THE STRUGGLE FOR A SECOND TRANSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA: UPRISING, DEVELOPMENT AND PRECARITY IN THE POST-APARTHEID CITY

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ABSTRACT

Yousuf Al-Bulushi: The Struggle for a Second Transition in South Africa:
Uprising, Development and Precarity in the Post-Apartheid City
(Under the direction of John Pickles)

This dissertation explores the limitations of post-apartheid liberation in the specific
environment of Durban, South Africa. It takes a social movement of shack dwellers,
Abahlali baseMjondolo, as a looking glass into urban debates concerned with the wellbeing
of some of South Africa's most marginalized communities. As the country struggles to deal
with the ongoing crises of mass poverty, inequality, and unemployment, the government has
responded with a range of developmental projects. At the same time, poor people around the
country have protested injustice in record numbers, rivaling levels of unrest in any other part
of the world. A mix of state repression and increased governmental redistribution of wealth
has been the official response.

This study explores these contentious issues by placing them in the context of South
Africa's Second Transition. More broadly, the approach situates the study at multiple
geographical scales of analysis from the global to the continental, and the regional to the city.
In so doing, it tries to de-center the nation-state as a central unit of analysis without losing
site of the specificity of South Africa's challenges. The dissertation begins by exploring
national debates around the resurgence of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa,
before moving on to approach to the issue of racialization as a central divisive factor within
South Africa and in many of the global uprisings that have occurred since 2011. The study

shifts to explore state responses to these moments of unrest and rebellion from below by

thinking about the rise of a South African developmental state over the past decade. The

developmental state in Durban is examined through one of the country's largest public

housing projects. Finally, the dissertation explores the other side of the coin to the state's

response to movements: beyond developmental initiatives too often lies naked repression.

The violence that racialized communities living in slums throughout South Africa face is

explored through a variety of debates around the peculiarities of precarity beyond the global

North. The study closes by putting the findings into conversation with Mahmood Mamdani's

seminal work on the legacy of African colonialism.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the extensive assistance of a range of mentors, colleagues, family and friends. Working under the supervision of John Pickles was truly a delight. He possesses an uncanny ability to let my mind wander freely down a number of exploratory paths while at the same time periodically stepping up to challenge me, discipline my overly ambitious agendas, and provide incredibly rigorous and timely feedback. His own extensive involvement in South African intellectual life proved invaluable as I set out to conduct my research, and the connections he graciously offered me ended up being crucial for my project. Committee members Eunice Sahle and Michael Hardt both put me in touch with South Africans who influenced and changed my thinking dramatically, while proving to be gracious hosts, teachers and interlocutors. Their guidance throughout the process has been extremely beneficial, and both have given their time freely to me over the years in a way I imagine only advisors usually do. Scott Kirsch and Altha Cravey were crucial in my graduate school intellectual formation, teaching courses that proved foundational to my own development. Their role on my committee has been simultaneously supportive and challenging: pushing me beyond my comfort zone while constantly providing the positive reinforcement graduate students need to stay the course. In the final, crucial months of writing, Haruna Suzuki served as an indispensable research assistant by transcribing interviews, providing feedback on chapter drafts, and regenerating me with a combination of humor and optimism.

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INTRODUCTION
METHOD, RESEARCH, POLITICS: LIVING LEARNING

African politics has for too long been characterized by the central dilemmas of violence, civil war, and the supposed necessity for benign foreign intervention. Beginning perhaps around 1974, with the triumph of independence movements in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, African politics began to shift from the dilemma of overthrowing colonial rule to healing internal divisions. Southern African nations like Angola and Mozambique slid from anti-colonial struggles into civil wars. While Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa all continued to fight for self-determination in a struggle against their internal white colonizers, much of the rest of the continent began to experience the "pitfalls of national independence" followed by the lost decade of the 1980s with the rise of neoliberal structural adjustment. Over the next thirty-odd years, the question of politics shifted from non-alignment, (pan) African unity, and African socialism to transitional justice, modernization, humanitarian intervention and anti-corruption.

With the end of formal South African apartheid in 1990 and the coming to power of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994, the long independence struggle on the continent was largely complete. My interest in the post-apartheid moment was stimulated by the fact that the struggle for social justice there continued despite the attempts by the liberation party to subsume the variety of political viewpoints under the single hegemonic banner of the ANC. This struck me as particularly important, and serves as one way through

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which to re-insert Africa into the broader debates around social movements that have largely been defined by the Latin American context over the past decade. South Africa did not require humanitarian intervention. The problem of ethnic divisions—so crucial to the colonial and apartheid eras—was matched if not exceeded by the continued way in which race and class mapped onto each other, typifying a broader articulation between global neoliberalism and regimes of racialization. Indeed, it struck me that much could be learned from the South African experience of a transition from apartheid to neoliberalism. For me, this took the form of studying one particular poor people's movement: Abahlali baseMjondolo.

The more I learned about Abahlali from a distance, the more I became intrigued by the overlaps in discourse, theory and practice between the group and other movements around the world. Falling under the banner of alter-globalization struggles, autonomous and anarchist organizations, indigenous people's movements, or gatherings of the multitude, the global struggles of the post-Cold War era were too often confined to the geographical continents of Latin America, Europe, and North America. These included occasional references to Asia (Katsiaficas 2012), but hardly any mention of Africa. The Arab Spring in 2011 began to change this pattern, with a renewed attention to North Africa (albeit largely through a Middle Eastern/Arab lens). It transformed the peoples of that part of the world from mere victims of US imperialism and domestic authoritarianism, into subjects confronting a similar predicament as other marginalized people elsewhere but nonetheless capable of changing the world.

The different movements for an Other globalization—and arguably the 2011 uprisings from the Arab Spring to European anti-austerity struggles and the Occupy Wall

Street explosions—shared a number of different characteristics. They were confronted by a global enemy they variously termed neoliberalism, Empire, or the fourth world war—all attempts to define the latest phase of global capitalism. They all grappled with forms of democratic organization that were experimental in nature, but nonetheless did not emerge from a vacuum. The radical struggles were all defined by the question of the relationship between state and movement, and this problem was addressed based on the specific shortcomings of the previous state socialist experiments that had dominated so much of radical political theory and practice in the 20th century. As such, the problematic of autonomy emerged as central in much of the discourse and practice associated with the new upheavals. The varieties of autonomy included the autonomy of movements from the state, autonomy of the superstructure from the base, autonomy of women's caucuses from men, people of color from white groups, queer identified rebels from straight people, and the autonomy of the working class from capital.

It was this vocabulary that attracted me to Abahlali, a group that was of course intervening in this global conjuncture through the specificities of their own context: shack communities in post-apartheid South Africa. Yet another characteristic of Abahlali's organizing that overlapped with the issues at the center of movement debates elsewhere included the question of the relationship between knowledge and practice, or the professionalization of knowledge and the marginalization of struggle intellectuals. This concerned not only the relationship between academics and movement activists, but also the way in which NGOs and middle class political projects interacted with more grassroots and community-based groups. Abahlali was extremely critical of middle class individuals and organizations that refused to see them as actors in their own right, capable of autonomous

thought that did not require any of the professional attributes to be taken seriously. The resonance between their critique of academics and NGO workers and Biko's critique of white liberals who constantly wanted to advise and lead the anti-apartheid struggle on behalf of Black South Africans is undeniable. This was attractive to me because it meant that the movement already had a critique of outsiders like myself, and would likely assist in holding me accountable in an otherwise uneven power structure between American researcher and South African shack dweller.

I had been confronted with those uneven dynamics in prior research work abroad, initially on a class trip to Beirut, Lebanon. "Why are you here? What exactly brought you to this place? We already have plenty of Americans that come through to see the camps, to witness the suffering of the Palestinians first-hand. It ends up being purely voyeuristic political tourism. I'm not sure we need any more of your people here." These were the words that greeted me as I took the taxi ride from Hamra to Shatila with my Lebanese host in early 2002. She was to show a few of my classmates and me the camps. I later learned that she was forced into this position because our professor was a good friend with one of her professors, who had in turn begged her to show these Americans around Shatila as a favor for an old friend.

And yet, I thought I was different from those *other* Americans. After all, I was born in the Middle East and had Arab ancestry. I identified strongly with this part of my background, and upon arriving at college I had immediately begun to organize politically, starting a student group in my freshman year intended to highlight issues of social, political and economic justice in the Middle East and North Africa. I remained active on these themes throughout my undergraduate career, organizing teach-ins, protests, and writing newspaper

columns highlighting the variety of issues that determined the relationship between the US and the Arab world. Surely, I was different from these other "Americans" who came merely as political tourists?

Unfortunately, what my companion was telling me about the problem with my presence in the camps was indeed largely true. This confrontation from someone who would later become a dear friend was my first lesson in the need to transcend solidarity as a political platform, and ultimately pushed me in the direction of engaging politically, primarily in the immediate surroundings of my own community. And yet, it did not result in eliminating the internationalism behind my political vision, nor do I think this is what my friend was intending. In what follows I reflect briefly on the relationship between researcher and movement in terms of my own experiences in the US and abroad, and in the terms of the theoretical traditions that have informed the development of my own political outlook.

If one of the central problems that has consciously guided movements in Latin America in recent years, and we might argue has unconsciously penetrated the terrain of the Arab uprisings, is that of the tension between state and movement, then we might make a preliminary formulation along similar lines about the relationship between the university and intellectuals. That is, the university serves too often as an apparatus of capture for radical ideas, stultifying them, separating them off from the social realm, and confining them to academic venues which, while far from useless, are dramatically decreased in intensity in terms of their ability to attach themselves to other productive desires and becomings that are often most active and pregnant with possibility within movements.

As an example of the theoretical stakes and misinterpretations that are possible depending on the specific locus of enunciation one speaks and studies from, we might think

of the different (mis)interpretations of French theory. To many American academics, Michel

Foucault's writings often lead in the direction of an all-consuming power, and thereby appear

to position resistance as futile. In contrast, for many movements his work points in a very

different direction, one more akin to what Deleuze says about Foucault in his short book on

his work.

> It is as if, finally, something new were emerging in the wake of Marx. It is as if a
> complicity about the State were finally broken. Foucault is not content to say that we
> must rethink certain notions; he does not even say it; he just does it, and in this way
> proposes new co-ordinates for praxis. In the background a battle begins to brew, with
> its local tactics and overall strategies which advance not by totalizing but by relaying,
> connecting, converging and prolonging. The question ultimately is: *What is to be
> done?* The theoretical privilege given to the State as an apparatus of power to a
> certain extent leads to the practice of a leading and centralizing party which
> eventually wins State power; but on the other hand it is this very organizational
> conception of the party that is justified by this theory of power. The stakes of
> Foucault's book lie in a different theory, a different praxis of struggle, a different set
> of strategies (1988: 30, original emphasis).

Here Foucault's microphysics of power leads towards a different problematic that de-centers

the state and the political party from forms of radical political practice, and thus opens us up

to a multiplicity of terrains upon which political organizing and the production of knowledge

can take place. The Italian Operaismo and Autonomia movements of the 1960s and 1970s

drew from this interpretation of Foucault's work, and saw their political practice as realizing

the best of such theoretical traditions. Christian Marrazi, in an attempt to redefine the debate

around the arrival of the post-political, argues that in these Italian movements, "the 'end of

politics' involves a search for new *political* areas of struggle, new territories for the

massification of the struggle. In Italy, the French theories, like those of Foucault, Deleuze,

Guattari, and Baudrillard too, are immediately translated into the Movement's language, that

is, into concrete struggle" (*Autonomia*: 12).

The Argentinian group Colectivo Situaciones is equally inspired by this Franco-Italian tradition of theoretical struggle as well as the rich set of political experiments that emerged coeval with the December 2001 post-political uprisings that toppled successive governments in Argentina. Colectivo Situaciones works closely with a number of these movements. They reflect upon the relation between researcher and movement through the figure of the "researcher militant." Their first intervention is to highlight the fact that "Militant research works neither from its own set of knowledges nor from how things ought to be. On the contrary, the only requirement for researcher-militants is a difficult one: to remain faithful to their 'not knowing'. In this sense militant research is an authentic antipedagogy" (2003). Here I think Colectivo Situaciones comes very close to Fanon's own conception of the militant in *Wretched of the Earth*—discussed below—when he says the sole job of the political activist is to teach the people that everything depends upon them. Again, as Situaciones argues, "Research-militancy…tries to generate a capacity for struggles to read themselves" (2003).

And yet they are equally aware of the danger of reifying this conception of research-militancy. Like participatory action research, or activist anthropology, or any number of similarly formulated radical approaches to research within academia, it has the potential to become stultified by its university-oriented context. It can become the latest trend in a field constantly looking for and valorizing the new, a unique way to carve out additional publications and advance your career. Once militant research has devolved into this practice then it ceases to be useful, and as Situaciones argues, becomes "deprived of situational anchoring" (2003). Nonetheless, it is still possible to reframe this intellectual-political

practice in refreshingly tangible fashion: "In more practical terms, research-militancy develops through workshops and collective reading" (2003).

In my own studies and political involvement, such a framing of the potential for militant research is part of what attracted me to my work in South Africa with the organization Abahlali baseMjondolo. As an organization of people who live in shacks, Abahlali is often critical of intellectuals and the extractive nature of much academic knowledge production. And yet they simultaneously understand the necessity of intensifying their struggles through the production of alliances and resonances in all areas of society: from the squatter camps to the workplace and the university. Despite their stinging critique of the ruling African National Congress, and Abahlali's own repeated insistence upon organizational autonomy, they open themselves to building ties with certain divisions within the South African government. This organization has done much of the useful work that is required to hold intellectuals accountable, and can offer a lot to research militants who want to engage in a collective process of transformation.

Reflecting on their experience within an experimental university study group and their exchange with a number of academics that established a practice extremely akin to research militancy, a number of intellectuals from the shack settlements affiliated with Abahlali had this to say about the process they termed "Living learning":

> Living Learning is about what's happening in and outside of the University classroom. So we are trying to combine the two universities – the one of experience and the one of academics. … So there is a need for a good translation and interpretation to make it really a living politics. …The point is that it is not our work – it is the people's work. They sent us and we need to report. …Knowledge is a dangerous thing! The publication will help the people where we come from because people compare these two universities – the University emijondolo and eplasini and the academic University of KwaZulu-Natal. There is this assumption, for example among the people in the shacks, that when you go to the academic university you don't think about what you are learning daily in life

but you are just theorizing and talking about the people. But if this publication comes, it will show that it can be different; that the people and daily life are included by us in our Living Learning, and that the work continues. And sure, maybe there will be critique on our thinking. But you know, if a car is running, the dogs will be running alongside and barking. Anyway, if the car stops, the dog just pees on the car (Figlan et al 2009: 7-8).

While I don't believe my own research practice ever achieved exactly this kind of living learning as a form of research militancy, I did take it as a goal to strive for, and I continue to believe it provides us with a beautiful example of the potential relationship between knowledge and movement that we can and should aspire to.

This dissertation does not, however, take as its goal the concrete elaboration of the practices and daily lives of the members of Abahlali. Much useful work has already been written with this in mind (see for example Pithouse (2005), Patel (2009), Chance (2010), Gibson (2011)). Rather, I approached my study as an attempt to see South Africa through the political problems that Abahlali as a social movement revealed. As such, the chapters in this work examine the following issues: the reconstitution of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, the nature of political organization when the liberation movement is now in charge, the role of racialization as an under-examined and divisive factor weakening many global uprisings over the past few years, the relationship between movement and state as the rebirth of the development project unravels globally, and rethinking precarity from the specific site of the South African shack settlement. Each of these themes emerged through my concrete examination of Abahlali, where I attempted to use the movement as a window into broader debates of central concern in South Africa and the world at large.

The research was conducted over three years in three different visits to the country in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Throughout my study, my qualitative research methods included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and policy analysis. I attended academic

workshops like the Johannesburg Workshop on Theory and Criticism and those organized by

the Center for the Critical Research on Race and Identity and the School of Development

Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, activist intellectual gatherings organized by the

Tribe of Moles, radical convergences such as BRICS from Below, student organized debates

on non-racialism, panels on social movements at the Time of the Writer Festival,

documentary film screenings at the Durban International Film Festival, and talks given at the

Antipode Institute for the Geographies of Justice seminars organized in Durban. I attended a

variety of community meetings regarding issues like community displacement due to the

expansion of the port in Durban and water sanitation challenges in low-income communities

where dry toilets had been installed. Most of all, I shadowed members of Abahlali as they

held meetings in their downtown office, attended court hearings throughout the city, traveled

to the different shack settlements affiliated with the organization, launched new branches of

the movement, held community consultations, and organized the election of the Abahlali

Youth League, Women's League, and overall organizational leadership, and held protests or

organized massive gatherings like Unfreedom Day. While the vast majority of my research

focused on Durban, I also spent time in Johannesburg and Cape Town, where I was able to

interview scholars, activists and journalists working in the areas of housing, water, race

relations and the law.

When I set out to conduct a study of Abahlali and social movements in South Africa,

I already knew a fair amount about the nature of social movement divisions and internal

debates and splits due to my own participations in such spaces in the United States. I had

read a little about similar debates surrounding Abahlali from a distance with skepticism, but I

also kept an open mind regarding the different positions that seemed to be laid out in these

forums. I decided I wanted to approach the study with an open mind so that I could

determine for myself through direct observation where I stood on many of these issues. I

also wanted to learn as much as possible from the different actors involved in social

movements in the country, and therefore I tried to avoid taking too strong a position that

might cut me off from any particular actor in these debates. Nonetheless, my ultimate

decision to shy away from some of the more heated debates surrounding social movements

like Abahlali in South Africa might still be viewed by some as a compromise or an attempt to

evade difficult issues. I took this decision because, as a participant in movements within the

US myself, I understand that many of the divisions within struggles are quite complex and

require first-hand knowledge to even begin to take a position. Were you even present at such

and such a meeting in 2006? Do you have a stake in these struggles? Does it affect your own

livelihood? Many of these questions I could not answer positively, and I therefore did not

see it as my place to intervene into internal movement dilemmas. However, in the

dissertation I still approach some of the most central debates I observed within the

movements by addressing the issues on a theoretical terrain. By taking the most

sophisticated theoretical representative of the different positions, and putting the theories into

conversation, I try to grapple in my own way with some of these key disputes. Through it

all, I have tried my best to avoid the sectarian, absolutist approaches that too often fracture

progressive communities and begin to eat them from the inside out.

Finally, while I have a relatively strong background in the issue of race on a

theoretical and practical level, I did not set out to place racialization at the center of this

study. Instead, the theme emerged as a glaring absence in too much of the existing literature

and political discourse in South Africa. For a country that is so obviously structured along the

lines of race, South Africa remains surprisingly color-blind. I found this to be the case across

the board, from everyday life to the media, from academic studies to the courtroom, and from

social movements to the government. This is perhaps attributable to a purportedly post-

apartheid moment and the attempt to construct a rainbow nation. But when power,

geography and inequality are so clearly structured by race—historically and in the present—

one simply cannot afford to ignore the issue. As such, racialization emerged as one of the

central threads stringing together the different chapters of my study.

The most glaring aspect of the ongoing racialization of South African poverty and

politics might be found in the composition of shack dwelling communities. In Durban, the

shack communities I visited were almost exclusively African, with a small sampling of

Indian and Coloured residents mixed in. Abahlali as an organization is roughly 99% African

(Black), with most prominent representation from Zulu, Xhosa and Mpondo tribal groups.

Despite having its origins in the Kennedy Road shack settlement, a community of shacks

built along a hill adjoining the municipal dump in Durban, the group quickly gained citywide

attention in both the English and isiZulu press, and began to attract interest from other shack

communities. Most often, a few grassroots community leaders in a specific shack settlement

where issues of public home allocation, water, sanitation, electricity, crime or corruption

have gone unaddressed by the local ward councilor (who is most often a member of the

ANC, but could also be an IFP, NFP or DA representative, depending on the ward) will

decide of their own accord to get in touch with Abahlali for advice after reading about the

group in the newspaper, or hearing about them through word of mouth. This often takes the

shape of visiting Abahlali's headquarters, which have been located in a downtown office

building since their 2009 displacement from the Kennedy Road shack community at the

hands of an ANC-led mob. Abahlali leaders will often advise such communities willingly, without necessarily encouraging them to join the movement. But if the community leaders express greater interest in politics and in joining a broader struggle, Abahlali will often explain to them the process for joining the organization.

Typically, in order to join the movement, a shack community must organize at least fifty members to agree to form a chapter of Abahlali. This is required in order to emphasize that, despite joining a broader group with a centralized leadership, the initiative and drive for any movement activism must always come from a strong local base, grounded in and knowledgeable about the specific dynamics of their own particular shack settlement. Once fifty members have been recruited, a few Abahlali representatives will visit the community to explain more about how the group functions, their broader political vision, their insistence upon political autonomy, and the rights of poor South Africans yet to be realized. If the community is welcoming and organized, Abahlali will agree to return on a later date with more leaders in tow in order to facilitate an official branch launch. At the branch launch, a series of formalities are organized with readings from the South African constitution and the Abahlali constitution, along with political speeches from a variety of group leaders. Local leaders will also be encouraged to speak out about the challenges facing their community, and this will generate a process of collective visioning whereby the existing political system will be proven inadequate, and the need for an independent social movement will be reinforced as clear to all in attendance. Lastly, elections will be held for the leadership of the local branch, and Abahlali membership cards will be issued to all those in attendance who wish to join the struggle.

In the almost ten years since its inception, the movement has experienced many ebbs and flows in its membership and composition. It is incredibly impressive that the group continues to exist despite the meager resources they rely upon in order to survive, and in the face of an extremely repressive governmental response to their mobilization. While the group has claimed a presence in anywhere from 30-40 different shack communities throughout the city, this is difficult to document at any one given time. The group struggles to keep new branches active after initial victories are won, such as the right to housing or access to better services. This is the case because where the ANC does make concessions to locally active branches, this can be read as a sign that the ANC is still committed to the liberation struggle. The ruling party is thus often able to effectively wage a counter-campaign wherever the movement is active. This usually consists of a combination of disinformation leveled at the movement, along with promises that they should stick with the powerful people in government, because they will be able to deliver the goods. Where the local party apparatus is unable or unwilling to improve conditions for shack dwellers, Abahlali branches may remain quite active. This has been the case with a number of the key settlements throughout the city. While fifty members is the minimum required to join, most branches have many more members who attend local meetings. At the 2013 Unfreedom Day gathering that Abahlali organizes to openly denounce what they see as the ANC's hypocritical annual celebration of a "Freedom Day" when, they argue, the poor are clearly still not free, approximately three thousand group members from across the city attended the rally. This was the largest gathering of the group I witnessed during my time in Durban, although they have brought together many more at protests or other rallies organized in the past.

Events such as these bring a lot of attention to the group. They have been at the center of a range of debates in the city and the country regarding the nature and limits of post-apartheid liberation, and the accomplishments and failures of democracy. While this dissertation relies upon extensive research with the group, as argued above, it uses the group as a window into some of these broader debates regarding the bottlenecks faced by social movements in South Africa and elsewhere, the relationship between oppositional movements and state-led developmental initiatives, and the theories of precarity and surplus populations that can easily be associated with marginal groups living in slums. It is to these debates that I now turn.

CHAPTER 1
EMERGING ALTERNATIVES IN THE "TRANSITION" TO DEMOCRACY: WHAT IS AT STAKE IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLES?

> Democracy lives only by struggling to preserve itself, and by going beyond itself toward a society freed from the state and from political alienation. (Henri Lefebvre 1968: 7)

> For me, the problem of autogestion shifts more and more away from enterprises towards the organization of space. (Henri Lefebvre, quoted in Merrifield 2006: 141)

South African society has been undergoing a prolonged transition to democracy over the past 20 years since Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990. The liberation movement waged against apartheid from 1948-1990, led primarily by the African National Congress (ANC), proclaimed that its goals reached far beyond an end to political racism, and that a post-apartheid South Africa would necessarily be a just society for all. The political outlook of the ANC might have been described as revolutionary nationalist, as it formed strong and lasting alliances during the struggle with the South African Communist Party, as well as with socialist countries around the world form Cuba to Tanzania. The Freedom Charter of the ANC, written in 1955 and still strongly adhered to by Mandela in a letter to the nation two weeks prior to his release from prison in 1990, contained central demands for the redistribution of land and for a people's democracy. They read as follows: "The people shall govern! The people shall share in the country's wealth! The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole. The land shall be shared among those who work it! Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish

famine and land hunger. All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose." The charter also included important clauses guaranteeing the right to freedom of speech and assembly, and to decent housing as a human right.

Since the initial transition period of 1990-1994 when the white supremacist National Party handed power to the majority-rule party of the ANC, however, the situation for the vast majority of South Africans has not only not improved, but has in some cases deteriorated (Bond 2000). Despite governing under a clear majority—the ANC won 70% of the National Assembly seats in the 2009 election—the government has simply failed to deliver the goods. Much of the basic vision of the Freedom Charter lies in ruins, and South Africans have decried the supposed shift from a strictly white supremacist society to one where neoliberal capitalism rules (Gibson 2006). Scholars and social movements alike have attempted to grapple with this devastating defeat by searching for explanations as to what went wrong. How could a liberation movement clearly dedicated to implementing a more just society have so radically altered its position? How can the ANC and its allies—most notably the South African Communist Party (SACP)—continue to govern the country while it is clear that the oppression they came to power to ameliorate if not erase has outlived formal apartheid?

One should note that overall poverty has in fact decreased throughout the country, primarily in the rural areas. However, urban poverty has increased according to the South African Labour and development Research Unit. Ashwin Desai, Brij Maharaj and Patrick Bond explain this apparent dichotomy: "In other words, what ordinary observers view as a manifestation of dreadful policy failure—the peri-urban shack settlement stretching for miles with dreadful living conditions—is in reality an improvement over life in the depressed, hopeless rural periphery of South Africa" (Maharaj, Desai and Bond eds. 2010).

Additionally, the country's Gini coefficient reveals that it is the second most unequal society in the world, demonstrating that the transition to an egalitarian democracy still has a long way to go. It boasts perhaps the most progressive constitution in the world—enshrining women's rights, human rights, and even linguistic rights for underrepresented groups—yet it also experiences one of the highest levels of social unrest in the world with more protests per capita than any other country besides China (Bond 2010). While it plays host to the largest stock exchange on the continent, it also struggles with an unemployment rate hovering around 25%, officially. Many of the unemployed, together with some workers in the informal economy, have mobilized politically into community organizations, predominantly located along the urban peripheries, that have been described as South Africa's "new social movements" (Ballard et all 2006, Desai 2002). These movements have garnered a significant amount of attention worldwide and many commentators see them as embodying a new political subject in an increasingly post-industrial world where the traditional industrial working class, pressured by economic precarity, is finding it ever more difficult to exert political power (Saul 2011).

Rather than looking to the past to account for this failure, then, this dissertation will attempt to examine the present for clues to the future. In this introduction I assess a number of the vigorous debates that have emerged regarding the *first* transition—what Patrick Bond terms an "elite transition" (2000). I then examine those groups most actively mobilized against the new government in the more recent push for a *second* transition: a burgeoning collection of social movements. The chapter closes by introducing the work of Abahlali baseMjondolo, an organization of shack dwellers based primarily in the city of Durban that is an extremely prominent contemporary South African social movement. Abahlali's

conception of the right to the city, it is argued, provides us with an alternative understanding of "transitions to democracy", and is a model that will be traced throughout this work.

While much of South African society remained in permanent suspension during the late 1990s, the early 2000s witnessed a re-emergence of grassroots forces that directly challenged the new "majority-rule" government of the ANC. These movements have been incredibly diverse in outlook and program, but they share a number of general characteristics. They have largely concerned issues of service delivery and basic needs demands such as health, housing, electricity, water and land. While all these issues played a role in mobilizing resistance during the anti-apartheid struggle, the most notable absence in the current round of organized opposition concerns that of organized labor. The Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) alliance with the ANC and the harsh realities of de-industrialization in South Africa has led to a situation in which the labor movement is increasingly viewed as a peripheral and weakened force as regards potential sources of opposition to the current government (Barchiesi 2006). Nonetheless, the massacre of a number of striking mineworkers at Marikana in August 2012, as well as the recent split of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa from the tripartite alliance of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP, has brought the potential of a renewed labor movement back to the fore. Arguably the key factor determining the future success of such a breakaway movement will be the ability of these renegade unions to forge an alliance with the spontaneous social unrest and organized social movements that are most active in urban settings throughout the country.

Understanding the Limits of the First Transition

Patrick Bond takes up these issues and others in his account of the early years of ANC rule in *Elite Transition*. He surmises that the COSATU intellectuals who adopted a

post-Fordist approach to the post-apartheid national economy were much more likely to take up a cozy alliance with the ANC in its capitulation to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) pressures to align the economy according to the needs of foreign investment and structural adjustment. Domestic business elites, often working in partnership with international financial organizations and the post-Fordist intellectuals Bond critiques, developed a series of "social contract scenarios" during the transition in order to pacify left elements and slowly solidify consensus around neoliberal policies. None of these scenarios tackled the historically weakest aspect of South Africa's economy according to Bond: "overproduction of luxury goods as a result of high import barriers and the capital-intensive technologies of multinational corporate producers." Ignoring these issues led to "capital flight, under-production of both machines and basic needs goods, and those speculative financial bubbles"(75). Thus the social contract scenarios were successful attempts at maintaining the status quo in South Africa because they managed to incorporate previously excluded elite members of society in the discussion, while simultaneously marginalizing the most progressive actors.

Bond's analysis of the failed transition to democracy centers on the framework of uneven development. Such a framework allows us to grasp the important *continuities* in the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism in the way capitalism extends its tentacles to all regions of the world in a fundamentally asymmetrical manner. For Bond, uneven development is rooted in capitalism's overaccumulation crisis as spelled out most famously by Rosa Luxemburg. Therefore the common thread running throughout his book is that "the rise of financial markets during periods of capitalist overproduction—or overaccumulation crisis— amplified unevenness, as South Africa demonstrates clearly"(6). The process of

overaccumulation leads to a shifting of the crisis throughout time and space. Unfortunately, the only real long-term solution to this crisis is the incessant process of creative destruction elaborated by Schumpeter, which plays out today through "widespread devaluation"(10) of physical and human labor. His central argument is that "as overaccumulation begins to set in, as structural bottlenecks emerge and as profit rates fall in the productive sectors of the economy, capitalists begin to shift their investible funds out of reinvestment in plant, equipment and labor power and instead seek refuge in financial assets"(11). The rapid growth of the "non-productive" Johannesburg stock market in the past two decades was therefore coupled with a tremendous de-industrialization process nation-wide that has brought record levels of unemployment—25% has been a relatively steady official unemployment rate over the past decade.

For Bond, such an analysis of capitalism is paired with a corresponding state-based solution. Uneven development, it would seem, can only be curbed through a traditional socialist response that puts up barriers to capital's global reach while facilitating entry-points for global solidarity between various people's movements and governments around the world. Because neoliberalism brings with it a necessary erosion of state sovereignty, the ANC was unable to fully determine its country's destiny and was instead brought under the sway of international elite forces and ideologies advancing the Washington Consensus. This can only be solved by a re-assertion of South African sovereignty as a protective-mechanism that guards against international incursions while cultivating the domestic resiliency to test alternative paths to development. Such an alternative Bond sees as squarely within the tradition established by Samir Amin known as "delinking."

> As unrealistic as this appears at first blush (recall this chapter's long list of populists-
> turned-neoliberals), the recent, present and forthcoming conditions of global

economic crisis appear to both demand and supply the material grounds for a profound change in power relations. The ideological hegemony and financial stranglehold that neoliberalism and its sponsors have enjoyed are discredited and could fast disappear (2006: 251).

A key lingering question, however, concerns where such an internal oppositional force strong enough to seize state power in South Africa would emerge? On this matter, Bond demonstrates a clear desire for a truly oppositional South African Communist Party and for the apartheid-era strength of the labor unions. Discussing these groups, Bond claims "there was always the possibility that the SACP—the only party on the South African Left with more than a few hundred cadres—would break free from the Alliance early in the twenty-first century" (245). Regarding the labor movement, Bond asserts again that "there was always the hope that, *perhaps*, Cosatu would move leftwards again…After all, under generally less propitious conditions than South Africa, Moody observed, a series of political mass strikes by national workers' movements had shaken Nigeria, Indonesia, Paraguay and Taiwan in 1994…and then with the 1998-99 crisis, many other important sites of East Asian, East European, African and Latin American proletarian suffering due to neoliberal economic disaster"(246-247). These passages demonstrate Bond's clear allegiance to the traditional Left alternative of instituting a socialist government through the establishment of a mass-based political party. Such a party would gather its support from those workers who hold a privileged point in the production process by virtue of their proletarian status and their supposed ability to lodge a monkey-wrench in the system of capitalist accumulation, and it would use this strength against capital in order to gain state power.

By 2006, six years after Bond penned his penetrating critique of South Africa's "Elite Transition," the situation in South Africa had shifted significantly. The emergence of new people's movements once again raised the hope that opposition to the ANC's neoliberal

platform was growing. Many hoped these movements would open a window for implementing a more just society under the banner of the democratic transition most South Africans believed would occur immediately after the fall of apartheid. And yet this new source of opposition was rooted firmly in social movements that did not appear to have sprung from either the organizing efforts of political party cadres or from the center of proletarian power in the labor movement. Rather, these movements emerged in community settings in some rural and many urban areas. This chapter will largely focus on the struggles confined to urban settings that involve a mixture of proletarian and lumpen proletarian classes that some scholars prefer to refer to as a kind of "precariat" class (Standing 2011, Saul 2011).

In revisiting some of the same questions regarding the potential source of opposition to the new ANC hegemony six years later (2006), Bond tacitly acknowledges that neither the SACP nor the labor unions have been directly instigating the new social movements. Yet he focuses on Johannesburg's agglomeration of movements in order to demonstrate that while the actors may have changed slightly, "the Johannesburg left has simply reconstituted itself via community activists, while the traditional goals of socialism via state power remain intact"(116). For Bond, the "vast proletarian townships" located along the peripheries of Johannesburg have historically constituted these movements' base. As such, the current struggles are building off an earlier round of movement associated with the township civic associations that peaked in the 1980s (Mayekiso 1996). Most active among these new movements were the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Anti Privatization Forum (APF) that formally presented socialist candidates for election in open opposition to the ANC. Rather than viewing these emergent movements as oppositional to the traditional

left, Bond prefers to see them as part of a re-scaling of struggle. Thus, in place of *only* the scales of the factory, the state, and the international realm of solidarity, the new South African social movements typified by the SECC and the APF have grounded themselves in the scales of the body (particularly the HIV struggles), the household, and the neighborhood as additional sites of class struggle and contestation with the state. This expansion beyond the state and the factory has led to the struggle being presented around the "political principle of decommodification"(120-121).

New Subjects Emerge

Others have taken the emergence of new social movements as a sign of more profound changes in the composition of oppositional politics within South Africa. Franco Barchiesi argues that the failure of South Africa's attempted transition to democracy is best exemplified by ever-decreasing levels of voter-turnout throughout the country. "Popular participation in the elections has shown a trend to constant decline, which means that in 2004 the ANC was voted into power by an actual minority of eligible voters"(213). Concomitant with the decline in democratic participation through the electoral process, post-apartheid South Africa has experienced dramatic shifts in the labor market. We might juxtapose the current round of struggles, then, with those of the previous generation in order to grasp what has changed in the objective and subjective conditions underlying social change in South Africa. This requires an attempt to "relate the rise of new community movements to changes in waged employment and working class organizations"(217).

While the labor union movement enjoyed an incredibly close relationship with the new ANC government, Barchiesi claims that the largely neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) of 1996—undemocratically adhered to by the ANC—gutted

this partnership of any radical content. "The growing institutionalization of organized labor

mirrored the deepening crisis in the living conditions of largely unemployed and un-

unionized poor, and was unable to stem rising uncertainty, precariousness and vulnerability

that face many union members as well"(222). Parallel to this marginalization of organized

labor as a political force is a general rise in precarity within the broad working conditions

throughout South Africa. Precarious work emerged in part as a consequence of the de-

industrialization and de-unionization effects of the rising neoliberal economy during the

1990s. While COSATU lost members by the hundreds of thousands, worker militancy was

focused not simply around increased wages but also on a rebellion against work itself. This

extended a long tradition within the worker's movement in South Africa, where struggles

revolved not merely around improving workplace conditions but often were also directed

against work itself, even in the height of anti-apartheid activism. By de-centering the

workplace as *the* site for improving life conditions, other arenas of struggle began to emerge.

While under apartheid "the most relevant contribution on the left to mass grassroots

organizing was undoubtedly provided by the growth of militant trade unions of the black

working class,"(220) Barchiesi claims that this militancy was not limited to the factory but,

due to a lack of formal citizenship rights under the apartheid regime, the struggle often

exploded into the community realm beyond the factory:

> Coercive labor control in the absence of citizenship rights within colonial realities
> encounters insurmountable problems in enforcing workers' loyalty and reducing their
> ability to escape from, and refuse, wage labor. In South Africa, workers' refusal and
> subversion of the wage relation was translated into exporting worker militancy from
> the factory to the community. Workers' refusal of the wage relation as a terrain of
> emancipation isolated from radical social change made deep-seated desires of
> liberation *from* wage labor co-exist with workplace-based demands for social and
> political recognition (227-228).

This led to a split in the movement between the struggles organized around the sphere of production (the factory) and struggles coalescing within the arena of reproduction (community, housing, electricity, water). As Altha Cravey and Georgia Ann Cravey argue, "attention to the material and bodily necessity of social reproduction is one way to sharpen our analysis of class struggle" (2008: 26). Bond and Barchiesi certainly concur with this analysis, and conceptualize this shift in their own competing terminologies: what Bond highlights as a shift in scale of struggle, Barchiesi sees as an expansion and transformation within the struggle against capitalist productive and reproductive realms.

It is only after comprehending this history within the labor struggle, one where this split and tension already existed under apartheid between factory and community struggles, that we can understand the contemporary resurgence of social movements in South Africa. Globally, the rise of precarious labor has dealt a blow to the once central labor movement. South African labor struggles remain much more vibrant than those in most countries around the world, but workplace struggles have arguably been displaced as the principle site of antagonism with state and capital by movements emerging in the space of the city as a whole. Yet, argues Barchiesi, we cannot erase workers' own subjectivity in this demise, in that much of their struggle historically entailed a fight beyond the factory, explicitly rejecting the wage relation while insisting on the importance of struggle at the community level. In his examination of contemporary movements, Barchiesi points to the same organizations as Bond, but in doing so he stresses their break from earlier models of struggle more so than their continuity. "In general, these movements do not mobilize in alliance with mainstream unions, including COSATU ones, which express suspicion and even overt hostility towards them"(232).

While he celebrates the APF both for its open opposition towards the ANC and for its attempt to link struggles within the factory to community struggles by highlighting privatization as their common neoliberal enemy, Barchiesi is also weary of the group's continued insistence upon conquering the state apparatus as a struggle objective, and upon their centralized, "party-like" decision-making structure. He draws from Ashwin Desai's own assessment of the resurgent South African social movements to drive home this critique:

> There is an agreement that while left values are still important to us, the left project often took on forms that became obstacles to realizing those values. This was true at least to the extent that left organizations are based on a mere philosophy of domination that confines social subjects to the role of either passive victims or card-carrying members of the revolutionary party. The left has been unable to recognize the teeming life in between. Life! (238).

Such a concern with 'life' is often traditionally confined to what is seen as the "private" dimension of citizenship in a republic. While older models sought to place emphasis on the "public" realm of the state as that space where a general will could be forged amongst the divided masses, community concerns were often sidestepped as inconsequential, especially because they lacked a direct relation to the privileged sphere of the economy that was seen as fundamentally determining much of political and social existence. But South Africa's new social movements are seen by many as good examples of the refusal to accept this split between public and private life. In an effort to defend his own use of the term "multitude" to adequately characterize this collapse between public and private citizens, Barchiesi explains that:

> Community movements' prominent characters are the 'unemployed, single mother, community defender, abandoned, neighbor, factory worker, popular criminal and rap artist,' a social landscape that does not easily fit homogenous identities, especially when the national liberation ideology is undergoing a credibility crisis. Rather than delegating the definition of citizenship to political institutions, those subjects tend to experience it as a permanently fluid field of contestation. Many in the official left can dismiss community movements as 'single-issue,' 'particularistic' and 'confused.' It is

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however unquestionable that their very presence interrogates the established lefts' ability to redefine the confines of the 'possible' and 'feasible'(239).

Civil Society and the State

A similar concern permeates reflections upon the intertwining relevance of the realms of civil society and the state in contemporary South Africa. Michael Neocosmos, for example, picks up from Barchiesi's line of thinking regarding the contested terrain of citizenship and the challenge that new movements present to traditional conceptualizations of social struggle. Neocosmos, however, directs his critique most profoundly towards what he sees as two interchanging forms of authoritarianism that consistently divide state and civil society: (neo)liberalism and state nationalism. He avoids framing the challenges of South African democracy in terms of the individual psychologies of ANC leaders, and instead focuses attention on structural dynamics in place preventing a real transition to democracy. When viewed as interchangeable authoritarian frameworks for governing, (neo)liberalism and state nationalism equally produce a civil society that is gutted of its political content. Instead civil society operates merely as the arena where the reproduction of state hegemony occurs. By siphoning off the political content from non-state spheres, capitalism is able to prevent any true democratization in the realm of society at large. The countervailing project of politicizing *society* is rooted in Neocosmos's belief that "the state is not the exclusive site of politics and it is clear that it is certainly not the site of an emancipatory politics on the continent"(2006: 60).

Such a framework runs counter to the traditional approach to the realm of civil society whereby it becomes the space from which citizens can compete for influence upon the state and thus express their societal agency. This traditional view of civil society, which Neocosmos ascribes to neoliberal ideology, insists that "the more extensive this pluralism as

manifested by the 'vibrancy' or 'diversity' of civil society, the more extensive supposedly is democracy itself"(63). Political theorists from Karl Marx to Partha Chatterjee present us with a different analysis of civil society by claiming that it is characterized by its *divergence* from the state in that the realms of society and the economy become "largely depoliticized"(63). Neocosmos tells us that this separation forms the basis for a continued authoritarianism at the heart of liberalism. Such authoritarianism is made possible by placing "politics out of reach of the society and the economy beyond the reach of politics"(64).

Thus, when considering the relation between the two realms of state and civil society on the one hand, and the supposed universal goal of democratization in contemporary Africa on the other hand, Neocosmos is adamant that we must refute any correlation between a deepening of activity within civil society and said democratization. Quoting Marx, he insists that democratization "consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it"(65). Such a subordination of the state to society at large is extremely difficult to achieve within civil society when a group is only granted civil society status once it has ascribed to the state's preferred and recognized criteria: namely, not being a member of a purportedly illegal or underground organization. Tellingly, Neocosmos claims that the vibrant political resistance movements that spread throughout the townships in 1980s South Africa never constituted a civil society precisely because they were viewed as openly subversive by the state and therefore beyond the realm of "mutual recognition" between state and society required to gain civil society status.

The framework for achieving social justice commonly referred to as "human rights" might equally fall under this critique. Precisely because human rights are presented as universal values that the state must provide to its subjects, they become potentially

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problematic as part of the depoliticization of society as a whole. "These rights, even though fought for and achieved through popular struggles throughout society, are supposed to be "delivered" and "guaranteed" by the state. They are taken out of popular control and placed in a juridical realm, where their fundamentally political character is removed from sight so that they become the subject of technical resolution by the judicial system"(67). Thus rights become subsumable under the technocratic process of governing properly, rather than a means to increasing the democratic political power of people in society as a whole. This helps us to understand how post-apartheid South Africa can be home of the most progressive constitution in the world and at the same time have the highest level of inequality of any country.

Human Rights and the First Transition

There are at least three critical positions available for assessing the successes and failures of what I'm calling "the first transition" in South Africa, often associated with the early negotiations between the ANC and the National Party, and followed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established once the ANC came to power. The first position sees the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the defining moment in the first transition in South Africa, but it views it as a project with tremendous shortcomings. In distinguishing between political and economic rights, and choosing to focus the proceedings of the TRC on supposedly political violations, the TRC is thought to have missed an opportunity to frame apartheid as a crime that mapped onto a broader context of colonial rule. Coerced labor and forced removals, two of the principle crimes of apartheid, are in fact simultaneously political and economic (Mamdani 2002: 39). Land dispossession, a crime that dates to 1913 in pre-apartheid South Africa, is similarly taken off the table as a non-issue

for the TRC. The bifurcated rule of apartheid, where rural tribal homelands confined much of the African population to a structure of rule outside the apartheid legal framework, meant that treating apartheid's crimes as principally a matter of unethical laws, as the TRC did, simultaneously failed to grapple with the historic and ongoing form of rural despotism that facilitated apartheid rule.

In a similar fashion, one might argue that the problem today in SA is not that political rights haven't extended into the economic terrain, but that political rights are accessible only to those elite communities that have access to the realm of civil society. Here, a critical interrogation of civil society becomes crucial: Michael Hardt sees it as withering away in late capital (1995); Partha Chatterjee (2004) and Michael Neocosmos (2006) argue that civil society is a space where only privileged sectors of the urban population can interact with the state; and Frank Wilderson (2007) goes even further in arguing that anti-blackness as an exclusionary paradigm predicated on gratuitous violence is the very condition of possibility for civil society.

The idea that the TRC, as the paradigmatic form of transitional justice, represented the realization of political justice along with an ethical commitment to acknowledge past wrongdoing, is problematic in the South African context for a variety of reasons. First, it represents a continuation of the ethical tradition in political theory that still fails to grapple with the reality of power relations as a central terrain upon which justice must be realized. Second, it ignores the ongoing struggle for a second transition in South Africa, whereby economic rights are being fought for as an entirely neglected part of the first transition symbolized by the TRC. Thirdly, it ignores the persistence of precisely that form of rule

thought to be paradigmatic of apartheid: racialized forms of dispossession in post-apartheid South Africa (Hart 2002).

The second critical position regarding the TRC identifies a break in transitional justice that occurred with the end of apartheid. Human rights in this framework first emerged as a problem of the Rights of Man in the 18th century French Revolution, as an explicitly political project. The second phase of human rights is thought of primarily as a post-WWII problem that confronted the evil of the Holocaust in an effort to proclaim 'never again'. Thus this second phase framed human rights as principally requiring an ethical project, rather than a political one, for it was politics that was blamed for bringing about mass killing in the first place. Emanuel Levinas, and perhaps Judith Butler today, are two principal figures in this ethical philosophy of responsibility to the Other. As Mahmood Mamdani (2011) has argued, this paradigm of human rights evolved into the present by basing itself in the lessons of defeat, rather than the lessons of revolution. And yet, the Nuremberg model of human rights that gathered steam in the late 1970s was predicated upon a notion of criminal violence with responsibility ascribed to individual perpetrators. What the South African TRC was supposed to challenge was the problematic universality of this second phase of human rights. The problems that arose with this purported universality led Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Prakash to reframe human rights as "the Trojan horse of recolonization" (1997). In this sense, it is important to remember that the modern human rights movement gathered steam in the wake of not only the Holocaust but also the multiple projects of decolonization that reclaimed state sovereignty for indigenous populations. The end of South African apartheid can be viewed as a pinnacle of this movement.

And yet, argue some, the fall of apartheid and the first transition that accompanied it

also broke with this second phase of human rights in that it challenged some of the universal

aspects of the earlier discourse. Rather than endorsing the framework of mass violence as an

ethical problem, the first transition in South Africa managed to reframe it as a political

problem, involving collectivities. It is in this sense that Mamdani argues "Political violence

requires more than just criminal agency; it needs a political constituency. That constituency,

in turn, is held together and mobilized by an issue. More than criminal violence, political

violence is issue-driven" (2011:8). While Nuremberg is thought of as approaching justice as

a mater of criminal proceedings, the first South African transition, and the negotiations that

the ANC undertook with the departing National Party were supposed to have been framed

around a notion of "survivor's justice". Survivor's justice here is thought of as a collective

project of reconciliation, whereby the categories of victim and perpetrator are transcended in

a collective healing process that allows all populations to move forward into a new, post-

conflict moment. More important than the late-1990s TRC in this first transition, then, were

the early 1990s negotiations between the ANC and the National Party, when the groundwork

was laid out for the dismantling of juridical and political apartheid. In these early

negotiations, precisely by *ceding power* to the formerly dominant white minority, the ANC is

thought to have overcome the traditional model of victim's justice. As Mamdani argues

> If South Africa is a model for solving intractable conflicts, it is an argument for
> moving from the best to the second best alternative. That second best alternative was
> political reform. The quest for reform, for an alternative short of victory, led to the
> realization that if you threaten to put the leadership on either side of the dock they
> will have no interest in reform. This change in perspective led to a shift, away from
> criminalizing or demonizing the other side to treating it as a political adversary. It led
> to displacing the paradigm of criminal justice identified with Nuremberg"…These
> earlier set of negotiations "prioritized political justice…Political justice affects groups
> whereas criminal justice targets individuals. The object of criminal justice is
> punishment, that of political justice is political reform (2011: 16-17).

However, this second critical position which celebrates the early negotiations between the ANC and the NP as a promising model of survivor's justice predicated upon political justice, is also easily critiqued by a third position regarding the first transition in South Africa.

The notion of "survivor's justice" could be accused of falling victim to exactly what Grant Farred denounces about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "The TRC can only perform its political function if it suspends the past, if arbitrary temporal barriers, separating the past from the present, are imposed" (2007: p. 156). And more forthrightly:

> The genius of the truth commissions is that they allow for the ethical betrayal of the time passed. Because of the TRC, the time known can now be represented as the time unknown, the time unknown until now, until the justice-instituting event of the TRC…The TRC allows for the postapartheid nation to be 'asboluted' into the nonracial, democratic present…The reconstituted nation makes the past different from, but no longer disruptive of, the present. To be absoluted is to allow for the confession of guilt and the national forgiving of the perpetrators, the erasure of historical erasure, and the coming into absolute oneness of the new nation (2007: 159).

Here Farred provides us with a temporal critique of the suturing together of apartheid and post-apartheid societies, in a manner that still maintains the image of an absolute break that has been healed through the TRC. In essence, white South Africans and other elites are left off the hook, and this is all possible through South Africa's own version of color-blindness. This complicates Mamdani's insistence that the primary legacy of colonial rule in the post-colonial moment is ethnic, rather than racial rule (1996). This may have been an extremely poignant analysis of the period between 1990 and 1994, when the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party became a principle perpetrator of violence throughout the country, attacking ANC communities. Mamdani's critique then was that this was possible because the liberation movement, like the TRC as a whole, failed to take account of the particular nature of colonial rule. An urban bias in the ANC caused it to neglect the rural areas that were ruled

under a tribal logic of decentralized despotism, and thus the movement failed to unite across tribal lines. And yet, while Mamdani is correct that the South African *state* has been de-racialized in the post-apartheid moment, *society* remains fully racialized.

Farred therefore offers us a model for how to think through the persistence of race, rather than ethnicity, as perhaps *the* central problem in post-apartheid South Africa. He deploys a temporal critique of the continuities between an apartheid past and the ongoing forms of exploitation in the purportedly post-apartheid present. We might ask what the spatial corollary would be of this temporal 'absolutizing'? Spatial justice is clearly foreclosed upon in the post-apartheid present in a dual fashion. By delimiting its period of study to 1960-1994, the TRC avoided discussion of the issues of land reform and forced removals from urban areas, which, as we have already mentioned, date back to the 1913 Native Land Act. In the post-apartheid present, then, apartheid geographies are allowed to persist. Rural people struggle to eek out a living on land they were confined to over a hundred years ago. In the absence of land reform, many migrate to the cities and set-up precarious dwellings in shack communities, which pepper all urban landscapes throughout the country. While the country has built almost 3 million homes since the end of apartheid in an effort to provide shelter to this population, because it refuses to link the urban and the rural in its policies, it simply cannot keep pace: another 2 million still sit on housing waiting lists throughout the country, forced to eek out a living in shacks. And yet these same shack settlements make up many of the few instances of de-segregating urban South Africa, penetrating the heart of the historically white cities in an effort to access public resources, transportation, and jobs. The model of transitional justice in South Africa, then, clearly lacked a corresponding notion of spatial justice.

Given the blind-spots and shortcomings of the first transition, one might legitimately ask at this point what other kinds of politics actually exist that do not fall into the bottlenecks of the human rights framework celebrated by the TRC, or the elitist tendencies of the domain of civil society? For Neocosmos, the answer is clear. "Indeed it is an argument of this paper, that popular-democratic or *consistently democratic* politics are the kind of politics which are by their very nature emancipatory and which are of greatest interest to the majority of the people of Africa—the poor and the oppressed"(78). Such criteria can allow for a consistent critique of the ANC's own authoritarianism and offer a template for oppositional movements seeking to produce new social relations in South Africa that can provide the basis for a true transition to democracy. The contradiction between nationalism and liberalism found in geographically distinct parts of the world might therefore comprise an internal contradiction within the contemporary South African state when viewed through Neocosmos's framework. While under Fordism there existed a relative confluence between national interests and the interests of capital, under post-Fordist regimes of accumulation the divergence between these two means that the ANC is increasingly proved incapable of balancing the two forces within one government. Thus the liberal state is unable to provide national solutions to correct past wrongs and bring about justice (the failure of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) while it is equally unable to advance national development through the market as witnessed by the failure of Structural Adjustment Programs throughout the continent. Thus, while some states revert to nationalist authoritarianism, the ANC pays lip service to nationalist interests through its programs of Black Economic Empowerment, empowering a select few to become members of a new Black elite, while doing little for the vast majority of poor South Africans who are also Black.

All of this reinforces Neocosmos's belief that the state is a feeble instrument when it comes to instituting social justice. "The possibility for the development of emancipatory-democratic politics therefore will tend to be found primarily within the popular domain of politics as, despite the contradictions within it, the domain of state politics is founded on administrative, managerial and bureaucratic concerns, the nature of which is anything but democratic"(78). Neocosmos's skepticism about the state notwithstanding, he is careful to say that he is not arguing along anarchistic lines, whereby the state should simply be abolished or not taken into consideration at all when we consider potential political projects. "Clearly this should not be taken to be an argument against the sate as such, but only an argument against reducing politics to the state"(85).

But what does this mean when it is taken into account regarding specific social movements in South Africa? Both Neocosmos and Barchiesi are quite skeptical of movements which fall victim to reproducing the weakest dynamics of the old Left through vanguardist approaches and centralized leadership structures. They are both equally critical of attempts to re-direct such movements towards the direction of the state by subsuming them under the exclusive guidance of an existing or alternative political party. Bond too, approaching the issue from a more traditional socialist perspective, was able to recognize the importance of the new social movements that emerged in South Africa during the interregnum between 1999 and 2004 when the country began to once again witness strong oppositional grassroots forces. The question that begins to divide oppositional voices concerns what direction these movements should take and how we should understand their composition in relation to previous projects of social justice? This question takes on special urgency in light of the fact that the ANC's project of a democratic transition has now been

met with such tremendous grassroots discontent, proclaiming the still unrealized nature of any transition to a just society.

My own contention is that the transition to democracy was by and large a failure when viewed from above. But it is precisely this failure that has forced people amassing in slums to enact the transition to democracy in their own communities. As uneven and inconsistent as this may be, it is a project that refutes the contention that South Africa's transition never took place. Rather, it *is* taking place. The question is *where* is it taking place? Rather than seeing democracy as something located at the state-level, democracy might be understood as something akin to what French critic and spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre termed "autogestion": the self-government in all realms and at all scales of life. In this vein I would like to use Lefebvre's concept of autogestion to reflect upon one of the post-apartheid movements that has garnered much attention in recent years.

Autogestion and the Withering Away of the State: The Transition Reconceived

In their introduction to the collection of essays by Henri Lefebvre entitled *State, Space, World*, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden reflect on the fact that Lefebvre's writings on the state were largely produced during the height of Fordism in Europe and at the beginning of the transition to a post-Fordist society. Writing 30-40 years later, they ask their readers to reflect upon the question of what "a Lefebvre-inspired interpretation of the current round of worldwide sociospatial restructuring entail?...And how successfully is Lefebvre's work able to "travel," to offer insight into the very different geographical regions?" (32). In this section I will gather some preliminary reflections on the relevance of Lefebvre's thoughts concerning the state in post-apartheid South African society. In so doing, I seek to examine the very questions Elden and Brenner pose to their readers as a challenge. I hope to reveal the

continued relevance of Marxist thought in the 21st century as well as the extent to which Lefebvre's ideas do not simply explain current events but rather serve as a lens through which we can uncover social formations that are congealing in our current global conjuncture that all too often remain confined to the invisible. In what follows I will explore not the explanation that might seek to retroactively condemn the ANC for selling out the movement, but instead one of the most promising political formations that has emerged despite of and often in direct opposition to ANC hegemony over the new South African state.

Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM), or the shack dwellers, emerged in the city of Durban in 2005. While it is largely confined to the city of Durban and its surrounding districts in the east coast state of Kwazulu-Natal, it recently opened an office in the city of Cape Town, and is one of the most visible oppositional social movements in the country. As Raj Patel demonstrates (2009), after many years of waiting for basic services to be delivered to their slums, the shack dwellers began to give up on the newly elected "liberation" government. At first, they began to appeal to the local ANC government. Soon, this turned into outright protests, demanding attention be brought to their squalid conditions. Eventually, a coalition was formed amongst a number of the various shack-dwelling communities located throughout the city in an attempt to formalize and strengthen an otherwise dispersed movement for what was seen as basic survival services: water, electricity, and decent housing.

As local elections approached in 2006, the movement began to realize that the same ANC ministers who had been ignoring their demands now approached them for their vote. The black poor still comprise one of the ANC's strongest voting blocks, while the opposition Democratic Alliance party is composed disproportionately of whites, coloreds and Indians.

The shack dwellers used this dependence upon the black poor against the ANC, and quickly

inaugurated an abstention campaign under the banner of "No Land, No House, No Vote."

While this may be a minor intervention in the larger scheme of things, it is an important one

nonetheless. For it shifts the locus of power from state-centered to people-centered. Without

the people's consent and cooperation in the form of the vote, the state's power, and

especially the ideological role it serves as stand-in for the people as a whole, begins to stand

on shaky ground.

Three years later, in the fall of 2009, Abahlali would suffer a major attack at the

hands of paramilitaries under the guidance of the local ANC party (Abahlali 2009). Many of

its leaders were arrested on trumped up charges, while numerous shacks were completely

destroyed. The community center the movement had managed to open was shut down by

force, and many of its members were forcibly relocated. At issue was both the growing

effectiveness of the organization in organizing voter abstention campaigns, and also the

refusal of the members to be re-located to a distant area so that land speculators could begin

to make money off the land they were occupying. In *State, Space, World*, Lefebvre's

otherwise fragmented notes on the production of social space now begin to capture these

tensions that emerge in the city as it transitions from Fordism to Post-Fordism:

> From the space of productive labor to the global production and management of
> space. Conflict between the production of a rationalized space by the State
> (regulator) and the production of space by "private" capitalism and institutions that
> escape the control of the center (localities, regions, peripheries). Conflicts between
> so-called productive investment and so-called social investment (the framework of
> life, etc.) The State and urban problems. Conflicts between *integration* and
> *segregation*. Integration and disintegration. Disintegration. Social relations. Violence
> and fear (117).

More recently, Abahlali has moved steadily along a trajectory that began with a

politics of opposition, transitioned to a politics of confrontation while withholding

participation, and has ultimately become what they call a "living politics." Their "living

politics" is one that is not defined by the terms laid out by the state for its citizen-subjects,

but rather seeks to produce its own platform for doing politics. This is a platform that moves

slowly away from mere appeals to the state and towards an ethos of self-organization. This

living politics of Abahlali organizing has emphasized the establishment of their own

university, community gardens, day-care centers, sewing cooperatives, soccer tournaments

and the organizing of cultural gatherings around dance and music. It is a politics that is

extremely in-line with the self-organization celebrated by Lefebvre in his attempts to theorize

autogestion as an affirmative project designed to bring about the withering away of the state

(Kirsch 2012).

Lefebvre states:

> Autogestion, far from being established once and for all, is itself the site and the stake
> of struggle…Each time a social group refuses to accept passively its conditions of
> existence, of life, or of survival, each time such a group forces itself not only to
> understand but to master its own conditions of existence, autogestion is
> occurring…This definition also includes all aspects of social life; it implies the
> strengthening of all associative ties…This theoretical definition points toward a
> practical struggle that is always reborn with failures and setbacks.. Above all, this
> definition points to the fundamentally antistatist tendency of autogestion, the only
> efficient and active form of the famous "counterpowers."…The democratic nature of
> a State or any other apparatus can be evaluated in terms of its capacity to avoid
> snuffing out contradictions by restrictions or by formalism; it should not only allow
> their expression and allow them to take shape but should also directly provoke them.
> This does not happen without real struggles. Autogestion must continually be
> enacted. The same is true of democracy, which is never a "condition" but a struggle
> (SSW 134-135).

It is precisely this understanding of self-organization as the primary form of

Abahlali's "living politics" that is being emphasized in their writings and actions. A

delegation of shack dwellers was invited to attend the Social Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro

in March 2010. The forum was organized as an alternative venue for urban social

movements to gather and discuss their visions for a just city, while government delegates and

international NGO participants were gathered at the same time in Rio for the World Urban

Forum organized by the United Nations. In preparation for this meeting, the shack dwellers

issued a statement called "The High Cost of the Right to the City." The statement warns

forum attendees of the many attempts governments will make to incorporate them into local

government systems.

> Some of the ways that the militant slogan of the 'right to the city' can get taken and
> tamed are when:
> - it can be reduced to a 'technical' issue of working out how the state system can
> 'deliver' services and amenities to the people'
> - it can be turned into a legalistic issue of 'human rights' fought over in the courts of
> law between lawyers;
> - it presents the only possible solutions in terms of 'participation' in good
> governance' as defined by the power-players in the system of the state and the
> political parties.
> In our own struggles as Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) we have taken up all of these
> avenues and issues to fight for justice for shack-dwellers—but our living politics and
> our total struggle does not start and end in these limited definitions and confined
> spaces. (2010)

This framework for doing politics is one that exceeds the highly technocratic project

of better service delivery, and instead emphasizes democracy and dignity as the central

concepts of movement mobilization. While careful not to be dismissive of such avenues for

politics, it directly critiques the models and language of "good governance" as potentially

disempowering of already existing decision-making structures at the community level. In a

statement strikingly similar to Lefebvre's own statements on self-management as well as his

critiques of urban planners, the movement proclaims that:

> There is really no such thing as a 'right' that can be given to you by a government or
> NGO. As the poor we have to organise ourselves to increase our power and to
> decrease the power of the rich and the politicians. The only way to succeed in making
> the right to the city a living reality for everyone instead of a slogan which repressive
> governments can hide behind is to democratise our cities from below (2010).

And yet, in its daily functioning and in the campaigns it has adopted, Abahlali clearly does not adhere to any purist model of politics that would refuse *any* interaction with institutions of the state. One of their most effective campaign strategies has entailed legal struggles in the courts. They have tried to uphold aspects of the country's constitution when confronted with the municipality's plans to demolish their homes in a shack eradication campaign. At other times the movement has sought out meetings with local councilors and officials within the municipality in order to have their voice represented and to attempt an implementation of more democratic modes of local government and community development. Thus, what emerged from my investigation of Abahlali's diverse campaign strategies and movement orientations is an appreciation of their ability to simultaneously apply a mixture of internally oriented democratic practices and institutions with externally directed platforms to hold the state accountable for its developmental responsibilities, broadly conceived here as the provision of housing, electricity, water and sanitation to the country's most marginalized residents.

Transitions, Rebellions, Democracies

Reconceptualized through the language of transition, Abahlali's internal democratic practices and their organizational autonomy arguably constitute a better model of the "transition" to democracy than the political rights enshrined in the written post-apartheid constitution, or the new hegemonic force of a democratically elected ANC government. As Michael Hardt argues in his engagement with Thomas Jefferson's work from a different moment of historical transition to democracy, "A transition ruled by a hegemonic figure does not teach people anything about self-rule; it only reinforces their habits of subservience and passivity. People only learn democracy by doing it" (2007: xx). Writing twenty years after

the end of apartheid in 1994 and the country's first democratic election, we might find useful

a return to Jefferson's thoughts on the relationship between transition, rebellion and

democracy. Rather than emphasize any formally enshrined laws or electoral system as

representative of democracy, Jefferson placed faith in the assembly of everyday people as

constituting a living democracy. For this reason he argued that periodic rebellion was

required to throw out the old and bring in the new. Every constitution, he stated, required a

revolutionary upheaval at nineteen-year intervals. "No society can make a perpetual

constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth belongs always to the living

generation…Every constitution, then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of 19 years.

If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force and not of right" (Jefferson 2007: 56-57). In

Hardt's reading,

> He provocatively brings together, on the one hand, constitution and rebellion and, on the other, transition and democracy. In other words, for Jefferson the work of the revolution must continue incessantly, periodically reopening the constituent process, and the population must be trained in democracy through the practices of democracy…Jefferson insists on the virtue and necessity of periodic rebellion—even against the newly formed government. The processes of constituent power, he says, must continually disrupt and force open an establishment of constituted power (2007: xii).

This introduction has sought to identify, in broad strokes, the general limitations and

positive platforms for organizing provided to us in some of the recent and most visible social

movements and their corresponding theorizations. The woes of the post-apartheid moment in

South Africa have generated an incredibly diverse and productive debate regarding

contemporary capitalism in the periphery. This debate has been helpful for identifying the

multiple challenges facing those sectors of the population that are still seeking a more just

society. The next chapter therefore takes the opportunity of situating Abahlali and South

African struggles within a global conjuncture of struggle that has defined much of the past

few years, particularly since the 2011 birth of the Arab Spring and the corresponding

uprisings it inspired. We then turn our attention to the realm that lies "above" movements:

the state. Through an examination of the local municipal government's shifting position with

regards to informal housing communities in Durban, we will explore the extent to which the

ANC has really transitioned from a neoliberal first transition to a developmental logic of

governance in the second South African transition, and what the potential benefits will be for

the most marginalized sectors of the city. The dissertation closes with an exploration of

precarity from a South African vantage point by deploying the murder of Abahlali activist

Nkululeko Gwala as a window into broader debates regarding surplus populations and

spontaneity. A uniting theme throughout the chapters is the articulation between post-

apartheid developmental neoliberalism and processes of racialization that are spatialized in

dramatic fashion in the particular site of the slum, but which I argue remain thoroughly

underexplored.

CHAPTER 2
UPRISING: SOUTH AFRICAN AND GLOBAL STRUGGLES
BEYOND THE VERTICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF POWER

When Nelson Mandela stepped down from office in 1999 after one term in power, he bequeathed South Africans a nation rife with division. For all the talk about healing, reconciliation and truth telling, the country remained extremely fractured. One in four people searching for work remained unemployed, inequality skyrocketed throughout the 1990s, and the HIV/AIDS crisis was at its peak. Despite governing for only five brief years since the first democratic elections in the country, the public image of the African National Congress was already showing signs of vulnerability.

Much energy has been spent examining the extent to which Mandela himself, or the ANC as a whole, should be blamed for the shortcomings of post-apartheid liberation. Against such arguments, detractors posit the global dominance of neoliberal institutions like the World Bank, the Washington Consensus, and the threat of white capital flight as collectively backing Mandela and the ANC into a corner where the Thatcherite slogan that 'there is no alternative' truly became a reality. These debates, however, are largely confined to the period of South Africa's "first transition". The first transition occurred, strictly speaking, from 1990-1994, in the interregnum between the demise of apartheid, the legalization of anti-apartheid organizations, and the first democratic elections in 1994. More broadly conceived, the first transition also encompasses the initial five years of Mandela's presidency, during which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, headed by Bishop

Desmond Tutu, sought to forever put to rest the scars of an apartheid past in an effort to announce the birth of a properly "rainbow nation". These were also the years of major shifts in ANC economic policy, from the 1994 neo-Keynesian Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) to the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy of 1996 that would come to be characterized as erasing many of the liberatory promises the ANC had attached itself to historically. My study, in contrast, focuses on the period being termed South Africa's "second transition," and it is most predominantly characterized by the emergence of a new round of social upheaval since 1999. Beginning with the formation of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in 1998, new social movements began to challenge the ruling party's legitimacy, indirectly and directly. From 1999 until 2004, the country witnessed a renewal of popular protest, much of it organized through the formal channel of organizations drawing upon the legacy of the anti-apartheid movement. These groups denounced the new government for failing to realize many of the original struggle objectives.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) highlighted the plight of people infected with HIV/AIDS who were struggling to survive in a society weakened by the monopoly powers of pharmaceutical industry and plagued by official state denial of the disease. The movement sought broad anti-retroviral treatment access, and deployed mass civil disobedience as a means of publicizing the plight of their constituency. It was also careful to highlight the new but unrealized rights enshrined in the post-apartheid state's progressive constitution (Mbali 2005). Soon after, the Anti-Privatization Forum formed in 2000 in Johannesburg as a collective attempt at critiquing the negative effects of the ANC's neoliberalization (Naidoo and Veriava 2004). Towards the end of that same year, the Anti-Eviction Campaign was founded in Cape Town in an effort to prevent evictions and service

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disconnection in the city's poorest communities (Oldfield 2006). The Landless People's Movement followed suit in 2001, placing the unfulfilled demand for land reform back on the table by highlighting the plight of rural and peri-urban landless communities, something the group saw as potentially bridging the rural-urban divide (Alexander 2006). While the TAC attempted to walk the fine line of being 'within and against', refusing to break officially with the ruling party, the other movements all took strong stances against the ANC and most other political parties. A common uniting slogan became "No Land, No House, No Vote," and symbolized the emergence of a significant block of organized poor people's movements operating primarily outside the bounds of electoral politics. These groups combined to fill the vacuum left in oppositional politics by the labor movement's (COSATU's) decision to enter into an official alliance with the ANC as a part of the tri-partite governing parties, alongside the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Collectively, these groups highlighted the 'pitfalls of national liberation' by situating their critique of the post-apartheid state within a broader conjuncture defined by the prerogatives of homo-economicus (Read 2009). The precise political make-up of the movements varied from insider-today, outsider-tomorrow status in relation to the ANC, ex-SACP activists purged from the party for Trotskyist tendencies, to Pan-Africanist and Black Consciousness-inspired organizers and even those who were not active historically but became politicized by the disappointments of post-apartheid democracy. How to categorize these new political formations became a matter of important debate, but the most common consensus emerged around the idea that they represented a combination of new formations that continued to draw from older traditions of struggle. "Although these movements are 'new' in the sense that they have emerged in response to the ANC post-apartheid

government, they also trace a lineage to the militant township 'civics' who have pitted some of the most sustained and active movements against late apartheid regimes/policies" (Gibson 2006: 4). The political visions that undergirded the stakes of the struggle, however, remained highly contested. Some believed they could be most successful by pushing the boundaries of liberalism in deploying rights-based approaches to address inequality and injustice (Robins 2008). Others thought that the movements collectively represented a shift to a political terrain beyond the state-civil society framework (Neocosmos 2006). By 2004, however, the majority of these groups already faced a crisis of durability, and experienced a slow decline in membership and effectiveness. The reasons for the ebb and flow of movement activism are varied (Pithouse 2013).

Despite the relative decline of these initial post-apartheid social movements, popular unrest throughout the country has anything but subsided. The continued boom in protest—albeit largely outside the confines of many formal groups with a name, decision-making body, and organizational platform—has led sociologist Peter Alexander to term this second period of post-apartheid unrest unfolding since 2004 "a massive rebellion of the poor" (2010, 2012). The debate over the past decade has thus revealed a series of important questions regarding the supposedly insufficiently radical content of the movements (Sinwell 2010), their inability to scale up to the national level (Bond and Mottiar 2013) versus the primacy of the local as a universal but often-times fleeting grounds from which all struggles spring (Pithouse 2011), and the necessity for bridging social movement and labor union struggles (Friedman 2012, Naidoo and Veriava 2004). Important though these debates have been, too often missing is a wider conceptualization of South African struggles within a global conjuncture. While much productive work has taken the first round of post-apartheid

struggles' highlighting of neoliberalism as a productive platform to critique what the movements are fighting against on a global scale, less work has been done to compare the internal dynamics of movements at a similarly global scale.[1]

Such a project has become all the more important since 2011 with the emergence of the Arab Uprisings, Occupy Wall Street, European anti-austerity movements and other similar struggles. A blossoming of movements (and their corresponding repression) has characterized much of the global conjuncture over the past years. This context begs for a comparison with the specificities of the South African conjuncture. My approach therefore takes a cue from the work of James Ferguson, who argued that "the assessment of the political situation in Africa must move beyond the state-centered framework entirely" (2006: 86). While the relationship between movement and state remains important, an excessive focus on these dynamics can occlude other aspects of movements operating at a variety of scales. Echoing the recent work of Richard Pithouse (2013), Ferguson continues: "Indeed, many of the most important political processes on the continent are occurring, as I have suggested, at subnational and transnational levels. The local institutions and grassroots social movements referred to earlier must be taken seriously and understood not as regression or throwbacks, but as potentially formidable political responses to contemporary realities" (*ibid*).

In an effort to deconstruct the state-civil society binary—and in an analysis that also parallels the work of Michael Neocosmos—Ferguson is at pains to deconstruct a "vertical

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[1] This critique should not be taken to mean that South African theorists fail to situate the dynamics of South African capitalism within a broader global context. This has been covered quite well in the work of numerous South African scholars, most particularly Patrick Bond. My argument, rather, is that the conversation around South African *movements* is rarely presented within a broader global conversation of internal movement dynamics. This does not entail merely suggesting that all movements are struggling against a global neoliberalism, but rather requires an exploration of the dynamics of class composition within each struggle.

topography of power" that he sees as dominant in many contemporary explorations of the relationship of Africa to globalization. In such a scalar conception of power, the global impacts the national, which in turn determines the local. "Whether this contact zone is conceived as the domain of pressure groups and pluralist politics (as in liberal political theory) or of class struggle in a war of position (as in Gramscian Marxism), this imaginary topography of power has been an enormously consequential one" (93). The problem, he argues, is that globalization has in fact made power into a much more diffuse relation, in part explaining the rise of terms such as "governance" to account for the necessarily diverse, networked, and transnational sources of power relations.

Displacing the vertical topography of power requires new conceptualizations of power at different scales of analysis. "What would it mean to rethink this? What if we question the self-evident 'verticality' of the relation of state to society, displace the primacy of the nation-state frame of analysis, and rearrange the imaginary space within which civil society can be so automatically 'interposed between' higher and lower levels? As we will see, such a move entails rethinking 'the state' and looking at transnational apparatuses of governmentality" (*ibid*). And yet, very little of such comparative work is drawn out in Ferguson's own study. Instead, his most prominent example of a movement situated in a horizontal network of power is the South African civics movement. Unfortunately, this analysis is extremely outdated for a book purporting to examine twenty-first century globalized Africa. The oppositional nature of the civics movement was essentially captured by the ruling African National Congress after the end of apartheid, making it a far cry from what Ferguson claims is "today a major player on the national scene and serves as an independent advocate for worker and township interests" (105). The other example Ferguson

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points to of a transnational social movement is the Zapatista struggle in southern Mexico. This is certainly a more apt expression of networked global struggles. "Like the South African civics described by Mayekiso, the Zapatistas present us not with authentic others fighting for a nostalgic past, but with media-savy, well-connected contemporaries finding allies horizontally, flexibly, even opportunistically, but effectively" (108). While this is certainly true, Ferguson's reading of the Zapatista movement remains shallow, and his single source for the study is a *Los Angeles Times* article.

Additionally, Ferguson believes that his deconstruction of the vertical topography of power can add something to movement struggles that is currently lacking. "It is possible, too, that a better understanding of these movements will contribute to the crucial tactical goal of forging links and alliances among them, suggesting a beginning to a real alternative form of 'governance' (87)." While this should undoubtedly be one goal of intellectual reflection on movements, it should not take the place of actual dialogue between movements themselves. Ferguson's analysis thus risks occluding the fact that South African struggles such as the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and Abahlali baseMjondolo have consistently situated themselves as intervening in part within a necessarily global scale of struggle, reading about struggles around the world, welcoming activists to the country, and traveling abroad to gatherings in Latin America, the United States, Europe, and the rest of the African continent. The transnational context of South African movements became immediately apparent to me in my own discussions with activists who have played an active role in the past decade-plus of movement mobilization within these organizations (Interview Ashraf Cassiem June 2011; Interview S'bu Zikode August 2013). Both Cassiem and Zikode cite models such as the Argentinean Unemployed Workers Movement and Popular

Neighborhood Assemblies, Brazil's Landless Movement (MST), and the Zapatistas of

Mexico as struggles they have been in constant dialogue with, whether indirectly or directly.

The overlaps in experience between South Africa and many other parts of the world is rightly

identified by Gillian Hart in her most recent study of the ongoing post-apartheid crisis.

> South Africa is an extreme but far from exceptional embodiment of forces at play in many regions of the world: (1) massive concentrations of wealth alongside the mushrooming of 'wageless life' (or what an administrator of the Bundesbank calls 'populations with no productive function'; (2) oppositional politics that are assuming a multiplicity of forms: the Tea Party in the United States (US), explosive Hindu nationalism in India, widespread anti-Muslim and xenophobic sentiments in much of Euro-America, the re-emergence of fascism in Austria and other parts of Europe on the one hand—and, on the other, the uprisings in the Arab world, the Occupy movement and the anti-austerity movements in Greece, Italy and Spain; and (3) official efforts at containment ranging from liberal biopolitical interventions targeting specific populations (often in the name of security) to increasingly common police brutality and rampant militarism (2014: 5).

South African struggles also have a lot to offer the broader global conjuncture of

upheaval, unfurling since 2011, in that many of the problems these movements have revealed

have arguably been prefigured in South Africa over the past 15 years[2]. A comparative

analysis of uprisings can therefore illuminate aspects of the global conjuncture that are

common across specific contexts, while creating a dialogue between movements that might

help to decenter and de-fetishize the state in the manner that Ferguson encourages. In

exploring the particular dynamics of uprisings such as the Arab Spring, European anti-

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[2] Legassick argues that all the internal conflicts within South African movements have arisen due to struggles over organizational finances. This is clearly an important factor in the various splits that have occurred within different groups with access to meager resources, governed by poor people who are often forced to chose between providing for their immediate subsistence needs and continuing to struggle for a broader cause. Every conflict that I've seen in social movements I think has been over finance and over the people responsible for handling the finance being accused of misusing it. And that was the case earlier in the AEC when I was first involved in 2000-2003, there was a guy called Peter something who was accused, then it was Ashraf, then it was Mzonke who ran off with the container which War on Want paid for. I don't think War on Want has handled the AEC situation well because it has kind of forced Ashraf and the rest of them back together again. I've lost contact with the Anti-eviction movement since last year, so I don't know what's happening now, but they're not very visible, I suspect they're paralyzed, maybe I'm wrong, but anyway, it's finances that are a cause of these splits" (Interview June 25, 2013). In what follows in this chapter, however, I chose to focus on the fracturing theme of racialization as an underexplored element contributing to the demise of many of the most visible global movements.

austerity struggles, and Occupy Wall Street, I argue that the common theme of race emerges

as a divisive factor contributing to the decomposition of many of the most recent uprisings.

As a paradigmatic site of racial divisions, South Africa, both historically and in the

purportedly 'post-apartheid' present, offers a useful comparison to explore a central but too

often ignored element of neoliberal rule in the "threat of race". The persistence of

xenophobic attacks against African migrants is explored through a racialized lens of anti-

Blackness, alongside the response of Abahlali baseMjondolo to the threat of violence against

those deemed as racially and nationally Other in the shack communities of South Africa.

Neoliberalism and the Global Threat of Race

> This is why every attempt to defend the rights and liberties of the latest victims of
> state repression will fail to make substantial gains insofar as it forfeits or sidelines the
> fate of blacks, the prototypical targets of the panoply of police practices and the
> juridical infrastructure built up around them. Without blacks on board, the only
> viable political option and the only effective defense against the intensifying cross
> fire will involve greater alliance with an antiblack civil society and further
> capitulation to the magnification of state power (Sexton 2010: 48).

In his attempt at grappling with the confluence of racism and neoliberalism, *The*

Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism, David Theo Goldberg outlines three

periods of anti-racist struggle since the advent of modern racism. The first period began with

the momentous—but now conveniently forgotten—event of the Haitian Revolution, and gave

rise to the abolitionist movement of the nineteenth century. The struggle to overcome

slavery thus remained primary in this initial period of anti-racist struggle. The second period

was defined by anti-colonialism in the former colonies and the civil rights movement in the

United States, and lasted approximately from the 1920s to the 1960s. The final period of

anti-racist struggle, according to Goldberg, was led by the demands of the anti-apartheid

movement in South Africa, and gave birth to multicultural initiatives in Europe and the

United States. This period lasted from the 1970s until the 1990s. The above periodization

begs an obvious question: what defines the anti-racist struggles of our contemporary

moment? Is there such a struggle, and if so, what are its parameters? If not, what are the

consequences of the marginalization of anti-racism as a mobilizing framework?

One clue to these questions can be found in the strengths and weaknesses of

Goldberg's own analysis. On the one hand, he is careful to point out how the anti-colonial

struggles in the second phase of anti-racist movement gave way to the rise of the postcolony.

"In the worst cases, these are withering, debilitating, and abandoned spaces rather than

conditions promoting economic independence, demographic upliftment, and the promise of

human flourishing" (16). The uneven geography of global racism is therefore upheld in the

contemporary moment by the failure of such spaces to significantly transform the conditions

of their oppression. On the other hand, by framing the anti-apartheid activism as parallel to

an equally important rise of multiculturalism in the third phase of anti-racist struggle,

Goldberg remains blind to the ways in which multiculturalism in fact has operated primarily

as an instrument of colorblindness. After celebrating its achievements, however, he does

recognize the potential dangers lurking behind the appealing sound of multiculturalism. "In

the worst cases, though, multiculturalism has served as a form of appeasement for those

increasingly left behind as well as convenient public relations and advertising modalities for

corporate interests" (17).

This last point is crucial for our attempt to grapple with the persistence of racism as

one of *the* paradigmatic framing devices through which a neoliberalism undergirded by a

form of biopower that continues to articulate with, rather than displace, sovereign power, is

able to separate those who should live from those who must die. In Ruth Wilson Gilmore's

formulation, "racism is a practice of abstraction, a death-dealing displacement of difference into hierarchies that organize relations within and between the planet's sovereign political territories" (2002: 16). The ability of racism to persist beyond each sequence of anti-racist struggle Goldberg explains by the fact that "in the wake of each of these broad antiracism social, political, economic, and legal mobilizations, antiracism gave way to the dominant trend of antiracialism" (19). Antiracialism—in contrast to antiracism—is structured around the desire to eliminate race as an analytical category of meaningful analysis. By refusing to engage in the process of racial categorization, antiracialism portends to continue the struggle of antiracism. But it does so in a manner that prevents the deployment of *any* racial categories, for fear of reifying and bringing to life something that has no biological merit.

Perhaps a worthy goal, it is at best an unrealistic program in a world where the realities of racially coded differences that are never divested from specific hierarchies of power clearly persist. As Gilmore explains, "If race has no essence, racism does. Racism is singular because, whatever its place-based particularities, its practitioners exploit and renew *fatal* power-difference couplings" (16). Thinking against Paul Gilroy's own attempt to think *Against Race* in the twenty-first century, Grant Farred argues "The desire to think beyond race is, however, a double-edged sword. It marks the ambivalent process of mobilizing against racism and yet working within—and against—established racial categories. Race, and racism, is, for this very reason, not only dialectical, it is epistemologically foundational. It constitutes the very architecture within which the debate about race takes place: race cannot be transcended" (2004: 51). The celebration of multiculturalism by Goldberg, therefore verges on gutting his own critical project of one of its most powerful theses: "While **curiosity** and **exploitability** have lingered throughout the histories of racial extension and

remain resonant variously within racial reference and mobilization today, it is **threat** that has

assumed overriding contemporary significance in racial matters, absorbing the other two

largely into its orbit…Threat undercuts the possibility of…mediation, delimiting engagement

to the violence of incarceration or the instrumentalities of incapacitation" (29, my emphasis).

The movements that have defined our global conjuncture since at least 2011 have

arguably failed to grapple with this persistence of the threat of race, a constitutive feature of

the otherwise commonly recognized neoliberal assault. As a result, many of the struggles

that emerged in recent years suffered significant setbacks in the course of their evolution.

Others were easily hijacked by conservative forces deploying racism as a divisive,

diversionary tool used to bring about a return to the status quo.

Occupy: 99% or the White Middle Class?

> So I live in Roxbury, a little bit over that way. And we have a lot of issues, in our
> community that face black, Latino and Cape Verdean people of Roxburry,
> Dorchester-Mattapan. We respect the movement that you've done, and so far are in
> agreement with much of what you have to say. But I'd like to ask a question to the
> crowd. Is this movement, a movement for white people? Some of you may know, 51
> people have been murdered this year, much of which has been happening within a
> two-mile radius from which I live…I want to talk to you a little bit about the banks.
> Bank of America, right around the corner. Many people know about Bank of
> America. How many people know about the slave trading and Bank of America's
> involvement and being named in a reparations law-suit, because the Bank of America
> was one of the banks that directly profited from the slave trade, the trade of my
> people…I want to expand a little bit about some of the issues this group is talking
> about…if you look at any of the unemployment rates for white people, it's double
> that for black people…Why I come here today, because normally I organize in my
> community, I wouldn't attend an event like this. I wouldn't come and address a
> group of people that I see, the majority, don't look like me, may not share some of my
> personal concerns. I made it a point to come down here to address these issues with
> you, and encourage you to not only occupy this space, but to occupy other spaces.
> And one of the reasons that the black movement of working class and poor people has
> not linked with the movement of white working class and poor people is that often, as
> black people I can say, we don't think that white people give a damn about what
> we're going through…so I say that what you went through the other night, I give you
> kudos for that, but I'm telling you it's a drop in the bucket compared to what my
> people have been dealing with in this country for far too long…Help us clean up the

hood, help us bring attention and energy to the issues that have been long ignored, because when we talk about this 99%, I will submit, that no people have suffered in this country like my people. When I say my people, I mean all people of color (Jamarhl Crawford, speech at Occupy Boston, October 12, 2011).

When the Occupy Wall Street movement emerged in late 2011, its division of the United States into an elite 1% and an exploited 99% was celebrated as a powerful framing device. The idea of a ruling 1% seemed to capture the general disgruntlement with a financial sector that managed to continue turning profits at a time when many ordinary businesses were forced to close their doors. Thousands of people posted 'selfies' online while holding a sign that read "I am the 99%" followed by a brief description of personal battles with school debt, exorbitant health care bills, or unemployment. The commonality of this exploited 99% seemed undeniable in the face of bankers who controlled both the economy and the political system. But very quickly the monolithic nature of the 99% began to run aground as divisions emerged both within the occupy encampments and between those identifying as occupiers and those who never joined the movement but were subject to an extra-economic violence arguably more threatening than debt and unemployment.

Perhaps the most important division that emerged within the Occupy movement was posited as that between 'legitimate' Occupiers and those deemed 'illegitimate'. In camps from Zucotti to Los Angeles, middle class suburban families and college students carved out a space for legitimate concerns to be expressed, while confining the homeless, drug addicts, and other urban vagabonds attracted to occupy for a variety of reasons to a supposedly illegitimate encampment, spatially siphoned off from the 'real occupiers'. Zucotti occupier Craig Hughes brought together his concerns about this division within occupy in a pamphlet entitled "Occupy Zucotti: Social Struggle and Planned Shrinkage." In November 2011 he expressed his disgruntlement about a growing trend.

Stories abound from and about homeless youth at the park about being policed and marginalized by some working group participants and protest gatekeepers who presume the intentions of others present. Some vocal activists have argued that dealing with issues of poverty in the park have sidetracked all other work. Some have made unfortunate comments about poor and homeless people—arguments conflating homelessness with 'substance abuse,' and 'substance abuse' and homelessness with morally reprehensible behaviors; arguments conflating 'mental health issues' with disruption and violence'; arguments implying that formerly incarcerated people and the homeless are problems to be dealt with instead of comrades and allies, or potential comrades and allies. Some organizers have strategized ways to cut service provision in the park in order to disperse poor people (2012: 4-5).

While class was clearly a dividing line along which this fracture within the Occupy 99% began to grow, race was an equally obvious framing for distinguishing the legitimate activists from those who were deemed to be the source of additional problems. "That most of those being blamed are people of color and many of those doing the blaming are white is an obvious fact that points to just a couple of the numerous ways that racism and white privilege are evincing themselves" (7). Even more striking than this division within Occupy itself is Hughes' conclusion based on participant observation that this dynamic revealed an underlying and defining similarity between Occupy and the right-wing Tea Party movement. Both were largely middle class white movements, disenchanted with the fact that neoliberalism, an ideology of self-help that neither group initially disagreed with, had failed to deliver the goods despite their hard work. "Much of the struggle at Zucotti Park and similar protests elsewhere is about not becoming 'the poor' and decisively not about ending poverty. Like the Tea Party, much of this movement is about not loosing the relative privilege that some have and not about ending that privilege all together" (21).

Occupiers were soon met with force by local police departments, carrying out a coordinated intimidation campaign to reclaim occupied space from the public. Horror stories flashed across every major cable channel of police pepper spraying innocent occupiers in

Zucotti and student occupiers in Los Angeles. The image of a swat team sent to evict occupy

activists in Chapel Hill, North Carolina quickly went viral, as citizens were shocked to see

innocent looking white youth forced to the ground with military grade weapons pointed at

their skulls. And yet, the justified outrage expressed in the face of such police repression

also revealed a relative silence in the face of ongoing, mundane violence the police commit

on a more regular basis against poor communities of color throughout the country. In a rare

moment of truth telling on cable news, MSNBC hose Lawrence O'Donnell captured the

systemic nature of such police violence in a commentary responding to an early incident of

unjustified police repression of Occupy Zucotti protesters.

> This weekend, a few troublemakers turned a peaceful protest against wall street greed into a violent burst of chaos. The trouble-makers carried pepper spray and guns and were wearing badges… Every day in America police are too tough, every day in America police cross the line and abuse citizens...Every day in America police get away with that. White America was shocked at what they saw police doing to Rodney King. Black America would have loved to have been shocked by what they saw police do to Rodney King but Black America only could have been shocked if what the police did to Rodney King was something completely alien to their experience, was something they couldn't imagine doing to their community. There's a Rodney King every day in this country, and Black America has always known that (2011).

Sure enough, one week before the incident of police brutality that triggered O'Donnell's

tirade, the state of Georgia had executed Trayvon Davis. Davis was an African American

man convicted of a crime that he arguably did not commit. His defense argued that seven of

the original nine witnesses who testified against him in 1989 had since altered or recanted

their testimony. Despite this, Davis was put to death. Five months later in a suburb of

Sanford, Florida, African American teenager Trayvon Martin was shot dead at the hands of a

local self-appointed neighborhood watch vigilante, George Zimmerman. Martin was not in

the process of occupying Wall Street or protesting the government. Martin was not even

engaged in a defiant act of any kind. Arguably, Trayvon Martin was shot simply for being a

black male in the wrong place at the wrong time. One year later in mid-2013, his killer was

acquitted of any wrongdoing and allowed to go free.

As a preliminary response to the patently divergent experiences of violence and

death-dealing between predominantly white college students in Occupy and black and brown

youth within and outside the movement, some occupiers of color attempted to generate a

critical conversation. In a piece titled "A Critique of the Occupy Movement from a Black

Occupier,' Emmahunn Rahim Ali Campbell argued that Occupy had inspired a generation of

activists to social change, and that such an achievement could not be dismissed so easily.

However, Campbell continued,

> It is also the case that people of color do not have a space in this movement as it is
> currently oriented. Despite its horizontal structure and consensus-based actions, it is
> still led by white middle-class youth. These individuals, whose very social reality as
> white people, allows them close access to institutions of capital and the power that is
> closely associated with these institutions, cannot afford and will be unable to continue
> this movement without a full acknowledgement, critique, and dismantlement of white
> privilege within its ranks. As it currently exists, the Occupy movement is
> hypocritical in its anti-racist stance (2011: 50).

Despite Occupy's ability to highlight some of the most glaring detrimental effects of the

concentrated financial power of the 1%, its inability to link struggles across class and race

lines proved to be a major weak point. In this failure, it revealed perhaps the major

underbelly of radical attempts at social change in the United States over the past century

since the breaking up of the multi-racial populist movement. The current age of

neoliberalism has proven to be no exception to the refusal of movements to grapple seriously

with the processes of racialization that are constitutive of the very couplings of difference

and power that Gilmore identifies. In his own attempt to highlight such issues, geographer

Clyde Woods was appreciative of much of the mainstream critique of neoliberalism that was

in part represented by the Occupy Movement. "Yet," he argued, "the scholarship on

neoliberalism is peculiarly silent on the global significance of the forms of hegemony that

have been worked out in the United States. Internal racial regimes can no longer be treated

as incidental to global processes" (2007: 48). A side-stepping of the centrality of "the threat

of race" in the contemporary neoliberal moment has arguably weakened the attempt to create

a new society, and foreclosed the opportunities for encounter between otherwise segregated

communities that the occupation of public space by Occupy activists presented briefly.

"Ignoring the transformation of regional and racial regimes allows proponents and critics of

neo-liberalism to also freely ignore their own complicity in a wide variety of domestic racial

projects that undermine democratic institutions and constituencies: massive social spending

cuts, segregated education, welfare reform, gentrification, the prison-industrial complex,

employment discrimination, and electoral disenfranchisement, among others" (*ibid*).

Europe: From Anti-Austerity to Migrant Menace

> With utter uniformity, riots by the popular youth in the 'suburbs' (the *banlieues*—a
> word which, like *faubourgs* in the past, refers to the huge working-class and poor
> areas of our spruce towns and cities, the dark continent of our megalopolises) are
> provoked by the actions of the police. The spark that 'lights a prairie fire' is always a
> state murder. Just as uniformly, the government and its police not only categorically
> refuse to accept the slightest responsibility for the whole affair, but use the riot as a
> pretext for reinforcing the arsenal of the police and criminal justice system. As a
> result of this view of things, the *banlieues* are spaces where one finds juxtaposed a
> contemptuous lack of interest in such hopeless zones on the part of the public
> authorities and heavy, violent, repressive incursions. All this on the model of 'native
> quarters' in colonial cities, black ghettos in the American *belle époque*, or Palestinian
> reservations on the West Bank (Badiou 2012: 18).

> The state is an extraordinary machine for manufacturing the inexistent—through
> death (the history of states is essentially a history of massacres), but not exclusively
> so. The state is capable of manufacturing the inexistent by imposing a figure of
> identitarian normality, 'national' or otherwise. Now, especially in Europe, this issue
> of identity has become an obsession. A sort of cultural racism, which in fact conveys
> the fear of the 'middle classes'—querulous profiteers from the imperial dynamic—of
> being reduced to the inferior status of 'people from the *banlieues*', poisons the

situation and even ends up clouding the minds of once admirable and courageous intellectuals (Badiou 2012: 71).

The global ramifications of a necessarily racialized neoliberalism were similarly highlighted in the wake of European anti-austerity struggles that evolved coeval with the Occupy movement and were equally inspired by the precedent of the Arab uprisings. An initial round of impressive square occupations—most prominent in Spain and Greece—articulated with a denunciation of the entirety of the political class. Many of the 'indignados' in Spain decided to boycott elections as an unviable solution to the profundity of the economic and political crisis they faced. In Hardt and Negri's analysis, this represented a deep desire for greater democracy, something the established political institutions could no longer offer. "So many of the movements of 2011 direct their critiques against political structures and forms of representation, then, because they recognize clearly that representation, even when it is effective, blocks democracy rather than fosters it." (2012: 29). And yet the ability of the movements themselves to accurately 'represent' or even incorporate their respective country's most marginalized members also proved quite weak.

In the wake of electoral defeats in Greece, Italy and Spain, as either right-wing or technocratic and supposedly 'neutral' governments came to power, the movements faced a crisis of faith and began to dwindle in numbers. Following a decline in numbers, a similar discourse emerged demarcating legitimate from illegitimate protestors. On June 30, 2011 public sector workers across Britain spearheaded a one-day general strike. Hundreds of thousands of protestors took to the streets in downtown London to voice their concerns about the increased austerity measures of the British state, denouncing everything from pension cuts to diminishing teacher salaries, spikes in university tuition and the thinning of the National Health Service.   While the one-day strike was initially seen as a sign of strength of

the movements even in Britain, the government went on to pass austerity measures regardless. Soon thereafter, from August 6 to 11, riots broke out across the country. The immediate impetus for the rioting was the police murder on August 4 of Mark Duggan in Tottenham. Duggan, like Trayvon Martin, was a young black male, targeted by police for being armed and dangerous. Despite conflicting accounts of this narrative, and the state changing its story multiple times, an inquest into his killing eventually found no wrong doing at the hands of the police.

Regardless of the findings, the community response to Duggan's killing clearly revealed an underlying rage amongst communities of color, youth, the unemployed, and those with a criminal background—the groups most prominent in the riots—in British cities (Trott 2013b: 543). While rioters attacked indiscriminately, looting stores and burning buildings and cars in their own neighborhoods, a few commentators tried to give voice to the expressions of rage. In a live interview on BBC, Darcus Howe, a nephew of the Trinidadian Marxist CLR James, was attacked by reporters for having participated in 'riots' in the past that seemed emblematic of the 2011 riots. Howe responded by referencing the historical parallels in the face of community discontent with structural racism, arguing that these riots revealed a desire for justice amongst young communities. "Where were you in 1981 in Brixton? I don't call it rioting, I call it an insurrection of the masses of the people. It is happening in Syria, it's happening in Liverpool, it's happening in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and that is the nature of the historical moment… Have some respect for an old West Indian Negro and stop accusing me of being a rioter" (Darcus Howe, on the BBC, 9 August 2011).

But British civil society proved largely deaf in the face of such calls for understanding the experiences of rioters as part of a broader search for justice. There were at

least three possible politicized understandings of the riots. The riots could have been read as political simply as a response to a specific political context of neoliberalism, a declining welfare state and a corresponding rise in racialized containment; they could have been understood as political in the sense that rioters became objects of a range of political strategies of policing that deployed the full repressive apparatus of the state together with a media discourse of supposedly rampant criminalization; or they could have been politicized by understanding the protagonists as expressing an underlying political subjectivity, attempting to tackle the state head-on while revealing the underlying ethics of a commodified society[3]—loot or be looted (Trott 2013a and Gilroy 2013. For parallel analyses, see Al-Bulushi 2011, The Invisible Committee 2009, and Guy Debord 1965). None of these interpretations could gain much traction in Britain however. The violence and looting in the riots combined to discredit the events and paint them as horrific examples of licentious consumerist desires and anarchistic destructive impulses. This inability to connect the political context of the June 30, 2011 general strike with the rioting of youth one month later would prove emblematic of the division that emerged in continental movements over the next few years.

In his attempt to deploy a class analysis of the contemporary global conjuncture of movements, Slavoj Zizek draws from Marx's *18ᵗʰ Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in order to parallel our current moment with that of the failed French movements of 1848. In this text Marx is at his most conjunctural, carefully attuned to the specificities of class formation.

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[3] As Paul Gilroy (2013) argues, "In a post-secular celebrity-obsessed culture that conceives of selfishness as an innate virtue, the rioters' greed and gratification, though undesirable, misplaced, and criminal, were also morally insufficient to make them truly deviant. We can see that their pursuit of gratification is in fact a mainstream attitude common to corrupt bankers, expenses-fiddling politicians, and others seeking the addictive thrill of acquiring something for nothing"(556). "1981 & 2011: From Social Democratic to Neoliberal Rioting," *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Vol. 112, No. 3: 550-558.

Understanding 1848 required a reformulation of the traditional economistic class analysis. The 1848 movements began with the massacre of the proletariat, and thus the remainder of the period concerns a battle over control of the state, and a slow devolution of the republic. The bourgeoisie decides to give up its political power to the Bonaparte monarchy in order to maintain its economic power. On the bottom of the social ladder, the peasantry and the lumpen proletariat are unable to represent themselves in Marx's formulation. This is in part due to their spatial dispersion, and in part the product of the fact that neither group can constitute a class capable of exerting political power. Both the peasantry and the lumpen proletariat end up siding with Bonaparte because he is able to use the proposal of universal suffrage as a platform to win them over against the interests of the bourgeoisie. In this sense, political agents do not always map directly onto economic classes as their adequate representers.

What might a similar reading look like today? The first thing that Marx's text on 1848 provides us with is a sense of the class struggle as a 'concrete universality', according to Zizek. It operates as a concrete universality in the sense of an overdetermination, such that the heterogeneity of the class struggle, as Marx in part argues, operates to demonstrate the determining nature of class above all other identitarian mediums of struggle such as feminism, racism, etc. The overdetermined nature of class struggle is captured by the fact that "a single political agent can represent different social groups; a class can renounce its direct representation and leave to another class the task of securing the politico-juridical conditions of its rule" (19).

The task that faced Bonaparte in 1848 was how to represent the interests of an otherwise contradictory amalgamation of antagonistic social forces. In other words, how can

a single actor ever hope to adequately represent in one body the interests of the bourgeoisie, the working class, and the peasantry, when it is clear that such interests are necessarily antagonistic, constitutive of a class struggle when viewed from the economic relations of capitalism? For Zizek, this is an impossible feat, but one that is often temporarily accomplished through the uniting of competing factions around hatred for an Other. "The standard way of disavowing an antagonism and presenting one's own position as the representation of the All is to project the cause of the antagonism onto a foreign intruder who stands for the threat to society as such, for the anti-social element, for its excremental excess. This is why anti-Semitism…embodies the zero-level (or the pure form) of ideology, establishing its elementary coordinates: the social antagonism ('class struggle') is mystified or displaced so that its cause can be projected onto the external intruder" (23). One way of comprehending the rightward shift in European movements from class struggle to anti-immigrant paranoia, then, would be to posit it as a contemporary expression of anti-Semitism.

However, today's anti-Semitism is clearly not targeting Jews, but rather operates on the visceral level of phenotype; one must be perceived immediately as racialized Other in Europe in order to warrant categorization as enemy of the state. We are therefore reminded of the objection Frantz Fanon makes in the face of Sartre's attempt to use the experience of the Jew as paradigmatic of all forms of racism; for Fanon, the experience of the black man is clearly much more adequate because the Jew can escape his Jewishness as he walks down the street. Such an outlet is impossible for those of a darker skin (Fanon 2008). Thus the paradigmatic experience of immigrants in Europe following the initial euphoria of the 2011 anti-austerity protests became one of walking the streets in fear of being identified. Like the

post-9/11 slogan deployed in the New York City Subway and throughout the airports of the

United States, Europeans were encouraged to be vigilant: "if you see something, say

something." Zizek recounts this experience vividly:

> Imagine a scene from a dystopian movie depicting our society in the near future: ordinary people walking the streets carry a special whistle; when they see something suspicious—an immigrant, say, or a homeless person—they blow the whistle, and a special guard comes running to brutalize the intruders…What seems like a cheap Hollywood fiction is a reality in today's Greece. Members of the Fascist Golden Dawn movement are distributing whistles on the streets of Athens—when someone sees a suspicious foreigner, he is invited to blow the whistle, and the Golden Dawn special guards patrolling the streets will arrive to check out the suspect. This is how one defends Europe in the Spring of 2012 (14).

But how could such a radical shift in the emancipatory agenda of the anti-austerity

movements take place? For Zizek this was possible because so many of the movements that

were born in 2011 were principally responding to a decline in relative benefits accrued to

capitalism's middle class. Part of what characterizes contemporary capitalism is a demotion

in status of many workers, what Zizek refers to as the "proletarianization of the lower

salaried bourgeoisie". This strata of workers are still remunerated at higher rates than the

working class proper, and therefore accrue a 'surplus-wage'. And yet many of these same

workers faced impending doom with the onset of the 2008 economic crisis. The meager

remaining benefits of their middle class status now at risk, many of them took to the streets in

protest. University students who hoped to gain access at least to this surplus wage, if not the

professional prestige of yesteryear, suddenly found themselves saddled with debt and without

prospects of *any* decent employment. Amidst such a situation, the right-wing movements

penetrate easily to recruit new members to their cause. It is not necessarily the bankers that

are to blame, they proclaim, but those evil immigrants who stole the few remaining jobs we

had left in this country! And thus, just as in 1848 Bonaparte was able to unite the peasantry

and lumpen classes with the ruling class, today such movements are able to bridge the

antagonistic gap between the class interests of the dwindling middle class and the ruling class

bankers. "Foreign immigrants are today's Jews, the main target of the new

populism…today's small farmers are the notorious middle class" (24). The Middle class is

ambiguous for Zizek because on the one hand it is a-political and wants a return to pre-

revolutionary normalcy "to be left to work and live in peace, which is why it tends to support

authoritarian coups" (*ibid*). On the other hand, because the middle class can be framed as a

"threatened patriotic, hard-working moral majority—[they] are the main instigators of

grassroots right-wing populist movements" (*ibid*).

If Zizek is critical of the European movements for remaining confined to the middle

class sectors in danger of losing access to a surplus wage, he has even less enthusiasm for the

popular sectors of British society involved in the riots. There is nothing positive or even

political to be found in the riots of August 2011 for him. "The student protests against

university reforms in the UK, for example, were clearly different from the UK riots of

August 2011—that consumerist carnival of destruction, a genuine outburst from those

excluded from the system" (12). In characterizing the riots in Britain as exemplary of

capitalist consumption, Zizek undermines any possibility of recovering a political project

from such events. In so doing, he becomes complicit in the very anti-immigrant hysteria he

is at pains to unpack through a theory of a declining middle class.

> Although the UK riots of August 2011 were triggered by the suspicious death of
> Mark Duggan, it is generally accepted that they expressed a deeper unease—but of
> what kind? Similar to the riots in the Paris suburbs in 2005, the UK protesters had no
> message to deliver. The contrast with the massive student demonstrations of
> November 2010, which also turned violent, is clear. The students had a message—
> the rejection of the government's higher education reforms. This is why it is difficult
> to conceive of the 2011 riots in Marxist terms, as indicative of an emerging
> revolutionary subject; much more appropriate here is the Hegelian notion of the

'rabble'—referring to those outside the organized social sphere, prevented from participating in social production, who are able to express their discontent only in the form of 'irrational' outbursts of destructive violence, or what Hegel called 'abstract negativity' (53).

For Zizek there is a surprisingly direct parallel to be drawn between the lumpen proletariat and peasantry classes in Marx's account of 1848, who are unable to represent themselves and must be represented, and the rioters of 2011. By confining them to the terrain of 'non-society', Zizek condemns the rioters' acts to an illegible, meaningless space of (self)destruction. Unfortunately, the irony in his analysis is that while on the one hand he laments the fact that the anti-austerity protests remained confined to the middle classes, on the other hand he is unable to give any sense of valorization, and in fact reserves his harshest critiques, for those members of the working class for acting out in a fashion he cannot comprehend. While concerned by the rise of right-wing anti-immigrant hysteria throughout the continent, Zizek is unable to point to the inability of formally 'organized' groups to link up with the communities that rioted as a principle cause of the loss in momentum for the anti-austerity struggles. The fact that the riots in Britain were instigated by yet another incident of police brutality directed against racialized youth seems to be meaningless for Zizek. Instead, he openly mocks those social commentators who sought to provide any such contextualization for the rioters' actions. But, as Paul Gilroy has demonstrated, "the official statistics on unemployment, street stops and searches, and school exclusions told a different story about the institutionalization of racialized inequality, prejudice, and discrimination" (2013: 555).

So why this obvious lacuna in Zizek's analysis, precisely at the moment when the groups ignored by the anti-austerity protestors and made victim of the right-wing backlash that followed in their wake, decided to take action in the streets of Britain? Zizek's own

important attentiveness to the anti-capitalist, class struggle basis of the 2011 movements also unfortunately clouds his interpretation of struggles that mobilize racialized populations. Despite emerging from an important critique of multiculturalism, his attack on what he perceives to be identity politics elides the concrete forms of organization and political expression that are arguably present in the 2011 British and 2005 French riots. The Invisible Committee offers one model for thinking this through: "Not making ourselves visible, but instead turning the anonymity to which we've been relegated to our advantage, and through conspiracy, nocturnal or faceless actions, creating an invulnerable position of attack. The fires of November 2005 offer a model for this. No leader, no demands, no organization, but words, gestures, complicities" (2009: 113). Unfortunately, very few of the protagonists behind the global spring movements were able to capture this sense of dynamism amongst racialized communities in rebellion, and too often ignored their contribution to struggle, at the expense of the liberatory vision of the new round of struggles. The Arab Spring proved no exception.

Libya: Anti-Blackness and "African Mercenaries"

Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation on December 17, 2010 in the provincial town of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia led to a national protest that culminated with President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali resigning from office on January 14, 2011. Inspired by the Tunisian precedent, protests quickly spread to Yemen and Egypt in late January. The protests grew in Cairo's Tahrir square until Hosni Mubarak was overthrown on February 11. Valentine's day was named a national day of protest in Bahrain, and on February 15, 2011, the Arab Spring arrived in Libya. Three days later, the anti-Qaddafi forces already controlled most of Benghazi, the country's second-largest city after the capital Tripoli. Because the events were

transpiring so rapidly, it was difficult for the media to cover the daily developments while also providing an adequate geo-political history that contextualized each conflict within its own specific national dynamics. Progressive American news outlets like Democracy Now! therefore simply went along with the general idea that each struggle represented a popular demand for more democracy in countries where a single leader had held power for far too long. The movements were characterized as anti-authoritarian in nature, rejecting the silencing of dissent in each context. And yet Libya represented a special geopolitical case: while Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and Yemen were all ruled by pro-Western regimes, Libya's Colonel Muamar Qaddafi had for most of his four decades in power taken a strong anti-imperialist stance. It wasn't until 1999 that Qaddafi began to make overtures towards the West, in part as an effort to lessen the harsh sanctions imposed on his country for its supposed role in the Pan Am Lockerbie bombing.

Regardless of the fact that Qaddafi was no longer a stalwart anti-imperialist, the political positions his government took continued to emphasize Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism as part of a broader project to unite developing countries economically and politically in order to improve their bargaining power in the face of persistent Western hegemony. In this regard Qaddafi followed in the footsteps of leaders such as Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, all of whom were early advocates of a United States of Africa, modeled in part on the European Union. Qaddafi had drawn up a formal proposal for greater African unity in 1999, and this document became the basis for the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU), formally launched in 2002 at a continental summit hosted in Durban. Part of the new framework of the AU announced in Durban included a Peace and Security Council designed to manage Africa's conflicts

internally, and a Pan African Parliament intended to signal a shift towards explicit political

sovereignty on a continental scale (Horace Campbell: 133). It was certainly a surprise, then,

when South Africa, then a temporary member of the United Nations Security Council, voted

in favor of UN resolution 1973 calling for the establishment of a No-Fly Zone over Libya in

order to assist the forces attempting to overthrow Qaddafi's government. The resolution was

notably silent about the violent crackdown on protestors in Yemen and Bahrain, an

inconsistency in UN policy that led Germany along with South Africa's BRICS partners—

Brazil, Russia, India and China—to abstain from the vote. The government of Jacob Zuma

later became extremely critical of the way in which the NATO-led operation quickly

exceeded the bounds of the UN No-Fly Zone resolution. This led certain leaders within the

ANC to admit error in having supported the initiative from the beginning.[4]

Without question, then, South Africa's vote represented a low-point in Pan-Africanist

politics and the dream of a united Africa. As Horace Campbell argues, critiquing the NATO

intervention did not necessitate a whole-hearted endorsement of Qaddafi's own repression of

the protests or of his policies in general, which are extremely mixed and at times

contradictory. "The response of Gaddafi to these demonstrations was of great concern, but

soon it became obvious that the forces of counterrevolution were busy seeking to exploit the

political development of the social forces in Libya. When Nicolas Sarkozy emerged as the

champion of the 'uprisings,' it was instantly clear that the British and the French were up to

mischief" (9-10). Unfortunately, the worst of what was transpiring in Libya still lay buried

beneath the celebratory news stories of a supposedly dignified people's revolt transpiring in

Libya.

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[4] See South Africa's *Mail and Guardian* article, "Zuma lashes NATO for 'abusing' UN resolutions on Libya,"
June 14, 2011. http://mg.co.za/article/2011-06-14-zuma-lashes-nato-for-abusing-un-resolutions-on-libya

Very soon after the initial uprising against Qaddafi, rumor began to spread that his government was deploying "African" militias to defend the government. This quickly devolved into a racialized discourse deployed against all dark-skinned individuals residing in the country. While a few reports highlighted the fact that more than a million African migrants made their living in Libya, almost none pointed to the fact that the Libyan citizens included recognizably black communities. Glen Ford of *The Black Agenda Report* was one of the few journalists who remained consistently attentive to the hyper-racialized dimensions of the anti-Qaddafi movement.

> Numerous reports from migrant workers who escaped from rebel-held areas indicate hundreds of black Africans have been lynched, including black Libyan citizens. A Turkish oil worker related an especially horrific account to NPR: 'We left behind our friends from Chad. We left behind their bodies,' he said. 'We had 70 or 80 people form Chad working for our company. They cut them dead with pruning shears and axes, attacking them, saying you're providing troops for Gadhafi. The Sudanese, the Chadians were massacred. We saw it ourselves (2011).

The manner in which the anti-Qaddafi movement was couched explicitly against his government's long-standing Pan-Africanist positions and his willingness to provide refuge to a variety of guerrilla movements from sub-Saharan Africa was only grasped in fleeting reports in the Western press.

The town of Tawergha, disproportionately comprised of many dark-skinned Libyans, represented one important example of the extent to which the anti-Qaddafi forces conflated their own struggle with a corresponding purging of the country of a "black African menace." Tawergha was occupied by Qaddafi's forces as they moved closer to rebel-occupied Misrata in their battle to re-gain sovereignty over the country. The rebels announced that the town was occupied by "African mercenaries" fighting in support of Qaddafi's government. By September 2011, the town had been cleansed of its original inhabitants, turned into a ghost

town. In December a journalist from the BBC visited Tawergha and issued the following

report: "The possessions of the people who lived here are scattered about, suggesting

desperate flight...Buildings show the scars of heavy bombardment, some are burnt-out shells,

some are just abandoned. The town is empty of humans, apart from a small number of

Misratan militiamen preventing the return of the town's residents." (quoted in Campbell:

168). The chair of the Commission of the African Union, Jean Ping, expressed outrage on

behalf of African countries at the alarming extent to which anti-blackness seemed to

represent a core component of the rebel movement. "Blacks are having their throats slit.

Blacks are accused of being mercenaries. Do you think it's normal in a country that's a third

black that blacks are confused with mercenaries? There are mercenaries in Libya, many of

them are black, but there are not only blacks and not all blacks there are mercenaries.

Sometimes, when they are white, they call them 'technical advisers'" (quoted in Campbell:

166-167).

"Xenophobia" in South Africa's Slums: 'The Anger of the Poor Can Go in Many Directions'[5]

> Yousuf Al-Bulushi: I'm wondering how the current round of global movements from
> Arab Spring to Occupy--and now what we've seen with Brazil and Turkey's
> incredible movements--how that cycle of movements and specifically the political
> conjuncture they're responding to relates to the situation in South Africa? I know that
> Firoze Manji and Sokari Ekine[6] tried to reflect on the Arab Spring from an African
> perspective in one of their edited collections, and to re-situate the Arab Spring within
> a broader African Awakening—I'm wondering if you see something similar in South
> Africa, if that has purchase, and generally what the relationship is between all those
> other movements happening around the world and what we see in South Africa.

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[5] This is a slogan popularized by Abahlali. It represents their own intervention into comprehending the
xenophobic attacks that periodically occur in South African shack communities against migrant populations
from neighboring Africa. It should also be read as their insistence upon adequate forms of autonomous
organization in poor communities. Without such political structures, independent of moneyed interests and
established political apparatuses, the anger of the poor can veer down a variety of inadequate and politically
regressive paths.

[6] See (2011) *African Awakening: The Emerging Revolutions*. Nairobi: Pambazuka Press.

Martin Legassick: Well, all these movements are products of the particular situation, which is the crisis of capitalism which set in about 2008, which is a financial crisis, but underneath it you know is a crisis of accumulation…which governments have then tried to resolve by spending more or making cuts and by imposing austerity on the working class. So you see two different trends. In the poorer countries, which include the poorer countries in Europe like Greece, you've had these huge movements…I mean, there are specific causes in each one; in Turkey it was some park or something, but they're products of, or a reaction to this capitalist crisis there. In Europe, unfortunately what we're seeing is the strengthening of extreme right-wing—the Woolwich bombing gave a lease of life to the EDL [English Defense League] in Britain. In Sweden, the riots in Stockholm also have fueled the ultra-right; France the same thing. It's a very worrying sign. Although…and it reflects the lack of leadership in the working class. In Britain, for example, there's huge cuts being made and there's local resistance to them, but there's no really organized resistance to those cuts on a national scale. And the trade union leaders of the Labor party are absolutely useless. So South Africa reflects the same thing—the protests reflect the squeezing of the economy globally (Interview, June 25, 2013).

It is perhaps fitting that South Africa's ANC cast its vote in favor of the NATO presence in Libya that would facilitate the rise to power of a rebel movement plagued by anti-blackness and a xenophobic attitude to migrants. After all, South Africa had recently experienced its own racialized hysteria in the face of a growing population of migrants from across Southern Africa. In May 2008 a series of pogroms across the country targeting Mozambicans, Somalis, Zimbabweans, and other African migrants left 62 people dead, and forced anywhere from 80,000 to 200,000 others to flee their homes (Neocosmos: 117). In an image that harkened back to the violent period of transition from apartheid to democracy in the early 1990s, some immigrants were even 'necklaced,' a process that involves dousing a tire with gasoline before wrapping the tire around a victim and setting it alight. While shocking, these attacks on migrants were in fact representative of a consistent and growing trend throughout the country that precedes 2008 and has persisted to the present day. Most shocking for the Southern African region was the fact that many of the migrants hailed from countries that historically had risked so much in their decision to provide the armed wing of

the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe, with shelter and training grounds in the fight against apartheid. The attacks seemed to shatter the myth of a post-apartheid 'rainbow nation' governed by the idea of 'Ubuntu', a Nguni term intended to express the inherently communal ethos "I am because we are."

In Durban, these attacks were largely limited to a few core areas, including the informal settlements of Bottlebrush and Cato Manor. Part of the discourse that drove the paranoia around a migrant menace had its roots in a fear over migrants 'stealing' not only jobs, but also women, from South African citizens. Within the context of social movement struggles around housing rights, the accusation also commonly arose that 'foreigners' had gained ownership over public housing through corrupt means. An activist from the Johannesburg based Anti-Privatization Forum voiced this concern explicitly, claiming that Zimbabweans and Mozambicans had "become rich" by corrupting ANC officials, "stealing houses," and even "marrying our women." (Field notes, July 27, 2012). Abahlali baseMjondolo consistently spoke out against such xenophobic attacks on migrant communities, and were therefore successful in minimizing violent attacks in their own communities in Durban. But the salience of the xenophobic discourse in slums at large was undeniable, and persists into the present day.

The fear over job loss makes sense from a strictly economistic reading of xenophobia, but the articulation of this concern with the patriarchal drive to "protect our women" requires a bit more analysis. The patterns of unemployment and slum formation in South Africa were in large part driven by a gendered pattern in the changing nature of social reproduction throughout the country. Because the city was largely restricted to African males under apartheid, the reproductive work of homemaking and childrearing was outsourced to the rural

Bantustans. As the benefits of urban citizenship declined along with a stagnating apartheid economy by the late 1970s, women were also forced to enter the workforce by migrating into the city and establishing a home in peri-urban slums. This pattern boomed in the late 1980s and has continued up until the present. As unemployment rose, men were often emasculated as they were decreasingly able to raise the funds sufficient to pay for *ilobolo*, or bridewealth. Marriage rates have therefore plummeted over the past decades, "down to less than half of the 1960 levels, so that today only 3 of 10 South African adults are married" (Hickel 2014: 107). As Mark Hunter has argued, these corresponding changes in the broader political economy of South Africa and the intimate spaces of social reproduction combined to exacerbate the HIV/AIDS crisis throughout the country. The slum has since become a central site of both poverty and HIV/AIDS.

> The 1980s reconfigured expectations, emotions, dreams, and intimate relations that for generations had been profoundly shaped by the joint but contested project of *ukwakha umuzi* (to build a home). Living in an *umjondolo* [shack] came to symbolize precarious economic circumstances and life without marriage—and this was true in townships where backyard shacks mushroomed as much as in informal settlements themselves. These shifts are what I refer to as the changing political economy and geography of intimacy. And they coincided with the introduction of the deadly HIV virus in the 1980s, which would come to be disproportionately found in informal settlements (Hunter: 86).

Poor South Africans thus lashed out at foreigners not only for stealing their jobs but also for supposedly being able to access "their" women, whom regular citizens could no longer afford to marry.

In response to a question I posed to him about the relative decline in organized social movements in South Africa since 2004, life-long activist and scholar Martin Legassick had the following to say about the idea that rebellion in the slum can go in many different directions:

For a start, there are still social protests going on. For example in Wallersteen…a township or a shack settlement set in the northern suburbs, it's where the Irene Constitutional court is. Anyway, they have been up in arms, you know, the usual sort of Toyi Toying, burning tires, fires etc. etc. But its very poise because that was partially protest against the government, but it was partially against Somalis. And there's been reports that there were 200 Somali shops demolished. I mean, that's a very interesting statistic because it shows that…if there are 200 Somali shops in Wallersteen, I mean that must be the majority of the shops there. I'm surprised there are as many as 200 and it shows how foreigners are taking over the township shops and that's inevitably going to produce antagonisms. You know like in the old days when the Jews were the sort of money grubbers and traders and all that. So that's the problem with these social protests, they can go either way. (Interview: June 25, 2013)

Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the murder of Abahlali activist Nkululeko Gwala in

Cato Crest, Durban in June 2013, an Ethiopian shopkeeper was also murdered. While the

two incidents appear to be disconnected in this latter case, it demonstrates the dual paths that

the rage of the poor can travel down: either address government and the multinational and

subnational representatives of neoliberalism, or target those amongst you who are even more

precarious, dark-skinned, and visibly or linguistically 'Other' in the context of your everyday

environment. And as Legassick implies with his paralleling of xenophobia in South Africa to

the European attacks on Jewish communities, the ruling classes have the most to gain from

finding a convenient scapegoat in subaltern communities for the poor to unleash their anger

upon.

In the South African context, this misdirected rage operates along both racial and

ethnic lines. Despite our initial attempts to de-center the scale of the nation-state, it is clear

that race couples with nationalism in a xenophobic drive to eliminate supposed outsiders.

The ANC-led state has been a principle instigator of anti-foreigner sentiment, and has

consistently been involved in round-ups of dark-skinned migrants. "Indeed, every year, the

South African Human Rights commission reports on state agencies harassing and detaining

so-called 'illegal aliens': people being apprehended by the police for being 'took dark' or 'walking like a black foreigner'" (Gibson 2011: 191). And yet a good argument can be made that xenophobia is a misnomer when applied to the pogroms in South Africa. In the case of the May 2008 attacks, a third of the victims turned out to be locals, full South African citizens. Further, the only people capable of being deemed a foreigner in South Africa appear to be black people. No white person, immigrant or citizen, has been attacked for lacking the qualities of a proper South African. So xenophobia in this context is really a replacement term for rampant anti-blackness, internalized amongst the black poor and deployed as an outlet for the expression of rage in the confined spaces of urban slums where battles over territory and limited employment opportunities are fought out with the highest stakes. Reformulated, then, the periodic expressions of xenophobia by the poor and government alike reflect a broader problem about the persistence of apartheid-era racism into the present. "The question is to what degree post-apartheid South Africa remains a victim of 'White South Africa's' Afrophobia, and to what degree is that Afrophobia expressed in the violence against African 'foreigners'?" (Gibson 2011: 192).

In an attempt to give meaning to these kinds of attacks that have plagued the country at least since the end of apartheid, the Southern African Migration Programme conducted a broad-based attitude survey of people in the country. The study found that Whites were the most xenophobic, followed by Coloureds, Africans and finally Indians; but all groups expressed high levels of xenophobia. People who spoke Afrikaans were by far the most xenophobic among the different linguistic groups of the country. The middle class was the least xenophobic, while upper and lower classes expressed high levels of xenophobia. Between the two, the lower class tended to be the most explicitly xenophobic. Supporters of

the Democratic Alliance, the main, strongly neoliberal opposition to the African National Congress, were more xenophobic than ANC supporters.

While these are all interesting findings, "these data are still not very helpful in terms of constructing a xenophobic profile" (Neocosmos 2010: 124). In order to do that, one needs more qualitative engagement at the community level to understand the formation of xenophobia and what drove its manifestation in the form of outright violent attacks. Michael Neocosmos (2010) argues that the role played by community level leadership structures was key in this regard. Linking the resentment against migrants at the level of the slum to structural shortcomings of post-apartheid freedom, Neocosmos made a remarkably consistent finding with my own research that consistently found that slum dwellers linked housing shortages with migrant complicity in corruption. "RDP houses[7] which were built to house the poor and distributed to South Africans are then sometimes sold to foreign nationals, giving the impression that South Africans are still waiting for housing while 'foreigners' live in government provided housing" (128). This often plays out through the following resentful comments by everyday shack dwellers: "Even I don't have a RDP house, but go to Madalakufa you'll find foreigners owning houses which they have bought from South Africans…Government is fighting against us, employers are fighting against us and foreigners are fighting against us, that is why we fight against them because they are nearer; they don't support us in our struggle" (HSRC 2008, 29, 30, 38, 45)" (*ibid*).

Neocosmos claims that people resort to xenophobia, then, in the absence of access to the powerful structures that they may also blame, and in the absence of an adequate

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[7] "RDP houses" is the common term for the public housing the ANC government has built since 1994. RDP refers to the Keynesian, redistributive economic plan called "Reconstruction and Development Programme" released in 1994, quickly eclipsed by the more neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) unveiled in 1996 after much World Bank consultation (Bond 2000).

leadership structure that could channel community anger towards a productive outlet of political organization. Unfortunately, in such a context, "leadership is allowed to wander into the hands of unscrupulous leaders" (129). Existing structures of community leadership, characterized by patrimonialism, informal gangsterism, and political party lackeys, were forced to lead the battle against migrants in order to maintain credibility in their communities in the face of a rising tide of xenophobic sentiment. A report commissioned by the United Nations International Organization for Migration and carried out by researchers at the Forced Migration Studies Programme at the University of Witwatersrand, therefore argued:

"The xenophobic violence in most affected areas was organized by the…parallel structures or by some self-serving members of formal institutions who capitalized on residents' feelings, fears and negative attitudes towards non-nationals…the study found that in most affected areas, the attacks on foreigners were organized and led by different local community leadership structures and/or known influential groups" (132). The principal instigators of the violence were therefore often the same figures struggling to maintain the status quo that benefitted them. Xenophobia, rather than anti-neoliberal critiques of the ruling ANC, proved a productive outlet to let off steam in this context for the same figures that received even meager trickle-down benefits as a result of their leadership position.

Our overview of the different case studies of global struggles indicates that a critique of neoliberalism does not necessarily imply an understanding of racialized inequalities. Race, migration and neoliberal imperatives all combine to produce cheap labor, a lifeline for surplus populations, and convenient scapegoats that divert attention away from elite constituencies that benefit from the persistence of the status quo. The spatial concentration of inequality and xenophobia in the particular place of the slum in South Africa highlights

the manner in which the city and its numerous urban peripheries have become a central flashpoint for antagonism and struggle in the twenty-first century (Zibechi 2012: 189-266). Mike Davis therefore argues for a re-centering of the urban periphery as paradigmatic site of urban livelihoods for over a billion squatters. "Indeed, the suburban zones of many poor cities are now so vast as to suggest the need to rethink *peripherality*. In Lusaka, for example, the outlying shantytowns house tow-thirds of the city's population—leading one writer to suggest that 'these compounds are called 'peri-urban' but in reality it is the city proper that is peripheral'" (2006: 37). In Durban Abahlali baseMjondolo was among the first organizations to identify the importance of the slum as the paradigmatic site of social conflict in post-apartheid South Africa. The group linked the xenophobic attacks to the broader issues they were struggling against by contrasting the slum communities of Alexandria (Alex) where many xenophobic attacks occurred, with one of the richest communities in South Africa, Sandton, where Ferraris, Porsches and Lamborghinis are common modes of transport. "Let us be clear. Neither poverty nor oppression justify one poor person turning on another. A poor man who turns on his wife or a poor family that turn on their neighbors must be opposed, stopped and brought to justice. But the reason why this happens in Alex and not Sandton is because people in Alex are suffering and scared for the future of their lives. They are living under the kind of stress that can damage a person" (Abahlali 2008). After providing a context for the shocking attacks by elaborating on the precarious material reality facing inhabitants of shacks, Abahlali is careful to identify the real beneficiaries of xenophobia in South Africa. "The perpetrators of these attacks must be held responsible but the people who have crowded the poor onto tiny bits of land, threatened their hold on that land with evictions and forced removals, treated them all like criminals, exploited them,

repressed their struggles, pushed up the price of food and built too few houses, that are too small and too far away and then corruptly sold them must also be held responsible" (Abahlali 2008).

Unfortunately it was relatively common amongst other social movements in the country to identify 'foreigners' as contributing to poor South Africans' impoverishment. This occurred even in the most discursively radical groups where neoliberalism was attacked daily, and class exploitation was highlighted as the central axis around which struggle had to develop. As the history of the labor movement has already demonstrated, too often class struggles can mutate to become nationalistic and xenophobic in orientation, re-directing the anger of the poor against other exploited and marginalized communities rather than at economic bosses and political rulers. "The pictures on television of gangs in Alexandra wearing Anti-Privatization Forum T-shirts, were also an indication of a depressing failure of the politics of some social movements. The absence of alternatives was precisely why xenophobic violence took the form of a seemingly unstoppable 'tsunami' that only petered out when engaging in it started to become too risky for perpetrators" (Neocosmos: 140). The Anti-Privatization Forum was one of the strongest coalitions of groups in Johannesburg highlighting the negative ramifications of the ANC's neoliberal turn through the privatization of municipal services, and yet some of their members also reproduced xenophobia within the struggle.

Abahlali baseMjondolo therefore contributed an important intervention in a largely xenophobic society where government, elites, and even some social movement participants were actively feeding the generalized hysteria about the threat of racialized "outsiders". Because of the prior work Abahlali was able to do in incorporating migrants into their local

chapters, and in emphasizing that there is no such thing as an illegal human being—"An action can be illegal. A person cannot be illegal. A person is a person where ever they may find themselves" (Abahlali 2008)—none of the communities in Durban with an Abahlali presence experienced xenophobic attacks (Neocosmos: 147).

This was possible in part due to the historicization of struggle and oppression that the movement places front and center in their collective analysis. "We all know that South Africans were welcomed in Zimbabwe and in Zambia, even as far away as England, when they were fleeing the oppression of apartheid. In our own movement we have people who were in exile. We must welcome those who are fleeing oppression now. This obligation is doubled by the fact that our government and big companies here are supporting oppression in other countries" (Abahlali 2008). And while the attacks are situated as in part a nationalistic response to people from other countries, Abahlali's statement, released right in the heat of the spreading attacks in May 2008, was careful to capture the core of anti-blackness lying at the center of the hysteria. "Yesterday we heard that this thing started in Warwick and in the City centre. We heard that traders had their goods stolen and that people were being checked for their complexion, a man from Ntuzuma was stopped and assaulted for being 'too black'" (*ibid*).

The organization moved quickly to provide shelter for migrant communities in order to pre-empt any possible divisive attacks in their own shack settlements. This material intervention was coupled with an intellectual intervention through their press release. "We condemn the attacks, the beatings, rape and murder, in Johannesburg on people born in other countries. We will fight left and right to ensure that this does not happen here in KwaZulu-Natal." The group's intervention on the terrain of ideas took the form of a call to all South

Africans to refrain from attacks, and to instead identify the true enemies of the poor. They

were careful to highlight the ever-present danger of a potentially ambiguous expression of

the rage boiling beneath the surface of impoverished communities. "We have been warning

for years that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. That warning, like our

warnings about the rats and the fires and the lack of toilets, the human dumping grounds

called relocation sites, the new concentration camps called transit camps and corrupt, cruel,

violent and racist police, has gone unheeded (*ibid*)." The group went further, and linked their

critique of neoliberalism with a racialized restriction on the freedom of movement. "While

goods and services are increasingly 'freed' to move across spatial borders, human beings,

despite their conceptualization by economists as 'human capital,' still don't enjoy such

freedoms. It is time to ask serious questions about why it is that money and rich people can

move freely around the world while everywhere the poor must confront razor wire, corrupt

and violent police, queues and relocation or deportation" (*ibid*). In an effort to identify

capital's hypocritical spatial erasure of borders for goods with an increase in the policing of

transnational flows of migrants, Abahlali argued for a similar link between these global

policies of division and the domestic spatial policies of confinement directed at urban shack

dwellers, regardless of citizenship. "In South Africa some of us are moved out of the cities

to rural human dumping grounds called relocation sites while others are moved all the way

out of the country. Some of us are taken to transit camps and some of us are taken to Lindela.

The destinations might be different but it is the same kind of oppression" (*ibid*). Lindela is

the name for an infamous "Detention and Repatriation" facility built by the post-apartheid

government in 1996 to house undocumented immigrants detained in the area around

Johannesburg. In true neoliberal fashion, Lindela is operated by a private company on behalf

of the Department of Home Affairs. The facility was built in order to free up space in the

prisons for South African citizens, and has been at the center of controversy, facing

accusations of corruption and abuse of detainee rights (Klaaren and Ramji).

The Global Threat of Race and the Decomposition of Struggle

The fact that Abahlali highlights the spatial confinement of migrants as something

that mirrors the persistence of urban apartheid targeting black populations in South Africa is

crucial to elaborating what appears to be a growing trend in racial neoliberalism. In a

broader global environment dominated by color-blindness—the idea that anti-racism should

consist in simply banishing race as a meaningful category of analysis in understanding the

world (Bonilla-Silva 2006)—the proliferation of a variety of forms of racism continues to

operate as a divisive tool fracturing struggles, allowing elite groups to side-step otherwise

significant challenges to their hegemonic rule. Yet the dominant readings of global

neoliberalism, certainly in South Africa, but also around the world, remain locked in a

stultifying 'class' analysis. As South African white studies scholar Christi van der

Westhuizen told me,

> I feel very uncomfortable with any sort of notion that we've moved beyond race and
> that's how liberalism, South African liberalism in the way that it's understood here, is
> like such a limited ideology as well because it insists on this colorblindness. It's sort
> of like 'Now we should just judge people on what they do' you know and as long as
> you provide equal opportunities…then all will be fine, kind of thing. So we're just an
> equal opportunity society and it's also around class, of course. So you don't have to
> have any corrective measures in terms of race, class, gender, because as long as there
> are equal opportunities you're fine, which is as we know, it's ridiculous…So for
> me…it shows you the extent to which we still have to work through race in this
> country, I mean that's….because if it's so difficult to bring up, much like the
> centerpiece of power or one of the centerpieces of power, whiteness, to bring it to the
> fore and say let's look at this critically, if it's so difficult for you to do that, you
> know, twenty years into the democracy and it's almost like people are trying to
> mislead themselves, they're trying to deceive themselves and other people by trying
> to like pretend that race is not relevant anymore and we're seeing actually an
> increased use definitely of race in political discourses in the past few years. And

because we haven't worked through race, we haven't thought through it. (Interview
June 30, 2013)

If colorblindness remains dominant in South Africa[8], a society that lived through the horrors

of apartheid, then it is unsurprising that at a more global level the intertwining of regimes of

racializaiton and neoliberalism remains underexamined. While Zizek argues that the

contemporary crisis that generated the 2011 uprisings dictated that the revolts would be

comprised by a middle class now losing its hold on even the meager surplus wages of a post-

Fordist economy, this analysis is still largely devoid of the centrality of race. As David

Roediger argues, "To set race within social formations is absolutely necessary but to reduce

race to class is damaging" (8). In many places, a battle to defend what Du Bois called "the

wages of whiteness" might operate as a more appropriate lens through which we can grasp

what Zizek's "middle class" has been rebelling against. "The pleasures of whiteness could

function as a 'wage' for white workers. That is, status and privilege conferred by race could

be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships, North and South.

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[8] When we sat down to speak in Cape Town, van der Westhuizen, author of *White Power and the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (2008), had just returned from a white studies conference in Johannesburg. To her dismay, even in this space intentionally organized to create one of the few spaces in the country for scholars to discuss the centrality of whiteness and race generally as a persistent theme in South Africa, color-blindness reared its ugly head. According to Westhuizen, two keynote speakers for the conference, Sarah Nuttall and Ferial Haffajee, both challenged the very idea of the gathering, implying that any discussion of race reproduced racism. Westhuizen notes, "Sarah Nuttall was actually a keynote and she had a prepared speech; she was going to speak on consumption and whiteness that was going to be her topic.   Then Ferial spoke. Ferial dissed the whole conference saying, 'You shouldn't be here, I shouldn't be here, this shouldn't be discussed, etc etc.' and then Sarah Nuttall…she basically then said, 'we're not ready to have this conversation now. We shouldn't be talking about whiteness'… People were very upset, me included, because I thought a whole lot of assumptions were being made actually about what I'm going to be presenting in my paper, there's some sort of assumption or there's some sort of supposition here that I, with these other people, that I'm there to prop up whiteness, to reproduce whiteness, you know. My whole professional career I've been totally doing the opposite cus I've been… I'm not particularly popular in a great number of circles, white circles, because of the positions, public positions that I've adopted, you know. So I just felt extremely offended by that whole thing and actually I stood up in the Q and A session and I also said to them, 'you know, I take offense at the assumptions being made here about the papers that are due to be presented at the conference that haven't been presented...These kinds of comments can be made at the end if they were indeed true, but to pre-empt every single paper at the conference and put me, I mean, I just felt like, put me into this, to put me in a box, as some sort of weird racist that's come there to talk about how wonderful white people are (laughs) you know?" (Interview June 30, 2013).

White workers could, and did, define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as 'not slaves' and as 'not Blacks'" (13).

In the South African context, the race-class debate has raged since at least 1972, when Harold Wolpe published his article "Capitalism and Cheap Labor-Power in South Africa" in an attempt to define the relationship between racial confinement of surplus populations to the Bantustans and a broader capitalist economy. The central argument of Wolpe in 1972, one that was modified in a collaborative analysis with Martin Legassick in 1976, and again updated in the 1980s after engaging with Stuart Hall's work, was that the spatialized racial confinement policies of apartheid—in the form of rural Bantustans—allowed the apartheid state and its allied capitalist institutions to exploit migrant labor from the Bantustans at below the cost of reproducing that same labor. Social reproduction was outsourced to the Bantustans, as women and families were largely confined to these autonomous, and eventually (in some cases) fully sovereign entities. Here the Althusserian concept of articulation was crucial in that it allowed Wolpe to claim that pre-capitalist relations persisted into the capitalist present in South Africa, articulating otherwise separately conceived modes of production.

While important and productive in its attempt to grapple with the relationship between apartheid racial imperative and the broader necessities of capital, this initial formulation of this argument was arguably a bit clunky. John Pickles and Daniel Weiner claim that "radical political economy has…tended to homogenize South Africa's rural population. In this view, rural people have become classless victims of apartheid. Important social and spatial variations within Bantustans, as well as within white agriculture, have tended to be overlooked (1991: 14). The negative ramifications of Wolpe's early

formulations mirrored a broader "urban bias" in the anti-apartheid struggle more generally, whereby the trend towards proletarianization in the cities within South Africa was emphasized as productive for class struggle, while the pre-capitalist rural spaces of the Bantustans were too often written-off as unproductive sites for revolutionary movement. As Pickles and Weiner elaborate, "this urban bias results in part from the significance of urban and industrial struggles, particularly during the post-Soweto (1976) period, but can also be traced to theoretical positions regarding the functions of rural areas and people in contemporary South Africa" (*ibid*). The persistence of an urban bias in post-apartheid South Africa is an important theme examined in the following chapter. For now it is sufficient to point out that this analysis of the relationship between race and class tended to privilege class in a manner that saw heightened racial differences as a mere marker of a prior mode of production.

In her own attempt to re-visit the race-class debate for insight into the contemporary South African conjuncture, Gillian Hart deploys Stuart Hall's re-reading of Wolpe as a way of insisting upon the persistence of racialization as an *ongoing* process in the post-apartheid moment, one that cannot be reduced simply to economic determinants. "Instead, it needs to be shown *how* race comes to be inserted historically, and the relations and practices that have tended to erode and transform—or to preserve—these distinctions through time, not simply as residues or holdovers, but as active structuring principles of the present organization of society and the forms of class relations" (2007: 89). In this regard, Stuart Hall's conceptualization of race as "the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through'," becomes important as a means to analyze many of the bottlenecks contemporary

struggles have faced (*ibid*). "For racism is also one of the dominant means of ideological representation through which the white fractions of the class come to 'live' their relations to other fractions, and through them to capital itself" (*ibid*). For Hart, such a realization entails examining the terrain of the popular for insight into the power struggles within the ANC that led to Jacob Zuma replacing Thabo Mbeki at the helm of the party, and then later the country as a whole. Zuma was arguably able to discredit Mbeki by latching on to the rising discontent throughout South Africa at the failures of post-apartheid liberation. He accomplished this through deploying an alternative notion of nationalism and the liberation project that already existed in the popular imagination, and was therefore able to paint Mbeki as part of an ANC elite that was educated—unlike most of the South African poor—and didn't participate on the ground in the liberation struggle. In critiquing the notion of neoliberalism as simply entailing what David Harvey terms an "elitist class project" (2005), Hart claims that resistance cannot and will not necessarily follow in the line of the pure economics of exploitation. Rather, it also depends at least as much on everyday, popular notions of what constitutes a nation, and the meaning of liberation (2008).

In the absence of a more broad-based emphasis upon race in South Africa, the vacuum of analysis regarding the lived reality of racialized inequality and violence has been filled by populist groups such as the newly formed political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of this group). Gillian Hart's emphasis upon the popular as a central terrain of contestation over political meaning has therefore only gained in relevance. The ANC's largely refuses to address the persistence of racism in South Africa through more than piecemeal programs, directed more at developing a black bourgeoisie than alleviating the difficulties facing the black poor.

More generally, the South African experience of extreme forms of racialized dispossession—in a context where the white population is a numerical minority (less than 10% today), but has nevertheless managed to maintain if not enhance most of its privileges—might operate as a model for understanding the evolution of racialized divisions in struggles elsewhere. Even the historically marginalized Afrikaner communities have benefitted from the post-apartheid transition. "Afrikaners have been a chief beneficiary of the post-secularization of race. They are inheritors of post-apartheid largesse, cashing in on the extension of privileges of apartheid to all whites…The surging Afrikaner middle class—once South Africa's poor white problem of Triomf legacy—provides many of the middlemen for its current tourist trade. Neoliberalism's racial secularization turns out to fuel some of the very same people apartheid's racial sacralization was supposed to uplift" (Goldberg: 315-316). Most shocking is the extent to which anti-blackness dominates the popular mindset, penetrating the imaginaries of black subjects themselves, used as a weapon against non-citizen Africans in the periodic but ongoing xenophobic attacks.

But the extent to which the persistence of the racial threat is a specifically neoliberal phenomenon defining our contemporary conjuncture must also be brought into question. Goldberg identifies but then sets aside the obvious tension between his formulation of the neoliberalization of race on the one hand—as a necessarily economic imperative—and his (above-cited) formulation of the *threat* of race, as something that supersedes both curiosity and exploitation, on the other hand. "Threat for the most part seeks distanciation of one sort or another, not engagement, whether spatially or symbolically, materially or rhetorically enacted. But the other side of threat entails also the group—the 'population'—seen as threatening is the one actually threatened: with alienation, intimidation, incarceration,

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marginalization and externalization of one kind or another, ultimately with extinction" (29). The threat of race clearly extends beyond the parameters of the capitalist imperative of exploitation. Goldberg's analysis is therefore one that veers in the direction of that reading of biopower as something that re-articulates with sovereign power rather than merely displacing it. As Michel Foucault puts it, "Given that this power's [biopower] is essentially to make live, how can it let die? How can the power of death, the function of death, be exercised in a political system centered upon biopower? It is, I think, at this point that racism intervenes" (2003: 254). Contemporary racism operates as the persistence of the drive to make die or let live, in a broader era supposedly defined by the imperative to make live or let die. "The juxtaposition of—or the way biopower functions through—the old sovereign power of life and death implies the workings, the introduction and activation, of racism. And it is, I think, here that we find the actual roots of racism" (258).

It makes sense, then, that the debate on the relationship between precarious inclusion (what some have termed "differential inclusion") and surplus exclusion must take place on the specific terrain of slum communities in a South African context (this theme is explored further in chapter 3). Simultaneously spatially incorporated into the post-modern metropolis, but socially excluded from many of its potential benefits, shack dwellers are forced to walk the tightrope between the fruits of urbanity and the ever-present threat of premature death as a marker of the fatal pairing of power and difference. Indeed, "by centering attention on those most vulnerable to the fatal couplings of power and difference signified by *racism*, we will develop richer analyses of how it is that radical activism might most productively exploit crisis for liberatory ends" (Gilmore: 22). It is not a surprise that in the course of eking out a living in such a context, the anger of the poor can indeed go in many different directions.

And yet arguably, absent an interrogation of the persistence of the threat of race in the purportedly post-apartheid present, movements in South Africa and around the world will continue to be plagued by internal fissures, making themselves vulnerable to repression or co-optation at the hands of populist and conservative attempts to restore the status-quo. Before examining the specificity of the relationship between precarity and race in South Africa, I now turn to the question of how the ANC-led state itself has responded to the persistence of apartheid urban geographies and the renewal of social protest from below. Like the various forms of movement protest and uprising examined above, the following account of the post-apartheid state is also embedded in a transnational, *horizontal* topography of power that operates at multiple scales, from the local to the global, without fetishizing any particular one as *the* paradigmatic site of the exertion of power.

CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPMENT:
A PROMISED LAND CALLED CORNUBIA

After more than fifteen years of caution, as the statistics of persistent inequality, poverty and unemployment become ever more embarrassing, the ANC and the state are turning once again to the idea of development, under the concept of a 'developmental state', as the way out of their difficulties.
Ben Turok, *Development in a Divided Country*, 30-31

Social plans and the militarization of the urban peripheries are two sides of the same attempt to control populations outside the reach of the state.
Raul Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance*, 191

The fact that we want to work with clean government in fact doesn't take away our autonomy; it's not giving our power back…It's an attempt to hold the government accountable. I hold the new government accountable, but that doesn't mean that…you want to take over the government or that you will replace the government.
S'bu Zikode, Interview, August 2, 2013

Autonomy means Abahlali will speak to its members, through a collective decision, free from individuals' influence and external forces. Autonomy means free from being molded and controlled from outside the movement, by individuals within the academia research or NGOs or even from the State. Autonomy means Abahlali maintaining its own philosophy that is Abahlali's, that is the living politics that is opposed to all kinds of other politics and other forces… But autonomy doesn't mean that Abahlali cannot engage with those that are seen to be their enemies. Abahlali will engage with the State.
S'bu Zikode, Interview, August 2, 2013

Abahlali and the Birth of Cornubia

The first public action of the group that would later become Abahlali baseMjondolo

was to take to the streets in frustration on March 19, 2005. Blocking the N2 freeway running

adjacent to their Kennedy Road shack settlement for four hours, about 750 shack dwellers

demanded land in the city so they wouldn't have to remain cramped on a precarious hillside next to the largest municipal dump in the country. Six months later in September, the movement formally launched under the name of Abahlali by mobilizing 5,000 shack dwellers to march against the local ANC councilor. They demanded that he step down because of a failure to provide their community with a sense of permanence through services, land and housing (Pithouse 2005).

By the end of the year, Durban mayor Obed Mlaba announced that the municipal government would build a major low-income housing development in the Northern part of the city. The development—later called Cornubia—was intended to provide between 15,000 and 20,000 low-income housing units at a range of prices. Some would be provided free of cost, similar to the so-called RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) homes the government had been building throughout the country. Other homes would be built for those earning above a certain threshold, initially R1500/month (at the time, the equivalent of $230/month), and would be allocated with a bond (the South African term for a mortgage). It was therefore intended to be a mixed-income housing project, one that was supposed to address the legacy of apartheid geography that still plagued all South African cities. The development would not, however, be located near the heart of the city center, where many shack communities, including Kennedy Road, were located. Instead it would be based next to an edge city called Umhlanga, a predominantly white, middle and upper class beachfront community that had taken off in part as a product of white flight from the city core after the fall of apartheid (Verwey 2005).

The announcement by Mayor Mlaba should be read as part of the broader developmental state strategy that the ANC increasingly argued it was adopting during the

first decade of the new millennium. This larger project, I argue, must be situated at the conjuncture of two forces: first, it can be read as a response to the movements like Abahlali, agitating from below in increasing numbers since Mandela stepped down from the presidency in 1999; second, Cornubia and the ANC developmental state project should also be situated as part of a global rise in state capitalism, culminating with South Africa joining the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries in 2010, in the wake of the global crisis of 2008 that represented a significant blow to the hegemonic neoliberal project. There is also a specifically African context to the re-emergence of the developmental state project. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) spearheaded by former South African president Thabo Mbeki is just one example of an extremely problematic continental attempt at articulating neoliberal ideology with a more developmental platform intended to address the specificities of economic governance in Africa (Sahle 2008). In this chapter, I discuss the post-World War II development project, contextualizing it within a specifically African colonial context. While neoliberalism remained dominant in the 1990s, the developmental state gained renewed purchase in a context of rising domestic and global inequality by the 2000s. By historicizing and spatializing the local developmental state in Durban, we can identify the rise and fall of capitalist strategies of planning and movement co-optation. Finally, the chapter assesses the Cornubia project on its own terms. It seeks to answer the following questions: How has the state responded to the new movements in South Africa? What forms of governance have emerged as a method of placating or appeasing the poor, and are they fulfilling movement demands or merely re-directing their energy while reproducing the central problems driving poverty and inequality in the country?

Development(s)

Development is a central part of any capitalist society and can be divided into two distinct but interlinked processes: capital-D Development and small-d development. The latter, development, represents the in-built imperative for capitalism as a global system to grow quantitatively and qualitatively, extensively through space and intensively through time. This imperative grew parallel to the outset of global capitalism with the arrival of European conquerors to the New World in 1492. The former, Development, represents the explicit strategy of containment and state-by-state incorporation into the world capitalist economy. The Development project is generally framed as having been launched following the second world war. The contingent processes of reconstruction in Western Europe, the rise of the Cold War between first and second worlds, and the decolonization of the third world combined to drive the United States and the transnational institutions of capitalism to launch a Development project in the third world geared in large part towards preventing the spread of socialism (Hart 2009; Chari and Verdery 2009; Sachs 1992).

Perhaps the most devastating critiques of the Development project came from the work of Arturo Escobar (1995) and James Ferguson (1994). Their analyses progressed by paying particular attention to the way in which development operated as a normative discourse that exceeded the supposedly centralized power of the state, and by drawing from Foucault's (2008) analysis of socialism's failure to develop a genuinely alternative art of government from that of the capitalist societies to which it was often opposed. The latter contribution was particularly important as it highlighted the manner in which state redistribution of wealth following World War II was not merely a capitalist strategy to fend off the influence of the Soviet project. Rather, many newly independent socialist-identified

countries throughout Africa sought to promote national development as a model of post-colonial success, but were often limited both by the normative nature of their productivist orientation as well as their top-down programs of implementation and structural impediments rooted in the dynamics of global uneven development.

When thinking of the specificity of the African continent's experience with development, we should be careful to highlight the overlaps and divergences with the dominant critiques of the Development project. For instance, the project on the continent arguably preceded World War II[9]. The 1920s, 1930s and 1940s witnessed a range of anti-colonial revolts throughout the continent (James 1995). France and Britain in particular responded to these uprisings with a placating program of development (Cooper 2002). Britain passed the "Colonial Development and Welfare Act" in 1940 whereby part of the surplus extracted from the colonies would be put towards infrastructure, service provision, education, and housing for the colonized populations. After experiencing a parallel wave of revolt and labor strikes, France passed similar legislation in 1946 entitled the "Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development." Thus, "Both Great Britain and France thought they would regain control through their new concept, 'development'…Developmental colonialism was in part a response to the narrowing grounds on which a convincing case

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[9] For a parallel analysis of the planner state as emerging prior to World War II, see Antonio Negri's 1967 essay, "Keynes and the Capitalist Theory of the State," pp.23-52 in (1994) *Labor of Dionysus*, by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. In this essay, Negri argues that the Keynesian revolution which led to the mid-century welfare state had to be contextualized as the proper response by capital to the 1917 October Revolution and the 1929 global crisis perpetuated by worker struggles from below. Thus, the Planner State in Negri's work might be read as another theory of the Development project, but one that reverses the relationship between capital and labor by pointing to Development as a project that sought to harness working class autonomy towards the development of capital, rather than allowing it to continue along its threatening path of destruction. For a parallel analysis applied to the supposedly socialist countries, see CLR James's (1986) *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, where he argues that the Soviet Union under Stalin had developed a form of 'state capitalism' that sought precisely to make a similar intervention as Keynes' Planner State. Here the aim was to contain rather than support forms of working class resistance such as the powerful council movement of the Soviets.

could be made for the exercise of state power over people who were 'different'" (Cooper 2002: 36-37). Furthermore, while the meaning of development has become somewhat muddied today, at the time of independence in Africa, it was strongly correlated with the project of nation-building elaborated by Frantz Fanon. "Development became the centerpiece of the construction of a nation, through giving the rural poor majority (in particular) access to the benefits of modernity and industrialization" (Neocosmos 2010b: 535). As an important contrast, Neocosmos reminds us that not all states adopted a developmental platform. "The states which were mere extensions of imperialism from an early state (e.g. Zaire, Gabon) were never developmental" (Neocosmos 2010b: 536). Slowly, state politics subsumed civil society, becoming more authoritarian, and less developmental in the African context. "By 1980 the collapse of the old neo-colonial-statist form of development meant the collapse of the developmental state on the continent" (*ibid*).

In South Africa, however, the earlier continental drive to mobilize development as a placating strategy deployed against anti-colonial movements instead morphed into a policy of *separate* development with the ascendancy to power of the apartheid government in 1948 (Cooper 2002: 53-58). Thus, in many respects South Africa unmasked the brutal reality behind the general colonial project of Development. France and Britain promoted the idea that patient Africans—through Development—might one day become just as civilized as their European patriarchs. In South Africa, by contrast, Development brought real material benefits to the white minority through mineral-induced economic growth combined with state redistribution programs of general welfare, education and housing, while it simultaneously disenfranchised and underdeveloped the non-white majority. The apartheid government managed its reliance upon non-white labor by allowing a certain percentage of

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workers into segregated and dilapidated peri-urban townships close to mines, factories, and urban service economies. Simultaneously, it confined the surplus majority of Africans to quasi-sovereign tribal homelands that would be entirely responsible for their own populations' well-being.

Planning Durban

Some scholars have pushed back against a common analysis of post-apartheid South Africa that has argued for a simple transition to neoliberalism with the ANC's ascendancy to power. Bill Freund (2013), for example, avoids wholeheartedly endorsing this framework because, since its rise to power, the ANC has also placed a high emphasis on tackling urban issues that affect South Africa's most impoverished citizens. In this vein, it is important to recognize that the post-apartheid ruling party was successful in expanding local government to include edge cities potentially outside their purview in order to increase the pool of revenue they could draw on to redistribute wealth throughout the city. The ANC has therefore had to traverse a complex divide between its historical roots and in some respects ongoing organization along the lines of a social movement on the one hand, and its desire to govern that frames it as a hegemonic political party. The eThekwini Municipality (Durban) is perhaps the best case in point, where boundaries were redrawn to capture potential white flight and to demobilize the power of traditional rulers who governed the peri-urban sections of Bantustans (see figure 1.0). In Durban, the apartheid government mandated that the KwaZulu Bantustan be extended to include peri-urban settlements. This extension incorporated townships like Umlazi, today home to roughly 400,000 residents, the second largest township in the country after Soweto. The 1996 and 2001 extension of the Durban municipal boundaries (see figure 1.0) would incorporate the southern township of Umlazi,

and the northern edge city of Umhlanga—the precise community that the Cornubia housing development is seeking to harness to provide jobs to low-income housing recipients. Umhlanga had developed as a site of white flight, principally from the previously all-white downtown parts of the city (Freund 2002, Padayachee and Freund 2007). This process paralleled the similar pattern occurring throughout the United States following desegregation, when wealthier white communities moved to the expanding suburbs and state funds were re-allocated to support the burgeoning peri-urban and suburban neighborhoods in order to preserve white privilege. And yet, unlike the United States, the ANC was able to successfully expand the spatial boundaries of municipalities in order to preempt the emergence of upper class, largely white tax havens operating outside the confines of the major cities (Cameron 2004).
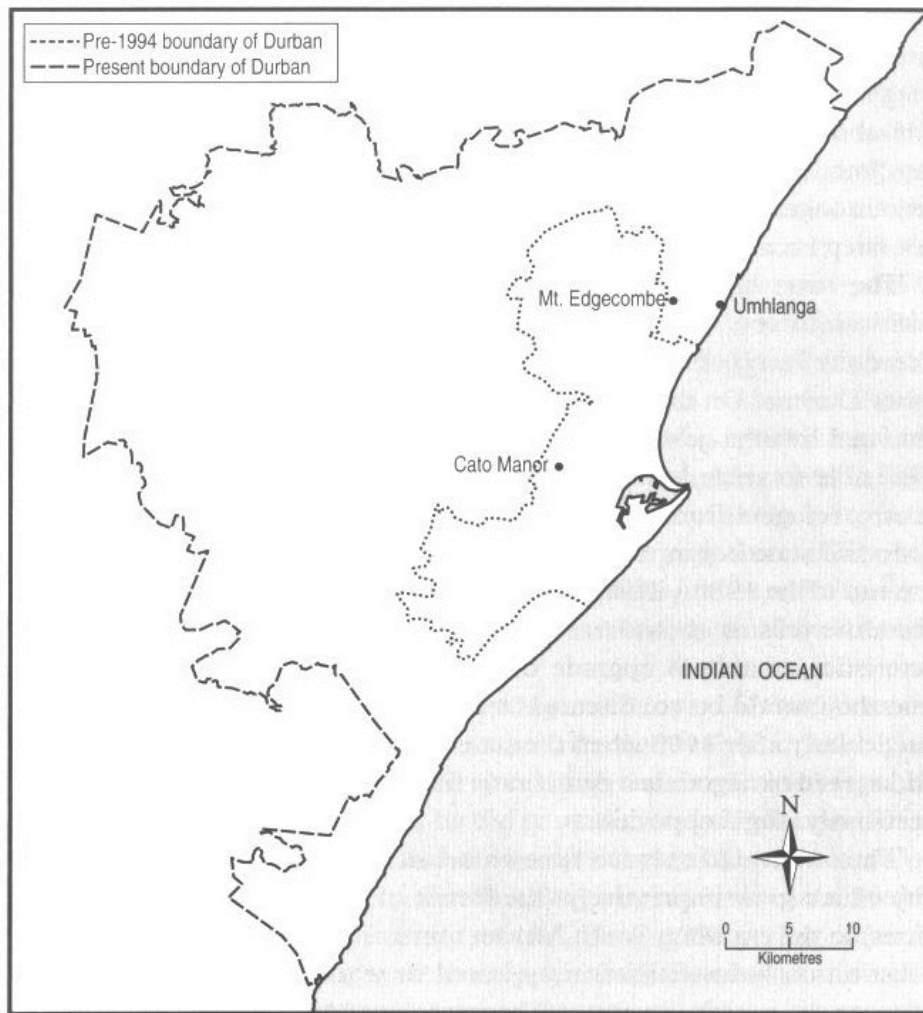
Figure 1.1 Durban pre-1994; Durban today (eThekwini).

Source: Bill Freund, *The African City*, p. 187

> In more than one sense, Umhlanga symbolizes the typical features associated with the globalized city: a sharp division between a cut-off and protected right and growingly unwanted and irregularly supported poor, an obsession with security, and the hunger of capital for exploitation of new land for constructing houses and commercial property. The architectural models used are eclectic and international with little or no use of any South African indigenous building forms. While the expansion of Umhlanga served to decenter Durban, as in many international examples, the gentrification option is however also present in the form of upgrading the wealthiest part of the older inner suburbia of Durban. The stereotyped view of Africa assumes that the entire continent is simply cut out of these trends typical of richer nations and banished to some outer hell by globalization. In reality, the example of

Durban…shows that these new divisions also form within Africa itself (Freund 2007: 191).

Durban was unique in the broader African trajectory of urban planning due to "its successful development of a large community of professional urban managers and technical specialists following the English model" (Freund 2002: 186). This basic bureaucratic and technical infrastructure for an urban developmental state dates back to the 1940s decade of transition to apartheid, (Freund 2013).[10] The city's very existence is owed to its historical ties to Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand region where much of South Africa's minerals are found. Durban became the port city of choice for exporting these minerals, and grew solely as a product of the minerals boom that began in the 1880s. Industrial agglomeration effects occurred, allowing for a sizeable textile and car manufacturing industry to emerge alongside the port. The spatial outsourcing of the developmental needs of non-whites to the townships and Bantustan authorities, however, meant that rural Zulu authorities in the province of Natal did not provide any of the same developmental services to which white South Africans were entitled. Prior to the minerals boom that led to Durban's growth as a port city, however, the most important income generator in the region was the sugar cane business, first launched in

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[10] In a way, Freund's 2013 argument that the modern developmental state in South Africa is being built on the ruins of the 1940s developmental state initiated by the apartheid government problematizes my central claim in this chapter: that the developmental state in contemporary South Africa should be read as a response to the new social movements which have emerged in the country since 1999. However, I don't see the two arguments as being in contradiction for two reasons: first, one can accept my argument in this chapter about the developmental state emerging as a response to contemporary movements using at least two different sets of theories: the primacy of resistance (Hardt and Negri) or the double movement (Polanyi). I am not particularly concerned about which of these two theoretical framings one uses to interpret the findings I present in this chapter. While the primacy of resistance makes the claim that working class resistance simultaneously precedes and calls into being new forms of capitalist exploitation and its corresponding structures of state power, the double movement is a claim for cyclical periods of state redistribution and relative calm, followed by a period of greater emphasis upon the free market, which generates greater degrees of inequality and in turn greater numbers of social protest. John Pickles first raised some of these issues on the relationship between Polanyi and Negri at a panel examining Polanyi's work at the 2012 AAG conference in New York. No one in the audience of geographers was able to engage this important intervention, and it remains clear that more work should be done in this area, perhaps using South African or other case studies as empirical examples to flush out the theoretical stakes.

the area in 1843. Britain had abolished the slave trade a few decades earlier, but the Mauritius model of importing labor from India proved a fruitful alternative in Durban by 1860. As in the Americas, native resistance to agricultural labor played a key role in the eventual decision by colonial authorities to rely upon imported labor (Pithouse 2009). To this day, the province remains home to more than half the country's 1.3 million citizens classified racially as "Indians," and Durban itself is 24% Indian (well above the national 2.5%).

In the late 19th century a number of the largest colonial sugar cane landholders in the area combined to form Tongaat Hulett. Tongaat would go on to become the largest sugar cane company in the region, and remains the largest landowner in Durban to this day. With the transition to a more globalized post-apartheid economy, Tongaat sought to diversify its holdings by embarking upon a property development component that has grown rapidly. Coeval with the property arm of the firm developed a spatial planning division—The Tongaat-Hulett Planning Forum. The Planning Forum has sought to influence the long-term spatial planning of city officials in order to harness public planning towards the firm's private interests. The Cornubia housing development was launched adjacent to Umhlanga as an unofficial public-private partnership between Tongaat and the eThekwini Municipality, and has so far mirrored precisely these dynamics of deploying public resources towards private benefit. And yet we must remember that the perpetuation of Tongaat's influence upon local government occurred at a time when Durban flouted the broader neoliberal trends by expanding the purview of local government rather than contracting it. These trends of a parallel expansion of public-private partnerships—thought to be paradigmatic of neoliberal governance—alongside the growth of a strong state government involved in economic and

spatial planning as well as the redistribution of wealth through social programs—come together to lay the groundwork for the renewal of a developmental state discourse in post-apartheid South Africa.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the demise of developmental thinking worldwide as the neoliberal political-economic platform became hegemonic and was seen by many as unchallenged in a post-Cold War era. As previously discussed, parallel to its abandonment as an explicit project emerged a strong critique of the development discourse (Crush 1995). South Africa's first majority-rule government took power under the ANC at the same time as these sweeping changes were taking place world-wide. Despite the legacy of broadly progressive politics within the anti-apartheid movement, this global conjuncture led the ANC to quickly shift from a largely Keynesian macroeconomic plan under the Reconstruction and Development Program in 1994 to a heavily neoliberal economic framework under its Growth Employment and Redistribution plan by 1996 (Makhulu 2010, Marais 2011, Bond 2000). Certain early critiques of the transition to post-apartheid society therefore denounced it as a total adoption of neoliberalism (Bond 2000, Desai 2002, Klein 2007). For some, this meant that the old idea of the developmental state was now simply an anachronism. "The developmental state of the 20th century," argues Michael Neocosmos, "has been fundamentally and irretrievably transformed along with the collapse of development as a state project in Africa, under the twin pressures of hegemonic globalized neo-liberalism, and the popular struggles of the 1980s and 1990s" (2010: 538). And yet, despite the plethora of examples of ANC adoption of neoliberal policies, by the early 2000s it became clear that in fact the ANC model of development was perhaps better understood as a mixed, hybrid form of political economy, where standard neoliberal politics blended with a more developmental

oriented state[11]. This situated South Africa within a broader multi-polar moment (Sahle 2010) of the first decade of the 21st century, where thinkers from China, Africa and Latin America—some of whom were even being incorporated into the World Bank itself—saw the resurgence of the developmental state as challenging both the neoclassical model and the theories of underdevelopment (Fine 2010). One of the key recent findings of theorists who have been following its rise, fall and resurgence is that "the life of the developmental state is no longer confined to the nation-state but has been extended to the local or sectoral developmental state"(*ibid*, 108). The city of Durban is a perfect setting to examine a scaled-down developmental program within a broader neoliberal context.

Durban offers a unique example of an African city that blends models of development, with a strong history of explicit urban planning coexisting alongside a broad-based informal economy (Padayachee and Freund 2002). Just as South Africa as a whole challenges the deployment of neoliberalism or development as mutually exclusive categories, the city of Durban provides us with a correction for the monolithic categories of the global city of the developed North and the megacity of the underdeveloped and chaotic South. With its equal mix of formal and informal economies, planned and unplanned city-making processes, "Perhaps coming to grips with Durban is a way to start bringing two kinds of literature together in order to enrich our picture of what is happening to cities generally in the contemporary world" (Padayachee and Freund 2002: 3).

BRICS, State Capitalism and a Changing World System

In March 2013, Durban played host to the Fifth BRICS Summit that brought together Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. When South Africa joined the BRICS

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[11] Within this broader conjuncture, it is important to note that James Ferguson has engaged in an unstated re-examination of his earlier rigorous critique of development (see my discussion of Ferguson's recent work in Chapter 4).

countries in 2010, it represented an important step towards a more complete South-South integration of the Latin American, Asian and African continents within this alternative global alliance. The BRICS countries—most particularly China—are often presented as paradigmatic examples of a growing form of state capitalism. This trend led *The Economist* magazine to dedicate an entire issue to the phenomenon in early 2012, out of concern for what it meant for the long-standing tradition of liberal capitalism.

> State capitalism is on the march, overflowing with cash and emboldened by the crisis in the West. State companies make up 80% of the value of the stockmarket in China, 62% in Russia and 38% in Brazil. They accounted for one-third of the emerging world's foreign direct investment between 2003 and 2010 and an even higher proportion of its most spectacular acquisitions, as well as a growing proportion of the very largest firms: three Chinese state-owned companies rank among the world's ten biggest companies by revenue, against only two European ones. Add the exploits of sovereign-wealth funds to the ledger, and it begins to look as if liberal capitalism is in wholesale retreat…The Chinese have a phrase for it: 'The state advances while the private sector retreats.' This is now happening on a global scale (Wooldridge 2012).

The concern expressed here by writers in *The Economist* represented a Western recognition that the era of triumphant neoliberalism and the supposed "End of the Nation State" (Guehenno 2000) had never fully come to fruition. What is more, following the 2008 crisis stimulated by the housing collapse in the United States, neoliberal orthodoxy was everywhere under question. Despite the response of austerity in Europe and the West, many other areas of the world were bulking up their state and its corresponding nationalized firms and social welfare programs. As the authors of the special report in *The Economist* argued: "Trotsky always insisted on the impossibility of 'socialism in one country'. The same logic applies to state capitalism. State-capitalist powers inevitably look outward as well as inward. China is the world's biggest exporter as well as its biggest energy consumer. Russia and the Gulf states are energy superpowers. But they are also conscious that they are newcomers in a global market that was created by America and Europe. So they frequently stick together,

striking deals among themselves and forging ever closer ideological links" (*The Economist* 2012).

The Durban conference presented precisely such an opportunity for further entrenchment of a South-South alliance as one alternative to the post-Washington Consensus. The conference attendees initially proposed to create a $50 billion BRICS New Development Bank that would begin to challenge the hegemony of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the hegemonic international financial institutions. They ultimately agreed to a $100 billion fund. It also launched a BRICS think tank that will play a central role in elaborating the precise nature of the BRICS developmental state model, and penned a "BRICS Multilateral Infrastructure Co-Financing Agreement for Africa" intended to facilitate the co-financing of infrastructure projects by BRICS countries throughout the African continent. In a keynote address to the newly launched BRICS think-tank, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, argued against the view of some critics that the new alliance represented a collection of "'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 late 19th century when European colonial powers partitioned Africa among themselves" (2013: 6). Nkoana-Mashabane claimed that sub-imperialism was not a category that could be applied to the BRICS alliance because Wallerstein's center-periphery model no longer mapped onto the more properly globalized context that BRICS nations faced. The minister went on to cite Paolo Freire, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Immanuel Wallertstein, and Amartya Sen in a speech that argued for BRICS as a unifying

project because their countries shared "a history of struggle against colonialism and underdevelopment, including the spirit of Bandung" (7).

Others were much more skeptical of the prospects emerging from this body that was claiming it represented a re-ordering of geoeconomic global structures (Cowen and Smith 2009). "While we recognize the importance of developing the infrastructure of our continent, the example of South Africa is a case in point," argued Fatima Shabodien, a feminist political activist with ActionAid South Africa. "Infrastructure without a defined redistributive mechanism does not do much for poor. Yes, it may grow businesses, but how does it lift people out of poverty? It is a cold comfort to the South African poor that they live in the African country with the most developed infrastructure on the continent while struggling to access water, electricity, decent housing and quality education for children" (2013: 14). And if the model of South African infrastructure couldn't be exported as a poverty-alleviating project, Patrick Bond went further in denouncing the entire BRICS program as being in collusion with imperialism. "South African, US, European, Australian, and Canadian firms have been joined by major firms from China, India and Brazil in the region. Their work has mainly built upon colonial infrastructural foundations—road, rail, pipeline and port expansion—for the sake of minerals, petroleum and gas extraction. BRICS appears entirely consistent with facilitating this activity, especially through the proposed BRICS Bank" (2013: 69).

Yet this new alliance of middle-income countries should not be viewed simply from the perspective of the conquering of foreign resources under the guise of developmentalism. Most critics positioned BRICS as cooperating with Western imperialism, or as part of a multilateral global project that presents its own project of sub-imperialism. But few analysts

captured the importance of BRICS within a broader context of a shift in global hegemons. Bond highlighted the danger that BRICS interest in Africa would present in the face of increased US military presence on the continent, especially through AFRICOM. But this militarism should also be situated within an overall decline of US power, something Immanuel Wallerstein has been arguing since the mid-1970s. While the US enjoyed a brief period of global hegemony for two decades following World War II, it soon ran up against a global crisis that Wallerstein analyzed as in part a product of the success of the anti-colonial struggles. "When the cumulated Third World pressures, most notably Vietnam, were added on, a restructuring of the world division of labor was inevitable, involving probably in the 1970s a quadripartite division of the larger part of the world surplus by the U.S., the European Common Market, Japan, and the U.S.S.R. Such a decline in U.S. state hegemony has actually *increased* the freedom of action of capitalist enterprises" (2000: 99).

Following the 2013 Durban conference, Wallerstein re-assessed the decline of US hegemony within the context of the rise of the BRICS countries, arguing that a multi-polar structure of eight to twelve powers indeed seemed to be filling the vacuum left by "the post-hegemonic decline of U.S. power, prestige and authority" (2013). For Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, however, a similar decline of US hegemony is best captured by the collapse of the Project for a New American Century, encapsulated in their own terms as "a failed coup d'état" over the global power structure. Drawing from the US State Department's Richard Haas, they make the claim that Wallerstein's assessment of an emerging multipolarity is still based on an outdated model that privileged nation-states as lying at the center of the global political economy. In its place they put forward the idea of "a form of network power, which required the wide collaboration of dominant nation-states, major corporations, supranational

economic and political institutions, various NGOs, media conglomerates, and a series of

other powers" (2009: 205). This represents a world dominated by what Richard Hass calls

"non-polarity", and Hardt and Negri term "Empire". The call to examine empire's world of

non-polarity, however, does not operate with quite the same relative erasure of the nation-

state that is often leveled at them as a critique, especially from geographers (see, for example,

Sparke 2005: 239-312). The world of non-polarity should not necessarily be read as the

product of a shift towards what they termed earlier—borrowing from Deleuze—as a

geopolitically "smooth space" of global empire[12]. Rather, drawing from Saskia Sassen,

Hardt and Negri understand the de-nationalizing trends in the contemporary interregnum

between imperialism and Empire as operating at multiple, striated geographical scales. "The

emerging global order, she argues, is forming not only outside of nation-states, but also, and

more important, within them, initiating a process of the 'denationalization' of certain

components of the nation-state that makes them increasingly oriented toward global agendas

and systems. The global is within the national, in other words, just as much as the national is

within the global" (223). Cities thus become a crucial site for re-thinking the processes of

globalization: not simply as concrete instantiations of an abstract theory of the global, but as

a denationalizing scale with its own concrete dynamics linked up to processes that transcend

the national or regional. "Sassen thus proposes reading the emergent global political and

institutional order in terms of assemblages in which 'the nation-state and interstate system

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[12] Even this reference has been mis-read by geographers, however. Deleuze's concept of smooth space should be read not as absent differentiation, but as horizontally *heterogeneous* power against the state's own vertical *homogeneous* power. A geographical elaboration of the relationship between deterritorializing smooth space and reterritorializing state spaces remains to flushed out fully.. David Harvey attempts to capture something like this in his distinction, drawing from Giovanni Arrighi, between the "territorial" and the "capitalist" logics of power (2003: 27). Stuart Elden (2005 & 2006) also tries to begin such a conversation. But both Harvey's and Elden's analyses are ultimately found wanting, leaving us with the need to provide further examination of the relationship between geography and Empire, and a more rigorous theoretical engagement with Hardt and Negri's overarching project.

remain critical building blocks but they are not alone, and are profoundly altered from the inside out'" (*ibid*).

The heterogeneous processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Arnold and Pickles 2011: 1618) that occur within globalization must therefore be situated as flowing not only from the outside in but also from the inside out. In South Africa, this has meant that the developmental state program has in fact been displaced from the national to the local terrain of government. Thus municipalities, especially the eight major metropolitan areas of Buffalo, Cape Town, Ekurhuleni (Johannesburg), eThekwini (Durban), Johannesburg, Mangaung (Bloomfontein), Nelson Mandela Bay and Tshwane, are tasked with implementing both regional economic plans and with redistributing wealth through public housing and adequate service provision. Often, city administrations adopt a platform of developing their municipality into a "world city" (McDonald 2008) capable of attracting global flows of investment, tourism, and prestigious summits like the one Durban hosted for the BRICS countries. The city-scale is thus partially able to transcend the national-scale in leaping immediately to the global through such a world city platform. The danger here is that the developmental plan will not only be subsumed under the demands of neoliberal globalization, but that the local developmental initiatives of each municipality will evolve independently of a surrounding rural countryside, still home to roughly four out of every ten South Africans

This spatially bifurcated nature of the developmental state in South Africa is perhaps most obvious when the local state is assigned the task of dealing with the problem of slums. Most of the shack dwellers that have set up a home in the precarious areas of informal settlements over the past thirty years are the product of a rural-to-urban migration patterns

whereby Africans continue to move from the "traditional homelands" known as Bantustans

into the forbidden quarters of the formerly white apartheid city (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.2 Apartheid's Rural Geography of Homelands
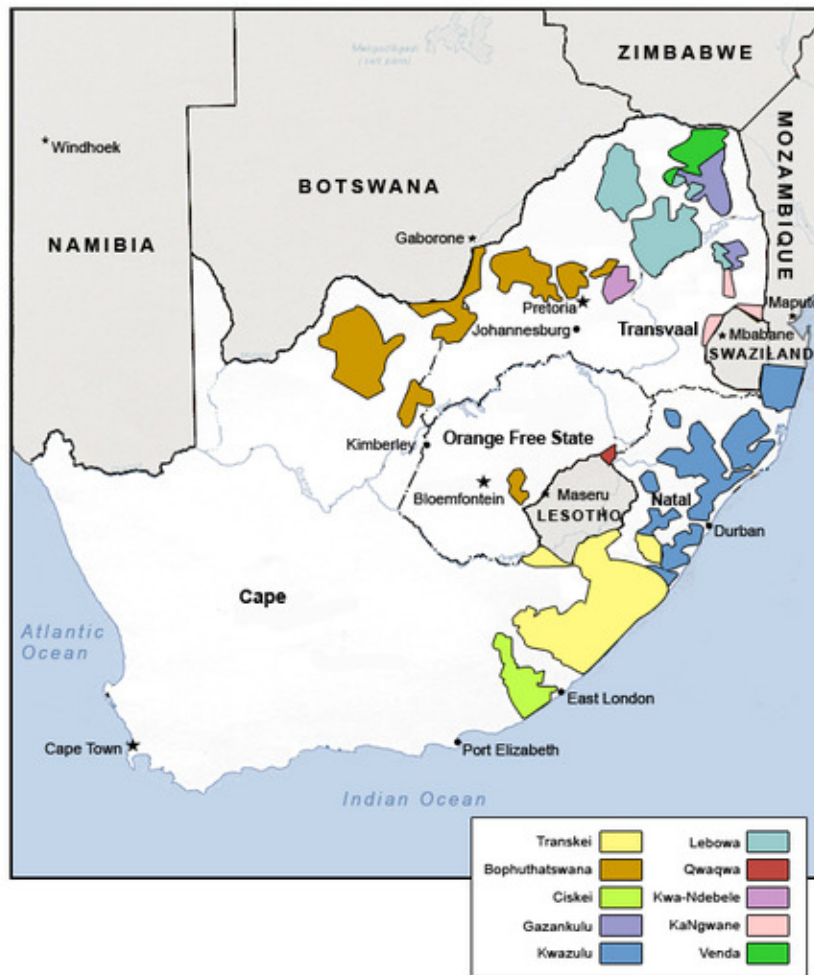
Source: © MATRIX Michigan State University

Urban Informal Settlements: The Growth of Shack Communities

While they are an old phenomenon dating to the arrival of Dutch settlers in the

Western Cape, urban informal settlements first began to experience exponential growth with

the repeal of the influx control laws. These laws, dating most prominently to the 1923 Native

Urban Areas Act, intended to allow a limited number of Africans access to white cities to provide labor, while the majority would be confined to peri-urban townships and the countryside. After coming to power in 1948, the apartheid government passed a series of measures intended to make non-white access to the city even more restricted, while physically confining a majority of the African population to rural Bantustans (Figure 1.1). A series of pass laws severely restricting the freedom of movement of non-white populations were repealed in 1986, in an effort to prolong the apartheid government's hold on power by realizing one of the central demands of the anti-apartheid struggle. Instead, it led to a dramatic peak in rural-to-urban migration with Africans setting up shacks in any open land they could find on the outskirts of the city or even within its very heart. In 1984 approximately one million shack dwellers lived in Durban, and by 1988, two years following the repeal of influx control, this number had skyrocketed to roughly 1.7 million (Pithouse 2009: 33).

Part of the specific dynamic fueling the growth of shack communities in Durban was the on-going war between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party throughout the entire province of Natal in the 1980s and early 1990s. Often when violence peaked in the countryside or the surrounding peri-urban areas, entire communities were displaced and took up new homes in a shack community further within the heart of the city. "But not all shack dwellers were political refugees," argues Richard Pithouse.

> For example, the new shacks could enable the reunification of families split apart by the migrant labor system. This included families where women domestic workers had been living in their employer's outbuildings. Shacks also enabled people fleeing rural poverty to access the opportunities of the city. Some shack dwellers had been evicted from white farms, while others were in flight from abusive conditions on those farms. The settlements also provided an important safety net for people—especially women, teenagers and sometimes even children—fleeing abusive relationships. They created living space for newly formed urban households and as

many as half the residents of new settlements were already urbanized. Sometimes these were people who had grown up in township houses, and in many other instances they were people who had previously been living in backyard shacks in townships (*ibid*).

We should therefore read the growth of shack communities initially as a broader part of what urban theorists of informality have begun terming "insurgency," (Miraftab 2009) and "quiet encroachment" (Bayat 1997). As "social nonmovements," these processes represent largely successful attempts by poor people to improve their lives by acting largely individually and outside the parameters of formal organizations and state institutions. These actions often occur outside the dominant legal parameters of a given society. "These nonmovements are not based in ideology, nor on organized demands, nor are they coordinated as such. However the collective effect of these disparate actions is to shift the locus of control away from planners and privileged interests and towards those at the margins" (Ballard 2014: 8).

On the other hand, it is important to note that there were also a number of examples of organized land invasions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as a part of official movement attempts to rapidly destabilize a crumbling apartheid regime (Gigaba and Maharaj 1996). Many informal settlements were also born through such formally organized movement processes. Nonetheless, recognizing the key role played by what urban theorists term insurgency and quiet encroachment as a crucial method that poor people relied upon to improve their lives is important because it is a process too often occluded by the dominant categories deployed to understand marginalized communities. "Precisely because of this largely silent and free-form mobilization, the current focus on the notion of 'civil society' tends to belittle or totally ignore the vast arrays of often uninstitutionalized and hybrid social activities which have dominated urban politics in many developing countries" (Bayat 1997: 55).

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Spatial Justice, the Rural-Urban Divide, and Post-Apartheid Housing Policy

Rural landlessness was a key driver of this rural-to-urban migration in South Africa, conceived here as a nonsocial movement. If the apartheid government was successful because of its ability to draw upon a long legacy of centralized despotism in the cities and a decentralized despotism in the countryside, then the anti-apartheid struggle and its eventual ANC government both suffered from a lack of attention to the legacy of this spatially bifurcated structure of power.[13] The focus has remained largely on urban areas, both as sites of potential economic growth and as the principal areas in need of redistributive developmental initiatives. Housing policy has been no exception. The two central pieces of policy in the arena of housing have been the 1994 White Paper on Housing and the 2004 Breaking New Ground. While the evolution of housing policy appears to point to an overall progressive shift within the ANC, broadening the lens of analysis to include the lack of continuity between successive administrations, the low availability of land for housing developments, and urban policy as a whole allows us to recognize why efforts to develop a truly progressive approach to housing in the country have fallen short.

The 1994 White Paper on Housing reflected the extent to which market-based service delivery was to penetrate ANC policy over at least the next decade. The document enshrined key principles such as the right for all South Africans to "a permanent residential structure with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements; and potable water, adequate sanitary facilities including waste disposal and domestic electricity supply" (Tissington 2011: 59). The manner in which the state proposed to realize

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[13] Mahmood Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject* (1996) remains the central point of reference for this formulation. It requires extensive ongoing engagement, with an eye to how the situation in South Africa may have changed since the book's release. Despite my heavy debt to Mamdani's framework, readers familiar with his work may already begin to sense certain points of distanciation from his ideas. I take up the relation between my own study and Mamdani's in the conclusion.

such admirable goals was largely market-based. Rather than the state building homes and transferring ownership to individuals below a certain income, or renting them out at a heavily subsidized rate, the plan was to incentivize private developers to enter the state-subsidized market for low-income housing while providing future home-owners with the start-up capital to access the credit and resources that would enable them to purchase a home within this subsidized market. "The intention was to deliver a 'starter house' (sometimes consisting of building materials, where the subsidy only covered land and servicing costs), which beneficiaries would add to and consolidate over time. This incremental way of achieving the right to housing was related to a key assumption in the policy that beneficiaries would be able to access loan finance, which would be spent on improving the house" (Charlton and Kihato, quoted in Tissington: 61).

Already by the end of Mandela's presidency, this market-based logic had evolved slowly by moving beyond the provision of starter materials towards a more comprehensive promise of delivering completed homes. As a result of being placed lower down on the list of national priorities, the homes that were built were often located on the urban peripheries, where cheaper land was available, but where corresponding services such as roads, electricity, water and sanitation were not readily available, as originally promised in the 1994 White Paper. Additional complaints were raised by housing occupants who were concerned by the dramatic increase in transportation costs for them to commute from distant urban peripheries into the city core where job opportunities were more abundant. The crucial issue of spatial justice was clearly neglected by an overly technocratic approach to housing delivery. "The location and density of affordable housing makes a significant difference to the overall costs and benefits of housing to South African society over time and that housing

that is well-located in urban centers, even though it financially costs much more to build, (due to higher land prices) actually has more benefits for society and costs less over time than does much cheaper housing on the periphery" (62). Indeed, many people who have received a state subsidized house (commonly referred to as an "RDP house", named after the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme) since the end of apartheid eventually sell their homes or decide to rent them out illegally, while choosing to remain in more centrally located informal settlements. As one consultant working on Cornubia for the eThekwini department of housing told me, "There is often times resistance from people that are living in the far south to be relocated here because they live in squat camps because they can find work closer to where they're living. Or they've got a social structure that they're reliant on and they prefer to go with it" (Fedaya Ebrahim, Interview, August 2013).

While the overall delivery numbers might appear impressive, the location, quality, and size of the homes were all problematic, while the manner in which the homes were delivered reflected a technocratic approach that was compartmentalized off from the central issue of land reform in the countryside. Thus, while the ANC boasted of approving the construction of 3 million low-income homes by 2007, the criticisms of the policy's short-sighted, segregated approach to housing are raising a number of important issues, the most glaring of which is arguably unfulfilled promise of land reform. "The government often notes that the backlog is increasing due to rapid urbanization, amongst other factors. It currently estimates the backlog at around 2 million units" (Tissington: 61). The steady growth in a housing backlog, therefore, threatens to undermine any of the temporary gains that housing construction and subsidies have achieved to-date.

A decade after the government penned its original White Paper on Housing, South

Africa was witnessing a massive "rebellion of the poor" with some of the highest rates of

urban unrest in the world (Alexander 2010). In this context, the National Department of

Housing (later renamed the Department of Human Settlements) signaled a comprehensive

shift in policy with the announcement of its "Breaking New Ground" report in 2004. Part of

BNG's shift included a recognition by the ANC that local government should take the

initiative away from the private sector with regards to developmental initiatives. The reasons

for the shift to local government were arguably multiple and complex.

> According to Charlton and Kihato, the reasons for this include a combination of the
> following: a move towards the creation of a strong local state more generally after
> 1999; the political imperative of local government councilors to gain greater
> influence over a visible aspect of state delivery; the need for spatial and
> programmatic alignment with integrated development planning (particularly with
> respect to the delivery of bulk services); reaction to the negative perceptions of the
> white construction industry; a concern for getting the best deal for beneficiaries
> through maximizing the value of the subsidy and perceptions of poor construction and
> abuse by private developers; the withdrawal of private sector actors from low-income
> housing delivery due to tightening environmental regulations; delays in township
> registration and transfer of title deeds; and increasing financial risk. Some saw this
> shift to state control of housing delivery as a positive move that would reduce the
> interest of the private sector in housing and enable a strong, development-orientated
> local state. Others, however argued that the shift was due to the fact that private
> developers had struggles to make profits from low-cost housing projects and wanted
> to be free of such obligations (64).

The new BNG policy emphasized a need for government to focus more on quality than

quantity, while paying greater attention to the process of home allocation rather than the

mere ends of delivery. This was supposed to entail a greater participatory role for

community members most directly affected by housing initiatives, while seeking to go

beyond the allocation of a set number of homes towards the total eradication of slums by the

year 2014 (66). Ten years later, the problem of slums not only persists, but has grown in

each major metropolitan area of the country. The slum eradication language of BNG was

adopted from the United Nation's own Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Huchzermeyer 2011: 23-46). The MDGs were clearly targeting slums for eradication with the idea of providing alternative accommodation for people forced to live in shacks. Unfortunately, the language of slum eradication was adopted by governments around the world, including South Africa, in a manner divorced from the eventual allocation of housing to those whose slums had been eradicated!

The BNG document also aimed to better integrate the diverse aspects of city planning within the new approach to housing. Economic development, employment, and spatial planning would now be considered alongside housing so as to avoid some of the shortcomings of the earlier approach to housing delivery. Arguably the two key innovations in policy included in the BNG revolved around the emphasis upon local government as the lead actor in delivery and the recognition of *in situ* upgrading as a valid approach to new housing construction. The primacy assigned to local government is intended to represent a shift away from a supply-driven approach where the private sector fills a market gap in low-income housing with a demand-driven approach where municipal governments actively plan the spatial layout of housing initiatives while paying attention to the qualitative nature of housing requirements in their specific locales. The emphasis upon *in situ* upgrading entailed "the recognition and permanent incorporation of informally developed neighborhoods into the city" (Huchzermeyer 2011: 69).

In situ upgrading has long been a central demand of a number of the social movements organized around housing issues, including Abahlali. Longtime Abahlali leader and spokesman S'bu Zikode, most recently rearticulated this demand in an address to the Department of Human Settlements national meeting on upgrading informal settlements in

Cape Town. "There are some cases when residents of a shack settlement might choose

relocation to a nearby and well located site chosen with and not for the residents," admitted

Zikode. "This might happen if, for example, people are living on a dangerous site such as a

river bank or a site with which they are not comfortable, such as a graveyard. However in

most cases people prefer *in situ* upgrading to relocation" (2013). Yet the fact that BNG

incorporated movement demands for a marginalization of the profit-motive and a recognition

of the need for *in situ* upgrading in its new policy has born little practical fruit in the actual

implementation of housing developments throughout the country.   This is best encapsulated

in the city of Durban through the municipality's flagship housing development for the poor,

Cornubia.

Post-Apartheid Housing 2.0? The Case of Cornubia

Cornubia is located in northern Durban, just beyond the city's old pre-1994

boundaries.   The area is now firmly within the post-2001 expanded Unicity, the eThekwini

Metropolitan Area. The settlement lies approximately three kilometers inland from the coast,

and is wedged in between the N2 and M4 highways. The roads serve as natural barriers

between Umhlanga, a predominantly white middle and upper class community to the south-

east, Mount Edgecombe, a golf course and gated community to the south, and the historically

Indian township of Phoenix and the Indian community of Verulam to the West and North.

Located at the intersection of these various communities, and as a development initially

geared towards the needs of the city's poorest residents who are almost entirely African,

Cornubia—at least according to its planners—offers the potential of contributing to a broader

effort to desegregate South African cities. As part of this effort, the importance of the

expansion of municipal boundaries to include Umhlanga cannot be overstated. As I argued

earlier, this allows the municipality to capture both the tax base of an otherwise runaway white community, while harnessing the location of Umhlanga—the largest shopping mall in the entire city is situated here—as part of a broader economic growth pole to provide nearby economic opportunities for future residents of Cornubia.

When Mayor Mlaba first announced plans for the housing development in late 2005, he proclaimed that the land required for housing would be obtained based on a mutual understanding with the land owner, Tongaat Hulett, the largest sugar cane company and property developer in the area. Initial press reports and statements by employees of Tongaat made it appear as though there was already a comfortable agreement between the ANC-dominated municipality and the property arm of Tongaat that controlled the land, known as Moreland until 2010. "The land is owned by Moreland Developments, part of the Tongaat-Hulett Group. Moreland is in full support of the project and recognises the land is 'uniquely positioned to make a key strategic contribution to the consolidation and integration' of the area" (Verwey: 1). And yet it is clear that the relationship between the two organizations remained far from cordial as the project progressed. The main group articulating opposition from the start was the Democratic Alliance (DA), the largest opposition party in local and national politics. "The DA's Lyn Ploos van Amstel said she was "outraged" at the plan because it had not been put to council. 'The mayor has bypassed the council and he has to know that this plan is going to be controversial as it is going to affect property prices in bordering areas,' she said" (*ibid*). The base of the DA is rooted historically in white liberal communities who supported the Democratic Party, operating uncomfortably from within the apartheid government but against the ruling National Party. In 2000, however, the Democratic Party became the Democratic Alliance after it merged briefly with the New

National Party, a reconfiguration of the old apartheid stalwart. Since 2000, it has worked tirelessly to dispel the image that it is a predominantly white party, representing the interests of a minority group clinging to the vestiges of apartheid-era privileges. It has been most successful, however, in carving out support from Coloured and Indian constituencies nationally, dividing the coalition around a broadly defined 'blackness' that dated to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. The Western Cape has been its strongest support base, the very province that contains the least number of Black ("African") residents.

The DA has grown largely through a discourse of individual responsibility and the necessity to downsize the supposed nanny state the ANC has created. It should be understood therefore as even more thoroughly supportive of neoliberal policies than the ANC. It also uses the accusations of corruption against many ANC members to claim that it would fight for a clean and transparent government. The reality of their support base, however, means that it should be viewed as an even stronger supporter of white capital in the country than the ANC, which has also tried hard not to endanger the interests of the many white dominated businesses throughout the country. A number of the most prominent white firms departed South Africa after the end of apartheid, moving their headquarters to the London stock exchange and in the process gutting the country of a massive source of tax income. Those that remained did so on the condition that the ANC *would not* adopt radical policies geared at nationalizing industries and redistributing land and wealth, particularly across race lines. The ANC has therefore been caught in a bind between cracking down on the legacy of apartheid acquired wealth and the continued necessity to rely upon white capital as a tax base and as a powerful constituency that tolerates their rule even while it denounces them in public.

Tongaat Hulett is precisely one of those firms that acquired its wealth and power in the colonial and apartheid eras, and that the DA defends. So although initial reports on Cornubia stated that an agreement had been reached between the firm and the municipal government led by the ANC, the reality was vastly different. Public statements proclaimed Tongaat Hulett's support for the project, but in private the organization was panicking. On August 20, 2008, the front page of *The Mercury* newspaper read "City threatens big land grab," and began an article with the following statement: "The eThekwini Municipality yesterday threatened to expropriate 1,200ha of Tongaat-Hulett Developments-owned sugar cane fields to fast-track a massive low-income integrated housing development near Umhlanga" (Savides: 1). The issue of land expropriation was already in the public eye, in part because of the unresolved nature of the issue in the country, but more prominently because of the ongoing land reform taking place in Zimbabwe, reported on in the South African and western press as essentially an attack on white people. But Tongaat intransigence had apparently led the city to threaten expropriation. "It emerged from a report presented to the municipality's executive committee, and elaborated upon at a subsequent ANC press conference, that councillors are frustrated by the pace of negotiations over the giant development" (*ibid*).

The precise reasons for the lack of progress were revealing; Tongaat was worried by the number of low-income homes the city hoped to place adjacent to the middle and upper income neighborhoods they had already put so much effort into developing. "According to sources close to the negotiations, one of the biggest areas of contention was the municipality's insistence on having 15 000 low-cost houses. Tongaat-Hulett was insisting on a fully integrated development comprising many different land uses, and to do this

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effectively it was necessary to decide on the number of low-cost houses as the development was planned in greater detail" (*ibid*). The language of "integrated development" is particularly interesting here, because it appears to operate as code for supposed racial and class 'diversity,' meaning that space in Cornubia would be created for middle and upper income homeowners, rather than just low-income people. On the one hand, this is part of the trend in public housing to create integrated communities as an ethical project. Inspired by a New Urbanist ideology, the Hope VI public housing plan in the United States operated explicitly under this model, with the problematic justification that poor families would benefit from being exposed to the supposed work ethic and general high morality of middle class families. On the other hand, from a property developers perspective, the insistence upon limiting the number of low-income homes is part of a broader profit-driven strategy to not drive general home prices down and to create more room in the overall project of Cornubia for off-shoot profit-seeking ventures that Tongaat would be clearly benefit from.

Karen Petersen, who served as project manager of Cornubia for Tongaat Hulett between 2006 and 2012, made it clear to me that the municipal government and Tongaat were at loggerheads in the early years of the initiative. "There were expropriation threats. They [municipal government] said, we're keeping all the best land, you got it through bad means, it's the people's land" (Interview, July 2013). Petersen acknowledges the historical backdrop to the conversation, and the sense that Tongaat acquired its land at a time when it was extremely difficult for non-whites, and impossible for Africans living outside Bantustans, to own land. The reference to the "people's land" harkens back to the Freedom Charter adopted by the ANC at the Congress of the People in 1955, and which declared triumphantly: "The land shall be shared among those who work it! Restrictions of land

ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger." The charter even included a provision on land rights acquired through occupation, proclaiming "all shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose." The ANC is thus able to periodically draw upon this unfulfilled agenda of the anti-apartheid struggle, although it is one they have been equally complicit in abandoning.

Tongaat employee Petersen explained why the firm was so worried about loosing their land. "Remember, they were going to expropriate. This would have been over a billion Rand. Even the agriculture and the sugar cane is worth millions sitting in the middle of the city. Our benchmark is 1 million rand a hectare, un-serviced, un-zoned" (*ibid*). The open reference to the full market value of the land should not surprise us. The number one concern of Tongaat was clearly the profit potential of the land they owned, not the project to provide poor South Africans with formal housing. And therefore, as a means to avoid losing the land to expropriation, Tongaat eventually came to the table with an alternative offer: "So they started in 2008. We decided, look, we can't go through the expropriation, negative publicity, damage to the brand, you know the whole thing…Let's see if we can meet them half-way, we know we want to get rid of some land, we know we want to do mixed use and mixed income…So we decided to sell it off, the first time we've ever done something so big…It's now the single largest real estate transaction in the country" (*ibid*). The open reference to the desire to off-load land together with the expressed concern about negative PR effects that could result as a by-product of forced expropriation represents the fact that Tongaat is almost embarrassed to own so much land because the land was acquired by a white firm first under colonial South Africa and later under an institutionally racist apartheid

government. Thus Tongaat's ongoing agenda includes property development precisely as one way to off-load some of the land they own so as not to highlight the extreme contradiction between the ongoing concentrated wealth held by apartheid-era firms on the one hand, and landlessness amongst Africans on the other hand. While it certainly is a large transaction—totaling 659 hectares—the fact that it remains the largest sale of land in the country is representative of the incredibly slow pace of land changing hands from the historical beneficiaries of apartheid to its historical victims.

The expressed interest in working on a "mixed-use"—commercial, industrial, residential—development is somewhat complicated, given that this could also be interpreted as a strategy by Tongaat to generate even more revenue by selling off land to powerful commercial and industrial firms that would pay a higher rate for properly zoned land than residential developers. Nonetheless, this is also a central aspect of the Cornubia vision, and for good reason. Cornubia represents an overall shift in the national housing strategy following the Breaking New Ground policy of 2004. Under BNG, "for the first time, housing policy enabled a municipality…to quantify its cost and to apply for the relevant amount of funding for land purchase, land rehabilitation, introduction of services and provision of basic social and economic facilities" (Huchzermeyer 2011: 116). This represented a shift away from the compartmentalized approach to plopping down public housing in the urban peripheries as a supposed solution to homelessness and informal settlements. Instead, the new policy was intended to address the fact that human settlements required an integrated approach that took into consideration the fact that people chose to live in particular areas because of access to services and income opportunities. Cornubia's mixed-use approach would represent one attempt to provide a number of services and

employment opportunities on-site, and should therefore be seen as a positive step in the evolution of a national housing policy that understands the developmental concerns of economic growth as socially and spatially intertwined with quality of life issues regarding formal housing. As Fedaya Ebrahim, a consultant for the Durban municipality's housing department, told me, "previously the poorest in the poor were dumped in any land that they could find. More often than not it was land that was out of the CBD [Central Business District] or away from housing, away from economical opportunities, so it created hardship for people. Besides just having a housing project, there was no social facilities, no schools, no sports facilities, no retail opportunities, things like that. So Cornubia seeks to address all of that" (Interview, August 2013).

But Tongaat's representatives within the Cornubia project were not shy about admitting where their own interests lay with regards to their informal partnership with the municipality. Not only was it clear from Petersen's remarks that the profit-motive remained the firm's primary objective, other issues emerged in our conversation that painted an even more problematic picture of the organization playing a central role in one of South Africa's flagship public housing initiatives. Because Cornubia is an unofficial partnership between the firm and the municipal government, roughly half the land remains under Tongaat's ownership, which they will prepare for sale to industrial and commercial buyers, as well as for middle or upper-income residential developments. Pointing to the half of Cornubia land that was sold to the city, Petersen commented, "This land here isn't the greatest. So it started off, so we got willing buyer, willing seller…So this land went for 725,000 Rand per hectare. It's not the best, it's shitty land." Petersen was frank in her admission that Tongaat had pushed the worst land into the city's hands, and that they received their value's worth at full

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market rate for the sub-par land intended to be the site of low-income houses for shack dwellers. "Willing buyer, willing seller" is the term the ANC adopted for the land reform plan that was never really land reform. It amounted to a policy based entirely on free market principles. If someone wanted to sell land, and they found a willing buyer, then land could exchange hands. Such a policy of land reform is effectively absent any genuine reform.

Despite the origins of the development in a massive market-rate transfer of wealth from the government to a private firm in exchange for "shitty land," the project's sheer scale and ambitious plan still attracted national admiration. Cornubia is the "largest greenfield, mixed-use, mixed-income project in, we say in the country, but probably in the province…It's a presidential lead project now, and it won the best priority project in KwaZulu-Natal." The focus on Cornubia results not only from its attempts "to address the legacy of apartheid planning," as Petersen claimed. It has garnered attention first and foremost because it seeks to address the plight of shack dwellers on a massive and all-encompassing scale. The years of Cornubia's birth corresponded with national attention given to slums in part because South Africa was preparing to host the 2010 World Cup and the government became self-conscious about tourists viewing slums as a blight on an otherwise pristine landscape. The discourse on slum eradication was adopted, and Cornubia was initially intended to form a part of that initiative. As Petersen elaborated, "eThekwini has informal settlements, like any other city. So where were we going to move people? Cornubia can form part of the slum clearance program. It's part of the whole eradication of slums. 2005-2009. They've sort of lost focus now, it's not really the aim any more" (Petersen).

Slum eradication is itself an extremely problematic and ambiguous discourse, in large part because it often results in wholesale displacement without the provision of alternative housing. The panic in the lead-up to the World Cup even led the province of KwaZulu-Natal to pass a "Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Act" in 2007. The bill contained a range of frightening mandates, including: requiring landowners to take a proactive role in militarizing their relationship to squatters in order to prevent new slum growth; promising to shift slum dwellers to temporary transit camps for indefinite time periods, reminiscent of apartheid relocation schemes; and ensuring that municipalities play an active role in meeting national rates of slum evictions, without necessarily building proper housing for the slum residents being evicted (Huchzermeyer 204-205). Abahlali baseMjondolo decided to launch an all out discursive and legal attack on this proposed legislation beginning in 2006. Provincial government ignored Abahlali's interventions at every step of the process, and eventually passed the bill in June 2007. The government failed to respond to a written critique submitted by the International Labor Research and Information Group in Cape Town on behalf of community members living in informal settlements in Cape Town, and it ignored an Abahlali delegation sent to the parliament to testify on the bill's problems. The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal took the decision to enact the bill in August 2007, despite additional appeals from Abahlali and a variety of organizations they had mobilized around the issue.

Having already built a strong coalition against the bill, drawing from other shack dweller's organizations locally and around the country, as well as non-governmental groups working around legal issues, Abahlali took their case to the constitutional court. The decision the court took in late 2009, more than two years later, represented a landmark

victory for Abahlali and shack dwellers all over the country. In pointing out internal contradictions in the bill, as well as inconsistencies with regards to existing constitutional rights around housing and evictions, the decision essentially gutted the core components of the bill, disabling it in the hands of KwaZulu-Natal administrators as well as other provincial officials hoping to enact similar legislation. The decision was a tremendous triumph for Abahlali, and represented one of the few successful models for grassroots-led mobilization of middle class expertise while ensuring that those most affected by the legislation remained in ultimate control of the battle with the state.

Cornubia was thus initially framed in this important context, around the most ameliorative components of slum eradication. But as Petersen remarks, despite the fact that Cornubia was intended to be a rare example of actual housing provision for the displaced, this initial intention has "lost focus now." Within the larger context of my conversation with her, it became clear that this statement reflected the fact that Cornubia was slowly becoming a project geared towards economic growth for the region as a whole, part of a 50-year plan to stretch the development northwards all the way up to the new King Shaka airport and beyond. Pointing out the town of Ballito towards the north, 30 km north of Umhlanga and a full 45 km north of downtown Durban, Petersen projected that the Cornubia development would serve simply as a pilot project of a strategically planned economic zone that would "grow all along this corridor, very likely you know in the next 50 to 100 years." This broader initiative would be clearly geared towards the imperative of business, without any clear application to the needs of the roughly 200,000 families in Durban confined to informal settlements. And since Cornubia only promised to build approximately 12,500 homes for this most vulnerable sector of the city, at best it will make a small dent in the overall problem.

Finally, the manner in which the new homes at Cornubia will be allocated is already a matter of disgruntlement. In early 2013, the municipality announced that there never was a housing list. Housing lists are the most common method of public home allocation in the country, and are considered relatively fair because priority is allocated according to the date your name was added to the list. Even this process has been rife with accusations of corruption, something upon which Abahlali has long insisted. Petersen acknowledged the problem in responding to my query about how the homes at Cornubia were going to be allocated. "You've got to be an informal settler where there's a bit of danger and slides or fire or whatever, number one. And you have to earn under 3,500R. I think women, there's certain criteria, women, the widowed, there's pensions, a whole lot of stuff." The announcement that the housing list was going to be abandoned in favor of this even more ambiguous emphasis upon extreme precarity and environmental risk generated great resentment among shack dwellers in the city. Worse yet, the potential for ongoing corruption and clientelism seems to have reached a point of open acknowledgement even by the project directors: "And obviously it's politically driven, you know? ANC says this, IFP says this, DA says this, it's pathetic really. But the ruling party will win, for sure…I wouldn't be surprised if those informal settlements are all sitting in ANC wards" (Petersen).

Social Movements and the Developmental State

The problematic within which movements mobilize in South Africa is clearly far more complex than that proposed by anarchists and socialists revolving around a pro- or anti-statist position. The situation is arguably not as simple as some movements in Latin America sometimes present it: "non-domination" remains a vague and perhaps inadequate goal, at least in the South African context, while socialism from above remains infused with a

multiplicity of problems such as corruption, authoritarianism, and delivery of development as the quintessential modernizing imperative. Similarly, the progressive project cannot be summarized as a battle against the adoption of neoliberalism as the primary enemy. The ANC is arguably an organization that is thoroughly infused with neoliberal logic. And yet its adoption of a developmental state platform in discourse and (limited) practice is perhaps better represented as a form of "variegated neoliberalization" (Brenner, Peck, Theodore 2010) where the project touches down in specific contexts and is altered significantly, sometimes running firmly against the grain of its most dominant ideologies. In this case, while the West has been dismantling housing, South Africa has built over 3 million public homes. The evolution of national housing policy has been a positive thing, and it has included groups like Abahlali sporadically, inviting them to the table at forums to discuss their own vision of public housing in the country.

The developmental state in South Africa as whole should therefore be framed as largely a response to the resurgence of movements from below over the past 10-15 years, most commonly problematized as "new social movements" (Gibson 2006, Ballard et al 2006) or as a "massive rebellion of the poor" (Alexander 2012). Cornubia can therefore be analyzed in part as a response to the movements that have been agitating across the country over the past 15 years. The project has successfully incorporated some of the key critiques and suggestions of both movements and progressive policy advocates over the past two decades. And yet, one of the central dimensions of BNG policy—that public housing should now be constructed based on the principle of *in situ* upgrading—is completely absent in Cornubia. So the claim that the project will be a crucial part of the attempt to desegregate the old apartheid city is somewhat dubious. Rather, as a result of the combined processes of quiet

encroachment and explicit collective mobilization, the informal settlements that have been penetrating the forbidden quarters of the historically white city are perhaps best suited to the challenge of dismantling apartheid's sticky urban geographies.

The form of state power in South Africa is therefore not simply one that movements merely respond to and are shaped by, as Mahmood Mamdani (1996) argued in the context of anti-colonial and post-colonial movements throughout the continent. Rather, state power can also be shaped by the forms of movement resistance that confront it from below. It is doubtful whether the ANC would have felt such a strong need to construct a developmental state absent the consistent pressure of movements like Abahlali. This is especially true considering that the ANC's most serious electoral contender, the Democratic Alliance, consistently promotes a neoliberal discourse, denouncing any attempts by the ruling party to roll out social programs intended to alleviate poverty. Public housing, in the discourse of the DA, operates similarly to the critique issued by Karen Petersen of Tongaat Hulett, who claimed that Cornubia's housing model for the poor is not a project that can endure over the long term. "BNG is good, [it] gives people home ownership. But it's unsustainable, it encourages a culture of entitlement—you know "give me,"—because nowhere in any of the other countries do we have this model."

The developmental state in South Africa might also be understood as a response to a global crisis of capitalism. The parallels between 1929 and 2008 prove to be particularly apt in this case. This is a geopolitical crisis, in part representing the decline of US hegemony. But it is also potentially a structural crisis, regarding the limits of extending credit indefinitely as a way to ensure capital's incessant need for 3% compound growth. One key shift, both pre-2008 but especially since then, has been the rise of the State capitalist

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countries. The rise of BRICS represents both of these tendencies: the geopolitical crisis whereby the US is loosing its unilateral hegemony over global capital, and the response by a variety of actors to the general crisis of capital, taking the form of rebuilding a strong state—with certain social redistributive programs—as a vehicle for ensuring the stability of capitalist growth rates over the long-term. Whether this state capitalist, developmental model will be sustainable remains under question. Cornubia is a project that is just now starting to deliver houses. While it represents a progressive shift in terms of overall housing policy in the country, the way in which the project advanced proves that the ANC's approach to housing and the redistributive components of the developmental state are still plagued by a number of shortcomings, some of which reproduce the very problem they are intended to resolve. None of this should stop us form recognizing that Cornubia can partially be viewed as a victory of movements like Abahlali who placed the issue of housing and land at the center of the national agenda, and has continuously forced the ANC to develop programs geared towards meeting the needs of the most poor in the country.

Which Developmental State?

Exactly what developmental model is being adopted in South Africa is constantly open to debate. The Asian tigers are perhaps the most prominent example that is drawn from, most often because of their export-led growth (Cravey 1998: 3-5). China is commonly seen as the new model for a developmental state in South Africa and elsewhere, despite its own problems with regards to undemocratic institutions, exploitative industries, environmental destruction and rising inequality. The agrarian basis for the Asian developmental states—where serious land reform preceded the developmental takeoff—is

arguably the most neglected feature of a developmental discourse in South Africa.   As

Gillian Hart explains,

> Small-scale Taiwanese industrialists are a direct product of redistributive land
> reforms in the late 1940s and early 1950s that broke the power of the landlord class,
> transformed agrarian relations, and helped to create the conditions for rapid rural
> industrialization. The same is true of Mainland China, where spectacular industrial
> growth since the mid-1980s has taken place largely in villages and small towns. In
> short, redistribution of land and other resources—driven originally by Mao Tse-
> tung's mobilization of the Chinese peasantry in the first half of the 20th century—
> underpinned the massive mobilization of low-wage labor in Taiwan and China,
> operating in effect as a social wage. By the same token, they represent what appear
> as distinctively 'non-Western' trajectories of industrial accumulation *without*
> dispossession of peasant-workers from the land—trajectories that have, since the
> 1970s, fundamentally defined the conditions of global competition (2002: 10-11).

The African experience is even more marginal as a source for comparative developmental

trajectories, despite the examples discussed above of both colonial and post-colonial

developmental states (Marais 2011: 340-342). Most important for our discussion, questions

of social policy are finally rising to the fore of debates regarding the developmental state, as

education, gender, healthcare, equality, redistribution, reproductive labor, and democracy all

emerge as crucial components in rethinking the developmental state model (342-343).

Adequate housing, planned in tandem with broader questions of livelihood, spatial justice,

and participatory processes, can clearly become a central feature of any strong developmental

state. Absent a parallel discussion of land reform, however, the entire discussion threatens to

reproduce the very problems it seeks to solve. The example of Cornubia, planned informally

together with the largest landowner in the area, Tongaat Hulett, risks exacerbating this

problem. If the project enriches and is guided by the very constituency that genuine land

reform might force to cede power—landed white capital—doesn't it risk at least in part

reproducing the very problem it seeks to alleviate in landless and precarious black living

conditions?

Further, the broader model of a developmental state must be re-thought with attention to historical and geographical specificities. Examples from the Asian or European past cannot be cut and pasted into an African future seamlessly.

> The social welfare states of the twentieth century shared three definitive features: machine-based industrial development, which generated powerful, concentrated social forces (chiefly workers' movements and organization of capital) and efficient, relatively predictable state bureaucracies. In combination, these made possible the social compacts that would anchor social-welfare states. These same features eventually characterized the most eye-catching developmental states of the twentieth century. But it is highly doubtful whether they remain a viable basis today. Stereotypes of economic development in the south (especially in Asia but also in South Africa) highlight the manufacturing sector as an engine of growth and source of mass employment. But the proportion of overall jobs created in manufacturing is shrinking—in both the industrialized north and the industrializing south (344).

Most concerning is the fact that the discourse around a developmental state in South Africa seems to have adopted the premise of a Development project as a necessary political platform without ever gesturing towards the crucial critiques of Development that emerged in the 1990s and that eventually adopted a post-developmentalist position (Escobar 1992). Ben Turok, a long-time ANC member who participated in the drafting of the Freedom Charter in 1955 and who remains an MP in the current government, makes no reference to this important body of literature in his most recent overview of the topic, *Development in a Divided Country* (2012). Perhaps the most important nuances in Turok's study, as well as within the overall adoption of a developmentalist discourse in post-apartheid South Africa, concerns the recognition of the challenge of constructing a developmental state in a democratic context, and the necessity to give more autonomy to local government in the elaboration of specific developmental projects. While the former is an important recognition of the differences between the East Asian model of a developmental state and the contemporary South African context, the latter adoption of localism probably represents the

neoliberal fracturing of national scales more than it does the post-developmental turn to debates on place in an effort to give primacy to the local as a site of community autonomy (Escobar 2001).

Arguing that the developmental state needs to be entirely reconfigured in twenty-first century South Africa, Marais puts forward the models of Kerala and Porto Alegre as the most appropriate parallels to be drawn from. The local focus is intriguing, and does correspond to the ANC's emphasis upon local governmental autonomy over municipal development programs. The democratic and participatory basis of both models also serves as inspiring parallels to what Abahlali refers to as their goal of "bringing the state closer to the people". And the broader focus on social justice and autonomy within each model creates space to broaden the discussion beyond the imperative of economic growth rates towards quality of life issues such as housing. Most important for our purposes, "social movements in Kerala and Porto Alegre retained their autonomy from the state (without yielding their influence) and were able to help shape and drive processes of democratic decentralization" (355). Abahlali has clearly operated with a very similar agenda: insisting upon maintaining its organizational autonomy, while refusing to ignore the importance of the state and its corresponding developmental initiatives. But while the actions of the group have clearly been influential in the elaboration of initiatives such as Cornubia, their direct participation and inclusion in the process, especially in the crucial and controversial step of allocating actual homes, has been a neglected feature of the South African experience so far.

But perhaps there are also broader questions to be asked of the resurgence of the developmental discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. A more rigorous theorization of the state itself, and the possibilities for intervention in the state apparatuses, is largely lacking

from the discussion. Here, attention should be given to historical critiques that identified the

Soviet Union not as an oppositional socialist model, but rather as the general form of state

capitalism, and a model for the developmental state broadly conceived (James 1986). In the

1968 preface to the third edition of *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, CLR James

notes: "What is most often overlooked by those who accept entirely or in part the conception

that the Soviet Union and its related states are fundamentally capitalist is that this analysis is

an analysis of capitalist society, not Russian society. The conclusions flowing from this

analysis have the greatest relevance in understanding the United States as well as the Soviet

Union, Great Britain as well as Poland, France as well as China, and, of course, the working

class of all these countries" (xxiv). Antonio Negri, writing in the same conjuncture, laid out

a critique of the rise of this general model of a "Planner State," Keynes's brilliant method for

simultaneously harnessing and containing working class revolt as a constitutive part of the

State-Capital relation, especially following the 1917 Soviet revolution.

> This then, is how we can sum up the spirit of the theory of effective demand: it assumes class struggle, and sets out to resolve it, on a day-to-day basis, in ways that are favorable to capitalist development. If we now take a closer look at the problem at hand, that is, how the experience of 1929 led to changes in the structure of the State, we can see how radical was Keynes' contribution. The transformation of the capitalist State lay not only in the way its capacity for intervention was extended throughout the whole of society, but also in the way that its structures had to reflect the impact of the working class (1994: 45).

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Nielson remind us that the emergence of what Negri terms the

Planner State coincided with "the age of the 'developmental state'… 'Planning' ceased to be

only a 'socialist' concept. It became a magical word of the Cold War decades" (2013: 46).

A key question facing the South African resurgence of a developmental state today

concerns the capability of the state to guide from above—even if through a decentered model

based in specific localities—the process of economic growth together with the social

redistribution of wealth. What will be the continued impact of those forms of resistance from below that Keynes sought to harness and contain through an abandonment of strict laissez faire theory? If formal housing projects such as Cornubia are part of one state strategy to placate and contain working class resistance, then how do we explain the periodic repressive responses by the state to oppositional movements like Abahlali? In attempting to answer this question, we reveal a theoretical impasse between the logics of incorporative inclusion through Development and state planning on the one hand, and the exclusionary impulse of violent repression on the other hand. This debate takes us explicitly beyond the boundaries of state strategies at movement containment and co-option towards a state that proclaims sole authority over the terrain of the political and over the exceptional right to exert force. This is the issue I turn to in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4
PRECARITY, SURPLUS AND SPONTANEITY:
THINKING THE SLUM WITH FANON IN SOUTH AFRICA

The lumpenproletariat, this cohort of starving men, divorced from tribe and clan,
constitutes one of the most spontaneously and radically revolutionary forces of a
colonized people."

<div align="right">

Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 81
</div>

In the political-juridical structure of the camp, he adds, the state of exception ceases
to be a temporal suspension of the state of law. According to Agamben, it acquires a
permanent spatial arrangement that remains continually outside the normal state of
law.

<div align="right">

Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," pp. 12-13
</div>

The manufacture of subjects rather than the genesis of the sovereign: that is our
general theme.

<div align="right">

Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, p. 46
</div>

You see, I say anybody who doesn't have access to the means of subsistence is part of
the working class. So the poor, the marginalized, the surplus population, they all
don't have access to the means of subsistence, and their only possibility for producing
or subsisting is their labor. People who are working and employed are the lucky ones
now in the working class. So the unemployed in the townships are in a similar
position to the landless in the Bantustans.

<div align="right">

Martin Legassick, Interview June 25, 2013
</div>

In South Africa, to think politically is to think racially.

<div align="right">

Grant Farred, "Shoot the White Girl First," p. 55
</div>

For the eThekwini Municipality, democracy means that they are a law unto
themselves and can act in total disregard of the rule of law. The poor are
automatically viewed as criminals even when we act within the law. For those of us
who have organised to defend the dignity of the poor, democracy has come to mean
death threats, torture, arrest, violence and assassination. This has been evident in Cato
Crest in Durban between September 2013 and January 2014. Violence from the ruling
party is worse in Durban than in other cities, but state violence is everywhere in South
Africa. The Marikana Land Occupation in East Phillipi in Cape Town has been met
with state violence just like the Marikana Land Occupation in Cato Crest.

Everywhere in South Africa the state is unaccountable to poor people and tries to control us with violence.

S'bu Zikode, "The Poor are Punished for Demanding our Constitutional Rights"

The question asked by Fanon and Biko (and most modern revolutionaries, but especially so by African ones and their Diaspora) is the role of politics in the context of political formation. In other words, what should one do when the place of discursive opposition has been barred to some people? What should those who live in the city but are structurally outside of it do if they do not accept their place of being insiders who have been pushed outside?

Lewis Gordon, "Biko's Black Consciousness," p. 87

As the global economy struggles to regain pre-2008 growth levels some theorists have renewed debates about a terminal crisis of capital. Others have worked to defy the ideology of austerity as both inhumane and inadequate to restoring economic balance. Yet few are willing to accept what appears to be a potential long-term outcome of the current crisis: long-term unemployment as a central feature of life in many developed and underdeveloped countries alike. The surplus populations no longer merely constitute a reserve army of labor, but in many places, begin to appear to lie beyond the realm of remunerated wage labor altogether (Jameson 2011).

A second, more long-term tendency of the contemporary conjuncture concerns the unceasing expansion of what has been termed "precarious work," for those who are lucky enough to get work at all. Precarity is commonly used as a term for the changes in working conditions within the overall shift from a Fordist regime of accumulation to one premised upon flexible accumulation. A decline in long-term contract stability, the rise of labor brokers, the imposition of intellectual alongside manual labor, the erosion of workplace benefits from healthcare to retirement, and the agglomeration of tasks and skills required of the social worker who replaced the mass worker are just a few central facets of this transition (see, for example, Harvey 1989; Negri 1988). While much of the original literature on

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Fordism and flexible accumulation emerged from work that examined the United States, Europe and Japan, recent studies of the global South have expanded the term to include non-work attributes such as the precarious living conditions found in slums. All of these factors are characteristic of an increased precarity that is defining our neoliberal age of flexible accumulation.

How does one take into account these two pillars of our contemporary conjuncture: surplus and precarity? How might we continue to think the question of the political between the lines of exclusion and differential inclusion? This chapter engages these questions by grappling with some of the central theoretical debates of the past few decades, and by drawing from the empirical examples of historical and contemporary South Africa.

A Tale of Two Deaths

Periodically in recent years, and throughout 2013, South Africans and the world as a whole were held in suspense at the news of Nelson Mandela's precarious health. Every time he visited the hospital, even for a routine check-up, news media would appear at his bedside, as if simply to remind the public of his imminent departure from the world. A man denounced by an apartheid state and by British and US governments as recently as the late 1980s as a terrorist threat had certainly achieved a remarkable reversal of his public image. While the US still had problems getting Mandela off the terrorist watch list—as recently as 2008 he required special state department clearance just to allow an officially designated 'terrorist' to enter the US—Mandela was most often publicly proclaimed a global symbol of peace and reconciliation. Such a disjuncture led then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to proclaim, "It's frankly a rather embarrassing matter" (Dewey 2013).

The contrast could not have been starker. Was Mandela still the moral leader of a group denounced by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as late as 1987 as "a typical terrorist organization"? (Bevins 1996). When he refused to meet Thatcher on an official visit to Britain in 1990 after being released from prison, Conservative Member of Parliament Terry Dicks queried: "How much longer will the Prime Minister allow herself to be kicked in the face by this Black terrorist?" (Bevins 1996). Or was Mandela truly, as George H.W. Bush proclaimed at the same time as MP Dicks, "a man who embodies the hope of millions," (Sullivan 2013) someone worthy of the Presidential Medal of Freedom bestowed upon him by Bush's son, George W. Bush, in 2002?

This controversy behind Mandela's public representation slowly eroded as the decades past, so that by the time of his death at the end of 2013, more world leaders attended his funeral than any other in recent memory. Mandela arguably had at least two public images: the pre-1990 freedom fighting, African Nationalist, Communist-aligned leader of the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the post-1990 patron saint of free market democracy, forgiveness and reconciliation represented in the popular film *Invictus*. This incredible inversion allowed Mandela to become a popularly commodified symbol, claimed by all the major corporations in South Africa in their ad campaigns, eventually taking his rightful place on what Marx called "the universal *confusion* and *exchange* of all things, an inverted world, the confusion and exchange of all natural and human qualities," (Marx 1975: 379, emphasis in original) in his appearance on each denomination of the South African Rand bills. The South African novelist Zakes Mda most fairly captured this ambiguity at the core of Mandela's legacy. "I understand the disillusionment of…young people, although I do not share their perspective. To me, Mandela was neither the devil they make him out to be

nor the saint that most of my compatriots and the international community think he was"
(Mda 2013). Against such opposing views, Mda offered a reasoned assessment of Mandela's
pragmatism, something that at one and the same time offered concrete rewards and
foreclosed radical possibilities. "I see him as a skillful politician, smart enough to resist the
megalomania that comes with deification. I do not think the policy of reconciliation was ill-
advised; it saved the country from a bloodbath and ushered in a period of prosperity. But
therein lies the rub. The distribution of that prosperity was very skewed. South Africa has
never been a place of equal opportunity, and that was reinforced instead of changed by
Mandela's presidency" (Mda 2013).

Mandela is perhaps best thought of as a figure standing in for a surpassed moment in
South African history. If the image of the freedom fighter most closely aligned him with the
anti-apartheid struggle, then Mandela the politician was representative of South Africa's first
transition from 1990-1999. Once he stepped down from power, he continued to represent the
moral fabric of the ANC, something all other leaders in the party could never replicate, but
only hope to benefit from by mere osmosis. The power of Mandela's image led South
African President Jacob Zuma to visit him in hospital in June 2013, when it was widely
reported he was on his deathbed. The resulting photo-op backfired on Zuma, as it was clear
Mandela was so far gone as to not even be aware whom he was posing next to. This led US
president Barack Obama, in the country on a formal state visit, to proclaim that he didn't
require any such photo op. Instead, Obama chose to visit Mandela's prison cell on Robben
Island, one of the central symbols of the anti-apartheid struggle, enshrined in history as a key
site of political tourism during the first transition to democracy in the 1990s.

On June 30, 2013, While Obama wandered the halls at Robben Island, pondering Mandela's life-long struggle and his leadership role in the transition to democracy, a small community in Cato Crest, Durban, was gathering to commemorate another life. Nkululeko Gwala was shot down in cold blood on the night of June 26, 2013, hit with twelve bullets as he walked home to his shack after watching Brazil defeat Uruguay 2-1 in the Confederations Cup match televised at a his local shebeen. Gwala's life and death arguably represented a different moment from Mandela's impending demise. His struggle involved a battle for South Africa's second transition. With formal political equality for all South Africans won, and an electoral democracy operating on the principle of one-person-one-vote firmly in place, the battle had now shifted to economic rights and the broader project of social justice as yet unrealized in the post-apartheid era. And yet the one consistency throughout South African history, whether it was the colonial period, the apartheid era, or the first and second transitions, appeared to be the disposability of poor Black lives. After plummeting from the low 60s to the low 50s between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, life expectancy has slowly begun to rebound since 2007. This is largely due to the successful effort of the Treatment Action Campaign social movement, which has continued to place the issue of HIV/AIDS front and center in South African political debate, winning the right to anti-retroviral treatment. Absent direct intervention by the sick and poor, this victory may not have been achievable.

Beyond the bounds of health and sickness, Black lives are routinely sacrificed as a result of crime, poverty, and even state violence. As recently as August 2012, the world was shocked to witness the South African police force massacre 34 striking platinum miners in the town of Marikana, the majority of them shot in the back. The massacre immediately

drew comparison with the Sharpeville attacks of 1960, when apartheid police opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators, killing 69 people. Workers were disappointed with the official union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and some decided to form a breakaway group, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The owners of Lonmin mine, where the strike occurred, reached out to shareholder Cyril Ramaphosa, a top ANC leader, to help quell the rebellion. Ramaphosa is said to have willingly obliged, encouraging the police to put an end to the strike by any means necessary. In the wake of the massacre, wildcat strikes sprung up across South Africa's many mines, with workers all demanding a corresponding share in the profits of the booming industry. Soon other sectors joined in, including agriculture and the auto industry (Alexander 2013). In late June 2013, just before Gwala's death, Martin Legassick gave me his own assessment of the national balance of forces and how the Marikana massacre had generated a series of internal fissures within the labor movement.

> Martin Legassick: There's two factions in COSATU, …let's call one the NUM faction which is supported by the president, which is very pro-Zuma. And then there is Vavi, the General Secretary who has been very critical of the government and he is supported by NUMSA. NUMSA stands for a very radical economic program: nationalization of banks, mines, monopolies. And says the ANC manifesto has got to reflect those issues or it's not going to support them. Now recently this came to the surface because of Marikana and because of essentially the strike-breaking role that NUM played in the whole Marikana thing which has sort of pushed it into this really defensive position and pro-Zuma and pro-government position, which it had anyway, but it's more overt now…So there are real tensions there, and that links back to the question that you asked which was what?
>
> Yousuf Al-Bulushi: Mandela's looming death.
>
> Martin Legassick: So now the question is, how will the NUMSA faction react to Mandela's death? Everybody will try to claim the legacy of Mandela. DA has been already trying to do that. But whether that will lead to increased support for the ANC or not, there's still a year to go till the elections and it depends what happens, it's unpredictable.

Just as Legassick predicted, the wave of anti-ANC and anti-corporate sentiment finally dealt a blow to the government's tripartite alliance between the ANC, the SACP and COSATU in December 2013. Within weeks of Mandela's death on December 5, the largest union in the country, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), announced its decision to formally withdraw its support from both the ANC and the SACP, calling for an independent worker's movement.

And yet, the murder of Nkululeko Gwala, occurring right in the middle of this year of revolt, led to no such similar national calls for political transformation in the space of informal settlements and everyday life. Gwala had been active as the Cato Crest branch chairperson of Abahlali baseMjondolo. In a meeting I attended on June 9, 2013, Gwala stood out clearly as the organic leader of the one hundred shack dwellers who gathered on the local soccer field to hold a consultative session with Abahlali's central leadership. On this cold breezy day, shack dwellers were hoping to garner some hope in their struggle against displacement in Cato Crest. Earlier that year they had taken over unoccupied and still half constructed rental houses as a protest against their own lack of housing. After being displaced, they squatted on nearby land and built their own shacks. Police were sent in, but refused to take direct action against the community and instead called for Durban Mayor James Nxumalo to intervene as a political mediator between force and occupation. This decision by the police signaled a national hesitance in the wake of the Marikana massacre to get involved in situations that might lead to more violent conflict between the police and protestors. Mayor Nxumalo arrived to address the shack dwellers, and in March began relying upon the mediation of a long-time local community leader named Thembinkosi Qumbelo. At this point, the community had not yet taken a decision to join Abahlali, and

while historically the group had visited the area to consult, Qumbelo was not a member of the group. Qumbelo had been active over the years with a variety of different political parties and NGOs, including the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the SACP, and the National Democratic Convention (NADECO).

Community members decided to occupy the local ward councilor's office, and soon thereafter chased him out of his own residence and the area as a whole. In the wake of these actions, Qumbelo was shot dead while watching soccer at a local bar in the area. At this point, having mentioned Qumbelo's past activity with a variety of political parties, it is important to note that much of the present-day violence in KwaZulu-Natal is overcoded by the historical relationships of violence in the province. Looming largest is the decades-long battle between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC. The IFP was founded in 1975 by the chief of the KwaZulu Bantustan, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and remains under his leadership today. The Zulu nationalist politics of the IFP fell directly into the kind of tribal divisions critiqued by Mamdani (1996) as the central legacy of the colonial era. Colonial powers used tribal authorities as indirect rulers, and thus often propped up certain tribes at the expense of others as a divide and rule strategy. Under apartheid, the Bantustan system was no different, and the relationship between the white nationalist apartheid government and figures like Buthelezi was far from conflictual. Therefore, when the IFP claimed to be an African organization fighting for black people, and came into direct confrontation with the ANC, most participants in the anti-apartheid struggle saw it as a collaborating instrument of an invisible "third force," that is, the white apartheid security state. Most of the violence in the 1980s and in the period between 1990 and 1994 that constituted the formal transition phase from apartheid to democracy took place between the ANC and the IFP.

Heavily steeped in tribal and regionalist politics, however, the IFP nonetheless managed to maintain a strong following amongst the Zulu communities of KwaZulu-Natal. Enjoying some initial success in the early elections of the 1990s, it has nonetheless slowly lost much of its ground since then, most notably with the election of Jacob Zuma as the ANC's first post-apartheid Zulu president in 2009. After splitting into two groups in 2011, with the National Freedom Party breaking off and forming it's own party, collectively the IFP and the NFP won only 4% of the national vote in the 2014 elections, a fraction of its 10% peak in the 1994 elections.

Despite the steady decline of the influence of Zulu nationalist politics as an oppositional force outside the ANC, the discourse of a supposed third force is raised quite often at any oppositional movement against the ANC, as though anyone critiquing the ruling party is being duped or controlled by an invisible white force, a remnant of apartheid refusing to die. This serves the ANC's hegemonic project of silencing dissent, and is a scare tactic intended to strike fear into the public's mind by recalling the very real ANC-IFP violence of the 1980s and 1990s as supposedly an ever-present threat in the current moment. This was precisely the discourse used to denounce S'bu Zikode and Abahlali when the group first emerged in 2005, despite Abahlali's multi-ethnic makeup and their own explicit articulation of an anti-tribalist politics. The violence directed at Qumbelo—a brief member of the IFP—can't be read in isolation from this historical context. It assists us in comprehending the variety of rhetoric thrown around in the lead up to and the wake of the assassination. At the same time, we must avoid falling into the official ANC discourse that merely parallels the two contexts when they are clearly different. It goes without saying that oppositional forces

to the ruling ANC are not all mere stooges of, or even historical remnants of, an IFP-white alliance.

While Qumbelo was never a member of Abahlali, the discourse surrounding his own assassination paralleled that of other attacks on AbM as a movement. AbM is oddly often accused of either being controlled by white intellectuals, or being a remnant of the Zulu Nationalist IFP, or of being a bunch of Mpondo migrants, a group from the neighboring Eastern Cape. Oddly enough, while there are a few key white intellectuals who work with the movement, the most close of these doesn't even live in Durban, and during my entire stay in Durban I never once witnessed their attendance at a single meeting. This alone should lead one to be skeptical about claims of outsider manipulation. The other claims about the organization being either Zulu Nationalist or Mpondo are obviously contradictory, as these two groups are often pitted against each other. In reality, my observations led me to conclude that the group was comprised of multiple tribes and linguistic groups. It is explicitly anti-tribal in its political organizing, but it does not shy away from forming strategic alliances with traditional leaders or other groups. It works tirelessly to transcend the limitations of tribal, racial, or linguistically specific politics in both its discourse and its practice. This is reflected in its diverse leadership, which has members from different tribal groups. Unfortunately, while a decent portion of the shack communities in Durban are indeed comprised of Mpondo migrants from the Eastern Cape, their presence in the city is marginal and therefore in need of more concern rather than xenophobic denunciation. The discourse of a Mpondo menace is therefore an openly xenophobic one, and though Abahlali does not fit neatly into the Mpondo box, it defends any group accused of such an accusation

and recognizes it as a problematic discourse mobilizing the fear of supposed outsiders to detract from legitimate criticism of the local government.

In the months following Qumbelo's assassination, the Cato Crest shack community re-organized, and soon emerged with a new grassroots leader in Nkululeko Gwala. Gwala had been a life-long member of the ANC, once vowing that the only way he would leave the organization would be if he died. But his commitment to the poor led him to denounce the pervasive corruption he witnessed throughout the organization, especially at the local level. This did not sit well with his superiors, and soon he was formally kicked out of his own ANC chapter. In response, he approached Abahlali baseMjondolo, requesting their assistance in mobilizing shack dwellers for the right to land and housing in Cato Crest. Like many other shack communities Cato Crest is located extremely near the city center, providing residents with greater economic opportunities.

The June 9 meeting gathered one hundred shack dwellers, and began with the traditional round of songs to raise spirits and pass the time as people wandered down to the soccer field. Gwala opened the meeting, introducing the theme of the day—how Abahlali baseMjondolo might help in their struggle for houses—and welcoming the delegation from Abahlali's own leadership. S'bu Zikode spoke next, introducing Abahlali as an organization by explaining that it was not an NGO or a political party, but an independent social movement run by and for shack dwellers. TJ Ngongoma followed by speaking about the meaning of South African citizenship, and the new constitution that was approved during the first transition. Ngongoma emphasized that much of what Cato Crest shackdwellers were fighting for was actually enshrined as rights in the constitution, but remained unrealized in practice. He then explained the procedure for forming a branch of Abahlali, and the

inaugural event of hosting a branch launch in a newly affiliated community. Mnikelo Ndabankulu then addressed the crowd on the theme of Abahlali's 'living politics,' a key organizational concept that distinguishes the group from any other political entity. Living politics, he said, entailed being engaged directly in the struggle rather than waiting for intermediaries to solve problems on your behalf, be they politicians, academics or development 'experts'. Ndabankulu explained Freedom Day, a national holiday intended to celebrate the end of apartheid, which Abahlali annually recognized as "Unfreedom Day" by organizing a counter-rally with thousands of its own members from throughout the city. Ndabankulu emphasized the importance of what Ngongoma had said about the constitution, claiming that the ward councilor representing the ANC probably didn't even know the material in the constitution. He spoke of a similar gathering at another nearby shack community when Lindela Figlan, a former president of Abahlali, had challenged the local councilor on the constitution's contents, revealing the politician's total ignorance of the document. In response the assembled crowd erupted in laughter.

Abahlali uses the South African constitution to explain to shack communities how many of the rights they fought for in the anti-apartheid struggle have in theory been won, but are largely unrealized or ignored by the ANC in practice. In this way, Abahlali establishes a continuity in struggle from anti-apartheid to post-apartheid movements. Rather than simply saying that the anti-apartheid movement amounted to nothing—which might lead to despair or depoliticization—the group emphasizes the economic, social and political rights that they *did* win, enshrined in the constitution. This tends to give people hope that those rights might still be realized in practice by working with Abahlali to pressure the government to uphold them while simultaneously mobilizing the community members to organize themselves.

After additional speeches by Abahlali's General Secretary Bandile Mdlalose and President Mzwake Mdlalose, the floor was opened for community members to speak their mind and ask any questions. After three people made statements affirming much of the Abahlali speeches, and expressing strong enthusiasm about joining the organization, Nkululeko Gwala took the floor. He spoke about how shack dwellers didn't respect themselves. Too often, people wanted to keep multiple political options open, and therefore would remain members of multiple political parties at the same time. Alternatively, they would join a protest against the ANC in the street, and the next day, attend a rally in favor of the ANC in an upcoming election. He demonstrated this equivocation by standing with his feet spread far apart, with one foot metaphorically planted in the camp of the ruling ANC, and another foot placed within the space of an oppositional movement or political party. As he continued to emphasize the irreconcilable nature of these two positions, his stance became wider and wider, until he was essentially paralyzed in a quasi-splits position, unable to go lower, but unable to stand up properly without assistance. This was supposed to represent the immobility that results from the inadequacy of a community alliance that refuses to take the unequivocal stance of an openly antagonistic opposition.

Gwala warned people that fighting against the ruling party wasn't easy, and that despite their united enthusiasm in the meeting, they should each take the decision carefully. Once taken, no equivocation would be tolerated. They would have to be willing to oppose the ANC unambiguously until they won the right to housing and a dignified life. More than anything else, what he had taken away from his numerous exchanges with Abahlali organizers was that the group stood for the idea that the poor needed to reclaim their dignity. Dignity was a concept that went beyond the delivery of material goods, although these too

were clearly needed. Dignity entailed recognizing and acting upon the ability of the poor to think for themselves, to determine their own destiny, and to engage in a process of grassroots planning (De Souza 2006). Abahlali's central leadership would therefore not take initiative on the community's behalf. Their role would be merely advisory. The organizational principal of community autonomy meant that each specific local struggle had to take initiative over the precise course of action appropriate to their circumstances. Only then could they claim to have begun the journey of reclaiming their dignity. As a closing thought, Gwala reminded people that no one would be forced to join the new branch of Abahlali. Rather, he insisted, this choice should be made with the utmost level of autonomy and commitment to the struggle, something no one should take lightly.

The community members present then voted unanimously to join Abahlali, and insisted upon setting a date to launch their branch. They proclaimed that in the meantime they would again occupy vacant land as a sign of how seriously they took their struggle, with or without the support of a recognized group like Abahlali. Two weeks later, Gwala led the group in a protest against the corrupt allocation of public housing. The group accused the local ward councilor, Zanele Ndzoyiya, of having won office through illegitimate means according to the ANC's own internal appointment process rather than the community voice. The group's protest along with these two accusations were widely reported it the local press, and Mayor James Nxumalo and the regional head of the ANC, Sibongiseni Dhlomo, quickly called a community meeting at Cato Crest to counter their narrative. At a meeting on June 26, "Nxumalo's main message was that ward 101 shack residents should have lower expectations. Because "land does not expand", they would never be able to satisfy everyone. Even after buying nearby plots, there would not be enough housing for everyone, so some

people would be moved to Cornubia" (ka-Manzi 2013). Over two thousand community members attended the meeting, and the mayor led the crowd in songs that denounced Nkululeko Gwala as a traitor, calling for his removal from the area. Dhlomo, the regional head of the ANC, is reported to have "told the 2,000-strong meeting that Gwala was not wanted in the area and that he "either leaves the area or the community leaves. He must go. He is not wanted here." In a heated 25-minute speech, which was recorded by a community activist and handed to the local Tribune newspaper, Dhlomo said that Gwala should be banished and he should "scrub his heels because he is leaving today" (Moore 2013). Dhlomo was reported to have addressed the mayor, who hailed from the same hometown as Gwala, Inchanga, about an hour outside Durban, telling him to take Gwala back home as soon as possible. Within five hours of this meeting, Gwala's body was littered with twelve bullets. Journalist Faith ka-Manzi summarized the symbolism of the Cato Crest murder as follows: "In recent days, as Nelson Mandela continued to struggle for his life and as Zuma entertained Obama, a microcosm of the ANC's degeneration played out here" (ka-Manzi 2013).

While the shack dwellers of Cato Crest would continue their struggle, occupying land multiple times throughout the remainder of 2013—and significantly naming their new squatter settlements 'Marikana' in an effort to link national struggles—Gwala's murder, like Qumbelo's before him and the death of an unarmed 17-year old girl named Nqobile Nzuzua who was shot by the police in an Abahlali-led Cato Crest protest on September 30 2013, would go largely unheeded in the national media and political scene. Some argue that such incidents are the product of a lack of effective organizational leadership within shack communities, and that absent such structures, the spontaneity of lumpen classes often veers in violent, unpredictable, and reactionary directions (Bond and Mottiar 2013). These deaths

therefore leave us with a number of serious questions. What is the relationship between forms of political struggle on the one hand, and an individual's or a population's disposability? At what moment are shack dwellers rendered superfluous or eliminable? Was Gwala sacrificed in order to save another portion of the South African population (Mitchell 2009), or was he part of a broader process whereby populations racialized as Black are too commonly subject to an extra-economic violence (Sexton 2010)? How to understand the political subjects active in slums in South Africa with respect to the theoretical framing of surplus on the one hand, and precarity on the other?

A Precarious Liberation

Studies of the global city (Sassen 2006) have brought attention to the concentrated power of particular cities within the larger global economy. While a large percentage of manufacturing has been dispersed from the core to the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, power over the flow of goods and information has become increasingly concentrated in cities that operate as financial hubs as well as centers of knowledge and specialized services. Thus, "most of the literature on the global city understands the city form to be the spatial expression of shifts in the geography and structure of the international economy since the 1970s" (Mbembe and Nuttall: 3).

In response to this discourse that privileged northern cities, a plethora of literature has emerged in an attempt to understand the perhaps equally global—even if less powerful— nature of the megacities of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Parallel to the focus on megacities grew a body of work that attempted to understand all cities as ordinary (Amin and Graham 1997, Robinson 2006, 2008). This approach attempts to see all cities as participants in modernity, and highlights the cultural as well as economic and political dynamics that

make them work the way they do. In so doing it attempted to moderate some of the negative ramifications the global city approach had upon policy, where many urban planners in the South sought simply to 'catch up' with New York, London and Tokyo, reproducing the economistic and linear narrative of modernization theory.

Rem Koolhaas has gone even further in suggesting that African cities like Lagos need not catch up with any other city but instead might even provide a model for Northern "global" city inhabitants. Specifically, attempts to navigate the precarious existence that has come to define post-Fordist urban life (Soja 2000) in cities like New York might benefit a great deal from the ways in which everyday inhabitants of Lagos have made their city work under extremely precarious conditions for most of its history (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008). This framework places the issue of precarity front and center in our analyses of global cities of the South.

The dramatic increase in South Africa's urban shack dwelling population (Hindson and McCarthy 1994, Harber 2011), coupled with the consistently high rates of unemployment, would seem to indicate that a large section of the working class has been permanently excluded from the realm of formal production and occupies a precarious position in relation to not only the work-place but also to living conditions and life as a whole. It is important to note that debates about surplus populations in South Africa are not new. In the apartheid era the Surplus People Project took the issue as central to their study of the forced relocations of primarily African communities throughout the country, particularly once the economy entered a period of decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Writing in 1983, the authors of a collaborative report on forced relocations and surplus people in the province of Natal (current day KwaZulu-Natal) state:

As a result of increased capitalization of industry, agriculture and mining relatively fewer unskilled workers are demanded by the economy. The changing nature of capitalist development in South Africa has resulted in an increased demand for skilled workers, hence an attempt on the part of the ruling class to consolidate an urban Black population with a stake in the system, and the determination to rid white South Africa of the unproductive, unemployed, disabled and youth. From surveys and field work it has become clear that there are thousands of people who will never gain access to employment in urban areas and unless they are prepared to work for R1,00 per day on white owned farms, where there may still be some work, they have been made redundant permanently. These surplus people will never enter the wage labor market under the present economic system (Surplus People Project 1983: xv).

Indeed, the official unemployment rate has increased steadily in the 30 years since that report was issued, peaking at around 30% in 2002 before leveling off in the mid 20's in the decade since. Given this historical precedent and the constantly high rate of the past two decades, such numbers do indeed seem to confirm the surplus people's project contention that these groups are no longer best thought of simply as comprising a reserve army of labor (Marx 1976). Such a labor reserve is traditionally conceived as capable of being rapidly mobilized—either against striking workers or when economic booms take place and additional labor power is needed to meet output goals. Instead, as surplus population theorists tell us (Denning 2010), these numbers point to a permanent de-industrializing trend whereby a large percentage of the population has been permanently excluded from capital's circuits, forced to rely upon their own ingenuity or the welfare state in order to survive in an informal economy.

In this context, we might use the term precarity to define the overarching condition of a supposedly liberated society in contemporary South Africa (Barchiesi 2011). Rather than accept as unproblematic the idea promoted by former President Thabo Mbeki that South African society is comprised of two economies—a formal one of stable work and an informal second economy of precarious living and working conditions—Barchiesi chooses to examine the seemingly privileged sector of the unionized first economy in order to highlight the

pervasiveness of precarity beyond the supposedly "excluded" sectors. In so doing, he confronts the central post-apartheid "technique of rule" that he terms the "wage-citizenship nexus". Challenging the idea that South Africa poses for the rest of the African continent a kind of promising future where economic development can provide for basic means of survival and generally improved social conditions, Barchiesi adopts and extends Mahmood Mamdani's (1996) critique of the entire line of "South African exceptionalism." If apartheid can be framed as evolving out of a prior British policy of indirect rule that was the model for—rather than the exception to—so much of the British colonial project elsewhere, then similarly the precarious working conditions that have defined post-apartheid South Africa must be understood as largely mirroring rather than escaping the precarious states of life that have engulfed so much of the rest of the world. And yet, while engaging in a re-theorization of precarity in the post-apartheid moment, Barchiesi is also careful not to sweep away the differences that define the particularities of flexible accumulation in an African context. "African post-Fordism is more about 'out of luck' than 'just-in-time' as the future uncertainties of informal entrepreneurship are grounded in present assets that depend on social networks, chiefly the family, undermined by the same global dynamics that make waged work redundant in the first place" (Barchiesi 2011: 204).

Behind this analysis lies Barchiesi's central attack on the "wage-citizenship nexus." This term frames his entire study of "liberated" South Africa, and it contains a number of different components that are useful in our own attempt to grapple with the political stakes of precarity. "First, the work-citizenship nexus is *a technique of rule* to produce governable social subjects by normatively categorizing the attitudes, behaviors, and proclivities individuals have toward employment" (Barchiesi 2011: 24, emphasis added). In this

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framework, the State, and much of the liberation movement even before it seized power, aligns its conception of the *citizen*—someone who is entitled to rights and services—with the normative idea of the *worker*. Not only did the British and apartheid governments of the 20th century often eschew welfare in favor of the private sector and the ideal of hard work as a solution to all social ills, the African National Congress-led struggle for liberation also often normalized work as the central vehicle for liberation. This historical account refuses the language of a post-apartheid "betrayal" by the ANC by rooting its contemporary shortcomings in a long history of more normative aims centered on the dignity of work.

> The ANC's abandonment of socialist rhetoric and alignment with macroeconomic moderation also highlighted how ambiguous and malleable the discursive relations of work and citizenship have been in South Africa's history to begin with. In few other contexts has work provided such a contested point of intersection for profoundly dissimilar imaginations of the human and the citizen, from the racial state's disciplinary fantasies, to democratic nationalist protestations of universal rights, to ordinary visions of activity liberated from the capitalist workplace. Perhaps the inability of resistance to wage labor to hatch unambiguously alternative meanings of work can help explain why the massive revolutionary forces energizing twentieth-century South Africa were in the end, and with relatively little trauma, reabsorbed in a postapartheid official imagination that centered citizenship around productive economic activity (Barchiesi 2011: 60).

Those who lie beyond the realm of formal work—most of the slum residents in Durban and other major cities in South Africa—are therefore not conceived as complete citizens. Reciprocally, supposedly only by entering into the pact of wage labor can an individual fully realize his or her potential as a citizen in a liberated society. "Second, the work-citizenship nexus is also a contested field of signification involving official discourse, organized labor ideologies, and workers' meanings of work" (Barchiesi 2011: 24). Not unlike the Development project, the work-citizenship nexus operates on the diffused terrain of a discourse—defined here as both ideological and as "a material and political practice" (Barchiesi 2011: 257)—including but going beyond the state institutions to envelop the

imagination of the union movement and workers' own understandings of what it means to be a citizen in a liberated society.

Labor union politics and worker imaginations are both therefore constrained by the work-citizenship nexus and the idea that a job will provide fulfillment of the most central human needs and desires. Radical intellectuals are often equally complicit in limiting their studies of work to the spatial bounds of the factory. "Analyses centered on production dynamics are always at risk of essentializing and naturalizing the workplace as the obviously primary social locale where workers express and enact desire" (Barchiesi 2011: 199). In his critique of this over-emphasis upon life within the factory walls, Barchiesi is clearly influenced by the Italian "Autonomist Marxist" ("Operaismo") conception of the social factory, where the productive capacities of workers are seen to be operable far beyond the factory walls in the space of everyday life. This re-positioning of workers then captures the extent to which the centrality of the work-citizenship nexus must be deconstructed.

While the potentially oppositional force of a strong labor movement has certainly not disappeared—witness the importance of the recent Marikana massacre in setting the anti-ANC agenda—it is certainly true that in the past fifteen years a new oppositional force emerged from beyond the bounds of the factory in the form of 'new social movements'. Abahlali baseMjondolo is perhaps the most active of these new movements, and it emerged from the community setting of shack settlements, rather than from the traditional realm of work-place organization. The dynamics of precarity in the community setting of the slum pose a new set of questions that move beyond work-place dynamics and towards the question of surplus. It is at this juncture between precarious inclusion, permanent exclusion and

revolutionary possibility that the renewed debates about the relevance of anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon in South Africa is taking place.

Fanon in the University, Fanon in the Slum

A few years ago Mary Gilmartin and Lawrence Berg provided us with an appraisal of anticolonial and postcolonial theory in geography, stating: "As geographers both living through and working on, issues of colonialism in former British colonies, the writings that emanated from the anti-colonial movements around the world continue to inspire and move us. From Fanon to Cesaire, from Senghor to Cabral to Achebe, these writings are influential partly because they are grounded in experiences of oppression, but also because they contain alternative visions, alternative understandings of how the world could be better"(Gilmartin and Berg: 120). And yet, they went on to argue, such an appreciation for the anti-colonial cannon was rare in the university. The dominant trend in geography and academia at-large entailed an embrace of *post*-colonial theory that had split itself off from the anti-colonial thought more grounded in struggle. While not being dismissive of post-colonial theory at all, they worried, along with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, that "post colonial theorists 'combat the remnants of colonialist thinking'" and that "Through the use of postcolonial theory within geography, many British geographers have fallen into the trap that Anne McClintock identified over a decade ago: of reorienting the globe around a new binary opposition, that of colonial and post-colonial, of center and periphery, of past and present, of *in Here* and *out There*"(Gilmartin and Berg: 123). How did this come to pass, and how might contemporary Fanonian-inspired thought and struggle in South Africa seek to rectify it?

Frantz Fanon's reception in the US academy is largely still dominated by the political

and theoretical conjuncture of the 1980s and 1990s. As Stefan Kipfer (2007) and Cedric

Robinson (1993) have pointed out, the academic interpreters of Fanon—primarily Homi

Bhabha and Henry Louis Gates—were in part rooted in specific poststructuralist theories of

difference, and thus saw Fanon's explorations, particularly those in *Black Skin, White Masks*,

as revolving around the problematic of identity and a corresponding return to essence. In

what amounts to a troubled interpretation, here the struggles in which Fanon's thought and

ideas were grounded were seen as reflecting an insufficiently critical celebration of violence

and a corresponding return to an essential identity or pre-colonial experience. In its place,

they sought to prop up a Derridean attention to *differance*. As Bhabha explains: "Unlike

Fanon, I think the *nondialectical* moment of Manicheanism suggests an answer. By

following the trajectory of colonial desire…it becomes possible to cross, even to shift the

Manichean boundaries. Where there is no human *nature* hope can hardly spring eternal; but

it emerges surely and surreptitiously in the strategic return of that difference that informs and

deforms the image of identity, in the margin of Otherness that displays the image of identity"

(Bhabha: 192).

In a 1994 article titled "The Post-Colonial Aura,"—later expanded into a book—Arif

Dirlik provided us with an early critique of post-colonial theory. In a controversial

formulation, Dirlik stated that "the popularity the term *postcolonial* has achieved in the last

few years has less to do with its rigorousness as a concept or with the new vistas it has

opened up for critical inquiry than it does with the increased visibility of academic

intellectuals of Third World origin as pacesetters in cultural criticism" (Dirlik: 329). Setting

aside the potentially racist undertones to this argument—something Hardt and Negri are

careful to distance themselves from in their own critique of postcolonial thought—it is worth taking seriously the philosophical target of Dirlik's argument. While he acknowledges the difficulty of lumping together seemingly diverse theorists such as Said, Spivak, Guha and Bhabha into one uniform category called "post-colonial," one senses he is really interested in attacking a specific strain of thought behind much of postcolonialism. Philosophically, it is poststructuralist concern for heterogeneity and difference that underlies much of the postcolonial thinking that he is most concerned with. His most salient critique, however, was that this current sought to destabilize the binaries traditionally associated with Western thought, modernity, and capitalism. And yet, according to him, global capitalism now operates in such a way that it necessitates incorporating difference, rather than merely excluding it through binary oppositions. Thus Eurocentrism can only continue to exist by adopting and subsuming (and thus transforming) alternative frameworks and traditions. As just one example of this Dirlik cites the case of the renewed interest in Confucianism by both Chinese *and* Western scholars. "In their case, the effort takes the form of articulating to the values of capitalism a Confucianism that in an earlier day was deemed to be inconsistent with capitalist modernization. Hence Confucianism has been rendered into a prime mover of capitalist development and has also found quite a sympathetic ear among First World ideologues who now look to a Confucian ethic to relieve the crisis of capitalism" (Dirlik: 341).

A similar formulation is found in David Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity*, whereby much of what arrived under the name of postmodern criticism was in fact symptomatic of a general condition of late capitalism, dominated by the very same flexible accumulation responsible for generalizing the condition of precarity. Hardt and Negri also

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provide a corresponding critique of this postcolonial celebration of difference: "When we begin to consider the ideologies of corporate capitalism and the world market, it certainly appears that the postmodern and postcolonialist theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power. Power has evacuated the bastion they are attacking and has circled around to their rear to join them in the assault in the name of difference. These theorists thus find themselves pushing against an open door"(Hardt and Negri 2000: 138).

Fanon can be read, in contrast, to offer both a different terrain for attentiveness to difference and the possibility of grounding anti-essentialism in actual struggles, following Sylvia Wynter's emphasis (2001), through his stressing of the "socio-genic principle" that refuses to ontologize the conditions of colonization, dependency, or psychological complexes. Fanon instead situates these conditions in the environment of their social conditions: the 'situation' of colonialism. Furthermore, as Paget Henry has demonstrated (2001: 117-143), Wynter's work, and her engagement with Fanon, avoids the sometimes problematic dichotomy—that Dirlik might be accused of reproducing—between a pure commitment to the radical political praxis of the Marxist tradition on the one hand, and the intellectual emphasis upon anti-essentialism and a renewed attention to difference inherited from post-structuralist and post-colonial thought on the other hand. Nonetheless, Fanon's own deployment of the socio-genic principle should be viewed as offering a critique of those forms of anti-racism that do not take into account a rising cultural racism, or neo-racism, that in fact celebrates rather than simply condemns difference—the post-apartheid government's appropriation of the term "Ubuntu" would be a prime example here. Such a framing of the

problem of racism sidesteps much of the more ambiguous post-structuralist and post-colonial celebrations of difference. This is clear in certain passages in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he says: "There is a quest for the Black man. He is yearned for; white men can't get along without him. He is in demand, but they want him seasoned a certain way. Unfortunately, the Black man demolishes the system and violates the agreements. Will the white man revolt? No, he'll come to an arrangement. This fact…explains why so many books dealing with racism become *best sellers* (Fanon 2008: 153)."

He follows a similar line of thought in the essay "Racism and Culture," in the collection *Toward the African Revolution*, where he argues: "For a time it looked as though racism had disappeared. This soul-soothing, unreal impression was simply the consequence of the evolution of forms of exploitation…The need to appeal to various degrees of approval and support, to the native's cooperation, modified relations in a less crude, more subtle, more 'cultivated' direction. It was not rare, in fact, to see a 'democratic and humane' ideology at this state…Thus the blues—'the Black slave lament'—was offered up for the admiration of the oppressors. This modicum of stylized oppression is the exploiter's and the racist's rightful due. Without oppression and without racism you have no blues. The end of racism would sound the knell of great Negro music"(Fanon 1967: 37). This formulation at once introduces us to the intricate terrain of neo-racism (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991), while it also identifies a potential double relation to the **"**zone of non-being" that Fanon discusses as *both* a site of absolute dereliction, and also as the place for the possible emergence of something new. The zone of non-being and the call to enter it, to *descend* into it, as he says, opens the dual possibilities of slumming, as well as a potential passageway to revolution.

In contrast to the academic reception of Fanon under the wings of theories of difference and anti-essentialism, the contemporary surge in Fanonian scholarship in South Africa over the last decade has occurred in a very different situation. If the 1980s in the US represented a singular moment of utter defeat, the 2000s in South Africa were doubly marked by "the Pitfalls of South Africa's Liberation" on the one hand, and the emergence of a plethora of movements throughout the country on the other. This reflection on Fanon has also witnessed a corresponding attempt to identify the proper inheritors of Fanon's thought in South Africa, both historically and contemporarily.

In this context, Gillian Hart draws on Fanon to resist the idea put forward by critics like Patrick Bond that the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa, or from a Fordist to a neoliberal state, represents a mere switch from racial to class apartheid. Rather, against the idea of neoliberalism as simply constituting a class project, she insists upon an attentiveness to the persistence of race in the post-apartheid moment through "specifically racialized forms of dispossession"(Hart 2007: 686). Hart wants to show that resistance cannot and will not necessarily follow in the line of the pure economics of exploitation, but rather also depends at least as much on everyday, popular notions of what constitutes a nation and liberation.

This refocus on the parameters of resistance in a post-apartheid South Africa brings us back to Fanon's idea of a "descent" discussed in the preface to *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he states "There is a zone of non-being, an extraordinary sterile and arid region, an incline stripped bare of every essential from which a genuine new departure can emerge. In most cases, the Black man cannot take advantage of this descent into a veritable hell"(Fanon 2008: xii). In Chapter 5 and 6 of the book, especially, Fanon engages in a dialogue with both

Cesaire and Sartre, whereby he attempts to go beyond both positions that the two thinkers present to him, while at the same time highlighting their important contributions to his own project. These chapters are full of references to this "descent," of which Negritude represents one important but flawed example due to its celebration of a Blackness that too often gets caught in a mythical past, or merely inverts the racist lens by affirming the categories that Europe denigrates. Nonetheless, Fanon tells us, Cesaire's work represents one attempt at this descent, and he claims that: "When the Black man plunges, in other words, goes down, something extraordinary happens." (Fanon 2008: 174)

In these chapters he seems to tell us that in place of an insufficient Negritude, but also in place of Sartre's universalizing class analysis, something like "Black consciousness" might stand out as an alternative. "Still regarding consciousness, Black consciousness is immanent in itself. I am not a potentiality of something, I am fully what I am…My Black consciousness does not claim to be a loss. It *is*" (Fanon 2008: 114). This particular passage is crucial in the South African context, where, as Andile Mngxitama, Amanda Alexander and Nigel Gibson (2008) have shown, Steve Biko would read Fanon and go on to establish the Black Consciousness Movement that in the 1960s and 1970s would fill the political vacuum of an exiled ANC and SACP, while also challenging the remnant white normativity of those movements by tackling the paternalism of white allies in the anti-apartheid struggle. The definition of Blackness that Biko deploys is a similar example of an anti-essentialist and political framing of racial categories in that it applies to Africans, Indians and the Coloured community alike. But it does not merely accept this grouping of non-whites as constituted through racism, but rather distinguishes the idea of non-whites from Black consciousness as an affirmative political project that parallels Fanon's own insistence upon affirmation. Biko

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says: "Being Black is not a matter of pigmentation—being Black is a reflection of a mental attitude…From the above observations therefore, we can see that the term Black is not necessarily all-inclusive; i.e. the fact we are all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *Black*…If one's aspiration is whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment of this impossible, then that person is a non-white…Black people—real Black people—are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man" (Biko 1978: 48-49). As Eunice Sahle notes in her assessment of the anti-racist tradition in South Africa, Biko's conception of Blackness opened up space for broader political alliances in the anti-apartheid struggle. "The new notion of Blackness provided an important mobilizing ideology for the oppressed. In addition to broadening the category of Blackness, he created a significant 'political opportunity structure' for Africans, Indians and Coloureds to create organizational networks committed to the dismantling of the racist apartheid system"(Sahle 2012: 17).

Alongside the figure of Steve Biko as an historical inheritor of Fanonian thought and praxis in South Africa, Achille Mbembe has identified the writer, actor and playwright Bloke Modisane, an original founder of *Drum Magazine* and the author in exile of the autobiography *Blame Me On History* (1987). In the opening lines of this text, Modisane tells us of the experience of watching his community of Sophiatown destroyed at the hands of an apartheid state bent on total separation of the population into racial districts: "Something in me died, a piece of me died, with the dying of Sophiatown…In the name of slum clearance they had brought the bulldozers and gored into her body, and for a brief moment, looking down Good Street, Sophiatown was like one of its own many victims; a man gored by the knives of Sophiatown, lying in the open gutters, a raisin in the smelling drains, dying of

multiple stab wounds, gaping wells gushing forth blood; the look of shock and bewilderment, of horror and incredulity, on the face of the dying man" (Modisane 1987: 1, quoted by Mbembe in 2011 talk).

Modisane's reflection upon the destruction of his built environment as a destruction of his self, parallels the slum conditions inhabited by Abahlali members where the actual built environment of such zones of non-being offer *both* a path into nothingness, but also the raw material for the potential production of other lives and futures. Sophiatown, Modisane's home, is a good example of this in that, despite its poverty and suffering, it also produced tremendous cultural and theoretical works of art such as DRUM magazine and township jazz, all while making up a part of the striated space of apartheid. Here we must navigate the tension between the zone of non-being as what Frank Wilderson—drawing from the work of Orlando Patterson—has referred to as social death (Wilderson 2007: 28), and the zone of non-being as a space of already existing alternatives to the given which require intensification through the non-hierarchical process of political organization articulated by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Navigating this tension is precisely what the shack dwellers of Abahlali are seeking to do in articulating their organizational relationship to intellectuals in their elaboration of the concept of "living politics." This practice of living politics is one that forces intellectuals to engage with their project on a horizontal plane of participation rather than through paternalistic guidance. The representation of their spaces as zones of non-being, while accurate in terms of the utter squalor of squatter life, can also lead to the idea that intellectuals and militants must lead the inhabitants of such areas in the struggle. At the same time, the call by Fanon for intellectuals and development experts to descend into the zone of non-being can lead to an unhelpful and voyeuristic practice of

slumming. Here shack communities can be put on display for slum tourism stops,

incorporated into capital's exploitative circuits through a process of differential inclusion

(Mezzadra and Nielsen 2013). They can also become sites for biopolitical savings programs,

geared towards collectivizing the poor's entrepreneurial capabilities. Cato Crest in Durban

was in fact the site of precisely such a program under the leadership of the transnational

Shack Dweller's International organization.

Both potential pitfalls in relation to their inhabitation in the zone of non-being are

taken up by the shack dwellers in their reflection on Fanon's work in an attempt to insist that

the path to the new does indeed lead through the zone of non-being. Yet they insist this path

must be one that forestalls any deviance into the paths of social death or slumming

articulated above. As we will see, Fanon had these problems firmly in mind in his own

reflections, and his advice to intellectuals and political militants is entirely compatible with

the shack dweller attempts to maintain their organizational autonomy in relation to

collaborative projects with intellectuals through a practice of living politics[14].

From Non-Being to the New: Spontaneity and Beyond

In chapter two of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon discusses the "Grandeur and

Weakness of Spontaneity." The chapter, like the book as a whole, represents Fanon's

attempt to assess the different class forces at play in the anti-colonial revolts of Africa,

parallel to Marx's class analysis of the events of 1848 in France roughly one hundred years

earlier. Fanon was an official member of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), but

he also travelled and spent time in many different African countries throughout the 1950s,

witnessing the plethora of struggles on the continent seeking self-determination. This

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[14] See Sahle 2014 for a parallel reflection, drawing on Gramsci, Biko, and the neglected role of South African
women such as Fatima Meer who struggled as both liberation fighters and intellectuals.

experience allowed him to provide a diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the different struggles for national liberation and their attempts to forge a national consciousness distinct from their prior identity as mere territorial extensions of Europe. Impressively, this 1961 study foreshadows precisely the problems of post-independence that would only become clear to others in retrospect. Most particularly, he targeted the nascent African national bourgeoisie, predicting it would betray the popular classes who sacrificed so much in their various struggles against European colonizers.

Fanon believed the African national bourgeoisie held specific interests that bound them to centralized political parties that would ultimately stunt the liberatory power of the anti-colonial movements. His critique of political parties foreshadows the decision by groups like Abahlali to break with the ANC and other formal political organizations and to abstain from voting. "The formation of the nationalist parties in the colonized countries," Fanon states, "is contemporary with the birth of an intellectual and business elite. These elite attach primordial importance to the organization as such, and blind devotion to the organization often takes priority over a rational study of colonial society. The notion of the party is a notion imported from the metropolis"(63-64). Interested more in their own survival than in genuine societal transformation, the national political parties can easily become conservative impediments to revolutionary change. Indeed, S'bu Zikode asserts that the ANC plays precisely this roll in Durban. "The ruling party has worked hard to make sure that housing is only allocated to its members and their friends and families and to exclude those who are critical of them as a punishment. Evictions are political; only those who are not loyal members of the ruling party are having their homes illegally destroyed without court orders" (2013).

Just as Marx saw the French bourgeoisie giving up its commitment to republican political power in order to allow Bonaparte to save their economic power, Fanon sees the national bourgeoisie in newly independent countries as sacrificing the radical political goals of the anti-colonial revolutions in order to maintain their limited economic power as lackeys for Europe in a neo-colonial arrangement. Where, then, would genuine transformation emerge from, if not from the mouthpiece of the independence parties?

Marx's own assessment of the revolutionary potential of 1848 sought out amongst the potentially radical groups a class that was capable of representing itself. As Edward Said and other post-colonial scholars never tired of reminding us, this unfortunately entailed denouncing the peasantry as too disjointed and unable to represent itself due to its spatial dispersion. Similarly, Marx saw the lumpen proletariat classes of France as too easily manipulated by Bonaparte. It is from *The 18th Brumaire* that many orthodox Marxists get their classic lines about the lumpen as the "refuse of all classes"(1916: 75). For him, only the proletariat, concentrated in urban settings and already used to cooperating for capital under single factory rooftops, was capable of representing itself at that historical moment.

Fanon's diagnosis, like Marx's, attempts to identify precisely that class which is capable of representing itself. But unlike Marx, he views the urban proletariat and their workers unions as relatively conservative forces. "It has been said many times that in colonial territories the proletariat is the kernel of the colonized people most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic urban proletariat is relatively privileged. These elements make up the most loyal clientele of the nationalist parties and by the privileged position they occupy in the colonial system represent the 'bourgeois' faction of the colonized population"(Fanon 2004: 64). Thus the urban proletariat under colonialism not only would

shy away from the most radical forms of action in the interest of protecting their relatively privileged wages, they also eluded a form of self-representation by allowing the equally conservative national parties to act politically on their behalf.

Fanon instead looks to the peasantry and the lumpen classes in the transition from colonialism to independence as those classes most likely to provide the radical edge needed to drive the struggle forward. All over Africa Fanon witnessed forms of spontaneous struggle, often but not exclusively violent, that emerged outside the grasp of the formal models of organization represented by the political parties and worker unions. The response of these traditional Left organizations was often to denounce these events as extremist. "Insurrection disorients the political parties. Their doctrine has always claimed the ineffectiveness of any confrontation and their very existence serves to condemn any idea of revolt. Certain political parties secretly share the optimism of the colonists and are glad to be no part to this madness which, it is said, can only end in bloodshed"(Fanon 2004: 79). Against this model, Fanon saw this period of spontaneous revolt as an initial stage that had to be celebrated by those members of society who truly hoped to overthrow the colonial model, both in its original form and under its later, neo-colonial guise. But he also saw that the revolts would reach a point where they would bring on a horrific crackdown by the colonial/state forces trying to restore order. At this point, they reached a kind of breaking point, beyond which a pure, immediatist spontaneity could go no further. "It soon becomes clear that this impetuous spontaneity, which is intent on rapidly settling its score with the colonial system, is destined to fail as a doctrine"(Fanon 2004: 85). The second stage of the struggle, then, had to bring about an encounter between those actors experienced with and seeking to provide organization, and the peasantry classes of the countryside as well as the

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lumpen classes gathered along the urban peripheries. For Fanon, this encounter was made possible by those militants who had abandoned urban politics (in the form of political parties), and who now "rediscover politics" (Fanon 2004: 86) in the recognition that the people's army needs organization and education if it is to triumph.

This may seem like a re-introduction of a traditional Leninist model of organization, one that cannot help but clash openly with the form of spontaneous revolt Fanon has just been advocating as part of the initial stage of struggle. But here he adds a crucial caveat that often goes unnoticed. For Fanon, the encounter between urban militants and intellectuals who have abandoned their political parties, and the rural and peri-urban forces is one that must be premised upon a total humility and re-education for the urban militants and intellectuals themselves. Such an encounter can only succeed if "the colonized intellectual *who is lucky enough* to bunker down with the people during the liberation struggle" does not come simply bearing the gift of knowledge to the marginalized masses, but instead comes with a humility that recognizes the necessity to learn, more than the necessity to educate (Fanon 2004: 12, my emphasis). "Involvement in the organization of the struggle will already introduce him to a different vocabulary. 'Brother', 'sister', 'comrade' are words outlawed by the colonialist bourgeoisie because in their thinking my brother is my wallet and my comrade, my scheming….This colonized intellectual, pulverized by colonialist culture, will also discover the strength of the village assemblies…In such a context, the 'every man for himself' concept, the atheist's form of salvation, is prohibited" (Fanon 2004: 12).

Clearly, in this context, the urban militants and intellectuals who choose to abandon their political parties in favor of direct action with the more marginalized sectors of their society must learn more from these sectors than they can possibly share, both in terms of

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everyday modes of social interaction that attack a privileged individualism, as well as in terms of alternative models of organization. The interaction between the two sectors is one that takes place along the lines of a horizontal encounter. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the encounter must lead not to a re-instantiation of hierarchical models of struggle if it is to succeed, but must instead develop into an education that produces only more intense modes of self-determination. "The more the people understand, the more vigilant they become, the more they realize in fact that everything depends on them, and that their salvation lies in their solidarity"(Fanon 2004: 133). It is in this sense that Fanon understands the lumpen and peasantry classes in a colonial and neo-colonial context as the only classes capable of self-representation.

While we must be careful not to merely cut and paste a model of struggle that was written for a specific colonial conjuncture into a contemporary context, the lessons of Biko and Fanon are surprisingly applicable for post-apartheid movements operating within the zones of non-being typified in slums. Abahlali has drawn upon the legacy of Biko's expanded, de-nationalized notion of Blackness in their own attempts to forge solidarity and alliances across historical African-Indian divisions in Durban, as well as in an attempt to support the struggles of non-South African migrant workers who have come under repeated attack in periodic pogroms. In addition, their position is one that straddles the urban and the rural, as many shack dwellers are recent migrants to the city from rural areas (Interview S'bu Zikode August 2, 2013; Interview Siya James June 27 2013; Zibechi 2010). While they attempt to penetrate the heart of the forbidden post-apartheid city (Cato Crest comes closest to the central business district), they are most often still relegated to the urban peripheries that Fanon identifies in his analysis as the home of the lumpen classes under colonialism.

Finally, Abahlali has adhered to Fanon's stinging critique of intellectuals and political parties as vanguards, instead affirming their autonomous capacity to think and act democratically. They demand recognition for their own "University of Abahlali baseMjondolo," even as they claim that the only classrooms of this "university" are comprised of the spaces of shack settlements writ-large. That is, they insist upon their own ability to articulate profound ideas, relevant to contemporary struggles for social justice, and upon grounding those ideas not exclusively in written texts but also in the living politics of their own everyday struggles for survival in their shack communities. As Bandile Mdlalose, General Secretary of Abahlali, argues, "Normally it is seen that the poor are poor in mind and that everything needs to be thought for us. But poverty is not stupidity; it is a lack of money. And we always remind people that the same system that made the rich rich has made the poor poor. We are still fighting to insist that there should be nothing for us without us. No one has a right to make decisions for us while we still have a mouth and mind to use" (Quoted in Sacks 2013).

And yet, in all of this, they do not seek to withdraw from society in order to form an exclusive shack-dwelling commune. Like Fanon, they recognize the importance of an encounter with "professional" intellectuals and militants, in addition to groups struggling in other areas and in other contexts. But for Abahlali the encounter with such individuals and organizations must take place on an equal ground whereby the autonomy of their organization is respected as a vehicle for moving from non-being to the new. While this movement towards the new certainly appears to start in a place overdetermined by the logic of superfluous exclusion on the one hand, and precarious inclusion on the other, it clearly does not end up in either place.

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Riots and the Delegitimization of Precarious Protesters

The protests led by Nkululeko Gwala in Cato Crest were initially characterized by the local newspaper *The Mercury* in the following manner: "Mayville in Durban came to a standstill yesterday when a mob trashed streets, pelted motorists with rocks and tried to forcibly evict an elderly man who was accused of occupying a government house illegally. The police watched as the group, estimated to number about 700 people, went on the rampage, destroying public toilets, blocking the road, and stoning motorists and police cars in protest at alleged corruption in low-cost government housing" (Mkamba 2013). This depiction of a supposed 'mob' on the 'rampage,' apparently destroying random pieces of public property in an incredibly unruly manner is an incredibly common way of portraying any act of protest by shack dwellers in South Africa. From official government agencies such as the police, to Marxist intellectuals on the Left, slum protests are often written off as the acts of an unruly mob, lacking in formal organization, or as examples of 'outsider meddling' and an evil 'third force'. Even progressive portrayals rely upon the moniker of "service delivery protests" to describe any and all such actions that occur outside the formal workspace of a factory. This depiction is intended to signal that the protests essentially amount to a complaint by shack and township residents that they have not received adequate government services. While this is often the case, it unfortunately does not come close to capturing the level of discontent, nor the demands and desires of these communities in rebellion. Worse yet, such depiction often parallels the orthodox Marxist stance on the inadequacy of 'merely spontaneous,' expressions of dissent. But as S'bu Zikode is fond of saying, there is no such thing as a spontaneous protest. That is to say, every expression of dissent in the slum emerges from countless experiences on behalf of residents, and in a

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context whereby people have made multiple attempts to seek redress but are often silenced, ignored, or directly repressed. Only when the poor took to the streets in acts of rupture to place a monkey wrench in the daily lives of a city's inhabitants, businesses, and government, were shack dwellers finally recognized by the state officials, Bandile Mdlalose told me (Interview May 5, 2013). Nonetheless, the predominance of certain strains of Orthodox Marxism in South Africa, even among progressive intellectuals, is such that the surplus poor of the slums is seen as a threatening group, a population that is extremely difficult if not impossible to organize. Thus the moniker "service delivery protest" gives the impression that if only the government were to better perform their top-down obligation of delivery in a more efficient manner, the protests would whittle away. But Abahlali's own call for dignity can clearly not be realized through an improved technocratic process of government-led service delivery.

A more fitting assessment of many of the expressions of outrage throughout South Africa's townships and slums can be found in Alain Badiou's typology of riots. Interestingly for Badiou, the riot itself "is the guardian of the history of emancipation in intervallic periods" (Badiou 2012: 41). Thus, rioting is an expression of the ever-present desire for emancipation—"the communist invariant"—that Badiou believes exists in all societies but remains latent, below the surface, expressing itself periodically in an "Event" that constitutes a dramatic rupture with the status quo (what for Fanon is symbolized by the movement *from* the zone of non-being to the new). Despite attempts by capital to thwart and repress it, this communist invariant cannot be eliminated. Therefore riots become a kind of intermediary guardian force of history in between Events that signal the "rebirth of history".

In an analysis that parallels Fanon's own assessment of spontaneity, Badiou

distinguishes between an immediate and a historical riot.

> An immediate riot is unrest among a section of the population, nearly always in the wake of a violent episode of state coercion…[it] is located in the territory of those who take part in it…Hence the blind destruction and pillaging of the very place the rioters live in, which is a universal characteristic of immediate riots. For our part, we shall say that all this achieves a *weak localization*, an inability of the riot to *displace itself*…Finally, an immediate riot is always indistinct when it comes to the subjective type it summons and creates. Because this subjectivity is composed solely of rebellion, and dominated by negation and destruction, it does not make it possible clearly to distinguish between what pertains to a partially universalizable intention and what remains confined to a rage with no purpose other than the satisfaction of being able to crystallize and find hateful objects to destroy or consume (Badiou 2012: 22-25).

Aspects of this description might fit some of the expressions of rage at a community level

that are an on-going part of the "rebellion of the poor" that Peter Alexander claims include

"mass meetings, drafting of memoranda, [petitions, toyi-toying, processions, stay-aways,

election boycotts, blockading of roads, construction of barricades, burning of tyres, looting,

destruction of buildings, chasing unpopular individuals out of townships, confrontations with

the police, an forced resignations of elected officials" (Alexander 2010: 26). In the case of

Abahlali, and the group led by Nkululeko Gwala, it would appear that parts of Badiou's

description of an immediate riot apply, but other parts simply do not. This was not

temporally immediate, it was planned, and it occurred after many hours of consultation. The

targets of their attack were officials and residents accused of corruption, and their protest was

accompanied by a clear analysis of the problem that the media explicitly ignored.

In contrast to the early form, an historical riot "is the result of the transformation of

an immediate riot, more nihilistic than political, into a pre-political riot" (Badiou 2012: 33).

It therefore takes the form of a more generalized expression of discontent, which for Badiou

usually occupies the downtown part of any city, typified by the occupation of Tahrir Square,

Plaza del Sol, Pearl Roundabout, and Zuccotti park in the 2011 year of global uprisings. Three characteristics define a historical riot: "A transition from limited localization to the construction of an enduring central site…a multiplicity of voices, absent or virtually absent from the clamour of an immediate riot, asserts itself…[And] a transition from the nihilistic din of riotous attacks to the invention of a single slogan that envelops all the disparate voices" (Badiou 2012: 33-35). Despite the general character of Abahlali's actions—staging gatherings throughout the city of Durban, and engaging in broader acts of rebellion in central locations in the city—it is clear that most of their actions, and certainly the protests led by Gwala in Cato Crest, would not fit the definition of an historical riot that Badiou provides here. They almost always involve poor shack dwellers exclusively and are usually confined to a somewhat 'local' stage. While the central slogan of the movement has been "No land, No House, No Dignity, No Vote," it isn't entirely clear whether this is something that Badiou would qualify as a generalizable slogan for an entire populace.

The actions led by Gwala, along with much of Abahlali's political protests, might be characterized as exemplary of an intermediary riotous stage that Badiou calls "latent riots". A latent riot is neither characteristic of the problematic aspects of spontaneous, self-destructive rebellion, but nor does it represent an obvious rupture and generalized expression of discontent that opens directly to the rebirth of history. Rather, a latent riot represents the expression of a subjective condition that signals the possibility of a move towards an historical riot that might eventually constitute "an evental rupture" (Badiou 2012: 27-32). Rather than characterize such expressions of discontent on the part of organized shack dwellers as dangerous mobs, or as a call for more efficient service delivery, we should be careful to identify the potential that lies in such moments of latent rioting. The question of

scale becomes important in this regard, as Badiou signals. The same critics who decry shack

protests as unorganized expressions of dissatisfaction by unruly mobs often denounce their

inability to scale-up to a more effective national platform of intervention.

The Scale of the Slum: From Local to National Politics?

In a careful study of the localized nature of much of the South African rebellion of the

poor, Richard Pithouse proclaims that more attention should be paid to the precise dynamics

of struggle before denouncing them as ineffective and un-generalizable.

> While the shanty town and the gated community are both nodes in the space of flows, the lived sense of place, of the local, is much more pronounced in the former. A key reason for this is that money extends the ability for mobility and reduces dependence on spatially situated sociality. Most people in most of the world have little money; so, most people depend on spatially situated sociality for childcare, for security, for caring of the sick, for fire fighting, and for burying their dead. For most people, then, there is a strong degree through which sociality is practiced through the local (Pithouse 2013: 105).

Arguably, the struggles that take place within the factory are equally localizable, and

confined to the precise nature of a particular corporation's relations with its employees. The

dangers and limitations—highlighted by Barchiesi in his critique of the wage-citizenship

nexus—of an exclusive focus on the factory and its precarious conditions of work, should be

clear in an era increasingly defined by structural unemployment. But the scalar critique of

shack-based struggles still seems to rely upon nostalgia for the era of strong union

movement. Such criticism elides the important point that all struggles—factory-based or

community-based—need a specific, local context from which to grow.

> A mass movement cannot be built and sustained before local struggles have emerged, made errors and developed. Sometimes these can coalesce into broader struggles, sometimes they will leave only a sedimented experience from which future projects can draw. But without local struggles, a sustained broader struggle is unimaginable. The lesson is clear: local organization is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustained organization at a larger scale (Pithouse 2013: 106).

In this context a variety of attempts have been made to generalize the latent and historical riots that emerge in the shack settlements like Cato Crest, in an effort to move away from political precarity and towards a broad-based "evental rupture". And yet, in the South African context, most of these efforts seem to rely on the mechanism of the political party as a mobilizing tool. The Democratic Left Front (DLF) is perhaps the most interesting group of the traditional left—comprised of a combination of disaffected members of the SACP and Trotskyists who were always on the margins of the official anti-apartheid organizations of the ANC and SACP—still plans to mobilize the community struggles they support behind the banner of an oppositional party. Martin Legassick is a key member of the DLF, and someone who has managed to maintain his support for the community struggles like Abahlali. He is therefore representative of perhaps the best of the socialist Trotskyist tradition in South Africa. But Legassick, too, relies upon the political party platform based in worker's struggles as a more adequate expression of political agency than the existing social movements. "Were it possible, a decision by a COSATU Congress to split from the Alliance and to launch a workers' party would be a huge step forward for the South African working class, as big a step as the formation of COSATU itself in 1985. Such a party could rapidly win majority support in the major urban centres, and, with a clear and convincing programme for all the oppressed, in small towns and rural areas as well" (Legassick 2007: 538). Legassick is unfortunately guilty of reproducing the orthodox approach to slum politics— lacking the nuances in Fanon's and Badiou's own typology of riots—by characterizing all protests in these spaces as merely spontaneous. "It is necessary to maintain an orientation to the rank and file of COSATU members, even if the most immediate task is to link up with

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the *spontaneous service delivery struggles* and other struggles emerging in the communities"
(Legassick 2007: 541, my emphasis).

Gillian Hart is extremely careful to valorize both organized groups like Abahlali and
the various forms of popular discontent that express themselves through both immediate and
latent rioting. She holds out hope for a reinvigorated, independent labor movement, but not
necessarily with the project of mobilizing a political party. Hart applies Peter Alexander's
distinction between a first round of struggle that lasted roughly from 1999-2004 and was led
by organized groups like TAC, LPM, CCM, and APF on the one hand, and a second round of
struggles from 2004 to the present characterized largely by relatively un-organized, informal
expression of popular discontent located slums on the other hand. Since 2004, she argues,
"we have witnessed the emergence and proliferation of popular anger and discontent
extending far beyond the reach of the first round of new social movements. These seemingly
disparate mobilizations can usefully be understood in the same frame in terms of 'movement
beyond movements'…Often accompanied by intense rage, these municipal rebellions have
become an entrenched feature of everyday life in the heavily segregated Black townships and
shack settlements of post-apartheid South Africa" (Hart 2014: 3).

In her 2002 study of South Africa, *Disabling Globalization*, Hart argued that local
government had become a key site for the expression of the contradictions and limitations of
post-apartheid liberation. In her most recent 2014 book, *Rethinking the South African Crisis*,
she affirms this line of thought, but now claims that local government is *the* central site of
contradictions in the country. Therefore it makes sense that the rebellion of the poor has
been oriented around specifically local issues. But her solution also reaches out in the hopes
that the traditional labor movement might form a political party and adequately represent this

supposedly 'inadequate' rage at the local level, on a more profound national scale. In particular, for Hart, hope is to be identified in the recent NUMSA split. Unlike Legassick and Bond, however, Hart does not invoke a centralized political party as the solution, but rather invokes the grassroots mobilization efforts of the United Democratic Front in the anti-apartheid struggle as a model to be reinvigorated. "NUMSA's challenge to the ANC alliance following shortly after Mandela's passing is hugely significant…At the risk of allowing optimism of the will to overtake pessimism of the intellect, one can at least raise the possibility of NUMSA and others retrieving and renovating their histories of democratic organizing from the 1970s and 1980s" (Hart 2014: xx).

From Precarity to Anti-Blackness

One problem with such proposals—whether they rely upon the older model of a centralized, socialist political party, or a grassroots labor-led democratic struggle—is that both have hitherto elided a central dynamic at play in the space of the slum that has become the epicenter of rebellion in South Africa. The dynamics of precarity and surplus in South Africa have a specifically racialized dimension that has by and large gone unheeded by these two traditions of struggle rooted in the labor movement and a Marxist analysis. The official Marxists—whether they are the SACP or the Trotskyist outcasts—continue to emphasize class at the unifying discourse of a post-apartheid moment that is best defined, they argue, by neoliberalism and "class apartheid" (Bond 2004, 2008, 2010). Hart is one of the few South African Marxist theorists who continues to claim that such an analysis is inadequate to the contemporary moment, both because neoliberalism on its own cannot explain the developmental initiatives and social grants that the ANC has unfurled over the past decade at least, and because of the ongoing racialized dimensions of dispossession in the country.

A number of political and intellectual figures argue that there is an inability in

Marxist analysis to give an account of the prevalence of extra-economic violence directed at

surplus populations who cannot be characterized as merely 'unemployed', but should rather

be understood as racialized groups subject to the force of anti-Blackness. Such an analysis is

deployed in part by key members within the new Economic Freedom Fighters Party led by

the ex-ANC youth league leader, Julius Malema. The organization was formally launched in

June 2013, the same month that Cato Crest was on fire with the protests that led to Gwala's

assassination. Its constitution states:

> ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS is a radical and militant Economic
> Emancipation Movement which brings together revolutionary, fearless, radical, and
> militant Activists, workers' movements, Non-governmental organisations,
> community based organisations, lobby-groups under the need to pursue the struggle
> for economic emancipation.
>
> EFF is a radical, Left, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist Movement with an
> internationalist outlook anchored by popular grassroots formations and struggles. EFF
> will be the vanguard of community and workers' struggles and will always be on the
> side of the people.
>
> The EFF takes lesson from the notation that "political power, without economic
> emancipation is meaningless.
>
> The EFF draws inspiration from Marxist-Leninist and Fanonian schools of thought on
> its analysis of the State, imperialism and class contradictions in every society (2013).

Despite gestures to being based on the popular will of the people, and affirmations of

grassroots community based struggles, at its core it is clearly operating on the traditional,

hierarchical Leninist model of a vanguard party. The uniqueness of the group, however, lies

in part in the important reference to Fanon as a direct inspiration for their political platform.

This resulted from an alliance between Malema and the September National Imbizo, a Black

Nationalist group inspired by the thought of Steve Biko and Frantz Fanon. In my

conversation with the members of this wing of EFF, they made it abundantly clearly that they

hoped to fill a vacuum in analysis and political practice in South Africa where race was concerned. Explicitly attacking the tradition of non-racialism that has long been dominant in the country, these members of EFF are focused on the continued dominance that "white capital" has over the country. In their view, white capital gave up their *political power* to a Black political class in 1994 for the same reasons the bourgeoisie conceded direct control over the state to the monarch Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte after 1848: in order to preserve their *economic power* (fieldwork notes).

Most interestingly, members of the September National Imbizo that are involved with the EFF are directly inspired by Frank Wilderson and the "Afro-Pessimist" intellectual movement he spearheads. Wilderson is an American student of Edward Said who spent significant time in South Africa from the late 1980s until the mid 1990s and joined the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, during this time. "When I first arrived in South Africa in 1989, I was a Marxist," Wilderson tells us. "Toward the end of 1996, two and half years after Nelson Mandela came to power, I left not knowing what I was" (Wilderson 2008: 97). Spending time in the country during the first transition proved fundamental to his elaboration of the primacy of anti-Blackness in the modern world. "In the last days of apartheid, we failed to imagine the fundamental difference between the worker and the Black. How we understand suffering and whether we locate its essence in economic exploitation or in anti-Blackness has a direct impact on how we imagine freedom and how we foment revolution" (Wilderson 2008: 97). Anti-Blackness, an idea he borrows from the philosopher Lewis Gordon, is predicated on the structural dehumanizing nature of the Black experience in a white dominated world. Explicitly targeting the non-racialism that was and is predominant within the anti-apartheid and post-apartheid movements, Steve Biko's thought

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proves a rich breeding ground for re-thinking South African struggles through the lens of Black consciousness. Like Malcolm X, Biko put forward the necessity for grasping an autonomous Black experience, which would be developed on the basis of an affirmative identity that did not need to come into synthesis with existing white society. "Does this mean that I am against integration?" asked Biko, after disagreeing with the call from white liberals to celebrate the few places under apartheid where a limited form of integration had been accomplished in non-racial spaces and organizations. "If by integration you understand a breakthrough into white society by Blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of Blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behavior set up by and maintained by whites, then YES I am against it" (Biko 1978: 28).

But Wilderson—despite his admiration for Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement that has been largely erased from the anti-apartheid narrative by a hegemonic story in which the ANC is lionized—goes further in an attempt to push beyond Biko, going back to Fanon for a theory of anti-Blackness. For Wilderson the assent of the ANC was inextricably linked with the *descent* of Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. But oddly enough, Wilderson's politics lie in a destruction of the existing world, rather than in the possibility of creating an autonomous Black space within the existing one, as Biko proposed through a combination of Freirean consciousness raising and community programs. This is because Wilderson conceives of modernity, and its celebrated terrain of civil society[15] where so much faith is placed in contemporary theories of social movements, as a space-time predicated upon anti-Blackness. That is, only through dehumanizing the Black is contemporary civil society allowed to function. This demonizing dehumanization is

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[15] Here much more could said about the parallels between Wilderson's conception of civil society and the way it is deployed in the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Mahmood Mamdani, and Partha Chatterjee.

representative of an extra-economic force, a "gratuitous violence" (Wilderson 2008: 105) that has its roots in slavery, and persists in the "after-life of slavery" today (Sexton 2010). Therefore, Marx's emphasis upon exploitation cannot give a complete picture of the Black experience. Only Fanon seems to provide such an account for Wilderson, eclipsing even the optimism of the will that Black Consciousness expressed, in favor of the pessimism of the intellect. All this is true despite Biko's careful engagement of Fanon's own work (Turner 2008).

For Biko's Black Consciousness movement to have achieved a resolution between the fissure Wilderson identifies between a class analysis focused on exploitation and the racialized ontology of non-being that is Blackness in the modern world would have required a different reading of Fanon.

> For this to happen, Black Consciousness would have also had to undergo adjustments in its assumptive logic. Adjustments that would have moved it away from its pragmatic interpretation of Fanon's dream of disalienation; adjustments that would have allowed it to comprehend those moments in Fanon's work when Fanon could not make the dispossession of the colonial subject jibe with the dispossession of the Black object or slave: Fanon's revelations (albeit often more symptomatic than declarative) that Black colony is an oxymoron, for Blacks are not, *essentially*, dispossessed of land or labor power, but dispossessed of being…Steve Biko and Black Consciousness were compelled to read *Black Skin*, *White Masks* pragmatically rather than theoretically; thus denying their analysis the most disturbing aspects of *Black Skin, White Masks* which lay in Fanon's capacity to explain Blackness as an antirelation; that is, as the impossible subjectivity of a sentient being who can have 'no recognition in the eyes of' the Other (Wilderson 2008: 103).

The persistence of the slave relation in the present thus confines what is thought to be an antagonistic relationship between capital and labor in a certain Marxist framework to a mere conflict. An irreducible, un-synthesizable antagonism is rather said to lie in the relationship between the slave and the human. Drawing from the work of Italian feminist Leopoldina Fortunati, Wilderson extends his critique of class analysis to the terrain of gender. Fortunati "argues that there is no exchange of filial affection (i.e., the nurturing of children by parents,

the nurturing of parents by children, or sexual encounters between parents) that is not in

service to the reproduction of labor power and therefore to the valorization of capital"

(Wilderson 2008: 108). For Wilderson, this implies that no mere redistribution of wealth

along the lines of the ANC's original Keynesian RDP—now longed for by post-apartheid

radical intellectuals—could solve the problem that reproduced a fundamentally classed and

gendered inequality. Rather, only a destruction of the existing community as it is currently

understood could prevent the reproduction of capitalism through filial affection. While they

provide a useful parallel argument to his own, Wilderson still wants to go even further than

Marxist feminists like Fortunati.

> But Fanon reveals a structural relation that is more comprehensive, more devastating, more essential, and therefore more unethical than either the filial relation or the capital relation—namely, the Human relation. The filial relation is unethical because it is overdetermined by the Name of the Father and because it is parasitic on the position known as female. It subsumes the world in asymmetrical power relations predicated on gender. The capital relation is unethical because it is parasitic on the worker's labor power. It subsumes the world in asymmetrical power relations predicated on class…The unethical structure of Humanity lies in the fact that its Other is the Black (Wilderson 2008: 108).

The condition of non-being therefore lies on a more fundamental, ontological terrain for

Afro-Pessimists than that of gender and class-based exploitation. I find this argument

simultaneously intriguing and problematic. The intersectional analysis favoured by feminists

of color is usually a more comprehensive and appropriate lens through which to study social

problems, as it explicitly takes into account the overlapping and mutually constitutive roles

played by gender, class, race and sexuality. And yet, intersectionality can sometimes be

deployed by thinkers in an anti-intellectual and relativist fashion. As such it can also

function to erase the particularity of the raciailized dimensions of struggle by critiquing

analyses that privilege race for ignoring class, gender, or disability. While I certainly hesitate

to adopt Wilderson's formulation of race as always and everywhere more "essential" than

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class or gender, I think his is an important wake up call to not automatically treat these different dimensions of analysis and struggle as absolutely equal in their effect, or as central to each and every particular social antagonism.

But nor does this mean that struggles against anti-Blackness are somehow celebrated by the likes of Wilderson. To the contrary, it demonstrates how struggle within the existing conditions defined by the after-life of slavery reveal themselves to be a bottleneck out of which there is no apparent exit.

> No matter what Blacks do (fight in the realm of preconscious interest or heal disalienation in the realm of unconscious desire), Blackness cannot attain relationality. Whereas Humans are positioned on the plane of *being* and, thus, are present, alive, through struggles of/for/through/over recognition, Blacks can neither attain nor contest the plane of recognition. That is to say 'Black Human' remains an oxymoron regardless of political victories in the social order or the psychic health of the mind; not because of the intransigence of White racism, or the hobble of the talking cure in the face of hallucinatory whitening, but because were there to be a place and time for Blacks, cartography and temporality would be impossible (Wilderson 2008: 111).

None of this analysis therefore leads Wilderson, like other followers of Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, to believe that if only Biko had escaped his apartheid assassins and lived to see the demise of their government, the post-apartheid context would be somehow dramatically different. But he does hold onto Biko's critique of non-racialism and his engagement with Fanon as a positive influence in South African struggles that may have ultimately led to the discussion around anti-Blackness that Wilderson believes is required in order for any political project to have any possibility of success. "I believe that had Biko lived, and had the Black Consciousness Movement survived as a credible alternative to the ANC and the UDF, the ethical imperatives of class analysis, that were hegemonic and unchallenged within the Charterist Movement, might have experienced a distended calculus through which the grammar of suffering could be debated rather than assumed"(112).

Gwala's Legacy

This chapter has presented the death of Nkululeko Gwala, a shack dweller organizing with Abahlali, as a window into debates regarding precarity and surplus in the contemporary globalized world. Examining these questions from the specific spatialized context of the Black slum, I argue, forces us to shift the geography of reason in the work of Giorgio Agamben and others who have hitherto emphasized the refugee detention camp or Guantanamo Bay as paradigmatic spaces of exception. In contrast, postulating the post-apartheid slum as a zone of non-being allows us to understand how something new might emerge from this space of nothingness. Racializing and spatializing the critique of precarity necessarily broadens our framework for grasping the conditions of possibility which give rise to the power to make die or let live which articulates with contemporary biopolitical imperatives to make live or let die. While it provides a necessary framework for grappling with the primacy of anti-Blackness in contemporary South Africa, I argue that the Afro-Pessimist critique also contains within it dangerous nihilistic, misogynistic and destructive tendencies, which are expressed quite openly in the contemporary Economic Freedom Fighters Party who see themselves in part as followers of Wilderson's work. Wilderson might counter that these are expressions of the modern world, rather than products of his own lens of analysis, and more work would be required to provide a significant counter-argument. In the specific political spaces of post-apartheid South Africa, the ethical choice is that between supporting a poor shack dwellers movement mobilized around the concepts of dignity and the production of a new human being, versus the class force of a NUMSA workers party or the populist Black nationalist mobilization of the Economic Freedom Fighters.

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Hart holds out hope that the NUMSA faction will link up with the community struggles on a grassroots level that have been posing the problem of survival amidst an economy that has relegated them to the position of waste. Abahlali's Vice President, Lindela Figlan, holds on to a similar optimism.

> We need the workers to take the side of the poor, to join with us in our struggles. We all know that this is impossible as long as the workers are controlled by Cosatu, which is under the ANC and influenced by the SACP too. But now that some workers are organising themselves autonomously from the ANC, like we have done in Abahlali baseMjondolo since 2005, it might be possible for the workers and the poor to struggle together (Figlan 2013).

Unfortunately, it appears much more likely that even this breakaway faction of the labor movement will reproduce a vanguard structure of organization that privileges the work-space and reproduces the work-citizenship nexus that occludes the lived experience of precarity in the slum experienced by so many South Africans today.

Others are fearful of the EFF's populist mobilizing platform, and of the dangerous ways in which a racialized discourse is deployed within the group's ranks. On the one hand, the concern relates back to the Ugandan experience under Idi Amin, when an executive decision was taken to expel all "Asians" from the country in the 1970s because to be Ugandan was to be a Black African, not an Indian. On the other hand, fear arises from the fact that many of the leaders within the EFF, Julius Malema amongst them, might benefit from a nationalization project that leaves the minerals energy complex of South Africa in their hands, allowing for further corruption and theft of the people's wealth, something Malema stands formally accused of during his tenure as President of the ANC Youth League. Here the discourse of race is viewed as a convenient distraction from a project that simply replaces one ruling class with another more populist minded one.

But too few South Africans have either aligned themselves with the political

formation of Abahlali and its partner movements of the poor throughout the country as an

alternative to this apparent electorally focused political impasse. And even fewer people

willingly deploy an alternative analysis around race and anti-Blackness that could give an

account of the ongoing forms of both racialized dispossession and gratuitous violence that

populations confined to slums are arguably most often exposed to. Could it be because these

zones of abandonment are rarely ventured into by outsiders, who prefer to remain confined in

the settler quarters of the city identified with contemporary civil society and its

corresponding state privileges? Regardless, the struggles of the poor in these spaces are not

disappearing; indeed they continue to grow year by year. As Richard Pithouse argues, while

the slum does not have a privileged hold on precarious life, it has indisputably become the

central flashpoint for social struggles.

> Of course, neither social exclusion, nor the myriad of ways in which it is resisted, can
> be reduced to the shack settlement. But it is here—rather than in, say, the
> countryside, the school, the prison or the migrant detention centre—where the refusal
> to accept the idea that the human should be rendered as 'waste' (Mbembe 2011) has
> produced the most intense and sustained conflict between the state and its citizens
> over the last eight years (Pithouse 2013: 100).

For this reason, any attempt to grapple with precarity and surplus life in contemporary South

Africa will have to begin with the lived experience of shack dwellers like Nkululeko Gwala.

CONCLUSION:
RACIALIZED CITIZENS, SUPERFLUOUS SUBJECTS, AND COUNTER-POWERS
IN THE AREA FORM

In his monumental study of colonial and post-colonial Africa, Mahmood Mamdani attempts to displace the hegemony of political economy in studies of the continent with an acute attention to relations of power. Arguing against writing African history through analogy to non-African experiences, Mamdani sought to uncover a specifically African colonial history that continued to shape power relations in the post-colonial present. "I try to underline the specificity of the African experience," he claimed, "or at least a slice of it. This is an argument not against comparative study but against those who would dehistoricize phenomena by lifting them from context, whether in the name of an abstract universalism or of an intimate particularism, only to make sense of them by analogy. In contrast, my endeavor is to establish the historical legitimacy of Africa as a unit of analysis" (Mamdani 1996: 13). By positing a division in rule between an urban civil society of citizens with rights and a rural traditional society of subjects, Mamdani went on to map the contours of power in Africa that destabilized anti-colonial revolts and continue to fracture the quest for social justice throughout the continent. Conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, Arab and Zurga in Darfur, Zulu and Xhosa in South Africa, all represent holdovers from the specific colonial policies of decentralized despotism, where colonizing powers ruled through proxy tribal chiefs who were propped up, allocated land, or otherwise stratified at the expense of other tribes. While colonial rule was as much racial as it was tribal, it is the

enduring and often spatialized divisions of tribal rule that Mamdani is concerned with in the post-colonial present, at a time when African states have been de-racialized.

Throughout the African continent, Mamdani read the disappointment of post-colonial governments as a product of neglecting the rural at the expense of the urban (or vice versa), and an insufficient attempt to grapple with the enduring nature of colonial power relations in the present. Resistance movements, he argued, were shaped and overdetermined by the forms of power they were supposedly organizing to overcome. This meant that internal violence plagued both anti-colonial struggles and post-colonial African societies. In sum, Mamdani states: "I have already suggested that the fragmentation is not just ethnic. Rather, the interethnic divide is an effect of a larger split, also politically enforced, between town and country. Neither was this double divide, urban-rural and interethnic, fortuitous. My claim is that every movement against decentralized despotism bore the institutional imprint of that mode of rule. Every movement of resistance was shaped by the very structure of power against which it rebelled" (24).

Mamdani therefore posits a largely deracialized African continent, plagued by persistent tribal division that persists in rural areas or wherever the rural has migrated into the urban (South Africa's urban hostels under apartheid and during the first transition, for example, where Zulu migrant workers came into conflict with non-Zulus). He presents social movements as overdetermined by the power relations they sought to confront, and he claims an urban civil society of citizens benefited at the expense of rural subjects. He argues for an attention to the specificity of the African experience rather than vague gestures towards history by analogy to the European experience. In many respects, however, this dissertation can be read as at attempt to re-read Mamdani, against the grain of these brilliant

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insights, in the context of contemporary South Africa, twenty years after he conducted his study.

Africa clearly does have its own unique history that deserves independent study. But regional geography and area studies as a whole have come under attack in recent years, highlighting the limits of absolutist approaches to space while emphasizing the necessity of approaching topics through relational conceptualizations of space that don't always map neatly onto the physical geography of continents or the colonial geography of nation-states. By adopting the metaphorical (and at times literal) perspective of the migrant—what they call "border as method"—Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Nielsen replace the continental approach to area studies with the new critical regionalism, or what Ranabir Samaddar calls the "area form."

> In contrast to their official constitution as tightly bounded entities, migratory movements throw into question the possibility of identifying an inside and outside to such continental spaces. They also tend to harden and soften their internal boundaries, depending on the pressures exerted on them by migratory flows and the composition of the populations traversing them. These tendencies are themselves important examples of continental drift, and they need to be analyzed in relation to the longer history of cartographic anxiety and metageographic uncertainty" (Mezzadra and Nielsen: 55).

> "In the case of Samaddar's analysis of the South Asian area form, we obtain a new perspective on regionalism by asking how border and labor struggles, which are increasingly carried out in urban spaces far from territory's edge, imply ways of making the world—fabrica mundi—that are socially and politically remote from the dominant continentalist visions. Again, it is a question of how the *production of subjectivity* intersects the *production of space* (Mezzadra and Nielsen: 54).

Chapter two therefore sought to de-center the state and challenge the vertical topography of power by placing the dynamics of social movements below in direct conversation with other movements around the world, emerging coeval over the past years defined by economic crisis on the one hand, and a diversity of uprisings on the other.

If anti-colonial and post-colonial movements have in the past been shaped by the forms of power they confronted, I have tried to demonstrate that resistance can also shape the forms of power it resists. In this regard, a more accurate conceptualization of power might move beyond state power to give an account of power as a more diffuse relation, always reversible, as Foucault argued, and subject to different logics in different socio-spatial settings. Resistance that has emerged largely from the urban townships and shack communities of post-apartheid South Africa over at least the past fifteen years has therefore contributed to the rise of South Africa's own developmental state. Dismissing post-apartheid government as merely neoliberal—while incredibly useful as a heuristic device for grappling with what so many movements around the world are rebelling against—can nonetheless occlude the specific articulation between South Africa's neoliberal and developmental policies. It also ignores the fundamental ways in which counter-powers are constantly co-opted, internalized, and subsumed within state powers. Chapter three contextualized the rise of the developmental state through the lens of a Cornubia as one example of governance strategies forced to respond to the initiative of movements from below.

While tribal divisions persist throughout the continent, and are certainly still prevalent in South Africa, I have argued for a renewed attention to the persistence of forms of racialization that equal if not surpass the predominance of tribal divisions in the country today. Mamdani himself acknowledged, albeit in passing, that "Independence tended to deracialize the state but not civil society. Instead, historically accumulated privilege, usually racial, was embedded and defended in civil society" (20). The urban-rural divide also persists, and formed a key part of my argument in Chapter 3 regarding the impasse that urban housing policies reach in their failure to articulate with a rural demand for land reform. And

yet, my study has also uncovered a division *within* urban civil society whereby some groups

are understood as citizens entitled to rights and other populations are deemed threatening and

are therefore subject to a range of sovereign powers. The urban shack communities of

Abahlali might best be conceived through the lens of what Partha Chatterjee calls political

society, rather than civil society.

> While the urban sphere in Africa enables protest, it is the particular character of that
> urban sphere that also establishes the limitations within which protest must operate.
> Just as national state power is structured around a violent separation of the urban and
> the rural, so is it structured around a violent separation within the urban. Since
> colonial times, access to the guarantees and protections of liberal civil and political
> rights has been restricted to a small urban minority—the political elite, civil servants,
> professionals including those in the nonprofit sector, university administrators,
> faculty, and sometimes students, and organized wage workers. On the other side of
> this divide are the vast majority of urban inhabitants, the large urban underclass that
> has accompanied the expansion of African colonial cities since the beginning. Often
> unemployed or scraping by in the informal or illicit sectors, they have been excluded
> from the realm of civil and political rights. They instead relate to the state through
> regimes of politicized distribution of benefits and violent control. Therefore, each of
> these two groups has developed under entirely different forms of power, and it
> follows that each has different political imaginations, employs different modes of
> political action, and has different expectations for political change. We will call these
> two urban sectors, following Partha Chatterjee (2011), "civil society" and "political
> society" (Branch and Mampilly 2014: 7).

The urban-rural divide clearly persists, but within the urban there is a rural component—

often conceived as a lumpen proletariat, a political society, or a surplus population—that

attempts to eek out a living in the specific context of shack life. Abahlali operates on this

terrain, and while they sometimes work to enter the space of civil society as citizens, they

often find, as Nkululeko Gwala did, that there is no space for them there. Chapter 4 therefore

argued that shack dwellers are subject to forms of precarity that exceed the parameters of

changing conditions of work within the post-Fordist factory, verging on the designation of

mere surplus populations. Nonetheless, the experiences of Abahlali prove that even in such

zones of non-being, resistance can never be expunged. As S'bu Zikode explains, "Voting did

not work for us. The political parties did not work for us. Civil society did not work for us. ... We have no choice but to take our own place in the cities and in the political life of the country" (Quoted in Ballard 2014: 1).

Whether Nkululeko Gwala's efforts to build a better world will go down as the frustrated attempts to gain recognition from an anti-Black world predicated upon the ontological inhumanity of Black populations, or will instead continue to add fuel to Abahlali's own long march to freedom in their efforts to realize a second South African transition from below, remains to be seen. One thing is certain: despite state repression, being abandoned, landless, homeless, and party-less, the poor shack dwellers of Abahlali baseMjondolo will likely not cease their mobilizing efforts anytime soon. In the wake of Mandela's death, Abahlali held a rally in Cato Crest, commemorating both Madiba and the life of Gwala. The press release issued to announce their actions read: "Today we protest to demand land and housing and an end to corruption and repression, including assassination. This is how we will show our respect for Mandela's struggle. We are continuing where Mandela left off. This new phase of the struggle is just beginning" (Abahlali 2013).

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