

Representation Is Not Difference

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Abstract

In this article, we put forth the argument that globalization represents a Durkheimian mechanicalization of the world via the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under American hegemony. The latter (America), we conclude, serves as an imperial agent, an empire, seeking to interpellate and embourgeois the masses or multitudes to the juridical framework of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, and in the age of capitalist globalization and climate change this is done within the dialectical processes of two forms of fascism or system and social integration: right-wing neoliberalism and identity politics masquerading as cosmopolitanism. Identity constitution within such a society leads to representation without difference of purposive-rationality as all social actors are interpellated and embourgeoised to fulfill their economic role in the social structure with representation, without difference, as the means of generating surplus-value for global capital.

Keywords: ideological domination, capitalism, underclass, globalization, blacks, theory, globalization as culture, culture of globalization

1. Introduction

Globalization represents a Durkheimian mechanicalization of the world via the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under American (neoliberal) hegemony. The latter (American hegemon), we conclude, serves as an imperial agent, an empire, seeking to interpellate and embourgeois the masses or multitudes of the world to the juridical framework of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, and in the age of (neoliberal) capitalist globalization and climate change this is done within the dialectical processes of two forms of fascism or system/social integration: right-wing neoliberalism and left-wing identity

politics masquerading as cosmopolitanism or hybridization. Both positions represent two sides of the same fascistic coin in the age of (neoliberal) globalization and climate change. On the one hand, neoliberal globalization represents the right-wing attempt to homogenize (converge) the nations of the globe into the overall market-orientation, i.e., private property, individual liberties, austerity, and entrepreneurial freedoms, of the capitalist world-system. This neoliberalization is usually juxtaposed, on the other hand, against the narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity of the left, which converges with the neoliberalizing process via commodification and the diversified consumerism of the latter groups

as they seek equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with white agents of the former within their market logic. Hence private property, individual liberties, difference, diversified consumerism, and the entrepreneurial freedoms of the so-called marketplace become the mechanisms of system and social integration for both groups in spite of the fact that the logic of the marketplace is exploitative and environmentally hazardous. In this work, we posit that identity constitution within these two socioeconomic and political processes is unable to deal with their exploitative and environmental problematics in postindustrial societies like the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) in the age of globalization due to the fact that identity constitution leads to identity representation without difference of purposive-rationality as all social actors are interpellated and embourgeoised to fulfill their commodified and economic roles in the social structure with representation, without difference, as the means of generating surplus-value for global capital through diversified consumerism.

2. Background of the Problem

The linguistic turn in meaning and identity constitution, which supplanted biological determinism in the early twentieth century, whether in linguistics or the social sciences, presupposes that meaning and the nature of human identity or consciousness is nothing more than the relationships which pertain within a given linguistic system, structure, culture, or social structure. Thus, such questions as those pertaining to matters of human agency, individual or shared interests, community, etc., have generally been ignored by so-called "structuralists" (Edgar & Sedgwick, 1999, p. 383). This in turn makes most structural approaches synchronic; that is, most structuralists approach a phenomenon at a single moment in history, or as something existing outside history, which is unchanging.

It is well known that Ferdinand de Saussure in linguistics, to Claude Lévi-Strauss in anthropology, and Talcott Parsons and Louis Althusser in sociology postulate this synchronic world ordered into an interconnected semiotic system. In Saussurean structuralism, which serves as the model for the social sciences, language "is viewed as a purely arbitrary system of signs in which *parole* or speech is subsidiary to *langue*, the formal dimension of

language. *Parole* is the world's messiness that the semiotic order [or formal dimension] shuns" (Obeyesekere, 1997, p. 18), subjecting social actors to its binary rules that gives them their conceptual framework, rather than the other way around (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Marshall, 1998; Saussure, 1972 [1916]).

In anthropology, Lévi-Strauss extends this idea to culture, and culture too becomes a system of external signs, which reflect the structure or categories of the mind, exercised in social relations to order experience (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 279). Just the same, in sociology Talcott Parsons, and many others, employs the notion of structure or system to refer to modern capitalist society as an "organic" whole or totality consisting of interrelated parts (i.e., structurally differentiated) that perform specific functions in relation to each other and contribute to the maintenance of the whole, i.e., structural functionalism (Parsons, 1951, p. 5-6). The structural Marxism of Louis Althusser, and many others, replaces both Parsons's conservative holism and Levi-Strauss's mental (cultural) categories by positions in modes of production and relations to the means of production for the structure or system that governs meaning and gives social actors their conceptual framework (Althusser, 2001 [1971]).

The logical consequence of the adoption of the Saussurean position by Lévi-Strauss, Parsons, and Althusser in philosophy and the social sciences, however, is the implication that human action, or consciousness, lies in the reproduction of the relational (binary rules for inclusion and exclusion) objective models of society as either structured by our minds, or the external interrelated structures of signification as internalized by social actors. Therefore, to understand human social agency, one only needs to understand either how the mind structures reality (transcendental idealism), or the differentiating (relational) rules of a culture, social structure, or social system. Both positions, however, are problematic. In the psychologism of the former case, social structure reflecting the structure of the mind, social practice or action and its variability are inconceivable in that there is no analytical means to explain how the internal "binary" processes of the mind give rise to the external empirical phenomena of social structures, practices, and their variabilities. In the latter case, structure or social structure as a reflection of the internalization of external

functional structures of signification, i.e., part/whole relationship, the possibility for, and the origins of, the variability of practices, which have ontological status in the world, amongst irreducibly situated subjects are inconceivable, as human subjects or social actors are only reproducing in their actions the relational meaning and representation of the external objective social world (society), without any alternative practices, deviations, or improvisations outside of the structural differentiation of the social structure.

Moreover, since the 1960's with the advent of postmodern and post-structural theories, which emphasized *Parole* over *langue* for understanding human agential initiatives, into the theoretical discourses of social science academics a new struggle regarding the origins and nature of identity and consciousness vis-à-vis the aforementioned structural problematics has dominated social science and philosophical theories. The issue centers on several factors raised by postmodern and post-structural thinkers in the likes of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan against the structuralism of the sciences, 1) they question the validity regarding the Cartesian rational individual, which Foucault and Derrida deny in favor of their attempt to dissolve the subject altogether; 2) they question the interdependency of the constitution of a stable structure and a distinct subject with agency, in denying the latter they undermine the former; 3) they question the status of science; 4) finally, they question the possibility of the objectivity of any language of description or analysis.

In this article, using Mocombe's theory of phenomenological structuralism to resolve this structure/agency in understanding identity constitution, we posit that the postmodern and post-structural positions are completely nonveridical in that the four factors they raised are themselves a product of a (postindustrial) social structure, which promotes commodification of identity and representation, without difference of purposive-rationality, as means to continue the reproduction of the Protestant capitalist social structure in postindustrial phases of capitalism's development.

3. Theory and Method

Mocombeian (2019, 2021a, 2021b) phenomenological structuralism, which is a

structurationist theory that views the constitution of society, human identity, and social agency as a duality and dualism, views the contemporary postindustrial social structure in the West and America as paradoxically constituted via Protestant neoliberalism and identity politics. Mocombeian phenomenological structuralism posits that societal and agential constitution are a result of power relations, interpellation, and socialization or embourgeoisement via five systems, i.e., mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, which are reified as a social structure or what Mocombe (2019) calls a "social class language game" by persons, power elites, who control the means and modes of production in a material resource framework. Once interpellated and embourgeoisied by these five systems, which are reified as a social structure and society (social class language game), social actors, for their ontological security, recursively organize, reproduce, and are differentiated by the rules of conduct of the social structure, which are sanctioned by the power elites who control the means and modes of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse in a material resource framework. Hence, societal and agential constitution are both a duality and dualism: a dualism given the reification of the social structure (social class language games) via the five systems; and a duality given the internalization of the rules of the five systems, which become the agential initiatives or praxes of social actors differentiated by the rules of conduct that are sanctioned based on the economic mode of production. Difference, or alternative social praxis, in Mocombe's structuration theory, phenomenological structuralism, is not structural differentiation as articulated by traditional structurationists such as Bourdieu, Sahlins, Habermas, and Giddens; instead, it is a result of actions arising from the deferment of meaning and ego-centered communication given the interaction of two other structuring structures (physiological drives of the body and brain; and phenomenal properties of subatomic particles that constitute the human subject) vis-à-vis the mental stance of the ego during the interpellation and socialization or embourgeoisement of social actors throughout their life span or cycle in the dominant social class language game or social

structure, which produces alternative praxis that is exercised at the expense of the threat these practices may pose to the ontological security of social actors in the social structure or society.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the age of (neoliberal) globalization the latter processes, according to Mocombe, are utilized by the American empire to retrench and force nation-states to adopt the juridical rules and policies of neoliberal capitalism, i.e., private property, individual liberties, and entrepreneurial freedoms, for capitalist development and accumulation. Paradoxically, the (Western postindustrial) left utilizes these same processes, via identity politics and diversified consumerism, contemporarily, in order to promote equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with the white globalizing power elites of the right in spite of the exploitation and climate change problematics caused overwhelmingly by the latter processes under capitalism and American hegemony. Hence, instead of promoting an alternative form of system and social integration to the neoliberal fascism of the right, the cultural elites of the left, antagonistically, building on the concepts of postmodern and post-structural theories, seek to integrate within it using the same methods, i.e., radical authoritarianism, ultranationalism, forcible suppression of opposition, and strong regimentation of society and of the economy, of the fascist right to promote the narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, identity politics, diversified consumerism, and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with the white power elites as the counter-hegemonic alternative to neoliberalism in the age of globalization and climate change. Under these two processes, neoliberalism and identity politics, America and the West promote globalization, which in essence represents representation and inclusion through the commodification of the self and cultural/sexual identity, for diversified consumerism, within the capitalist world-system, without difference from the purposive-rationality of the white power elites, i.e., agents of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

Globalization represents the discursive practice, "spirit of capitalism," of American agents of the Protestant Ethic seeking to interpellate and homogenize, through outsourcing, mass mediatization, and consumption patterns,

"other" human behaviors, cultures and sexual identities, around the globe within the logic of their metaphysical discourse, "the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism," so as to accumulate profit, via agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial/consumerist production, for the predestined from the damned. That is, via globalization social actors around the globe are socialized, through state ideological apparatuses such as education and neoliberal market forces, funded by the IMF, World Bank, etc., via the US nation-state, to become agents of the Protestant ethic so as to fulfill their labor and consumptive roles in the organization of work required by their nation-state in the global capitalist world-system under American hegemony. Integration via the retrenchment of the nation state under American global hegemony subsequently leads to economic gain and status for a few predestined, administrative bourgeoisie, or transnational capitalist class, that in-turn become cultural consumers, given the mediatization of society, of commodified identities, and bourgeois goods and services from postindustrial societies like America while the masses (whose identities are commodified) are taught (via the church or school) the Protestant work ethic to labor in agricultural, industrial, or tertiary tourist or financial industries. Hence, proper socialization of the other in the contemporary capitalist American dominated world-system is tantamount to hybridization, i.e., the socialization of the other as a liberal bourgeois Protestant *other* seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their white counterparts within the neoliberal framework of the global capitalist nation-state world-system under American hegemony by commodifying and servicing their cultural, sexual, and self-identities for capital accumulation and representation. This left-wing process of integration via hybridization and commodification is just as fascistic as the right-wing integrative measures of the globalizing nation, i.e., America, and do not proffer an alternative social praxis or purposive rationality to the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

American capital beginning in the 1970s sought to outsource work to other nation-states in order to escape the high cost of labor and environmental laws in the US. Given the new civil rights legislations enacted in the 1960s, as a

result of the civil rights movement, to reinforce the American liberal bourgeois Protestant social order without regards to race, creed, nationality, etc. that discourse would be exported to other nation-states. American capital, therefore, sought to hybridized other ethnic cultures/practices the world over via the retrenchment of the nation state and color-blind (ideological) legislation in order to make social actors of other cultures known for two reasons, to socialize them to the individualized and entrepreneurial work ethic of the neoliberal globalizing process and to accumulate surplus-value as American capital sought to service (by commodifying the narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity of the left) the others of ethnic, gender, racial, and sexual communities as agents of and for capital, i.e., consumers and administrative bourgeoisie controlling production for global capital, for their postindustrial economy focused on financial investment and cultural, sexual, and ethnic entertainment.

Upon the encountering of the liberal bourgeois Protestant discourse, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and mode of production of the metaphysics of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism under American hegemony, the response of the "other" cultural, sexual, ethnic, and racial groups was, and or is, participation in the world market system, using the ideologies and ideological apparatuses of their nation-states and transnational corporations of globalizing forces to negative dialectically convict white bourgeois Protestant society for not living up to their standards. Forcing them to do so via representation and identity politics for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with the white power elites of the globalizing force. Hence, the hybridization, or liberal bourgeois Protestantism of cultural "others," which guides the behavior of many "other" cultural, gender, and sexual identities in the world-system as they seek to open up their nation-state markets for investment and participation in the global marketplace is a subversive-less hybrid simulacra of white liberal bourgeois Protestant ideals and actions and is not counter-hegemonic to the globalizing process under American hegemony. Instead, like the right-wing fascism of the globalizing power seeking to retrench the nation-state system under the control of corporatist dictators within the juridical framework of neoliberalism; the

left-wing identity politics of the elite others also adopt the radical authoritarianism, ultranationalism, forcible suppression of opposition, and strong regimentation of society and of the economy of the right in order to promote their purposive-rationality of equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. within the juridical rules and laws of neoliberalism in the face of its deleterious effects, i.e., exploitation and climate change. Hence representation is promoted via the narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity, which converges with the neoliberalizing process through commodification and diversified consumerism; but difference of purposive-rationality is denied as the emphasis for the so-called other is commodification, diversified consumerism, and embourgeoisement of the latter groups as they seek equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with white agents of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

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