Chapter 5

Shielding the Afro-Neoliberal Consensus from Contestation

Introduction

To maintain the initiative for advancing and imposing an Afro-neoliberal model of capitalism on Africa, the consensus underpinning this initiative had to be shielded from challenge. The AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring agenda had to be insulated and driven from above through technocratic practices and legitimating discourses. In addition to these class practices AU-NEPAD restructuring had to be driven through a fourth strategic element: excluding and coopting mass social forces. African civil society had to be contested and enlisted from above to ensure the non-hegemonic rule of the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes could be secured. This was not a politics of building a genuine continental and popular will to lead transformation. It was not about asserting hegemonic leadership which expressed the moral, intellectual and strategic authority to lead by organising consent in African civil society. Instead, and consistent with advancing the interests of transnational capital, AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has been about deepening Africa’s passive revolution. It has been done in the name of and for the African people in the context of a disciplined Africa.

This chapter scrutinises the politics of dividing and coopting African civil society to ensure the imposition of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. It brings into view the contentions from African civil society and how these positions have impacted on the fissures within African civil society. Moreover, this chapter analyses the class practices emanating from within AU-NEPAD restructuring to contest African civil society in the course of implementing the Afro-neoliberal consensus. This chapter looks at how participation has been institutionalised within organs of the AU, the role of the APRM in entrenching liberal democracy and good governance and the practice of addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment from above.
Through the class practices of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring the power structure of the African continent has been changing. New social forces have been engendered in the process of macro-restructuring, whose interests and ideological orientations have converged with Africa’s transnational fraction. In this process the old project of self-reliant development has been displaced and the new concept of control, Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring through the AU-NEPAD, has come to serve as the basis for the formation of a new continental historic bloc of forces led by Africa’s transnational fraction. It is this Afro-neoliberal historic bloc, directed by the transnational fraction of Africa’s ruling classes, that is leading Africa’s adjustment to transnational capital and Africa’s globalisation. Identifying and understanding the orientation of these social forces is crucial in understanding how social agency has operated through AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring.

**Mapping Critique of the AU - NEPAD**

The transnational fraction of the African ruling classes driving the AU-NEPAD agenda and Africa’s macro-restructuring has effectively kept out civil society in the formative and defining stages of the process. This is contrary to the claims and rhetoric within the AU-NEPAD about ‘African ownership’ and the aspirations of Africa’s people. This disjuncture between class practice from above and the exclusion of the raw aspirations and interests of Africa’s people at the base has sparked a great deal of debate about AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. Moreover, due to this disjuncture debate across African civil society has been deeply polarising. Various attempts have been made to map the debate and its various positions. Landsberg (2008: 207-208) refers to three positions: the ‘NEPAD engagers’ who he believes have a nuanced engagement but which is also critical of the NEPAD; the ‘NEPAD fundamentalists’ who believe NEPAD is the answer for Africa’s problems and the ‘NEPAD sceptics and smashers’ who believe the entire program and process must be confined to the ‘dustbin’. Maloka (2006: 87-88), on the other hand, refers to two anti-NEPAD positions. The first is the culturalist argument and critique made by Northern based political scientists who suggest that NEPAD merely
uses ‘democratic orthodoxy’ to continue and entrench neo-patrimonial relations. In other words, resource transfers within the AU-NEPAD are about more patronage. The second position he considers to be anti-capitalist and which is concerned with the ‘post-Washington consensus’ and the terms of Africa’s integration into the global economy.

This study cuts into the critique of the AU-NEPAD from a perspective that relates critique to the making of a continental passive revolution, a process of leading Africa’s neoliberalisation and integration into global capitalism by the transnational fraction of Africa’s ruling classes. Hence the typology offered is about how intellectual discourse about the AU-NEPAD either deepens or challenges the continental passive revolution. In this regard three categories are utilised to map critique of the AU-NEPAD: (i) instrumentalist critique, which refers to a current within the AU-NEPAD debate that accepts the objectives, principles and even strategies of the AU-NEPAD but believes there is room for change to make it more effective as a response to Africa’s crises (see Table 5.1); (ii) existential critique refers to a current within the AU-NEPAD debate that completely rejects the assumptions, premises, political economy and consequences of the AU-NEPAD. In short, it is a rejectionist position based on the need for alternatives to integration into global capitalism on the terms of transnational capital (see Table 5.2); (iii) is procedural critique which refers to how a democratic process of producing knowledge and answers to solve Africa’s crises is dealt with by the AU-NEPAD and what this means for power relations and Africa’s passive revolution (see Table 5.3).
Table 5.1: Critique I – Instrumentalist Critique of AU-NEPAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Social Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>▪ Change the terms of the partnership for greater African responsibility</td>
<td>AU officials and advisors, policy think tanks, academics, journalists and media, intellectuals in the diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Deepen African cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Strengthen South-South partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Strengthen link with civil society to give NEPAD a ‘human face’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>▪ Strengthen link with RECs, AU, NEPAD</td>
<td>African governments, diplomats, politicians, AU officials and advisors, technocrats, think tanks, academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Strengthen AU-NEPAD integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Work more closely with academic community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of AU-NEPAD</td>
<td>▪ Leadership Centric</td>
<td>Academics, think-tanks, advisors, journalists and media, intellectuals and business within the diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Focuses on big infrastructural projects, thus favouring transnationals rather than African capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ APRM is voluntary and financed by assessed member states</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Solutions</td>
<td>▪ Add on a Development Strategy</td>
<td>Academics, policy think tanks, advisors, journalists and media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Emphasis on poverty reduction aspects like MDGs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Incorporate Elements of existential critique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Make donors more accountable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to Cox (1995: 31), ‘problem solving theory takes the world as given (and on the whole as good) and provides guidance to correct dysfunctions or specific problems that arise within this existing order’. Hence the problem solving approach ‘maintains the existing order’. Instrumentalist critique of the AU-NEPAD restructuring process can be located in a problem solving theoretical framework. Such a framework does not attempt to question the objectives, assumptions and premises of Africa’s macro-restructuring.
Instead, it limits its critique to areas of weakness and lack of capacity that limit the realisation of the AU-NEPAD framework. While in some instances this critique might elude to problems with the neo-classical and liberal economic underpinnings of the AU-NEPAD, it treats such ideas in a very superficial way.¹ Such critique has a blind spot with regards to the depth and embeddedness of transnational neoliberalism, as Afro-neoliberalism. Moreover, such a perspective is ahistorical about AU-NEPAD neoliberalisation.

Consistent with its problem solving approach, instrumentalist critique attempts to provide solutions to make AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring work.² Hence by taking NEPADs assumptions and premises for granted it accepts at face value the viability of African partnership as part of an African solution to an African problem. Such a perspective is blind to the deeper power relations operating within AU-NEPAD restructuring and inducing African partnership. In many ways it exposes the limits of a realist ontology which merely explains change in terms of powerful states operating on the continent (Southall, 2006: 232). AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring in its operationalising as class strategy has been about much more than the power of big states as pointed out in the previous chapter. In many ways the media on the African continent have also approached the AU-NEPAD with a limited understanding of the power relations operating within AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. However, within the instrumentalist approach to AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring the media have embraced instrumentalism in different ways. On one extreme, the media has embraced the AU-NEPAD and its Afro-neoliberal underpinnings as the solution to make African capitalism work. Such media accept the power relations of NEPAD and are willing to contribute to its legitimacy as a pro-capitalist agenda (Kupe, 2005: 198). Esan (2004: 43) points to how, ‘the media has helped raise awareness of the problems that the partnership seeks to address’. Moreover, the African Times has given the NEPAD the African Achievement

¹ This is a view held by Chris Landberg, the former Executive Director of the Center for Policy Studies, an influential policy think tank in South Africa. See Landsberg (2008: 214).
² The Centre for Conflict Resolution, a policy think-tank, based in Cape Town South Africa is one among many institutions that practices such an approach to the AU-NEPAD. It has mobilised a number of academics and intellectuals on the continent into various research projects to promote such an approach to the AU-NEPAD. See Akokpari, Mvumba and Murithi (2008) and Akokpari and Zimbler (2008).
Award (HSGIC, 2002c:5). The *Financial Mail*, a South African based business magazine, has co-sponsored an infrastructure funding conference for NEPAD.\(^3\) The *Africa Report*, a business magazine with an important footprint on the African continent, consistently promotes an Afro-neoliberal approach to Africa’s development with its regular investment guides for particular African countries, while problematising obstacles and constraints.

At the same time, some adherents of instrumentalist critique have become selective about aspects of AU-NEPAD restructuring, including the media. This derives from a more general epistemological premise of the AU-NEPAD. That is the AU-NEPAD is based on ‘a realistic reading of conditions and possibilities’ confronting Africa (Maloka, 1997:39).\(^4\) Such a realism is contrasted with idealism and is meant to provide a compelling basis for the acceptance of the AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring or aspects of it and easily slides into legitimising it. In this regard sections of Africa’s media and academic community have also appropriated elements of AU-NEPAD restructuring and have championed these as crucial solutions to solve Africa’s challenges. In this process legitimating elements of Afro-neoliberalism. In the course of 2008 the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper, based in South Africa and which has an electronic online version, ran a series on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how they relate to the development prospects of African countries. This was meant to assist the public understand what it means for African countries to overcome their poverty challenges. The MDGs are consistent with the trickle down growth frameworks of the World Bank and IMF, but yet sections of Africa’s media and various think tanks have promoted it as the solution to Africa’s poverty challenges.\(^5\) Another example of championing an aspect of AU-NEPAD is the African Peer Review Mechanism. The South African Institute of International Affairs, a foreign policy think-tank with close ties with the transnational

\(^3\) See [www.nepadbusinessfoundation.org/nepad/pmo.jsp](http://www.nepadbusinessfoundation.org/nepad/pmo.jsp). NBF website is a crucial organising tool to inform its members of business opportunities within NEPAD. It has profiled many conferences and initiatives to ensure member participation and its business members pursue their interests.

\(^4\) This is an argument that has been made consistently by the Africa Institute of South Africa, a foreign policy think tank of the South African government. Its former Executive Director, Eddy Maloka, advocated such an interpretation of the AU-NEPAD.

\(^5\) One cannot help wondering whether these media houses and their journalists can have their needs met with $1 a day. Also see an Africa Institute of South Africa publication edited Nwonwu (2008).
fraction of South African capital and with a very strong Afro-neoliberal ideological outlook, has made it its business to track the Africa Peer Review Mechanism implementation process and its standard setting mechanisms for creating liberal and good governance democracies in Africa (Herbert and Gruzd, 2008). This will be revisited below.

Essentially instrumentalist critique has provided a basis for full blown and serious ideological support for AU-NEPAD restructuring, on the one hand. On the other, it has permitted selective embracing, support and defense of AU-NEPAD restructuring. Such a critique inadvertently works in the interests of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. It also serves to mobilise intellectual, academic, media and public support for the AU-NEPAD. This has implications for the nature of Africa’s power restructure and Africa’s continental passive revolution. This will be explored further below when discussing the formation of an Afro-neoliberal historic bloc led by Africa’s transnational fraction.
Table 5.2: Critique II – Existential Critique of NEPAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Social Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td>• NEPAD is ahistorical and does not take on board consequences of colonialism and neo-colonialism</td>
<td>Radical intellectuals and progressive academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silent about African development thinking and previous attempts to develop alternatives to Africa’s problems and does not use critical concepts like imperialism, neo-colonialism and dependency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Africa must take full responsibility for its situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>• Partnership with global power structure re-inforces asymmetries, sub-imperialism, ‘middle class betrayals’/Fanon’s ghost, the interests of South African and global corporations, transnationalising elites</td>
<td>Social movements, global activist forums, campaign networks, radical intellectuals, radical think-tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Re-legitimates Washington consensus and other neoliberal policy agendas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>• Neo-classical or neoliberal and reinforces structural adjustment of African economies</td>
<td>Radical think tanks, radical intellectuals, social movements, global activist forums, campaign networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotes Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper approach of World Bank in support of MDGs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Re-inforces global apartheid through policies that exacerbate Africa’s debt, terms of trade, capital flight and exchange control vulnerability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>• Supports ‘market democracy’, ‘donor democracy’, ‘elitist’, disempowers democracy</td>
<td>Social movements, global activist forums, campaign networks, radical intellectuals, radical think-tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary effects</td>
<td>• Policy measures exclude women and vulnerable groups and contributes to further marginalisation, the ‘looting of Africa’, its dependency, HIV/AIDS and underdevelopment</td>
<td>Progressive academics, radical intellectuals, radical think tanks, Social movements, global activist forums, campaign networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical theory according to Cox (1995: 31-32) has two features. First, critical theory is concerned with going beyond the surface appearance of social reality. In Cox’s words, ‘it is concerned with how the existing order came into being and what are the possibilities for change in that order’(1995-31). Second, unlike problem solving approaches and
instrumentalist critique which are concerned with specific improvements or reforms of existing structures in order to maintain them, critical theory explores the potential for structural change and the construction of strategies for change. The existential critique of NEPAD is grounded in a critical theory approach. Moreover it is critique articulated by social forces attempting to struggle against the neoliberalisation of Africa and who have a normative commitment to an alternative. The challenge to NEPAD mobilised progressive African civil society across various countries and sectors on the African continent.

Patrick Bond (2005:16-17) vividly captures the response of progressive African civil society to NEPAD in late 2001 and early 2002. In his words, ‘virtually every major African civil society organisation, network and progressive personality attacked NEPAD’s process, form and content’ (2005:16). This critique was articulate and wide-ranging. In the first place, most radical intellectuals framed the critique of NEPAD in neo-Marxist terms. Such a critique located NEPAD within capitalist relations of production, recognised it as an expression of the neoliberal paradigm, recognised its ahistorical approach to Africa and problematised its approach to deepening Africa’s integration into the global economy. The neo-Marxist position asserted that NEPAD’s integration approach to global capitalism amounted to greater underdevelopment, dispossession and marginalisation. Another reading of NEPAD has mainly focused on its neoliberal ideological underpinnings. It has been recognised as neoliberal either by showing how it derives from various aspects of transnational neoliberalism or how it has been influenced in its formulation by global neoliberal forces or how it equates to the continent’s negative experience of nationally based structural adjustment. The argument then suggests that more of the same at a continental level will have negative consequences for Africa and its people. Both these streams of critique have also come

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together through various platforms.\(^8\) In the main, both these currents of existential critique concluded that NEPAD had to be rejected.

The articulation of existential critique shattered the pretensions of the AU-NEPAD macro- restructuring project as reflecting the aspirations of Africa’s people. From progressive social scientists, activist scholars, church groups, trade unions to social movements, a bold rejection was articulated. Bond (2005: 29) captures, at the critical moment when AU-NEPAD restructuring was first placed on Africa’s agenda, the rejection of NEPAD by the African Social Forum meeting in Mali, January 2002; a fortnight later the rejection of NEPAD by African NGOs active in international financial matters related to Africa; in February a rejection of the neoliberal thrust of NEPAD by a trade unionist meeting in Dakar; in April African intellectuals meeting under the auspices of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and Third World Network Africa also registered their public opposition to NEPAD; a public concern by COSATU about NEPAD’s neoliberal proposals and the Civil Society Indaba rejection of NEPAD at its May gathering of civil society formations, rural communities, urban communities, First Nations Indigenous people, Non-governmental organisations, youth and women’s groups. However, beyond these initial reactions the existential critique of NEPAD had wider impacts and was also received by a host of other social forces.

Two other important consequences flowed from this existential critique by progressive African civil society. First it challenged those with an instrumentalist critique and sympathetic approach to NEPAD. This ensured that Africa’s epistemic and scholarly communities were polarised and were not passively accepting NEPAD. A vibrant and sophisticated exchange ensued between those adherents of an instrumentalist position and

\(^8\) See African Social Forum (2005:54-57), *Bamako Declaration: Another Africa is Possible*, passed by participants from some 200 social movements, organisations and institutions from 45 countries that met in Bamako, Mali, from 5-9 January 2001. Also see regional workshop publication(2004) by National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), a policy think tank of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the African Labour Network. This workshop brought together leading labour researches from the leading African research centres/trade union structures on the continent.
those adhering to an existential critique. Three important collections of essays capture this. Each of these collections brings together academics, policy experts and activist scholars, from different parts of Africa. In general a sophisticated conversation has happened amongst Africa’s progressive scholarly and epistemic communities, such that the intellectual legitimation of NEPAD as an ‘African solution for Africa’s problems’ was seriously curtailed. The debate reveals, that despite the disciplining of Africa, a progressive and critical African intelligentsia exists which is unwilling to accept the new Afro-neoliberal project.

The second important consequence of the existential critique of NEPAD is the broadening of an oppositional consensus beyond Africa. The activist networks of the World Social Forum process successfully globalised the critique of NEPAD. This intersected with and became an integral part of mass opposition to the International Financial Institutions (World Bank and IMF), to the World Economic Forum and G8. The NEPAD critique became part of the global critique of transnational neoliberalism. It became an integral part of oppositional mass actions and protests, in the streets, outside the meetings of these hegemonic institutions. A crucial high point of the globalisation of the existential critique of NEPAD was at the World Social Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2007. Activists from around the world affirmed the ongoing struggle against the neoliberalisation of the world. Prominent left intellectuals like Samir Amin, Patrick Bond, as well as, various representatives from social movements, trade unions, NGOs and grass roots organisations from the continent further affirmed the existential critique of NEPAD. Moreover, various discussions and debates ensued about alternatives to transnational neoliberalism and its Afro-neoliberal variant.

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10 I attended the 2007 World Social Forum in Kenya, where I participated on a panel debate with Patrick Bond.

11 I participated on a panel that launched a project by the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC). The centrepiece of the launch was a book entitled: The Search for Sustainable Human Development in Southern Africa. This book is part of a wider research agenda to formulate country specific
However, while these voices from below registered an important case against NEPAD within public discourses, and even succeeded in globalising this critique, the inherent limitations of this critique also undermined its own impact. First, those who advocated the existential critique were not able to cohere around who the main antagonist was. Various ‘enemies’ stand out in the debates and positions. On the one end, the antagonist is defined as the petite bourgeois with its inherent disposition to betray the masses and Africa (Adesina, 2006b: 60). This is the Fanonian thesis and reflects an unthinking historical materialism; a frozen one. While the Fanonian thesis affirms a Marxist pedigree it does not assist with understanding class politics and agency in contemporary Africa. The African petite bourgeois has not disappeared but class dynamics on the African continent have changed in the context of a globalising capitalism. With this failing the Fanonian thesis does not assist a critical theoretical approach informing progressive social agency and struggle; it misdirects it.

On the other end, and more influential has been the ‘sub-imperialism’ thesis (Bond, 2006: 111-135). In simple terms, this thesis suggests Pretoria is the continental agent of the Washington-London axis. This sub-imperial role is necessitated by the contradictions and limits facing imperial power in the world today. This includes the negative impact on state building due to the extraction of surplus from the periphery and the complexity of policing and co-opting the new range of actors that inhabit the world today. Hence, ‘the next logical step is to locate South Africa’s own position as regional subimperial hegemon within the same matrices’ (Bond, 2006: 113). There are two fundamental problems with the articulation of this critical concept. First, as an analytical category it is moored within a dependency theory approach to political economy which works with an image of the global political economy as a hierarchy. In this hierarchy the ‘place’ of the periphery is structurally determined. Various mechanisms operate to re-enforce this peripheral status including unequal exchange and surplus extraction. At the same time,

alternatives to neoliberalism coordinated by an organisation called Alternatives to Neoliberalism in Southern Africa (ANSA) and supported by SATUCC. See Satgar (2007: 6-7)

12 A more simplistic version of this reduces South Africa to an imperial power based on Lenin’s schema of what constitutes imperialism (Lesufi, 2006a:35-37).
the power of the centre is determined by particular structural capacities including the strength of economies and the ability to unleash imperial violence and destruction. Bond argues that South Africa has also become a mechanism to ensure the peripheral status of Africa is reinforced. Bond’s (2006:113) evidence for this, ‘requires identifying areas where imperialism is facilitated in Africa by the Pretoria-Johannesburg state-capitalist nexus, in part through Mbeki’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development and in part through the independent (though related) logic of private capital’. Thus his evidence stands on two legs.

In responding to the first leg about imperialism and Mbeki’s NEPAD it is important to appreciate that Africa was not neoliberalised by NEPAD, instead Africa has been neoliberalised at a national level since the conjuncture of the debt crisis and adjustment of the 1980s. By the logic of Bond’s argument, then, most of Africa’s states have been sub-imperialist because almost all adopted neoliberal SAPs; most of Africa’s states and political elites facilitated imperialism. Moreover, an understanding of NEPAD that reduces it to Mbeki is ahistorical and simplistic. NEPAD emerged in the context of an Afro-neoliberal shift that began since 1989 at a continental level. At the same time, Mbeki was merely one actor among many and a representative of the interests of a class fraction; Mbeki was part of a class project of the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes. In terms of the logic of the private capital leg of Bond’s argument, the evidence does suggest an outward expansion by South African capital on to the continent. However, in Africa’s major growth sector for example, oil, it is mainly US and Chinese transnationals driving the exploitation of this sector. In short, there a many powerful transnational interests shaping Africa today, many of them more powerful than South African linked transnational capital.

The second fundamental problem with the sub-imperialism thesis, is that it reduces the struggle against Afro-neoliberalism to the South African state. At the level of social forces struggling against NEPAD, the notion of sub-imperialism moves beyond being a critical analytical category and becomes a strategic category. The material effect of privileging South African sub-imperialism as the ‘enemy’ simply demobilises struggle in
other parts of Africa. If South Africa is the enemy then all efforts are channelled to bring down the beast and instead of fighting Afro-neoliberalism in other national spaces, on the continent, African civil society is directed to fight South African capital and South African state interests. What about American, European, Chinese, Brazilian and Indian transnationals and state interests? In this respect the sub-imperialism thesis is bereft of a consistent anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective. It has a questionable strategic value in terms of fostering an effective political agency for progressive social forces. Beyond demobilising and misdirecting progressive African civil society, the sub-imperialism thesis has important propagandistic value and has served to irritate and has contributed to discrediting ruling elites in South Africa.

Flowing from this, has been the inability of the existential critique to develop a response to the unfolding strategic thrusts of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. In part this relates to the failure of existential critique to recognise the AU and NEPAD as component parts of a common Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring strategy. Increasingly, and due to the implementation of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring, the entire AU system has become the agent of the Afro-neoliberal project. Hence, the critique has been narrow and one-sided, mainly targeting NEPAD and has thrown up a critical blind spot. It also means the existential critique of NEPAD is incomplete. Feeding into this inability to counter the unfolding strategic thrusts of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring is the nature of engagement from below. While globalising the critique of NEPAD through the WSF has been extremely important, it also means the weaknesses of the WSF have also become the weaknesses of the struggle against AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. The WSF is an extremely important oppositional transnational movement but it is not a counter-hegemonic movement. It has not become a serious coordinating centre for a programmatic alternative to the globalising neoliberal world order. Similarly, the struggles against NEPAD have not matured into a counter-hegemonic struggle in which a common and shared alternative is advanced across African civil society and within continental engagements. The ebbs and flows, and generally sporadic nature of contestations emerging from the WSF process have shaped the logic and rhythm of the existential critique within Africa’s political economy. Hence, those that adhere to an
existential critique have also been sporadic and inconsistent, and have been unable to take
the struggle beyond delegitimising NEPAD.

The existential critique and rejection of NEPAD by key social forces within African civil
society did not succeed in stopping the implementation of AU-NEPAD macro-
restructuring. Partly, due to its own limitations this oppositional struggle was not able to
dislodge this macro-restructuring strategic initiative. More importantly, as an articulate
and strong critique it did express the willingness of key social forces on the continent to
continue the struggle against Africa’s neoliberalisation and it shattered the pretensions
that NEPAD was an ‘African solution to an African problem’ embraced and supported by
all of Africa’s people. In short, it ensured NEPAD was exposed as a project not in the
interests of Africa and its people.

Table 5.3: Critique III – Procedural Critique of NEPAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Social Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elitist Formulation of NEPAD</td>
<td>◦ Excluded voices from civil society&lt;br&gt;◦ Lacks African ownership&lt;br&gt;◦ Behind the backs of Africa’s people&lt;br&gt;◦ Not a people’s agenda but defined by Northern rich countries, IFS’s and UN&lt;br&gt;◦ Suppresses alternatives</td>
<td>Trade unions, religious organisations, campaign networks, global activist forums, NGO’s, think tanks, radical intellectuals, progressive academics</td>
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The NEPAD was formulated without input from African civil society (Prempeh, 2006:
100). This is consistent with the content of the call made to African people in the NEPAD

We are, therefore, asking the African peoples to take up the challenge of
mobilising in support of the implementation of this initiative by setting up, at all
levels, the structures for organisation, mobilisation and action.

Put differently, Africa’s leaders wanted support from Africa’s people only for
implementation. Africa’s voiceless and marginalised masses needed to remain as such
and had to fit into the plan. The political and moral arguments for this are twofold. First,
it had to do with the nature of the ‘invite to mobilisation’ made through the discourse of the African Renaissance. As mentioned in the previous chapter this was an invite made from above and in itself was consistent with the duplicity and ambiguity of African leadership with regard to mass participation. Besides the exclusion of mass voices in national passive revolutions, dictators and tyrants endorsed the OAU’s *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation* (1990) and it has become standard practice in African development discourse and leadership rhetoric to evoke mass involvement. The African Renaissance discourse was no different except it was arrogant enough to say to African people that their ‘confidence’, their ‘genius’ and their ‘capacities’ could only be realised through supporting NEPAD (2001: 27). In supporting NEPAD, the African people would be ‘masters of their destiny’ and of course experience true liberation.

The second argument attempting to justify this call from above is how the NEPAD discourse understands leadership and the role of leadership. Two elements come together. First, a liberal conception of leadership. The assumption NEPAD asserts is that if a leader is elected in multi-party elections this is sufficient to provide legitimacy for leadership. The base document (2001: 25) asserts, ‘the numbers of democratically elected leaders are on the increase. Through their actions, they have declared that the hopes of Africa’s peoples for a better life can no longer rest on the magnanimity of others’. Hence organising consent for a popular project on the terrain of civil society is not necessary. Merely being voted into power suffices. However, this liberal conception of leadership exists in a context of flawed electoral and multi-party systems in most of Africa’s emerging democracies, and therefore the claim that elected leadership has the legitimacy to lead Africa is difficult to sustain. In some extreme cases like Zimbabwe, Cote d’Ivoire and Kenya, elections processes were moments of open civil strife and violent conflict. Nonetheless, this conception of liberal leadership is consistent with advancing an elite politics and giving the strategic political initiative to Africa’s transnational fraction. The second element defining the role of leadership is translating popular will into action. According to the NEPAD base document (2001: 27), ‘the present initiative is an expression of the commitment of Africa’s leaders to translate the deep popular will into
action’. This is more than a sleight of hand. It is prescription. Africa’s people must express support and will to change but only through NEPAD.

AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring excluded mass involvement in defining the substantive content of change through rationalising the role of civil society and mass social forces as secondary. Africa’s people within AU-NEPAD discourse had a cheer leading role, while Africa’s new political leadership led change on their behalf. This conception of the relationship between rulers and ruled, leaders and led, is crucial in attempting to insulate the Afro-neoliberal consensus from contestation and at the same time deepening Africa’s continental passive revolution. Its material effect on African civil society is to divide. It presents an elitist, technocratic and top-down conception of politics consistent with how Africa’s national passive revolutions have been constituted.

However, progressive sections of African civil society were not convinced by NEPAD’s rhetoric. For the adherents of an existential critique of NEPAD the exclusion of civil society feeds into a holistic critique of NEPAD. It recognises the exclusion of civil society as confirming and consistent with the overall substantive thrust of NEPAD. In other words, the essence of neoliberalism is about privileging markets and transnational capital over people; it is consistently anti-people. NEPAD’s design and formulation in taking place at the top, ‘behind the backs of the people’, is what neoliberalism is all about. Almost all the voices that have expressed the existential critique have problematised the exclusion of African civil society and various arguments have been made in this regard (Prempeh, 2006: 91-16; Bond, 2005). Many voices pointed to the exclusion of African civil society as amounting to a lack of African ownership, the suppression of alternatives and the continuity of elite politics. Many observed and juxtaposed the exclusion of African civil society to the time and effort spent on winning support amongst the powerful Northern countries, the UN and the G8. For many in civil society this enhanced suspicions about NEPAD, confirmed deep distrust of elite leadership, deepened cynicism about the so called ‘African solution for an African problem’ and affirmed a politics of rejection. Across African civil society these perceptions, feelings and attitudes were vocalised.
Maintaining the Strategic Initiative for Afro-neoliberal Restructuring: Bringing the Masses in from Above

The existential and procedural critique of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring exposed the elite nature of these policy-making processes. It also delegitimised NEPAD within African and global civil society. In the face of this the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes did not abandon its project. It did not stop the strategic offensive of Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring. In response to arguments about the exclusion of civil society the protagonists of AU-NEPAD restructuring have responded in a manner consistent with directing change from above. The first response shared by the collective African political leadership and instrumentalists is to treat the exclusion of civil society as a technical problem that has to be fixed. In this regard there are three responses offered. The first is communication and awareness raising in the context of the implementation of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. As the *NEPAD Progress Report* states (2002e: 21), ‘plans are in place to bring NEPAD to African grassroots organisations and to civil society structures’. The people were being technically planned in and while African civil society does not own NEPAD the assumption of this class practice was simply that the masses can be convinced of its virtues. This will lead to a ‘NEPAD with a human face’ (Bunwaree, 2008: 227-228). The second response accepts that some of the critique and concern from civil society has to be taken on board without rejecting NEPAD out of hand. In other words, managing consultation and selectively bringing in aspects of the existential critique from civil society will be beneficial to reforming NEPAD and adding on a development strategy directly inspired by previous African alternatives like the LPA (Landsberg, 2008: 207-226).

A third response has been much bolder and does not hide its intention to coopt. It is argued that despite the failure of Africa’s leadership to consult African civil society there are issues within NEPAD that resonate with demands being made by civil society.

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13 From scrutinising HSGIC communiqués it is apparent that the challenge of communication about NEPAD was a recurring theme. Many meetings and workshops also spoke to the approach and challenge of a communication strategy.
Hence, debt cancellation for example is part of the NEPAD agenda and therefore civil society organisations should support this aspect of NEPAD and its tactics of changing the global governance system from within. While there is potential in this position for convergence with civil society its sum effect is polarising and partisan. The call for debt cancellation has also been a call against neoliberal SAPs. Surrendering the debt cancellation call to the transnational fraction literally meant cooption into the Afro-neoliberal paradigm. Hence, the argument around common and shared demands divides rather than unites and ruptures a potentially counter-hegemonic challenge to NEPAD and global capitalism that can be driven from below. At the same time, it confirms the continuation of reformist politics from above that believes that civil society can also be instrumentalised to achieve reformist ends. It is not about opening spaces for genuine alternatives to come through from below, but rather is about legitimising what has been developed without the people. In short, the instrumentalist response to civil society’s exclusion from the NEPAD process maintains the initiative for the transnational fraction of the African ruling class and is about deepening the continental passive revolution.

However, beyond the cooption tactics of the instrumentalisists, key implementation thrusts of AU-NEPAD restructuring have also brought to the fore a practice of division and cooption vis-à-vis African civil society. The technocratic approach and class practices of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring have amounted to maintaining the initiative for Afro-neoliberal restructuring while opening spaces to fit in African civil society. The parameters set had to be managed through technocratic class practices. In this regard three important class practices have to be brought under scrutiny. First, the institutionalising of organs of the AU and how civil society has been incorporated from above. Second, entrenching liberal democracy and good governance through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Third, attempts to address gender equality and women’s empowerment from above. These issues will be engaged with as part of demonstrating how AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has attempted to bring the masses in from above in the implementation phase of the AU and NEPAD. Actually, it has been a concerted process, driven by a conscious social agency that has deepened Africa’s
passive revolution to ensure an Afro-neoliberal model of capitalism takes root. Concomitantly a liberal African civil society has been constituted as a bulwark to an anti-capitalist civil society.

I. Institutionalising Participation in Organs of the African Union

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and AU-NEPAD approach to the diaspora were established after the Afro-neoliberal consensus was defined as the way forward for Africa; these institutions and the policy approach to the diaspora were products of this consensus. In the main the institutionalising of AU-civil society relations has been used to remake parts of African civil society at a continental level, to conform with the imperatives of Afro-neoliberal restructuring. How these institutions express the Afro-neoliberal strategy of coopting and dividing civil society will be elaborated on.

When the AU Constitutive Act was adopted by the OAU Summit in July 2000, most African parliaments and citizens on the African continent were not consulted (Mbete, 2008: 311). This Act was adopted by African leadership and was implemented from above. This has had serious implications for AU-civil society relations in the context Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring. Both the PAP and the ECOSOCC are both organs of the AU. The former is established based on Article 17 and the latter is established based on Article 22. The PAP was established in Addis Ababa, on the 19th March 2004 and the statutes for the ECOSOCC were adopted at an AU Summit in July 2004. In March 2005, an interim ECOSOCC was established in Addis Abba. Both these institutions are hailed as the means to give African civil society voice within the AU system (Mutasa 2008; Mbete, 2008).

According to Mbete (2008:307), a former member of the PAP, ‘once fully operational, the parliament will act as a common platform for all the peoples of Africa to get more involved in discussions and decision-making on the continent’s problems and challenges’. Despite this bold claim for the role of the PAP it has limited the scope for
African civil society to influence the direction of economic development on the continent. First, the PAP has serious institutional limitations in relation to the impact on the economic development framework of the continent. According to the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Pan-African Parliament it can only make recommendations to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the AU, draw attention to the challenges facing integration in Africa, as well as, the strategies for dealing with them. In short, the PAP is an advisory body and it is not legally empowered to override decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. This means the Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring framework cannot be changed through the PAP.\(^\text{14}\) It is already locked in place by decisions made by the Heads of State and Government.

Moreover, the symbolic importance of the PAP should not hide the fact that it is buttressed by weak democratic political systems in which parliaments and civil societies do not have dynamic and robust relations. Many of the new parliaments on the African continent are ‘deficient in physical infrastructure and basic equipment, as well as technocratic and analytical capabilities. Furthermore, constitution-making processes and amendments have not been sufficiently liberated from the hold of incumbent autocrats. It has been a source of dismay and frustration among many African democrats that some of those constitutions appear to have been designed to ensure that incumbent strongmen would retain most of their autocratic power (Boadi, 2004: 10). While Boadi’s insight makes an important point it is just part of the story of why power has been concentrated around the Executive and particular Ministries. More importantly, as part of the making of national passive revolutions Afro-neoliberal reform has necessitated the insulation of the Executive and particular Ministry’s such as those responsible for finance and Reserve Banks from popular scrutiny and oversight.\(^\text{15}\) These are the kinds of parliamentary institutions, with weak oversight powers, that underpin the PAP. Hence the 265 representatives that are meant to represent African countries come out of national passive

\(^\text{14}\) The PAP is meant to become a body with full legislative powers in 2009, with its members elected by universal adult suffrage. This is highly unlikely given the weak state of most African democracies let alone awareness amongst Africans about the PAP.

\(^\text{15}\) This has been the case in South Africa’s transition to democracy. Shivji (1991: 27), points to similar developments in Algeria.
revolutions, in which the practice is to keep the masses at bay and outside policy-making processes. Up to now the PAP has not developed the means to reach Africans in their everyday lives, at workplaces, in rural communities and in slums. It does not even have a practice of public hearings (Mbete, 2008: 314). In this respect the PAP also serves to insulate Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring from civil society voices.

The third way in which the PAP advances Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring and limits the impact of mass social forces, is in the manner in which it has embedded this discourse and paradigm as Africa’s framework for development. This has happened in the following ways through its various sub-committees (Mbete, 2008:310-313): through ensuring NEPAD features prominently in how the PAP sub-committee on Cooperation, Conflict Resolution and International Relations understands geopolitical engagements; promoting the role of the private sector on the continent, particularly through the call for a ‘Pan African Investment and Financing Institutions for the Continent’s Rural Economy’; supporting NEPAD’s approach to telecommunications and public transport by recommending the establishment of a new database to support the NEPAD thrust; it has defined a role around support for the APRM and how to accelerate the MDGs and finally it has declared its sub-committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters the PAP’s key focal point for liaison with NEPAD. The PAP is an institutional vehicle to support and drive AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring of Africa. It is currently not a space that is capable of entertaining alternatives to Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring.

At the same time, the ECOSOC has failed to establish itself as a non-partisan platform for African civil society. According to Mutasa (2008: 294), the Southern African representative involved in setting up the ECOSOCC, ‘the involvement of CSOs is a key to development and democratisation, when considering the role they can play as watchdogs of their governments, guardians of democratic practices, and in ensuring the implementation of conflict-resolution efforts’. The ‘watch-dog’ understanding and philosophy of civil societies role in African liberal democracies and transitions is standard World Bank speak and part of its agenda of disciplining the African state from below (Beckman, 1993: 20-21). However, the ECOSOCC seems to be floundering and
unable to establish itself. Its institutional development has been constrained by financial problems, power struggles with the African Citizen’s Directorate a structure located within the AU-Commission, and generally the ECOSOCC has lacked the leadership to ensure it is established as a platform for African civil society (Mutasa, 2008: 294-304).

However, alongside the failed ECOSOCC process the AU has embarked on a new initiative to bring in African civil society from above. Since June 2007 it has initiated Civil Society Conferences alongside AU Summits and it has established the Centre for Citizen’s Participation (CCP-AU) to coordinate this process. This institution has been much more aggressive about reshaping civil societies interface with the AU. In the first place it has tried to foster a sanitised dialogue between the AU and civil society. According to the Director, Yemisrach Kebede (CCP-AU, 2008c: 3) ‘civil society should not play the role of critic, but instead must engage with the AU and policy issues’. Moreover, a tame civil society must merely lobby the political elite within the ambit of the Afro-neoliberal consensus. Kebede (CCP-AU, 2008c:3) urged, ‘that when doors close on civil society, it should look for a way in or organise its own spaces, until a time when those who are closing doors realise that civil society’s rightful place is inside’. In short, African civil society must resist militant actions and merely be patient until the African ruling classes deem the voices of African civil society important.

*Bringing in Northern NGOs*

To foster a civil society without critique and merely committed to lobbying, the CCP-AU has deepened support for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring through the following practices. First, it has brought in powerful and well resourced Western NGOs into its steering committee, like Oxfam and Action Aid – Ethiopia and NGOs linked to the AU such as the African Center for Humanitarian Action (ACHA) and the African Rally for Peace and Development (APRD) and NGOs with a great deal of Western donor funding like the Organisation for Social Justice in Ethiopia (OSJE) which receives its funding

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16 This echoes the views of CIVICUS a powerful transnational alliance of civil society organisations that operates within the UN system. See Civicus Global Survey of the State of Civil Society, particularly Mensah (2008: 87-88)
through the European Union.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, in terms of taking positions in the civil society conferences that have happened, the influence of the Northern NGOs have been distinct. For example, Action-Aid representative, Brian Kagoro, argued that African civil society should let go of its misdirected efforts, ‘towards better aid, debt cancellation and anti-corruption’ (CCP-AU, 2008c: 14). Instead he made the case for limiting capital flight and illicit commercial flows. This position found its way into the final declaration (CCP-AU, 2008c: 21) and displaced in a rather crude way a consensus built up over many years of struggle amongst progressive sections of African civil society for debt cancellation. While these positions might both have strong merit it would seem that instead of creating the conditions for finding a broader consensus, the platforms organised by the CCP-AU are meant to forge a counter consensus to more progressive and anti-capitalist parts of African civil society.

\textit{Engendering Support for Elements of AU-NEPAD Macro-restructuring}

Second, the CCP-AU has deepened support for AU-NEPAD restructuring, in its dialogue with civil society through firming up support for elements of AU-NEPAD macro restructuring. This includes the NEPAD approach to restructuring RECS (GIMPA, 2007: 15; 2008b: 6), the MDGs (CCP-AU, 2008c: 12 ) and the AU-NEPAD approach to peace and security (CCP-AU, 2008c: 6-9). In terms of all these thrusts a deeper and more critical appreciation of the dynamics involved does not come through. For example, despite some concerns raised about NEPAD-driven restructuring of RECs, it is accepted as the appropriate approach. The question is not asked whether NEPAD has contributed to the crisis amongst RECs. In terms of the MDGs, these are not located in the overall context of structurally adjusting Africa. Rather these underpinnings are accepted. In terms of African conflict in Zimbabwe, Darfur and Somalia, all the recommendations affirm the AU-NEPAD peace and security architecture and affirm the peace-keeping and making role of the AU. Moreover, while the humanitarian message coming through these resolutions are important, the deeper structural roots of the violence are not brought into

\begin{footnote}{17} Of the seven NGOs in the CCPs steering committee six out of seven are based in Ethiopia.\end{footnote}
view and thus there is a failure to appreciate the external dimensions to these conflicts. With the Darfur conflict, for example, what is the role of Russian and Chinese support for the Khartoum regime? These kinds of questions were clearly not posed and do not feature in the resolutions. Rather the positions adopted in the CCP-AU led civil society conferences seem to merely attempt to legitimize the broad thrust of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring.  

*Marginalising Anti-capitalist Social Forces and Existential Critique*

Third, it is patently clear that critical voices, particularly advocates of an existential critique are not brought into this process or if they are their positions do not find expression in the final outcomes of civil society conferences. At the Ghana civil society conference, held from June 22-23, 2007, in Accra, the conference report points to critical voices challenging NEPAD (GIMPA, 2007: 15). However, this does not come through in the final declaration. Moreover, the NEPAD was defended and its role in supporting regional integration through the RECs was affirmed (CCP, 2007: 15). Progressive NGOs like Third World Network, based in Ghana, were not part of the Accra civil society conference and in the other two civil society conferences in Ethiopia and Egypt, none of Africa’s leading progressive NGOs, social movements and trade unions could be found on the list of invitees. Particularly, advocates of an existential critique of NEPAD were markedly absent. This affirms the counter mobilisation from within the AU of a liberal civil society committed to supporting the Afro-neoliberal consensus of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. Most of the voices within this process are instrumentalist and are about finding ways to ensure this consensus finds expression as the consensus for Africa.

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18 The resolutions on African conflict literally read as though they were penned by officials of the AU. See CCP-AU, 2008b: 22–24.

19 All the civil society conferences contain a list of participants. See CCP – AU (June, 2007: 6; January, 2008a: 43; June, 2008c: 26).
Finally, in terms of the African diaspora the approach of AU-NEPAD restructuring has been about treating it as a sixth region of continental Africa, embracing all who are of African origin, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality, but willing to contribute to the development of the continent and building the AU (Kornegay, 2008: 335). The CCP-AU led civil society approach echoes this position. It calls for (CCP-AU, 2007: 5), ‘strengthening the commitment to African’s in the diaspora by formally recognising them as the sixth political region of Africa, granting of African citizenship and appointing a Deputy Commissioner for diaspora affairs’. Kornegay (2008: 333-354) problematises such an approach. First he argues it fails to differentiate the complexities of the African diaspora. In his view it is necessary to distinguish three important diaspora communities: The first diaspora community emerged from the African slave trade with the West; second, the ‘Afro-West Indians’ who are not just communities but also states; third, African expatriate communities. Kornegay argues that it is necessary to understand the politics of each of these diaspora forces in order to define an appropriate approach. Hence he challenges the spreading the net approach. Second, he highlights the extent to which spreading the net undermines progressive forces in the diaspora communities that supported the anti-apartheid struggle for example. Instead the trend with luring in investment, skills and promoting trade within AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has seen some dubious relationships formed with right wing forces in the US diaspora community for example (Kornegay, 2008: 344). This is the approach endorsed by the CCP-AU led civil society conference process.

**The African Peer Review Mechanism’s Approach to Entrenching Liberal Democracy and Good Governance**

The process and practice of inter-governmental and inter-state peer review is not new in the world. According to Adedeji (2008:242) it has been part of the practice of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries of Europe, North America and Asia. He points out, ‘the ultimate goal to the country being
reviewed is to improve its policy-making, adopt best practices, and comply with established standards and principles of governance. This examination has to be conducted in a non-adversarial manner’ (Adedeji, 2008: 242). This approach is adapted for the African context and is expressed in the NEPAD-African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) document. The document defines the purpose of the APRM as follows:

The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building (NEPAD –APRM, 2003:525).

The APRM was adopted by the NEPAD HSGIC in July 2002 and was formally launched in March 2003 as a flagship initiative of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. This mechanism derives directly from NEPAD’s technocratic approach to implementing governance and democratic reforms from above. Within the NEPAD base document (2001: 31-34), the Democracy and Political Governance Initiative, specifies the need for ‘diagnostic and assessment tools’ that would assist with achieving shared goals of good governance, ‘targeted capacity building’ through institutional reforms, monitoring and assessment by the HSGIC and a platform for sharing experiences.

With the adoption of the NEPAD-APRM mechanism the media and various intellectuals on the African continent welcomed it and defended it. For instance, Asante (Herbert and Gruzd, 2008: viii) declared, ‘peer review may mark the start of a new kind of African diplomacy. Its success will determine whether NEPAD remains a dream or becomes a reality. If African leaders fail to hold each other strictly accountable to the new principles they espouse, the renaissance of the continent will not take place’. Makhanya, an editor of one South Africa’s leading newspapers, the Sunday Times, participated in an APRM workshop in Ethiopia and wrote about his experience under the headline: Shred the peer review and you will trample Africa’s best hope.\textsuperscript{20}

The NEPAD-APRM is organised through a Panel of Eminent Persons, who exercise oversight over the process. Supporting the APRM panel work is a Secretariat which is empowered to source in expertise that the peer review process might require. The costs of the review are carried by the contributions made by member states. By July 2007, the following 27 countries had acceded to APRM: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

In this study the NEPAD-APRM is not understood as the great hope of Africa. Instead it is understood as a component part of Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring. The NEPAD-APRM, is a key instrument to roll back and isolate illiberal Africa and its operationalising contributes to redrawing the geopolitical map of Africa. Moreover, it is a class practice that contributes to coopting and dividing African civil society, from above, as part of shifting Africa’s accumulation path in a globalising direction. In this APRM process anti-capitalist social forces in African civil society are isolated and divided by constituting a liberal African civil society in support of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. This study critically appraises the class practices of the APRM.

Promoting a Liberal Ideological Discourse of Democracy and State Conduct

First, the NEPAD-APRM expresses class practices and shifts power relations within Africa, through the ideological discourses it engenders about what is appropriate for state conduct and what democracy means. In this sense it is more than an institutional mechanism to ensure self assessment of African states. As a discourse it asserts certain claims and advances particular social and class practices. Moreover, while affirming certain social practices, it delegitimises others. The APRM (2003: 525) defines its

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21 The first APRM panel includes Marie-Angelique Savane, Adebayo Adedeji, Bethuel Kiplagat, Graca Machel, Mourad Medelci, Dorothy Njeuma and Chris Stals.
conception of democracy and good governance with reference to the AU Summit NEPAD Declaration (2002), *On Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance*. This NEPAD Declaration frames expectations, sets the norms for society and provides standards for state performance. It provides a blue-print for the ideal type Afro-neoliberal society to be realised through democracy and good governance.

The NEPAD Declaration (2002: 519) defines democracy as a shopping list of features: the rule of law; the equality of all citizens before the law and the liberty of the individual; individual and collective freedoms, including the right to form and join political parties and trade unions, in conformity with the constitution; equality of opportunity for all; the inalienable right of the individual to participate by means of free, credible and democratic political processes in periodically electing their leaders for a fixed term of office; and adherence to the separation of powers, including the protection of the independence of the judiciary and of effective parliaments. Within the African context and in practice liberal democracy, in most instances, has amounted to electoral practices and multi-party competition. This is affirmed in many liberal analyses of African democracy that reduce it to quantitative measures of the procedural aspects of democracy. This has also been married to shallow discourses on human rights. This is consistent with a global trend observed as either ‘low intensity democracies’, ‘polyarchy’ or ‘pseudo democracies’ and reflects an instrumentalising of democracy and which also contributed to Africa’s passive revolutions in national spaces after the Cold War and post-apartheid. This was discussed in chapter 2. The APRM discourse on democracy does not challenge this trend. It fails to articulate a wider conception of democracy, such as direct and participatory democracy, and in this sense suppresses and delegitimises a wider conception of democracy. In short, the APRM conception of democracy further instrumentalises democracy for Africa’s transnational fraction of the African ruling classes.

In terms of ‘good governance’ this term has contested meanings. According to Amuwo (2006: 113-114) the term good governance is associated with three discourses: a technocratic/economic approach in which good governance merely repackages SAPs with a ‘human face’; a political discourse of legitimation in which states are transparent,
accountable and rule bound; and a third perspective on good governance relating ‘ownership’ by the people of reforms and development programs championed by the state. In the African context, good governance has taken on the meaning given to it in technocratic/economic discourses. The World Bank in particular introduced the concept in the late 1980s, as part of unleashing an offensive on the African state. In the main this amounted to blaming the failures of structural adjustment on the African state and neo-patrimonial elites, on the one hand. On the other hand, it has been about celebrating the entrepreneurial energies and social capital within African civil society. Thus, within the World Bank’s governance discourse African civil society was liberated as the panacea and saviour of African society, while it was constrained by the African state (Beckman, 1993).

The APRM continues with the technocratic/economic discourse on good governance but speaks in an Afro-neoliberal voice. It does this is three respects. The first is an affirmation of an efficient and truncated form of state; in Gramscian terms a ‘nightwatchman state’ that rigs the rules in favour of capital. The NEPAD Declaration (2002: 522) boldly prescribes the form and role of the African state:

Globalisation and liberalisation does not mean that there should be no role for government in socio-economic development. It only means a different type of government. We, therefore, undertake to foster new partnerships between government and the private sector; a new division of labour in which the private sector will be the veritable engine of economic growth, while governments concentrate on the development of infrastructure and the creation of a macroeconomic environment. This includes expanding and enhancing the quality of human resources and providing the appropriate institutional framework to guide the formulation and execution of economic policy.

The second way in which a technocratic/economic discourse on good governance is advanced through the APRM, is through an open and blatant commitment to manufacture a narrow liberal civil society, merely concerned with human rights. Such a watch-dog role is given to civil society, but particularly to strengthened ‘human rights institutions at the national, sub-regional and regional levels’ (NEPAD, 2002: 520). The third way in which the technocratic/economic discourse on good governance is advanced through the
APRM, is through its eight priority codes and standards, adopted in consultation with international organisations and which are genuinely global standards to ensure ‘market efficiency’, to ‘control wasteful spending’, to ‘consolidate democracy and to encourage private financial flows’ (NEPAD, 2002:521). These eight codes, which African countries are meant to adopt, are: Code of Good Practices on Transparency in Monetary and Financial Policies; Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency; Best Practices for Budget Transparency; Guidelines for Public Debt Management; Principles of Corporate Governance; International Accounting Standards; International Standards on Auditing; and the Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision. In one move AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring attempts to achieve what the World Bank and IMF have failed to achieve for just over two decades on the African continent.

Manufacturing Liberal African Civil Society

The second class practice expressed through the APRM relates to embedding the policy agenda of Afro-neoliberal restructuring by remaking African civil society. It is about implanting ‘African ownership’ of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. This process began at a continental level with various Church groups trumpeting support for NEPAD, through dialogues being fostered between trade union and business and the media generally blunting the edge of existential critique by excluding it. However, within national spaces this form of top down legitimation of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring operates differently through the APRM. Instead of openly coopting and dividing, it has been orchestrated through an ostensibly technically sound and neutral process. This happens at two levels. First, through the technical support given to the Review Team as part of preparing thematically based technical studies. The technical capacity is sourced from within countries. In the South African case this was done through the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) which was responsible for the technical report on democracy and political governance; The South African Institute of International Affairs

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22 Most of the standards and codes that relate to fiscal and monetary policy are from the IMF and World Bank. See Herbert and Grudz (2008:339-341)
23 This is expressed through the principles of the APRM which call for a review that is , ‘technically competent, credible and free of political manipulation’ (NEPAD-APRM, 2003: 525).
(SAIIA) which was responsible for the technical report on economic governance and management; The African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) which was responsible for the technical report for Corporate governance and The Institute for Economic Research on Innovation (IERI) was responsible for the technical report on socio-economic development (Herbert and Gruzd, 2008: 291). All of these institutions adhere to narrow conceptions of liberal democracy and are mainstream neoliberal think tanks. They are not known to be ideologically neutral. This immediately skews the substantive discourse in favour of liberal civil society.

Moreover, the content of the standards and criteria used to assess democracy and good governance present the Afro-neoliberal agenda as part of a wider agenda which includes human rights, women’s rights, trade union rights, standards against corruption and the MDGs, for example (Herbert and Grudz, 2008: 333-345). In short there is a presentation of the Afro-neoliberal consensus as a broad agenda which is capable of accommodating and winning over various interests and social forces in African civil society. Put differently economic reforms and adjustment policies are part of a wider agenda for restructuring African societies. The consequence of this is to isolate illiberal African civil society and to divide progressive and anti-capitalist civil society. At the same time, the APRM promotes and constitutes liberal African civil society by championing its demands and issues. In this process the APRM affirms the voice of liberal civil society as the voice of African civil society and it shifts power relations, from above, in favour of the transnational fraction of the African ruling class.

II. Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment from Above

The existential critique of NEPAD was extremely incisive from a gender perspective. In 2002 Mohau Pheko, from the Africa Trade Network, delivered a devastating critique

24 The irony of the APRM process in Africa is that the only serious research done on this project is contained in a publication by SAIIA, by Herbert and Gruzd (2008), which spans a five year period of tracking the APRM process. Through this publication a think tank, extremely close to the transnational fraction of the South African ruling class, such as De-Beers Mining House, is championing civil society participation in the APRM! It is trumpeting the virtues of mobilising the masses from above.
entitled: *New or Old Partnership for African Women?* (Bond, 2005: 69). Her biting critique was broad and it exposed the shallow commitment that NEPAD had to gender equality and women’s empowerment; she underlined the extent to which NEPAD lagged behind the general consensus on the continent about women and development, particularly the negative impact of neoliberal policies on the lives of women but yet NEPAD was enacting another tragedy on African women; NEPAD did not deal with power relations; NEPAD ignored the role of the external factor in reproducing women’s oppression, amongst other important arguments. These arguments found a resonance across progressive African civil society.

However, by 2003 the class practices and social forces underpinning AU-NEPAD restructuring steered around this critique, in the context of mass mobilisation by women’s networks on the continent for the realisation of the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (AU, 2003a). The 32 Articles of the *Protocol* provide for: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; the rights to development and peace; and reproductive and sexual rights. As Clarke (2008:112) observes, ‘the Protocol is thus one of the few international human rights instruments that are informed by experiences of African feminists. The Protocol is, to a large extent, a ‘baby’ of Africa’s women’s rights activists’. However, the three main networks that led and fought for the realisation of this protocol – Women and Law in Development (WILDAF), The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) and Solidarity on African Women Rights (SOAWR) – had an extremely narrow mass base for the advocacy campaign. In short, a few strong institutions and a small cadre of African women’s rights activists drove this agenda (Clarke, 2008:112).

This limitation assisted with appropriating the gender and women’s empowerment question by AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring and contributed to giving this process the means to champion African women’s interests while imposing an Afro-neoliberal concept of control. This expressed itself in three ways to shift power relations in favour of the transnational fraction of Africa’s ruling classes. First, through embedding the gender and women’s empowerment question within the Afro-neoliberal consensus
underpinning AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. While the AU Constitutive Act and NEPAD pronounce a commitment to gender equality, this is expressed within a framework of Afro-neoliberal capitalist development that promotes market based economic policies and reforms that further displaces African women. Within the *Protocol on Rights of Women in Africa*, its Preamble (AU, 2003a: 2) affirms AU-NEPAD’s commitment to gender equality as the premise for its rights based discourse. It states:

REAFFIRMING the principle of promoting gender equality as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, relevant Declarations, Resolutions and Decisions, which underline the commitment of the African States to ensure the full participation of African women as equal partners in Africa’s development (AU, 2003a: 2).

This concept of ‘partnership’ embraced by the *Protocol* is aimed at constituting African women as agents of capitalist development. This is programatically expressed through affirming individualised solutions for ‘sustainable development’. This echoes measures envisaged by NEPAD.25 Article 19 of the Protocol (AU, 2003a: 18) promotes and guarantees individual property rights. Within AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring this is taken further. Byanyima (2008: 326) highlights how this works, ‘the AU, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Development Bank are now meant to integrate guidelines for landownership policies which take gender into account. The policies they draw up will most likely propose the end of discrimination in inheritance, matrimonial property laws and customary practice, as the AU issue paper suggested. This is an example of how to link the concept of gender equality to development concepts and strategies.’ Ending discrimination in property rights for women is important and necessary, particularly on the African continent, with its deeply embedded patriarchal cultural and social practices.

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25 The base document commits NEPAD to (2001:26): *Promoting the role of women in social and economic development by re-enforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training; by the development of revenue generating activities through facilitating access to credit; and by assuring their participation in the political and economic life of countries.*
However, believing that merely providing women with individual ownership of the means of rural production is sufficient to overcome structurally defined power relations is actually setting rural African women up for failure. Further, these risks of failure are increased in the context of globalising economies in which the Protocol’s provisions (2003:18) on sustainable development promote a vague commitment to limit the ‘negative effects of globalisation’ and ensure ‘adverse effects of the implementation of trade and economic policies’ are reduced to the minimum for women. In short, the Protocol for the Rights of Women in Africa, fails to take women’s empowerment beyond a narrow Afro-neoliberal approach to development and attempts to affirm the dogmatic commitment to individualism at the heart of transnational neoliberalism amongst the most challenged on the African continent. It does not seek to promote alternative choices for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This includes collective or socialised forms of ownership such as cooperatives that are part of national agrarian transformation strategies, pivoted around ecologically sound agro-processing industries, that shift structural imbalances in favour of women, for example. In fact, the Protocol is captured by the Afro-neoliberal concept of control and is being used to foster transnationalised capitalist relations of production; African women are being enlisted as, atomised owners of property, into a patriarchal project that has already failed them in the context of national structural adjustment.

The second way in which AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring appropriates the gender and women’s empowerment question to further legitimise its approach to developing an Afro-neoliberal capitalism is through the state. The Protocol for the Rights of Women in Africa is anchored in a state-centric framework for the affirmation of rights contained therein. By 2007, 23 countries were signatories to the Protocol, 23 have ratified and seven countries have neither ratified nor signed: Botswana, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan and Tunisia (Clarke, 2008:112). For AU-NEPAD restructuring this simply means taking the initiative to champion ratification and implementation of the Protocol through the APRM (Jahed and Kithatu, 2007:204-206). Again, giving AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring the leading role, from above, in national spaces to legitimise an Afro-neoliberal approach to national
development and the gender question. This does not enable women’s unity particularly with more radical African feminists who are critical of the capitalist underpinnings of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring.

The third way in which AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring appropriates gender and women’s empowerment is by deploying the rights based discourse of the Protocol against illiberal Africa but most importantly from above. It literally seeks to use the coercive power of a juridified women’s rights discourse to impose the Protocol. Clark (2008: 112-115) shows how reducing women’s rights to human rights fails to appreciate the deeper contextual challenges of patriarchal relations with regard to genital mutilation for example. While she does not reject the need to challenge and end genital mutilation she does expose the limits of a narrow rights based and juridical approach in countries like Sierra Leone, for example. She shows how a narrow juridical approach fails to take on board the complexities of rural society including the difficulties of accessing courts for rural women. Instead she argues for a bottom up approach of dialogue amongst African women to interrogate the complexities of genital mutilation and through this process of mutual education and learning to find solutions that move society beyond genital mutilation. This is very different from the top down approach AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has to the gender and women’s empowerment question.

**The Transnational Fraction of the African Ruling Classes and the Continental Afro-Neoliberal Historical Bloc**

Murphy (2005: 128) argues, ‘to construct a historic bloc, a social movement (a party, faction, government, or so forth) must figure out how to piece together not only an alliance of social groups, but also the ideas that will motivate that alliance, the political institutions that will both dominate its opponents and help keep the bloc together, and the institutions of production, distribution and consumption which will mediate the relations of the dominant and the dominated with their physical environment – the economic institutions on which the social order will rest’. In the context of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes has been engaged
with constructing a new power structure on the African continent, as reflected in a new Afro-neoliberal historic bloc. The process of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has realigned the relations of force on the African continent. This has happened at an elite level and at a mass level through engaging civil society. The social forces engendered by this process have embraced an Afro-neoliberal perspective or elements of this perspective such that the base of support for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has been broadened from above. In addition the various organs and institutions that make up the AU-NEPAD have served as apparatuses for the deepening of Africa’s passive revolution. The technical and political cadres in this institution all operate within and champion Afro-neoliberalism.

Moreover, this Afro-neoliberal historic bloc has turned its back on self-reliance as a continental project and has also abandoned national development strategies in favour of adjusting Africa to transnational capital. The emphasis is on market led development processes and externally orientated accumulation models. This version of a globalised Africa is championed, led and driven in the main by non-hegemonic forces at the core of which is Africa’s transnational fraction. Moreover, this historical bloc has defined itself against illiberal Africa. Thus it is attempting to develop a coercive capacity to deal with illiberal Africa. The Afro-neoliberal historical bloc has problematised and distanced itself from illiberal Africa as part of projecting its own identity. Thus, these forces have come together into an Afro-neoliberal historic bloc glued together by common interests and a shared ideological perspective.

The broadening of the historical bloc has brought in some of the following forces to manage and lead Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring:

- Pan African intellectuals and professionals in the diaspora;
- Liberal African states, including various Ministries supporting the AU-NEPAD framework, government agencies supporting FDI led development, Reserve Bank governors and political parties that are engaged with the African partnership and APRM process;
- Technical cadre within continental development and political institutions including the AU itself, ECA and AfDB;
- African media from national newspapers to business magazines and particularly finance journalists;
- Foreign and security policy think tanks, experts and academics;
- Stock exchanges, African business associations and businesses linked to the NEPAD business foundation;
- Liberal African civil society such as human rights NGOs, some women’s networks, some trade unions and some religious groups.

Africa still has its big men and its petite bourgeois forces. Some will rise and others will fall. However, in the current remaking of Africa through a strategy of Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring, these forces are adapting to the rules of this game and not determining the meaning of a globalised Africa. On the other hand, neither is progressive African civil society. AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has maintained the strategic initiative to lead and integrate Africa into the global economy on the terms of transnational capital. The hegemonic responses of the US-led transnational historic bloc to this project will be studied in the next chapter.