The Ordeal of Modernity in an Age of Terror

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Sometime during the increasingly tense European summer of 1938, the Anglo-Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski sat down to write an introduction to a new book by one of his students, Jomo Kenyatta—a book based on the graduate thesis the latter had written under his supervision at the London School of Economics. A scientific rationalist and atheist, as well as an antiracist, antifascist, and anticommunist, Malinowski was most of all in that fraught time a deeply frightened liberal watching Europe slide into war. During the 1930s he had shifted his focus from the South Pacific to Africa. Over the course of that decade he had become increasingly critical of European colonialism, particularly of what he regarded as its deeply destructive impact on indigenous societies. In his brief introductory essay, Malinowski reflected on Kenyatta's work and, no doubt, on their many long conversations during the three years Kenyatta had studied with him. He commented on the dilemma of the educated African who had "suffered the injury of higher education" and noted that "an African who looks at things from the tribal point of view and at the same time from that of Western civilization experiences the tragedy of the modern world in an especially acute manner" (1938:ix).

And what was this tragedy of the modern world? Malinowski immediately added, "For to quote William James, 'Progress is a terrible thing'" (1938:ix). What was called "progress" in Malinowski's era and "development" in ours refers to global social processes that have not simply

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enriched a few and impoverished the many, but, more tragically, have generated intense moral and political crises in every society and led to the most destructive violence against humanity and nature in history. Modernity and its cultural and institutional expressions in scientific rationality, capitalism, and the nation-state have engulfed the world in increasingly intense waves of global expansion from its Western European origins. The celebrated victory of liberal democracy and humanist social democracy in the West itself was not secured until the middle of the last century, and it is threatened again in this. And, as Sigmund Bauman (1989) has brutally reminded us, the same social forces of modernity that made possible liberal democracy, the welfare state, individual freedom and human rights, and the achievements of modern science and medicine, also made possible the Nazi Holocaust and the Soviet gulag.

Today, the desperate atrocities of global terrorism have brutally upset the amnesiac euphoria of Western elites over the "fall" of Communism and betrayed the fantasy expectations of neoliberal globalization. Modernity remains an unfinished project, a continuing source of bitter conflict as well as epochal change both in the West and in the non-Western societies in which it was abruptly and forcibly introduced. The ordeal of modernity is the enduring "tragedy of the modern world," and its impact on African societies large and small is the context and defines the issues for all of us who study the experience of the continent over the past three centuries.

As a graduate student, I wrote a paper on the psychology of terror. I was proud of it then, I am not now. But the conclusion comes back to haunt me: the object of terror is not violence in itself, but the destruction of security and trust in the protection of social institutions, in the stability and orderliness of everyday life, and in the ability of those in power to protect. Terror is the state of disorder, unpredictability, and overwhelming risk and menace that annihilates our trust in the social world. It is the deeply ambiguous and often destructive consequences of modernity in Africa that I wish to discuss tonight. I will examine, first, the social ordeal of capitalist modernity in the West and its relationships to the development of liberal democracy and the reconstructions of moral economy; second, the distinctive African experience of modernity; and finally, the current epoch of globalization and the profound immiseration, social decay, state failure, and acute vulnerability that make it for Africa an age of terror, as captured in the titles of two of the most profound reflections on the experience of modernity: *Things Fall Apart*, and *All That Is Solid Melts into Air.*

In 1944, while in exile in Britain, the anthropologist and Africanist Karl Polanyi published *The Great Transformation*, a cultural history of the industrial revolution in Britain. In 2001 it was republished in a new edition with an introduction by the economist Joe Stiglitz, who apparently lost his position as chief economist at the World Bank in 1999 by suggesting that the rigid conditions of the Bank's and the IMF's structural adjustment programs for developing countries were not appropriate in all situations.

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Polanyi's account focuses on the two central institutions of capitalist modernity in the West—the self-regulating market and national state—and their interaction in what he calls the "double movement": the first, a deliberate, politically engineered disembedding of the market from other social institutions of state regulation in order to create freely fluctuating factor markets for land, money, and labor; and the second, a spontaneous political reaction to protect nature and humanity from the destructive ravages of the free market. The self-regulating market, he noted, was a utopian dogma of secular salvation pursued with religious zeal by market liberals, the apostles of "laissez-faire" (Polanyi 1957:135–50).

Polanyi begins by noting that before modern times, no economy had ever existed that was controlled by markets. Human economies were as a rule submerged in social relations, and people acted not to safeguard their individual interests in the possession of material goods, but to safeguard their social standing, social claims, and social assets. Material goods were valued only insofar as they served these ends. The economic system was, therefore, a function of social organization in societies that were generally neither egalitarian nor democratic, but in which production and distribution were allocated according to principles of reciprocity and redistribution within the social hierarchy. Concentration of political power and material wealth among social elites was legitimated by redistribution to meet the needs of material and social security within the community. Each human community, to borrow E. P. Thompson's (1993) concept, has a moral economy: that is, the relations of law and custom defining the reciprocal obligations of elites and common people and governing the production, distribution, and redistribution of the material means of existence.[1] Each moral economy before modern times was also the challenged and contested basis of legitimate authority and wealth—the central focus and outcome of hegemonic struggle. And relations of ruler and subject typically took the form of patron and client, the anthropologists' "lopsided friendship," in a myriad of local variations from the most informal of social ties to the most elaborately differentiated system of ranks and formalized customs of behavior among superiors and subordinates. Authority in precapitalist moral economies was typically patriarchal within family groups, with an authoritarian paternalism—to extend the kin metaphor—in the wider society.

"The great transformation" of which Polanyi writes was, of course, the transition from mercantile to industrial capitalism through the creation of a self-regulating market, first in Britain between the 1780s and 1830s. This was, he notes, a complete transformation of the structure of society. Instead of the economy's being embedded in social relations, social relations were now embedded in the economic system. All economic interactions now took the form of supposedly freely entered contractual exchanges of commodities produced for sale in the market. This involved, most of all, the development of markets for what he called the "fictitious commodities" of land, labor, and capital. No longer was their allocation determined by

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social relations and custom, but solely by supply and demand in the marketplace.

The creation of a labor market was resisted the most fiercely, and its effective creation dates only from the repeal of the Old Poor Law in Britain in 1834. With the repeal, society became an accessory of the market, and the way of life of common people was not just profoundly altered but subject to unprecedented havoc and dislocation. Social conditions under the Industrial Revolution were, in Polanyi's words, "a veritable abyss of human degradation" (1957:39). Introducing unparalleled poverty, urban squalor, disease, and insecurity, the industrial revolution and the self-regulating market were, even more significantly, unprecedented cultural calamities that destroyed customary institutions and their moral economy, and induced that condition of disorienting uncertainty and disorder that I call the state of terror.

More profoundly still, the culture of modernity that powered the key institutions of industrial capitalism and the nation-state undermined and threatened to destroy the central cultural foundations of any existing social order.[2] First, and most important, was what Max Weber described as "the disenchantment of the world," the secularization of nature and society through the systematic development of rational knowledge and its instrumental application: a world understood as the contingent outcome of scientific laws in which instrumental rationality permitted purposeful intervention to control nature and society. Rather than divinely ordained necessity or fate, events were now the deliberate outcome of human agency and choice. Marx called this the movement from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Second, and closely related to secularization, was the transformation of conceptions of time and space, of human behavior and society itself, from the concrete to the ever more abstract and beyond the range of direct human experience, but open to deliberate manipulation. This included what Marx called the reification and fetishization of labor: its transformation from the human substance into a commodity that could be bought and sold and continuously applied in new ways. Even capital has been transformed by abstraction from precious metals to paper tokens to electronic bits existing only in computer memories. Third, the development of human agency and instrumental rationality has been based on the understanding of probability and risk in a contingent world. It is the most challenging cultural expression of secularization, as suggested by the title of Peter Bernstein's history of probability and risk, *Against the Gods* (1998). The calculation and management of risk is the basis of extending agency and predictable control in both capitalist enterprise and the state. Innovation and creation become self-conscious and planned, and focused on the creation of counterfactual states that did not exist before.

Finally, the culture of modernity rested upon the transformation of social trust from personal and concrete to abstract and universal—from trust in persons grounded in ties of kinship, community, and reciprocal

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relations of power and dependence embedded in the ontological frameworks of religious cosmologies and the meaningful routines of social tradition itself, to an impersonal abstract trust based upon the anticipated probity and competence of unknown others in complex, large-scale institutions of national and, indeed, international scale. Trust is always partially an act of faith that institutions and individuals will behave as they are supposed to, and it always involves some calculation of risk. In a bourgeois culture trust rested on a framework of business ethics applicable, in particular, to the contractual exchanges that were the heart of the system. Trust in the reliable behavior of others in the market made possible the counterfactual future orientation of capitalist modernity. Moreover, from the late eighteenth century, the development of a more abstract system of trust rested on the application of instrumental rationality through expert systems of technical and professional knowledge that organize the natural and social environment. These provided the basis for the rational calculation of risks and benefits and the reduction of uncertainty in the systems of production and exchange of modern industrial capitalism.

Before such systemic trust could be effectively established, however, the destructive impact of the self-regulating market had to be curbed by the second part of what Polanyi calls the "double movement": a spontaneous social movement of self-protection to bring the self-regulating market under social control. Developing the basis for a new hegemonic moral economy dominated the political agenda of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The focus was primarily on the state, which, having been the primary actor in creating the self-regulating market, was now seen as the principal agent of social protection and management. From factory legislation regulating hours and conditions of work to the legal creation of limited liability corporations, the central regulation of money supply, social legislation for education, health, and pensions, and national policies of tariffs and trade regulation, Western states acted to bring the market under control, subordinate it to social interests, and use it in deliberate projects of national development.

Social responses to the self-regulating market and modernity defined the entire spectrum of political and social movements. On the left, "scientific" socialists pressed the modernist project toward its ultimate rationalist conclusion in a socialist order free of the contradictions and inequities of capitalism. Anarchists rejected it entirely in favor of spontaneous cooperation as utopian as the invisible hand of market liberals, and they invented modern terrorism in "the propaganda of the deed." On the right, antimodernism flourished in movements of religious revival, romantic reaction, and conservative nationalism, only too ready to accept the wealth and weaponry of industrialism while rejecting its secularizing culture and reinventing "tradition" as an instrument of social order (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). At every step of the way the process was deeply contested, marked by intense conflict and repeated violence. The outcome, in the form of sec-

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ular liberal democracy, was never the inevitable result of liberal principles, but more the contingent outcome of strategic and co-optative reforms by hard-pressed regimes that blunted threats of revolution, restored a degree of social stability and order, and provided some improvement in material conditions and security for the bulk of the population. Moreover, the dominance of liberal democracy was not secured in Western Europe until after the bloodiest world war in history, and in Eastern Europe, not until the collapse of Communism in 1990 (see Mazawer 2000).

Trust is essential not only to the functioning of the self-regulating market but also to the functioning of liberal democratic states, and systemic trust in state institutions sustains trust in the apparently separate spheres of the market and civil society. The national state requires trust not only in the competence and probity of politicians and public officials who can rarely be personally known, but also in the fairness and efficacy of the institutions of the state itself. Liberal democracy is based on the development of a widespread trust, cutting across cleavages of class, region, and ethnicity, that political institutions act as disinterested arbiters of clashing interests. This trust involves an essential public belief that the political process can be used to pursue the visions of differing social interests and that institutional rules provide for transparency and accountability in the formulation and implementation of public policy. It is, in turn, the fundamental basis of political agency; without it, risk and unpredictability render collective organization and action literally unthinkable (Dunn 1988). Trust makes possible and encourages the pursuit of collective political objectives of principle and policy, rather than a politics of narrow materialism and self-interest. Thus, we can act politically in liberal democracy in pursuit of suprapersonal principles because we trust that elections are fair; that unknown bureaucrats are competent and unbiased in the administration of policy; and that politicians and leaders of interest associations, whom we support but cannot know personally, will not give all the jobs and contracts to their friends and relatives, sell out to the opposition, and run off with the money.

The achievement of civic trust in Western liberal democracies facilitated the construction of a new hegemonic moral economy. The state increasingly became the guarantor of social security. In the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II, the process culminated in the creation of the Keynesian moral economy that dominated state policy in Western democracies for a generation, marrying state macroeconomic management of the market with a commitment to full employment and the full range of welfare services. The achievement of such a renewed moral economy has varied over time and from society to society. Each major era of crisis in the capitalist world system has occasioned major restructuring of production and markets, and with that another major crisis of moral economy and political legitimacy. The hegemony of the Keynesian moral economy linking capital, labor, and the state itself fell into crisis during the 1970s, and for the past twenty-five years has been under increasing attack as we have entered what

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political economists call the Third Industrial Revolution of neoliberal globalization. This has been marked in the West by unprecedented attacks on public services of health, education, and human security, along with the most dramatic widening of the inequalities of wealth and income distribution in more than a century.[3] Moreover, civic trust in the institutions of liberal democracy has been persistently undermined by particularistic ties of individuals and factions, clientelism and cronyism, and by institutional bias, opaque decision-making, and special deals and preferential access to public goods.

Industrial capitalism, the nation-state, and the culture of modernity came to Africa and the rest of the non-Western world primarily through the forceful imposition of Western hegemony, most importantly in the epoch of the first globalization of the self-regulating market during the 1870–1914 period. Mike Davis (2001) has recalled to modern memory the lethality of the famines of this era. Some 30 to 60 million died in India, where the Raj refused to interfere with the "natural laws" of the market, so that Indian wheat was shipped to London while Indian peasants boiled the thatch of their houses for food and ate their small children; and in China, the sadly decayed empire of the Qing, its granaries empty and the Grand Canal silted up, was able to provide no relief for its starving peasants. The political elites of non-Western states in Asia and Africa readily understood the threat from the European powers and its basis in industrial modernity. Their characteristic response was an attempt at a defensive, conservative modernization, moving from the purchase of modern weapons to seeking to develop the means of making them. This was selective modernity, taking from the West only what would sustain and enhance their power. It was, however, grounded in the untenable contradiction of seeking the science and technology that they believed was the basis of Western power, but rejecting the secular culture of modernity that threatened to dissolve the hegemonic cosmologies, religious systems, and moral economies on which their own power and institutions were based. This led, often enough, to bitter internal conflicts, sometimes ending in civil strife, between modernizers and traditionalists. In the end, only one of these efforts at conservative modernization, that of Japan, succeeded in both warding off the threat of Western imperialism and establishing a secular industrial nation-state.

In Africa, the most powerful of the West African states, Ashanti, failed in this process, which included a bitter civil war between reformers and conservatives in the 1880s. In 1895, an Ashanti embassy arrived in London to negotiate with the British, who were dealing in bad faith, as they were already planning the conquest of Ashanti in the following year. While in London, the ambassadors took time to negotiate a contract with a British entrepreneur for a comprehensive turn-key development of the kingdom covering everything from transportation and communications, to educational and health institutions, a new police force, establishment of a mint

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and banks, mining and manufacturing, improved agriculture, and the publication of newspapers. Had their command of English been better, they might have been more careful about signing a contract with a gentleman named George Reckless! (Wilks 1996:48–51).

The encounter with Western modernity was posed with even greater urgency under colonial domination. Malinowski understood that the relationship was not an equal exchange, but one based upon European domination established largely by force and involving a very selective introduction of Western institutions and culture to serve specific European interests. Nevertheless, he insisted on the tenacity and continuity of African cultures and their vigorous response to colonialism. The result, he believed, would not be the demise of African cultures and their replacement by a facsimile of Western modernity, but rather what he called a *tertium quid*, a third way creating a new civilization in which Western and African elements were combined in ways that radically modified and reinterpreted both—his version of the double movement. By the 1930s Malinowski increasingly recognized the importance of the project of conservative modernization being pursued not only by indigenous African political elites, such as King Sobhuza II of Swaziland, to whom he was introduced by his student Hilda Kuper during his only visit to Africa in 1934, but also by the first generation of a new literate intelligentsia, like his student Kenyatta.[4] It was an attempt to selectively control social change and preserve a sense of continuity, order, and authority against the turbulent commotion of colonialism: "Order and Progress" was Jomo Kenyatta's motto.

To what extent, then, did the development of the *tertium quid* take place in colonial Africa? Thirty years ago, the British economist Geoffrey Kay caused a minor sensation when he suggested that Africa's problems were not that it had been exploited by capitalism, but that it had not been exploited enough (1975:x). The relative weakness of colonial states and their reluctance to press the development of capitalist labor and commodity markets beyond a point where metropolitan trading interests and local tax needs were satisfied resulted in confused, disorderly, and incomplete capitalist transformations of subject African societies. To maintain control and sustain the limited extraction of labor and commodities, colonial states relied on indirect rule through local African authorities, both indigenous and colonial creations, who were rewarded by channels of clientelistic access to state resources. Colonial officials became, in effect, patrons of their African clients/collaborators. Patron-client relationships, already deeply embedded in most African societies, became the dominant social relation of power, the fundamental idiom of politics, and the mode of access to the state and the resources of modernity.

The inequities and conflicts resulting from the intrusions of state and capital into African societies made modernity, as John Lonsdale (2000) put it, into a "monster of social disruption," and in both its opportunities and oppressions an instrument of moral danger and confusion. Former under-

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standings of moral economy and political legitimacy that were bound up with the reciprocal obligations of ruler and ruled, rich and poor, elders and youth, men and women were called into question. Ethnicity and class, long seen by Africanists as alternative bases of social cleavage, have actually been intimately linked products of the same social forces and expressions of the moral and political crises of colonial modernity.

The disruptions of colonial modernity were experienced as a crisis of moral economy, a challenge to indigenous understandings of the legitimate bases of inequalities of wealth and power, authority and obedience, and the reciprocities and loyalties of social relations. Contests over property rights and access to resources, including the new opportunities of modernity through state and capital, and social differentiation and class formation became inseparable from debates over the legitimacy of political authority and the definition of moral and political community cast in ethnic terms. Colonial states and markets provided differential opportunities and threats to the position and reciprocal obligations of all. For chiefs and elders there were opportunities to increase control over land and property and to increase wealth through the patronage of the state and favored access to markets, but there were also threats from the loss of control over youth and women who found opportunities in migrant labor and trade. Male loss of control over women, particularly of their labor and offspring, provoked widespread moral panic in community after community. Confrontations over class formation were subsumed within disputes and discourses about custom, social obligation and responsibility, and the bounds of the moral community. The deep politics of patron-client relations was the terrain of social struggle, its arguments the idiom of the search for political authority and accountability in times of disorienting change and disorder. Modern African ethnicities originated in attempts to reconstruct political community against the threat of class formation. In arguing out conflicts to redefine an accepted moral economy, Africans became members of self-conscious ethnic communities both larger in social scale and more sharply demarcated than what had existed before. This internal discursive political arena, through which ethnic identities have emerged out of multiple, selective imaginings of "tradition," culture, and identity from European as well as African sources, is what Lonsdale and I have termed "moral ethnicity" (see Lonsdale 1994, Berman 1998; see also Berman 2004:24–29).

A moral economy of a sort, tenuous and constantly disrupted, emerged in colonial Africa, but constructed *within* newly expanded ethnic communities, urban and rural, and based on the pervasive patron-client networks. In disordered and threatening social circumstances, ethnic communities became the focus of an increasingly desperate search for security and stability. As Peter Ekeh has pointed out, ethnic communities became megakinship systems meeting individual security needs and dispensing material benefits through the direct and indirect reciprocities of internal networks

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built on the relations of "big men and small boys" (2004:34–36). And the networks of clientelism remained the principal mode of linkage to the postcolonial state, providing access to its diverse resources and protection from its erratic and unpredictable power to harm. The state remained an alien entity, both a threat and an opportunity, the focus of an amoral contest for its resources among competing ethnic networks. Politics became an increasingly opportunistic food chain, in which, as Chabal and Daloz remind us, legitimacy "continues to primarily rest on practices of redistribution" (1999: 3; ch.3). And thus the "politics of the belly" and the pervasive metaphors of eating and being eaten with which Africans so often describe the political process. This is the arena of political tribalism, not the moral ethnicity of a community of rights and obligations, but the political solidarity and mobilization of that community against the competing interests of rival ethnicities. Social trust in Africa is largely contained within ethnic communities, and even here the materialism of relations makes loyalties shallow. There was and continues to be little basis for the development of systemic civic trust in the state as an impersonal arbiter of conflict or an honest and disinterested distributor of public resources.

Indeed, capitalism and the secular nation-state simply do not exist as fully formed institutional and cultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa, with the possible exception of South Africa: no double movement, no *tertium quid.* Instead, neither state power nor ruling coalitions have been organized around transformative projects directed toward either capitalism or the nation-state. Such a project actually threatens the established bases for the accumulation of wealth and power, and the patronage politics that sustain elites and ethnic factions. African states are stalled in a heaving, chaotic pluralism of clashing institutional and cultural elements. People attempt to find in ethnic communities, each internally divided and contested, a degree of support and security, with some semblance of cultural and moral coherence in an environment of intense, even desperate, competition for resources. The state is a conglomeration of agencies and offices to be captured and manipulated, beneath the façade of the official "development" ideology, for individual and communal benefit. The arbitrary and authoritarian use of state power to accumulate wealth reflects the limited development of the impersonal exchange relations of the capitalist market and of the state as disinterested arbiter of political conflict. Not only do ethnic and patronage politics inhibit the development of a coherent national dominant class with a project of social transformation, but the fragmentation and privatization of state power also undermine the ability of the institution to enact such a project of national development.

For a while, during the exhilarating days of independence in the 1960s and into the 1970s, the ramshackle structures of the state and market—and the networks of ethnicity and patronage that pervaded them, powered by substantial inflows of aid and modest ones of investment—produced eco-

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nomic growth in most states and a degree of industrialization in some. Aid and growth fueled, in particular, the most prized forms of patronage in the public sector jobs of a growing white-collar salariat and in community access to schools and health facilities. Modest progress toward modernity appeared to be occurring through the rhizomes of ethnicity and patronage that persisted even when elected governments were replaced by military regimes and increasingly authoritarian civilian governments.

And then came the 1980s. From the most profound structural crisis of Western capitalism of the late twentieth century emerged the Third Industrial Revolution. For the Western capitalist powers it meant an effort to revise the Keynesian moral economy of the 1945–70 epoch of expansion; for the rest of the world it brought the most sustained attempt since the nineteenth century to aggressively spread everywhere with fanatic religious zeal the "unrealizable fantasy" of the self-regulating market: globalization.[5] The U.N. *Global Report on Human Settlements* noted that by the 1990s, "under what were almost perfect economic conditions according to the dominant neo-liberal economic doctrine, one might have imagined the decade would have been one of unrivalled prosperity and social justice" (U.N.-Habitat 2003:2). Instead, as Mike Davis notes, "the brutal tectonics of neo-liberal globalization since 1978 are analogous to the catastrophic processes that shaped a 'third world' in the first place, during the era of Victorian Imperialism (1870–1900)" (2004:23). The modest economic and social gains of the first decades of independence were wiped out. The World Bank country report on Nigeria for 2003 acknowledged that per capita income in Africa's most populous country was lower than it had been at independence (World Bank 2003).

This social catastrophe has been, moreover, primarily an urban phenomenon. In the earlier experience of Western modernity, cities had been the central focus of capitalist industrialization, the development of classes, and the creation of modern secular scientific culture, as well as the principal site of the growth of the central institutions of the nation-state and of the mass movements and political struggles of the double movement to contain the destructive excesses of the self-regulating market. In contemporary Africa, Asia, and Latin America, however, extreme economic decline has been combined, against all conventional economic logic, with sustained high rates of urban population growth: 5 to 8 percent per annum in Africa alone. The U.N. report places the blame for this squarely on neoliberalism and structural adjustment programs.[6] The result, in Davis's vivid phrase, has been the "mass production of slums," especially in Africa, where Lagos now sits as "the biggest node in the shanty town corridor of 70 million people that stretches from Abidjan to Ibadan: probably the biggest continuous footprint of urban poverty on earth" (2004:11, 15). Ethiopia and Chad now have the unenviable distinction of possessing the highest percentage of slum dwellers among their urban populations, a staggering 99.4

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percent; while Maputo and Kinshasa have the poorest urban dwellers, two-thirds of whom earn less than the cost of their minimum daily nutritional requirements.

The metastasizing shanty towns of structural adjustment are populated by former peasants and small farmers whose livelihoods and communities were devastated when they were thrown into global commodity markets dominated by multinational agribusiness, and an urban middle class and working class immiserated by the slashing of the public sector and ruin of import substitution industries. Today, the "informal sector" is not a field for enterprising micro-entrepreneurs but an increasingly ruthless economy of survival, employing 60 percent of the urban labor force in Africa and estimated to provide 90 percent of the new jobs over the next decade (U.N.-Habitat 2003:103–4). A large proportion of the population of Africa has been reduced, in the chilling Victorian word, to a social "residuum" effectively expelled from the global market. And to this we must add the threat to life and institutions of the almost biblical plague of AIDS.

According to the U.N.-Habitat report, the "main single cause of increases in poverty and inequality during the 1980s and 1990s was the retreat of the state" (2003:48). The degradation of the already limited capacities of postcolonial states has had two further consequences. First, it has made it impossible for African states to pursue the interventionist and protectionist policies that all developed capitalist states, including the new industrial nations of Asia, have deployed to manage the market, guide industrial development, and construct some semblance of a functional internal moral economy (Wade 2004; Berman 1994). Second, the already tenuous and contested moral economies of Africa's ethnic patronage systems have been increasingly strained by the evaporation of resources and escalating conflicts within and between communities for the appropriation and redistribution of what remains. The democratization process of the 1990s and beyond has provided no solutions. Multiparty elections produce governments that can, in practice, pursue only the neoliberal policies required by the IFIs and the G8; John Gray describes their agenda as "an attempt to legitimate through democratic institutions severe limits on the scope and content of democratic control over economic life" (Gray 1999; see also Abrahamsen 2000). Without the ability to pursue alternative social and economic policies, governments of whatever party are simply alternations of competing ethnopatronage networks of the political magnates. This means not only no effective economic growth, but also no double movement, no *tertium quid.*

Without an effective state and political process, the response of the impoverished millions in Africa cannot be the secular mass movements of modernity that shaped the liberal democracies of the West. Throughout Africa today there are few if any effective trade unions or parties of the working or middle classes, partly because there are few such workers left and the scope of action within democratized polities remains so con-

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strained. Instead Africans cling to the deteriorating networks of ethnic patronage, including the culture of witchcraft and occult powers that surround "big men"; or they turn to the analgesic balms of populist Islam or Pentecostal Christianity (Davis 2004: 27–33). The condition of existential dread and insecurity that neoliberalism has laid upon African societies is the age of terror and the ordeal of modernity in our times.

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Notes

1. See especially chapter 4, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," and chapter 5, "The Moral Economy Reviewed."
2. These points are synthesized from, among other sources, Giddens (1991), Kern (1983), and Lowe (1982).
3. From among almost daily examples, see Lowenstein (2005).
4. Sobhuza articulated the project for them all when he later told Hilda Kuper (1947:1): "European culture is not all good; ours is often better. We must be able to choose how to live, and for that we must see how others live. I do not want my people to be imitation Europeans, but to be respected for their own laws and customs." He corresponded with Malinowski for several years, particularly on how to integrate Western education with Swazi institutions and culture. See Cocks (2000:25–47).
5. This new attempt of market fundamentalism is critically analyzed in Gray (1999). He specifically connects his analysis of the contemporary period with Polanyi's of the nineteenth century.
6. "The primary direction of both national and international interventions during the last twenty years has actually increased urban poverty and slums, increased exclusion and inequality, and weakened urban elites in their efforts to use cities as engines of growth" (U.N.-Habitat 2003:6).

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