



Journal of Business and Social Science Review

Issue: Vol. 5; No.2; April 2024 (pp.18-26)

ISSN 2690-0866(Print) 2690-0874 (Online)

Website: www.jbssrnet.com

E-mail: editor@jbssrnet.com

Doi:10.48150/jbssr.v5no2.2024.a3

The Queerification and Effeminization of Haitian Society

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This article applies Mocombe's concepts of queerification and effeminization to Haitian society, contemporarily. For Mocombe, the shift from industrial capitalism to postindustrial capitalism in the West has led to emasculated and feminine patriarchy, the assumption of patriarchal norms by the state, its ideological apparatuses, queers, and women (given the feminization and queerification of the postindustrial—financialized—workplace) from individual men whose masculinity is no longer associated with being producer and provider as it was under industrial capitalism; instead, they have been interpellated and embourgeoised, like their female counterparts, to define their masculinity as sensitive entrepreneurs, consumers, and or service workers for finance capital, i.e., rentier oligarchs. In the Black diaspora, this process has led to the queerification and effeminization of society as global capital under American hegemony queerify and effeminize the diaspora by promoting queers and women into the labor force at the expense of men and young boys who are either gangsterized or trained for the athletic and entertainment industries.

Key Words: Ideological domination, Capitalism, Underclass, Globalization, Feminism, Theory, phenomenological structuralism, structurationism, masculine studies, gender studies, black identity

Introduction

This article applies Mocombe's historical materialist concepts of queerification and effeminization to Haitian society, contemporarily. For Mocombe, the shift from industrial capitalism to postindustrial capitalism in the West has led to emasculated and feminine patriarchy, the assumption of patriarchal norms by the state, its ideological apparatuses, queers, and women (given the feminization and queerification of the postindustrial workplace) from individual men whose masculinity is minimized and no longer associated with being producers and providers as it was under industrial capitalism; instead, they have been interpellated and embourgeoised, like their female and queer counterparts, to define their masculinity (agents of the Protestant Ethic) as sensitive entrepreneurs, consumers, and or service workers, i.e., finance workers for finance capital (rentier oligarchs). In the Black diaspora, this process has led to the queerification and effeminization of society as global capital under American hegemony queerify and effeminize the diaspora by promoting queers and women into the labor force at the expense of men who are gangsterized or must turn to athletics, entertainment industry, politics, and the military for employment. In Haiti, like elsewhere in the black diaspora, the latter processes have seen the rise of an uncontrollable gang culture in the capital city, Port-Au-Prince. However, whereas right-wing religious fascism emerges elsewhere in the black diaspora to protect their traditionalism against queerification and effeminization; in Haiti, the former two processes take place via the queerification of Haitian Vodou and the ideology of women as the *Poto Mitan*, pillars, of the society. On the one hand, in other words, global capitalists, with the assistance of a Haitian comprador bourgeoisie, enter the Haitian economy promoting both queers and women as the pillars of the society through the ideology of identity politics to take advantage of them as more compliant laborers over their heterosexual male counterparts who are displaced from the country's agricultural base and pushed into cities (abroad and in Haiti) where they serve as a lumpenproletariat for the comprador bourgeoisie and global (predominantly American, French, and Canadian) rentier oligarchs.

On the other hand, Vodou is queerified and effeminized, i.e., queerifying and effeminizing Vodou as queer, feminine, indeterminate, and fluid for black diasporic and white female tourism, as an ideological apparatus for interpellation and embourgeoisement (of women and queers) in the capitalist world-system under American hegemony.

Background of the Problem

Like the Africans of North America who were enslaved by the British, the Africans of Haiti were enslaved by the French on plantations to reproduce the colonial mercantilist system of global capitalism, which became juxtaposed against an emerging liberalization of the latter (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016). Whereas the former, mercantilist capitalism, promoted colonies and protective measures in trade to protect those colonies for the development of the colonial nation, i.e., metropole; the latter, promoted specialization and free trade (McMichael, 2008; Hudson, 2022). The dialectical struggles between (European and American) capitalists promoting either model have shaped geopolitics since the eighteenth century (Chase-Dunn, 1977; Wallerstein, 1982; McMichael, 2008; Hudson, 2022). Contemporarily, the distinction is drawn between protective measures and Keynesian economics, with an emphasis on social welfare programs, state interventions into the economy, import substitutions, and nationalization, on the one hand; and neoliberal identity politics, on the other, with an emphasis on trade liberalization, austerity, financialization of economies, privatization, specialization, and identity politics (Sklair, 1995; McMichael, 2008; Hudson, 2022). The latter has been promoted by America (under their rules-based order), the hegemon of the contemporary global capitalist world-system, to countries seeking to develop and increase the well-being of their citizenry over the former, which America itself used to develop its economy and society against European (British) colonialism (McMichael, 2008; Hudson, 2022). To date, the consequences for countries using the neoliberal model for development have been disastrous: seeing, the rise of identity politics, with an emphasis on the queerification and effeminization of the work force, society, and culture; the privatization of state resources and the rise of a small oligarchy, i.e., comprador bourgeoisie, working for, and with, foreign capital to ascertain and (privately) control these resources; increased poverty for the masses; and a weak state unable to provide social welfare for its citizenry who are dependent on outside foreign and domestic private non-profit companies, i.e., nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other non-state organizations for these services (Hudson, 2022). In essence, contemporarily, neoliberalism has become (feudal finance) mercantilism in an effort to colonize the states of the world for American, the new metropole replacing the Western European states of previous centuries, agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial interests, against state nationalism and the Keynesian model, which are viewed as reactionary fascism in the Polanyian (2001 [1944]) sense by the rentier oligarchs and comprador bourgeoisies of the capitalist world-system.

This work, using a Mocombeian structurationist, phenomenological structural, analysis, posits that the contemporary Haitian state is a paragon of the neoliberal state model, which entails queering and effeminizing the society. Haiti's neoliberal state is a colonial/vassal state impoverished to serve (as a raw material, light manufacturing, and tourist hub) American global capitalist hegemony under the auspices of a Haitian comprador bourgeoisie composed of professionals, managers, intellectuals, and business elites in Haiti and the diaspora. However, unlike Chile, which the West points to as the success of the neoliberal process, Haiti's model is a complete failure, similar to the attempt to neoliberalize Russia post the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Whereas Russia, under Vladimir Putin, was able to combat the deleterious effects (poverty, unemployment, death, etc.) of the neoliberal process by gaining control of the state, curtailing the powers of the oligarchy created by the West, nationalizing its natural resources, and implementing Keynesian economic policies, Haiti is unable to do so (Hudson, 2022). Instead, this work posits that Haiti is queerified and effeminized to facilitate the neoliberalization of its economy and society via Vodou and the ideology of women as the pillar, *Poto Mitan*, and therefore the more employable (compliant and less violent), of the society over men and young boys who are either gangsterized or trained for the athletic and entertainment industries.

Theory and Methods

Mocombeian (2019, 2022) 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 patriarchy and emasculation highlighted by its emphasis on both Protestant neoliberalism and identity politics, which are used to interpellate and embourgeois the masses. 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 embourgeois (socialized) by these five systems, which are reified as a social structure and society (social class language game), social actors 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 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, 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.

Discussion

From its colonial period to independence, Haiti and the social practices of the Haitian people have always been a product of their relations to capitalist relations of production under Western social class language game hegemony. Haiti was established as a mercantilist colony of France, and became divided between a planter class seeking to freely trade in the globe economy and the bankers and elites of the metropole seeking to maintain the colony as a colonial outpost of raw materials. Post the Haitian Revolution, as Francois Pierre-Louis (2000) brilliantly highlights,

[t]he revolutionary governments kept intact the export based economic arrangements which existed under colonialism. The most productive lands in the country were divided between the generals and their families for the cultivation of cash crops. Most of the slaves who fought in the independence war had to resign themselves to working small parcels of land in the mountains for their subsistence. As a result of this arrangement, the class structure of Haiti evolved into three categories: The vast landowners (made up primarily of generals and relatives of the fleeing colonists who moved up the ranks under revolutionary governments), the merchant class and the landless peasants. The large landowners encouraged the production of cash crops on their plantation through a system of share cropping.... Soon after the revolution the government attempted to restore a forced labor system called *corvée* on the plantations in order to restore Haiti’s pre-independence level of productivity in commodities such as coffee and sugar. The leaders had a tough time enforcing the forced labor system due to massive resistance from the former slaves. Instead, a system of share cropping was instituted through which they succeeded in obtaining a substantial labor from the peasant population.

After the large landowners came the merchant class. This class was composed primarily of descendants of the colonists and foreigners. The merchant class acted as an intermediary between the landowners and the external market. A symbiotic relationship developed between the landowning-class and the merchant class.

This symbiotic relationship manifested itself in the property relations, the labor relations, and the mechanism of distribution that they both depended on to maintain their economic status. The only way the landowners could obtain manufactured goods was through the merchant class who in turn would sell Haiti's commodities in the international market. The primary role of the merchant class...was to sell the cash crops in the international market and buy manufactured goods for the local economy. Therefore, the landowning class depended on the merchant class for its manufactured goods while, the merchant class could not survive without the landowning class. Even though in some cases there were a few members of the merchant class who had large tracts of land, their main activities were in the import-export sector (pp. 6-7).

Thus, Haiti entered the post-colonial era with a society divided between three economic systems (modes of production), their classes, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, i.e., social class language games: a merchant class operating a faux mercantilist system under the auspices of global capitalism; a predominantly black-nationalist landowning-class seeking a liberal economic order under the auspices of a black nationalist state; and the peasantry in the mountains and provinces with their communal lakouism stemming from the Vodou Ethic (Du Bois, 2012; Mocombe, 2016). Contemporarily, within the neoliberal and identity politics process of interpellation and embourgeoisement under America, the global hegemon, Haiti is queerified and effeminized, by the merchant and landowning classes operating in concert with the upper-class of owners and high-level white executives (finance capital), rentier oligarchs, to remain a colonial outpost of cheap labor, raw materials, eco-cultural tourism, light manufacturing, and agricultural production.

Neoliberalism represents a resurgence of political economic liberalism in the Western world following the fall of global communism in the 1990s. Globalization (1970s-2000s) is the imperial attempt of the West, under American hegemony, to integrate and colonize the world around the juridical framework (rules-based order) of liberalism, which emanates out of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, at the expense of all other forms of system and social integration. Hence, contemporary globalization represents a Durkheimian mechanicalization of the world via the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under American (neoliberal) hegemony. The power elites, the upper-class of owners and high-level executives, rentier oligarchs, of the latter (American hegemon) serves as an imperial agent seeking to interpellate and embourgeois (via NGOs, education, media, Vodou, etc., serving as ideological apparatuses) 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: 1) right-wing neoliberalism; and 2) (neo) liberal identity politics masquerading as cosmopolitanism or hybridization "enframed" by a cashlessness pegged to the US dollar backed by Saudi Arabian oil (Mocombe, 2023). Both forms of system and social integration represent two sides of the same fascistic coin in the age of (neoliberal) globalization and climate change even though proponents of the latter position view the former antagonistically. In fact, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nations' attempt to institute a multipolar world against American hegemony, under Russian and Chinese tutelage, is not a counterhegemonic move, in the socialist/economic sense, to challenge the constitution of neoliberal capitalism on a global scale; instead, it is a right-wing response, at the global level, to exercise national capitalism, traditionalism, economic autarky, against the identity politics and free-trade mantra of the left promulgated by American hegemonic forces under neoliberal globalization and identity politics. In the latter sense, it is culturally counterhegemonic but not economically.

On the one hand, in other words, (neo)liberal globalization represents the right-wing (reactionary) attempt to homogenize (converge) the nations of the globe into the overall market-orientation, i.e., private property, individual liberties, and entrepreneurial freedoms, of the capitalist world-system through the retrenchment of the nation-state system, right-wing nationalism, austerity, privatization, and protectionism. This (neo) liberalization process is usually juxtaposed, on the other hand, against the free-trade mantra, narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity of the left, which converges with the (neo) liberalizing process via the diversified consumerism of the latter groups as they seek equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with white agents, rentier oligarchs, of the former within their market (finance) logic.

Both positions, the convergence of the right and the hybridization of the left, are (antagonistically) dialectically related in the age of neoliberal globalization under American hegemony. Private property, individual liberties, diversified consumerism, and the entrepreneurial freedoms of the so-called marketplace become the mechanisms of system and social integration for both groups even though the logic of the marketplace is exploitative, environmentally hazardous, and impacting the climate of the material resource framework, i.e., the earth, which often requires the protectionist fascists of the right of the dialectic to intervene, in keeping with the “double movement” thesis of Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]), against the radical (neo) liberalism of the so-called left representing freedoms to and identity politics.

Haiti within this process is queerified and effeminized through a neoliberalism that promotes neoliberal identity politics, cultural tourism via diversified consumerism (with an emphasis of promoting Vodou as queered, effeminate, and fluid), trade liberalization, austerity, financialization of the Haitian economy, privatization of national resources, and specialization of its labor force towards tourism, athletics (basketball and soccer), export agriculture, and light manufacturing where women, who are deemed by Western researchers and the political elites as the *Poto mitan* of the society, are overly represented. In other words, the American hegemon seeks to colonize Haitian society through the neoliberalization of the society with an emphasis on individual responsibility, privatization of the state’s natural resources, non-profit organizations for social welfare, and displacing the Haitian peasantry (and their families) off of their lands, which become grounds for large scale export agriculture, soccer fields and basketball courts, and or manufacturing plants, and into the cities (where gangsterism and poverty accumulate), abroad and in the country, looking for employment in the formal (low-skill service work, garment industry, entertainment, tourism, etc.) or informal (drug-selling, prostitution, and market vendors) economies. These latter processes are undergirded by the financialization of the society through remittances sent by the diaspora to offset the growing poverty in the cities; effeminization and queerification of the labor force as women and queers are employed by foreign and local capital at the expense of men who turn to gangsterism, athletics, entertainment, and or politics for employment; and diversified consumerism centered on carnival, Kreyol rap, rara, konpa (Haitian dance form), and Vodou as a queered, feminine, and fluid cultural (religious) product of the Haitians to be promoted and sold (for interpellation and embourgeoisement of women and queers), via tourism, on the island and the international community.

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