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Rhodes University, ECSECC and Harold Wolpe Dialogue

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Topic:

UNIVERSITIES IN CRISIS: TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Speakers:

Prof Ashwin Desai
Rhodes University

Prof Brij Maharaj
UKZN

Christopher McMichael
RU PhD candidate

The aim of these dialogues is to create a space for open and informed dialogue and debate around key local and global political, social and economic issues facing South Africa.

Policing 2010: Appearance and Reality

My aim is to provide an outline of some of the possible social and political ramifications of the safety and security preparations of 2010. At this point in time this is necessarily speculative, so what I've done is brought in some examples from other recent mega-events. Quasi-militarised and spectacular security apparatuses are as much a part of major sporting events as dramatic opening ceremonies: Beijing in 2008 protected its stadiums with surface to air missiles, the 2006 World Cup was patrolled by NATO and the 2004 Olympics was assisted by the US Navy. This trend has become institutionalized in the post-9/11 World, where sporting events are allegedly key targets for mass scale terror attacks, and the concurrent influence of the private and "homeland" security industry on event consulting and planning. In context of South Africa the safety and security preparations have been one of the most focused upon, and yet little understood issues in the lead up to the 2010 World Cup. South Africa's high crime rates, and indeed status as a poster child for violence, have been seen as posing a profound threat to the success of the largest sporting mega-event in the World. Over the last six years, since the awarding of hosting rights in 2004, a dialectical cycle has emerged: high profile incidents of crime are seized upon by both the national and international media as proof of South Africa's lack of readiness, which is followed by government denunciation of this as cheap scaremongering. This is normally followed by FIFA's statements showing their belief in the South African government's ability to protect its product. A recent example was the demise of Eugene Terreblanche, which saw British Tabloids claiming that the World Cup would be the site of a "machete race war" (which begs the question of why the aspirant genocidaires of 2010 would wait until they were in the spotlight of the world's media to unleash mayhem). Both the LOC and the SAPs were quick to denounce this and pointed to the oft-cited figures of the planned security apparatus of the event: The SAP's is the primary security provider of the tournament, with the assistance of the SANDF (the South African National Defence Force). According to official statements, the main thrust of this mobilization is to ensure minimal disruption of the event through mass policing of the " skies, stadiums, highways, streets and tourist destinations" of the host cities. In preparation the government has spent R 1, 3 billion. An amount of R 665 million has been spent on special equipment, including crowd control, equipment, water cannons, body armour, helicopters, 100 BMWs for highway patrol and surveillance cameras. An additional R640 million will be spent on the deployment of police officers, and to this end government has initiated a drive to increase the number of both active officers and reservists.

This promises to be the largest mobilization of the state security apparatus and indeed of state power in general in the post-1994 period. As such this has often been read as a test of the state's legitimacy. Through this optic the World Cup is an event which *must* be protected. The benefits of marketing South Africa as a gentrified, foreigner friendly country through the successful protection of the World Cup are said to result in a "rebranding" of the country which will encourage tourism and foreign investment. In addition, there is said to be an internal legacy: in some tangible way the expertise and resources acquired by the police between June and July will somehow make the country itself safer in the long run. This idea has been articulated again and again through in the academic literature on 2010 security. For example, the Institute for Security Studies have produced monographs detailing the scale of preparations and the potential trouble areas. Even at its most critical, such as Frans Cronje's rather hysterical account of the existential threat posed by Al Qaeda to 2010, the underlying assumption is still firmly in place: 2010 must be protected through any means necessary as its benefits will be overwhelmingly positive.

However when we take a closer look at the actual ownership structure of the event, this question of public benefit becomes a matter of perspective. As a host South Africa is legally obliged through law such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa Special Measures Act to protect the marketing interests of FIFA and its corporate partners such as Coca-Cola. A major concern for FIFA is the prevention of "ambush marketing" which broadly means any unofficial advertising around 2010. FIFA reserves the right to deem almost anything its wants as ambush marketing: to date transgressors have ranged from television dramas which have accidentally included FIFA logos in the background to a small sweet manufacturer which made the mistake of manufacturing suckers which combined the phrases "South Africa" and "2010". This aggressive ring fencing has a significant bearing on security arrangements. Government documents on the preparations put as much if not more emphasis on protecting against ambush marketing as they do to preventing terror attacks. For example, the 2003 Bib Book, which exhaustively lists South Africa's security duties towards FIFA, includes a clause about providing air security over host cities: this is as much aimed at preventing attempts at mid-air ambush marketing, such as rouge sky writing, as it at preventing possible aerial assaults? This presents a strange worldview, where impugning on corporate brand integrity is as serious as WMD's. This is indicative of the massive corporate dominance of modern mega-events. And as research shows these events tend to socialise

the risk and privatise the benefits: it is host cities and countries that are left with the debts and white elephant stadiums while corporations walk away with the vast profits generated by advertising. The harsh neoliberal reality of this arrangement also bespeaks of one of the major ironies of 2010. While the event has been sold as a jamboree of Pan-African achievement, its very success is contingent on the sub-continent's most powerful state essentially functioning as a proxy for the voracious interests of multinational capital. Look Up Bheki Cele story

The safety and security arrangements are also a marketing strategy for the South African state. The security arrangements pivot around treating World Cup related sites as heavily guarded strategic sites. Essentially this translates into insulating foreign tourists from the negative elements of South African social life. As "Destination 2010" puts it tourists have little to fear as the "bulk of (criminal) cases occur in teeming, poverty-stricken townships". This is featured in an official government publication: What this points out is that one of the key tenets of World Cup security is to protect gentrified spaces of elite consumption, which conforms to the trajectory of post-apartheid urban development.

The safety and security arrangements have been viewed as a managerial responsibility. This treats it as a matter of apolitical planning which ignores the implications of a dramatically extended security apparatus and the implications of this after the event. To give an example, South Africa is one of the most protest ridden countries on earth and these protests have often been treated with extreme degrees of state violence: how with advanced new forms of crowd control equipment and surveillance impact on this? For example, the Greek government was pushed by the US to install an expensive C41 system by the SAIC-SIEMENS consortium during Athens 2004. Only two of the subsystems actually worked: they were still used for extensive phone tapping during and long after the Games. This story has a lot to tell us about the safety and security aspects of mega-events with its intersection of corporate greed, unequal geopolitical relations and technologically aided government repression. Already in the South African case the World Cup has been used to gag civil liberties: for instance, Durban has used the World Cup as a pretext to ban matches by Abahlali BaseMjondolo. Another aspect which has received little coverage, and may have particularly dire ramifications is the wholesale importation of the rhetoric of the "war on terror" as part and parcel of preparations. The SAPS has already consulted the FBI on "counter-terror" tactics and last October claimed to have disrupted an Al-Qaeda cell in

Khayaleitsha. FIFA requires that the SAPS apply so called " Homeland Security" techniques and procedures as part of its hosting duties: it remains to be seen how this will be used after the event. What is certain is that this rhetoric of terror can be aid in legitimating and extending the abuse of state power.

In conclusion it is uncertain to say what legacy the safety and security preparations will leave. The SAPs are using the safety and security budget, or what Jacob Zuma has called the " war chest" to intensify their base of equipment and resources. This must be seen within the context of attempts to restructure and reinforce the SAP's power. The quasi state of emergency that will be imposed as part of the World Cup comes at a time when South Africa does seem to be in a state of turmoil- it as such dangerous times that authoritarian powers may become legitimated, institutionalised and normalised.