Is post-apartheid South Africa still ‘subimperialist’?
BRICS banking and frustrated global development finance reform

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ABSTRACT
After 1994, a new era of post-apartheid foreign policy was to have begun, but a great many residual habits continued, including Pretoria’s self-interested geopolitical activity elsewhere in Africa (mainly on behalf of Johannesburg capital) and subservience to larger powers intent on the exploitation of the African continent via a South African ‘gateway’. The ‘subimperial’ stance was strengthened at the same time rhetoric was uttered about a new ‘seat at the world table’ for South Africa. As just the most recent example, the opportunity to establish a BRICS Bank was anticipated at the March 2013 Durban meeting of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa leadership, although it would only be at the September 2013 G20 meeting before details were to be released. The Durban summit advanced some countervailing institutional prospects, including monetary cooperation, a currency reserve and more Chinese bilateral lending for South African infrastructure, but debates continued about development finance. Precedents for the BRICS Bank are not only the Bretton Woods Institutions, which some BRICS finance ministers say they aim to avoid, but also the countries’ own development finance institutions. The BRICS seem to need a bank to assure expedited extraction of Africa’s minerals, petroleum, gas and cash crops, raising further questions about how different their pro-corporate economic growth model is from the West’s.

Introduction

During Barack Obama’s June 2013 visit to Pretoria, Soweto and Cape Town, political commentator Xolela Mangcu (2013) remarked in his *CityPress* column that around 1000 protesters in the three cities (combined) were profoundly mistaken because, ‘Agree or disagree with him, Obama is not our enemy… The last time I checked, we do not have a foreign policy dispute with the US... Until such time that the US presents a danger to our interests, we should leave the protestations to those affected by its actions.’ He continued,

> We are no longer freedom fighters but a democratic society competing for global resources alongside many others… here we are, in a country existing on the margins of global public consciousness with an economy that is all of 0.66 percent of the global economy, seeking to embarrass a visiting leader of the only country we can really rely on as a potential best friend in the long run. I know there is a great deal of excitement about China as Africa’s next saviour. That view ignores the fact that even though China’s economy is the second largest in the world, it is still not even half the size of the US’… So why not let those countries directly affected by American foreign policy lead the protests against the US? The last time I checked, we do not have a foreign policy dispute with the US. We do not have prisoners in Guantanamo and

> face no threat of drone strikes. Even more puzzling is that the so-called revolutionaries protesting Obama's visit did not have the gumption to protest against George W Bush when he came here some years ago.

Mangcu misremembered from a decade earlier when in Pretoria, according to SA Press Association reports, 'Around 2000 demonstrators waved placards and burnt US flags to protest the visit by President George W Bush to South Africa on Wednesday, saying he was aiming to make South Africa Washington's 'policeman on the continent'' (SAPA 2003a), and in Cape Town, when 1500 people

> spontaneously started a bonfire close to the main entrance of parliament, feeding the fire with posters of Bush's face on them… In a fiery speech, imam Achmat Cassiem railed against the twin evils of imperialism and capitalism as embodied by America and to a lesser extent South Africa, a uniform theme among the speakers… Anti-War Coalition spokesperson Shaheed Mahomed 'denounced' the South African government, saying the ANC was 'siding with the side of imperialism... (by) welcoming the brutal and barbaric section' of the American administration' (SAPA 2003b).

That welcome was generous, for as Peter Bruce (2003) of *Business Day* editorialized, the 'abiding impression' left from Bush's Pretoria stopover was 'of a growing, if not intimate trust between himself and president Thabo Mbeki. The amount of public touching, hugging and backpatting they went through was well beyond the call of even friendly diplomatic duty.' The diplomatic duty that post-apartheid South Africa had provided the world under Nelson Mandela (1994-99) and during Mbeki's first four years as president was indeed impressive, justifying Bush's goodwill (and promotion of Mbeki to what he called his 'point man' for the thorny Zimbabwe problem). In the first decade of democracy, Pretoria's representatives had hosted, chaired, initiated or played leading roles in the:

- Board of Governors of the IMF and World Bank;
- Non-Aligned Movement and G77 group of poor and middle-income countires;
- UN Conference on Trade and Development;
- Commonwealth;
- Organisation of African Unity and later the African Union launch;
- Southern African Development Community;
- 2000 International AIDS conference;
- World Commission on Dams;
- World Conference Against Racism;
- New Partnership for Africa's Development;
- World Trade Organisation ministerial summits;
- UN Financing for Development Monterrey Summit;
- G8 Summits;
- World Summit on Sustainable Development; and
- Davos World Economic Forums.

Mbeki was subsequently occupied trying to hold onto power in South Africa, with a distracting three-year period from 2005 dominated by the unsuccessful campaign to keep Jacob Zuma at bay. After Mbeki was fired in September 2008 and as the world economy melted down (thus requiring a new global configuration of power to arbitrate an urgent global financial bailout), caretaker president Kgalema Motlanthe sat quietly in two G20 summits. Later in 2009, Zuma's first major international role was to silently join four other signatories to the Copenhagen Accord during the UN COP15 climate summit. By mid-2010 he could claim the hosting of both the soccer World Cup and a Chinese invitation to join the BRIC club with Brazil, India and Russia. The following year, Zuma personally stepped onto the world stage by co-chairing Ban Ki-moon's UN High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability. In December 2011, he and foreign minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane hosted the UN COP17 climate summit and by 2012 his ex-wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was installed in the African Union chair. In 2013, Zuma hosted BRICS so as to present a 'gateway' role for these fast-growing economies to more favourably invest on the African continent.

In these respects, Pretoria's in-house South African International Marketing Council (2013) was pleased that

> evidence of South Africa's ability to punch above its weight includes the success of the BRICS summit in March in Durban. Outcomes from this meeting, including the idea of an international development bank for the developing world, seemed to set the BRICS club on a course of action after almost a decade of scheming and dreaming. Now, [Goldman Sachs bank leading official Jim] O'Neill said, the time had come for the newest member of the group to get on with proving it deserved that seat at the table.

Already a year before, as a *New York Times* report argued, the BRICS could 'agitate for a seat at the table' of the global economy, through 'signing new financial cooperation agreements… [and] signaling discontent at their lack of influence over decision-making within the world's existing financial institutions, and exploring steps to do something about it' (Tatlow 2012).

What, however, was actually accomplished through these extraordinary opportunities? As I have spelled out elsewhere (Bond 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2012),

- the IMF and World Bank made only trivial changes to their operations, such as a slight shifting of their voting power to accommodate China mainly at the expense of Africa, even when SA finance minister was in the chair and ran the institutions' Development Committee;
- the Non-Aligned Movement and G77 faded into obscurity, unable to wrestle the potentially vast power of China ("G77 + China") into a unified stance;
- the UN Conference on Trade and Development was pulled towards the neoliberal Washington Consensus during SA trade minister Alec Erwin's presidency;

- in its single major challenge, the Commonwealth failed to shift Zimbabwe to democracy (Robert Mugabe withdrew Zimbabwe's membership);
- the AU first fell under Muammar Ghaddafi's influence (and then in 2011 chided Pretoria for officially supporting the NATO bombing of Libya instead of pursuing the AU peace strategy), and in 2012 suffered a severe Anglophone/Francophone split over Dlamini-Zuma's leadership candidacy, in view of the prior agreement that the continent's most powerful countries (SA, Nigeria and Egypt) would not propose its citizens for such central posts;
- the Southern African Development Community proved incapable not only of achieving economic coherence (the Southern African Customs Union nearly breaking apart over a European Union trade deal in 2012-13) given South Africa's domination, and incapable of defending even liberal rights (e.g. white farmers' property rights against Mugabe's 2000s land redistribution) much less liberal democracy (Mugabe's various infringements of the 2008 Global Political Agreement power-sharing);
- the 2000 International AIDS conference was the scene of the opening rounds in the battle between the Treatment Action Campaign and Pretoria's genocidal AIDS-denialist policy-makers led by Mbeki;
- the World Commission on Dams was subsequently rejected not only the World Bank and prolific dam-building rulers like China's and India's, but even by Pretoria's ministerial successor to the WCD chair, Kader Asmal (1999-2004 Water Minister Ronnie Kasrils);
- at the World Conference Against Racism Mbeki shot down NGO and African leaders who were demanding slavery/colonialism/apartheid reparations, as well as the reasonable Palestine-solidarity demand that Zionism be considered a form of racism;
- the New Partnership for Africa's Development provided merely a 'homegrown' Washington Consensus, was rejected even by one of the four co-sponsors (Senegal's Abdualawaya Wade), and failed to generate even the anticipated Western neoliberal countries' support (in part because its African Peer Review Mechanism was ultimately farcical);
- the World Trade Organisation ministerial summits were, at their worst (especially Doha in 2001), an opportunity for Erwin to split African delegations so as to prevent consensus-denial by trade ministers (but at their best, this was the outcome, as in Seattle in 1999 and Cancun four years later);
- at the UN Financing for Development Monterrey Summit, Manuel was summit co-chair and legitimised ongoing IMF/WB strategies, including debt bondage, yet the proposed new international financial architecture proved incapable of addressing systemic risk and contagion with the resulting world financial chaos in 2008-13;
- the G8 Summits provided Africa only patronizing rhetoric;
- at the World Summit on Sustainable Development , Mbeki undermined UN democratic procedure, facilitated the privatisation of nature, and did nothing to address the plight of the world's poor majority;
- at the Davos World Economic Forums, Africa was largely ignored;

- at G20 meetings, including London in 2009 (where Manuel presented his IMF committee's plan for a $750 billion recapitalization of the IMF and hence the world economy), the only accomplishment was to delay and displace – not *resolve* – the world crisis, by shifting the burden from private sector over-indebtedness to public sector bailout/austerity;
- the Copenhagen Accord boiled down to the US-Brazil-China-India-South African destruction of the Kyoto Protocol in favour of Washington's preferred avoidance of binding emissions cuts, and in terms of process, the five leaders 'wrecked the United Nations', as climate activist Bill McKibben accurately observed; and
- tragically, the day before BRICS dignitaries arrived for the Durban summit, 13 corpses of SA National Defense Force soldiers were recovered in Bangui after apparently trying to guard Johannesburg businesses in the Central African Republic's capital against the Chad-backed Seleka rebel movement who took power that day, suggesting the limits of the gateway's gatekeepers (and a few weeks later, another 1350 SANDF troops were deployed in the resource-rich eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of a peace-keeping force, notably not far from where Zuma's nephew Khulubuse had bought into a major oil exploration project).

In all of this, as Mangcu (2013) correctly observes, Pretoria politicians and their allied Johannesburg business*men* (one businesswoman, Anglo American Corporation's Cynthia Carroll, mainly lived in London but in any case was fired in 2013 for not squeezing sufficient profits from workers and nature) were simply 'competing for global resources alongside many others.' As for BRICS, while 'China's economy is the second largest in the world, it is still not even half the size of the US'. Moreover, in none of the mishaps above do South Africa's ruling elites genuinely 'have a foreign policy dispute with the US.' Pretoria's officials connived in the unconstitutional 'rendition' (i.e., involuntary deportation for the purpose of torture) of supposed foreign 'terrorists', the very description that Washington officially gave Nelson Mandela from the time the CIA helped put him in jail in 1962 until a Congressional vote removed the label in *2008.* That meant, as Mangcu put it, 'We do not have prisoners in Guantanamo and face no threat of drone strikes.'

Is, as might be concluded from this preliminary review, Pretoria a 'subimperialist' ally of Washington? If I or Mangcu use that term, we risk being chided – by no less than Nkoana-Mashabane (2013) (or speech-writer Eddie Moloka) – for the intellectual crime of

> a dogmatic application of classical notions of imperialism and Immanuel Wallerstein's centre-periphery model to a situation that is fundamentally different from what these theories were trying to comprehend and explain. Our scholars have to be innovative and courageous enough to develop new tools of analysis and theoretical models when history challenges us to do so. I am reminded here of a warning Franz Fanon made in his *The Wretched of the Earth* that, and I quote: 'It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the

> struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.' The tragic mishap in this case is that such intellectuals will be left behind and rendered irrelevant by history.

But by way of rebuttal, is a prerequisite for being 'relevant' – and getting the desired 'seat at the table' – to follow the logic of neoliberalism, financialisation and extreme uneven and combined development, especially in intensifying the looting of Africa? The word 'subimperialism' is one way to describe precisely that 'relevance.'

South African subimperialism

In 1965, Ruy Mauro Marini (1965, 22) defined the Brazilian case of subimperialism in a way that applies to contemporary South Africa: 'It is not a question of passively accepting North American power (although the actual correlation of forces often leads to that result), but rather of collaborating actively with imperialist expansion, assuming in this expansion the position of a key nation.' Nearly half a century later, such insights appear prescient, in the wake of the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) as an active alliance. By 2013 these five key nations encircling the traditional Triad (the US, European Union and Japan) were decisive collaborators with imperialism. They advanced the cause of neoliberalism by reaffirming its global institutional power structures and driving overproductive and overconsumptive maldevelopment, and they colluded in destruction of not just the world environment – through unprecedented contributions to climate change – but in the sabotage of any potentially workable global-scale ecological regulation (favouring instead deepened commodification through emissions trading).

Confusingly to some, BRICS regimes carried out this agenda quite consistently at the same time they offered radical, even occasionally 'anti-imperialist' rhetoric and mainly trivial diplomatic actions, e.g. at the United Nations Security Council, mainly for the sake of their internal nationalist political needs. Their growing alliance was not entirely coherent, of course, as can be observed in the interface between BRICS and the Bretton Woods Institutions, or in the UN Security Council. But the BRICS agenda of relegitimising neoliberalism not only reinforces North American power, of course. In each case, the BRICS countries' control of their hinterlands for the sake of regional capitalist hegemony was another impressive feature of subimperialism, especially in South Africa's case.

Much of the long-standing (apartheid-era) critique of South African subimperialism still applies, but what is new is that thanks to financial deregulation associated with the country's 'elite transition' from racial to class apartheid during the 1990s, what were formerly Johannesburg and Cape Town-based regional corporate powers – Anglo American Corporation, DeBeers, Gencor (later BHP Billiton), Old Mutual and Liberty Life insurance, SA Breweries (later merged with Miller), Investec bank, Didata IT, Mondi paper, etc – escaped. Their financial headquarters are now in London, New York and Melbourne, and the outflows of profits, dividends and interest are the main reason South Africa was ranked the 'riskiest' amongst 17 emerging markets by *The Economist* in early 2009, requiring vast new foreign debt obligations to cover the hard currency required to facilitate the vast capital flight. Meanwhile, the African continent expanded its rate of trading with the major emerging economies – especially China – from around 5 to 20 percent of all commerce in the post-apartheid era (1994-2012). By 2012 the rationalisation and facilitation of tighter continental economic relationships was one of Pretoria's leading objectives, according to its main foreign official dedicated to BRICS, deputy minister Marius Fransman (2013): 'South Africa also presents a gateway for investment on the continent, and over the next 10 years the African continent will need $480 billion for infrastructure development.'

Aside from lubricating world neoliberalism, hastening world eco-destruction, and serving as coordinator of hinterland looting, what are the other features of subimperialism that must be assessed, in a context of Washington's ongoing hegemony? As argued below, if a 'new imperialism' entails – as David Harvey (2003) suggests – much greater recourse to 'accumulation by dispossession' and hence the appropriation of 'non-capitalist' aspects of life and environment by capitalism, then South Africa and the other BRICS offer some of the most extreme sites of new subimperialism in the world today. The older generation of arguments about South Africa's 'articulations of modes of production' (Wolpe 1980) – migrant male workers from Bantustans providing 'cheap labour' thanks to black rural women's unpaid reproduction of children, sick workers and retirees generally without state support – seems to apply even more these days, when it comes to notorious Chinese pass-laws or the expansion of the South African migrancy model much deeper into the region in the wake of apartheid (notwithstanding tragic xenophobic reactions from the local working class). But the point is to make the case that contemporary subimperialism lubricates global neoliberalism, and that within BRICS, South Africa joins the other 'deputy sheriffs' to keep regional law and order (e.g. in the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2013).

In the recent era, the main military conflicts associated with Washington-centred imperialism have been in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, and so Israel, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are often cited as the West's subimperial allies. But it was not long ago – from the 1960s through late 1980s – that Southern Africa was the site of numerous wars featuring anti-colonial liberation struggles and Cold War rivalries, with apartheid South Africa a strong and comforting deputy to Washington. Over two subsequent decades in this region, however, we have witnessed mainly state-civil tensions associated with conflict-resource battles (e.g. in the Great Lakes region where southern Africa meets central Africa and where millions have been killed by minerals-oriented warlords), neoliberalism (e.g. South Africa and Zambia), an occasional coup (e.g. Madagascar), dictatorial rule (e.g. Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Malawi) or in many cases, a combination. The civil wars engineered by apartheid and the CIA in Mozambique and Angola had ceased by 1991 and 2001, respectively, with millions dead but with both Lusophone countries subsequently recording high GDP growth rates albeit with extreme inequality. Across Southern Africa, because imperial and subimperial interests mainly aimed at resource extraction, a variety of cross-fertilising intra-corporate relationships emerged, symbolised by the way Lonmin (formerly Lonrho, named by British Prime Minister Edward Heath as the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' in 1973) 'benefited' in mid-2012 from leading ANC politician Cyril Ramphosa's substantial shareholding and connections to Pretoria's security apparatus, when strike-breaking was deemed necessary at the Marikana platinum mine. 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.

As for Washington's ongoing coercive role in this continent, the Pentagon's Africa Command has prepared for an increasing presence across the Sahel (e.g. Mali at the time of writing) out to the Horn of Africa (the US has a substantial base in Djibouti), in order to attack Al-Qaeda affiliates and assure future oil flows from Africa. Since taking office in 2009, Barack Obama maintained tight alliances with tyrannical African elites, contradicting his own talk-left pro-democracy rhetoric within a well-received 2009 speech in Ghana. According to Sherwood Ross (2010), one reason is that amongst 28 countries 'that held prisoners in behalf of the US based on published data', are a dozen from Africa: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, South Africa and Zambia. In Gambia, for example, President Yahya Jammeh's acquiescence to the CIA's need for a rendition site for US torture victims may explain Obama's blind eye towards his dictatorship. Likewise, the US role in Egypt – another rendition-torture hotspot – in propping up the Mubarak regime until the final days spoke volumes about the persistence of strong-man geopolitics, trumping the 'strong institutions' that Obama had promised (Bond 2012).

With fewer direct military conflicts in Africa but more subtle forms of imperial control, and with 'Africa Rising' rhetoric abundant since the early 2000's commodity price boom, the continent and specifically the Southern African region appear as attractive sites for investment, in no small measure because of South Africa's 'gateway' function, with Johannesburg as a regional branch-plant base for a variety of multinational corporations. Yet thanks to South African politicians' anti-imperialist rhetorical twitch, one of the most confusing features of the post-apartheid era has been foreign policy, especially in view of the conflicting traditions of internationalism from which the ANC – in exile from 1963 to 1990, during the period Nelson Mandela was imprisoned – launched its bid for power. Material and ideological supporters of the ANC ranged from the United Nations, Soviet Union and Sweden to black-consciousness, Third Worldist and international progressive movements and institutions in civil society. Hence it was not out of character, given the ANC's hot political traditions, to hear Nelson Mandela declare, just prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, that George W. Bush, 'who cannot think properly, is now wanting to plunge the world into a holocaust. If there is a country which has committed unspeakable atrocities, it is the United States of America' (Murphy 2003). Yet within weeks, three Iraq-bound US warships docked and refuelled in Africa's largest harbour in Durban, and South Africa's state-owned weapons manufacturer sold $160 million worth of artillery propellants and 326 handheld laser range-finders to the British army, and 125 laser-guidance sights to the US Marines.

Bush visited Mandela's successor, Mbeki, in the South African capital Pretoria in July 2003, and left the impression, according to Johannesburg's *Business Day* newspaper, 'of a growing, if not intimate trust between himself and Mbeki. The amount of public touching, hugging and backpatting they went through was well beyond the call of even friendly diplomatic duty' (*Business Day* 2003). By May 2004, Mandela had withdrawn his criticism: 'The United States is the most powerful state in the world and it is not good to remain in tension with the most powerful state' (Associated Press 2004). Mandela's outburst was one of many confusing signals from South Africa's leaders: occasionally talking left while mainly walking right, indeed sometimes talking left *so as to walk right.*

In the meantime, South African capital's drive to accumulate up-continent continued, as Johannesburg business sought out new opportunities especially in mining, retail, banking, breweries, construction, services and tourism. The largest South African corporations benefited from Nepad's lubrication of capital flows out of African countries, yet most of the money did not stop in Johannesburg, as was the case prior to 2000. The financial flight went mainly to London, where Anglo American Corporation, DeBeers, Old Mutual insurance, South African Breweries, Liberty Life insurance and other huge South African firms had relisted at the turn of the Millennium (thanks to permission from Mbeki and Manuel). Within Africa, regional acquisitions by South African corporations were in any case mainly takeovers, not 'greenfield projects' involving new fixed investments. This was not difficult insofar as in 2010, 17 out of Africa's top 20 companies were South African, even after the capital flight a decade earlier (Laverty 2011). Yet in spite of a high-profile mid-2002 endorsement of Nepad by 187 business leaders and firms, led by Anglo American, BHP Billiton and the Absa banking group, there were no investments made in twenty key infrastructure projects two years later, only vocal corporate complaints that the peer review mechanism had insufficient teeth to discipline errant politicians. According to the chief reporter of (pro-Nepad) *Business Day* in mid-2004, 'The private sector's reluctance to get involved threatens to derail Nepad's ambitions' (Rose 2004).

On the other hand, the prospect that Johannesburg-based corporations would be 'new imperialists' was of 'great concern', according to Pretoria's then public enterprises minister, Jeff Radebe, in early 2004: 'There are strong perceptions that many South African companies working elsewhere in Africa come across as arrogant, disrespectful, aloof and careless in their attitude towards local business communities, work-seekers and even governments' (SAPA 2004). To illustrate drawing upon a telling incident in 2012, the Johannesburg parastatal firm Rand Water was forced to leave Ghana after failing – with a Dutch for-profit partner (Aqua Vitens) – to improve Accra's water supply, as also happened in Maputo (Saur from Paris) and Dar es Salaam (Biwater from London). Rand Water had long claimed its role in Ghana was part of both the Nepad and Millennium Development Goals mandate to increase public-private partnerships in water delivery (Amanthis 2012).

Radebe could also have been describing his Cabinet colleague Mbeki. The Johannesburg *Sunday Times* reported from the July 2003 African Union meeting in Maputo that Mbeki was viewed by other African leaders as 'too powerful, and they privately accuse him of wanting to impose his will on others. In the corridors they call him the George Bush of Africa, leading the most powerful nation in the neighbourhood and using his financial and military muscle to further his own agenda' (Munusamy 2003). These critics of Mbeki were joined by African intellectuals who demanded better from their leaders as well, including those who understand Pretoria's continental ambitions. To illustrate, at a joint conference in April 2002 in Accra, Ghana, the Council for Development and Social Science Research (2002) in Africa and Third World Network-Africa identified the 'most fundamental flaws of Nepad' as follows:

- the neoliberal economic policy framework at the heart of the plan ... which repeats the structural adjustment policy packages of the preceding two decades and overlooks the disastrous effects of those policies;
- the fact that in spite of its proclaimed recognition of the central role of the African people to the plan, the African people have not played any part in the conception, design and formulation of the Nepad;
- notwithstanding its stated concerns for social and gender equity, it adopts the social and economic measures that have contributed to the marginalisation of women;
- that in spite of claims of African origins, its main targets are foreign donors, particularly in the G8;
- its vision of democracy is defined by the needs of creating a functional market.

Mbeki's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) itself was conceived so that African regimes – including South Africa's, to great internal consternation – would essentially review themselves with kid gloves, and when civil society critique emerged, this was repressed (Bond 2009). According to Bronwen Manby (2008) from AfriMAP (a pro APRM NGO)

> Although each country that has undergone the APRM process is supposed to report back to the APR Forum on its progress, there is no serious monitoring exercise of how effectively this is done. Nor any sanctions for failure to act. Nor, apparently, is there any real system to ensure that the commitments the government makes address the most important problems highlighted in the APRM review...The implementation of the APRM programme of action is also left entirely to the executive, with no formalised role for parliamentarians or civil society to hold the government's feet to the fire should it fail to perform... Even the continental APRM secretariat failed to engage in any serious way with national institutions...Without this sort of integration into other national planning systems, debates and oversight mechanisms, the APRM process seems doomed to become little more than a cosmetic exercise without effect in the real world of policy and decision making.

In sum, the imposition of Nepad's neoliberal logic soon amplified uneven development in Africa, including South Africa. Adding to the invasion by Chinese firms – specializing in neo-colonial infrastructure construction, extractive industries and the import of cheap, deindustrializing manufactured goods – and the West's preparations for military interventions from the oil- filled Gulf of Guinea in the west to the Horn of Africa in the east, Africa was squeezed even harder. Patents, marketing restrictions and inadequate state-financed research made life-saving medicines unreasonably scarce. Genetically modified food threatened peasant farming. Trade was also increasingly exploitative because of the 'Singapore issues' advanced by the G8 countries: investment, competition, trade facilitation, government procurement. The new conditionalities amplified grievances of developing nations over the G8's vast agricultural subsidies, unfair industrial tariffs, incessant services privatisation and intellectual property monopolies. Together, they prompted African–Caribbean–Pacific withdrawal from the ministerial summit of the World Trade

Organisation (WTO) in Cancun in September 2003, leading to its collapse, with no subsequent improvements in the following years. Although there was talk of 'Africa Rising' thanks to high GDP growth in several countries – mainly those that benefited from the commodity boom or civil wars ending – the actual wealth of Sub-Saharan Africa shrunk dramatically during the 2000s once we factor in non-renewable resource depletion, with the height of the boom recording a -6 percent annual decline in 'adjusted net savings' (i.e., correcting GDP for ecological and social factors typically ignored).

Throughout this period, there was a restrained yet increasingly important Washington geopolitical agenda for Africa, which Bush's first Secretary of State, Colin Powell, described in a document, *Rising US Stakes in Africa:* political stabilisation of Sudan (whose oil was craved by Washington); support for Africa's decrepit capital markets, which could allegedly 'jump start' the MCA; more attention to energy, especially the 'massive future earnings by Nigeria and Angola, among other key West African oil producers'; promotion of wildlife conservation; increased 'counter-terrorism' efforts, which included 'a Muslim outreach initiative'; expanded peace operations, transferred to tens of thousands of African troops thanks to new G8 funding; and more attention to AIDS. On all but Sudan, South African co-operation was crucial for the US imperial agenda. However, after the US military's humiliating 1993 'Black Hawk Down' episode in Somalia, there was insufficient appetite at the Pentagon for direct troop deployment in Africa, and as a result, President Bill Clinton was compelled to apologise for standing idly by during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Instead in future, as Africa Command head Carter Ham explained in 2011, Washington 'would eventually need an AfriCom that could undertake more traditional military operations… [although] not conducting operations – that's for the Africans to do' (AfriCom Public Affairs 2012). Likewise, the US Air University's *Strategic Studies Quarterly* cited a US military advisor to the African Union: 'We don't want to see our guys going in and getting whacked… We want Africans to go in' (Cochran 2010). In late 2006, for example, when Bush wanted to invade Somalia to rid the country of its nascent Islamic Courts government, he called in Mbeki to assist with legitimating the idea, though it was ultimately carried out by Meles Zenawi's Ethiopian army three weeks later (White House Press Office 2006). When in 2011, Obama wanted to invade Libya to rid the country of Muammar Gaddafy, South Africa voted affirmatively for NATO bombing within the UN Security Council (where it held a temporary seat), in spite of enormous opposition within the African Union. And in January 2013, Pretoria deployed 400 troops to the Central African Republic during a coup attempt because 'We have assets there that need protection,' according to deputy foreign minister Ebrahim Ebrahim, referring to minerals (Patel 2013).

The big question raised by Zuma's presidency was whether the momentum from Mbeki's expansionist years would continue, given the former's preoccupations with domestic matters and comparatively weak passion for the international stage. Only in 2012 was the answer decisively affirmative: Dlamini-Zuma's engineered election as African Union Commission chairperson, and Pretoria's entry to BRICS. By mid-2012, Pretoria's National Development Plan – overseen by Manuel from within the Presidency and endorsed at the ANC's December 2012 national conference – provided a variety of mandated changes in policy so as to align with South Africa's new BRICS identity and functions. These mainly involved pro-business statements for deeper regional economic penetration, as noted below (National Planning Commission 2012).

Perhaps local elite interests conflicted most with those of the hinterland (as well as of most South Africans) when it came to climate management, given Pretoria's role, first in maintaining extremely high emissions levels on behalf of the country's 'Minerals-Energy Complex', and second with respect to sabotaging global climate talks by destroying the Kyoto Protocol in Copenhagen in 2009 and again in Durban in 2011. Indeed an important pre-BRICS example of Zuma's personal role in adjusting not transforming global governance was the December 2009 line-up of 'BASIC' (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) countries' leadership with Washington to confirm climate catastrophe. At the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Denmark, Zuma joined Obama, Lula da Silva, Wen Jiabao and Manmohan Singh to foil the Kyoto Protocol's mandatory emissions cuts, thus confirming that at least 4 degrees global warming will occur by 2100. This, Naomi Klein (2009) called, 'nothing more than a grubby pact between the world's biggest emitters: I'll pretend that you are doing something about climate change if you pretend that I am too. Deal? Deal.'

A secondary objective of the deal – aside from avoiding emissions cuts – was to maintain a modicum of confidence in what were crashing carbon markets by the late 2000s (especially after the 2008 financial meltdown), which would entail increasing domination of 'Clean Development Mechanism' (CDM) carbon trading by the BASIC countries (until year-end 2012) and then new internal carbon markets especially in Brazil and China thereafter. As Steffen Böhm, Maria Ceci Misoczky and Sandra Moog (2012) argue,

> the subimperialist drive has remained the same: while domestic capital continues to invest heavily in extractive and monocultural industries at home, it is increasingly searching for investment opportunities in other peripheral markets as well, precipitating processes of accumulation by dispossession within their broader spheres of influence. This mode of development can be observed in many semi-peripheral nations, particularly in the 'BRICS' countries. China's extensive investment in African arable land and extractive industries in recent years has been well documented. What is perhaps less well recognized in the development literature, however, is the extent to which financing from carbon markets like the CDM is now being leveraged by elites from these BRICS countries, to help underwrite these forms of subimperialist expansion.

In terms of global-scale climate negotiations, the Washington+BASIC negotiators can thus explicitly act on behalf of their fossil fuel and extractive industries to slow emission-reduction obligations, but with a financial-sector back-up, in the event a global climate regime does appear in 2020, as agreed at the Durban COP17. Similar cozy ties between Pretoria politicians, London-based mining houses, Johannesburg 'Black Economic Empowerment' tycoons and sweetheart trade unions were subsequently exposed at Marikana. Other BRICS countries have similar power configurations, and in Russia's case it led to a formal withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period (2012-2020) in spite of huge 'hot air' benefits the country would have earned in carbon markets as a result of the industrial economy's disastrous exposure to the world economy during the 1990s. That economic crash cut Russian emissions far below 1990 Soviet Union levels during the first (2005-2012) commitment period. But given the 2008-13 crash of carbon markets – where the hot air benefits would have earlier been realised as €33/tonne benefits but by early 2013 fell to below €3/tonne – Moscow's calculation was to promote its own oil and gas industries helter-skelter, and hence binding emissions cuts were not in Russia's interests, no matter that 2010-11 climate-related droughts and wildfires raised the price of wheat to extreme levels and did tens of billions of dollars of damage.

The same pro-corporate calculations are being made in the four other BRICS, although their leaders did sometimes posture about the need for larger northern industrial country emissions cuts. However, the crucial processes in which UN climate regulatory language was hammered out climaxed in Durban in December 2011 in a revealing manner. 'The Durban Platform was promising because of what it did not say,' bragged US State Department adviser Trevor Houser to the *New York Times.* 'There is no mention of historic responsibility or per capita emissions. There is no mention of economic development as the priority for developing countries. There is no mention of a difference between developed and developing country action' (Broder 2012). The Durban COP17 deal squashed poor countries' ability to defend against climate disaster. With South African foreign minister Nkoana-Mashabane chairing, the climate summit confirmed this century's climate-related deaths of what will be more than 180 million Africans, according to Christian Aid. Already 400 000 people die each year from climate-related chaos due to catastrophes in agriculture, public health and 'frankenstorms'. And climate was not exceptional when it came to the BRICS approach to environmental preservation. The Columbia and Yale University (2012) Environmental Performance Index showed that four BRICS states (not Brazil) have been decimating their – and the earth's – ecology at the most rapid rate of any group of countries, with Russia and South Africa near the bottom of world stewardship rankings.

Moreover, like the political carving of African in Berlin in 1884-85, the BRICS 2013 Durban summit had as its aim the continent's *economic* carve-up, unburdened – now as then – by what would be derided as 'Western' concerns about democracy and human rights, with 25 African heads of state present as collaborators. Reading between the lines, its resolutions would:

- support favoured corporations' extraction and land-grab strategies, including through provision of army troops;
- worsen Africa's retail-driven deindustrialization (South Africa's Shoprite and Makro – soon to be run by Walmart – were already notorious in many capital cities for importing even simple products that could be supplied locally);
- revive failed projects such as Nepad; and
- confirm the financing of both African land-grabbing and the extension of neo-colonial infrastructure through a new 'BRICS Development Bank', in spite of the damaging role of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) in its immediate hinterland, following Washington's script.

South Africa's development finance strategy in Africa

In exchange for the Durban summit amplifying such destructive tendencies, more than a dozen African elites who joined the 27 March afternoon session might have hoped to leverage greater power in world economic management via BRICS, especially in relation to the financial flows that were proving so destructive across the continent (justifying even a special AU commission on illicit financial flows, led by Mbeki). With SA finance minister Pravin Gordhan's regular critiques of the World Bank and IMF, there was certainly potential for BRICS to 'talk left' about the global-governance democracy deficit. Yet in the vote for Bank president in April 2012, for example, Gordhan's choice was Washington-Consensus ideologue Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Nigerian finance minister who with IMF managing director Christine Lagarde catalyzed the Occupy movement's near revolution in January 2012, as a result of the removal of petrol subsidies. Brasilia chose the moderate Keynesian economist Jose Antonio Ocampo and Moscow backed Washington's choice: Jim Yong Kim. This was a repeat of the prior year's fiasco over the race for IMF Managing Director, won by Lagarde – in spite of ongoing corruption investigations against her by French courts, in the wake of criminal charges against her predecessor (in both jobs) Dominique Strauss-Kahn – because BRICS was divided-and-conquered. The 'emerging' bloc appeared in both cases as incompetent, unable to even agree on a sole candidate, much less win their case in Washington.

Yet in July 2012, the BRICS treasuries sent $100 billion in new capital to the IMF, which was seeking new systems of bail-out for banks exposed in Europe. South Africa's contribution was only $2 billion, nevertheless a huge sum for Gordhan to muster against local trade union opposition. Explaining the SA contribution – initially he said it would be only one tenth as large – Gordhan told *Moneyweb* (2011) that it was on condition that the IMF became more 'nasty' (*sic*) to desperate European borrowers, as if the Greek, Spanish, Portuguese and Irish poor and working people were not suffering enough. The result of this BRICS intervention was that China gained dramatically more IMF voting power, while Africa actually lost a substantial fraction of its share. Gordhan (2012) then admitted at the September 2012 Tokyo meeting of the IMF and Bank that it was likely 'the vast majority of emerging and developing countries will lose quota shares – an outcome that will perpetuate the democratic deficit.' And given 'the crisis of legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of the IMF,' it 'is simply untenable' that Africa only has two seats for its 45 member countries. Yet Gordhan's role in promoting the BRICS' expanded capital commitment to the IMF was the proximate cause of perpetuating the crisis of legitimacy.

In exchange for these concessions to Washington's world view and financial capacity, South African elites might have hoped to leverage greater power in world economic management via the BRICS. With Gordhan's regular critiques of the World Bank and IMF, there was certainly potential for BRICS to 'talk left' about the global-governance democracy deficit. Yet in the vote for Bank president in April 2012, for example, Gordhan's choice was Washington-Consensus ideologue Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Nigerian finance minister who with IMF managing director Christine Lagarde catalyzed the Occupy movement's near revolution in January 2012, as a result of the removal of petrol subsidies. Brasilia chose the moderate Keynesian economist Jose Antonio Ocampo and Moscow backed Washington's choice: Jim Yong Kim. This was a repeat of the prior year's fiasco over the race for IMF Managing Director, won by Lagarde – in spite of ongoing corruption investigations against her by French courts, in the wake of criminal charges against her predecessor (in both jobs) Dominique Strauss-Kahn – because BRICS was divided-and-conquered. The 'emerging' bloc appeared in both cases as incompetent, unable to even agree on a sole candidate, much less win their case in Washington.

Had the subimperialist boost to global neoliberal financing not been so central to the BRICS' positioning, it would have been logical for them to instead have supported the Bank of the South. That project – with $12 billion in capital by 2013 – was dreamt of by the late Hugo Chavez although repeatedly sabotaged by more conservative Brasilia bureaucrats and likewise opposed by Pretoria, which refused to support it during the Mbeki era. Instead, London and New York economists Nick Stern and Joe Stiglitz (2012) – both former World Bank senior vice presidents – told the BRICS would that a new Bank would cost $50 billion in start-up capital, the exact figure that in early 2013 that SA Ambassador Anil Sookla (the 'sherpa' from Pretoria to BRICS) was publicly announcing, even claiming support from China for South Africa to be the host country, with no competitors in sight prior to the BRICS Durban summit (Fabricius 2013). However, going into the 2013 G20 meeting in St Petersburg, Russia (where a decision on BRICS Bank capital and headquarters was anticipated), it was not clear whether Sooklal's vision would be adopted.

The G20 was a much more substantive site for the debates about world finance, having been resurrected in November 2008 to deal with the global meltdown. A few months later, in April 2009, the G20 was central to the push for re-empowering the IMF, first through increased Special Drawing Rights allocations to stimulate the world economy, and later, in a full recapitalisation in 2012, to generate more bailout financing options for European bankers, at the expense of structural adjustment for poor and working people (Donnely 2012). Gordhan was implicated in the latter, while in the former, Manuel (2009) had authored the main document proposing the IMF's $750 billion recapitalization. Although Dominique Strauss-Kahn postured about a Keynesian fiscal-expansionary policy during the 2008-09 crisis, the IMF maintained neoliberal, contractionary measures in most of Africa. Likewise, Manuel had consistently promoted the kind of debt relief that resulted in low-income African countries actually paying a much *higher* percentage of export income on debt relief in the 2005-08 period, because while the unrepayable capital was written off, the terms of the deal meant that ongoing repayment obligations actually increased substantially, from 5 to 7 percent of export earnings (Bond 2012).

In some respects, Pretoria was out of step with the other BRICS when it came to global finance. SA Reserve Bank deputy governor Daniel Mminele (2012) acknowledged in November 2012 that Pretoria stood alongside Washington in *opposing global regulation* such as the 'Robin Hood tax' on financial transactions that was supported by more enlightened countries, including those from Europe being roiled by global financiers. Moreover, Mminele conceded, 'South Africa is aligned with advanced economies on the issue of climate finance' and against those of the South, especially when it came to the matter of paying 'ecological debt' to increasingly desperate countries already losing 400,000 people per year to climate-caused deaths.

The squeeze of poorer countries through South Africa's financing power has been a long-standing problem, as Johannesburg became the continent's premier hot-money centre. In mid-2002, Manuel (2002) promised the Commonwealth Business Council he would 'fast-track financial market integration through the establishment of an internationally competitive legislative and regulatory framework' for the continent. But without any Africa-wide progress to report two years later, Manuel's director-general Lesetja Kganyago (2004) announced a new 'Financial Centre for Africa' project to amplify the financialization tendencies already evident in Johannesburg's exclusive new Sandton central business district: 'Over the five years to 2002, the financial sector grew at a real rate of 7.7 percent per year, more than twice as fast as the economy as a whole.' This would usually be considered a sign of a parasitic and dangerous economy, but not by Pretoria financial officials. Responsible for a full quarter of post-apartheid South African GDP growth, the sector required further room to expand, according to Kganyago (2004):

> What is needed is a financial hub especially focused on the needs and circumstances of the region, much in the same way that Singapore and Hong Kong cater for the capital needs of the Asian continent… International financial centres tend to have a foundation in common. Elements include political stability, free markets, and what is best described as the rule of commercial law.

Pretoria's specific aims included 'opening South Africa's markets to African and global issuers; global lowest trading costs and trading risk; global leadership in investor protection; and a global hub for financial business process outsourcing'. Concluded Kganyago, 'Africa's economies cannot wait the slow maturing of national financial markets to provide the necessary channel for large-scale foreign capital flows for development. Only a regional financial centre will be in a position to provide these services in the foreseeable future.' Ironically, by 2012 Mbeki (2012) was reinventing himself as a leading critic of illicit capital flight from Africa.

A telling incident in mid-2002 illustrated the responsibility that the South African government had taken on to police such world financial mechanisms. A Cabinet meeting in Pretoria concluded with this statement: 'The meeting noted the provision by South Africa of a bridge loan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 75 million. This will help clear the DRC's overdue obligations with the IMF and allow that country to draw resources under the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility' (SA Government Communications and Information Service 2002). In ensuring the rollover of the debt, Pretoria thus sanitized the earlier generation of IMF loans made to Mobuto Sese Seko, riven with corruption and capital flight to European banks. In fact, continuities with an earlier subimperial project were obvious, for the people of the DRC were previously victims of South Africa's apartheid-era allegiance with Mobuto, an arrangement that especially suited the ecology-destroying mineral extraction corporations headquartered in Johannesburg. The people's struggle against oppression had initially spawned another ruler in 1996, Laurent Kabila, who unfortunately refused democracy and later fell to an assassin's bullet. Thanks to his son Joseph's connections in Union Buildings and finance ministry, the old 'odious' Mobutu loans were honoured and serviced with Pretoria's new credits. They should have been repudiated. In addition, IMF staff would be allowed back into Kinshasa with their own new loans, and with neoliberal conditionalities again applied to the old victims of Mobutu's fierce rule. A similar process began with lending to regimes such as Mugabe's Zimbabwe and King Mswati's Swaziland, for the purpose of repaying the IMF first and foremost.

For all these reasons, South Africa can be considered a subimperialist ally of global finance, combining on the one hand, support for neoliberal global governance no matter its failure to deliver, with growing regional clout on behalf of Johannesburg-based corporate plunder of the subcontinent on the other hand, no matter that much of the capital then flowed out to the world financial headquarters of what were formerly South African firms. Harking back a century to South Africa's chilling past of subimperial regional conquest in the interests of global-imperial domination, it could easily have been said, and indeed was, by Nelson Mandela (SAPA 2003), 'I am sure that Cecil John Rhodes would have given his approval to this effort to make the South African economy of the early 21st century appropriate and fit for its time.'

The National Planning Commission (2012) had further strategies in mind, along these lines:

- South Africa's economy is smaller than that of the other BRICS economies and this has led to some questioning of the country's membership. However, it can play a leading role in BRICS by helping to *facilitate deeper integration of relations between African states and other BRICS member countries* and by focusing on other niche advantages. The country has several strengths that can be used both when negotiating within BRICS and in broader global negotiations between BRICS and the world, including:
    - Considerable *natural resources*
    - Highly developed *banking, financial, communications and transportation networks*
    - Established and relatively successful *business, industrial, mining and research institutions*…
- The country's diplomats should work *closely with business and industry leaders*, with research and academic institutions and with epistemic communities, to facilitate relationships with counterparts in BRICS…
- The Department of International Relations and Cooperation, in collaboration with South Africa's research institutions and professional bodies, should lead a strategic drive to *engage China on minerals, mining, research and development and infrastructure expansion on the continent*. This collaboration must include maintaining sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards to ensure that South Africa's products can continue to gain access to European markets…
- In six months of consultations, the NPC encountered, alongside the *perception of the country as a regional bully*, and that South African policy-makers tend to have a *weak grasp of African geopolitics*. Because of this, foreign relations with African

states are often tentative, with policymakers vacillating between leading and muddling through on issues of integration and cooperation…

- Strengthen economic diplomacy and build *effective partnerships with the private sector and state-owned enterprises*. In areas such as science, culture, higher education, sport and environmental protection, there is a need to showcase South Africa and promote its presence and leadership on strategic issues as part of its "soft power" in international relations, without losing sight of the increased value of mental power – the ability of countries to *show restraint on emotional impulses and maintain a relatively stable mind-set in getting along with each other* during international negotiations, and in general.
- Involve the business community in foreign relations. South Africa's sophisticated business community needs to be intimately involved in foreign relations. Diplomats may strike foreign cooperation deals, but it is private companies that actually trade across borders. They are, therefore, central to wealth creation. *The local business community is willing and able to provide managerial, administrative and general capacity-building services to South Africa's regional institutions.* It is a resource that needs to be fully explored.
- As a middle-income African country, there needs to be a more comfortable fit between critical domestic socioeconomic demands, regional and continental obligations and international cooperation through BRICS and the world. Foreign policies cannot be disassociated from these demands and obligations. They should be made through engaging with domestic constituents like *the business community, the DBSA and arts, culture and sporting bodies,* which ultimately constitute the relations between countries. [emphasis added]

It is evident that in the coming period, to carry out these functions, institutional restructuring will be crucial for Pretoria. One reason is the distinct gap between its main vehicle, the DBSA, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC): 'South Africa is critically underrepresented in organisations like the African Development Bank and SADC. The latter is critical as South Africa is a major funder of the group… To fulfill South Africa's obligations in the BRICS and in the region, the DBSA should be strengthened institutionally…' (National Planning Commission 2012). That gap was articulated by SADC deputy executive secretary João Samuel Caholo in 2012.

> There is resentment towards the DBSA in certain quarters because it is in South Africa, and South Africa is the only shareholder. SADC has no say in what the DBSA does and although the bank does work on a bilateral level with SADC countries, we need our own bank… The name of the DBSA is misleading, as it was established by the apartheid government that saw Southern Africa as consisting of apartheid South Africa and the former homelands (*CityPress* 2012).

A few months later, just as it was deployed to become Pretoria's core representative as the BRICS Bank was being conceptualised, the DBSA fell into disrepute for recording $43 million in net losses in 2011-12, based on (unspecified) investments. Around 14 percent of its assets were in the region outside South Africa, with future SADC lending anticipated at

$2.3 billion, of which $400 million would be in semi-privatised infrastructure. In late 2012, DBSA CEO Patrick Dlamini announced a 'new restructuring process, staff would be retrenched [from 750 to 300] and corruption would not be tolerated. We can no longer allow the DBSA to be associated with shoddy work' (Mungadze 2012). The man tasked with ensuring the revitalization of the DBSA in the region was Mo Shaik, who trained as an optometrist but became the leading spy in the Zuma government prior to numerous internal crises in the National Intelligence Agency. One problem was his revelation of important and highly embarrassing political secrets to US embassy officials, which in turn were published by WikiLeaks (Rademayer 2011). Shaik's forced resignation from the security services in 2012 was followed by a brief Harvard executive course, after which he was controversially appointed the DBSA's main liaison to the region (Molathlwa 2012).

Conclusion: is BRICS subimperialist?

In sum, lubricated by finance whose gateway may be South Africa, are the BRICS doing deputy-sheriff duty for global corporations, while controlling their own angry populaces as well as their hinterlands? The eco-destructive, consumerist-centric, over-financialised, climate-frying maldevelopment model throughout the BRICS works very well for corporate profits, but is generating crises for the majority of its people and for the planet. Hence the label subimperialist is tempting. Marini (1974) argued that 1970s-era Brazil was 'the best current manifestation of subimperialism,' for three central reasons:

- 'Doesn't the Brazilian expansionist policy in Latin America and Africa correspond, beyond the quest for new markets, to an attempt to gain control over sources of raw materials – such as ores and gas in Bolivia, oil in Ecuador and in the former Portuguese colonies of Africa, the hydroelectric potential in Paraguay – and, more cogently still, to prevent potential competitors such as Argentina from having access to such resources?
- 'Doesn't the export of Brazilian capital, mainly via the State as exemplified by Petrobras, stand out as a particular case of capital export in the context of what a dependent country like Brazil is able to do? Brazil also exports capital through the constant increase of foreign public loans and through capital associated to finance groups which operate in Paraguay, Bolivia and the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, to mention just a few instances.
- 'It would be good to keep in mind the accelerated process of monopolization (via concentration and centralization of capital) that has occurred in Brazil over these past years, as well as the extraordinary development of financial capital, mainly from 1968 onward.'

Matters subsequently degenerated on all fronts. In addition to these criteria – regional economic extraction, 'export of capital' (always associated with subsequent imperialist politics) and internal corporate monopolization and financialisation – there are two additional roles for BRICS regimes if they are genuinely subimperialist. One is ensuring regional geopolitical 'stability': for example, Brasilia's hated army in Haiti and Pretoria's deal-making in African hotspots like South Sudan, the Great Lakes and the Central African Republic, for which $5 billion in South African arms purchases serve as military back-up.

The second is advancing the broader agenda of neoliberalism, so as to legitimate deepened market access. Evidence includes South Africa's Nepad; the attempt by China, Brazil and India to revive the WTO; and Brazil's sabotage of the left project within Venezuela's 'Bank of the South' initiative. A richer framing for contemporary imperialism is, according to agrarian scholars Paris Yeros and Sam Moyo (2011, 19), a system 'based on the *super-exploitation* of domestic labour. It was natural, therefore, that, as it grew, it would require external markets for the resolution of its profit realisation crisis.' This notion, derived from Rosa Luxemburg's thinking a century ago, focuses on how capitalism's extra-economic coercive capacities loot mutual aid systems and commons facilities, families (women especially), the land, all forms of nature, and the shrinking state; Harvey's (2003) accumulation by dispossession, and in special cases requiring militarist intervention, Klein's (2007) 'Shock Doctrine'.

Along with renewed looting, various symptoms of internal crisis and socio-economic oppressions are common within the BRICS, including severe inequality, poverty, unemployment, disease, violence (again, especially against women, as India unveiled in early 2013), inadequate education and prohibitions on labour organising. Rising BRICS inequality – except for Brazil whose minimum wage increase lowered the extreme Gini coefficient to a bit below South Africa's – is accompanied by worsening social tensions, and these turn are responded to with worsening political and civil rights violations, increased securitisation of societies, militarisation and arms trading, prohibitions on protest, rising media repression and official secrecy, debilitating patriarchy and homophobia, activist jailings and torture, and even massacres (including in Durban where a notorious police hit squad killed more than 50 people in recent years, and even following reports by local media and attempted prosecutions, continued into 2013).

The forms of BRICS subimperialism are diverse, for as Yeros and Moyo (2011, 19) remark, 'Some are driven by private blocs of capital with strong state support (Brazil, India); others, like China, include the direct participation of state-owned enterprises; while in the case of South Africa, it is increasingly difficult to speak of an autonomous domestic bourgeoisie, given the extreme degree of de-nationalisation of its economy in the post-apartheid period. The degree of participation in the Western military project is also different from one case to the next although, one might say, there is a "schizophrenia" to all this, typical of "subimperialism". As a result, all these tendencies warrant opposition from everyone concerned. The results are going to be ever easier to observe, the more that BRICS leaders prop up the IMF's pro-austerity financing and catalyse a renewed round of World Trade Organisation attacks; the more Africa becomes a battleground for internecine conflicts between subimperialists intent on rapid minerals and oil extraction (as is common in central Africa); the more the hypocrisy associated with BRICS/US sabotage of climate negotiations continues or offsetting carbon markets are embraced; the more that specific companies targeted by victims require unified campaigning and boycotts to generate solidaristic counter-pressure, whether Brazil's Vale and Petrobras, or South Africa's Anglo or BHP Billiton (albeit with London and Melbourne headquarters), or India's Tata or

Arcelor-Mittal, or Chinese state-owned firms and Russian energy corporations; and the more a new BRICS Bank exacerbates World Bank human, ecological and economic messes.

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