portugal, France, Belgium and the host Germany. In the SADC region, each colonial power land-grabbed and to differing extents, each established settler-colonial white power over the inhabitants and nature. This Scramble represented not just colonial powers taking territories, but *capitalism* expanding voraciously during its own economic crisis.

Old and new Scrambles for Africa: seen from Berlin, 1885 and Johannesburg, 2013

According to Rosa Luxemburg, the German Communist leader who read about Namibia, the DRC and South Africa and then wrote *The Accumulation of Capital* in 1913,

> Capitalism must therefore always and everywhere fight a battle of annihilation against every historical form of natural economy that it encounters… The most important of these productive forces is of course the land, its hidden mineral treasure, and its meadows, woods and water, and further the flocks of the primitive shepherd tribes. Since the primitive associations of the natives are the strongest protection for their social organisations and for their material bases of existence, capital must begin by planning for the systematic destruction and annihilation of all the non-capitalist social units which obstruct its development.

Is there a new Scramble for Africa now underway, as some describe the way not only the Western colonial powers, but also South Africa and China, behave in the region? As far as the BRI is concerned, it is undeniable that two serious problems with China's strategy are emerging. First, tension with India is acute, due to BRI's Kashmir link via Pakistan, close to the area where Delhi is repressing a political uprising and where Sino-Indian conflict in mid-2020 led to dozens of troops' deaths. The second, discussed below, is rising resistance to social, environmental, political and economic injustice, which though mainly directed against tyrannical governments (some supported by the West, some by China), also have roots in structural features of the China-Africa relationship, especially resource extraction.

Membership in the BRI is now taken for granted for those in proximity, with the exception of India, where the link from Pakistan's Gwadar port to the western edge of China could make import of Middle East petroleum and other vital supplies much easier, and far less risky than the ocean route (what with its bottlenecks and geopolitical tensions). But India's own agenda creates a competitive conflict that has not yet been resolved, in part because India began its own counter-BRI strategy, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, in alliance with Japan in 2017.


The Hindu Explains: From Real Estate regulation to POSCO row

Why did India boycott China's road summit?

Suhasini Haidar

MAY 20, 2017
UPDATED: MAY 20, 2017

- the corridor includes projects in land belonging to India;
- the projects could push smaller countries on the road into a crushing debt cycle, destroy the ecology and disrupt local communities; and
- China's agenda was unclear, with the implied accusation that this was more about enhancing its political influence, not just its physical networks.

India And Japan Join Forces To Counter China And Build Their Own New Silk Road

The AAGC would consist of four main components: development and cooperation projects, quality infrastructure and institutional connectivity, capacity and skill enhancement and people-to-people partnerships.

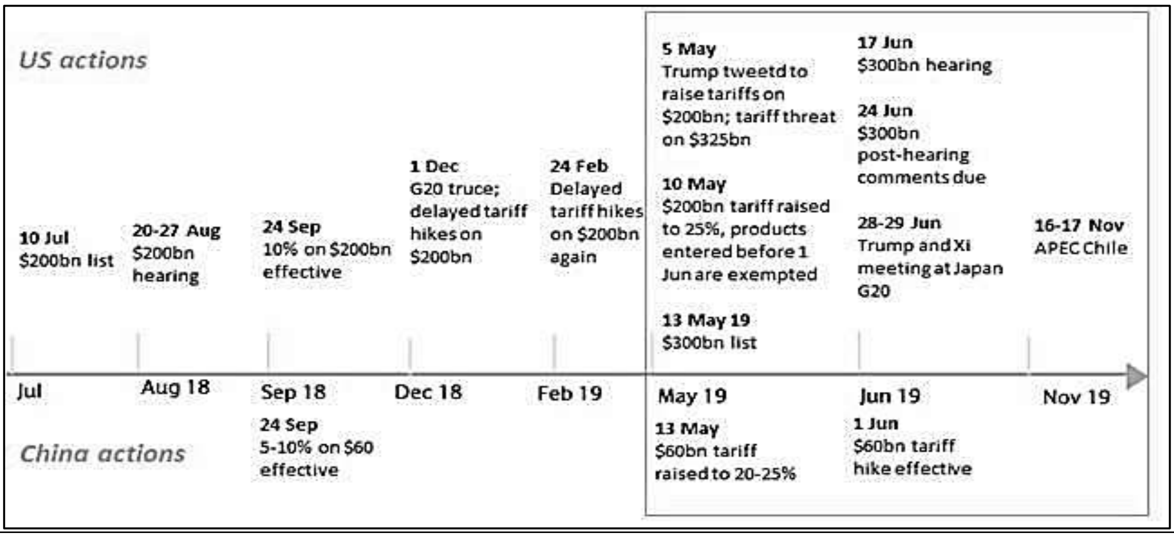
Meanwhile, the West complains that as the BRI allows for China's expansion, Beijing still does not play by 'fair' rules. Whether Obama or Trump or soon Biden, Washington attacks China's currency (considered to be artificially low so as to make exports more competitive), Intellectual Property theft, generous subsidies to parastatal corporations and protected domestic markets. In turn, this leads to the thorny question of whether a new Cold War has begun, in which Africa will be a pawn, yet again.

While the Biden Administration will reverse some of the more irrational U.S.-China trade war provisions imposed by Trump, there are others in the realm of state security and Big Tech that may continue. Some of Wall Street's largest firms capital are extremely exposed in China through direct investment, supplier relations, Research&Development contracts (which earn the corporates massive royalties), and consumer markets. And Beijing still owns more than $1.1 trillion in Treasury Bills, although that holding has not increased since 2012. In spite of these interconnections, geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea began rising in 2011 with Barack Obama's imperialist 'pivot to Asia.' This meant, wrote journalist John Pilger in late 2016, that

> almost two-thirds of US naval forces would be transferred to Asia and the Pacific by 2020. Today, more than 400 U.S. military bases encircle China with missiles, bombers, warships and, above all, nuclear weapons. From Australia north through the Pacific to Japan, Korea and across Eurasia to Afghanistan and India, the bases form, says one US strategist, 'the perfect noose'.

In addition, Eurasia is a testing ground because of increasing investments in Chinese infrastructure in the Belt and Road Initiative. These are being funded in part by the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), centering on Russian-Chinese energy cooperation, and moving quickly without Washington's membership thanks to Obama's and then Donald Trump's opposition. The situation became dangerous due to Trump's mercurial character, ruthless pragmatism, exceptionally thin skin, crude bullying behaviour and ability to polarise his own society and the world.

U.S. trade war on China, 2018-19



Even though in early 2021, Trump was replaced by a much smoother U.S. leader, Biden, further belligerence can be anticipated, including aspects of the trade war that relate to U.S. military interests, where Biden will more reliably represent the Military-Industrial Complex than did the erratic Trump. In contrast to Trump, Obama pursued a strategy of assimilating China into Western-dominated multilateralism, including much bigger roles (and higher voting shares) in the traditionally exploitative Bretton Woods Institutions. In 2014, Obama agreed with *The Economist* (2014) magazine's editor, who interviewed him about "the key issue, whether China ends up inside that [multilateral financial] system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times, I think." Obama replied, "It is. And I think it's important for the United States and Europe to continue to welcome China as a full partner in these international norms."

In contrast to this rhetoric, Obama in 2015 dogmatically (and unsuccessfully) discouraged AIIB membership by fellow Western powers and the Bretton Woods Institutions. It was his most humiliating international defeat. But when it came to intensified trade liberalisation in the WTO, recapitalisation of the IMF under neoliberal rule, and destruction of the binding emissions reductions targets on Western powers that characterised the Kyoto Protocol, Obama's strategy of bringing China and the other BRICS *inside* was much more successful. For such reasons, the role of these countries can be considered 'subimperialist,' in the original sense of the term, as defined by the Brazilian dependency theorist Ruy Mauro Marini (1972): "collaborating actively with imperialist expansion, assuming in this expansion the position of a key nation."

The day before Trump took office in early 2017, it was Xi Jinping who went to the Davos World Economic Forum to commit his rule to expanding global capitalism, in contrast to Trump's protectionism and 'America First' rhetoric. Xi's plenary talk clarified his ideology:

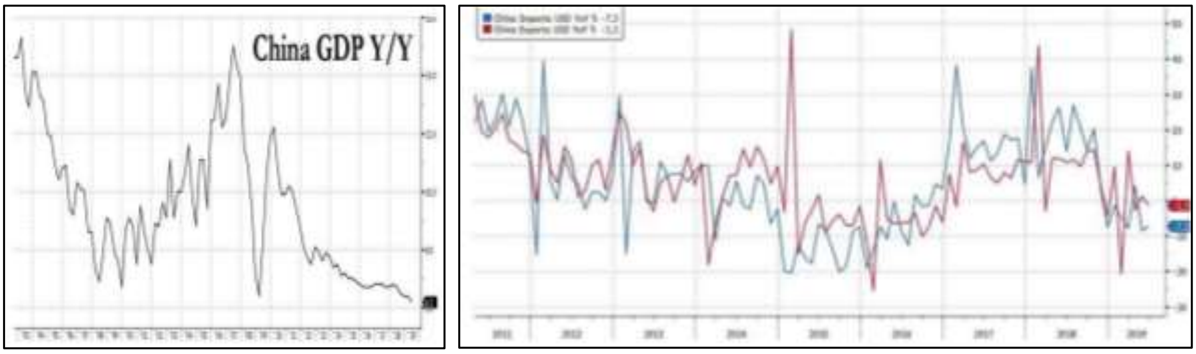
> There was a time when China also had doubts about economic globalisation, and was not sure whether it should join the WTO. But we came to the conclusion that integration into the global economy is a historical trend...

> Any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries and people between economies, and channel the waters in the ocean back into isolated lakes and creeks is simply not possible...
> We must remain committed to developing global free trade and investment, promote trade and investment liberalisation...
> We will expand market access for foreign investors, build high-standard pilot free trade zones, strengthen protection of property rights, and level the playing field... China will keep its door wide open and not close it. (Xi 2017)

Actually, not only did Xi effectively responded in kind to Trump's tariffs by imposing countervailing tariffs, he also engineered a decline in the currency to below RMB 7/$ in August 2019. And well before Trump, Xi proved his rhetoric of liberalisation was not matched by reality, for during six months starting in mid-2015, Beijing imposed stringent exchange controls, stock market circuit breakers and financial regulations to prevent two Chinese stock market collapses from spreading beyond the existing $5 trillion in losses. Moreover, within eighteen months of his Davos speech, Xi had authorized a set of trade restrictions on US products in retaliation for Trump's protectionist tariffs. Channeling toxic waters of excessively chaotic capitalist globalisation back into economic purification systems is indeed possible, and necessary.

The deglobalisation process illustrates the trend. As noted above, the trade/GDP ratio and share of output from global value chains were falling prior to Covid-10. The decline in trade intensity was led by China, where gross exports as a share of gross output in goods fell from 18 percent to 10 percent from 2007-17. So even as China continued to play the role of global leader in capital accumulation, being the largest economy in Purchasing Power Parity terms, the country's GDP was estimated to rise at only around 6 percent in 2019, the lowest rate in 25 years, and 2020 growth was far lower due to Covid-19. The results included a shrinkage of imported goods in 2019, which adversely affected African countries which had long become dependent upon Chinese purchasers of their commodities.

China's declining rate of economic growth, and 2019 shrinkage of imports



As a result, China's internal economic contradictions are becoming more acute, in part because the national debt doubled from 150 percent of GDP in 2007 to more than 300 percent by 2018. In addition, the Chinese "elite who control the state sector seek capital flight, encroach on the private sector and foreign companies, and intensify their fights with one another", explains Hung (2018, 162):

> The post-2008 boom was driven by reckless investment expansion funded by a state-bank financial stimulus. This created a gigantic debt bubble no longer matched by commensurate expansion of the foreign-exchange reserve...
> The many redundant construction projects and infrastructure resulting from the debt-fueled economic rebound are not going to be profitable, at least not any time soon. The repayment and servicing of the debt is going to be challenging, and a major ticking time bomb of debt has formed. This overaccumulation crisis in the Chinese economy is the origin of the stock market meltdown and beginning of capital flight that drove the sharp devaluation of Chinese currency in 2015–16.

From late 2015, the Chinese imposed tighter exchange controls not only to prevent financial capital flight but also to confront overaccumulation with so-called Supply-Side Structural Reforms, so as to "guide the economy to a new normal." Beijing had five strategies, namely, capacity reduction, housing inventory destocking, corporate deleveraging, reduction of corporate costs, and industrial upgrading with new infrastructure investment. The "three cuts, one reduction, and one improvement" was, according to a favourable World Bank staff review in 2018, "a departure from China's traditional demand-side stimulus policies" (Chen and Lin, 2018).

The dilemma in coming years is whether the other contradictions in the Chinese economy, especially rising debt and the on-and-off trade war with the United States (potentially spilling into other economies trying to resist devaluation), will turn a managed process into the kind of capitalist anarchy that causes overaccumulation in the first place. If so, it will be ever more important to coordinate worker and community resistance to the devaluation process with international solidarity. What are currently tit-for-tat protectionist responses (often accompanied by right-wing xenophobic politics) must be transformed into a genuine globalisation of people, with the common objective of degrowth for the sake of socio-ecological sanity.

3. Civil, political, socio-economic and environmental factors

China has had a strong state for centuries, in spite of the era from 1839 to 1949 when first the British and French and then Japanese imperial powers invaded and occupied crucial parts of the country. In the past three decades, since the Tiananmen Square repression of 1989, many more human rights concerns – and social protests – have been expressed, with growing concern that Xi's regime has taken its powers to extreme levels. Since the late 1970s, Beijing's imposition of liberalising capitalist development – without democratisation – has entailed heightened authoritarianism, unprecedented levels of surveillance, repression of minorities especially in the Western provinces, rural land grabs in the context of an apartheid-like migrant labour system, selective prosecution of corruption, and the demise of the Iron Rice Bowl state welfare system.

Before the revolution led by Mao Tse Tung in 1949, rural China was fragmented, inefficient and repressive. His centralisation of agricultural production attempted to transform the peasantry, but led to mass starvation in 1959-61. Heavy industrial investment and strict planning allowed cities to capture surpluses, while the gap in society's basic needs was met through an "iron rice bowl" welfare model that included state-company housing as well as schools and hospitals. Literacy improved from 20 to 83 percent of the population from 1952-78. The core system of labour control is ‘hukou’, whose parallels with apartheid’s migration constraints are notable. After liberalisation began, three hundred million rural workers moved to cities on a temporary registration basis. According to Kevin Lin (2015, 71),

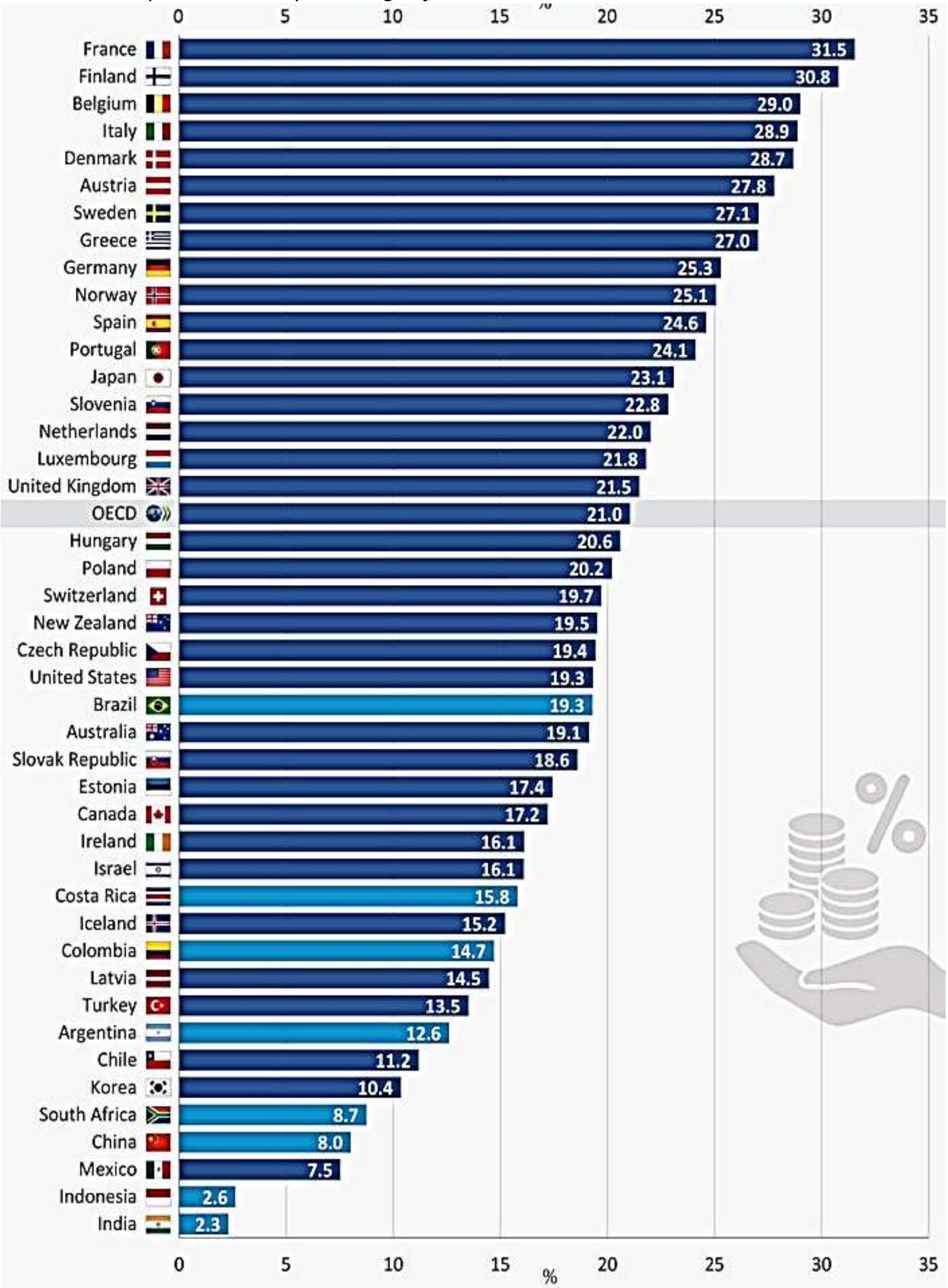
> The first generation [of migrant workers] were rural peasants who, pushed by rural poverty and pulled by the burgeoning urban economy, migrated to China’s urban centres in the 1980s. Their city wages were meagre but still higher than their rural incomes. For young women, factory work and urban life also brought a new sense of freedom. But the household registration system and their own rural roots meant that the first-generation migrant workers have been predisposed to eventually returning to their villages.
>
> It is the family farm that lends the migrant worker away from home a substitute for the benefits he or she is not getting from urban work, as well as security in the event of dis-employment or unemployment or in old age, while this same worker helps supplement the otherwise unsustainably low incomes of the auxiliary family members engaged in underemployed farming of small plots for low returns. So long as substantial surplus labour remains in the countryside, the key structural conditions for this new half-worker half-cultivator family economic unit will prevail.

During an era in which millions of former Township and Village Enterprises have closed and there is no longer an Iron Rice Bowl, the ability of Beijing to maintain super-exploitative wages for the benefit of transnational corporate investors is partly based on the gendered dimension. Julia Chuang (2016, 484) explains of rural gender relations, “In the sending community, women face a double bind: they are expected to support husbands who engage in precarious and high-risk migrations; and they are expected to negotiate with those husbands to channel a portion of remittance income to their aging parents, who lack access to welfare or social support.”

The tasks are harder given how few resources Beijing allocates from its massive surpluses to social welfare. Among the world’s 40 wealthiest economies measured by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2019), the Chinese share of social spending to GDP – like South Africa’s – is just 8 percent, far short of the OECD average of 22 percent. Only India, Indonesia and Mexico are lower in this peer group.

One result is rising social discontent. The last year that the Chinese government released statistics on protests was 2005, when there were 87,000. In recent years, according to Bin Sun (2019, 429), “More than 600 mass protests a day erupt in China, more than 200,000 a year. Of these, over 100,000 occur in rural areas, of which perhaps 65 percent are linked to residents’ loss of land… Chinese governments will repress religiously rooted resistance, tolerate economically motivated actions, and encourage nationalistically inspired demonstrations.” Sometimes the protests are a good pressure-cooker indicator, leading to adjustments in state practices, including removal of officials seen to be hostile to communities or workers. In his book *Responsive Authoritarianism in China,* Christopher Heurlin (2016, 3) shows how Beijing “proactively monitors citizen opposition to state policies and selectively responds with policy changes when it gauges opposition to be particularly widespread.”

Public social expenditure as a percentage of GDP



Source: OECD

However, the exceptional advances in Beijing's Social Credit surveillance system are now capable of not only predicting the location and timing of protests – through systematic monitoring of grievances expressed on China's Facebook equivalent, Weibo – but also punishing activists. Although the U.S. agency Freedom House is not always reliable, what it terms the China Model of Internet Control is undeniable, and entails the Great Firewall, content removal, revoking access by users, manipulation of social media and high-tech surveillance, as well as violence, arrests and repression. One example, internet journalist Lu Yuyu, was a prolific analyst of labour and social protests. He and his partner Li Dingyu were arrested in 2016 on charges of "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble." After jail beatings, Lu was sentenced in 2017 to four years in prison (Committee to Protect Journalists 2017).

Social Credit scoring was announced in 2014 as a way to "allow the trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step." By late 2018, Beijing's National Public Credit Information Centre revealed, Chinese courts banned would-be travellers from buying flights on 17.5 million occasions, and from buying train tickets 5.5 million times. The system's roll out is scheduled for 2020. This is part of a general arsenal aimed at assuring totalitarian social control. As *Wired* magazine reported in 2019,

> The Chinese government is already using new technologies to control its citizens in frightening ways. The internet is highly censored, and each person's cell phone number and online activity is assigned a unique ID number tied to their real name. Facial-recognition technology is also increasingly widespread in China, with few restraints on how it can be used to track and surveil citizens. The most troubling abuses are being carried out in the western province of Xinjiang, where human rights groups and journalists say the Chinese government is detaining and surveilling millions of people from the minority Muslim Uyghur population on a nearly unprecedented scale. (Matsakis 2019)

Occupation and resident re-education camps are common especially in Xinjiang and Tibet, where minority ethnic nations have long demanded greater rights and self-rule. In November 2019, *The New York Times* (2019) published 403 pages of proof – the 'Xinjiang Papers' – from within the Chinese state, showing how after a train station attack by Islamic extremists in 2014, Xi ramped up the repression. He called for a 'struggle against terrorism, infiltration, and separatism' using the 'organs of dictatorship,' and showing 'absolutely no mercy' against those with 'strong religious views,' a process which began in earnest in 2017. Beijing's répression of Hong Kong democracy protesters is playing out in the extraordinary activism now in process. The demonstrations are being watched closely by SADC activists since so many of the creative tactics being used to escape surveillance will be vital in a region whose authoritarian and democratic leaders have often stooped to illegal spying on the citizenry.

To illustrate, the confluence of Chinese elite interests and South African leaders was on display three times – in 2009, 2011 and 2014 – when the South African government denied or delayed a travel visa for the Dalai Lama, respectively for a peace conference, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's 80th birthday and a Nobel Peace Prize laureates' workshop. On the final occasion, Beijing's Foreign Ministry spokesman celebrated "the respect given by the South African government on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the support given to China on this issue" (Reuters 2014). In 2015, the Foreign Ministry's lead Africa official, Lin Songtian, complained that while Beijing was helping Jacob Zuma develop ten Special Economic Zones, the Dalai Lama "can't just come and spoil this for you and we want a friendly atmosphere and environment for this to happen. We invest a lot of money in South Africa and we can't allow him to come and spoil the good relations" (Mazibuko 2015).

The sovereignty of the South African state was also violated in late 2015, in the reversal of the appointment of finance minister Desmond van Rooyen, who was widely seen as a dangerously ill-equipped crony of Zuma. According to *Business Day* publisher Peter Bruce (2016): "I have reliably learnt that the Chinese were quick to make their displeasure known to Zuma. For one, their investment in Standard Bank took a big hit. Second, they've invested way too much political effort in South Africa to have an amateur mess it up. Their intervention was critical." (Bruce saw this as a highly favourable development.)

In the other case of a widely-applauded Chinese intervention in the affairs of an African state, the November 2017 coup against Robert Mugabe followed major investments and then a fall-out. China had been invited to Zimbabwe for weapons sales and stakes in tobacco, infrastructure and mining, and its retail imports continue to deindustrialize Zimbabwean manufacturing. Mugabe's successor Emmerson Mnangagwa had fought Rhodesian colonialism in the 1970s, and was one of Mugabe's leading henchmen, rising to the vice presidency in 2014. But Mugabe fired him on November 6, signaling his wife Grace's ruthless ascent. Mnangagwa's fate was the catalyst for an emergency Beijing trip by his ally, army leader Constantino Chiwenga, for consultations with the Chinese army command. Mnangagwa received military training in China during Mao's days (CNN 2017).

Beijing's *Global Times*, which is often a source of official wisdom, was increasingly wary of Mugabe. According to Wang Hongwi (2017) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,

> Mnangagwa, a reformist, will abolish Mugabe's faulty investment policy. In a country with a bankrupt economy, whoever takes office needs to launch economic reforms and open up to foreign investment… Chinese investment in Zimbabwe has also fallen victim to Mugabe's policy and some projects were forced to close down or move to other countries in recent years, bringing huge losses.

Amongst the populace, Mnangagwa remains widely mistrusted due to his responsibility for (and refusal to acknowledge) 1982-85 'Gukhurahundi' massacres of more than 20,000 people in the country's western provinces (mostly members of the minority Ndebele ethnic group, whose handful of armed dissidents he termed "cockroaches" needing a dose of military 'DDT'); his subversion of the 2008 presidential election which Mugabe initially lost; his subsequent heading of the Joint Operations Committee secretly running the country, sabotaging democratic initiatives; as well as for his close proximity – as then Defence Minister – to widespread diamond looting from 2008-16 (Bond 2017a).

Chinese military with Robert Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa, late 2000s; Sam Pa

China in Africa: how Sam Pa became the middleman

FT Magazine

By Tom Burgis with Demetri Sevastopulo in Hong Kong

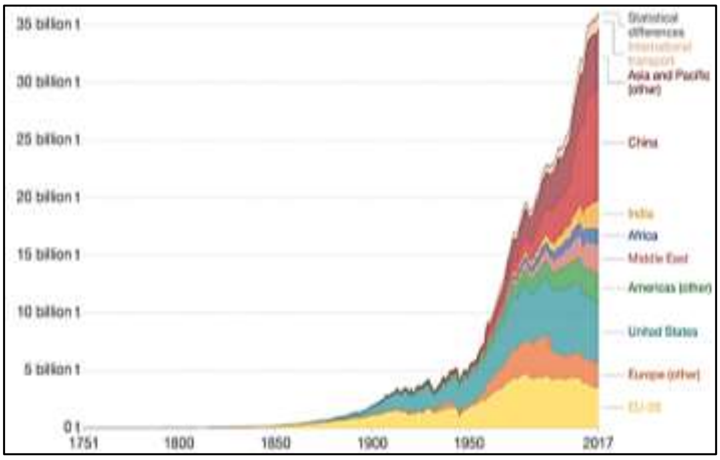
For a decade, Sam Pa has opened doors for Beijing in Africa. But his story reveals a troubling side to China's ambitions. An FT investigation by Tom Burgis

Over the past decade, Pa has risen from obscurity to clinch deals across five continents worth tens of billions of dollars. He has helped to build from scratch a sprawling network of companies linked by common owners, directors and a registered address at 88 Queensway in Hong Kong. Those who have followed the network's evolution have dubbed it the "Queensway group".

In 2016, Mugabe himself complained of revenue shortfalls from diamond mining in eastern Zimbabwe's Marange fields: "I don't think we've exceeded US$2 billion or so, and yet we think that well over US$15 billion or more has been earned in that area." In order for Mnangagwa to establish the main Marange joint venture – Sino Zimbabwe – with the notorious (and now apparently jailed) Chinese investor, Sam Pa, the army under Mnangagwa's rule forcibly occupied the Marange fields. In November 2008, troops murdered several hundred small-scale artisanal miners there (Bond 2017a).

There have been many other instances of Chinese investors propping up African dictators, but in the SADC region, the case of Sam Pa's relationship with Jose Eduardo Dos Santos stands out. According to respected commentator António Pereira, "Pa exploited this relationship to secure total control over construction projects in Angola. The construction of the new airport [Aeroporto Internacional de Angola] is a continuation of Pa's, CIF's and by extension, China's monopoly on Angola construction projects" (*Africa News* 2018). He also worked with Beijing parastatal Sinopec to acquire Angolan oil fields. Pa was arrested in China in 2015 after apparently falling foul of anti-corruption prosecutions that took down high-ranking party and state officials. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Highest CO2 emitting economies: absolute amounts and per capita amounts (tons/year)



Highest Annual Per Capita Emitters

tonnes CO2 (2014), countries with 10 million+ population:

Saudi Arabia 19.5	South Africa 9.0
United States 16.5	Germany 8.9
Australia 15.4	Belgium 8.3
Canada 15.1	Iran 8.3
Kazakhstan 14.4	Malaysia 8.0
Russia 11.9	China 7.5
South Korea 11.6	Poland 7.5
Netherlands 9.9	United Kingdom 6.5
Japan 9.5	Greece 6.2
Czech Republic 9.2	Venezuela 6.0

These are examples of local socio-economic, civil and political, and environmental violations. The most dangerous, however, are in the ways China, South Africa and other high-emitting countries continue to create climate-crisis conditions in the SADC region. Weak regulation of HCFCs, toxins and plastic products are becoming a major problem, although China's lead in solar and wind energy generation and decision to ban waste imports are positive signs.

The combination of socio-economic and environmental damage is also evident in mega-projects, which we take up next in a brief review of the five main cases of Chinese investments and loans in South Africa.

4. China's controversial role in South African mega-projects

The five largest projects involving South Africa are illustrative of the problems described above, especially those that conjoin political corruption, maldistributed economic benefits, social dislocation and ecological damage. The two biggest current projects in South Africa entail export of coal on a new rail line, and expansion of Durban's port – the 'Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission Strategic Integrated Projects' 1 and 2. Campaigns for reparations have been launched against the Chinese vendors. They began to succeed in early 2018, due to blatant corruption in the state transport agency's purchase of several hundred locomotives designated to export 18 billion tons of coal in the $50 billion bulk rail upgrade project. The Chinese connection also entailed a commitment by the China Development Bank in 2013 to provide $5 billion in credit to Transnet for its capital investments, a sum that would in part pay for China South Rail's provision of locomotives. The purchase price also included $2.9 billion in 'irregular expenditures' apparently known to the firm's CEO Zhou Qinghe ; these were corruption payments to the Gupta brothers via a Transnet official. Those brothers had notoriously 'state captured' the South African president at the time, Zuma, through his son whom they had employed. As a result of the public outcry, Zuma was pushed out of power in early 2018, nearly a year and a half before his term ended (Bond 2020).

The second biggest mega-project in South Africa is expansion of what is already the largest sub-Saharan African container terminal, costing $15 billion. In the first stage, a much smaller case of Gupta bribery occurred, again via Transnet, during the purchase of seven tandem-lift ship-to-shore cranes used mainly to import goods from East Asia. These were provided by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries (in partnership with Liebherr-International of Switzerland) and entailed an $8 million payoff to the Guptas as part of what were termed the 'world's most expensive cranes' due to the markup and supplier profiteering (Amabhungane 2017). The most important point about the Durban port expansion, however, is that it is firmly opposed – and regularly protested – by the main social movement in the area, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance due to the large-scale pollution and displacement (Bond 2017b).

Third, another major port city further down the Indian Ocean coast is the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality (formerly Port Elizabeth). It includes a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with substantial tax benefits at the area known as Coega, and contains the largest single Chinese manufacturing investment in South Africa. The Beijing Automobile Industrial Corporation (BAIC) plant is co-financed by the South African state's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). In mid-2018, the first semi-knock down Sport Utility Vehicle came off the assembly line, just a day before the BRICS Summit was to start in Sandton. The manufacturing plant cost nearly $1 billion (then R11 billion), and was the single largest Foreign Direct Investment in any of the main South African SEZs. In June 2018, Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian stated, "I've been to many developing countries and industrial development zones and the Coega SEZ is by far the best of them all" (Toussaint et al 2019).

However, in the subsequent year, the BAIC/IDC joint venture encountered many difficulties. The University of the Western Cape (Toussaint et al 2019) report on SEZs documented these:

> Crises included inadequate Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise involvement, budget shortfalls for the start-up phase, differential labour laws, and delays in production, which played havoc with the image projected of a functional SOE partnership. As one report in the (partially Chinese-owned) *Independent* newspaper chain confessed in 2019, "Serious doubts have been expressed in motor industry circles about the claims that the vehicle was manufactured in South Africa... Last September, the local media reported that the construction had been moving at a snail's pace and all SMMEs had vacated the premises due to non-payment."

Again, according to University of Western Cape analysts, one manifestation was local dissent:

> Local journalist Max Matavire reported on extensive labour and small business protests against BAIC during construction, and titled a November 2019 article, "Overambitious production targets delay R11bn BAIC project," since BAIC "has missed its deadline by two years because it failed to meet its own overambitious and unrealistic production targets set at the launch… Currently, they are producing 50 000 vehicles per year from the semi-knocked-down kits. This will increase to 100 000 a year when fully operational"… Inadequate pay at the factory was the source of further grievances, according to media reports. Workers demanded twice the R24/hour that they were earning in 2018, and were on strike for several weeks, for the second time. (Toussaint et al, 2019)

Finally, at what is potentially the biggest SEZ in South Africa – at the far northern tip of the country – there is a $10 billion China-funded metals-manufacturing facility planned in a corridor termed Musina-Mukhado. One smaller part of the SEZ is just 50 km from the Zimbabwean border post of Beit Bridge. But it is the rural Makhado section that Chinese entrepreneur Ning Yat Hoi and his Shenzhen Hoi Mor Resources Holding Company chose for an 8000 hectare project, bordering the main highway heading north. That part of the Musina-Makhado SEZ (MMSEZ) is the energy-metallurgical complex (hence sometimes termed EMSEZ).

President Cyril Ramaphosa had co-chaired the Forum on China-Africa China Cooperation in September 2018, and in addition to promoting the MMSEZ, he announced a further $1.1 billion (R16.5 billion) loan from the Bank of China for SEZs and industrial parks in South

Africa (Mokone 2018). If approved, the MMSEZ will contain a coal washing plant (with the capacity to process 12 million tonnes per year); a coking plant (3 million tonnes); an iron plant (3 million tonnes); a stainless steel plant (3 million tonnes); a ferro manganese powder plant (1 million tonnes); a ferrochrome plant (3 million tonnes); a limestone plant (3 million tonnes); and most controversially, a 3300 MW coal-fired power plant.

The latter is not incorporated in South Africa's official National Determined Contributions to cutting emissions, nor in the Energy Department's Integrated Resource Plan for added capacity. Water to cool the plant is not immediately available, and will require an international transfer from deep aquifiers in water-starved western Zimbabwe and Botswana. Even the company hired by the MMSEZ to conduct environmental analysis, Delta BEC (2020), admitted that in terms of greenhouse gases, "emission over the lifetime of the project will consume as much as 10% of the country's carbon budget. The impact on the emission inventory of the country is therefore HIGH. The project cannot be implemented in the current regulatory confines." Delta BEC suggested the environmental contradiction could be overcome with a carbon-capture-storage strategy for the vast CO2 emissions, although no such proven technology exists.

南非能源冶金经济特区
South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone

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Build the World' s Most Competitive Energy Metallurgical Base

——Interview with Mr.Ning Yat Hoi, Chairman of South African Energy Metallurgical Base(Pty)Ltd

□By Lei Mao Sheng/ China Reform Daily 2019-05-15 18:52:06 Source:: 《China Reform Daily》

Many people's first impression of the Republic of South Africa is undoubtedly glittering and dazzling diamonds. In fact, as the second largest economy in Africa and one of the five largest mineral resource countries in the world, the "Rainbow Country" has mineral resources that are not limited to diamonds. It has been proved that there are more than 70 kinds of minerals with reserves and mined in South Africa. The reserves of platinum group metals(PGM), fluorite and chromium rank first in the world; gold, vanadium, manganese and zirconium rank second; titanium rank fourth, phosphate, uranium, lead and antimony rank fifth, coal and zinc rank eighth and copper rank ninth.

South Africa's rich mining resources have long attracted the attention of many Chinese businessmen, including Hong Kong based businessman Ning Yat Hoi. As one of the earliest Chinese businessmenin Africa's "gold rush", he has been involved in the mineral resources industry such as African non-ferrous metals since 2005, with operations in Congo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and other countries. In 2014, he officially signed a contract with the provincial government of Limpopo, South Africa, to start investing and engage the South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone projects.

Recently, the reporter interviewed Mr.Ning Yat Hoi, Chairman of South African Energy Metallurgical Base(Pty)Ltd. on the progress of the construction of the South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone, the results of investment promotion and the opportunity of the "Belt and Road".

Moreover, corruption is another concern in a part of South Africa, Limpopo Province, that has notorious legacies of state capture. Ning had spent much of 2017-18 defending himself in court and was even on the Interpol 'Red List' for some time. The reason was that in 2015-17 he served as board chair of a mining company in Zimbabwe, ASA Resource Group. But he was fired by the other directors and charged with $5 million in alleged graft. At a November 2018 London High Court hearing on the case, the judge ruled that there were credible allegations against Ning for "stealing money, a corrupt relationship between Mr Ning and the Chinese suppliers and an alleged tortious conspiracy between the Chinese directors. The pleadings are extensive." Investigative journalists at Amabhungane (South Africa's leading reporters) identified many suspicious relations between Ning and South African officials, including dereliction of duty by the South African Ministers of Trade and Industry responsible for giving Ning permission to operate that part of the MMSEZ, Rob Davies and Ebrahim Patel (Amabhungane 2020).

Still, the project would continue because, according to one reporter,

> the concept of the MMSEZ was premised on extensive cross-border research to determine what commodities were crossing the Beit Bridge border with the top ten identified as being potential low-hanging fruit. The idea was that that instead of machinery and equipment being built in, say, Durban and shipped to a SADC country, it could far more advantageously be done in the MMSEZ (Ryan 2019).

In other words, the net benefit for South Africa was dubious, if the MMSEZ's opening of new capacity in one part of the country simply shut down that capacity in another part, one where the tax rate was about twice as high. Indeed, the standard corporate tax rate for South African businesses was, in 1992 at the close of apartheid, 52%. It was reduced to 28% over the subsequent three decades, but still this was not sufficient to entice new investment by either local or foreign capital. The SEZ strategy is to lower the rate still further, to just 15%.

In spite of the dilemmas associated with access to capital and to water, climate, and corruption, even the 2019 UN Conference on Trade and Development special SEZ report unequivocally promoted the MMSEZ:

> In Africa, intercontinental trade and economic cooperation through border SEZs is also high on the agenda. The MMSEZ of South Africa is strategically located along a principal north-south route into the Southern African Development Community and close to the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. It has been developed as part of greater regional plans to unlock investment and economic growth, and to encourage the development of skills and employment in the region (UNCTAD 2019: 160).

5. Conclusion: Potentials for reviving positive Chinese-SADC relations

The adverse conditions unfolding in the South African cases and across the region are indisputable, and will continue to be contested. Yet many Southern Africans know a different face of China, not only that of the super-exploitative state and private firms now active in the region. Many ask whether Chinese workers, peasants and progressives could one day, just as they did in 1949, wrest their society away from a self-destructive ruling class now controlling the economy and state? To be sure, China's role in Africa has often been honorable, and there are many reasons to admire and offer return solidarity to those forces which have consistently sought liberatory allies in Africa. Chinese socio-ecological-economic advances celebrated by progressives everywhere include:

- China’s 1949 peasant-worker revolution and decolonisation – and later in the 1960s-70s, its crucial support for African anti-colonial struggles (especially Zimbabwe’s) and regional development aid (especially the Tanzania-Zambia railway);
- China’s capacity for rapid pollution abatement and renewable energy dissemination (based partly on disregard for the West’s Intellectual Property);
- China’s strength in maintaining international financial sovereignty through exchange controls and financial regulations (especially those imposed in 2015-16 to halt spreading stock market crashes into other markets);
- China’s 2009-14 expansion of mass housing, services, recreational and transport innovations (especially the “Chongqing Model” of municipal development promoted by China’s neo-Maoist ‘New Left’);
- China’s ongoing worker and peasant protests which are reputed to number more than 100 000 annually, in spite of often severe punishment;
- Chinese internet users’ ability to avoid Beijing’s repressive surveillance systems (including ongoing democratic organising in Hong Kong).

There are also Zhou Enlai’s ‘Eight Principles’ for Chinese interrelations with Africa dating back more than 55 years. As the first Premier of China, Zhou listed principles for foreign aid during a trip to Africa in late 1963 and early 1964:

- mutual benefit
- no conditions attached
- the no-interest or low-interest loans would not create a debt burden for the recipient country
- to help the recipient nation develop its economy
- not to create its dependence on China
- to help the recipient country with projects that need less capital and quick returns
- the aid in kind must be of high quality at the world market price to ensure that the technology can be learned and mastered by the locals
- the Chinese experts and technicians working for the aid recipient country are treated equally with local ones, with no extra benefits to them (Shixue 2011).

While many Chinese innovations and aspirations are admired by SADC progressives, the pages above considered aspects of the socio-economic and environmental advances that relations with China portend are, in reality, witnessed in Chinese parastatal and corporate investments, financing and trade, as well as in China’s role in multilateralism and its geopolitical power in Africa. The answer, thus far, is pessimistic about the relationship binding Chinese and SADC elites. Yet there are grounds for optimism regarding social resistances that in future may reconnect Southern African progressives with their Chinese counterparts.

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Costs and benefits of China's role in Southern Africa

in D.Degterev (Ed), *Africa and the Formation of the New System of International Relations: Rethinking Decolonization and Foreign Policy Concepts.* London: Springer Nature, 2021

Summary

The Southern African Development Community countries are grappling with the complex problem of Chinese state and corporate involvement in divergent societies, politics, economies and ecologies. There is enormous concern rising now about these relationships, in part because of the continuation of the new Cold War between Beijing and Washington, leaving Southern Africa torn, divided and subject to new forms of exploitation. After centuries of slavery, colonialism and imperialism, a degree of political 'independence' was won between the 1960s-90s, with a terrible loss of life due to white supremicism. But since then, the region has still suffered: from neo-colonialism, inter-imperial rivalries, sub-imperialism, neoliberalism, sustained patriarchy, resource-looting and now also the global climate meltdown and differential access to Covid-19 treatment and vaccines. China's role is often an amplifier of these forms of oppression, but not always. It is vital to distinguish between functions that may assist the region in autonomous, sovereign self-development, on the one hand, and those that have negative implications for the region's relationship to the world economy on the other. Social activists often provide guidelines to help make these distinctions.

1. Introduction: Trends in Chinese-Southern African relations during economic crisis

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region consists of 14 countries: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In dealing with the main countries and issues areas, what is the role of China, given not only massive recent investments, loans and trade relationships with SADC countries, but also its new Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? After all, BRI's reach is exceptionally ambitious, reaching even as far off the beaten track as Southern Africa. Still, several SADC countries have *not* yet joined BRI: Mauritius, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana, Malawi and the DRC. And Eswatini's long-standing Taiwan relations remain a source of growing tension with Beijing.

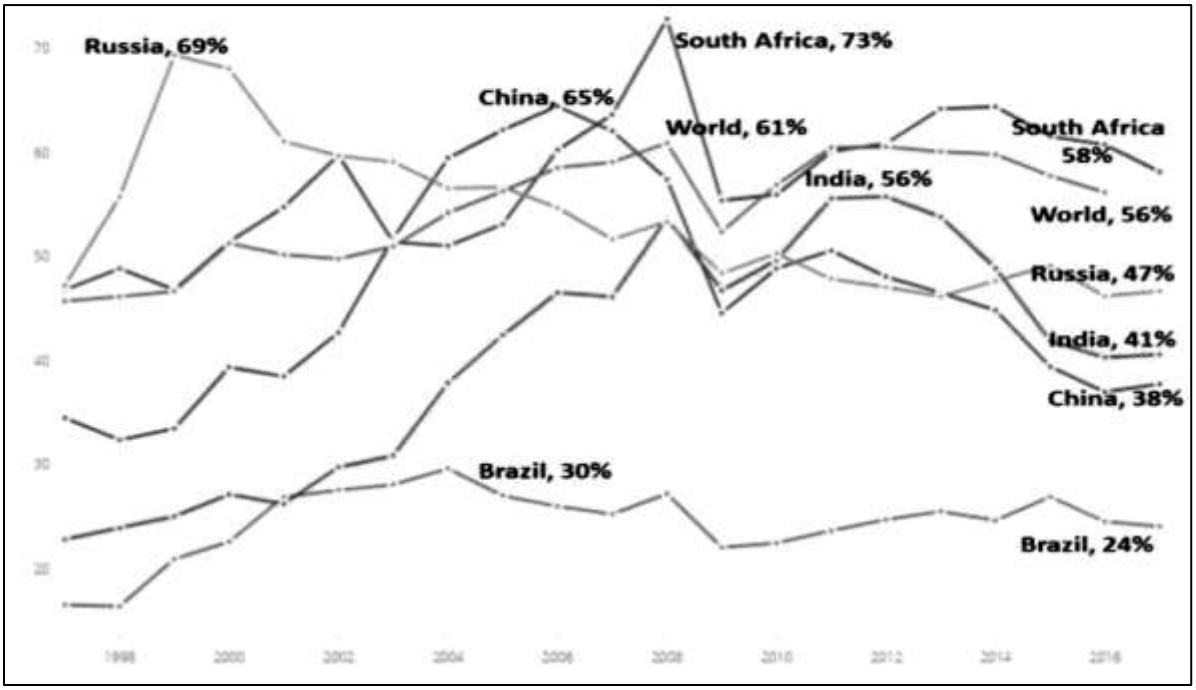
The main Chinese investments and loans in South Africa require unpacking because they are both within the BRI, conceptually, but due to systemic corruption and ecological destruction, social resistance has arisen to the main projects: port expansion in Durban (already Sub-Saharan Africa's largest), rail expansion to export coal from Limpopo province, an auto factory in Nelson Mandela Bay, the largest coal-fired power plant under construction in the world (Kusile), and the largest Special Economic Zone in South Africa (Musina-Makhado).

These projects – begun during the 2010s with most continuing into the 2020s – can be understood as a function of a plenary talk at the World Economic Forum in early 2017, just before Donald Trump took power, in which Xi Jinping clarified his ideology: "We must remain committed to developing global free trade and investment, promote trade and investment liberalisation" (Xi, 2017). In a 2015 talk, Xi insisted on the merits of trade among his key partners, the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa BRICS bloc. These economies must "boost the centripetal (unifying) force of BRICS nations through cooperation in innovation and production capacity to boost competitiveness" (Xi 2015). However, as argued below, the '*centripetal*' economic strategy referred to within the BRICS – i.e., that as the world turns, it becomes more tightly integrated – was, in reality, increasingly *centrifugal,* given tendencies to *deglobalisation* underway already by 2007, the peak of internationally-integrated trade, finance and investment.

Indeed, the trade that now occurs is increasingly *disconnected* from what are known as value chains: i.e., globally-integrated production systems. McKinsey Global Institute's 2019 'global flows' analysis confirms that "…a smaller share of the goods rolling off the world's assembly lines is now traded across borders. Between 2007 and 2017, exports declined from 28.1 to 22.5 percent of gross output in goods-producing value chains" (McKinsey 2019). The decline in trade intensity is led by China, where gross exports as a share of gross output in goods fell from 18 percent to 10 percent from 2007-17.

The centrifugal process entails outward stresses on a system as it turns, pushing an object away from the centre, potentially leading to its disintegration. Ironically, even before Covid-19 wrecked the global economy, the recent decline in world trade/GDP ratios was led by the BRICS group; i.e., the economies that once were considered by Goldman Sachs manager Jim O'Neil (2001) to be what he called the 'building BRICS' of 21st-century capitalism. Not only was South Africa hit hard – as trade fell from 73 percent of GDP in 2007 to 58 percent in 2017, compared to a world trade/GDP decline over that period from 61 percent of GDP to 56 percent. All the BRICS witnessed reduced trade in much greater degrees than the global norm, and three spent parts of 2015–19 in recession: Brazil, Russia and South Africa. In 2020, only one (China) recorded positive GDP growth.

Pre-Covid-19 Deglobalisation: the rise and fall of BRICS and world trade, 1997-2017 (high point ratio and 2017 ratio, as percent of GDP)

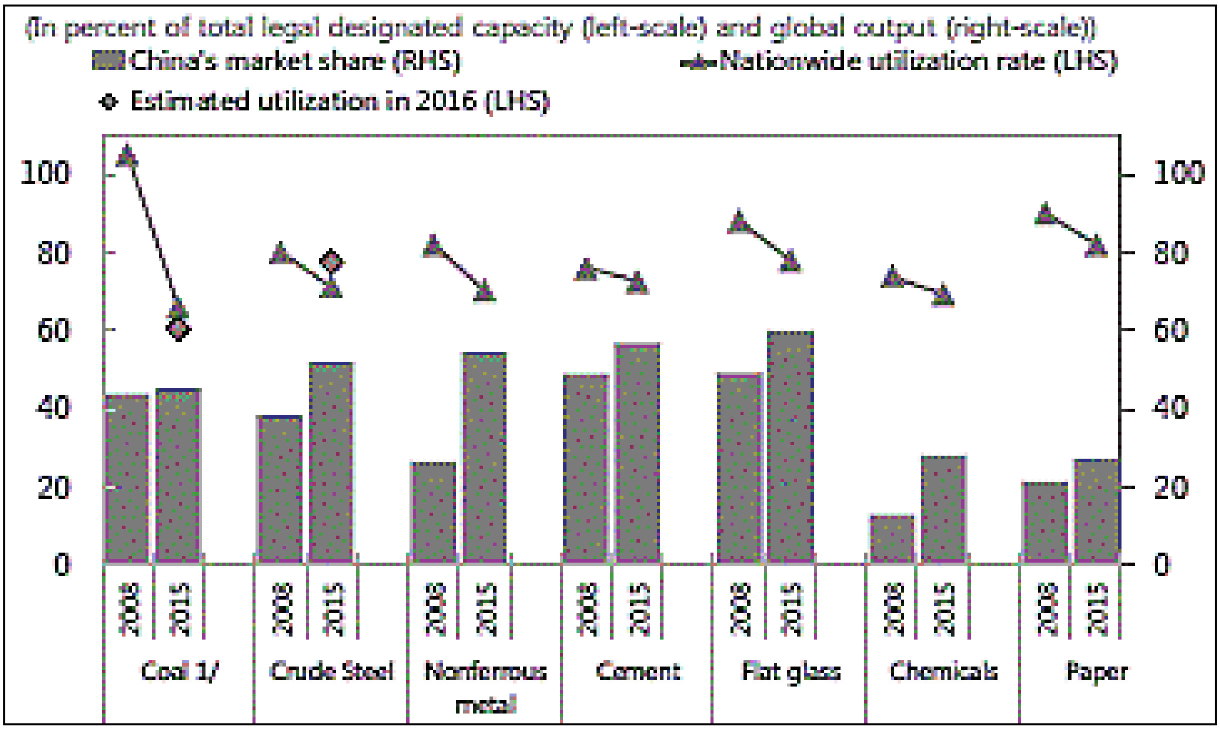


Source: World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?end=2018

One reason is a classical symptom of economic crisis that since the early 2010s, has emanated mainly from Chinese companies: what can be termed the overaccumulation of capital, reflecting systemic overcapacity. China has over-invested in its plant, equipment and machinery, so much, that the ability to continue to generate growth is limited. This overaccumulation of capital is recognised by left-wing and right-wing economists alike. For leftists, overaccumulation has various symptoms. Given the intercapitalist competition within and between industries which leads to ever rising capital intensity and hence overproduction, there is a tendency for gluts to develop: high inventory levels, unused plant and equipment, excess capacity in commodity markets, idle labour and bubbling financial capital. Because profits are higher in the banking sector and stock markets, corporations that had been accumulating within the productive economy find it more lucrative to shift from reinvestment in fixed capital, into purchasing 'fictitious capital' (financial, paper assets) (Bond 2019).

Among orthodox economists, staff at the International Monetary Fund (IMF 2017) studied Chinese capital overaccumulation and found that in major sectors – coal, steel, nonferrous metals, cement, chemicals and others where Chinese demand is between 30-60 percent of the world market – there exists at least one third overcapacity in production. And due to overindebtedness, a financial crisis can break out at any time, causing domestic and global growth to fall and worsening the living conditions of hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Chinese overaccumulation: capacity underutilisation in sectors with high global share



Source: IMF 2017 Article IV Consulation

This problem is not unusual, because according to sociologist Ho-fung Hung (2015), "Capital accumulation in China follows the same logic and suffers from the same contradictions of capitalist development in other parts of the world . . . [including] a typical overaccumulation crisis, epitomised by the ghost towns and shuttered factories across the country". Well before Covid-19 amplified economic stress, these conditions were becoming acute.

According to political economist Xia Zhang (2017, 321-22), they reflect Chinese capitalism's "restructuring as the result of overaccumulation. Often jointly with various representatives of Chinese capital, the Chinese state is compelled to reconfigure Chinese capitalism on a much larger spatial dimension so as to sustain the capital accumulation and expansion."

Progressive activists understand this too; as articulated by the 2017 Hong Kong People's Forum on BRICS and the BRI,

> Instead of offering an alternative, the BRICS actually offer a continuation of neoliberalism. On top of BRICS there is also China's new mega project, the BRI whose main purpose is to export China's surplus capital, and in this process seek the cooperation and 'mutual benefit' of big foreign TNCs and regimes which are often authoritarian. The price of these investments is often borne by the working people and the ecological balance. (Borderless Hong Kong 2017)

2. From overaccumulation to a "New Scramble" and resurgent geopolitical tensions

The economic crisis conditions are also playing out in a manner they have in past confrontations, in the late-19th century era of imperialism that led to World War I. Geopolitical influences are today being acutely felt, in the tug of war between West and East. There is enormous concern about whether Sino-African relationships will become the source of Western-African conficts, in part because of the post-Trump continuation of the new Cold War between Beijing and Washington, leaving SADC countries torn, divided and subject to new forms of exploitation. Under Trump, there was practically no effort to woo African countries – which he infamously termed s*&!-holes – to the U.S. side, but this will change under the Biden Administration.

The original 'Scramble for Africa' – when the continent's borders were carved – occurred in 1884-85 in a Berlin conference room, and divided peoples as a result of the whims of representatives from Britain, Portugal, France, Belgium and the host Germany. In the SADC region, each colonial power land-grabbed and to differing extents, each established settler-colonial white power over the inhabitants and nature. This Scramble represented not just colonial powers taking territories, but *capitalism* expanding voraciously during its own economic crisis.

According to Rosa Luxemburg, the German Communist leader who read about Namibia, the DRC and South Africa and then wrote *The Accumulation of Capital* in 1913,

> Capitalism must therefore always and everywhere fight a battle of annihilation against every historical form of natural economy that it encounters… The most important of these productive forces is of course the land, its hidden mineral treasure, and its meadows, woods and water, and further the flocks of the primitive shepherd tribes. Since the primitive associations of the natives are the strongest protection for their social organisations and for their material bases of existence, capital must begin by planning for the systematic destruction and annihilation of all the non-capitalist social units which obstruct its development.

Old and new Scrambles for Africa: seen from Berlin, 1885 and Johannesburg, 2013

Is there a new Scramble for Africa now underway, as some describe the way not only the Western colonial powers, but also South Africa and China, behave in the region? As far as the BRI is concerned, it is undeniable that two serious problems with China's strategy are emerging. First, tension with India is acute, due to BRI's Kashmir link via Pakistan, close to the area where Delhi is repressing a political uprising and where Sino-Indian conflict in mid-2020 led to dozens of troops' deaths. The second, discussed below, is rising resistance to social, environmental, political and economic injustice, which though mainly directed against tyrannical governments (some supported by the West, some by China), also have roots in structural features of the China-Africa relationship, especially resource extraction.

Membership in the BRI is now taken for granted for those in proximity, with the exception of India, where the link from Pakistan's Gwadar port to the western edge of China could make import of Middle East petroleum and other vital supplies much easier, and far less risky than the ocean route (what with its bottlenecks and geopolitical tensions). But India's own agenda creates a competitive conflict that has not yet been resolved, in part because India began its own counter-BRI strategy, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, in alliance with Japan in 2017.

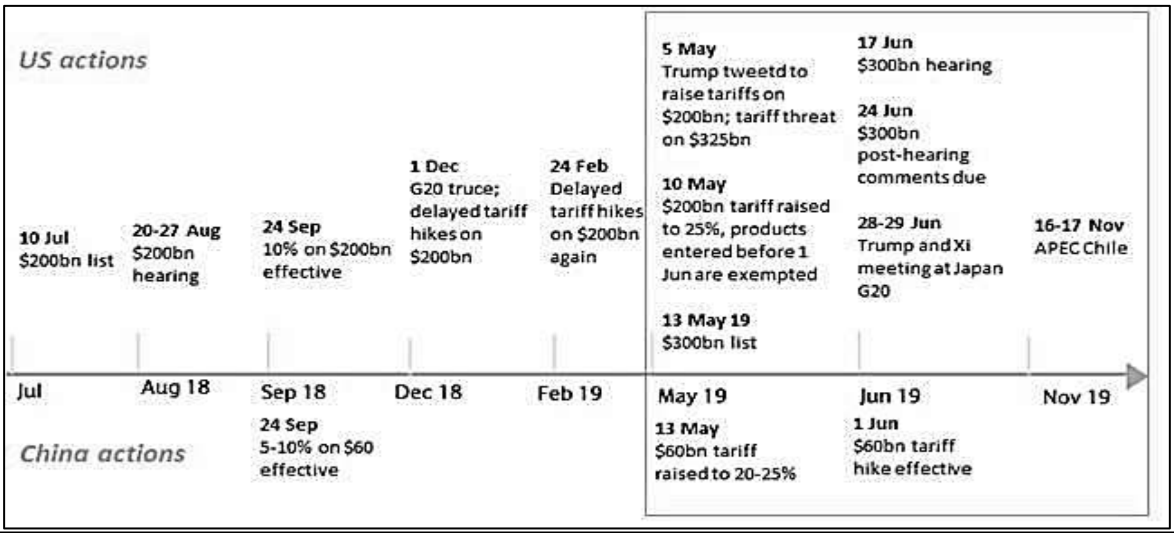
Meanwhile, the West complains that as the BRI allows for China's expansion, Beijing still does not play by 'fair' rules. Whether Obama or Trump or soon Biden, Washington attacks China's currency (considered to be artificially low so as to make exports more competitive), Intellectual Property theft, generous subsidies to parastatal corporations and protected domestic markets. In turn, this leads to the thorny question of whether a new Cold War has begun, in which Africa will be a pawn, yet again.

While the Biden Administration will reverse some of the more irrational U.S.-China trade war provisions imposed by Trump, there are others in the realm of state security and Big Tech that may continue. Some of Wall Street's largest firms capital are extremely exposed in China through direct investment, supplier relations, Research&Development contracts (which earn the corporates massive royalties), and consumer markets. And Beijing still owns more than $1.1 trillion in Treasury Bills, although that holding has not increased since 2012. In spite of these interconnections, geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea began rising in 2011 with Barack Obama's imperialist 'pivot to Asia.' This meant, wrote journalist John Pilger in late 2016, that

> almost two-thirds of US naval forces would be transferred to Asia and the Pacific by 2020. Today, more than 400 U.S. military bases encircle China with missiles, bombers, warships and, above all, nuclear weapons. From Australia north through the Pacific to Japan, Korea and across Eurasia to Afghanistan and India, the bases form, says one US strategist, 'the perfect noose'.

In addition, Eurasia is a testing ground because of increasing investments in Chinese infrastructure in the Belt and Road Initiative. These are being funded in part by the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), centering on Russian-Chinese energy cooperation, and moving quickly without Washington's membership thanks to Obama's and then Donald Trump's opposition. The situation became dangerous due to Trump's mercurial character, ruthless pragmatism, exceptionally thin skin, crude bullying behaviour and ability to polarise his own society and the world.

U.S. trade war on China, 2018-19



Even though in early 2021, Trump was replaced by a much smoother U.S. leader, Biden, further belligerence can be anticipated, including aspects of the trade war that relate to U.S. military interests, where Biden will more reliably represent the Military-Industrial Complex than did the erratic Trump. In contrast to Trump, Obama pursued a strategy of assimilating

China into Western-dominated multilateralism, including much bigger roles (and higher voting shares) in the traditionally exploitative Bretton Woods Institutions. In 2014, Obama agreed with *The Economist* (2014) magazine's editor, who interviewed him about "the key issue, whether China ends up inside that [multilateral financial] system or challenging it. That's the really big issue of our times, I think." Obama replied, "It is. And I think it's important for the United States and Europe to continue to welcome China as a full partner in these international norms."

In contrast to this rhetoric, Obama in 2015 dogmatically (and unsuccessfully) discouraged AIIB membership by fellow Western powers and the Bretton Woods Institutions. It was his most humiliating international defeat. But when it came to intensified trade liberalisation in the WTO, recapitalisation of the IMF under neoliberal rule, and destruction of the binding emissions reductions targets on Western powers that characterised the Kyoto Protocol, Obama's strategy of bringing China and the other BRICS *inside* was much more successful. For such reasons, the role of these countries can be considered 'subimperialist,' in the original sense of the term, as defined by the Brazilian dependency theorist Ruy Mauro Marini (1972): "collaborating actively with imperialist expansion, assuming in this expansion the position of a key nation."

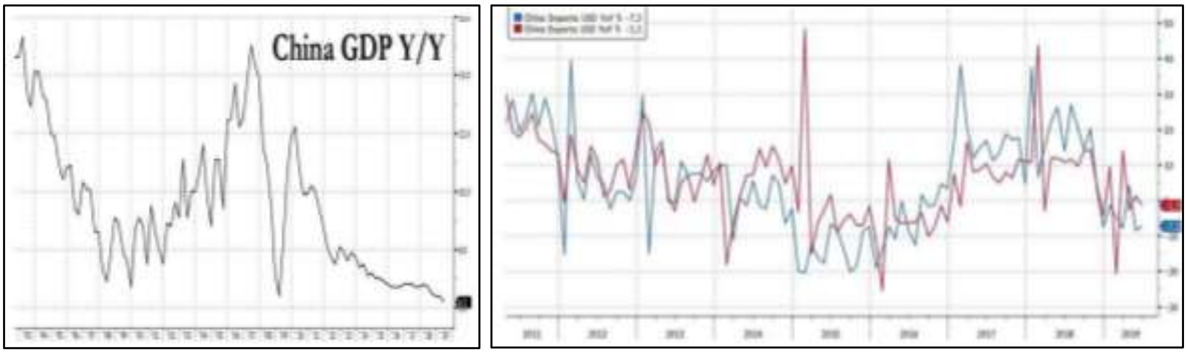
The day before Trump took office in early 2017, it was Xi Jinping who went to the Davos World Economic Forum to commit his rule to expanding global capitalism, in contrast to Trump's protectionism and 'America First' rhetoric. Xi's plenary talk clarified his ideology:

> There was a time when China also had doubts about economic globalisation, and was not sure whether it should join the WTO. But we came to the conclusion that integration into the global economy is a historical trend...
> Any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries and people between economies, and channel the waters in the ocean back into isolated lakes and creeks is simply not possible...
> We must remain committed to developing global free trade and investment, promote trade and investment liberalisation...
> We will expand market access for foreign investors, build high-standard pilot free trade zones, strengthen protection of property rights, and level the playing field... China will keep its door wide open and not close it. (Xi 2017)

Actually, not only did Xi effectively responded in kind to Trump's tariffs by imposing countervailing tariffs, he also engineered a decline in the currency to below RMB 7/$ in August 2019. And well before Trump, Xi proved his rhetoric of liberalisation was not matched by reality, for during six months starting in mid-2015, Beijing imposed stringent exchange controls, stock market circuit breakers and financial regulations to prevent two Chinese stock market collapses from spreading beyond the existing $5 trillion in losses. Moreover, within eighteen months of his Davos speech, Xi had authorized a set of trade restrictions on US products in retaliation for Trump's protectionist tariffs. Channeling toxic waters of excessively chaotic capitalist globalisation back into economic purification systems is indeed possible, and necessary.

The deglobalisation process illustrates the trend. As noted above, the trade/GDP ratio and share of output from global value chains were falling prior to Covid-10. The decline in trade intensity was led by China, where gross exports as a share of gross output in goods fell from 18 percent to 10 percent from 2007-17. So even as China continued to play the role of global leader in capital accumulation, being the largest economy in Purchasing Power Parity terms, the country's GDP was estimated to rise at only around 6 percent in 2019, the lowest rate in 25 years, and 2020 growth was far lower due to Covid-19. The results included a shrinkage of imported goods in 2019, which adversely affected African countries which had long become dependent upon Chinese purchasers of their commodities.

China's declining rate of economic growth, and 2019 shrinkage of imports



As a result, China's internal economic contradictions are becoming more acute, in part because the national debt doubled from 150 percent of GDP in 2007 to more than 300 percent by 2018. In addition, the Chinese “elite who control the state sector seek capital flight, encroach on the private sector and foreign companies, and intensify their fights with one another”, explains Hung (2018, 162):

> The post-2008 boom was driven by reckless investment expansion funded by a state-bank financial stimulus. This created a gigantic debt bubble no longer matched by commensurate expansion of the foreign-exchange reserve...
>
> The many redundant construction projects and infrastructure resulting from the debt-fueled economic rebound are not going to be profitable, at least not any time soon. The repayment and servicing of the debt is going to be challenging, and a major ticking time bomb of debt has formed. This overaccumulation crisis in the Chinese economy is the origin of the stock market meltdown and beginning of capital flight that drove the sharp devaluation of Chinese currency in 2015–16.

From late 2015, the Chinese imposed tighter exchange controls not only to prevent financial capital flight but also to confront overaccumulation with so-called Supply-Side Structural Reforms, so as to “guide the economy to a new normal.” Beijing had five strategies, namely, capacity reduction, housing inventory destocking, corporate deleveraging, reduction of corporate costs, and industrial upgrading with new infrastructure investment. The “three cuts, one reduction, and one improvement” was, according to a favourable World Bank staff review in 2018, “a departure from China’s traditional demand-side stimulus policies” (Chen and Lin, 2018).

The dilemma in coming years is whether the other contradictions in the Chinese economy, especially rising debt and the on-and-off trade war with the United States (potentially spilling into other economies trying to resist devaluation), will turn a managed process into the kind of capitalist anarchy that causes overaccumulation in the first place. If so, it will be ever more important to coordinate worker and community resistance to the devaluation process with international solidarity. What are currently tit-for-tat protectionist responses (often accompanied by right-wing xenophobic politics) must be transformed into a genuine globalisation of people, with the common objective of degrowth for the sake of socio-ecological sanity.

3. Civil, political, socio-economic and environmental factors

China has had a strong state for centuries, in spite of the era from 1839 to 1949 when first the British and French and then Japanese imperial powers invaded and occupied crucial parts of the country. In the past three decades, since the Tiananmen Square repression of 1989, many more human rights concerns – and social protests – have been expressed, with growing concern that Xi’s regime has taken its powers to extreme levels. Since the late 1970s, Beijing’s imposition of liberalising capitalist development – without democratisation – has entailed heightened authoritarianism, unprecedented levels of surveillance, repression of minorities especially in the Western provinces, rural land grabs in the context of an apartheid-like migrant labour system, selective prosecution of corruption, and the demise of the Iron Rice Bowl state welfare system.

Before the revolution led by Mao Tse Tung in 1949, rural China was fragmented, inefficient and repressive. His centralisation of agricultural production attempted to transform the peasantry, but led to mass starvation in 1959-61. Heavy industrial investment and strict planning allowed cities to capture surpluses, while the gap in society's basic needs was met through an "iron rice bowl" welfare model that included state-company housing as well as schools and hospitals. Literacy improved from 20 to 83 percent of the population from 1952-78. The core system of labour control is 'hukou', whose parallels with apartheid's migration constraints are notable. After liberalisation began, three hundred million rural workers moved to cities on a temporary registration basis. According to Kevin Lin (2015, 71),

> The first generation [of migrant workers] were rural peasants who, pushed by rural poverty and pulled by the burgeoning urban economy, migrated to China's urban centres in the 1980s. Their city wages were meagre but still higher than their rural incomes. For young women, factory work and urban life also brought a new sense of freedom. But the household registration system and their own rural roots meant that the first-generation migrant workers have been predisposed to eventually returning to their villages.
>
> It is the family farm that lends the migrant worker away from home a substitute for the benefits he or she is not getting from urban work, as well as security in the event of dis-employment or unemployment or in old age, while this same worker helps supplement the otherwise unsustainably low incomes of the auxiliary family members engaged in underemployed farming of small plots for low returns. So long as substantial surplus labour remains in the countryside, the key structural conditions for this new half-worker half-cultivator family economic unit will prevail.

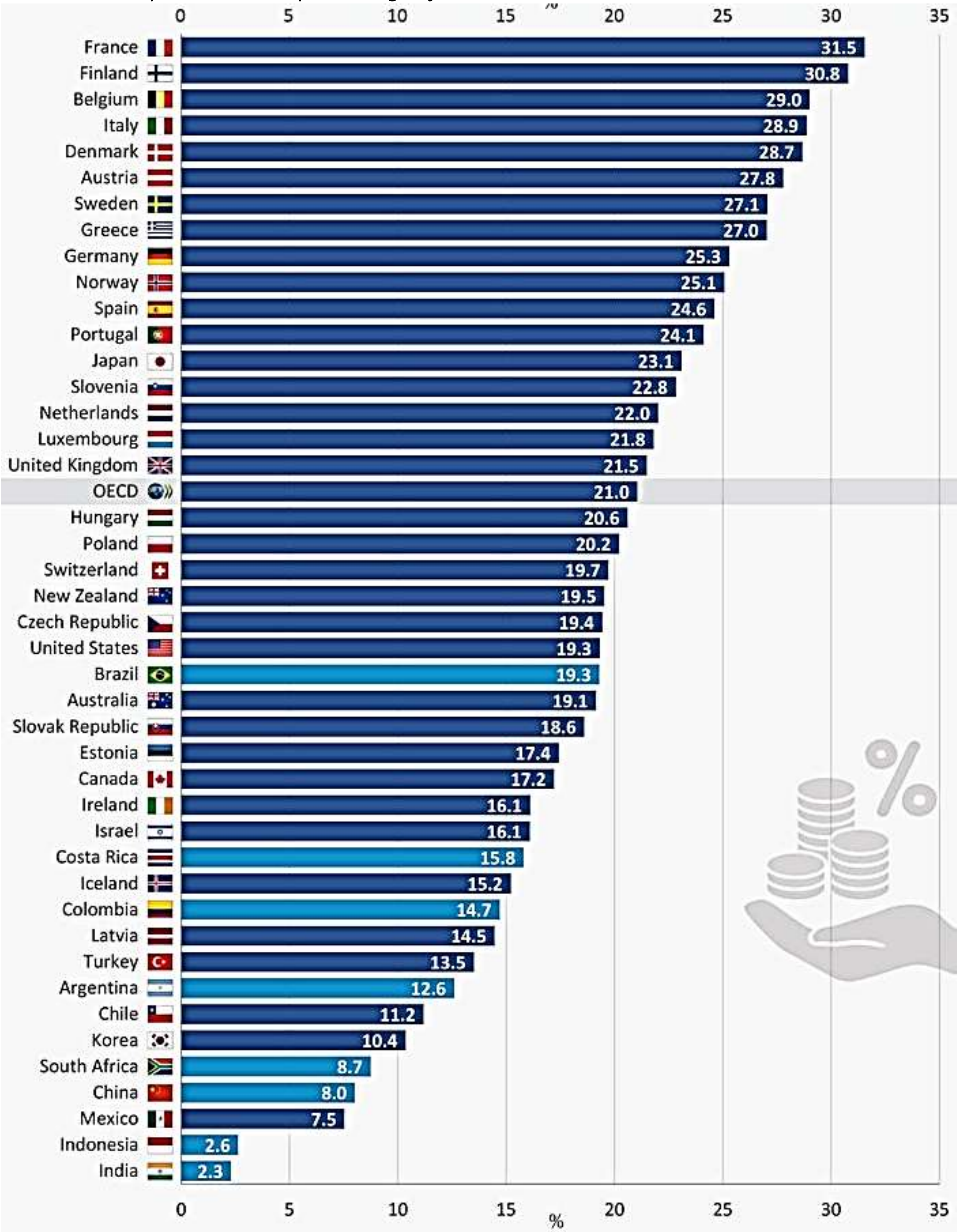
During an era in which millions of former Township and Village Enterprises have closed and there is no longer an Iron Rice Bowl, the ability of Beijing to maintain super-exploitative wages for the benefit of transnational corporate investors is partly based on the gendered dimension. As Julia Chuang (2016, 484) explains of rural gender relations,

> In the sending community, women face a double bind: they are expected to support husbands who engage in precarious and high-risk migrations; and they are expected to negotiate with those husbands to channel a portion of remittance income to their aging parents, who lack access to welfare or social support.

The tasks are harder given how few resources Beijing allocates from its massive surpluses to social welfare. Among the world's 40 wealthiest economies measured by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2019), the Chinese share of social spending to GDP – like South Africa's – is just 8 percent, far short of the OECD average of 22 percent. Only India, Indonesia and Mexico are lower in this peer group.

One result is rising social discontent. The last year that the Chinese government released statistics on protests was 2005, when there were 87,000. In recent years, according to Bin Sun (2019, 429), "More than 600 mass protests a day erupt in China, more than 200,000 a year. Of these, over 100,000 occur in rural areas, of which perhaps 65 percent are linked to residents' loss of land… Chinese governments will repress religiously rooted resistance, tolerate economically motivated actions, and encourage nationalistically inspired demonstrations."

Public social expenditure as a percentage of GDP



Source: OECD

Sometimes the protests are a good pressure-cooker indicator, leading to adjustments in state practices, including removal of officials seen to be hostile to communities or workers.

In his book *Responsive Authoritarianism in China: Land, Protest, and Policy Making,* Christopher Heurlin (2016, 3) shows how Beijing "proactively monitors citizen opposition to state policies and selectively responds with policy changes when it gauges opposition to be particularly widespread."

However, the exceptional advances in Beijing's Social Credit surveillance system are now capable of not only predicting the location and timing of protests – through systematic monitoring of grievances expressed on China's Facebook equivalent, Weibo – but also punishing activists. Although the U.S. agency Freedom House is not always reliable, what it terms the China Model of Internet Control is undeniable, and entails the Great Firewall, content removal, revoking access by users, manipulation of social media and high-tech surveillance, as well as violence, arrests and repression. One example, internet journalist Lu Yuyu, was a prolific analyst of labour and social protests. He and his partner Li Dingyu were arrested in 2016 on charges of "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble." After jail beatings, Lu was sentenced in 2017 to four years in prison (Committee to Protect Journalists 2017).

Social Credit scoring was announced in 2014 as a way to "allow the trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step." By late 2018, Beijing's National Public Credit Information Centre revealed, Chinese courts banned would-be travellers from buying flights on 17.5 million occasions, and from buying train tickets 5.5 million times. The system's roll out is scheduled for 2020. This is part of a general arsenal aimed at assuring totalitarian social control. As *Wired* magazine reported in 2019,

> The Chinese government is already using new technologies to control its citizens in frightening ways. The internet is highly censored, and each person's cell phone number and online activity is assigned a unique ID number tied to their real name. Facial-recognition technology is also increasingly widespread in China, with few restraints on how it can be used to track and surveil citizens. The most troubling abuses are being carried out in the western province of Xinjiang, where human rights groups and journalists say the Chinese government is detaining and surveilling millions of people from the minority Muslim Uyghur population on a nearly unprecedented scale. (Matsakis 2019)

Occupation and resident re-education camps are common especially in Xinjiang and Tibet, where minority ethnic nations have long demanded greater rights and self-rule. In November 2019, *The New York Times* (2019) published 403 pages of proof – the 'Xinjiang Papers' – from within the Chinese state, showing how after a train station attack by Islamic extremists in 2014, Xi ramped up the repression. He called for a 'struggle against terrorism, infiltration, and separatism' using the 'organs of dictatorship,' and showing 'absolutely no mercy' against those with 'strong religious views,' a process which began in earnest in 2017. Beijing's répression of Hong Kong democracy protesters is playing out in the extraordinary activism now in process. The demonstrations are being watched closely by SADC activists since so many of the creative tactics being used to escape surveillance will be vital in a region whose authoritarian and democratic leaders have often stooped to illegal spying on the citizenry.

To illustrate, the confluence of Chinese elite interests and South African leaders was on display three times – in 2009, 2011 and 2014 – when the South African government denied or delayed a travel visa for the Dalai Lama, respectively for a peace conference, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's 80th birthday and a Nobel Peace Prize laureates' workshop. On the final occasion, Beijing's Foreign Ministry spokesman celebrated "the respect given by the South African government on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the support given to China on this issue" (Reuters 2014). In 2015, the Foreign Ministry's lead Africa official, Lin Songtian, complained that while Beijing was helping Jacob Zuma develop ten Special Economic Zones, the Dalai Lama "can't just come and spoil this for you and we want a friendly atmosphere and environment for this to happen. We invest a lot of money in South Africa and we can't allow him to come and spoil the good relations" (Mazibuko 2015).

The sovereignty of the South African state was also violated in late 2015, in the reversal of the appointment of finance minister Desmond van Rooyen, who was widely seen as a dangerously ill-equipped crony of Zuma. According to *Business Day* publisher Peter Bruce (2016): "I have reliably learnt that the Chinese were quick to make their displeasure known to Zuma. For one, their investment in Standard Bank took a big hit. Second, they've invested way too much political effort in South Africa to have an amateur mess it up. Their intervention was critical." (Bruce saw this as a highly favourable development.)

In the other case of a widely-applauded Chinese intervention in the affairs of an African state, the November 2017 coup against Robert Mugabe followed major investments and then a fall-out. China had been invited to Zimbabwe for weapons sales and stakes in tobacco, infrastructure and mining, and its retail imports continue to deindustrialize Zimbabwean manufacturing. Mugabe's successor Emmerson Mnangagwa had fought Rhodesian colonialism in the 1970s, and was one of Mugabe's leading henchmen, rising to the vice presidency in 2014. But Mugabe fired him on November 6, signaling his wife Grace's ruthless ascent. Mnangagwa's fate was the catalyst for an emergency Beijing trip by his ally, army leader Constantino Chiwenga, for consultations with the Chinese army command. Mnangagwa received military training in China during Mao's days (CNN 2017).

Beijing's *Global Times*, which is often a source of official wisdom, was increasingly wary of Mugabe. According to a contributor, Wang Hongwi (2017) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,

> Mnangagwa, a reformist, will abolish Mugabe's faulty investment policy. In a country with a bankrupt economy, whoever takes office needs to launch economic reforms and open up to foreign investment… Chinese investment in Zimbabwe has also fallen victim to Mugabe's policy and some projects were forced to close down or move to other countries in recent years, bringing huge losses.

Amongst the populace, Mnangagwa remains widely mistrusted due to his responsibility for (and refusal to acknowledge) 1982-85 'Gukhurahundi' massacres of more than 20,000 people in the country's western provinces (mostly members of the minority Ndebele ethnic group, whose handful of armed dissidents he termed "cockroaches" needing a dose of military 'DDT'); his subversion of the 2008 presidential election which Mugabe initially lost; his subsequent heading of the Joint Operations Committee secretly running the country, sabotaging democratic initiatives; as well as for his close proximity – as then Defence Minister – to widespread diamond looting from 2008-16 (Bond 2017a).

Chinese military with Robert Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa, late 2000s; Sam Pa

China in Africa: how Sam Pa became the middleman

FT Magazine

By Tom Burgis with Demetri Sevastopulo in Hong Kong

For a decade, Sam Pa has opened doors for Beijing in Africa. But his story reveals a troubling side to China's ambitions. An FT investigation by Tom Burgis

Over the past decade, Pa has risen from obscurity to clinch deals across five continents worth tens of billions of dollars. He has helped to build from scratch a sprawling network of companies linked by common owners, directors and a registered address at 88 Queensway in Hong Kong. Those who have followed the network's evolution have dubbed it the "Queensway group".

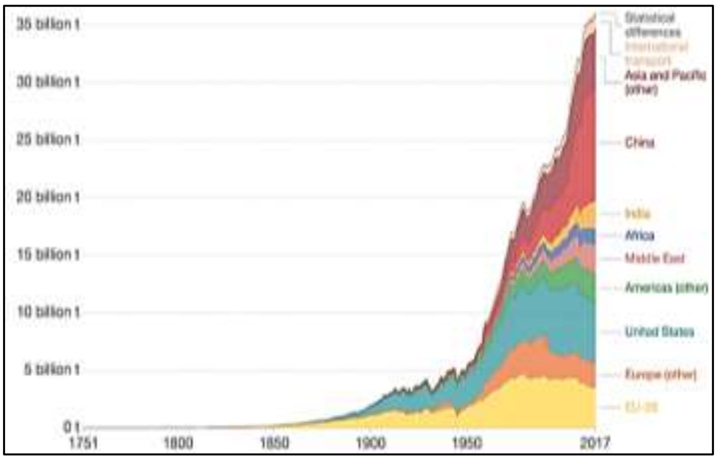
In 2016, Mugabe himself complained of revenue shortfalls from diamond mining in eastern Zimbabwe's Marange fields: "I don't think we've exceeded US$2 billion or so, and yet we think that well over US$15 billion or more has been earned in that area." In order for Mnangagwa to establish the main Marange joint venture – Sino Zimbabwe – with the notorious (and now apparently jailed) Chinese investor, Sam Pa, the army under Mnangagwa's rule forcibly occupied the Marange fields. In November 2008, troops murdered several hundred small-scale artisanal miners there (Bond 2017a).

There have been many other instances of Chinese investors propping up African dictators, but in the SADC region, the case of Sam Pa's relationship with Jose Eduardo Dos Santos stands out. According to respected commentator António Pereira, "Pa exploited this relationship to secure total control over construction projects in Angola. The construction of the new airport [Aeroporto Internacional de Angola] is a continuation of Pa's, CIF's and by extension, China's monopoly on Angola construction projects" (*Africa News* 2018). He also worked with Beijing parastatal Sinopec to acquire Angolan oil fields. Pa was arrested in

China in 2015 after apparently falling foul of anti-corruption prosecutions that took down high-ranking party and state officials. His current whereabouts are unknown.

These are examples of local socio-economic, civil and political, and environmental violations. The most dangerous, however, are in the ways China, South Africa and other high-emitting countries continue to create climate-crisis conditions in the SADC region. Weak regulation of HCFCs, toxins and plastic products are becoming a major problem, although China's lead in solar and wind energy generation and decision to ban waste imports are positive signs.

Highest CO2 emitting economies: absolute amounts and per capita amounts (tons/year)



Highest Annual Per Capita Emitters

tonnes CO2 (2014), countries with 10 million+ population:

Saudi Arabia 19.5	South Africa 9.0
United States 16.5	Germany 8.9
Australia 15.4	Belgium 8.3
Canada 15.1	Iran 8.3
Kazakhstan 14.4	Malaysia 8.0
Russia 11.9	China 7.5
South Korea 11.6	Poland 7.5
Netherlands 9.9	United Kingdom 6.5
Japan 9.5	Greece 6.2
Czech Republic 9.2	Venezuela 6.0

The combination of socio-economic and environmental damage is also evident in mega-projects, which we take up next in a brief review of the five main cases of Chinese investments and loans in South Africa.

4. China's controversial role in South African mega-projects

The five largest projects involving South Africa are illustrative of the problems described above, especially those that conjoin political corruption, maldistributed economic benefits, social dislocation and ecological damage. The two biggest current projects in South Africa entail export of coal on a new rail line, and expansion of Durban's port – the 'Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission Strategic Integrated Projects' 1 and 2. Campaigns for reparations have been launched against the Chinese vendors. They began to succeed in early 2018, due to blatant corruption in the state transport agency's purchase of several hundred locomotives designated to export 18 billion tons of coal in the $50 billion bulk rail upgrade project. The Chinese connection also entailed a commitment by the China Development Bank in 2013 to provide $5 billion in credit to Transnet for its capital investments, a sum that would in part pay for China South Rail's provision of locomotives. The purchase price also included $2.9 billion in 'irregular expenditures' apparently known to the firm's CEO Zhou Qinghe ; these were corruption payments to the Gupta brothers via a Transnet official. Those brothers had notoriously 'state captured' the South African president at the time, Zuma, through his son whom they had employed. As a result of the public outcry, Zuma was pushed out of power in early 2018, nearly a year and a half before his term ended (Bond 2020).

The second biggest mega-project in South Africa is expansion of what is already the largest sub-Saharan African container terminal, costing $15 billion. In the first stage, a much smaller case of Gupta bribery occurred, again via Transnet, during the purchase of seven tandem-lift ship-to-shore cranes used mainly to import goods from East Asia. These were provided by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries (in partnership with Liebherr-International of Switzerland) and entailed an $8 million payoff to the Guptas as part of what were termed the 'world's most expensive cranes' due to the markup and supplier profiteering (Amabhungane 2017). The most important point about the Durban port expansion, however, is that it is firmly opposed – and regularly protested – by the main social movement in the area, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance due to the large-scale pollution and displacement (Bond 2017b).

Third, another major port city further down the Indian Ocean coast is the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality (formerly Port Elizabeth). It includes a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with substantial tax benefits at the area known as Coega, and contains the largest single Chinese manufacturing investment in South Africa. The Beijing Automobile Industrial Corporation (BAIC) plant is co-financed by the South African state's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). In mid-2018, the first semi-knock down Sport Utility Vehicle came off the assembly line, just a day before the BRICS Summit was to start in Sandton. The manufacturing plant cost nearly $1 billion (then R11 billion), and was the single largest Foreign Direct Investment in any of the main South African SEZs. In June 2018, Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian stated, "I've been to many developing countries and industrial development zones and the Coega SEZ is by far the best of them all" (Toussaint et al 2019).

However, in the subsequent year, the BAIC/IDC joint venture encountered many difficulties. The University of the Western Cape (Toussaint et al 2019) report on SEZs documented these:

> Crises included inadequate Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise involvement, budget shortfalls for the start-up phase, differential labour laws, and delays in production, which played havoc with the image projected of a functional SOE partnership. As one report in the (partially Chinese-owned) *Independent* newspaper chain confessed in 2019, "Serious doubts have been expressed in motor industry circles about the claims that the vehicle was manufactured in South Africa... Last September, the local media reported that the construction had been moving at a snail's pace and all SMMEs had vacated the premises due to non-payment."

Again, according to University of Western Cape analysts, one manifestation was local dissent:

> Local journalist Max Matavire reported on extensive labour and small business protests against BAIC during construction, and titled a November 2019 article, "Overambitious production targets delay R11bn BAIC project," since BAIC "has missed its deadline by two years because it failed to meet its own overambitious and unrealistic production targets set at the launch… Currently, they are producing 50 000 vehicles per year from the semi-knocked-down kits. This will increase to 100 000 a year when fully operational"…

Inadequate pay at the factory was the source of further grievances, according to media reports. Workers demanded twice the R24/hour that they were earning in 2018, and were on strike for several weeks, for the second time. (Toussaint et al, 2019)

Finally, at what is potentially the biggest SEZ in South Africa – at the far northern tip of the country – there is a $10 billion China-funded metals-manufacturing facility planned in a corridor termed Musina-Mukhado. One smaller part of the SEZ is just 50 km from the Zimbabwean border post of Beit Bridge. But it is the rural Makhado section that Chinese entrepreneur Ning Yat Hoi and his Shenzhen Hoi Mor Resources Holding Company chose for an 8000 hectare project, bordering the main highway heading north. That part of the Musina-Makhado SEZ (MMSEZ) is the energy-metallurgical complex (hence sometimes termed EMSEZ).

President Cyril Ramaphosa had co-chaired the Forum on China-Africa China Cooperation in September 2018, and in addition to promoting the MMSEZ, he announced a further $1.1 billion (R16.5 billion) loan from the Bank of China for SEZs and industrial parks in South Africa (Mokone 2018). If approved, the MMSEZ will contain a coal washing plant (with the capacity to process 12 million tonnes per year); a coking plant (3 million tonnes); an iron plant (3 million tonnes); a stainless steel plant (3 million tonnes); a ferro manganese powder plant (1 million tonnes); a ferrochrome plant (3 million tonnes); a limestone plant (3 million tonnes); and most controversially, a 3300 MW coal-fired power plant.

The latter is not incorporated in South Africa's official National Determined Contributions to cutting emissions, nor in the Energy Department's Integrated Resource Plan for added capacity. Water to cool the plant is not immediately available, and will require an international transfer from deep aquifiers in water-starved western Zimbabwe and Botswana. Even the company hired by the MMSEZ to conduct environmental analysis, Delta BEC (2020), admitted that in terms of greenhouse gases, "emission over the lifetime of the project will consume as much as 10% of the country's carbon budget. The impact on the emission inventory of the country is therefore HIGH. The project cannot be implemented in the current regulatory confines." Delta BEC suggested the environmental contradiction could be overcome with a carbon-capture-storage strategy for the vast CO2 emissions, although no such proven technology exists.

Moreover, corruption is another concern in a part of South Africa, Limpopo Province, that has notorious legacies of state capture. Ning had spent much of 2017-18 defending himself in court and was even on the Interpol 'Red List' for some time. The reason was that in 2015-17 he served as board chair of a mining company in Zimbabwe, ASA Resource Group. But he was fired by the other directors and charged with $5 million in alleged graft. At a November 2018 London High Court hearing on the case, the judge ruled that there were credible allegations against Ning for "stealing money, a corrupt relationship between Mr Ning and the Chinese suppliers and an alleged tortious conspiracy between the Chinese directors. The pleadings are extensive." Investigative journalists at Amabhungane (South Africa's leading reporters) identified many suspicious relations between Ning and South African officials, including dereliction of duty by the South African Ministers of Trade and Industry responsible for giving Ning permission to operate that part of the MMSEZ, Rob Davies and Ebrahim Patel (Amabhungane 2020).

EMSEZ 南非能源冶金经济特区
South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone

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Build the World' s Most Competitive Energy Metallurgical Base

——Interview with Mr.Ning Yat Hoi, Chairman of South African Energy Metallurgical Base(Pty)Ltd

□By Lei Mao Sheng/ China Reform Daily 2019-05-15 18:52:06 Source:: 《China Reform Daily》

Many people's first impression of the Republic of South Africa is undoubtedly glittering and dazzling diamonds. In fact, as the second largest economy in Africa and one of the five largest mineral resource countries in the world, the "Rainbow Country" has mineral resources that are not limited to diamonds. It has been proved that there are more than 70 kinds of minerals with reserves and mined in South Africa. The reserves of platinum group metals(PGM), fluorite and chromium rank first in the world; gold, vanadium, manganese and zirconium rank second; titanium rank fourth, phosphate, uranium, lead and antimony rank fifth, coal and zinc rank eighth and copper rank ninth.

South Africa's rich mining resources have long attracted the attention of many Chinese businessmen, including Hong Kong based businessman Ning Yat Hoi. As one of the earliest Chinese businessmenin Africa's "gold rush", he has been involved in the mineral resources industry such as African non-ferrous metals since 2005, with operations in Congo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and other countries. In 2014, he officially signed a contract with the provincial government of Limpopo, South Africa, to start investing and engage the South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone projects.

Recently, the reporter interviewed Mr.Ning Yat Hoi, Chairman of South African Energy Metallurgical Base(Pty)Ltd. on the progress of the construction of the South African Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone, the results of investment promotion and the opportunity of the "Belt and Road".

Still, the project would continue because, according to one reporter,

> the concept of the MMSEZ was premised on extensive cross-border research to determine what commodities were crossing the Beit Bridge border with the top ten identified as being potential low-hanging fruit. The idea was that that instead of machinery and equipment being built in, say, Durban and shipped to a SADC country, it could far more advantageously be done in the MMSEZ (Ryan 2019).

In other words, the net benefit for South Africa was dubious, if the MMSEZ's opening of new capacity in one part of the country simply shut down that capacity in another part, one where the tax rate was about twice as high. Indeed, the standard corporate tax rate for South African businesses was, in 1992 at the close of apartheid, 52%. It was reduced to 28% over the subsequent three decades, but still this was not sufficient to entice new investment by either local or foreign capital. The SEZ strategy is to lower the rate still further, to just 15%.

In spite of the dilemmas associated with access to capital and to water, climate, and corruption, even the 2019 UN Conference on Trade and Development special SEZ report unequivocally promoted the MMSEZ:

> In Africa, intercontinental trade and economic cooperation through border SEZs is also high on the agenda. The MMSEZ of South Africa is strategically located along a principal north-south route into the Southern African Development Community and

close to the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. It has been developed as part of greater regional plans to unlock investment and economic growth, and to encourage the development of skills and employment in the region (UNCTAD 2019: 160).

5. Conclusion: Potentials for reviving positive Chinese-SADC relations

The adverse conditions unfolding in the South African cases and across the region are indisputable, and will continue to be contested. Yet many Southern Africans know a different face of China, not only that of the super-exploitative state and private firms now active in the region. Many ask whether Chinese workers, peasants and progressives could one day, just as they did in 1949, wrest their society away from a self-destructive ruling class now controlling the economy and state? To be sure, China's role in Africa has often been honorable, and there are many reasons to admire and offer return solidarity to those forces which have consistently sought liberatory allies in Africa. Chinese socio-ecological-economic advances celebrated by progressives everywhere include:

- China's 1949 peasant-worker revolution and decolonisation – and later in the 1960s-70s, its crucial support for African anti-colonial struggles (especially Zimbabwe's) and regional development aid (especially the Tanzania-Zambia railway);
- China's capacity for rapid pollution abatement and renewable energy dissemination (based partly on disregard for the West's Intellectual Property);
- China's strength in maintaining international financial sovereignty through exchange controls and financial regulations (especially those imposed in 2015-16 to halt spreading stock market crashes into other markets);
- China's 2009-14 expansion of mass housing, services, recreational and transport innovations (especially the "Chongqing Model" of municipal development promoted by China's neo-Maoist 'New Left');
- China's ongoing worker and peasant protests which are reputed to number more than 100 000 annually, in spite of often severe punishment;
- Chinese internet users' ability to avoid Beijing's repressive surveillance systems (including ongoing democratic organising in Hong Kong).

There are also Zhou Enlai's 'Eight Principles' for Chinese interrelations with Africa dating back more than 55 years. As the first Premier of China, Zhou listed principles for foreign aid during a trip to Africa in late 1963 and early 1964:

- mutual benefit
- no conditions attached
- the no-interest or low-interest loans would not create a debt burden for the recipient country
- to help the recipient nation develop its economy
- not to create its dependence on China
- to help the recipient country with projects that need less capital and quick returns
- the aid in kind must be of high quality at the world market price to ensure that the technology can be learned and mastered by the locals

- the Chinese experts and technicians working for the aid recipient country are treated equally with local ones, with no extra benefits to them (Shixue 2011).

While many Chinese innovations and aspirations are admired by SADC progressives, the pages above considered aspects of the socio-economic and environmental advances that relations with China portend are, in reality, witnessed in Chinese parastatal and corporate investments, financing and trade, as well as in China's role in multilateralism and its geopolitical power in Africa. The answer, thus far, is pessimistic about the relationship binding Chinese and SADC elites. Yet there are grounds for optimism regarding social resistances that in future may reconnect Southern African progressives with their Chinese counterparts.

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Obsolete economic ideas and personal corruption are closely linked in Africa

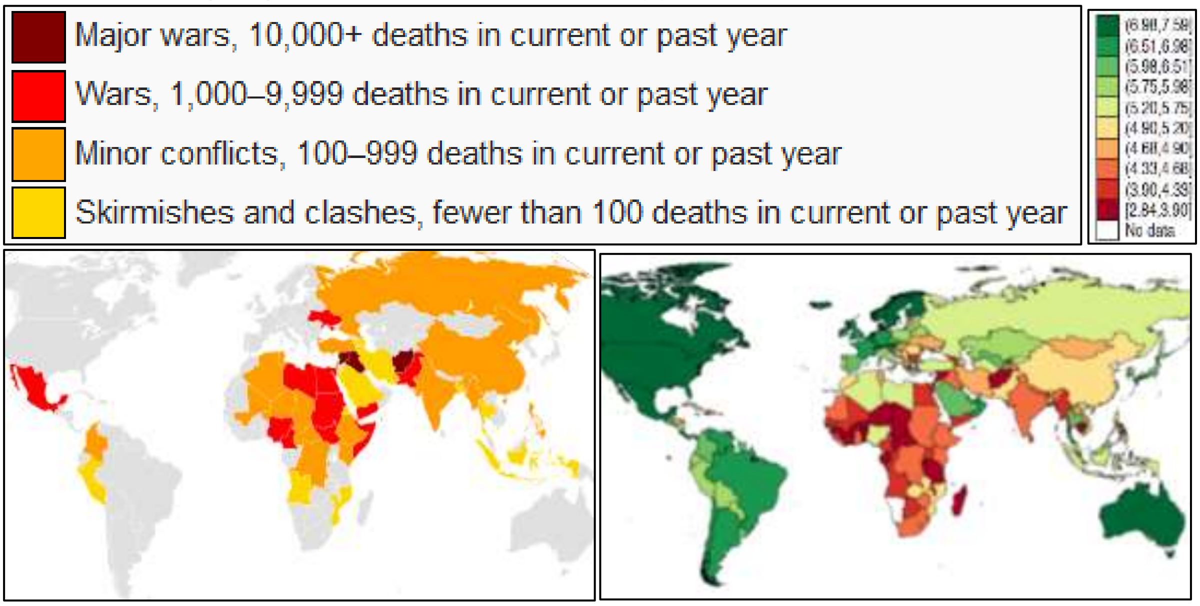
American Herald Tribune, 10 June 2017 (Interview by Mohsen Abdelmoumen)

1. The G20 will take place soon in Hamburg. In your opinion, what will be the strategic issues of this meeting?

There are three areas of extreme danger that we would expect the G20 to address, if they are indeed claiming to be the world's elite managers of human welfare: geopolitics, economics and environment. They won't solve the crises brewing in these areas, naturally – because they remain constipated as a group of leaders, lacking the needed tools and ideology to successfully confront and defeat these extreme threats.

Politically, the most complicated armed conflicts are in Syria and the Middle East, with renewed US-Iranian tensions and heightened war in Afghanistan coming; in Ukraine and Poland where Nato over-reached; in Kashmir between India and Pakistan; and in the Korean Peninsula and South China Sea, both involving Pentagon blustering. The G20 contains most of the major state players needed to address these conflicts, but it is abundantly evident that the most unpredictable, dangerous leader, Donald Trump, does not have the attention span to do anything more than promote the interests of the US military and corporations. The major wars and extreme civil conflicts the last two years have been in Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Mexico and northern and central Africa. There is a close correlation between such conflicts and low levels of 'well-being,' identified in the annual *Global Happiness Index.*

Locations of ongoing conflicts worldwide and happiness index, 2015



Source: *World Happiness Report* 2016

Meanwhile, two quite unpredictable processes are in play, centering on Russian and Chinese relations with Washington. First, in Russia, Vladimir Putin was accused by the defeated candidate Hillary Clinton and the US Central Intelligence Agency of assisting Trump to win the November 2016 election, in the hacking and leaking of her and allies' internal emails. This has not been proven, though the main US media have come to premature conclusions about the allegations in a burst of Moscowphobia unprecedented in at least three decades. As for the WikiLeaks revelations, Julian Assange denied he had direct access to leaked emails from any Russian source. But given Putin's hatred of the US State Department following its $5 billion putsch in the Ukraine in early 2014 which led to the Crimea invasion, he obviously favoured the election of Trump and had the spy-craft capacity to make an intervention. Trump's Secretary of State is the pro-Russian oil tycoon, ExxonMobil chief executive Rex Tillerson. But the intense backlash by the Washington establishment seems to have changed the new administration's power relations decisively, leaving anti-Russians in the National Security Council leadership. But the zig-zags, the confirmation of Deep State power over Trump, and dangers to his survival as President, are together revealing, and dizzying.

The same is true for China, where relations with Washington worsened in the months before and weeks following last November's election, but with rapprochement in the air. The South China Sea a site of conflict since 2011 given Obama's "pivot to Asia," entailing transfer of nearly two-thirds of US naval forces to the Pacific by 2020 and more than 400 American military bases encircling China. In the short term, the conflict with North Korea may overshadow Trump's concern that trade competition – specifically subsidised Chinese exports and currency devaluation, as well as alleged Chinese commercial computer hacking – is to blame for US deindustrialisation. He backed off on all these charges once Xi visited Trump and made clear to him the Korean sensitivies, and perhaps coincidentally once Ivanka Trump simultaneously won long-delayed trademark permissions. Perhaps the *Global Times,* a Chinese state mouthpiece, put it best last December, describing Trump as having "no knowledge of what he's talking about. He has overestimated the US capability of dominating the world and fails to understand the limitation of US powers in the current era."

Economic crisis (mis)management

As a result, if the Tory government wins re-election in Britain, the dominant G20 alignment appears to be the combination of far-right socio-cultural politics with mega-corporate interests. It became clear immediately after the Trump election in Wall Street's surge that investors expect military, financial and fossil fuel industry stocks to prosper far more than any others, as the Dow Jones index hit a new record. Trump promises to lower corporate taxes from 35 to 15% and rapidly inject a trillion dollars into what might be called 'dirty Keynesian' infrastructure – carbon-intensive airports, roads and bridges – thus heralding a new boom in US state debt. Along with the Federal Reserve's December 2016 rise in interest rates and the 12% rise in Wall Street prices from November 2016-April 2017, this in turn will draw more of the world's liquid capital into the US economy, similar to the 2008-09 and post-2013 shifts of funds that debilitated all the emerging market currencies aside from the Chinese yuan.

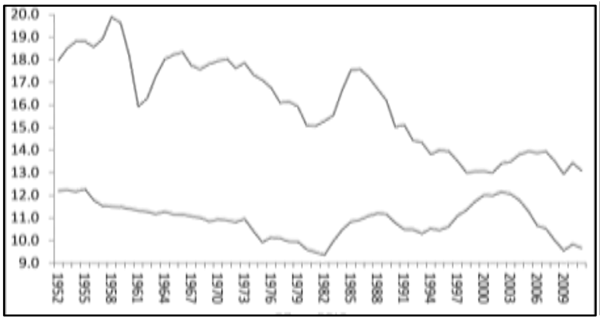
Given that such economic volatility remains a major threat across the world, we can expect even more extreme uneven development, unprecedented income inequality, excessive financialisation and overproduction. The resulting 'sectoral stagnation' is "the defining economic challenge for macroeconomic policy over the next decade," according to former

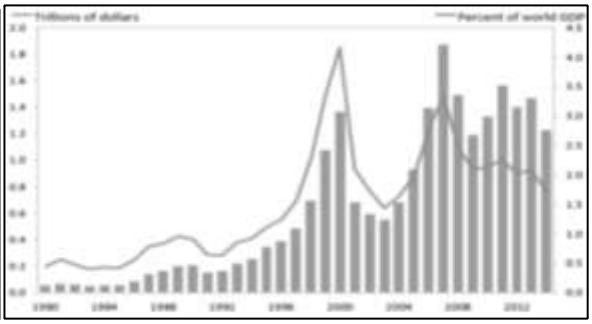
US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers. Although himself discredited – as the main official responsible for the most dangerous financial deregulation (the 1999-2000 ending of the division between investment banking and commercial banking) – Summers now diagnoses a serious deficiency in global economic management, including the G20.

In spite of these dangers, the G20 global economic managers appear incapable of taking decisive action. Various attempts to restore business confidence in most parts of the world appear to be failing. Multilateral institutions lack legitimacy and power. In addition, various kinds of class struggles are breaking out across the globe, revealing very weak redistributive systems. Refugees from poorer regions and war zones are moving at an unprecedented rate to Western borders. As a result, neo-fascist movements have gained strength in the US, UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Greece.

This stagnation is evident in what is increasingly being termed ‘deglobalisation,’ which applies not only to xenophobic attacks on migrants and refugees, but declining international economic interactions. One sign is the convergence between falling corporate profits in the G7 and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) economies, and as a result, a decline in the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the world economy. The peak year for FDI was 2008 with $1.9 trillion, nearly 3.5% of world GDP. But as the US-catalysed crisis spread across the world, FDI fell to $1.2 trillion and just 1.7% of GDP by 2015. Cross-border financial asset holdings fell from a peak 55% of world GDP in 2008 to just 35% by 2015. Various measures of trade also confirm a decline since 2014.

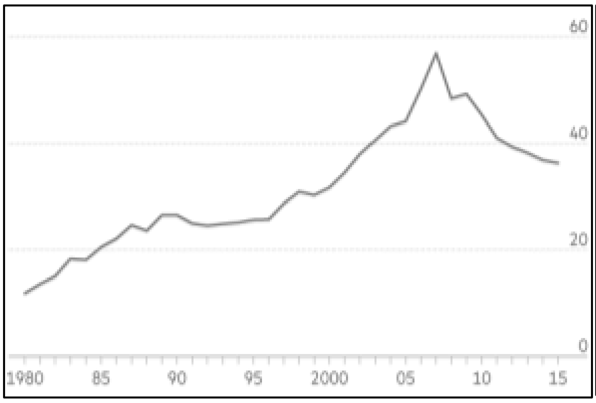
Declining rates of corporate profits (BRICS at top and G7) and of Foreign Direct Investment

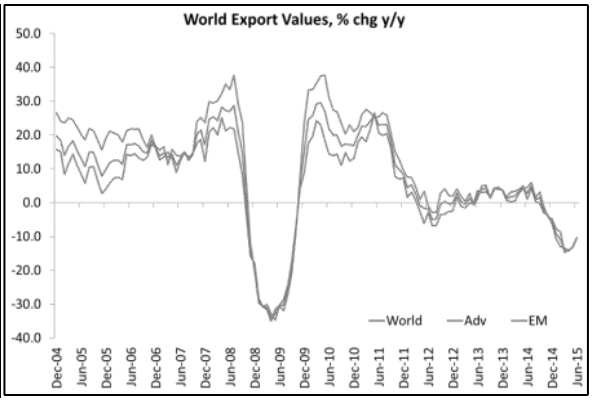




Sources: World Bank and UNCTAD

Declining cross-border financial assets as % of world GDP and of world trade values





Sources: IMF, BIS, Haver Analytics

Last July, the G20 trade ministers diagnosed the root cause of economic malaise at their Shanghai meeting but simply could not solve it: "We recognise that the structural problems, including excess capacity in some industries, exacerbated by a weak global economic recovery and depressed market demand, have caused a negative impact on trade and workers. We recognise that excess capacity in steel and other industries is a global issue which requires collective responses."

With such high excess capacity at the global scale, China's moves to cut steel and coal output have been marginal and merely ameliorative, as shown by continuing low prices, invasive exports and the extremely serious threat to entire national steel industries. Protectionism and tariffs are rising on many borders as a result.

At the global scale, this tendency towards capitalist overproduction can be delayed by artificial financial stimulation – but as we've seen since 2008, that strategy adds new contradictions. Loose G20 monetary policy encouraged new financial bubbles, without generating genuine sources of wealth. The $15 trillion in 'Quantitative Easing' (QE) paper-wealth printed and sent to the world's largest banks since 2008 only ultimately trickled upwards to the top 0.1% of the richest societies, i.e. to enterprises where speculation has replaced production. The profits were not reinvested but instead plowed into corporate share buy-backs, which mainly benefit top management.

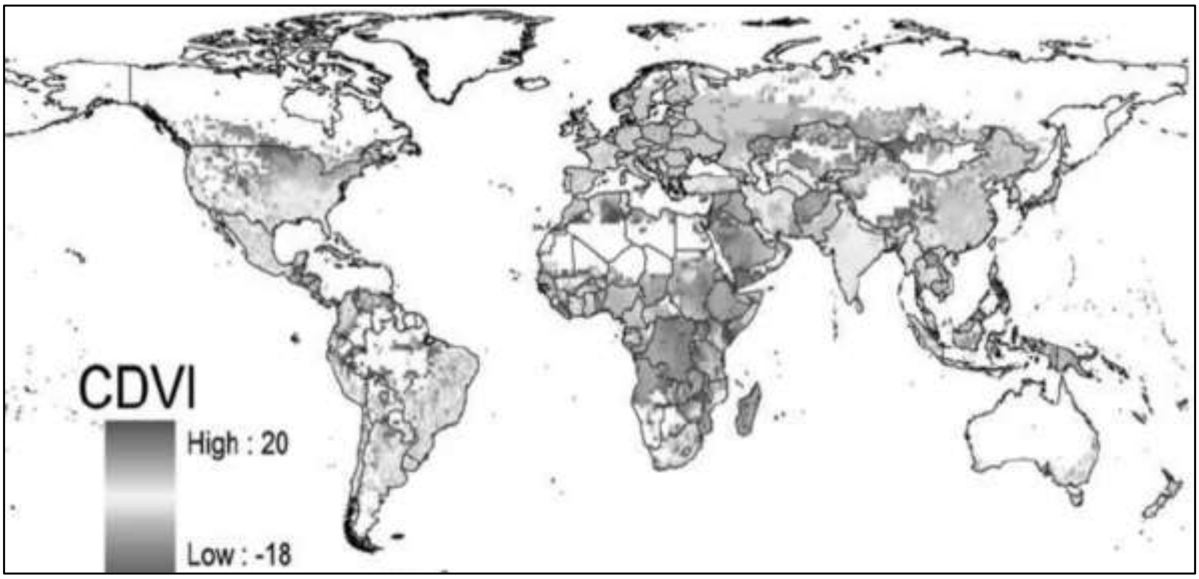
Thanks to the hollowed-out Western economy that resulted from the repeated QE fix in Washington, London, Brussels and Tokyo, financial crisis is again brewing. Perhaps it will be Deutsche Bank or Italian banks that play the same role that Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers did in 2008, or maybe it will be a spectacular malware virus or another unexpected financial crisis. But regardless, the G20's strategy then and today is merely the financial band-aiding of a deep-rooted capitalist cancer.

Environmental chaos

Finally, as for the environment, the G20 – especially the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa – did practically nothing in the critical 2009 (Copenhagen) to 2015 (Paris) climate negotiations. Their main accomplishments, which we know because WikiLeaks-documented State Department emails and cables implicate Hillary Clinton's staff, were to outlaw the concept of the 'Climate Debt' which the G20 economies owe the rest of the world, and to end the Kyoto Protocol's insistence on legally-binding accountability for emissions reductions.

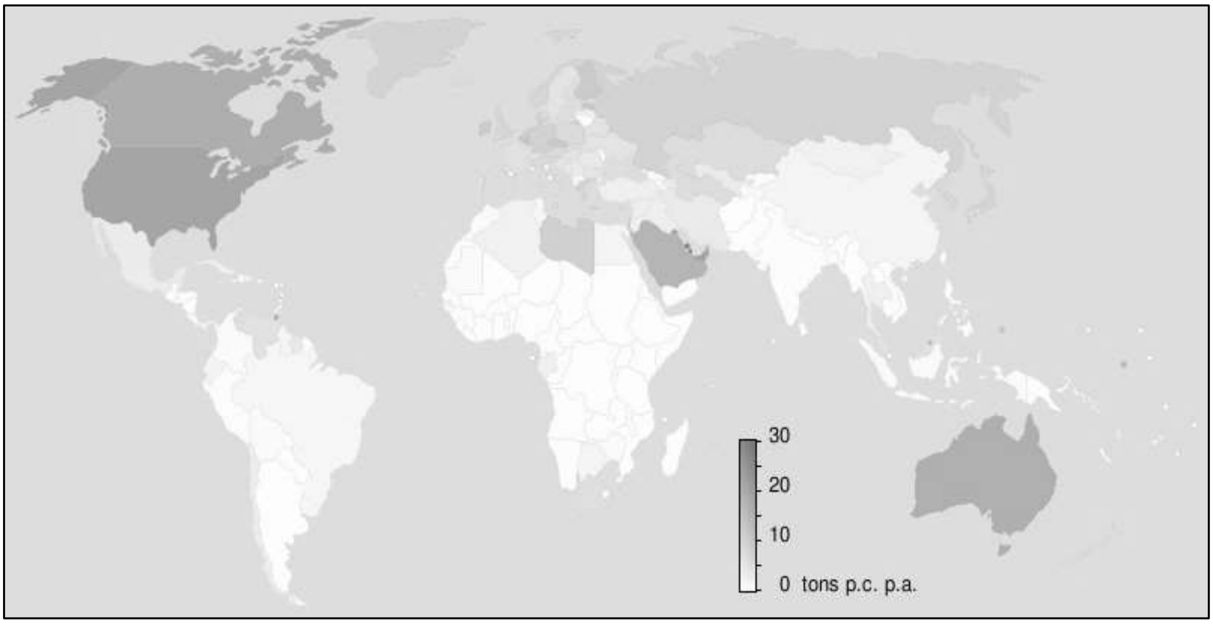
As a result, the greatest climate scientist, James Hansen, correctly labelled the Paris Climate Agreement "bullshit," for the present trajectory of warming is anticipated to break 4 degrees above normal by 2100, with inland Africa heating up by 6 to 7 degrees. Not only are humans threatened, but so too is nearly every living species – biodiversity itself – reliant upon water and a stable eco-system. Trump's climate denialism is merely the straw that will break the ecological camel's back. And the areas of the world that contributed least to causing the crisis – small islands, inland Africa, the Himalayas and Andes – will be the ones suffering first and most.

Areas suffering greatest vulnerability to climate change



Source: University of Texas Strauss Center

Countries most responsible for climate change: greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2000



2. Could you explain to us what the "Compact with Africa" is, initiated by the G20? Isn't it a form of neocolonialism to bleed Africa even more rapidly?

Yes, it's a return to the re-scrambling of Africa, this time for the benefit of both Western and BRICS corporations. The first codification of this process was in Berlin, when in 1885 the map of Africa was drawn by the then five big colonial powers (Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium and Germany), with no Africans present. No reparations were ever paid for the subsequent looting, not only until independence from the 1950s-90s, but also in the neo-colonial era.

Why do we see a G20-Africa Compact and other gimmicks such as a 'Marshall Plan' now? One reason is that the Compact's architect, German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, probably believes he must assist Angela Merkel with this rhetorical device, in order to justify to voters in the coming election how the million African refugees who entered Germany over the last dozen years can be kept at bay in future.

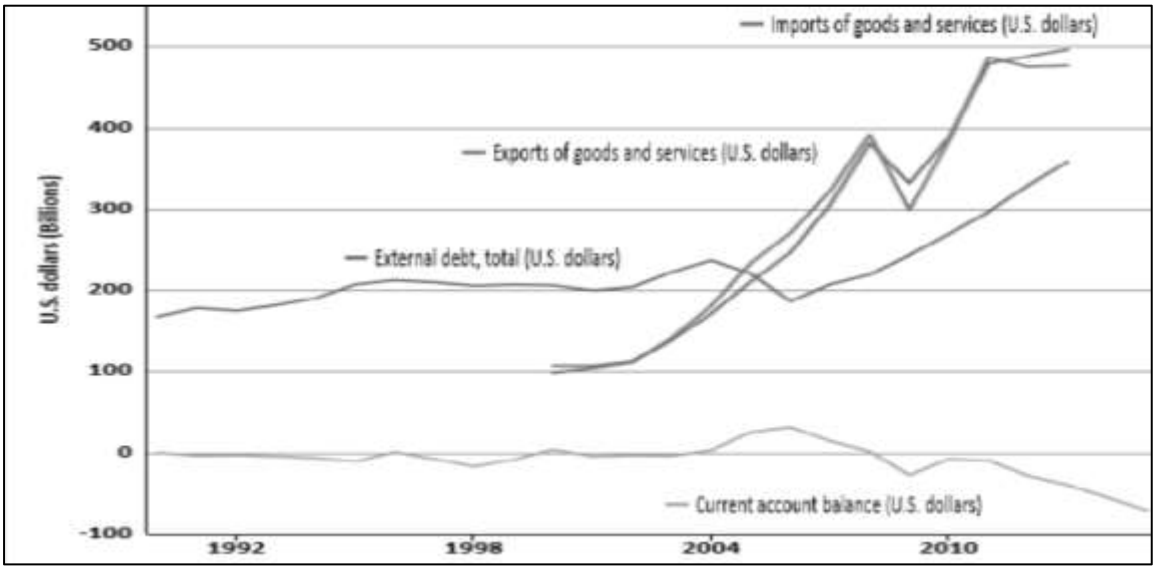
And Schäuble needs an African ally: the South African finance minister Malusi Gigaba. Sadly, South Africa has only the third largest African economy and sixth most populous society – but claims to represent the entire continent, along with continental bodies like the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development which are allowed to join as observers. In March, the Compact was unveiled at the G20 finance ministers' Baden-Baden meeting. Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Rwanda, *Senegal* and Tunisia presented evidence there that they are playing by Schäuble's rules, as has Greece, to the detriment of their societies.

In contrast there is a 'C20' group of civil society critics whose critique of the Compact is powerful: "higher costs for the citizens, worse service, secrecy, loss of democratic influence and financial risks for the public… and the multinational corporations involved demand that their profits be repatriated in hard currency – even though the typical services contract entails local-currency expenditures and revenues – and that often raises African foreign debt levels, which are now at all-time highs again in many countries."

The three largest economies in Africa began experiencing serious debt crises in 2016, including South Africa which got a junk status rating by two major credit-rating agencies in April, Nigeria which fell into a deep recession, and Egypt which required an emergency $12 billion IMF bailout. From 2005-07, Sub-Saharan Africa's foreign debt had fallen from $240 to $200 billion thanks to G7 and Bretton Woods debt relief.

But largely due to new Chinese lending, the sub-continent's sovereign debt rose to $350 billion by 2014. The economies suffering with the highest 2015 current account deficits (i.e., combining outflows of legal profits, interest payments and trade deficits) included several that were once celebrated during the 'Africa Rising' era: Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Angola, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso, Zambia, Mali, Lesotho, Eritrea, Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau.

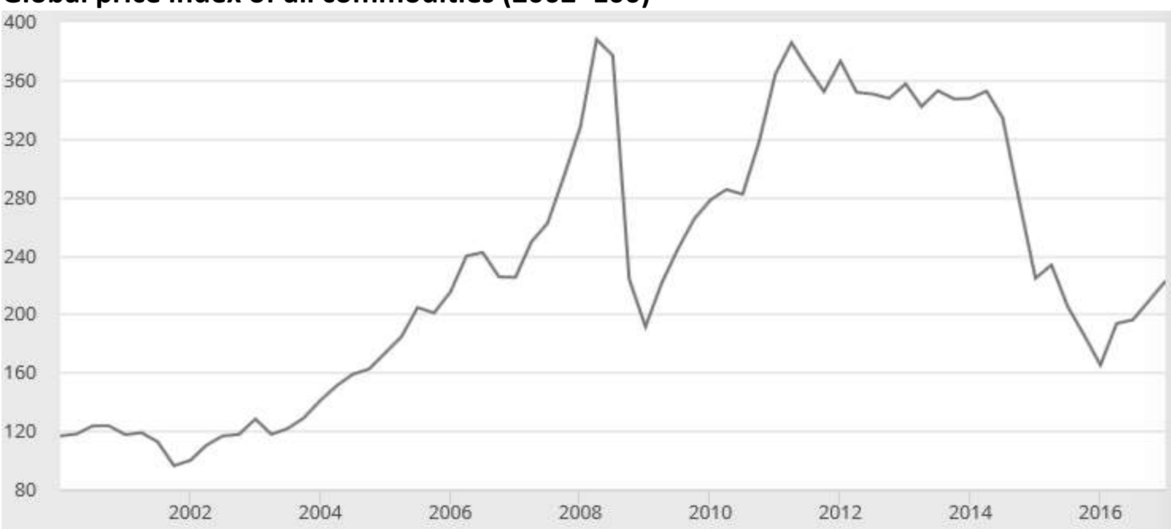
Sub-Saharan African debt, imports, exports and current account deficit



Source: IMF

Worse, while Africa enjoyed world commodity price increases of 380% from 2002-11, these were followed by crashes of more than 50% in 2014-15, to unprofitable levels. As a result, there is a renewed demand from corporations exploiting the extractive industries for state subsidies, including from impoverished African countries. So the new challenge for the G20-Africa Compact represented by Schäuble is that its corporations depend on higher volumes of output – to compensate the lower returns resulting from the lowest prices in a dozen years – so as to cheapen the average extraction cost for minerals and petroleum. That in turn requires more subsidisation of the infrastructure required to get the output of mines and oil wells across vast swathes of unpoliced land, on roads, railroads and bridges or through pipelines, to new ports closer to the markets.

Global price index of all commodities (2002=100)



Source: IMF

Most of the companies that are risk-averse in Africa are from China. Some are vast, some are relatively unknown. Their 2015-16 capital investments are far lower than in prior years, when Western and South African corporations led the scramble up-continent. The largest recent such investment is not in mining, but in land development near Cairo, by a Chinese developer.

Investment by multinational corporations in Africa, 2015-16

Investing company	Capital investment (USD billion)
China Fortune Land Development (CFLD)	20.0
Al Habtoor Group	8.5
Eni SpA (Eni)	8.1
China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPP)	6.0
Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP)	4.2
Sisban Holding	3.6
Terra Sola	3.5
China State Construction Engineering Corporation	3.3
Indorama	3.1
Bionas Agropolitan Technology Corridor	2.5
Total E&P Angola	2.2
Taaleritehdas	2.2
Enel Green Power	2.2
Korea Electric Power	2.1

Source: African Development Bank

Yet in part because of the extreme profiteering and illicit financial flows that these corporations are used to getting away with in Africa, the states that they loot don't have enough funding to build the supportive mega-project infrastructure. The investment envisaged in strategies such as the African Development Bank's 2010 Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) or 2012 Southern Africa Development Community regional master plan has never materialised.

For example, the most ambitious of the PIDA projects was the Inga Hydropower Project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which at $100 billion would be the most expensive development project in history. If taken to fruition, it will produce 43,200 MegaWatts of electricity, more than twice the second largest, China's Three Gorges Dam. But with commodity prices crashing, even China attempted in mid-2014 – on the eve of Obama's summit with African leaders in Washington – to get US government co-financing support. The Obama administration regularly rebuffed such approaches, even foolishly attempting to sabotage membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank so as to keep Beijing at bay. The World Bank withdrew its Inga financing commitment on grounds of the managers' failure to comply with socio-economic and environmental agreements.

So Inga may always remain a dream to the Western mining houses that have been its most enthusiastic backers, since they want the power to dig and smelt more minerals in central Africa. But the world's largest, BHP Billiton from Australia, once anticipated a massive aluminium smelter on the shores of the Congo, and then after the 2008 crisis, world overproduction forced it to back out. The next major backer, South African electricity parastatal Eskom, is also unwilling for it now finds itself with a huge surplus of electricity due to the decline in local mining and smelting.

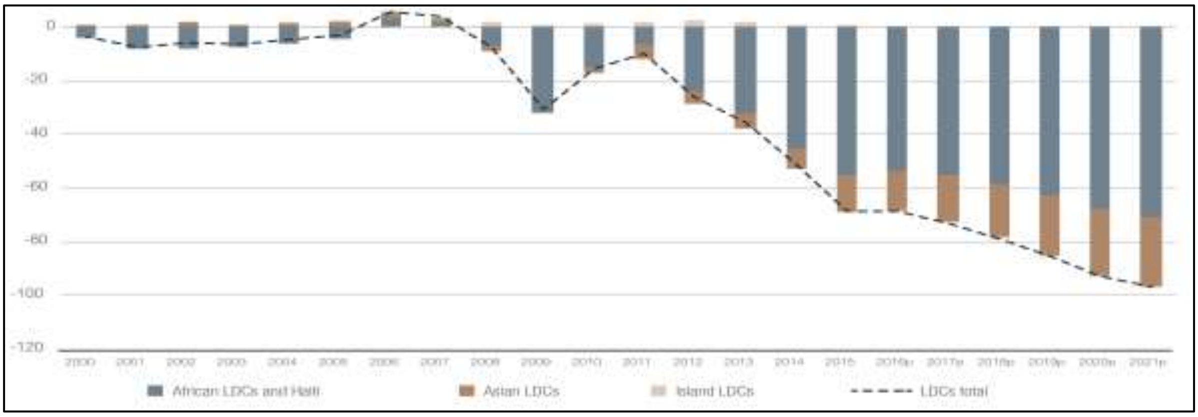
Other huge African infrastructure schemes have been cancelled or are not performing. Chinese projects in particular have been criticised, such as Botswana's failed coal-fired power-plant and Zambia's disastrous hydro-electricity expansion which suffered allegedly sub-standard Chinese equipment that excessively reduced the Kariba Dam's water level. China's $12 billion port at Bagamoyo, Tanzania – supposedly part of the One Belt One Road network – was just canceled. Other notorious mega-project failures, according to the *Wall Street Journal* in 2014, include China Railways in Nigeria ($7.5 billion) and Libya ($4.2 billion), Chinese petroleum in Angola ($3.4 billion) and Nigeria ($1.4 billion), and Chinese metal investors in the DRC and Ghana ($3 billion each).

The renewal of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December 2015 did nothing to assuage critics of the type of Chinese investment and credits, and their appropriateness in a post-commodity super-cycle environment. It is also well documented, of course, that infrastructure is weak due in part to corruption by the major construction firms operating in Africa, often financed by both Western and BRICS banks and multilaterals including the World Bank, whose standards on corruption remain as low as ever.

But a more general problem for Western and BRICS corporations is that their 'Illicit Financial Flows' from Africa are coming under scrutiny. The recent 'Panama Papers' and HSBC leaks revealed a great deal, as have studies of individual firms. The United Nations Economic Commission on Africa in 2013 showed how $319 billion was transferred illicitly from Africa during the commodity super-cycle (from 2001-10), with the most theft in Metals, $84 billion; Oil, $79 billion; Natural gas, $34 billion; Minerals, $33 billion; Petroleum and coal products, $20 billion; Crops, $17 billion; Food products, $17 billion; Machinery, $17 billion; Clothing, $14 billion; and Iron & steel, $13 billion.

During this period, African Foreign Direct Investment fell from its $66 billion peak annual inflow in 2008 to a level of $50 billion by 2015. Still, each year, in addition to *illicit* financial outflows, there were licit flows in the form of profit and dividend repatriation and debt repayments that created extreme balance of payments deficits in many African countries. These outflows of profits and dividends are the main reason that the 'current account deficits' in Africa's poorest countries soared since 2007.

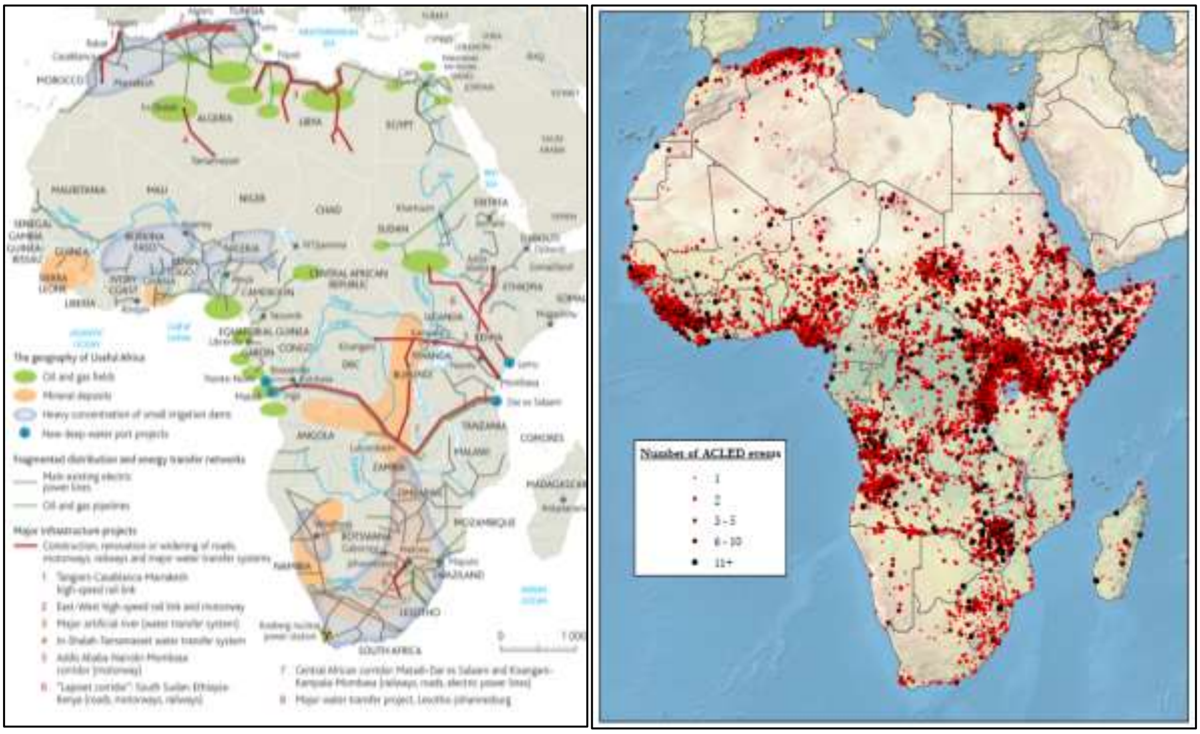
Current account deficits of African, Asian and Island Less Development Countries



Source: International Monetary Fund

Can the Compact with Africa incentivise multinational corporate investment merely with state supply-side subsidies? My guess is that it won't reverse those inherent crisis conditions within global capitalism, in which Africa is looted at the most rapid rate. The conditions for making profits from extraction are more difficult each year, as much more resistance and conflict rise in the main sites of mining and oil drilling.

Africa's resources and conflicts



Sources: *Le Monde Diplomatique,* Armed Conflict Location and Event Data

3. African political elites are often obsolete and corrupt, and obey the neo-liberal roadmap drawn by the likes of Wolfgang Schäuble and Christine Lagarde. Don't they need to be changed?

Yes, everywhere! Lagarde got quite a taste of that, five years ago. On the last day of December 2011, she had instructed the Nigerian finance minister to remove the internal petrol subsidy that kept fuel relatively cheap for mass consumption, in a country with such vast oil resources. When the price then doubled, poor and working-class people embarked on a huge protest, and very nearly overthrew Goodluck Jonathan's regime within weeks.

The year before, two very close friends of the IMF's were tossed out of power in Tunisia and Egypt after imposing neo-liberal programmes. In mid-2010, the IMF told Tunisian dictator Ben Ali to reduce corporate taxes and raise the Value Added Tax on the society, and a few months later the North African uprising began. In Cairo, Lagarde had to instruct her representative to temporarily start using two foreign words, "social justice," in IMF reports so as to appease the angry populace, as $32 billion in foreign debt taken out corruptly by Mubarak came due for repayment just weeks after he was removed.

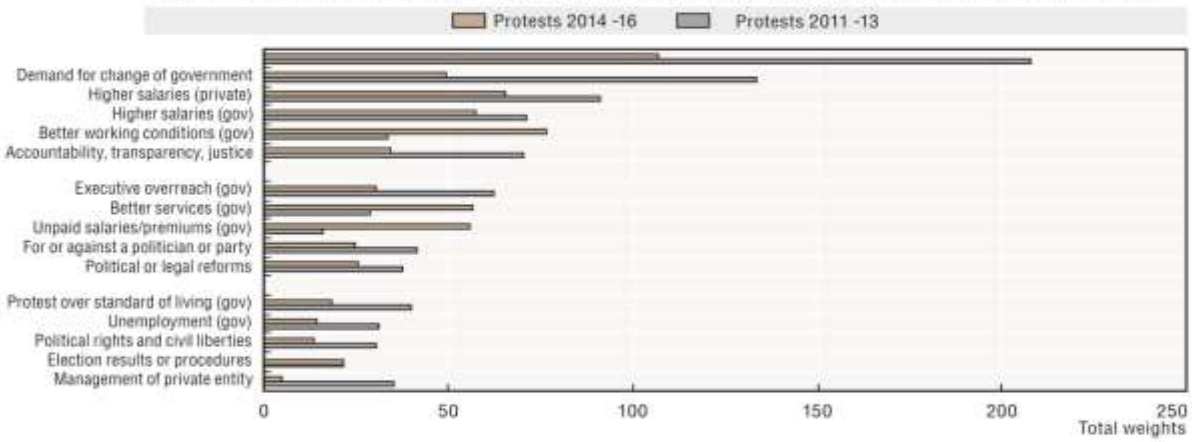
So yes, obsolete economic ideas and personal corruption are closely linked in Africa but especially within the G20 financial establishment. Lagarde herself had a close scrape last year after her conviction for negligence in a €403 million payout to a major Conservative Party contributor, Adidas owner Bernard Tapie, when she was French finance minister. Yet she continues in her present job, even gaining a unanimous re-endorsement on the day of her Paris conviction by IMF directors. There was also the extreme sexual corruption that her predecessor, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, visited upon countless unwilling women, or the blatant financial crimes committed by another former IMF Managing Director, Rodrigo de Rato, for which he was recently convicted in the Madrid courts. Schäuble too was expelled as leader of the German Conservative Party in 2000 for accepting and then publicly denying a cash bribe from notorious arms dealer Karlheinz Schreiber.

There is very uneven resistance to these ghastly Western rulers, sadly. Trump is obviously the most corrupt of all. The G20's typical patronising remarks about African governance will get no sympathy here. Instead we might want to consider more hopeful ways to describe a 'regime change' – one *not* dreamed up in the US State Department to re-impose neo-liberalism with more credibility, but instead driven organically by African activists.

But I retain great optimism, especially because of the anger rising from the continent's communities and workplaces. The World Economic Forum's regular *Global Competitiveness Reports* poll corporate managers to rate 'Cooperation in labour-employer relations' in each country on a scale from 'generally confrontational' (1) to 'generally cooperative' (7). African countries are by far the most militant of the 138 sites surveyed annually, with 28 African proletariats scoring above the world median of militancy, and just four below. Every year since 2012, South African workers (scoring 2.5 last year) have won the 'gold medal' in this global class struggle, if this measure is to be trusted. Other African countries with very militant workforces are Chad (3.5), Tunisia (3.6), Liberia (3.7), Mozambique (3.7), Morocco (3.7), Lesotho (3.7), Ethiopia (3.8), Tanzania (3.8), Algeria (3.8), Burundi (3.8), and Zimbabwe (4.0). These dozen were in the top 30 countries in terms of labour militancy.

Reasons for African protests

Figure 5.4. Top 15 drivers of public protests in Africa, 2011-13 versus 2014-16



Note: Public protests refer to strikes and any demonstration with political, economic or social motives. Each event is weighted by its duration and by an intensity score based on the number of protesters. See the methodological annex for more details.

Source: African Development Bank

The continent's urban communities are also increasing their protest rates. Sussex University's Pentagon-funded Armed Conflict Location and Event Data index and the African

Development Bank's *African Economic Outlook* report have both documented a dramatic rise since 2010. The latter studies, drawing on press reports, find that while changing government was overwhelmingly the main rationale to protest in the 2011-13 period, since 2014 the combination of demands for higher wages and better working conditions, plus better state services, are more prevalent.

And with that in mind, recall what Frantz Fanon himself complained about in his book *Toward the African Revolution:* "For my part the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles, the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology." Not long after, the revolutionary leader Amilcar Cabral agreed: "The ideological deficiency within the national liberation movements, not to say the total lack of ideology – reflecting as this does an ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform – makes for one of the greatest weaknesses in our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all."

If we take these cautions seriously, it is not only the removal of corrupt, unpatriotic regimes that is needed, though that is a pre-condition. What is now urgent to discuss in many settings growing ripe for revolution, is the replacement of venal African comprador relations with neo-colonialism with a programme of popular political empowerment. Otherwise, without structural change based on ideological clarity, the same conditions will generate the same corrupt African compradors. The forces of resistance may be rising fast – labour, community, environmental, women's, youth, students and other groups angry about the 'Africa Rising' nonsense – but they urgently need to discuss how to implement a set of policies that diverge from the Washington Consensus, in advance of democratisation.

That State Department and Bretton Woods Institution narrative – so successful in narrowing African political discourses since the first democratisation wave of the early 1990s – is simple: achieving a free society means imposing 'free-market' (pro-corporate) economics. In opposition, an egalitarian economic argument will be increasingly easier to make now that world capitalism and the dynamics of deglobalisation are forcing Africa towards rebalancing. This will ultimately compel discussion of much more courageous economic policies, potentially including:

- in the short term, as currency and debt repayment crises hit, reimposing exchange controls will ensure control of financial flows, quickly followed by lowered interest rates to boost growth, with an audit of 'Odious Debt' before any further repayment of scarce hard currency, along with much better management of imports – to serve national interests, not the interests of elite consumers;

- as soon as possible, the adoption of an ecologically sensitive industrial policy aimed at import substitution (making things locally), sectoral re-balancing, meeting social needs and true sustainability;

- once finances are secure, it will be possible to dramatically increase state social spending, paid for by higher corporate taxes, cross-subsidisation and more domestic borrowing (and loose-money 'Quantitative Easing,' too, if necessary, so long as it does not become hyper-inflationary);

- the medium- and longer-term economic development strategies will reorient infrastructure to meet unmet basic needs, and the expand, maintain and improve the energy grid, plus water and sanitation, public transport, clinics, schools, recreational facilities and universal access to the internet; and

- in places like South Africa and Nigeria that have an excess reliance on extraction and burning of fossil fuels, it will be vital to adopt what have been termed 'Million Climate Jobs' strategies to generate employment for a genuinely green 'Just Transition'.

These are the kinds of approaches requiring what the continent's greatest political economist, Samir Amin, terms 'delinking.' He stresses that this is not a formula for autarchy, and certainly would gain nothing from North Korean-type isolation. But it would entail a sensible approach to keeping G20 politicians and corporations as far away as possible.

Even John Maynard Keynes agreed with this strategy. He wrote in 1933: "I sympathise with those who would minimise, rather than with those who would maximise, economic entanglement among nations. Ideas, knowledge, science, hospitality, travel – these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible and, above all, let finance be primarily national."

Keynes saw the merits of the deglobalisation of capital, alongside the globalisation of people. So should all G20 critics, instead of agreeing with a Compact with Africa that will make everything worse.

4. The riches of the African continent, instead of being an asset, especially for the development of countries, are not they rather a curse? For example, my country of origin Algeria, which has not been able to get out of oil revenue, which is totally dependent on imports, and which has not built a varied economy.

Yes, the dilemma of the Resource Curse is quite obvious if we add a corrective feature to the very flawed Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure called 'natural capital accounting.' GDP only counts extraction of non-renewable resources like oil as a positive 'credit' in the accounts, failing to recognise that it is a country's depleted wealth and should also be considered a 'debit.'

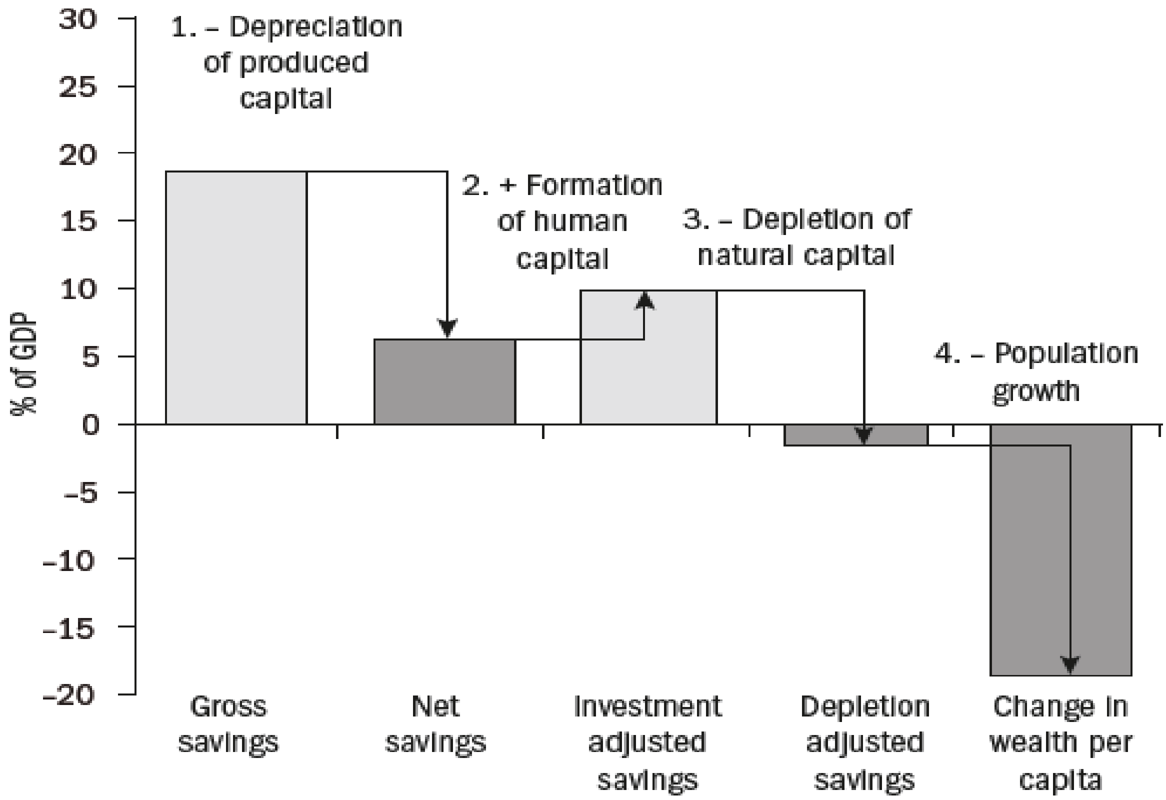
When we do this, we learn that not only has the oil revenue been wasted, but the historic wealth of Algerians – and likewise of so many other Africans – in the form of environmental assets has also been depleted, never to be recovered. The dinosaurs that gave us fossil fuels won't come back. The patrimony is gone forever.

The resulting economic argument is that by calculating natural resource depletion associated with extraction, and comparing to reinvestment made by the corporations which do the extraction, the overall impact is net negative for nearly all of Africa. So even though the World Bank has traditionally lined up in favour of extraction, including fossil fuels, several Bank staff in the office called Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem

Services annually calculate 'adjusted net savings' and the implications should subvert that commitment to extractivism.

For example, the Bank's 2014 *Little Green Data Book* concedes that "88% of Sub-Saharan African countries were found to be depleting their wealth in 2010," with a 12% decline in per capita net African wealth that year attributed to the extraction of minerals, energy and forest products (natural capital). With that degree of looting obvious even to an agency committed to further looting, it is long overdue for anti-extraction activists to add an economic logic to their micro-ecological, spiritual, political and social critiques.

The World Bank 'decomposes change in wealth per capita', Sub-Saharan Africa, 2010



In turn, this kind of measurement of the resource curse Africa suffers can assist in one of the de-cursing processes we desperately need to intensify: ecological debt advocacy. There is an urgent need to punish polluters by considering the formal monetary liabilities – or some approximation, since nature is priceless – so that reparations to environment and affected peoples are sufficiently financed, and so in the process an incentive is generated not to pollute in future. This is the central reason to make at least a rough monetary case for ecological debt payments within courts of law.

For example, of Nigeria's $11.5 billion claim against Shell for a 2011 oil spill, more than half is meant to compensate fisherfolk. The liability owed to silicosis-afflicted mineworker victims of Anglo American and other gold mining houses has begun to reach payment stage. The South African firms Gencor and Cape PLC had to pay $65 million a decade ago to settle asbestos lawsuits after they lost their last appeal in the UK House of Lords. Similar arguments should be made against the MNCs most responsible for what the UN calls loss and damage due to climate change. Ideally, over time, this strategy would develop as 'fine-and-ban,' so that as a corporation makes an egregious error, it is fined punitively for the damage done, and then nationalised and sent packing.

To be sure, there is a danger that if 'fine-and-ban' is not the local state policy, then natural capital accounting will lead, instead, to a 'fee' for pollution, with the damage continuing, alongside ongoing payment. That would logically result from establishment of a formal market in pollution rights, such as the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme. Serious environmental activists beginning with the Durban Group for Climate Justice in 2004 have firmly rejected these strategies to 'privatise the air.' The distinction should thus be clear, between valuing nature for ecological debt payment purposes (a fine and ban) on the one hand, and on the other pricing nature for market-making (a fee). As Vandava Shiva put it in a 2014 South African talk, 'We should use natural capital as a red light to destruction, not as a green light.'

The 'red light' strategy is an example of a potential rapprochement between two different framing strategies, emphasising technicist analysis in the ecological modernisation tradition as well as being useful to anti-extractivist campaigners who want an economic argument against fossil fuel depletion, but one that allows claims by the Global South – such as climate victims in Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria and other fossil fuel sites. The simple standpoint, which has been explored in the Niger Delta and Ecuador's Yasuni National Park as amongst the world's cutting-edge struggle sites, is that oil should be left underground, *but the ecological debt that Northerners owe the Global South should be paid,* in a way that strengthens local societies, not comprador elites.

The best model of North-South payment I know of is one set up for a few years in Otjivero, Namibia, in a desertifying zone about an hour east of the capital Windhoek. That region suffered Germany's genocidal displacements of the Herero people more than a century ago. Partly as a preliminary downpayment on paying the social debt owed, as Germans do to Israel for the Holocaust, some Lutherans and their allies arranged a small monthly payment to each resident of Otjivero.

This sample 'Basic Income Grant' trial was successful by all accounts, although it was opposed by governments on grounds that it might raise expectations for more citizenries. But that is exactly the point: we need to identify strategies such as natural capital accounting and payment of ecological debt (especially climate debt) that radically redistribute from rich to poor. Along with South Africa, Namibia is the second most unequal country in the world.

But these ideas are microscopic in impact so far, or even outright failures in implementation, such as the Yasuni case. There, former German development minister Kurt Niebel's stubborn opposition led the Ecuadoran president Rafael Correa to drop the protection and to authorise Chinese oil drilling. So while logical as sites for advocacy, they may be slow to take root, and so far they have tiny constituencies. Yet there is an undeniable urgency to both halting oil extraction to save the climate, and redistributing the world's wealth in a manner that the most adversely affected are paid directly, not through corrupted aid mechanisms.

Activists in the high-pollution G20 countries who are looking for strategic ways forward, in addition to blockading coal extraction sites such as Ende Gelände in Germany, might listen to visionary peripheral groups like the eco-feminists of Accion Ecologica based in Quito, or the Womin Women in Mining network based in Johannesburg, for guidance along these lines. A film by the GermanWatch NGO called "The Bill" – available on YouTube – helps the anti-G20 activists to make the case that we must become more creative about these huge debts that we owe. (And I speak as a Global North resident of Johannesburg who has a vast carbon footprint and a desire to help pay activist movements – such as at Yasuni and the Fuleni anti-coal campaign in South Africa – for their inspirational work in leaving fossil fuels underground.)

For Africa and for the entirety of humanity, climate change is the most important issue area for us to all increase awareness and activism. It is a crisis that links the workplace, the energy system, transport, agriculture, urbanisation, our lives as consumers, disposal and financing, so all kinds of activities could be considered climate activism. With a global movement that recognises these opportunities, the G20 might become a site that addressed a global crisis with genuine resolve.

Indeed if the G20 ever deserves to have world leadership, it would be because of the ambition to repeat what was accomplished through global governance back in 1987, a year in which the United Nations issued a genuinely progressive report on sustainable development authored by former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland's Commission. At that time, there was a major new global crisis: the expanding hole in the ozone layer that protects humans from ultraviolet rays. The main cause was the emission of ozone-depleting CFCs through aerosols and refrigeration.

Since the urgency of the situation required a global response, the 1987 Montreal Protocol was supported by even the US Reagan Administration. It committed national states to ensure their corporations (e.g. Dow Chemicals and General Electric) stop producing and emitting CFCs within nine years. The ban worked and the problem is receding.

But this global-governance success story occurred before the era of neo-liberal state capture. Today, to argue for a Montreal Protocol-type ban on greenhouse gas emissions – with binding emissions cuts, accountability and state control of corporate pollution – is practically unthinkable, notwithstanding impending eco-social catastrophe.

What we need to shift power relations and return as soon as possible to a global governance strategy is the amplification of what Naomi Klein calls 'blockadia.' In addition, the 'divest-invest' movement against fossil fuel companies is having a major impact on shareholder sentiments, as activists insist that the companies devalue their reserves of 'unburnable carbon.'

The classic example of this sort of battle is the South African anti-apartheid movement, which called for boycott, divestment and sanctions to complement direct activism. The pressure reached the boiling point when in 1985 protest from below rose just as international solidarity tackled firms supporting the Pretoria regime. The resulting financial crisis was only resolved when corporations (owned by white English-speakers) broke relations with the white (Afrikaner) regime and belatedly supported democracy.

5. Your career is very rich, both politically and professionally. You have notably accompanied the political process of the end of Apartheid in South Africa, by being a drafter of many policy documents for the government of President Nelson Mandela, including his first *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development*. Do you think that South Africa is a model of success for other African countries?

We are, sadly, an anti-model, because Southern Africa is still perhaps the most resource-cursed part of the continent, although West African and North African oil-saturated states are certainly close. Southern Africa regularly scores the worst inequality rates on earth, and this is a function in part of deals made by local elites with foreign corporations.

I saw many of those deals unfold, while writing two major policy documents for Mandela and other policies for ministers when I worked in the first democratic government. I still hope they can all be reviewed and in some cases even reversed, including decisions during the 1990s to:

- repay $25 billion of inherited apartheid-era foreign debt (October 1993)
- give the South Africa Reserve Bank ‘independence’ in the country’s 1993 interim constitution and 1996 final constitution (November 1993)
- borrow $850 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with tough conditions (December 1993)
- reappoint apartheid’s finance minister Derek Keys and South Africa Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals, at the insistence of IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus (May 1994)
- join the World Trade Organisation on adverse terms as a ‘transitional’ (not ‘developing’) economy (August 1994)
- lower primary corporate taxes from 48 per cent to 29 per cent and maintain countless privileges enjoyed by white people and corporations (1994–99)
- privatise parts of the state and demutualise mega-insurance firms (1995–99)
- relax the main exchange controls and raise interest rates (March 1995)
- adopt the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (‘Gear’) macroeconomic policy (June 1996)
- approve South Africa’s biggest companies moving their financial headquarters and primary stock market listings to London (1999).

Since 1994, largely as a result of these deals, unemployment soared from 16 to 27%, poverty rose from 45 to 63% and inequality rose from a Gini coefficient of 0.59 to 0.69. Mandela is now regularly described by the younger activist generation – as well as by his ex-wife Winnie – as an economic ‘sell-out.’

It was at the Davos World Economic Forum in 1992 that Mandela agreed to drop his own party’s 1955 Freedom Charter, especially its provisions for nationalisation the mineral wealth, banks and monopoly capital. So at the WEF-Africa 2017 summit held in Durban in

May, protests were held by grassroots activists, and a 'People's Economic Forum' counter-summit offered alternatives.

Since Schäuble will be relying upon South Africa's very controversial finance minister Malusi Gigaba to do his bidding in selling the Compact With Africa to the rest of the continent, we can expect a great deal more vibrant debate in South Africa about the G20, especially the need imperialism has for sub-imperialist collaboration. For that analysis, a 'brics-from-below' network is busy developing sub-imperialism theory – drawing on the Brazilian Ruy Mauro Marini and City University of New York's David Harvey – as well as activist sites where sub-imperial projects are being fought by community, labour, feminist and environmental activists.

In South Africa, this will be aided by the left revival in the unions (the SA Federation of Trade Unions was launched in April), in electoral politics (the Economic Freedom Fighters achieved 8% of the vote in 2016 municipal elections and share power in two of the four biggest cities) and in diverse social movements including the #FeesMustFall student campaign (which won major victories in 2015 including a 0% fee increase and the 'insourcing' of low-paid university workers). There was hope that a 'United Front' network that emerged in 2014 might pull all such progressive forces into alignment. Unfortunately it relied too much on sponsorship by the huge metalworkers union of 330 000 members – whose powerful, class-conscious leadership led labour's walk-out from the ANC-aligned COSATU trade union federation in 2013-15. But with internecine battles within the unions occupying the leadership, they did not achieve the promised linkage between a relatively well-paid proletariat and the sub-proletariat which so desperately needs material support and ideological coherence. That linkage probably must happen bottom-up, in town after town, as the unemployed masses in shack settlements find unity with workers living in townships, perhaps in socio-economic campaigns.

However, the last year has witnessed these left forces distracted, as an extraordinary elite battle rages over control of the state. On the one hand, there is a clique committed to corrupt accumulation opportunities stemming from President Jacob Zuma's alliance with India's Gupta brothers, and on the other, a neo-liberal clique that until April was located mainly in the Treasury and now draws strength from the residual power of the major media houses, the highly-unified financial capitalists, diverse liberal institutions including universities, and the centre-right opposition party (Democratic Alliance).

Most progressive activists – aside from a few centre-left NGOs – are uncomfortable with both these cliques, but nevertheless, substantial protests have been held in the major cities calling for Zuma to resign, and even the formerly Zuma-aligned trade unions and SA Communist Party are now calling for him to quit. However, if he does, the most likely inheritor of the presidency is Zuma's deputy, Cyril Ramaphosa, who is not just distasteful as a leader to many in labour and social movements due to his collaborative role in the Marikana massacre, but who is seen as the candidate of what is termed 'White Monopoly Capital.'

If as a result, Ramaphosa fails to secure the party's support, it is likely that Zuma's ex-wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma – who until this year served a term as the African Union leader –

will take over the party in December and if Zuma himself stays in power for his full term, she would inherit the national presidency in mid-2019. The irony is that due to the personalisation of these distracting battles, there is rhetoric about “radical economic transformation” from the Zuma camp yet Gigaba maintains the same neo-liberal policies as his predecessor because underlying power balances have not shifted in the least. And by maintaining the semi-austerity policies the neo-liberals demand, South Africa’s economy will remain stagnant and the populace will grow angrier, as leftist-sounding slogans from Zuma won’t fill their bellies. And that structural inability of capitalism to meet even the most basic needs is why the left revival is necessary here, and indeed everywhere.

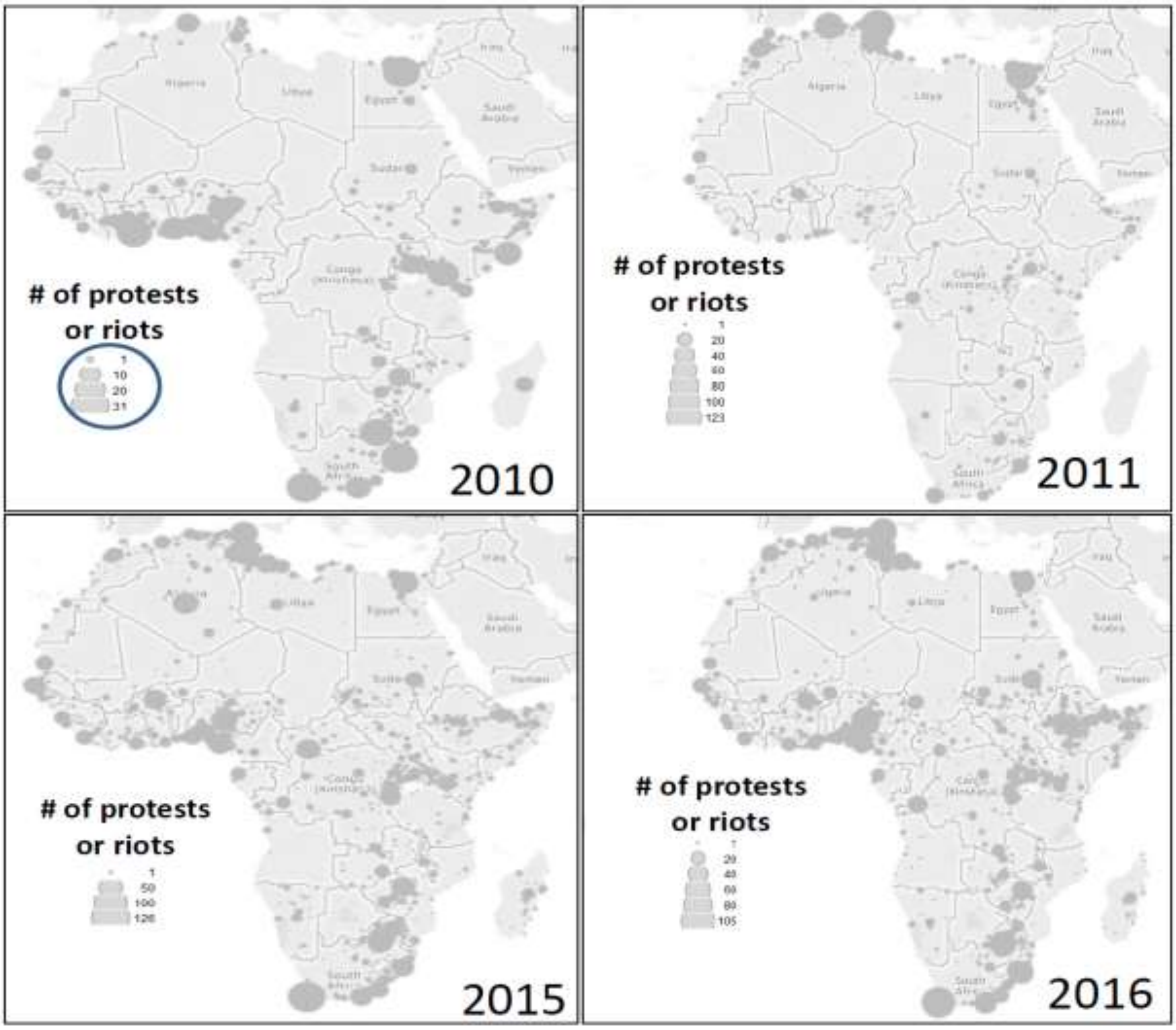
African uprisings, labour and ideology in an era of renewed economic crisis

in Nana Poku and *Jim Whitman* (Eds), *Africa in the Age of Neoliberalism*
London: Earthscan, 2018

Introduction

African uncivil society activists – those willing to express frustration in means other than what are often termed the 'invited spaces' of official participation – have been protesting at a rising rate. There are various ways to measure this power, including police statistics, journalistic accounts and business executive surveys. According to (Pentagon-sponsored 'Minerva') research carried at the Universities of Sussex and Texas, protest incidents rose dramatically in 2010-11 and stayed at remarkably high levels in many African cities (ACLED, 2017; Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, 2016). So too has repression intensified (Kode and Ben Garga, 2017).

Protests and riots measured by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project



In 2010, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED, 2017) database recorded scores of protests (that turned violent, typically facing police repression) or 'riots' in Cairo and Alexandria, Mogadishu, Nairobi, the cities and towns on the Gulf of Guinea – especially in Nigeria – and the four largest South African cities: Johannesburg-Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth. In 2011, dozens of protests in these cities continued. And Tunis, Algiers and Cairo were now measured as hosting more than one hundred protests each.

In the 2015-16 measurements, the continent witnessed even more intense protests across North Africa, Nigeria and South Africa. In addition, Southern Africa witnessed high levels of protests in Harare, Zimbabwe and in Kinshasa and Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in Zambia and Madagascar with the capitals of Lusaka and Antananarivo recording substantial increases compared to 2011. East Africa and the Horn witnessed scores of protests, in Nairobi, Kenya; Kampala, Uganda; Bujumbura, Burundi; Khartoum, Sudan; and in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa and surrounding towns. West African protests were led by Nigerians but there were many other scattered sites of social unrest in the Gulf of Guinea. In North Africa in 2016, there were new rounds of protests in the main 2011 sites: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Algeria. Although the counter-revolution had prevailed in most of these countries, the activists were not deterred from expressing grievances.

The African Development Bank, World Bank and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development also measure protests, using Reuters and Agence France Press reports, and in 2017 observed that higher wages and better working conditions consistently ranked as the main reason for protests in recent years (AfDB et al 2017, 129). Socio-economic protests included the fabled Tunisian revolt in 2011 catalysed by Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation. Both Tunisia and Egypt generated such intense revolutionary bursts of energy because their independent labour movements were also ascendant. Notwithstanding extreme unevenness across and within the continent's trade unions, Africa is ripe for a renewed focus on class struggle.

Indeed, as socio-economic conditions continue to deteriorate, the World Economic Forum's (WEF's) annual *Global Competitiveness Reports* – an annual survey of 14 000 business executives in 138 countries – have ranked the continent's workers as the least cooperative on earth. In 2016, workforces from South Africa (the world's most militant every year since 2012). Chad, Tunisia, Liberia, Mozambique, Morocco, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Algeria and Burundi were in the top 25 most confrontational proletariats (WEF, 2016) (while the most cooperative workers are in Norway, Switzerland, Singapore, Denmark and Sweden).

With GDP declining (to just 1.4% in 2016), commodity prices remaining low and declining levels of transnational corporate investment more frantically exploiting the continent, the contradictions may well lead to more socio-political explosions. The idea of a 'double-movement' – i.e., social resistance against marketisation, as suggested by Karl Polanyi (1944) in *The Great Transformation* – has long applied to Africa. International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity and subsequent 'IMF Riots' spread across the continent during the 1980s and to some extent catalysed democratisation movements during the early 1990s, but mainly failed to establish durable liberal political regimes. With the spoils of exuberant commodity markets going to unaccountable elites, another intense protest wave began in 2011 (Ekine, 2011; Dwyer and Zeilig, 2012; Biney, 2013; Mampilly, 2013).

Labour militancy of working classes, measured by reputation among corporations

Cooperation in labor-employer relations

In your country, how do you characterize labor-employer relations?
[1 = generally confrontational; 7 = generally cooperative]

Rank	Country	Score
1	Norway	6.2
2	Switzerland	6.2
3	Singapore	6.2
4	Denmark	6.1
5	Sweden	6.1
6	Netherlands	5.9
7	Japan	5.8
8	Austria	5.7
9	New Zealand	5.7
10	United Arab Emirates	5.7
11	Luxembourg	5.6
12	Iceland	5.6
13	Qatar	5.5
14	Hong Kong SAR	5.5
15	United Kingdom	5.4
16	Taiwan, China	5.4
17	Malaysia	5.3
18	Rwanda	5.3
19	Ireland	5.3
20	Canada	5.2
21	Bahrain	5.2
22	Finland	5.2
23	Estonia	5.2
24	Costa Rica	5.2
25	Germany	5.1
26	Bhutan	5.1
27	Philippines	5.1
28	Guatemala	5.1
29	Albania	5.1
30	United States	5.0
31	Israel	5.0
32	Malta	4.9
33	Saudi Arabia	4.9
34	Latvia	4.8
35	Mauritius	4.8
36	Thailand	4.8
37	Belgium	4.8
38	Honduras	4.8
39	Armenia	4.7
40	Panama	4.7
41	Jordan	4.7
42	Brunei Darussalam	4.7
43	Tajikistan	4.7
44	Czech Republic	4.7
45	Indonesia	4.7
46	Lao PDR	4.6
47	China	4.6
48	Colombia	4.6
49	Uganda	4.6
50	Azerbaijan	4.6
51	Portugal	4.6
52	Mexico	4.6
53	Sri Lanka	4.6
54	Australia	4.6
55	Oman	4.5
56	Kuwait	4.5
57	Chile	4.5
58	Côte d'Ivoire	4.5
59	Ghana	4.5
60	Kazakhstan	4.5
61	Lithuania	4.5
62	Namibia	4.4
63	Mauritania	4.4
64	Ecuador	4.4
65	Cyprus	4.4
66	Gambia, The	4.4
67	India	4.4
68	Mongolia	4.4
69	Botswana	4.4
70	Cambodia	4.4
71	Nicaragua	4.4
72	Dominican Republic	4.4
73	Zambia	4.3
74	Slovenia	4.3
75	Peru	4.3
76	Barbados	4.3
77	Senegal	4.3
78	Paraguay	4.3
79	Vietnam	4.3
80	Spain	4.3
81	Macedonia, FYR	4.3
82	Hungary	4.3
83	Jamaica	4.3
84	Mali	4.2
85	Lebanon	4.2
86	Nigeria	4.2
87	Slovak Republic	4.2
88	Congo, Democratic Rep.	4.2
89	Georgia	4.2
90	Ukraine	4.2
91	Bangladesh	4.2
92	Bulgaria	4.2
93	Poland	4.2
94	Madagascar	4.2
95	Kenya	4.2
96	Egypt	4.1
97	Moldova	4.1
98	Gabon	4.1
99	Kyrgyz Republic	4.1
100	Cameroon	4.1
101	Benin	4.1
102	Malawi	4.1
103	Russian Federation	4.1
104	Sierra Leone	4.1
105	Greece	4.0
106	Romania	4.0
107	Cape Verde	4.0
108	Zimbabwe	4.0
109	El Salvador	4.0
110	France	3.9
111	Italy	3.9
112	Montenegro	3.9
113	Yemen	3.9
114	Burundi	3.8
115	Algeria	3.8
116	Tanzania	3.8
117	Ethiopia	3.8
118	Brazil	3.8
119	Turkey	3.8
120	Lesotho	3.7
121	Argentina	3.7
122	Morocco	3.7
123	Mozambique	3.7
124	Iran, Islamic Rep.	3.7
125	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.7
126	Serbia	3.7
127	Liberia	3.7
128	Tunisia	3.6
129	Venezuela	3.6
130	Chad	3.5
131	Nepal	3.5
132	Croatia	3.5
133	Bolivia	3.5
134	Pakistan	3.4
135	Korea, Rep.	3.4
136	Uruguay	3.4
137	Trinidad and Tobago	3.2
138	South Africa	2.5

Source: World Economic Forum *Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17*

Indeed the current conjuncture is one we can consider as 'Africans *uprising* against the "Africa Rising" myth.' But where the protests go depends upon whether a corresponding ideology hostile to corporate power emerges from the ashes, and whether the fragile middle classes unite with the masses in universalistic social and economic policies. This uprising is by no means a revolutionary situation, nor even a sustained rebellion. One of the main reasons is the failure of protesters to become a movement, one with a coherent ideology to face the problems of their times with the stamina and insight required. And ideology is sorely lacking, as we see in the case of the most advanced, vanguardist labour movement, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). This is not a permanent problem, but it is one that Frantz Fanon (1967) complained of in *Toward the African Revolution:* "For my part the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles*, the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology."*

*In his speech 'The weapon of theory,' Amilcar Cabral (1966) agreed: "*The ideological deficiency within the national liberation movements, not to say the total lack of ideology – reflecting as this does an ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform – makes for one of the greatest weaknesses in our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all." To even recognise a struggle against imperialism, and also against South African sub-imperial accumulation requires more ideological development, to be sure. It is instructive to consider heated disputes about the next stage of liberation for poor and working-class people that are underway at least amongst leaders of the most militant proletariat, lining up against others from the Marxist tradition, NUMSA.

Was NUMSA's insurgency just a 'moment' – or a future movement?

Within South Africa, the largest union – with 330 000 members confirmed at its December 2016 congress – remains the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).[1] What many observers have remarked upon – often critically – is NUMSA's intense rhetorical militancy, in the wake of its bruising battle with labour nationalists and Communists affiliated to the African National Congress (ANC), as well as with 'Middle Class Marxists' (Ashman and Pons Vignon 2014). To put the fierce exchanges between various fractions of the South African Marxist left into context, consider some recent history. Although there are many targets of its ire ranging from white monopoly capital to the independent left intelligentsia, NUMSA's most decisive war has been with former comrades in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and its intellectual guide, the SA Communist Party (SACP). These have simmered for decades but began to surface in earnest during the prior NUMSA congress, in December 2013. My own overwhelming impression from that event was how 1400 delegates (mostly shop-stewards) drove the union rapidly leftwards, to the point of formally calling for President Jacob Zuma to resign.

It was an extraordinary U-turn, given NUMSA's strong support for Zuma to replace President Thabo Mbeki in 2006-08. Like many in the COSATU-SACP circuit, the expectation was that in exchange for that support, NUMSA would benefit from a radical leftward turn in macro-economic policy and much greater state subsidies to improve working people's livelihoods.

1 Disclosure: I attended the NUMSA congresses in both 2013 and 2016 as an occasional volunteer to the union in the "Friends of NUMSA" category so the next pages are written with at least some sort of bias, albeit with no role in crafting the Marxist-Leninist strategy discussed below.

However, Zuma dutifully stuck with the neo-liberal project and inevitably broke working-class and Communist hearts. Inevitably, anti-Zuma grumbling reached the point of active protest. And so it was not surprising to hear Zuma's desperation 'talk left' gimmicks, such as in November 2016 in Pietermaritzburg when he described the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc as an heroic anti-imperialist force: "It is a small group but very powerful. [The West] did not like BRICS. China is going to be number one economy leader… [Western countries] want to dismantle this BRICS. We have had seven votes of no confidence in South Africa. In Brazil, the president was removed" (*PoliticsWeb,* 2016). (The following week in Parliament, Zuma was asked during the president's Question Time by an opposition legislator: "Which Western countries were you referring to? How did they plan on dismantling Brics? And what will the effect of their actions be on our economic diplomacy with these Western countries over the next decade?" Zuma replied, "I've forgotten the names of these countries. [Laughter.] How can he think I'm going to remember here? He he he he.") (*Citizen,* 2016.)

In December 2013, perhaps the most important reason for NUMSA's revolt against the Alliance was the still-strong memory of the August 2012 Marikana massacre of 34 platinum mineworkers who demanded a living wage of $1520/month. NUMSA delegates were literally stunned into silence when they viewed Rehad Desai's film 'Miners Shot Down,' which later won the Emmy Award for Best International Documentary. The seeds of this radicalisation were sewn when Irvin Jim became leader in 2008. Like any good union, NUMSA has had to direct enormous resources into the bread-and-butter activities of member support that any force in organised labour must promote before doing serious politics. While there are always setbacks along these lines, NUMSA has nevertheless made remarkable steps away from labour corporatism – the Alliance that has served workers so poorly since 1994 – and towards independent militancy. Since 2008, NUMSA leaders and cadres have:

- restored the internal NUMSA left's strength (after the union's self-destructive Mbekite era under Silumko Nondwangu's leadership);
- pushed forceful new arguments into the public sphere about the character of the ANC neoliberal bloc's long-term (transMandela-Mbeki-Zuma) class betrayal;
- helped identify where SACP and COSATU forces were most weak in defending the ANC, and thereby opened a healthy debate culminating in the 2013 NUMSA special congress where the first call to toss out Zuma was made;
- survived what many feared might be a serious (and KwaZulu-Natal-centric ethnicist) challenge by former NUMSA president Cedric Gina's new metalworkers' union;
- won a five-week national metals strike in 2014 and coped with massive deindustrialisation pressures ever since, as the prices of aluminium and steel hit rock bottom and as dumping became a fatal threat to the main smelters;
- built up membership to the 2017 level of 330 000;
- pushed the political contradictions to break-point within COSATU by 2015, resulting in not just NUMSA's expulsion but also the firing of the extremely popular general secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, who leaned too far left for other COSATU leaders' comfort;

- put members on the street in fairly big numbers (e.g. around 30 000 protesting corruption in late 2015, in spite of a clumsy breakdown in alliances with other groups in the more liberal reaches of civil society);
- maintained member – and broader proletarian – discontent with the class character of specific rulers, including Zuma, Ramaphosa, Gordhan and Patel (even though the latter two were at the 2016 congress unsuccessfully attempting to sweet-talk NUMSA), so as not to be co-opted into playing a role (again) in the 2017 ANC electoral congress' internecine battles (as is COSATU on behalf of Ramaphosa);
- knit together COSATU dissidents into a rough bloc (at peak having nine unions) and then set up a process for the announcement (May 2016) and launch (April 2017) of a new workers' federation; and
- quite realistically opened the door for a new workers' party (and this is just a partial list.)

The latter two – the SA Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) under the leadership of Vavi and a potential workers party prior to the 2019 national election – are the main projects on the horizon. The United Front project rose briefly in 2013-14 and then crashed by 2016 (it did not appear to be a high priority of NUMSA), alienating many logical allies and losing respected staff in the process, as well. And although Vavi represents a broad, open-minded socialist current that spans from those communists still arguing for 'National Democratic Revolution' (NDR) to radical civil society, NUMSA has recently emphasised a definition of its own particular 'line' regarding a strategic route forward. That line, with its category of a 'Marxist-Leninist trade union' prior to a vanguardist workers' party, is often dismissed as 'rigid Marxism-Leninism' by independent-left intellectuals, to which NUMSA ideologues reply that petit-bourgeois radical-chic parasites should leave their fold. (Something akin to a shake-out of NUMSA's more Trotskyist and independent-minded staff occurred in late 2016.)

So certain ships are still passing in the South African night. But if we are frank, NUMSA has a massive vessel plowing through choppy waves above deep, torturous currents in unchartered waters, and the left intelligentsia occupies a dinghy limited to well-known shallows. However, it is not impossible that by the time of the mid-2019 election, the NUMSA vanguard can find a way to run alongside (parallel) or in direct coalition (or even merger) with the country's main leftist party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). After its formation in 2013, the EFF went from 6% of the vote in the 2014 election to 8% of the vote in the municipal poll of 2016, enough to evict the ANC from the Johannesburg and Pretoria city councils, as the EFF coalesced with the centre-right Democratic Alliance. (This unhappy marriage could result in divorce before 2019, probably amidst EFF and ANC contestation over an inevitable upturn in township service delivery protests.) With the ANC down from its 2004 high of 69% in a national election to its 2016 low of 54% in the municipal poll, it is quite conceivable that in narrow electoral terms, enormous potential exists for a left party to play a decisive role in national politics, as did the EFF in Johannesburg and Pretoria municipalities.

However, if the self-declared Marxist-Leninist leaders of both NUMSA and the EFF ever find each other in coalition, could what is termed the 'NUMSA moment' become a NUMSA-EFF *movement* replete with an ideology fusing their social bases, in NUMSA's industrial proletariat and the EFF's mix of the precariat and the aspirant progressive petit-bourgeoisie? This scenario is not looked on favourably by many on the independent left, because of a general concern left that EFF leader Julius Malema – whose record of ANC patronage in Limpopo Province prior to his 2013 expulsion as ANC Youth League president remains strong in many memories – will take the EFF's 10+% voting share in 2019 *back into the ANC* in the event that (as in August 2016 in Johannesburg and Tshwane) he becomes a kingmaker. This scenario assumes the ANC vote falls below 50% and that all opposition parties ally to deny the ruling party any further national spoils. Malema told an audience in 2016 that if such an opportunity arises in 2019, he might first destroy the ANC to then rebuild it in alliance with the EFF. But if it is any of the front-runners – Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, former Foreign Minister (and until late 2016 the African Union's Chairperson) Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma or ANC Treasurer Zweli Mkhize – running the ruling party after the December 2017 party congress, that hijack won't be easy to sustain.

In such a scenario, the antidote would be a NUMSA-catalysed, SAFTU-supported workers' party to influence the EFF, so as to prevent the regeneration of neoliberal nationalism with new elites. This is what some in NUMSA would argue is their historical role, once the petit-bourgeois radicalism of the EFF peaks and retreats into populism – a stance which may be proven incorrect. But given the ideological fluidity, there is no way to judge such alliances ahead of 2019. Like Fanon and Cabral, there is a need for a bottom-up communist (and anti-racist, feminist and ecological) political project, instead of the residual Capital-C Communism that still dominates in so many terrains of South African centre-left *real politik.*

The deep roots and fragile surface of South African communism

To illustrate the conundrum, consider what it means to have fought these battles first and foremost, as did key NUMSA leaders, in the Eastern Cape Communist Party tradition. Bearing that in mind, the Marxist-Leninist ideological rhetoric makes sense, because it appears to be the case that:

- the SACP-within-the-ANC is in its dying days (with continual rumours of Party leaders in the Cabinet suffering a purge in a Zuma cabinet reshuffle, and with the youth putting walk-out pressure on the party bosses), and
- COSATU's failures on nearly all policy and political fronts took several important member unions to the point of demanding that Zuma be replaced as president (he probably won't be before 2019); on May Day 2017, enough COSATU members booed Zuma at his main national speech (in the sixth largest city) that day, that the trade union leadership banned Zuma from speaking at their events.

If these are the most proximate political processes looming in the 2017-19 period, then the NUMSA rhetoric might be seen not as Marxist-Leninist dogmatism, but instead as careful positioning to capture a great many cadres who are now finally giving up on the ANC. (Some NUMSA shopstewards had already moved into the EFF in the 2016 election.) The NUMSA political push into the hearts and minds of a prestigious liberation movement is something that in Zimbabwe was tried – and that failed – in the case of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which also began as a workers' party, in January 1999 at its 'Working People's Convention.' By September 1999, the MDC had moved decisively to the right, in part to raise operating funds from white farmers and businesses, a fatal mistake that allowed President Robert Mugabe to paint the MDC as a neo-colonial project. To pull at the ANC from the left using its own NDR language may well be successful, as an alternative to the political alienation faced by so many working-class activists whose mass political experience is grounded in traditionally loyalty to the ANC (Bond and Manyanya, 2003).

Returning to the Fanon-Cabral challenge, NUMSA's historic role is to continually remind a huge ANC NDR-supporting constituency that there is a logical explanation for SACP-COSATU failures within the Alliance: namely, that the Party and labour leaders became fat-cats indistinguishable from the bosses. (This is a fate some observers accuse NUMSA leaders of reproducing, too, with the 'social distance' between leadership and workers still vast, just as is the distance between NUMSA workers – many of whom have struggled hard for five-digit monthly salaries – and the poorest South Africans.) So the NUMSA rhetoric is quite clear. Its simple message is that the NDR and two-stage revolution were correct as conceptualisation and strategy, *but that the wrong people were given the task of implementation, because the ANC, COSATU and SACP together grew far too comfortable maintaining the neoliberal nationalist status quo.*

This is a line of argument that may not readily appeal to most labour activists and social movements in South Africa, however. Nevertheless, the NDR remains especially appealing to those who still consider the ANC's pre-1994 populist nationalism to be South Africa's most prestigious political project, given that it was the main liberation-movement force in apartheid's defeat. Even though that was in 1994, the NDR tradition retains deep roots. And it is likely that, with its new leadership (probably either Dlamini-Zuma or Ramaphosa), the ANC can continue to maintain its 50%+ majority in the next election and beyond. So while there may be big problems in principle and theory with the NDR argument and the sell-out thesis, still, it is hard to dispute in empirical terms. The 'first stage' – the 'political kingdom' – was substantively reached in 1994. A 'second stage' – economic justice – is long overdue. And the persuasiveness of the SA comprador class – ranging across the main intra-ANC divide (i.e., from the Zuma-Gupta 'Zupta' patronage machine to the neoliberal bloc that until March 2017 controlled the Treasury) – represents the main barrier to the revolution's second stage. In addition, the South African state has engaged in a variety of dirty tricks to slow the transition's second stage, especially as community protests continue swelling (Alexander, Runciman and Ngwane, 2014; Duncan, 2016; Paret, Runciman and Sinwell, 2017).

With South Africa in a profound state of crisis, it is tragic that in spite of NUMSA and EFF efforts as well as SACP-COSATU anti-capitalist rhetoric, only two narratives dominate the political space: first, Zupta and second, neoliberal good-governance. Hence, breaking through with tried and tested NDR-speak might well work, and leaders like Malema, Jim and Vavi certainly know their constituencies. But to address those who are concerned about the ideological drift backwards to a Third International (i.e. 'Stalinist') reading of the NDR, will require more work. And yet there is a limited incentive for these leaders to move to the left, for every initiative by South Africa's tiny revolutionary cohort has failed to attract working-class membership much less leadership. Unlike the North African cases in 2011, the mix of the intelligentsia, progressive NGOs, social movements, frustrated citizens and creative labour activists in South Africa have not found anything like the mass support of EFF and NUMSA.

The role of labour within left regroupment

It may not be the 2019 election, but in South Africa there will be a point when looking beyond the rhetorical battleground and the immediate cadre-gathering becomes far more important than the current conjuncture. At a time much closer to a crunch moment, when alliances are really vital to make, might the masses from NUMSA workplaces take to the streets in combination – not contradiction – with the left movements' regroupment trajectory? Outside of the uncertain electoral terrain explored above, there are many other opportunities for the resurgent labour left to promote justice in South Africa:

- NUMSA hasn't folded to repression and divide-and-conquer and still holds up the strongest class challenge to capitalist power,
- the Food and Allied Workers Union (with 120 000 members in 2017) walked away from COSATU and make up the second-largest component of SAFTU,
- the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (with 200 000 members in 2017 and a loose affiliation to the other critics of COSATU) wasn't beat back into oblivion during the 2014-15 mining crisis which included a five-month platinum strike and the destruction of the vast bulk of their employers' share value (e.g. Lonmin lost 99.4 percent from early to late 2015);
- the working class as a whole is still considered the world's most militant at a time SA inequality has soared and the capitalist class is considered (by PricewaterhouseCoopers) to be the world's most corrupt;
- the EFF have grown stronger and less politically erratic;
- the new terrain of municipal politics (where EFF and ANC will likely compete to support – if not catalyse – community protests) is becoming very interesting as contradictions continue to emerge;
- communities continue protesting at very high rates over service non-delivery or excessive pricing or politicians' arrogance, notwithstanding the state's ever-stronger repressive and surveillance techniques;
- although student movement momentum faltered in late 2016 after a spectacular 2015 national debut, those activists have lots more potential for future mobilisations and alliances; and
- social movements, the Right2Know coalition, women, LGBTI activists, the NGO Equal Education, the Treatment Action Campaign, progressive environmentalists and other protesters make their voices heard and often win important battles along the way.

In coming years, can the infrastructure supporting all of this (even including support structures inhabited by obscure academics and others reading this) expand at the rate needed, so as to move forward as quickly as reality will demand? The African uprisings since 2011 have taught progressives that in the pro-democracy and social justice scenarios of mass demonstrations that made several countries so fertile for a change of state power – Gambia (2017), Burkina Faso (2014), Senegal (2012) and Tunisia (2011), for example – the moment of change comes without warning. There is typically a build-up in social grievances and an explosion. The aftermath includes a profound threat of counter-revolution, which in

Burkina Faso was repelled in 2015, but which in Egypt and Libya have been successful in suppressing democratic, progressive social movements since 2011 (in both cases with Western imperial aid and arms to the counter-revolution).

Will South Africa find itself, as Moeletsi Mbeki predicted, facing 'Tunisia Day' – a phrase signifying a joyous (yet threatening to elites) uprising such as occurred in January 2011 – as early as 2020? Can Africans update the threat, to encompass the extraordinary advances that have become evident in post-dictator regimes, or in sites like South Africa itself where the overthrow of (Moeletsi's brother) Thabo Mbeki's AIDS-denialist policies in 2004 raised life expectancy from 52 to 62 thanks to nearly four million people getting generic medicines for free?

The sense of stop-start progress and regress in so many sites, including South Africa, reflects in part how *rarely* the working-class, poor, progressive middle class, social movements and other democrats have made alliances. The Africans *uprising* against the neoliberal Africa Rising strategy of export- and resource-dependency, hasn't yet generated a firm ideology, and NUMSA's Marxism-Leninism is not enough to grapple with the broader alliances with the precariat and an extremely fragile middle-class. Such an ideology was much more apparent when in the 1960s-70s the phrase 'self-reliance' accompanied much leftist discourse. The Lagos Plan of Action even reflected this ideological approach. It may be that an updated ideology associated with Ubuntu philosophy and 'deglobalising' economies will emerge.

Nothing can be readily predicted in the current conjuncture. The only strategy that seems to be worth following, in search of a unifying progressive ideology, is a non-dogmatic appreciation of the various forces, so that whatever principles, analysis, strategies, tactics and alliances do emerge on the left can be treated with both respect and comradely critique. The debate over NUMSA may not yet have arrived at that healthier stage of inquiry, but at least there is a debate and an inquiry – the first steps to reclaiming some sort of profound ideological breakthrough so that the pessimism of the Fanon and Cabral warnings becomes a genuine Afro-optimism worthy of the ongoing struggles by so many African activists.

The ecological element during an era of climate change

Africa's social, community and labour movements have expressed both hopes and reservations about the translation of an example like NUMSA's into a full-fledged socialist ideology. The 2008 launch of the Democratic Left Front (DLF) was one opportunity to link independents under the rubric of an 'eco-socialism,' and led many of its activists onto the terrain of 'anti-extractivism' that Latin Americans were establishing as part of the 'Buen Vivir' framework. The DLF ultimately faded in importance as its cadres were integrated into the United Front in 2014. Although NUMSA did not provide sufficient resources to sustain the work and although its own rank-and-file were mainly absent from building the Front, the union's sense of a 'Movement for Socialism' relies on grassroots campaigning to establish the terrain on which its Marxist-Leninist vanguardists can operate (Satgar 2016).

Unlike many earlier-generation socialist activists who located themselves deep in the trade union movement, today's generation finds different contemporary campaigns attractive. For example, the Cape Town-based 'Million Climate Jobs' campaign (2011) suggests turning off the vast flow of electricity to South Africa's smelters and mines which would, in turn, help redirect employment there to more constructive, post-carbon activities: jobs in renewable energy, public transport, insulation retrofitting, digging biogas digesters and many others. As for communities, a class/race analysis of electricity access is expressed readily when some of the more advanced groups show visitors their own dirty household energy (paraffin, wood or coal), often in the immediate vicinity of a massive mine, smelter or power-plant (ka-Manzi and Bond, 2015).

As another example, Alternative Information and Development Centre political economist Dick Forslund (2016) suggests, 'The point of departure for eco-socialism should be the subsistence farming in many areas that are now contested by the mining corporations, unleashing many struggles for the land.' Forslund has been based in one such area of intense contestation: Xolobeni on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape, where in 2016 local anti-mining leader Bazooka Rhadebe was assassinated. He argues that given the collectivised land ownership and pre-capitalist social relations in such sites, politics should emerge "in the way the land users want it, taking the parts of 'modernity' that are not destructive and unsustainable into 'the communal mode of production'. Eco-socialism can put food security at its centre."

Indeed, an independent-left food sovereignty campaign emerged (with strong residual influence by DLF cadres), in part because of the difficult conditions in the ex-homelands, as well as food price inflation. One of the main intellectual influences in this movement, Vishwas Satgar, is also a professor of international political economy at Johannesburg's main university. "The ANC state has surrendered to market-centred green neoliberalism and the logic of ecocide," according to Satgar (2014), who was formerly the main leader of the SA Communist Party in greater Johannesburg, prior to a purge that left traditionalists in charge. "It has shown itself incapable of leading transformative just transition. Instead, this has to be led from below by forces such as the United Front, the emerging Food Sovereignty Alliance, the Solidarity Economy Movement, community-mining networks and rural movements."

Satgar's colleague Jacklyn Cock has been most persuasive in repeatedly showing how 'new coalitions and forms of co-operation between both labour and environmental activists contain the promise of a new kind of socialism that is ethical, ecological and democratic.' For Cock (2016) that will entail

> collective, democratic control of production for social needs, rather than profit; the mass roll out of socially-owned renewable energy could mean decentralized energy with much greater potential for community control; the localisation of food production in the shift from carbon-intensive industrial agriculture to food sovereignty; new relations between men and women and the sharing of resources in more collective social forms.

An example of the ideological innovations emerging to this end within social movements, is the Womin eco-feminist network's critique of the Paris climate summit in late 2015. Not only were the dozen Womin activists who protested there amongst the loudest critics of the pro-corporate, Washington-designed deal. In this statement, they were not exaggerating in claiming a privileged space for feminist mutual aid systems in the struggle against corporate capitalism, because these are the same tasks in social reproduction they carried out more than a century before apartheid fell, as migrant labour systems became generalised. According to Womin (2015),

> African women, alongside our working-class, indigenous, peasant and black sisters in other parts of the world, offer the most revolutionary alternatives to this deeply destructive model of development. These alternatives are found in the ways African women produce food, conserve and steward natural resources, and take care of our families and communities. Ours are the *living* alternatives to be recognised, built on and supported.

Together, these ideological and practical prefigurations represent a reflection of how South Africans are tackling the eco-socialist ideological challenge. As Canadian political scientist Greg Albo (2007) advises, not only do "Class and ecological struggles against capitalism depend upon campaigns won in families, workplaces, neighbourhoods and communities, all of which are located within particular environments." The organizer must ensure that "everyday acts of resistance in daily life connect with one another through time, so that they can become the building blocks in the process of collectively helping to envisage and build an organizational alternative. This is most basic element of socialist and ecological renewal."

In South Africa it is already evident that the process of left organizational regroupment will rely upon local resistances to the daily indignities and life-threatening attacks by capital, such as those noted above at the scales of the health-impaired body and the household needing basic water and electricity supplies. But jumping scale to national level, the period immediately ahead is also vital for South African workers to transcend defensive measures when warding off extreme pressure by capitalists, such as in the mining and smelting sectors. Left-Keynesian macro-economic arguments offer one framing that can help jump scale to national policy. But as socialists, the main advocates of a different macro-economic approach are the NUMSA militants who implicitly understand the 'non-reformist reforms' of Andre Gorz (1964). That means ensuring that small victories won today (e.g. a 10 per cent import tariff on Chinese steel in 2015 demanded and won by NUMSA) can build working-class confidence and work against the logic of the existing system. Those reforms may appear protectionist or based on outmoded loose-money theory when considered in surface appearance, but they are not the endpoint of the macro-economic debate.

Tomorrow's opportunities can be grasped only through the ever-closer interaction of environmental and social justice activists with NUMSA and SAFTU. It is only through broader-ranging fronts and coalitions that a 'just transition' will be envisaged and implemented. And that transition will only occur if there is a massive shift in state subsidies towards major public works – community-oriented, worker self-managed, socially-controlled – aimed at changing all manner of systems that are presently carbon-intensive, especially energy generation, transport and urbanisation.

Perhaps the activists will determine that the only route through to such campaigning and ideological clarity is what can be termed eco-socialism (although in South Africa it is just as likely to benefit from organic phraseology). As the metabolism of capital-labour-society-environment becomes more exploitative, as exposed mining and smelting capital continues to devalue in ever more destructive ways, and as climate change implications become ever more obvious, the main question is whether the route forward will be blocked by the narrowness of ideology-free localist and sectoral-based activism. Or whether, in considering prior working-class victories that empowered their very bodies, the next generation of radicals turns to the eco-socialist themes so essential to our broader prospects for survival. Although in South Africa such ideas can be expressed with confidence as a result of the strong cohorts of activists and the conditions of capitalist and ecological crisis, they also apply well on the continent, where the world economy and climate change are battering ordinary Africans.

Conclusion

Across Africa, much labour movement activism is still rooted in micro-shop floor and industry-level sectoral demands. Shifting to a broader ideological terrain, to national policy contestation and to Africa-wide solidarity is a vast task. The South African working-class turn to xenophobia in 2008, 2010 and 2015 (and in between) show that even the most advanced, militant proletariat reverts to Othering instead of continental and internationalist solidarity.

Still, once organised labour in unison with community, environmental, women's and other groups provides the 'Africans uprising' against the 'Africa Rising' constituency of extractive industries and neo-liberal policy managers, a different set of policies will be advocated. An egalitarian economic argument will be increasingly easier to make now that global capitalism is forcing Africa towards rebalancing. That will compel, ultimately, a much more courageous economic policy:

- in the short term, re-impose exchange controls to better control both illicit and licit financial flows, then lower interest rates to boost growth; audit 'odious debt' before further repayment, and better control imports and exports;
- adopt an ecologically sensitive industrial policy aimed at import substitution, sectoral re-balancing, social needs and true sustainability;
- increase state social spending paid for by higher corporate taxes, cross-subsidisation and more domestic borrowing (and loose-money 'quantitative easing', too, if necessary and non-inflationary);
- reorient infrastructure to meet unmet basic needs and expand/maintain/improve the energy grid, sanitation, public transport, clinics, schools, recreational facilities and the internet; and
- in places like South Africa and Nigeria rife with fossil fuels, adopt 'Million Climate Jobs' strategies to generate employment for a genuinely green 'Just Transition' (Bond 2016).

These are radical-sounding policies. But assuming state power can be won in a democratic election, they are attractive to those Africans with even a 'Keynesian' world-view aiming to rescue capitalism from its most self-destructive instincts. Indeed, John Maynard Keynes (1933) was the most brilliant economist of the last century when it came to saving capitalism from its worst excesses. As he put it in his 1933 *Yale Review* essay entitled 'National Self-Sufficiency': "I sympathise with those who would minimise, rather than with those who would maximise, economic entanglement among nations. Ideas, knowledge, science, hospitality, travel – these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible and, above all, let finance be primarily national."

Today we might term this the 'globalisation of people and deglobalisation of capital', and it is a perfect way to sloganise a sound short-term economic strategy appropriate for Africa. Samir Amin, the continent's greatest political economist, has argued for this sort of delinking strategy since the 1960s (Amin, 1990). It is time those arguments are dusted off and put to work, to help Africans continue to rise against the 'Africa Rising' meme and all that it represents.

Those who would dispute this line of argument must confront evidence of the futility of Africa's export-led economic fantasies, whether via the West or BRICS economies, in view of the continuing Great Recession: the dramatic downturn in world trade over the past year, the decline in rich country GDP to a two per cent annual level, and recessionary conditions in emerging markets. And as a final clarion call for radical re-envisaging of African political economy, there is also a political-ecological imperative to reboot the fossil fuel-addicted sectors of the economy as the world necessarily moves to post-carbon life. The Naomi Klein (2014) book *This Changes Everything* bears witness to the need to restructure a great many areas of life:

- energy (oil/coal to renewables);
- transport (private to public, shipping to local production);
- urban form (from sprawling suburbs to compact cities);
- housing/services (from hedonism to socio-ecological);
- agriculture/food (from semi-feudal, sugar-saturated, carbon-intensive, plantation-grown to organic, cooperative and vegetarian-centric);
- production (from multinational-corporate capitalist logic to 'Just Transition' localisation, eco-social planning and cooperation);
- consumption (from advertisement-driven, high-carbon, import-intensive and materialistic to de-commodified basic-needs guarantees and eco-socially sound consumption norms);
- disposal (from planned obsolescence to 'zero-waste');
- health, education, arts and social policy (from capitalist-determined to post-carbon, post-capitalist); and
- social/private space (from durable race/class/gender segregation to public space, recreation, desegregation and human liberation).

That, then, is the major challenge for Africans who rise up against injustice, especially those forms which can generate solidarity with the rest of the world's progressive people, and even their own middle classes. It is only in sketching out contradictions and opportunities that we can project forward several decades. But at this critical juncture, as the commodity super-cycle's denouement now makes obvious the need for change, at least it is evident that Africans are not lying down. After the 2011 peak of the commodity super-cycle, it was simply illogical to proclaim that Africa was 'rising' given its economies' dependence on primary exports and with most major mining houses' value crashing on the world's stock exchanges. Not even the more intensive corporate exploitation of Africa can disguise the crisis. This case requires continuous revisiting given how damaging the neo-liberal export-orientated strategy (and middle-class rising myth with it) was to genuine popular development, gender equity and Africa's natural environment.

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‘*The State of the Continent is Good’:* African ‘Foreigners’ and Foreign Direct Investment, seen from Subimperial South Africa

Africa Development, 2020, 45, 2, https://codesria.org/spip.php?rubrique39&lang=en

Abstract

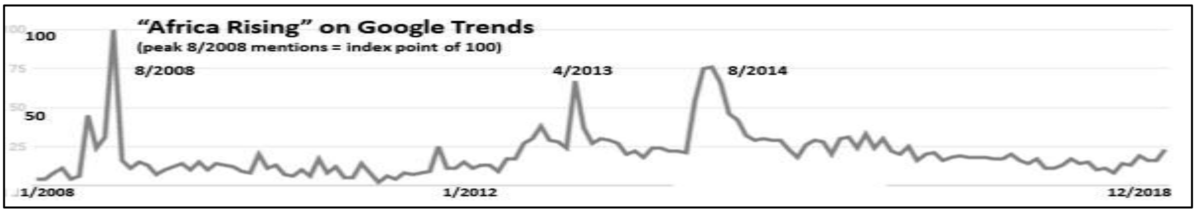
The xenophobic upsurge witnessed in Johannesburg in September 2019 was tragically revealing, in part because the social crisis unfolding within this former engine of capital accumulation – and ongoing melting pot of African entrepreneurs – signals many of the most extreme political-economic contradictions within the continent. African elite commentators’ perpetual neoliberal hope – that export-led growth based on primary commodity production will produce the desired ‘development’ results – continues to suffer from harsh economic, political and now also climatic realities. Among these are world capitalist downturn (‘deglobalisation’), especially multinational corporate disinvestment and persistent resource drain which occurs in alliance with local leaders. To the problem of imperialist drainage of Africa must be added a ‘subimperialism’ practiced by a handful of middle-income states and their corporations – including South African – which over the past few decades have increasingly accompanied Western firms, finance and trading routes. Hence the ‘Africa Rising’ hype that reflected strong GDP growth from 2002-11, followed by the peak and then 2015 crash of the commodity super-cycle, was entirely misleading. That period’s depletion of raw materials drained the continent of net wealth far worse – more than $100 billion annually – than even Illicit Financial Flows. Yet as South Africa prepares to take over African Union leadership in 2020, at a time climate catastrophes – whose main local cause is South African coal-related emissions (11th highest per capita on earth and 3rd most carbon-addicted economy among countries with more than 10 million people) – are becoming unmistakable, a new round of official foreign-investment myopia can be discerned from the African Development Bank, World Economic Forum-Africa and even the UN Conference on Trade and Development. There are various antidotes to the misleading analyses and prescriptions in these sites of power, some of which are potentially progressive (e.g. the unprecedented series of anti-authoritarian protests witnessed in at least 18 countries) and others obviously reactionary (especially resurgent South African working-class Afrophobia). But the first step is recognising just how much the official rhetoric, even from organic African elite sources, departs from reality.

Introduction: Myopia and resentment at the World Economic Forum-Africa

In the midst of South Africa’s mid-2019 social turmoil – over not only a fresh outbreak of xenophobia but a simultaneous worsening of the country’s gender-based violence pandemic – the World Economic Forum (WEF)-Africa’s meeting was held at the Cape Town convention centre from September 3-5. Earlier in the year, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) was agreed to. The host president, Cyril Ramaphosa, attempted to put the best possible face on the event: ‘The future is great, it looks very bright for the African continent, and if there was ever a time when Africa can definitely be said to be on the rise, this is the time. This is Africa’s century, and we want to utilise it to good effect’ (Pomeroy and Bruce-Lockhart 2019).

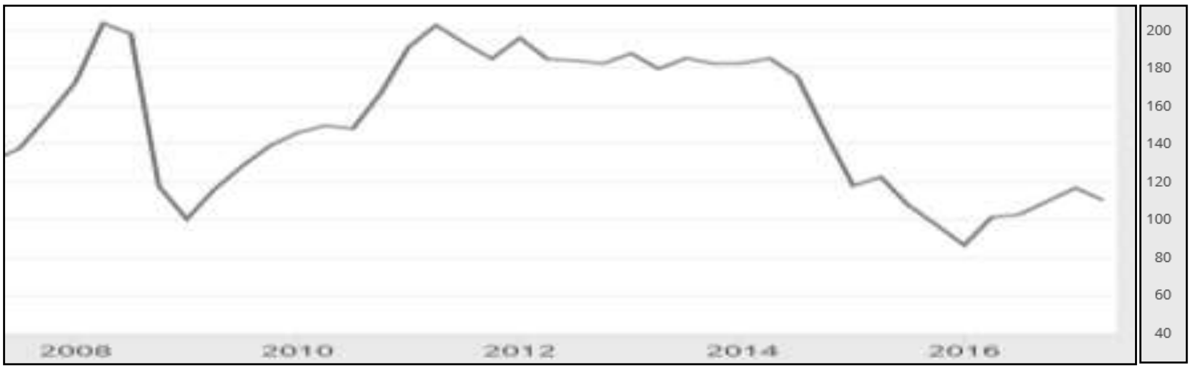
Such optimism harked back to ambitions a decade earlier, when the words 'Africa Rising' were often heard, especially during the 2008-14 peak of the global commodity super-cycle. China's massive internal expansion had at the time generated new impetus for African exports in the midst of the world financial meltdown (e.g. Perry 2012).

Figure 1: Africa Rising



Source : Google Trends

Figure 2: Index of Global Commodity Prices, 2008-18 (2005=100)



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis.

But even Africa's most optimistic economic news of 2019 – AfCFTA – was another casualty of the xenophobic attacks raging in Johannesburg just as the WEF meeting began. That violence initially targeted Nigerian businesses, including an upscale auto showroom where dozens of vehicles were burnt on September 2. Former World Bank vice president and the co-founder of the #BringBackOurGirls Movement, Obiageli Ezekwesili, was livid:

> The South African government looked away while our citizens were maimed, attacked and killed. They refuse to address the problem of xenophobia and allow the myth to continue that migrants are the cause of economic problems in the country. Yet it is a well-documented fact that migration can enhance economic growth in a country – do they know how many 'illegal immigrants' in South Africa are teachers? The mood towards migrants in South Africa threatens the entire free trade agreement; you cannot build a free trade area under those conditions (Planting 2019).[1]

Indeed, that very point immediately became obvious within the WEF-Africa summit, according to ubiquitous financial commentator Peter Altard Montalto (2019):

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1 Ezekwisili was not alone. In Nigeria, South African cellphone company MTN (Mahlaka 2019) and major retailers Shoprite and Pep were protested, and in Lubumbashi, the South African consulate was attacked along with Mr Price retail and Chicken Inn. Other protests were recorded in Zambia and Malawi (Capron and O'Brien 2019). The strange rebuttal by South African politicians was that Nigerians in particular were targets (Tau 2019). For structural critique of economic crisis conditions as factors in this xenophobia, see Amisi *et al* 2011.

> So much potential has been offered up from the ratification of the agreement, but absolutely no clarity could be got from the public sector and there were uncertain expectations from the private sector on implementation, factors to watch and time-lines. The issue of AfCFTA was continually mentioned at official and side meetings, but I came away with no real understanding of a path from here that we can define, cross-check and mark as implemented. It seems like a pipe dream.

Journalist Sasha Planting (2019) is correct that although high hopes are expressed for AfCFTA, the forces of continental *dis*integration may be overwhelming:

> The UN Economic Commission for Africa estimates that the agreement will boost intra-African trade by 52 percent by 2022. Signing an agreement and implementing the agreement are two different things, however, and navigating a route through the complexities created by trade nationalism and protectionism will not be easy, as SA's experience with xenophobic violence clearly documents. It is also vital that the agreement does not enable the economically stronger at the expense of the vulnerable.

But that danger looms large, in part because so many local politicians and officials were intent on xenophobia-denialism or even justification. In Cape Town, according to one reporter, 'the anger among Africans about South Africa's xenophobia and the government's refusal to address it is palpable' (Planting 2019). And this unrest was followed immediately by thousands of feminists and anti-xenophobic PanAfricans protesting outside the WEF-Africa, compelling even the normally insensitive elites inside a business gathering to wake up and confront the extreme contradictions in continental political economy that could no longer be brushed aside.

Partly as a result, the WEF-Africa Cape Town event also lacked the business frisson of prior summits in Durban in 2017 or Kigali in 2015-16, when 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' (4IR) rhetoric was unveiled by the Swiss WEF sponsors. There was an underwhelming response from the host, in part because South Africa's business confidence level had just fallen to the lowest level in 20 years (Mjo 2019). In spite of Ramaphosa's rhetoric, both South Africa's and the continent's stagnation was obvious, and as a result, the audience was subjected to 'vague generalities and platitudes,' according to Montalto (2019):

> WEF is a show, a choreographed stunt of corporate leadership, third-sector worthies and governments coming together… This plays into South Africa's hands – South Africa is excellent at putting on such shows and with the weather and vista of Cape Town can deliver the vibe to attendees glad of the holiday. The government takes WEF extremely seriously, with pre-meetings and agendas and press releases and most of the Cabinet there. The business has been happy to come along in previous years and play the best 'TeamSA' role (yes, with scarves and all) – choreographed into the action. But the business was having none of it this year and there was no sense of TeamSA.

Another major problem for WEF-Africa publicists was a series of large, militant protests outside the Cape Town convention centre on each of the conference days, by feminists (mainly), anti-xenophobia activists and other country-specific human rights advocacy lobbyists. Ramaphosa's inaction was the main target, as he had to cancel one WEF keynote speech so as to deal with the critique of patriarchy. All of this shook up the gathering, Montalto (2019) reported:

> The xenophobic violence in recent weeks caused a number of withdrawals (including from a Nigerian co-chair of the forum), but even before this, there was a lack of many names planning on attending. As a result, many sessions seemed poorly attended and applause was muted even in the more full sessions. A breach on the number one rule of WEF – which is security and the cordon around events – by protesters was perhaps part of the issue, but even then most attendees I spoke to understood a protest about sexual violence is a very different and more worthy issue than the usual anti-capitalist protests at such events.

Those 'usual' protests, e.g. as arranged by several hundred activists in the People's Economic Forum at the mid-2017 WEF-Africa in Durban (Bond 2017b), did not transpire in Cape Town, but it is worth recalling the extent to which dissent also marred the event two years earlier. Demonstrators targeted WEF-Africa 2017 heads-of-state who were generally considered tyrants: Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (removed in a November 2017 violent coup), Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, King Mswati of Eswatini and Edgar Lungu of Zambia. The main host was Jacob Zuma, who was tossed out of power in a February 2018 palace coup due to extreme levels of fraud during what his successor Ramaphosa later termed – at the WEF-Davos event in 2019 – 'nine lost years.'

A central figure during those years was 2017 WEF-Africa co-chair Siyabonga Gama, against whom his employer Transnet (South Africa's transport parastatal) commissioned a 200 page report in 2010, declaring him guilty of helping the Communications Minister commit multi-million dollar fraud. Zuma ensured Gama was rehired, where he was central to the corruption nexus, before he was finally fired for good in late 2018. South Africa's corruption-riddled state firms Telkom (phones) and Eskom (electricity) were also WEF-Africa fixtures, along with the Japanese company Hitachi. That firm had in 2015 paid a $19 million corruption fine to the US government after confessing illegal collusion with a fundraising arm of South Africa's ruling party. Hitachi was hired to build boilers at Eskom's $15 billion Medupi Power Plant – but 7000 welds needed redoing at the world's largest coal-fired power plant under construction (with the World Bank's largest-ever loan), a project still a decade behind schedule. Many WEF 'partner' corporations like Hitachi are implicated in Africa's state and parastatal corruption pandemics.[2]

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2 From the private sector, WEF-Africa 2017 partner corporations found guilty of serious corruption include bankers from Barclays, Citi (which to its credit in 2017 paid the first fine – $5.4 million – for manipulating the South African currency alongside 16 other banks), Credit Suisse, HSBC, Investec, Morgan Stanley, Standard Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank. Other WEF-Africa financiers with dubious ethical reputations include the Development Bank of Southern Africa and Old Mutual and Swiss Reinsurance corporations. In the construction industry, WEF-Africa hosted firms guilty of corruption including the Swiss-Swedish ABB and Nigeria's Dangote Group, joining controversial local mining houses African Rainbow Minerals and AngloGold Ashanti. WEF-Africa's partners in the business services, media and high tech fields also had records of fraud: Accenture, Baker & McKenzie, Boston Consulting, Cisco, Ericsson, Ernst & Young, Google, Microsoft, McKinsey, MTN, Naspers, PwC and Toshiba. And others of WEF-Africa's multinational corporate sponsors which bribed politicians across the world include Dow Chemical, Honeywell, Mitsubishi, Pfizer, Procter & Gamble, and Royal Philips (Bond 2017b).

Whereas in 2019 there was no WEF-Africa headliner from the 'international community' to give the event weight, the main non-African guest in 2017 was a man considered to be the most economically powerful in Europe, German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble. It is worth considering his agenda in 2017, for his own notorious corruption incident (Languth 2009) and dogmatic imposition of neoliberalism (Varoufakis 2017) were not remarked upon given his status. So Schäuble used the Durban WEF-Africa to sell a plan – the G20 Compact for Africa, which he co-chaired with the South African finance minister Malusi Gigaba (who resigned in late 2018 due to his role in widespread parastatal corruption) – for reviving multinational corporate investment in selected African countries with pro-business leadership.[3] The Compact was a priority, said Schäuble, because 'In Europe, we have come to understand that Africa represents one of the most important issues for the growth and stability of the global economy' (Heide et al 2017).

Africa as an 'issue' for global economic 'growth' dates to an earlier Berlin project: the 'Scramble for Africa' in 1884-85 (Phimister 1993). The continent's dysfunctional borders were drawn then, with nary an African in sight, in order to facilitate property rights for colonial extractive industries, all the better to ensure infrastructure investment. Roads, railways, bridges and ports needed to withdraw resources have been cemented into place ever since, and now require refurbishing and expansion, for further extraction.

But another explanation for the Compact can be offered: Germany's 2017 national election, in which president Angela Merkel needed a rhetorical device to explain to voters how the million African refugees who entered Germany over the prior dozen years could be kept at bay in future. At the WEF-Africa, Schäuble not only sidelined the more generous 'Marshall Plan' strategy advanced by Merkel's development ministry, he also insisted that African governments provide more public subsidies – and take on much more risk – for 'Public Private Partnership' infrastructure. This typically amount to profits, pilfering and – for consumers of commercialised infrastructure – pain (Bond 2017b).

A tough critique of Schäuble's strategy was offered by a 'C20' (2017) group of civil society critics, not only about the top-down process, but about

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3 By 2019, the dozen Compact countries (in addition to G20 member South Africa) were Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. Although the member countries' FDI inflows shrunk in 2018, according to the Compact with Africa secretariat, 'from $30.7 billion in 2018 down from $54.4 billion in 2017 (the number of projects recorded remained about the same: 304 in 2018 and 303 the year prior),' due to huge, once-off energy projects in Egypt and Ghana in 2017.

According to the main IMF official for Africa, 'Compact countries have deepened their commitment to structural reforms that improve the business climate. In the past few years, nearly all the Compact countries have featured in the group of top ten reformers in the [International Finance Corporation] Doing Business survey results' (Selassie 2019). This was the pull factor, but he also acknowledged a push force behind capital: 'The Compact would serve to contribute, albeit in a limited way, as an outlet for the increasing amounts of savings in advanced economies unable to secure any returns. In one corner of the global economy, we have a significant shortfall in demand. In another, there is much unmet investment demand and projects with incredibly high rates of return. To an extent, this has always been true. But the juxtaposition, I don't think, has ever been this stark' (Selassie 2019).

> higher costs for the citizens, worse service, secrecy, loss of democratic influence and financial risks for the public… and the multinational corporations involved demand that their profits be repatriated in hard currency – even though the typical services contract entails local-currency expenditures and revenues – and that often raises African foreign debt levels, which are now at all-time highs again in many countries.

There are many ways to seek foreign direct investment for Africa, but the WEF-Africa route is often the most dangerous in part because it is so misleading and overoptimistic. Whether based on Compact with Africa philosophy imposed from the G20 or 4IR deregulatory strategies parachuted from Davos, FDI-seeking can be a blinding pursuit. In 2019, WEF-Africa leader Elsie Kanza made this claim, ostensibly from the *World Investment Report* from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2019b): 'FDI has increased on the continent at a time in the past three years when there's been a decline globally. There has been an increase of 100 percent between 2017 and 2018 with most of the deals happening here in South Africa' (Menon 2019).

Behind UNCTAD's fictitious FDI data

The reality is worth reflecting on. Kanza was not only incorrect, factually, since for the continent as a whole, UNCTAD had recently reported on an 11 percent rise (Figure 3). But the South African case was indeed phenomenal, according to UNCTAD's (2019a) January 2019 *Investment Trends Monitor.* As proudly repeated by Ramaphosa (2019) at WEF-Davos a few days later,

> Last year, we launched an ambitious drive to raise $100 billion in new investment over five years. At the inaugural South Africa Investment Conference in October last year, both local and international companies announced around $20 billion of investments in new projects or to expand existing ones. According to a report released by UNCTAD on Monday, direct foreign investment into South Africa increased by more than 440% between 2017 and 2018, from $1.3 billion to $7.1 billion.

Soon afterwards, Ramaphosa used the news of the dramatic FDI rise in his State of the Nation Address ('Sona'), to great fanfare (Figure 4). However, a major problem for this line of argument emerged in June 2019 with the release of UNCTAD's (2019b) *World Investment Report,* i.e., that the new South African FDI of $5.3 billion (not $7.1 billion) in 2018 – second in Africa only to Egypt's – was not mainly technically greenfield plants, equipment and machinery that create jobs.

> FDI flows to *South Africa* more than doubled to $5.3 billion in 2018, contributing to progress in the Government's campaign to attract $100 billion of FDI by 2023. The surge in inflows was largely due to intracompany loans, but equity inflows also recorded a sizeable increase. (UNCTAD 2019b: 38)[4]

4 Raising such concerns about South African data quality with UNCTAD officials generally did not help, because, their economists argue, 'the Reserve Bank, unfortunately, report FDI data based on asset/liability basis rather than directional basis and this might create some confusion to the readers' (Sulstarova 2019).

Figure 3: UNCTAD 2019 promotion of Africa's alleged FDI inflow

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Foreign direct investment to Africa defies global slump, rises 11% — 12 June 2019

WIR 2019

Continent-wide trade agreement bodes well for future investment in Africa and burgeoning special economic zones further buttress prospects.

Africa escaped the global decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) as flows to the continent rose to US$46 billion in 2018, an increase of 11% on the previous year, according to UNCTAD's *World Investment Report 2019*.

Growing demand for some commodities and a corresponding rise in their prices as well as the growth in non-resource-seeking investment in a few economies underpinned the rise.

While FDI in some large economies on the continent – such as Nigeria and Egypt – contracted, this was outweighed by a surge in flows to others, most significantly, South Africa

Source: UNCTAD 2019b

Figure 4: UNCTAD's report on FDI

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BOOM! RAMAPHOSA'S #SONA2019 GOOD NEWS STORY IS FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

In just under a year of Cyril Ramaphosa's presidency, he has managed to rack up R70 billion in FDI – and that was just in the first three quarters of 2018.

A screengrab of President Cyril Ramaphosa delivering his State of the Nation Address in the National Assembly in Parliament on 7 February 2019.

There are two problems with the categorisation of intracompany loans as FDI. First, corporate treasuries typically treat such credit as a vehicle for Illicit Financial Flows. In such a scenario, the 'FDI' would not translate into real investment that results in employment creation, but represents a renewed multinational corporate squeeze of South Africa through its balance of payments outflows on the income account (profits, dividends and interest). Such transfers are easily facilitated by the lax capital and current flow supervision and regulation in South Africa. There are only rare prosecutions for Base Erosion and Profit Shifting, misinvoicing, transfer pricing and other tax dodges (Bond and Malikane 2019). Ramaphosa himself was regularly implicated in billions of dollars' worth of financial offshoring to zero-tax havens including Bermuda and Mauritius when he was chair or the lead executive of the firms MTN, Lonmin and Shanduka (Bond and Malikane 2019). Yet in spite of the growing evidence of South African illicit financial dealings found in Paradise Papers, Panama Papers and the HSBC leaks from 2015-17, Pretoria's Treasury and the SA Reserve Bank appear to have no interest or ability to monitor what kinds of international banking activities are underway, judging by the prevalence of illegal currency manipulation.[5]

This problem of state treasuries and central banks treating FDI statistics in a lackadaisical manner is a more general one, especially if the intracompany loans are recorded as FDI. According to the *Financial Times,*

> A large proportion of the world's stock of foreign direct investment is 'phantom' capital, designed to minimise companies' tax liabilities rather than financing productive activity, according to research. Nearly 40 per cent of worldwide FDI — worth a total of $15 trillion — 'passes through empty corporate shells' with 'no real business activities' … they are a vehicle for financial engineering, 'often to minimise multinationals' global tax bill' …
>
> As late as 2010, phantom FDI made up 31 percent of the total FDI stock; by 2017 it had reached 38 percent. Behind the global number, countries differ widely. The UK's share of phantom inward FDI jumped from just 3 per cent in 2009 to 18 per cent in 2017, the estimates show. In Belgium and Sweden, the share fell from about 30 per cent to single digits in the same period. (Sandbu 2019)

The research above was conducted by International Monetary Fund staff, who observed that when it comes to hosting such FDI, 'Luxembourg and the Netherlands host nearly half. And when you add Hong Kong SAR, the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Singapore, the Cayman Islands, Switzerland, Ireland, and Mauritius to the list, these 10 economies host more than 85 percent of all phantom investments' (Damgaard et al 2019). It is notable that

[5] The 17 major international banks involved were identified by Pretoria's Competition Commission and overseas police agencies, *not by South Africa's formal financial regulators*. As *Business Day* reported, 'Standard Chartered recently reached an agreement with the New York state department of financial services after admitting to manipulating currencies, including the rand, between 2007 and 2013,' paying a $40 million fine. The *laissez-faire* finance minister, Tito Mboweni, openly confirmed to parliament in mid-2019 that Treasury had not investigated the matter, and he did 'not have any evidence that any bank has taken part in currency manipulation,' even though in addition to Standard Chartered, Citi had also already admitted to doing so (Phakathi 2019). The excuse he gave for not investigating inadvertently included a confession that Treasury would not protect firms against bankers: 'It is important for members to differentiate between the impact of any transaction on consumers and the impact on the value of the rand – the investigation before the Competition Commission appears to be related more to the conduct of bank traders towards clients, rather than providing evidence of their affecting the actual value of the rand' (Phakathi 2019).

not only is Mauritius a favourite of most South African multinational corporations, but that the Netherlands was the site chosen in September 2019 to relocate the single biggest firm on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE): the local shares ('Prosus') in the Chinese tech firm Tencent, whose value is estimated at $130 billion, more than a fifth of the entire JSE.

The second problem with the UNCTAD revelation about FDI being 'largely' intracompany credit, is that the obvious rationale to make loans in South Africa is to have a relatively low-risk investment that carries a high rate of return. Among the fifty largest countries issuing bonds, the standard 10-year rate Pretoria paid was, in 2018-19, either fourth or fifth highest (South Africa and Venezuela would typically trade places from week to week), behind just junk-rated Turkey, Pakistan and Argentina (Table 1).

Table 1: Highest Annual Interest Rates Paid by State Issuing 10-year Bonds, Sept 2019

Turkey	15.0
Pakistan	12.0*
Argentina	11.0
Venezuela	8.24
South Africa	8.10
Indonesia	7.22
Mexico	7.19
Russia	7.12
India	6.66
Colombia	5.85

Source: *The Economist* 2019b.

As for UNCTAD's reporting on FDI 'equity,' the term is meant to include not just portfolio flows into a local stock market, but real investment. According to UNCTAD (2019b: 38), South Africa's high FDI in 2018 mainly reflected its burgeoning auto industry: 'In 2018, China-based automaker Beijing Automotive Industry Holding opened a $750 million plant in the Coega Industrial Development Zone, while automakers BMW (Germany) and Nissan (Japan) expanded their existing facilities in the country.'

But the reason for these large equity investments is simple: massive subsidisation of the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) by Pretoria. As even Deputy Finance Minister David Masondo (2018: 203) explained, 'Instead of building a developmental state, the post-apartheid state elite has built a nanny state which simply provides handouts to transnational companies.' The annual handouts were around $2 billion in tax losses, plus additional costs to consumers of $1 billion. In return, admitted David Kaplan (2019: 3), in spite of his 'post-Fordist' colleagues' strong support (Barnes, Kaplinsky and Morris 2003), the MIDP failed to meet its own three main objectives:

> The first objective was an increase in production. In 2008, South Africa produced 563 000 vehicles. The declared objective was to double production to 1 to 1.2 million vehicles by 2020. In 2018, 610,854 vehicles were produced; an increase of a little over 8% in a decade. The figure for 2019 is likely to be lower.
>
> The second objective was to 'deepen' local content. However, local content levels have been declining and are now below 40%.

The third objective was, on the back of rising output and increasing local content, an increase in employment. However, aggregate employment levels have declined. In the period 2004-2006, employment in motor vehicles and parts and accessories was 116,416; a decade later, in the period 2014-2016, employment had declined to 92,213.

The major investment UNCTAD (2019b: 38) observed in a plant by the Chinese firm BAIC is revealing, because more than a third of the plant is owned by the parastatal Industrial Development Corporation, lowering BAIC's risk. With an anticipated 100,000 vehicles per year capacity, BAIC advertised that it would be responsible for creating more than 10,000 jobs along the automotive value chain. However, BAIC suffered labour disputes that halted construction, and ultimately only 120 workers were hired to assemble vehicles in the first phase. Just as the plant was opened in mid-2018, the press reported on the extent of the 'semi-knocked down' character of the SUVs being made:

> Serious doubts have been expressed in motor industry circles about the claims that the vehicle was manufactured in South Africa... Last September, the local media reported that the construction had been moving at a snail's pace and all small, medium and micro enterprises had vacated the premises due to non-payment (Cocayne 2018).

A few subsidised, capital-intensive exceptions aside, the reluctance to invest is not unusual, for local South African businesses remain on a capital strike. Since 2010, gross fixed capital formation in South Africa remained in the weak 18-21 percent of GDP range, always below the 20-22 percent rate of Sub-Saharan Africa ('SSA,' which includes South Africa but not North Africa) (Figure 5). In the 1964-84 period, in contrast, South Africa's rate was in the range of 25 to 34 percent, prior to the 1980s crisis of 'overaccumulation' of fixed capital (Bond and Malikane 2019).

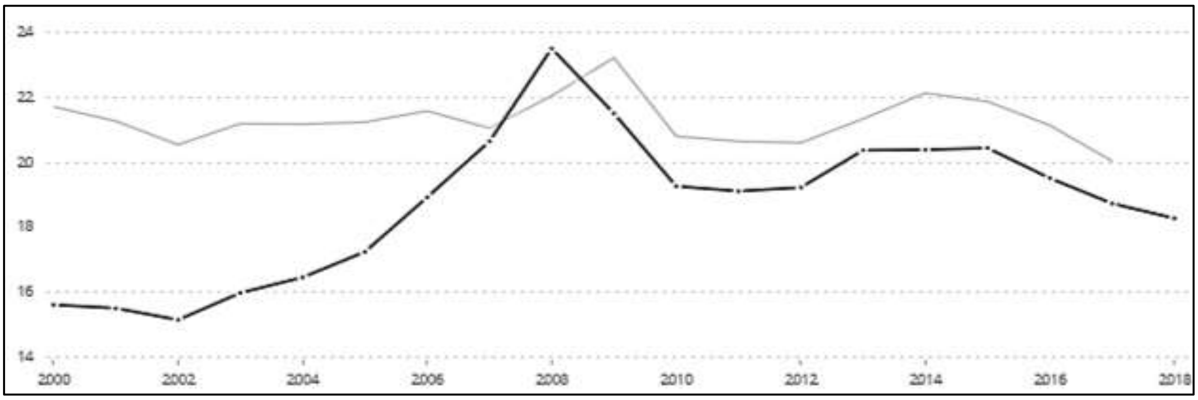
But the critical *annual growth rate* of gross fixed capital formation, indicating the momentum of capital accumulation, was on a strong downward trajectory after 2007, reaching negative rates in 2015-18 (Figure 6). The weakening of Africa's fixed capital investment – whether FDI or local – is even more explicit in the manufacturing sector (Figure 7). From an early 1980s peak of 23 percent share of manufacturing within GDP in South Africa and 17 percent in SSA, the shares have fallen for both to below 12 percent. Aside from tiny Eswatini's industrial zone and Ethiopia's surge in light manufacturing, the rapid deindustrialisation process during the Africa Rising era was not an anomaly. It reflected the insertion of the continent more fully into a world economy with very little scope for higher-value production opportunities.[6] One result is that even *toothpicks* are found in the continent's capital cities in small plastic containers, 'made in China.'

And yet in spite of the uncompetitive character of South Africa's industries, fantasies continue within the Treasury, whose August 2019 economic revival strategy fails to factor in

6 Exceptions do not contradict the general trend. First, Eswatini's extremely high manufacturing/GDP ratio (usually over 30 percent) reflects a half-century of tax breaks and dictatorial-monarchic rule that benefit a few major employers (especially CocaCola, and clothing and textiles firms) nearly entirely in its Matsapha industrial estate, an island of production in a sea of peasant poverty. Second, the rise of an Ethiopian sweat-shop sector takes advantage of a massive reserve army of workers, repressive labour relations, tax breaks and Chinese-supported export-oriented rail infrastructure.

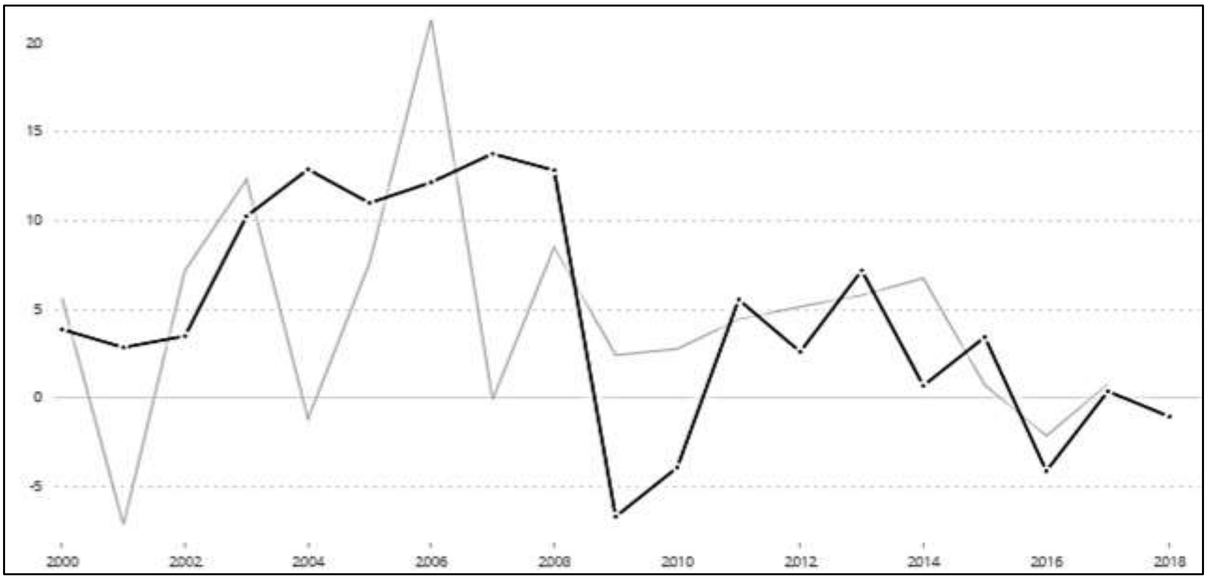
the ‘deglobalisation’ problem as well as Africa’s low growth prospects and high debt levels (Toussaint et al 2019). According to Treasury (2019), ‘South Africa needs to promote export competitiveness and actively pursue regional growth opportunities in order to leverage global and regional value chains for export growth. Exports have been identified as a key driver of economic growth.’ But this is easier said than done, for in 2018, South Africa’s ‘real net exports’ within the national income account category ‘Contributions of expenditure components to growth in real gross domestic product’ shrunk GDP by 0.2 percent; and in the first half of 2019, the impact of real net exports was negative 6.1 percent (SA Reserve Bank 2019: 16).

Figure 5: Gross fixed capital formation, percent of GDP: SA (dark), SSA (light), 2000-18



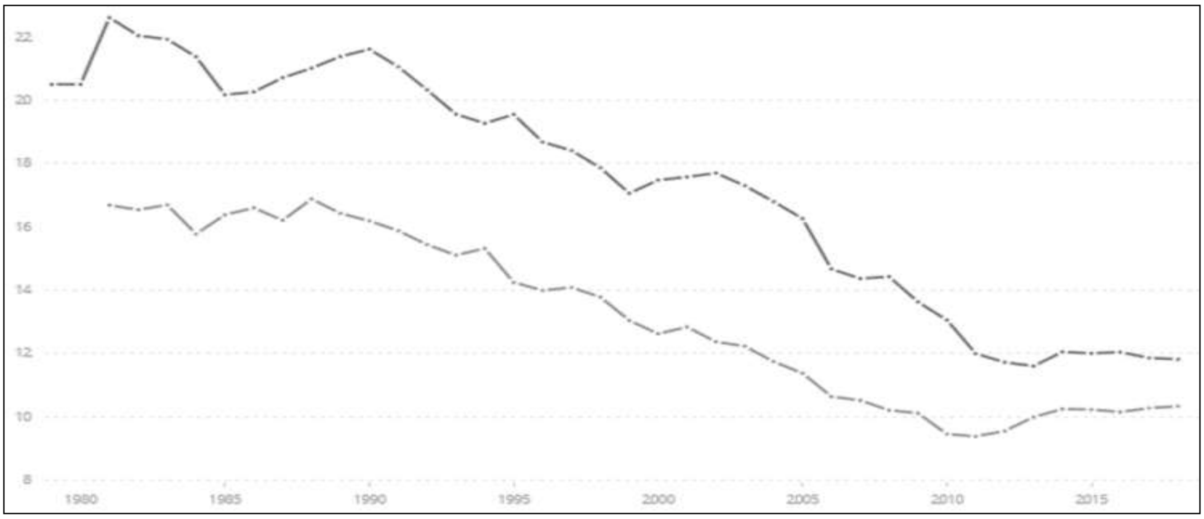
Source: World Bank 2019.

Figure 6: Gross fixed capital formation, annual growth: SA (dark), SSA (light), 2000-18



Source: World Bank 2019.

Figure 7: Manufacturing as a share of GDP: SA (top), SSA (bottom), 1980-2018



Source: World Bank 2019.

The dragging role of exports should not be surprising, given that the deglobalisation process is fully underway. Like the 1880s-90s and 1930s-40s (during which dramatic reversals in trade/GDP occurred) the current round began with a major crash, in 2008. Globalisation in the form of cross-border capital flows peaked in 2007: as a share of world GDP, FDI was 5.3 percent, portfolio debt and equity investments in bond and stock markets were 5.6 percent, and bank lending was 10.5 percent. In 2018, capital flows continued to fall: FDI down to just 2 percent of GDP, portfolio debt and equity investments to 1.9 percent, and bank loans to 2 percent (UNCTAD 2019b: 11). The recent 'slowbalisation' (*The Economist* 2019a) was partly due to Chinese overaccumulation (with lower growth and imports) and partly due to the Trump trade wars (which affected South Africa in 2018 due to Washington's steel and aluminium tariff hikes). Together these deglobalisation processes – anticipated to worsen considerably with the next global recession – will make Treasury's (2019) strategy futile (Toussaint et al 2019).

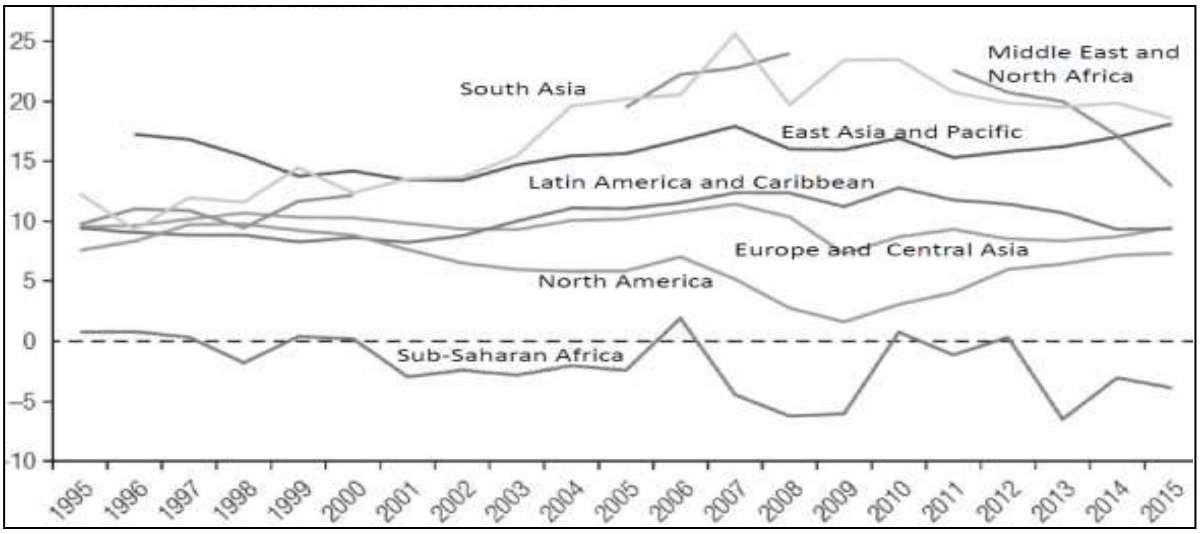
The myopia of rising African GDP

It is important to consider all these adverse trends from the opposite standpoint, however, that of the neoclassical economist. The African Development Bank (AfDB) was notorious for over-optimism, even allowing its chief economist Mthuli Ncube (2013) to claim an unprecedented discovery: an 'African middle class' of one third of the continent's billion-person population. This was possible only because Ncube (2013) counted this 'class' as spending between $2-$20/day. In the same spirit, the AfDB (2019: 5) views African capital accumulation very positively, based upon the most obvious measure adopted by economists: 'The state of the continent is good. Africa's general economic performance continues to improve, with GDP growth reaching an estimated 3.5 percent in 2018, about the same as in 2017 and up 1.4 percentage points from the 2.1 percent in 2016.'

Even putting aside the old question of data integrity (Jerven 2013), GDP ignores too many factors to be taken seriously in Africa (or anywhere), and the dubious data collection methods embodied in AfDB analysis further discredit a conclusion like 'The state of the continent is good.' First, an absolutely critical aspect of social welfare ignored in the GDP variable is the unpaid role of women in family and community reproduction.

Second, of profound concern is that GDP ignores the value of depleted non-renewable resources. To accurately assess the change in *wealth* that occurs in Africa from year to year requires setting a 'debit' of resource extraction against the 'natural capital' that declines in the process (i.e., the 'credit' of mineral/oil/gas sales that contribute so much to Africa's GDP). To do so, as the World Bank (Lange et al 2018) found, leaves the continent unique in the world for failing to replace the lost natural capital with both 'productive capital' and 'human capital' (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Adjusted net saving by region, 1995-2015 (share of gross national income)



Source: Lange et al. 2018: 64.

This loss is at least a net $100 billion per year, but including oil-rich North Africa and some minerals the Bank has not yet begun to count properly, that figure is more likely to be closer to $150 billion (Bond 2018). And on top of that is more general environmental destruction due to the 'externality' of pollution. In what may be one of the worst cases in Africa, CO2 harm is estimated in one country alone, South Africa, at 4.6 percent of that country's GDP (World Bank 2017, Bond 2020).

Economists who believe 'the state of the continent is good' fall into the trap that Samir Amin (2018: 159, 86) warned of in one of his last analyses, when asking Africa's *leftist political economists* not to ignore ecological destruction:

> Capitalist accumulation is founded on the destruction of the bases of all wealth: human beings and their natural environment… historical Marxisms had largely passed an eraser over the analyses advanced by Marx on this subject and taken the point of view of the bourgeoisie – equated to an atemporal 'rational' point of view – in regard to the exploitation of natural resources.

Thus 'correcting' Africa's GDP – not just technically but conceptually and politically – so as to reflect myriad exploitations is a necessary ideological struggle (Fioramonti 2014). Winning it will assist African political economists to advance a more explicit understanding of the ways patriarchal capitalism (e.g. the migrant labour system) and extractive-industry FDI together *underdevelop* Africa.

In turn, that heightened understanding would aid in providing more strategic support to both women's struggles for justice (e.g. against gender-based violence) and the micro-economic social movements rising against mining and oil, as well as to the broader movements of resistance that have emerged especially since Africans began uprising against Africa Rising, in 2011. South Africa's own lamentable role would also become clearer, if the perpetual abuse of GDP and the relentless propaganda about FDI could be put into proper context.

Conclusion

In 2020, Ramaphosa assumes the chair of the African Union. Since South African companies have been regularly criticised – and often formally attacked by other Africans – for their role in looting the continent, it is vital to nourish the upsurge of anti-xenophobia activism and to identify where it can solve root-cause problems, aside from the relatively easy rhetorical strategy of urgent ethical reassertion of PanAfrican ubuntu. South Africans increasingly recognise root causes of poor and working-class people's terrible alienation, in the structural inequalities and extreme internecine competition faced by ordinary people trying to survive. Nearly all South African commentaries remarked on unemployment, housing crises, and frenetic informal sector competition in townships, as the set of underlying factors associated with xenophobia, to which one might add South Africa's disruptive geopolitical role in the region (Amisi et al 2011). But while many are increasingly aware of how the African continent is stressed over economic and environmental crises, the resulting migration borne of such desperation remains beyond the consciousness of working-class South African xenophobes. That pressure extends into South Africa, where the Treasury is cutting major holes in the already-shrunken social safety net, given that the country's $176 billion foreign debt gives greater leverage to New York's austerity-minded ratings agencies.

In September 2019, anti-xenophobia activism in many countries was aimed at Johannesburg companies and South African High Commissions, an entirely appropriate responses. In South Africa, those protests were covered with a degree of respect and even fear, as were similar events in April-May 2015. After being attacked by angry Nigerians, MTN and Multichoice in turn put unprecedented pressure on South Africa's police minister to provide immigrants to South Africa with better local security and more arrests of those committing xenophobic acts (Mahlaka 2019).

But rather than simply identifying 'South Africa' in terms of state and corporate representatives across the continent, the most profound political challenge across Africa is uniting activists at the base to challenge rising corporate power associated with the continent's adverse insertion in the world economy. That power includes neoliberal ideological and power relations regularly facilitated by Pretoria, which has been felt in various ways up-continent, in:

- the *Pretoria government's pro-Western role within the World Trade Organisation* during the late 1990s, albeit a subordinate relationship spectacularly challenged by other African negotiators at the Seattle summit (Bond 2006);
- the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*, termed 'philosophically spot on' by the George W. Bush regime (Bond 2005);
- Pretoria's sole claim to *represent Africa within the G20*, which in 2017 led one seasoned commentator to remark on how South Africa was again 'obsequiously behaving like a neo-colony' of multinational corporate interests (Tandon 2017);
- the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa – *BRICS – bloc's reassertion of corporate privilege to extract natural resources from Africa*, in part thanks to the BRICS Durban and Johannesburg Summits' 'gateway' functions in 2013 and 2018, respectively (Van der Merwe et al 2019); and
- BRICS' leaders attempts to *shift multilateral financial power in their own interests*, which in 2015 led to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) vote restructuring that advantaged the four most wealthy BRICS at the expense of African countries (e.g. China gained a 37 percent increase voting share, while Nigeria lost 41 percent of its power and South Africa also lost 21 percent) (Bond 2019a).

These are economic reflections of subimperial power, but other incidents are just as disturbing in geopolitical respects. The SA National Defense Force has carried out unjustifiable military interventions – with significant casualties – in the Central African Republic (2013) and Lesotho (1998), while the Johannesburg mercenary firm Executive Outcomes and arms dealers like Denel and Ivor Ichikowitz's Paramount Group operate relatively underhindered from Johannesburg. Other incidents reflect South African subservience to Western geopolitical power, such as the unpunished Mark Thatcher's infamous 'splodge of wonga' paid to arrange a 2004 Equatorial Guinea coup d'état attempt while based in Cape Town, or Pretoria's approval of two early-2000s extraordinary renditions associated with Central Intelligence Agency anti-terrorist torture (Bond 2019b).

So too were Jacob Zuma's corrupt deal-making with Moscow's Rosatom for $100 billion in nuclear energy (foiled by environmental activists), or his repeated compliance with Beijing's insistence that the Dalai Lama not receive a visa to visit South Africa, even just to attend Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 80th birthday party. As for Pretoria's own most brazen political intervention in Africa, the way Zuma inserted his ex-wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma into the AU chair in 2012 – replete with bribery – received powerful critiques from competing large African countries who had pledged to allow smaller states the privilege of putting forward AU leadership candidates without such rivalries coming into play (Bond 2019c).

But looking to the future, perhaps the most important instance in which a stronger anti-*sub*imperial politics may emerge, is the growing criticism of South Africa's environmental stewardship (Bond 2017a). In addition to chairing the AU in 2020, Pretoria also leads the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, but completely failed its local residents and regional neighbours in the first step towards climate consciousness and reparations. On the planet, there are only two countries of substance (with more than 10 million residents) whose CO2-equivalent emissions per unit of per capita annual output exceed South Africa's (Kazakhastan and the Czech Republic). There are only ten countries with higher per capita emissions than South Africa's nine tons (Table 2).

Table 2: Leading Greenhouse Gas Emitters per Person (tons CO2-equivalent, 2014)

Saudi Arabia	19.5
United States	16.5
Australia	15.4
Canada	15.1
Kazakhstan	14.4
Russia	11.9
South Korea	11.6
Netherlands	9.9
Japan	9.5
Czech Republic	9.2
South Africa	9.0

Source: World Bank, ttps://data.worldbank.org/indicator/en.atm.co2e.pc

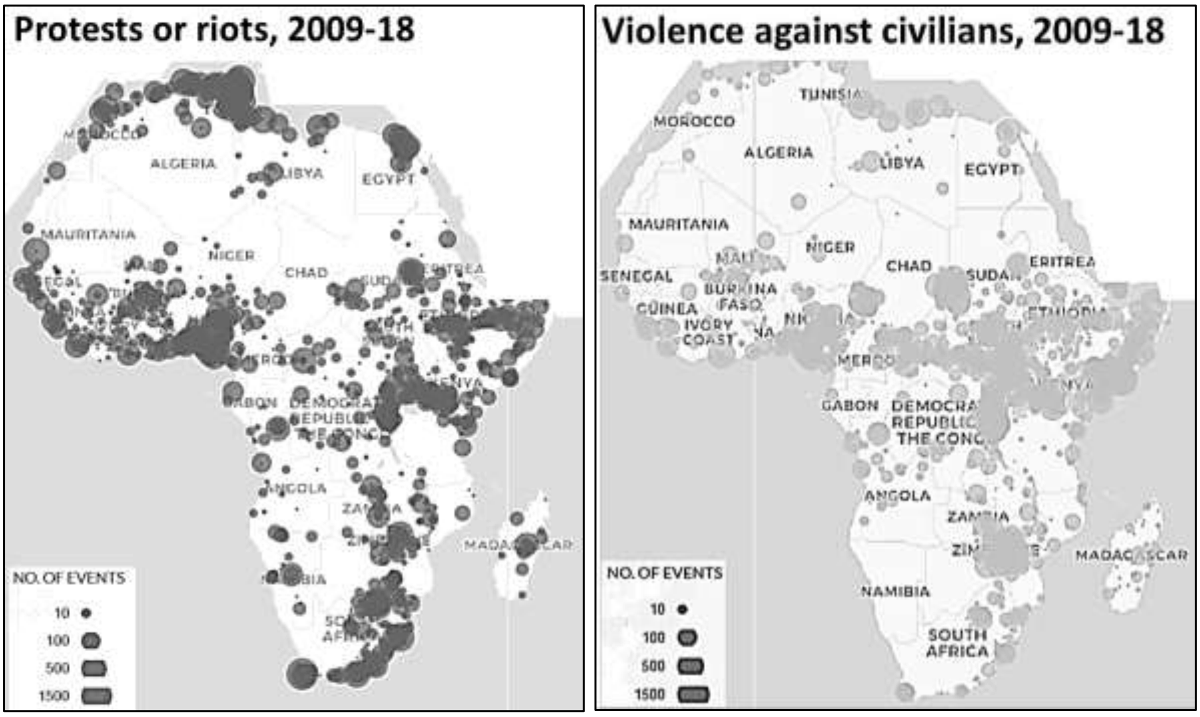
The 'climate debt' South Africa owes to the rest of the continent is vast, and would depend upon whether the starting point for measurement is the historical contribution (South Africa's coal addiction became substantial during the 1920s, as energy became necessary for deep-level mining) or a more recent date at which future climate change was recognised as a crisis (e.g. 1990).

One immediate official barrier to claiming this liability, is the UN's 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which prohibits claims by signatories for wealthy-country climate debt payment. This was due in part to rich Western countries led by the U.S. State Department's Todd Stern during the half-dozen years before the Paris deal, who declared at the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, 'The sense of guilt or culpability or reparations – I just categorically reject that' (Brkic 2009). But Stern also helped Barack Obama assemble a group in Copenhagen that included four BRICS, one accurately described by Bill McKibbon (2009) as a '*league of super-polluters,* and would-be *super-polluters' – very much including South Africa (Bond 2012).*

As a final brief note, however, social resistance is vital, and has been rising in fits and starts – often with heartbreaking reversals – across Africa since late 2010 when Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation sparked the North African uprisings. The University of Sussex 'Armed Conflict Location and Event Data' (ACLED) project records the protests as well as repression using media-based data. Their data (Figures 9 and 10) reveal that in at least a third of Africa's countries, the peak of either category – top-down repression or bottom-up resistance – occurred more than 50 times within a single month.

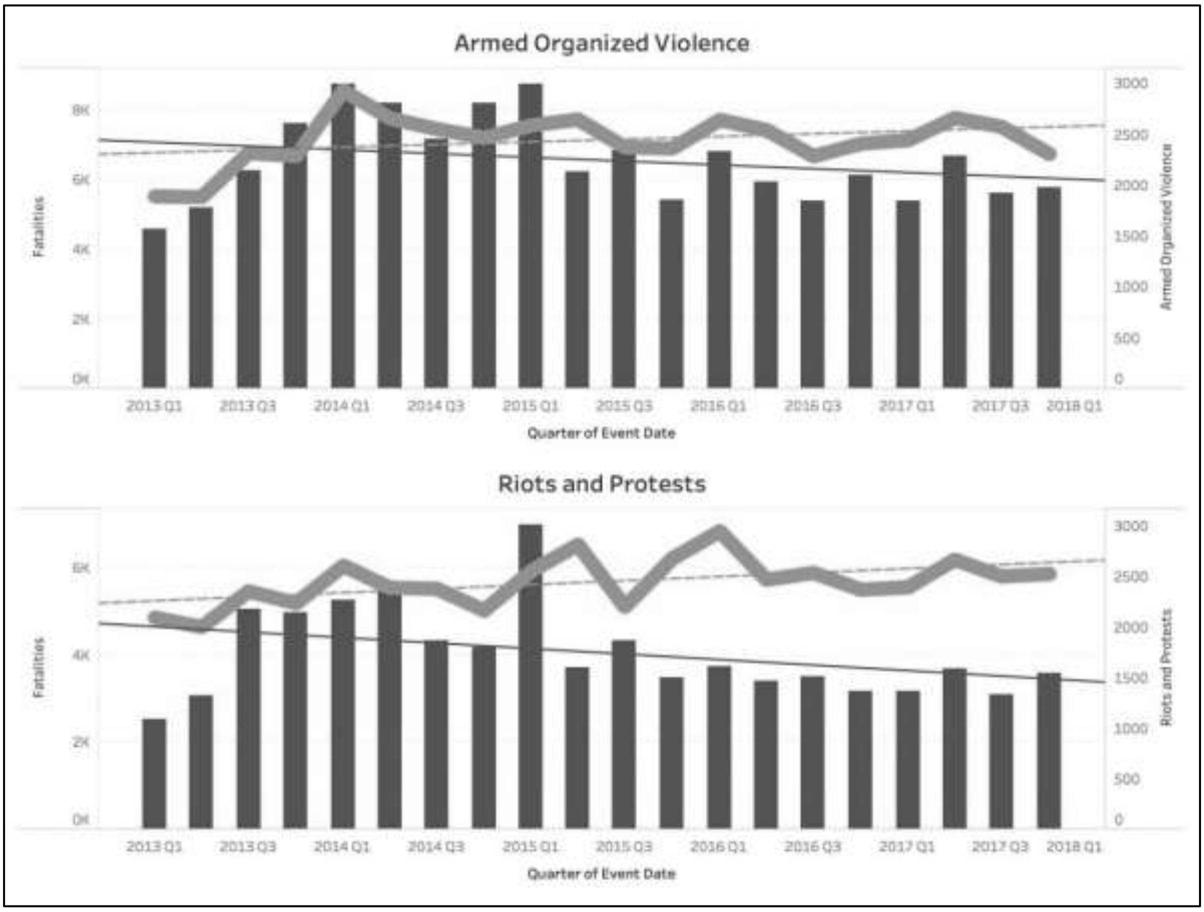
Alphabetically, the 18 countries are Algeria, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Eight of them witnessed extremely high social-dissent peaks in the period 1998-2018, in which at least 100 riots or protests occurred in the course of a single month: Egypt: 250 in early 2013; Burundi: 180 in mid-2015; Tunisia: 175 in early 2011; South Africa: 170 in early 2017; Ethiopia: 160 in early 2016; Kenya: 140 in late 2017; Nigeria: 110 in early 2015; and Algeria: 100 in early 2011 (Bond 2019b).

Figure 9: African protests and repression, 2009-2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) 2019.

Figure 10: Africa's incidents of fatalities, repression and protest, 2013-18



Source: ACLED 2019.

Table 3: Labour Militancy of Workers (reputation among corporations), 2016
'In your country, how do you characterize labour-employer relations?'
1= generally confrontational; 7 = generally cooperative

Rank	Country	Score
1	Norway	6.2
2	Switzerland	6.2
3	Singapore	6.2
4	Denmark	6.1
5	Sweden	6.1
6	Netherlands	5.9
7	Japan	5.8
8	Austria	5.7
9	New Zealand	5.7
10	United Arab Emirates	5.7
11	Luxembourg	5.6
12	Iceland	5.6
13	Qatar	5.5
14	Hong Kong SAR	5.5
15	United Kingdom	5.4
16	Taiwan, China	5.4
17	Malaysia	5.3
18	Rwanda	5.3
19	Ireland	5.3
20	Canada	5.2
21	Bahrain	5.2
22	Finland	5.2
23	Estonia	5.2
24	Costa Rica	5.2
25	Germany	5.1
26	Bhutan	5.1
27	Philippines	5.1
28	Guatemala	5.1
29	Albania	5.1
30	United States	5.0
31	Israel	5.0
32	Malta	4.9
33	Saudi Arabia	4.9
34	Latvia	4.8
35	Mauritius	4.8
36	Thailand	4.8
37	Belgium	4.8
38	Honduras	4.8
39	Armenia	4.7
40	Panama	4.7
41	Jordan	4.7
42	Brunei Darussalam	4.7
43	Tajikistan	4.7
44	Czech Republic	4.7
45	Indonesia	4.7
46	Lao PDR	4.6
47	China	4.6
48	Colombia	4.6
49	Uganda	4.6
50	Azerbaijan	4.6
51	Portugal	4.6
52	Mexico	4.6
53	Sri Lanka	4.6
54	Australia	4.6
55	Oman	4.5
56	Kuwait	4.5
57	Chile	4.5
58	Côte d'Ivoire	4.5
59	Ghana	4.5
60	Kazakhstan	4.5
61	Lithuania	4.5
62	Namibia	4.4
63	Mauritania	4.4
64	Ecuador	4.4
65	Cyprus	4.4
66	Gambia, The	4.4
67	India	4.4
68	Mongolia	4.4
69	Botswana	4.4
70	Cambodia	4.4
71	Nicaragua	4.4
72	Dominican Republic	4.4
73	Zambia	4.3
74	Slovenia	4.3
75	Peru	4.3
76	Barbados	4.3
77	Senegal	4.3
78	Paraguay	4.3
79	Vietnam	4.3
80	Spain	4.3
81	Macedonia, FYR	4.3
82	Hungary	4.3
83	Jamaica	4.3
84	Mali	4.2
85	Lebanon	4.2
86	Nigeria	4.2
87	Slovak Republic	4.2
88	Congo, Democratic Rep.	4.2
89	Georgia	4.2
90	Ukraine	4.2
91	Bangladesh	4.2
92	Bulgaria	4.2
93	Poland	4.2
94	Madagascar	4.2
95	Kenya	4.2
96	Egypt	4.1
97	Moldova	4.1
98	Gabon	4.1
99	Kyrgyz Republic	4.1
100	Cameroon	4.1
101	Benin	4.1
102	Malawi	4.1
103	Russian Federation	4.1
104	Sierra Leone	4.1
105	Greece	4.0
106	Romania	4.0
107	Cape Verde	4.0
108	Zimbabwe	4.0
109	El Salvador	4.0
110	France	3.9
111	Italy	3.9
112	Montenegro	3.9
113	Yemen	3.9
114	Burundi	3.8
115	Algeria	3.8
116	Tanzania	3.8
117	Ethiopia	3.8
118	Brazil	3.8
119	Turkey	3.8
120	Lesotho	3.7
121	Argentina	3.7
122	Morocco	3.7
123	Mozambique	3.7
124	Iran, Islamic Rep.	3.7
125	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.7
126	Serbia	3.7
127	Liberia	3.7
128	Tunisia	3.6
129	Venezuela	3.6
130	Chad	3.5
131	Nepal	3.5
132	Croatia	3.5
133	Bolivia	3.5
134	Pakistan	3.4
135	Korea, Rep.	3.4
136	Uruguay	3.4
137	Trinidad and Tobago	3.2
138	South Africa	2.5

Source: World Economic Forum 2016

In some countries, there were such strong protest mobilisations in part because labour movements were also relatively militant. There was unevenness across and within the continent's trade unions, to be sure, but the WEF's annual *Global Competitiveness Reports* – an annual survey of 14 000 business executives in 138 countries – continue to rank Africa's workers as the most confrontational of any continent, led by those from South Africa, Chad, Tunisia, Liberia, Mozambique, Morocco, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Algeria and Burundi (WEF, 2016) (Table 3).

This is the most important of all the political processes now underway in Africa: the uprisings of angry citizens and workers. One dilemma is that these remain country-specific, even though a 'contagion' of protest is evident once one movement's uprising is successful (Bond 2019b). But more tragic yet is that the logic of regional class formation so evident in post-apartheid South Africa as a result of uneven development, is not sufficiently powerful to overcome class fragmentation along national lines, as was again witnessed in central Johannesburg in mid-2019.

These, then, are some of the reasons the state of the continent is *not* good. But within these failures are seeds of future successes, surely?

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Neoliberalism, authoritarianism and popular resistance in Africa

in B. Berberoglu (Ed), *The Global Rise of Authoritarianism in the 21st Century: Crisis of Neoliberal Globalization and the Nationalist Response.* London, Routledge, 2021,

Abstract

This chapter on neoliberalism, authoritarianism, and popular resistance in Africa points out that as the 2020s begin and the Covid-19 crisis unfolds, neoliberalism has had forty years of dominance, albeit interrupted by two waves of democratic upsurges, in the early 1990s and in the 2010s. The latter period is what concerns us, because lessons from the first have yet to be learned by those engaged in the recent wave of resistance. One result of earlier struggles (termed "IMF Riots") against damage caused by the Third World Debt Crisis was an era of "low-intensity democracy," even in sites of intense, radical struggle like South Africa. Essentially, social movements and opposition parties mobilizing against dictators soon wilted under pressures of class compromise and degenerated into governments that accepted and even endorsed the neoliberal Washington Consensus. After the 1980s and 1990s economic decline, the first decade of the 2000s witnessed an 'Africa Rising' era largely of rhetorical optimism, catalyzed by the 2002–2014 global commodity price spike. But there was negligible trickle down of the resulting surpluses. Instead, Africa was soon littered with mega-infrastructure projects financed with debt, increasingly associated with Chinese extraction, construction, and financing firms, some of which became debilitating white elephants. Profound contradictions arose between citizenries and regimes sponsored by either Western interests or Chinese interests, leading to repeated protests during the 2010s. The decade ended with spectacular African uprisings in Algeria and Sudan, dislodging ossified authoritarian leaders (albeit not the structural regimes they led). Other forms of late 2010s resistance that did not result in overthrows but instead adjustments in the ruling bloc did not satisfy protesters, who continued vigorous demonstrations where these were not repressed. It is too early to tell how much more severe matters will become as the Covid-19 crisis unfolds, but aside from early emergency relief in the wealthier African states, in part to quell signs of vigorous protest, the most obvious political process ahead is an amplification of both neoliberal austerity and authoritarianism.

Introduction

This chapter reviews both the main narratives and emerging empirical evidence regarding the failure of neoliberal globalization, the revival of authoritarianism, and the intensification of social resistance in Africa, just prior to the economic collapse and political chaos caused by the Covid-19 crisis. Complex relationships were, by the late 2010s, emerging between economic suffering, state repression, and sociopolitical unrest, many of which could be measured, albeit with caveats. Neoliberals claim that rapid GDP growth in the 2002–2011 era of soaring commodity prices generated a sustainable development trajectory (Perry 2012). The African Development Bank chief economist, Mthuli Ncube (2013), even claimed he discovered the unprecedented emergence of an "African middle class" of one-third of the continent's population (because he counted this "class" as spending between \$2–\$20/day). But commodity prices plateaued from 2011 to 2014, and was followed by a crash and slight recovery prior to the 2020 collapse. Instead of slowing mining, oil and gas drilling, an intensified metabolism of extraction occurred, generating an uncompensated depletion of "natural capital" in excess of $100 billion per annum in sub-Saharan Africa alone (World Bank 2018, Bond 2018). Thus even prior to 2020, macroeconomic conditions were not improving, in spite of a 2019 claim by the African Development Bank et al. (2019: 5) that African capital accumulation is satisfactory:

> The state of the continent is good. Africa's general economic performance continues to improve, with GDP growth reaching an estimated 3.5 percent in 2018, about the same as in 2017 and up 1.4 percentage points from the 2.1 percent in 2016.

Abuse of GDP – which ignores women's and peasants' unpaid work, and counts the depletion of natural wealth as a credit not a debit – is here quite obvious. But just as importantly, raw materials extraction by both multinational corporations and local elites makes the continent's most-contested sites logical to expect official state leadership by despotic compradors. Compared to the imperial and subimperial countries of the G20 (e.g., the United States, Brazil, and Turkey) or some middle-income (e.g., Hungary) or poor (e.g., Philippines) sites of resurgent authoritarianism, Africa hosts a different kind of repressive regime, suited well for its super-exploited role in the 21st century's global economy. But although Covid-19's first impacts allowed for intensified repression, the broader trends are interesting. It appears that snuffing out dissent was becoming increasingly difficult given the return to austerity, with many leaders reaching their own limits of consensual rule. That led them to a desperate situation in which temporary "growth"—based mainly on resource depletion and unaffordable mega-infrastructure projects—returned Africa to an era of debt crises and austerity.

The question, for the period ahead, is whether the 2010s upsurge of protest could be revived. To illustrate the upsurge, a University of Sussex research program funded by the U.S. Pentagon and State Department ("Minerva")—known as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)— measures protests, riots, and repression and identified a noticeable increase in protests from 2012 to 2019 (Figure 10). In early 2020, some of Africa's most militant residential settlements and workplaces reflected ongoing anger at the way Covid-19 lockdowns were being implemented, as social-distancing requirements were ignored in the course of resistance (just as was the case with much Western right-wing populist protest against lockdowns). But early indications from one protest hotspot, South Africa's Western Cape, suggest potential to turn resistance into genuine gains, e.g. over distribution of food parcels and increased access to cash grants.

The overall context confirms the adverse balance of forces. After covering some of the systems of surplus extraction from Africa that have amplified adverse North–South and internal power relations over the past decade, this chapter then turns to narratives associated with this process, especially those that blame Africans for the political-economy context inherent in global capitalism: super-exploitative trade and investment, financialization, and capitalist crisis. There are, as a result, increasingly obvious strategies within neoliberalism, yet one strand—the imposition of austerity—leads directly to authoritarianism. The interpretation of protest is, hence, crucial, and early indications are that grievance reports (drawing on journalists' accounts translated into big data) are together both helpful and confusing, depending on how they are used. Finally, it has long been evident that when neoliberalism and authoritarianism are conjoined, there is a need for much-better-organized resistance movements.

Limits of Neoliberal Extractivism

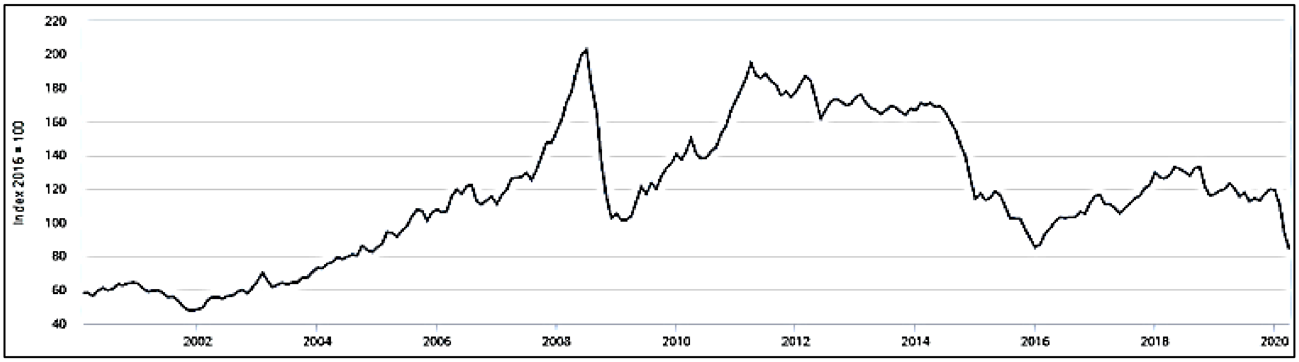
There is, first, a long postcolonial African history to recall, including continent-wide processes overdetermined from sites of power like the Bretton Woods Institutions in Washington, commodity exchanges, and the New York credit ratings agencies. Perhaps most decisive, in retrospect, was the 1979–1981 Volcker Shock of unprecedented interest rate increases and the subsequent Third World Debt Crisis, which not only caused the demise of Africa's nascent industrial base but also resulted in control from Washington. In the early 1980s, in both the African Union and individual capitals, the World Bank's neoliberal Berg Report strategy defeated the more developmental-Keynesian Lagos Plan of Action proposed by the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa under Adebayo Adedeji's leadership, the continent has experienced massive drainage of wealth (Bond 2006, 2011, 2018).

Without access to surpluses, African countries would continue to unsuccessfully implement the so-called Washington Consensus "Ten Commandments": fiscal discipline, reordered spending priorities, lower tax rates but broader-based value-added tax, liberalized interest rates, lower exchange rates, free trade, free inflows of foreign direct investment, privatized state-owned enterprises, deregulation, and secured property rights. The result of the widespread imposition of structural adjustment programs was a series of "IMF Riots" that by the late 1980s threatened dozens of governments (Seddon and Walton 1994). This process in turn gave a brief hope for early-1990s democratization in many African countries, albeit of a "low-intensity" type based on a neoliberal premise: "dictators [would give] the debt to the democrats." The latter, including Nelson Mandela, then had extremely limited policy and fiscal space with which to meet even basic needs. What financing was still available from the Bretton Woods Institutions and donor aid grants also strengthened the continental rulers' policing power over its people, as the one typical exception to fiscal austerity was a growing police and army.

The limits of the neoliberal export-led strategy are again evident, as commodity prices peaked in 2011, plateaued in 2014, and then fell rapidly through late 2015. From 2013 to 2016, for example, oil and iron ore fell by more than 70 percent, with copper and coal down more than 35 percent. In 2016–2018, there was a rebound in global commodity prices, but from mid 2018, the slide resumed and a threat emerged in early 2020—due to the novel coronavirus—that a much more extensive collapse of international transport, trade, and even finance would amplify the African export crisis (Figure 1).

Debt was especially troublesome, for the prior sub-Saharan African peak of absolute foreign indebtedness exceeded $250 billion in 2004, but after 2006, debt relief was arranged by the G7 (mainly after African pay-downs of existing capital reserves), the outstanding debt shrank to $170 billion. However, debt-fueled mega-infrastructure projects and the commodity price crash then hit Africa (especially the Highly Indebted Poor Countries), and the subregion's external debt stock soared again, in part due to new Chinese credit sources. By the end of 2018, it exceeded $580 billion in sub-Saharan Africa alone (World Bank 2020). The actual figure is bound to be higher, given that in various countries, there are large debts incurred by state agencies using collateral in the form of natural resource stocks and future outflows. These deals are often associated with illicit syndicates, are not transparent, and in the Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Togo recently caused chaos with debt accounting (see Table 1).

Figure 1. Global Commodity Prices, 2000–2020 (Index 2016 = 100)



Source: St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank (2020)
https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PALLFNFINDEXM

Table 1. Sub-Saharan African External Debt and Income Accounts, 2010 and 2018

($ millions)	2010	2018
External debt stocks	300,826.8	583,609.7
Long-term external debt	232,710.6	493,575.4
Public and publicly guaranteed	159,868.8	365,537.1
Use of IMF credit	19,482.0	21,616.5
Short-term external debt	48,634.1	68,417.9
Official creditors	9,210.1	9,934.1
Private creditors	2,949.0	1,242.9
Principal arrears	17,507.6	23,023.8
Disbursements	32,009.2	80,340.2
Long-term external debt	30,678.3	77,752.6
Total debt service paid	18,679.3	61,164.2
Foreign direct investment	22,805.3	23,580.7
Portfolio equity	15,942.0	2,489.7
Gross national income (GNI)	1,270,326.7	1,611,071.8
Exports of goods and services	399,779.0	434,003.2
Compensation of employees	31,476.2	46,921.5

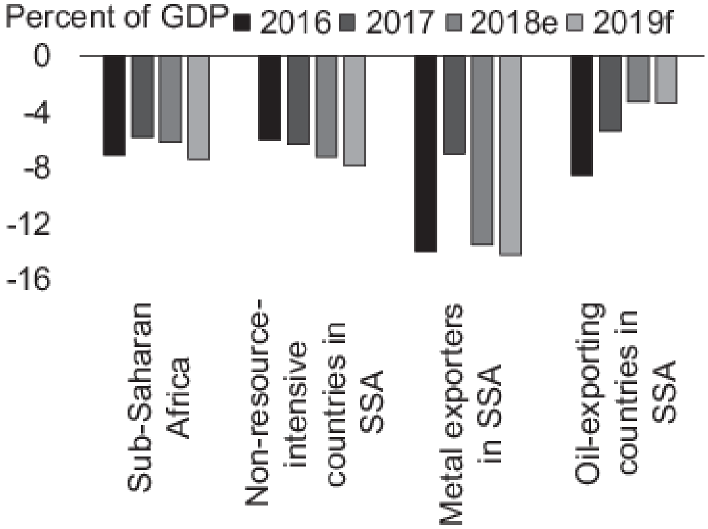
Imports of goods and services	453,574.1	538,881.7
Primary income on FDI	50,361.5	35,807.2
Current account balance	-9,276.8	-42,249.0
International reserves	156,535.5	163,122.2
Debt ratios:		
External debt stock to exports (%)	75.2	134.5
External debt stock to GNI (%)	23.7	36.2
Debt service to exports (%)	4.7	14.1
Interest payments to exports (%)	1.3	4.0
Interest payments to GNI (%)	0.4	1.1

Source: World Bank (2020)

Debt repayment stress drew the IMF (2017: 9) back to Africa, warning that oil-exporting countries faced "a seven-fold increase in debt service, from an average of 8 percent of revenues in 2013 to 57 percent in 2016," with Nigeria (at 66 percent) and Angola (at 60 percent) worst affected. Across the continent, the higher interest rates translate into "a widespread increase in nonperforming loans, triggering higher provisioning, straining banks' profits, and weighing on solvency" (IMF 2018b: 10). The IMF named fifteen sub-Saharan African countries as being in "debt distress" (or being at high risk of that label)—Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Mozambique, The Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—as a result of "large primary deficits, which for many countries widened sharply with the commodity price collapse" (IMF 2018b: 10). This was not merely an African debt crisis: from a total of $3.09 trillion in 2007, the external debt owed by all low- and middle-income countries more than doubled, to $7.07 trillion in 2017 (while high-income countries' foreign debt rose from $61.94 trillion to $75.72 trillion in the same period). As the World Bank warned in late 2018, "The increasing debt burdens of low- and middle-income economies come as concern rises about overall global debt, which by some estimates is 60 percent higher than before the 2008 financial crisis" (2018b).

Austerity orders were commonplace; for example, in debt-stressed Central Africa, the IMF (2018a: 25) insisted on "streamlining" the budget through spending cuts in 2016–2017: "overall primary spending declining from 27.5 percent of non-oil GDP in 2016 to 22.8 percent of non-oil GDP in 2018." South Africa's finance minister was pressured by the New York credit ratings agencies in 2017–2020 to make sharp cuts in spending so as to reduce the budget deficit (Bond 2019). In Zambia and Kenya, the debt repayment crisis resulted in widely reported (albeit exaggerated) fears of Chinese collateral appropriation, including an international airport in Lusaka, Zambia, and a port in Mombasa, Kenya. There appeared to be no prospect for simply increasing sub-Saharan African exports, so as to trade each country's way out of its debt crisis, because current account deficits (combining net trade and outflows of profit repatriation and interest payments to multinational corporations) were already high and would rise substantially in the near future, the World Bank (2019) projected (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Sub-Saharan African Current Account Deficits, % of GDP, 2016–2019



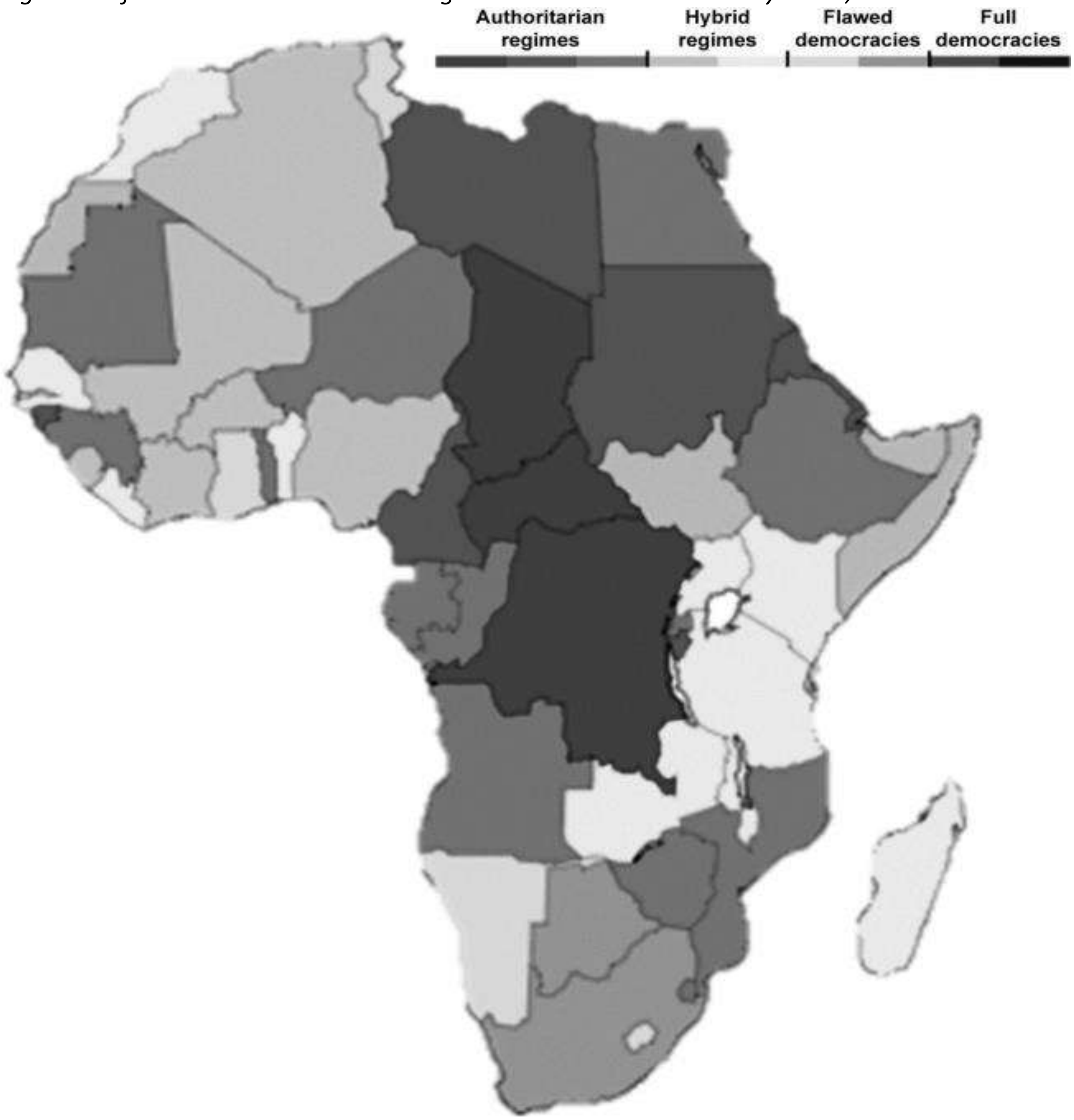
Source: World Bank (2019: 108)

Given the situation that Africa and the world faces today, especially with the amplification effects Covid-19 is having, more clarity is required about the current relationships of neoliberalism, authoritarianism, and resistance, conjoining as they do the inclement global economic turbulence (World Bank 2019)—preceded by trade-investment-finance deglobalization processes and, in Africa, renewed debt stresses and austerity—and unpredictable geopolitical conjunctures (Garcia and Bond 2018).

Reflecting these conjunctures, mass uprisings in 2011 not only overthrew Washington's allies in Tunis and Cairo, and an aspirant neoliberal in Tripoli, but in subsequent months threatened further bottom-up regime change in Washington-friendly Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria, where in each, major concessions were offered to protesters. Indeed, African tyrants were formally replaced (albeit often by a reformer from within their own ruling party) following mass demonstrations in the capital cities in countries as diverse as Senegal (Abdoulaye Wade, 2012); Burkina Faso (Blaise Compaoré, 2014); Gambia (Yahya Jammeh, 2016); Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe, 2017); South Africa (Jacob Zuma as well as powerful regional governor Supra Mahumapelo, 2018); Ethiopia (Hailemariam Desalegn, 2018); and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, Joseph Kabila, 2019).

Other authoritarian, corrupt, or otherwise-unpopular regimes and leaders who in recent years have also faced sharp grassroots protests openly demanding their resignation but who remain in office at the time of this writing, include those in Cameroon (Paul Biya), Gabon (Ali Bongo Ondimba), Kenya (Uhuru Kenyatta), Eswatini (King Mswati), Togo (Faure Gnassingbé), Uganda (Yoseri Museveni), and Zimbabwe (Emmerson Mnangagwa) (Figure 3). In 2019, authoritarian regimes in Algeria (led by Abdelaziz Bouteflika) and Sudan (Omar al-Bashir) were convulsed by protest, but although the leaders were vanquished, their systems were not.

Figure 3. Africa in the Economist Intelligence Unit Global Democracy Index, 2019



Source: The Economist (2020)

Neoliberal Co-optation of Anti-neoliberal, Anti-authoritarian Protest?

At the other end of the spectrum are those forces aiming to use the crises in authoritarianism to promote more thorough-going neoliberalism. One of the main advocacy groups promoting liberalization along these lines—to rid Africa of neopatrimonialism—is the World Bank's "Doing Business" team. Its annual attempts to shift Africa from patronage-based crony capitalism to a more modern, level playing field are paying off, as the World Bank (2019: 15) bragged of its power since at least 2004: "With 905 reforms, Sub-Saharan Africa holds the record for the highest total number of reforms captured by Doing Business over the past 15 years. Moreover, the region also recorded the highest number of reforms in 11 of those 15 years." For example, the time to start a business was reduced from sixty-five to twenty-two days, and the cost of getting an electricity connection halved in relation to income. Other improvements were recorded in acquiring construction permits, access to credit, registering property, protecting minority investors, the time required for paying taxes, the ease of trading across borders, resolving insolvency, and enforcing contracts (World Bank 2019). The World Bank's critique of economic authoritarianism has the virtue of supporting not just multinational corporations but also the neoliberal populist agenda of micro-entrepreneurialism made famous by Hernando de Soto and Muhammad Yunus, no matter the resulting crisis of micro-debt and overtrading (Bateman 2010).

To advance this agenda, the West occasionally celebrates what are to capitalism useful forms of authoritarianism, of which Paul Kagame's in Rwanda remains most obviously in contradiction to Western pro-democracy propaganda. In 1998, U.S. president Bill Clinton praised the "new generation" of leaders, understood to encompass Kagame, Museveni of Uganda, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. Against this group—most of whom the West had soured on by the early 2000s (Diamond 2008)—more explicitly illiberal African tyrants are generally painted as requiring profound "reform" (e.g., Mugabe from 1980 to 2017, except for the period 1991–1996, when structural adjustment was aggressively imposed and Zimbabwe was celebrated by neoliberals; see Bond 1998) or outright regime change (e.g., Sudan's Bashir, targeted especially by Western powerbrokers during the Darfur genocide). But the evolution in West African relations from political romance to dictatorial heartbreak best reflects the untenability of fusing free markets and free politics in super-exploited Africa. With China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) expanding to the continent's closest ports, rail lines, and oil extraction infrastructure, the East African authoritarians' hands are strengthened, along with those of traditional Beijing allies in sites of repressive rule like Angola and Zimbabwe. As a result, the likes of pro-Western neopatrimonial theorists Greg Mills et al. (2017) have recognized the new protest wave with opportunistic enthusiasm. Their new spin continues to disclaim the neoliberal causes of economic misery but offers at least some degree of awareness that dissent is rising for economic reasons.

The Brenthurst Foundation attempts to co-opt dissent (e.g., using "not surprisingly" to describe resistance to capitalism's African failures and the resulting austerity regime) to advance the neoliberal cause. This is revealing, even if we set aside the ill-informed remark about social media (for after the prolific use of Facebook and Twitter in Egypt's 2011 uprising, the subsequent ability of Africa's authoritarian regimes to switch off their Internet grid is well practiced and now a relatively common occurrence).[162]

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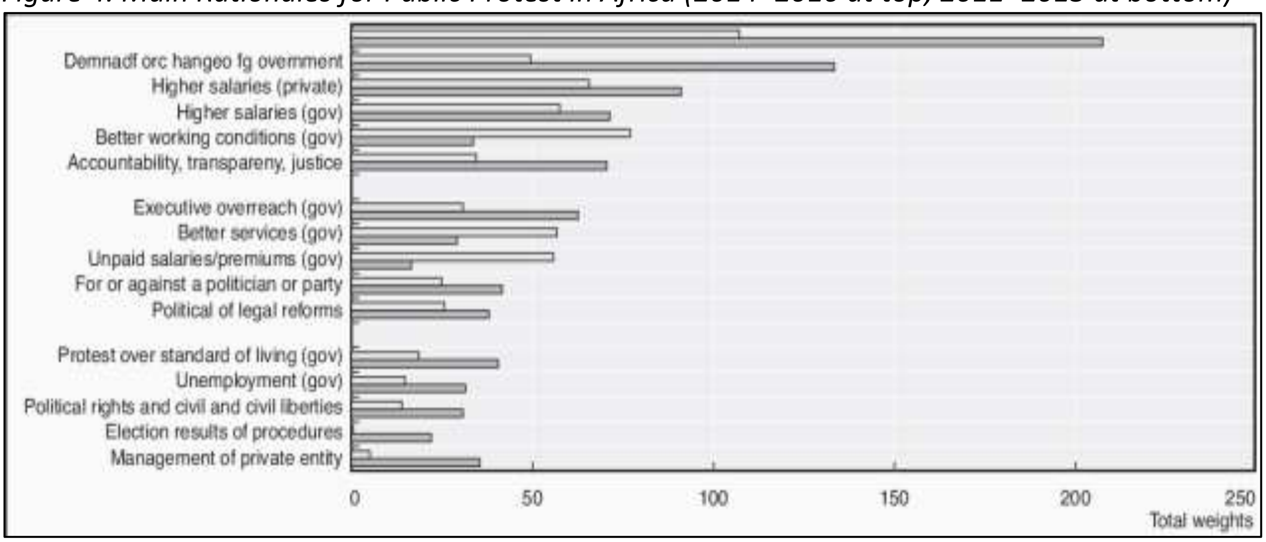
162 In 2016 alone, there were eleven politically motivated Internet shutdowns: Ethiopia (four times), Gambia and Uganda (twice), and Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Mali, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Mukeredzi 2017). Surveillance of the Internet is also a growing problem, as witnessed in the ways South African intelligence intervened repeatedly during Zuma's reign (Duncan 2016).

Awareness of widespread dissent, as reflected in the final two sentences in the foregoing quote, is drawn from increasingly widespread reporting, such as the African Development Bank's African Economic Outlook (AEO), which in turn is based on collated Reuters and Agence France-Presse protest journalism, in Figure 4. Since these grievances have started to find articulation in the annual AEO chapter on governance (albeit a chapter mysteriously dropped starting in 2018), the liberal narrative has struggled to explain why the 2011 protest wave did not subside. Unrest data show protest continued to crest ever higher (although the AEO suggests a decline after 2015), even though pro-neoliberal Africa Rising rhetoric persisted in the ether at least through mid 2014 (Figure 5).

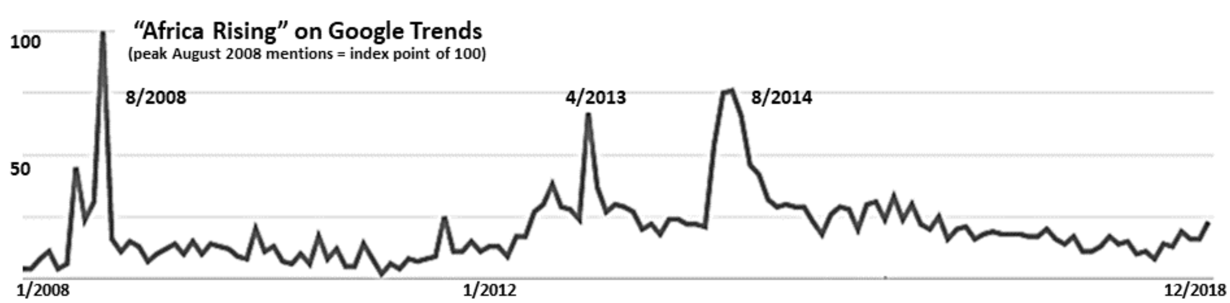
The rationale for protests combines political and economic factors (Harris and Hern forthcoming). If grievances persist, protest can be sustained for years, including in eleven countries—Algeria, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, and Tunisia—where at some point in the 2010s, at least fifty instances of protest were recorded in a given month.

Figure 4. Main Rationales for Public Protest in Africa (2014–2016 at top, 2011–2013 at bottom)



Source: African Development Bank et al. (2017: 132)

Figure 5. Citations of the Phrase "Africa Rising" on Google



Source: http://trends.google.com

The Relative Weaknesses of African Opposition Movements

According to two scholars of the first wave of postcolonial protest, Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle (1992: 439),

> opposition movements in Africa are relatively weak. Sometimes they constitute little more than a spontaneous convergence of diverse urban interests, ranging from privileged public servants to the lumpenproletariat of the shantytowns. Occasionally these elements are organized into formal associations such as churches, trade unions, and professional associations with an independent resource base and a policy voice to pursue specific interests. Only rarely are they aggregated across the breadth of civil society into an alternative ruling coalition with a sustainable multiclass social base and a coherent platform for governing. It is extremely difficult to gauge the effectiveness of the new opposition movements in Africa. The incomplete evidence to date suggests that civic forces lack the political and organizational resources to unseat ruling parties, especially given the tremendous advantages incumbency brings to the latter. More critically, we see little sign that the opposition can promote an alternative set of political values which would result in immediate changes in governance.

Hence, the more durable critiques of malevolent power in Africa require just as much attention as the overthrow of unpopular elites since 2011. There were other recent political protests with progressive undertones that should have generated more headlines, such as in Libya (against slave markets) or Morocco (against corruption and unemployment). In 2016, Nigerian militants fighting oil companies and their government resumed struggle and shrank petroleum production by 1.6 million barrels a day (65 percent) under the mantle of the Niger Delta Avengers. In South Africa, working-class residents of ghettoes engaged in what are termed “service delivery protests” at rising levels of frequency and anger, according to the University of Johannesburg Centre for Social Change (Paret et al. 2017).

The vast majority of grassroots protests lack a concrete political agenda (hence, in South Africa they might be termed “popcorn”—because they rise and fall chaotically, sometimes turning xenophobic). Indeed, one internal reaction of dissenters is a sharp turn to the religious right (the kind that gave Duterte, Erdoğan, Bolsonaro, and Trump such passionate supporters). In Somalia, mass popular protests were held in 2018 against Islamic extremism, another mode of authoritarian practice that has groundings in economic deprivation (UN Development Program (2018). As even the Pentagon’s Africa Command field leader, Ramon Colon-Lopez, recognized: “When you have no options and here comes an extremist that is offering you a motorbike and a bride, what do you think you’re going to do? Your family’s starving, you can’t provide for them and somebody’s giving you an option” (Babb 2018). Similarly, a desperation ideology increasingly powerful in Africa, often aligned to authoritarian elites, is evangelical Christian fundamentalism.

In reality, the West’s anti-terrorism strategy often entails the military strengthening of authoritarian regimes that exacerbate root-cause malgovernance and poverty, such as in

Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, and Somalia. In these countries, 2018 witnessed more than 2000 U.S. Military forces battling Boko Haram, al-Qaida, Islamic State, and al-Shabaab, with occasional scandals in the United States when word of the fighting (and casualties) was reported. Africom leader Thomas Waldhauser told the U.S. Congress, "Our posture network allows forward staging of forces to provide operational flexibility and timely response to crises involving U.S. personnel or interests without creating the optic that U.S. Africa Command is militarizing Africa" (Turse 2018). By early 2020, Trump's Pentagon requested that France step in on its traditional West African turf, to add more military presence in the hotspots. This was important, in part because of Washington's planned decline in the number of major U.S. bases in Africa (from thirty-four to twenty-seven), even though the number of U.S. Military personnel expanded to 6000. Yet the sporadic but often-intense fighting was not effective. Nick Turse (2020) reported the following:

> Violent extremism and insecurity on the continent has increased exponentially during the very years that the U.S. has been building up its network of bases, providing billions of dollars in security assistance to local partners, conducting persistent counterterrorism operations that include commando raids, combat by U.S. Special Operations forces in at least thirteen African countries between 2013 and 2017, and a record number of U.S. airstrikes in Somalia (just over one attack per week in 2019). There are now roughly 25 active militant Islamist groups operating in Africa, up from just five in 2010—a jump of 400 percent—according to the Defense Department's Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Militant Islamist activity also hit record levels in 2019. There were 3471 reported violent events linked to these groups last year, a 1105 percent increase since 2009. Reported fatalities resulting from African militant Islamist group activity also increased by 7 percent over last year, to an estimated 10,460 deaths.

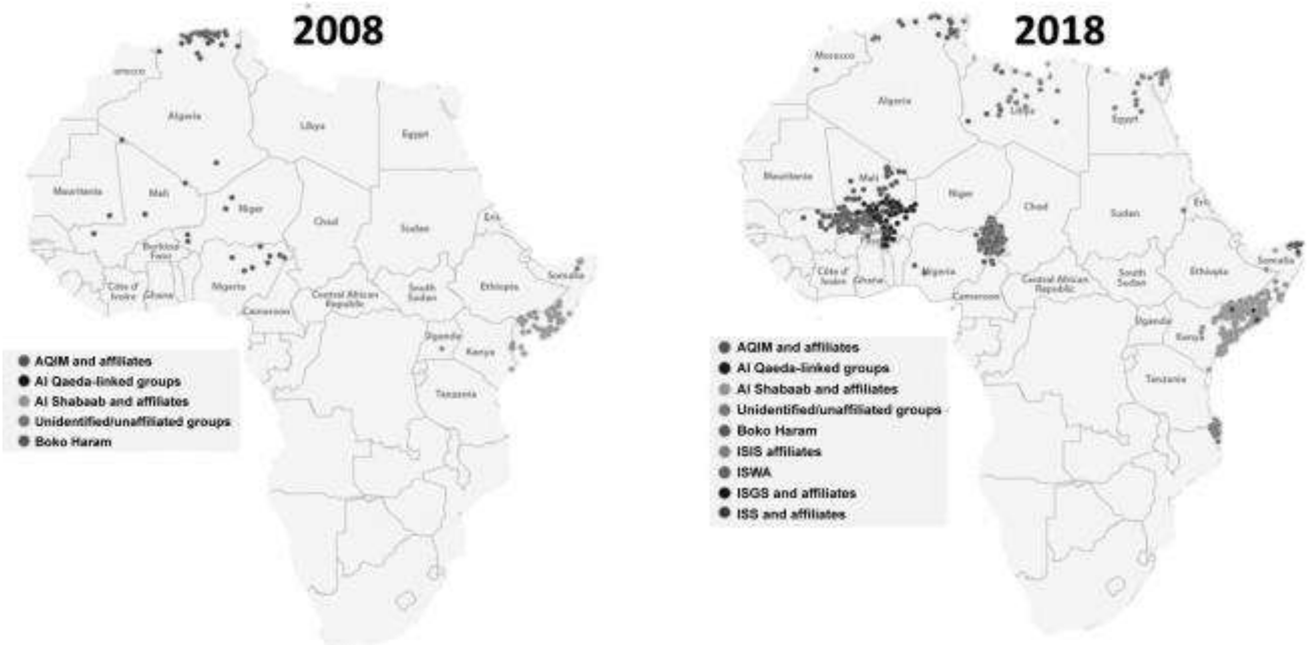
This appears to be the case, if we examine the groups that were active—and the violent incidents that they inflicted—in 2008 compared to 2018 (Figures 6 and 7).

In contrast to militant Islam, another source of protest born of economic oppression is the African labor force. The poorest continent's confrontations with employers has long been considered the world's most serious, as measured in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, which surveys 14,000 employers annually.[163] Of the thirty-two African countries included in the 2017 Report (out of 138 countries), twenty-eight were considered above the world median of militancy and just four below. Of the thirty most-angry national proletariats that year, a dozen were African. The most industrialized country, South Africa, was ranked as having the world's most uncooperative proletariat in 2017 (as was the case every year since 2012, although in 2018, it fell to fifth and then rose to third in 2019, in the world poll) followed by Chad, Tunisia, Liberia, Mozambique, Morocco, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Algeria, Burundi, and Zimbabwe (World Economic Forum 2019). In eleven of these countries, the number of events under the category of violence against civilians far outweighed the category

163 The measure in each country is the category of cooperation in labor-employer relations, on a scale from generally confrontational (1) to generally cooperative (7) (World Economic Forum 2017).

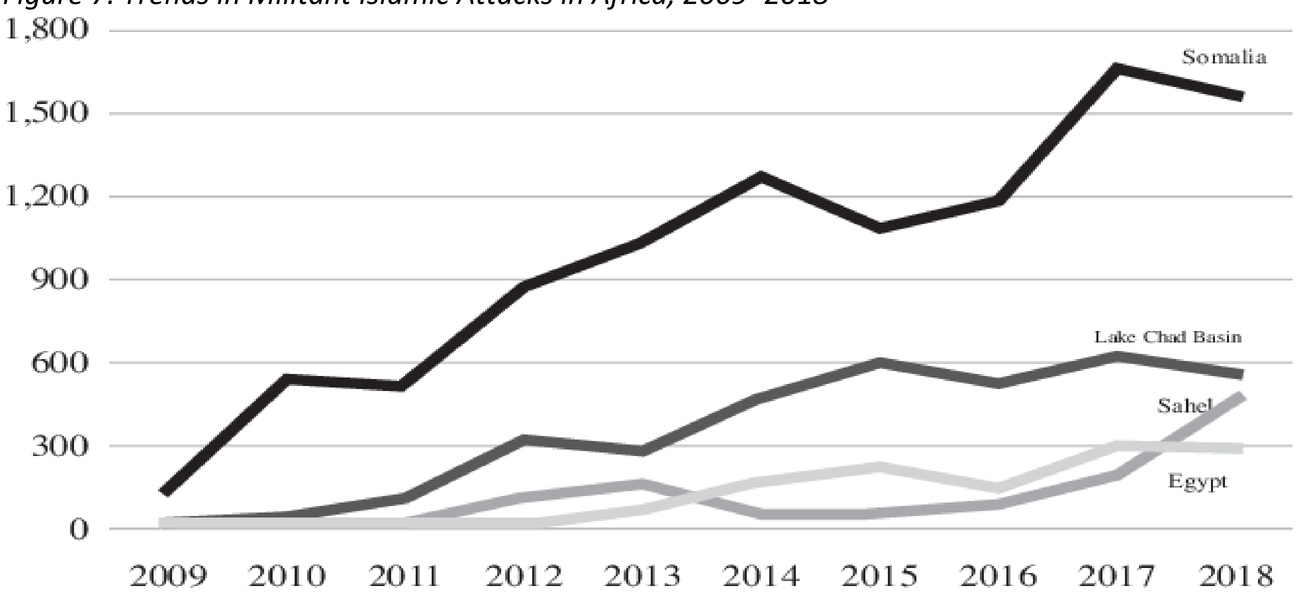
of riots and protests,164 suggesting that there is a much more prevalent tendency to repression: Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Figure 6. Africa's Militant Islamic Groups in 2008 and 2018



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2019)

Figure 7. Trends in Militant Islamic Attacks in Africa, 2009–2018



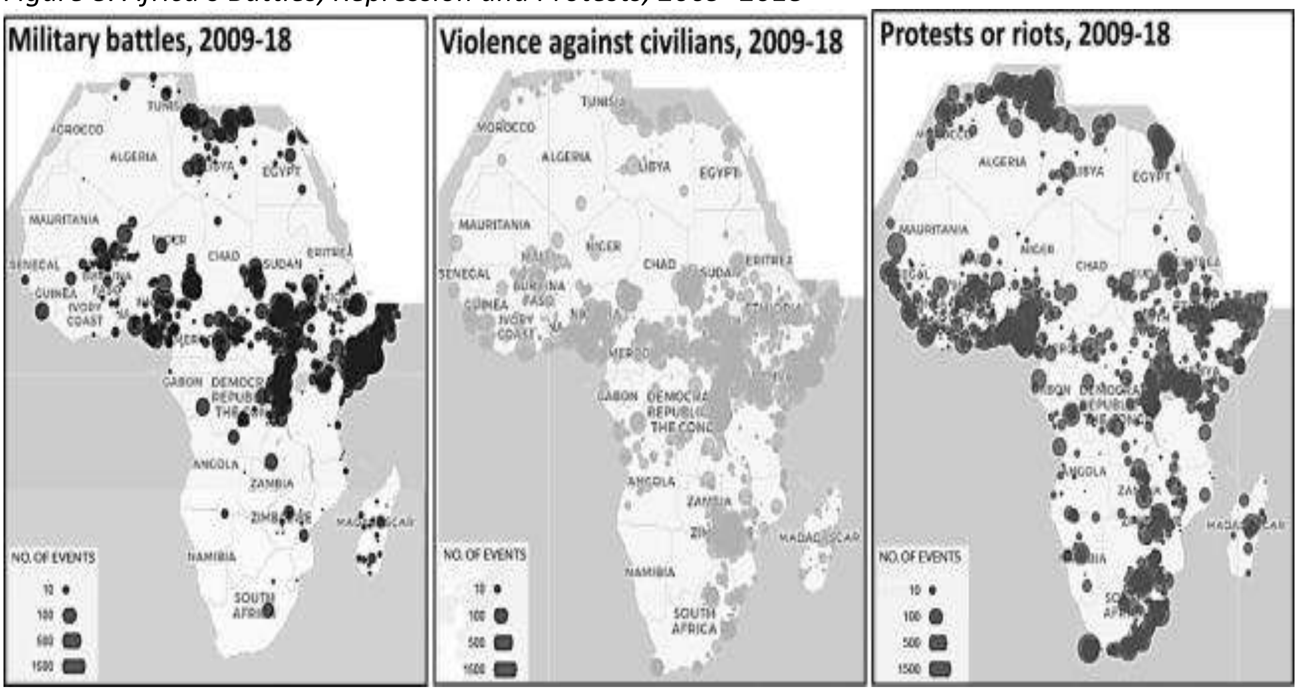
Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2019)

164 ACLED defines a riot as "a public demonstration by a spontaneously organized group that uses violence" and a protest as "a public demonstration where the demonstrators are peaceful." For a much-more-nuanced analysis of how protests might be considered "disruptive"—between violent and nonviolent—see Paret (2017).

What, then, does the authoritarian landscape look like, and how do those top three reasons for grievances lead to protest, in a manner that can be comprehended even in sites where protest is banned, journalists are afraid (or too lazy) to report dissent, and the Internet is shut down?

As one example of a monitoring organization, Freedom House considers most of Africa unfree, with only South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Namibia permitting fundamental civil and political rights. Of the twenty-four countries that Freedom House (2018) considered most rapidly degenerating over the decade 2009–2018, nine were African: Mali, Burundi, Mauritania, Ethiopia (until its early 2018 reversal), Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Eritrea, and Kenya. These assessments correspond closely to the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2019 political review, which ranks South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Ghana, and Tunisia as "flawed democracies" but every other African country as authoritarian (Figure 3).

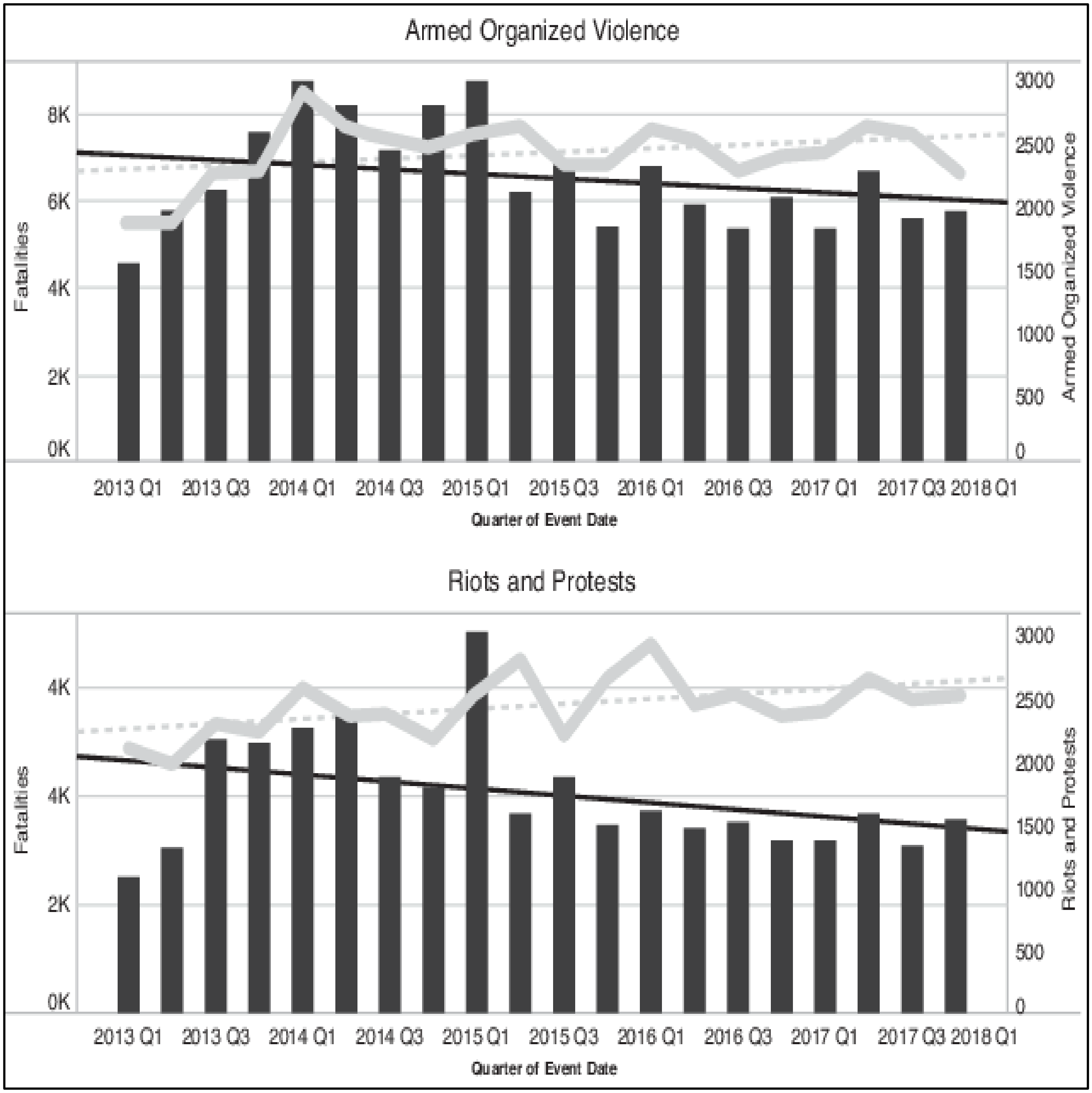
Figure 8. Africa's Battles, Repression and Protests, 2009–2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2019)

The degeneration of political freedom in Africa is confirmed by the rise of what ACLED (2019) terms "armed organized violence," which includes both state repression and paramilitary forces. Although fatalities fell from their peak highs in 2014–2015, the recent number of repressive events is higher than even the hot years of 2011–2013 (Figure 8). So although protests are more likely to be quelled by state violence, their numbers have steadily risen (Figure 9). The latest data from ACLED (2020) show that in 2019, these trends continued, including in Algeria and Sudan, where repressive heads of state were overthrown (Abdelaziz Bouteflika and al-Bashir, respectively).

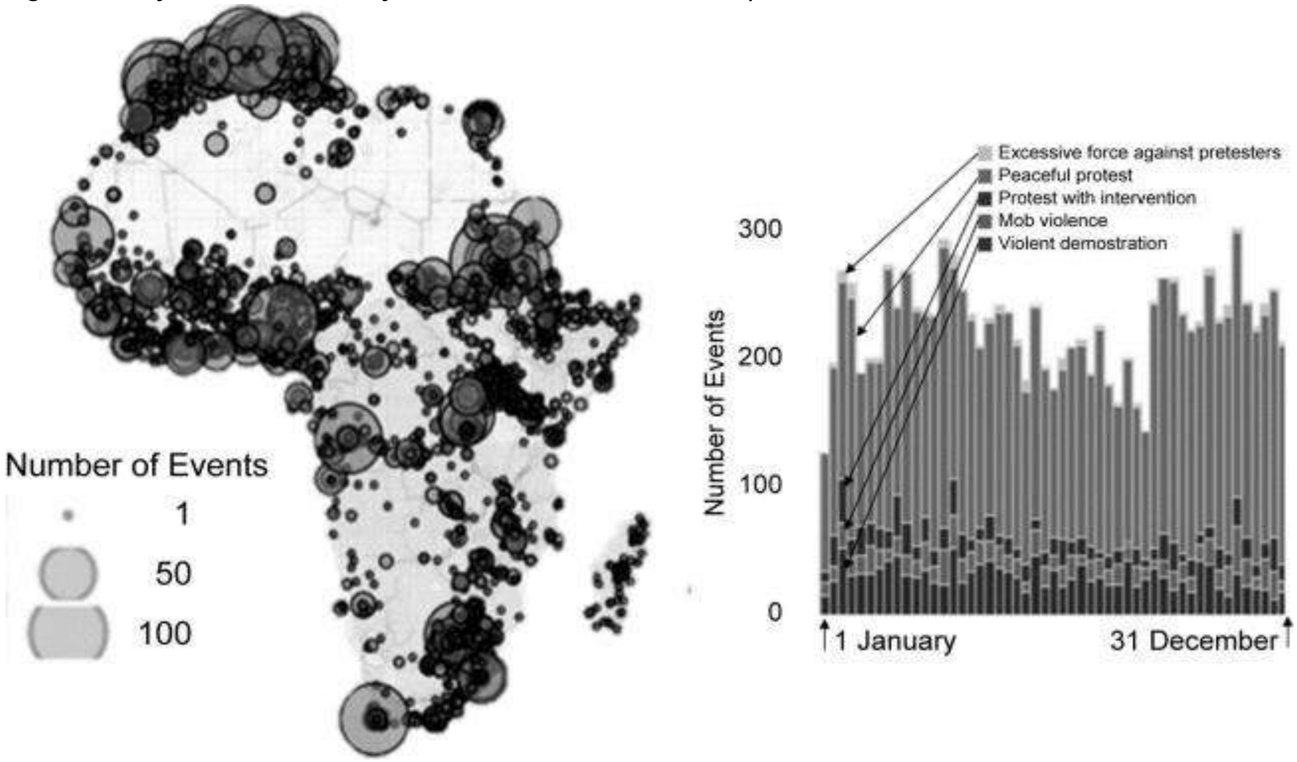
Figure 9. Africa's Incidents of Fatalities, Repression and Protest, 2013–2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2019)

Militancy rose, as reflected in two ACLED categories: peaceful protest and protest with intervention. In two other categories—riots and excessive force against demonstrations—the past year did not show any particular trends. The final category—violent demonstrations—witnessed a decline in 2019. As for the geographical locations of dissent, the main countries in which hundreds of social protests occurred in 2019 were Algeria, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Africa's Incidents of Protests and Riots Across Space and Time, 2019



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2020)

Connecting and Disconnecting the Dots When Resisting Neoliberal Authoritarian Politics

We have observed the empirical basis for concern about African economic crises persisting and indeed amplifying under export-led, extraction-based neoliberal regimes. This is especially worrying because the period ahead offers many potential threats of economic, geopolitical, and environmental catastrophes. Neofascist social forces combining cultural revanchism and economic protectionism on the one hand and neoconservative elites exhibiting traditional militarist-imperialist tendencies on the other hold power in Washington, DC. The European Union continues to fragment. In addition to nuclear buildup and missile technology advances in big-power theaters involving the United States, Russia, and China, various regional battlegrounds continue to fester in the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and South Asia, and potentially the Far East. These conflicts also generate waves of refugees, as do ever-more destructive processes of climate change (such as were witnessed in Sudan and Syria before their extreme sociopolitical conflicts). And economically, deglobalization tendencies and trade wars have fatally undermined faith that transnational corporate interlocks are an ever-expanding process that can civilize right-wing, populist governments. The "centripetal" economic forces that Xi Jinping hoped for from the Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa network—that is, a spinning world would draw together countries' economies in harmonious, self-reinforcing divisions of labor—are better described as centrifugal, as the world continues spinning apart (Garcia and Bond 2018).

As for the extremely vulnerable African continent, the challenge is obviously complicated by innumerable variations of hostile political, ethnic, community, generational, and gender relations—through which neoliberal policies amplify underlying tensions. In some cases, such as Algeria, the DRC, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, major protests erupted in early 2019—and were immediately met by police and army bloodshed—due to the mix of repressive politics and economics. Algeria's sickly president, Bouteflika, was quickly thrown out by a series of weekly mass protests, but these then continued all year as it became apparent to activists that electoral routes to change were blocked. As Amnesty International (2020) observed,

> Governments across the Middle East and North Africa displayed a chilling determination to crush protests with ruthless force and trample over the rights of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who took to the streets to call for social justice and political reform during 2019. In Algeria, authorities sought to quash protests through mass arbitrary arrests and prosecutions of peaceful demonstrators.

Elsewhere, Amnesty (2020) reported, North African protesters achieved mixed results:

> In Egypt, a rare outbreak of protests in September which took the authorities by surprise was met with mass arbitrary arrests with more than 4,000 detained. . . . In Tunisia the Truth and Dignity Commission published its final report and seventy-eight trials started before criminal courts offering a rare chance for security forces to be held accountable for past abuses.

The DRC suffered an apparently stolen election and thus unending legitimacy problems for a new leader whose ties to the outgoing Kabila regime may explain his surprise victory. In Sudan, according to the Associated Press (2019),

> The protests, called for by professional and opposition groups, are part of a wave of unrest over a failing economy that has transformed into demands for the resignation of the autocratic al-Bashir, an Islamist who has run the country for nearly 30 years but brought little improvement to his people.

By April 2019, the protests had compelled the military to remove Bashir from power, in a coup d'état that was received with great suspicion by activists. With protest continuing, a civilian–military Sovereignty Council was formed in September, led by a technocratic, neoliberal prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok. But activists in the Forces of Freedom and Change alliance compelled the state to begin prosecuting Bashir, who was convicted of corruption in December (with a two-year sentence) and who faces the likely prospect of an International Criminal Court trial over his handling of the Darfur conflict.

Zimbabwe is even more explicitly a case of resistance to neoliberal authoritarianism, in the wake of Mnangagwa's November 2017 military soft coup against Mugabe and the mid-2018 appointment of ultra-neoliberal finance minister Mthuli Ncube (the same economist who considers $2/day spending as entry into the middle class). Ncube immediately imposed a regressive 2 percent tax on all electronic financial transactions, cut major chunks from the state budget, granted mining companies much greater access to scarce hard currency, and announced that he would prioritize the repayment of $1.8 billion in debt arrears to the World Bank, African Development Bank, and European Investment Bank—all under the unashamed rubric of "austerity for prosperity." The contradictions mounted, however, and in mid January 2019, when Mnangagwa and Ncube imposed a 150 percent increase in the price of gasoline, it was met by four days of intense protest. The army killed at least a dozen people, injured scores, and abducted hundreds more.

The difficulty of dislodging ruling tyrants through protest is difficult enough, much less overthrowing an entire oppressive regime. Bratton and van de Walle (1992: 439) assessed the early-1990s protests with an appropriate mix of cynicism and compassion:

> The opportunism of opposition political leaders, their patronage followings, and their links with current state elites all suggest that a change of leadership would probably perpetuate a clientelistic pattern of "politics as usual." Nonetheless, opposition groups did prompt protest and reform, and in so doing put new issues on the political agenda in Africa. These include the recognition of basic civil and political liberties, the end of arbitrary regulation and state exaction, and greater transparency and accountability in public decision making.

As witnessed in the surge of African political protests since 2011, today not just the politics but also the economics of neoliberal authoritarianism have begun to hit limits in country after country. Across Africa, the still-forming ideological terrain is ripe for more discussion about these interrelationships. Dots between neoliberalism and authoritarianism are in place, but these can be conceptually connected and politically disconnected in the broader social interest, as the activists regularly show. Instead, next-generation discussions need to focus on connecting the dots between protests in various national and continental settings.

Postscript: Covid-19 Ramp-up of Authoritarian Power – and Resistance?

The months of March-May 2020 represented a stunning reversal for African democrats and advocates of economic justice. The primary long-term concern regarding authoritarian regimes is their ability to harness technologies of surveillance and repression to stay in power indefinitely. But even if African governments are not as capable as those in East Asia when it comes to legitimating greater social control through cyberwar on their citizenries, the Covid-19 tracking process aids their cause. Like ruling regimes everywhere, they began to exhibit the ability to combine biopolitical power at the level of the household during lockdowns, with prohibitions of social protest, with support to favored corporations.

The concrete manifestations were at best embarrassing, at worst fatal. Liberal scholars Jeffrey Smith and Nic Cheeseman (2020) identified three ways that African regimes had begun "to manipulate the coronavirus threat for authoritarian ends":

> First are the emboldened dictators, those leaders who were already leading characteristically authoritarian regimes but who are now free to further advance their anti-democratic machinations… Rwandan President Paul Kagame has carefully guided the country into a one-party dictatorship since taking power in 2000 and is now deploying security forces and soldiers across the country to enforce Africa's first nationwide lockdown. Already, according to credible reports, several citizens have been shot dead for allegedly breaking curfew. Instances like these are depressingly common in a country where brave activists, journalists, and opposition leaders have been routinely killed with impunity—apparently by Kagame's own security forces.
>
> The second major category are the opportunistic autocrats, those oppressors who had already moved toward authoritarianism but were facing mounting domestic opposition and have since used the pandemic to violently stifle their activities. Uganda is a glaring example. President Yoweri Museveni—who has been in power over the course of six successive U.S. presidential administrations—moved to ban opposition rallies well before the country had confirmed a single case of coronavirus. The pandemic provides ample opportunity to accelerate an evident trend toward authoritarianism. Museveni is concerned about the growing support for opposition candidates such as the popular musician-turned-lawmaker Bobi Wine of the People Power movement, who has spearheaded his own pandemic response by educating Ugandans on how to combat the virus through popular music… Meanwhile, Guinea's burgeoning strongman, President Alpha Condé, plowed forward with a highly controversial referendum and local elections on March 22, the results of which will allow him to further extend his 10-year rule, which has turned increasingly violent…
>
> Finally, there is a third category: the clueless authoritarians who appear to have little understanding of the inherent threats to public health that the coronavirus poses, with likely disastrous consequences for their populations and global health writ large… In Tanzania, President John Magufuli has refused to close crowded places of worship in the country, saying: "That's where there is true healing. Corona is the devil and it cannot survive in the body of Jesus." Previously, the government had come under fire from the World Health Organization for mishandling and underreporting suspected Ebola cases.

Regardless of the type of repression, African citizens would not be kept down. The "Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity" (2020) continent-wide network of 40,000 activists issued a statement against Covid-19 repression in April:

> it is with great sadness that in several countries we have noticed recurring incidents of human rights abuses by security forces that use excessive force on civilians in their efforts to enforce curfews and lockdowns ordered by governments implementing social distancing measures… we deplore the fact that this crisis is providing security forces an opportunity to bully and terrorize unarmed civilians. Repression and coercion are not effective means of disciplining citizens. We believe that if nations across the world are able to maintain weeks of lockdowns without such human rights violations, it can also be achieved in Africa… We, as Africans Rising, believe fighting this disease is largely dependent on our individual contributions. It is imperative that we unite people to

> stand together against coronavirus, not dehumanize and alienate the people most vulnerable to the disease.

There were various forms of popular resistance to the mix of authoritarianism and economic catastrophe, in Africa and across the world, with anti-lockdown activism of a far-right populist character making most news, e.g. in support of Trump and Bolsonaro. There were just as many pro-lockdown protests, e.g. in South Africa where trade unions – especially in the mining, teaching and healthcare sectors – expressed a continual resistance to unsafe workplaces.

ACLED (2020) reported on African protests against state excesses combining the lockdown process with yet more repression: "demonstrators pushed back on a range of issues from international travel restrictions to police enforcement of coronavirus measures. In Cameroon, several youths were stabbed to death during a brawl over the distribution of bags of rice donated by a footballer in Douala city. Associated demonstration activity was also reported in Nigeria, Gabon, Uganda, Tunisia, and Mauritania." In the traditional protest hotspot, South Africa, the state's ungenerous fiscal and monetary 'stimulus' policies – amounting to around 4 percent of GDP, the lowest in its peer group – were combined with its April-May deployment of 75,000 army troops to brutally impose law and order in urban slums where social distancing was truly impossible, and where food riots and land invasions regularly flared up (Bond 2020). The three logics associated with Covid-19 were those of capital, the state and the people: respectively, neoliberalism, authoritarianism and popular resistance. The overlap of the two former logics, and the lack of coherence of the latter logic, would mark at least the first period of Covid-19 crisis, well into 2020. What would come next is a matter, as ever, to be decided on the terrain of structural crisis and social agency.

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