Noémi Lendvai-Bainton
University of Bristol, UK

THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS ON MBEMBE AND BÖRÖCZ: RACE, VIOLENCE AND APARTHEID IN EUROPE

Abstract

This article will aim to theorise and reflect upon some of Achille Mbembe's and Jozsef Böröcz's work and its implications for understanding social policy development in the European Union and its Eastern European peripheries. Mbembe's concern with 'the repopulation and the planetarization of the world under the aegis of militarism and capital and, in ultimate consequence, a time of exit from democracy' (2019: 9) centres around issues such as colonialism, racism, borderisation, and apartheid understood as separation and enclaving. His emphasis on 'governing through the law of inequalities' highlights the many ways in which hierarchies are produced and reproduced. His work also problematises and records the many forms of 'instrumentalisation of social relations'. Similarly to Mbembe, Böröcz problematises understandings of colonialism, race and white privilege within the context of the EU. Böröcz's (2021) assertion that race cannot be confined to American scholarship and is a significant theoretical and empirical issue in Europe is an important point. Their work cuts through all important discussions within our disciplinary debates in social policy studies, not least because race, racism and regimes of apartheid are concepts that remain completely marginal in the 'European' social policy theoretical vocabulary. As such, the article will catalogue and reflect upon how the theoretical works of both Mbembe and Böröcz could be translated in the context of Eastern European social policy development.

> We live in an era where we can discuss everything. With one exception: Democracy. She is there, an acquired dogma. Don't touch, like a museum display (Saramago, 2006, quoted in Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015: 1)

INTRODUCTION

This article is the product of various interlocking puzzles I have been thinking and writing about for the last couple of years. These interlocking puzzles, of turbulent times and coalescing crises, of

the postcolonial world of 'Europe' and of 'European peripheries' (semi-peripheries on better days), of authoritarian freedoms and autocracies, and of necro politics, race and violence bring together very disparate, yet closely connected, debates around contemporary governing. Turbulent times designates a sense of 'general *confusionism* of our times and the corresponding loss of landmarks in knowledge and political orientation' (Iveković, 2022, emphasis added). This loss of landmarks in knowledge comes at a time when crises of democracy, capitalism, globalisation, environment, nature and climate, empire, history and memory coalesce. For some, this is not just a crisis, it is 'a state of siege' with raging reactionary populism, nativism, racism and xenophobia (Brown, et. al. 2018:1). These turbulent times are particularly challenging for social policy scholars. The unsettling of collective values and institutions, the relentless economic and political instrumentalization of the social, both the contraction and expansion of state controls, the visible radicalisation of inequalities of all kinds, and the faltering imaginaries of 'global' and "European social democracy', all point to difficulties in political orientation.

It is not that these coalescing crises are nowhere and everywhere. "Europe", "Eastern Europe" and "Hungary", all in plurals, are implicated in particular ways, all melting pots of both the visible and the invisible - all in need of problematisation. Shifting categories of core and periphery, "goodness" and "back-wardness", "whiteness", and fragile privileges facilitate a language that produces never-ending hierarchies. Writing at a time when many scholars come to the disappointing conclusion that European integration failed to mark a break/rupture from/with Europe's violent empire in the past and instead represents the continuation of European colonialism (Böröcz, 2021; El-Nany, 2019). At these times, the crises of 'Europe', the crises of the 'European Union' and the crises of 'European unity' unravel. As Krajina (2016:7, emphasis added) argues 'since all European regions want to be "essentially" European, they are set on an endless search for a source of their European belonging, thus seeking an opportune beginning and end of Europe. In other words, *Europe's unfinished character is constitutive of its definition*…. Europe to be far from "united" implicated though it may seem through the centrality of its "union"'.

"Eastern Europe", the "Second World" of postcolonial studies, and its position 'vis-à-vis Western Europe, remains ambiguous: it is both inside and outside, not "European" enough, nor "White" enough, and in a permanent state of needing to catch up' (Zarycki, 2014: 4– 5). Stuck in a 'transitory' status between the First World and the Third World, Nowak argues, the "Second World" has to "give identity to itself, struggle for it, create itself and at the same time free itself from it" (Nowak, 2016: 87 quoted by Grzechnik, 2019) and as such "the semi-periphery is permanently stuck in between a vision of

advancement and a fear of falling down" (ibid.). The semi-periphery, that is:

'a space located close to the core yet not the core itself, always "lagging behind" yet not distant enough to develop an alternative scale of evaluation, hence forever measuring itself with the yardstick of the core. Positioned between the center and the periphery, it has characteristics of both. It cannot be subsumed under the post-colonial subject, because, from the viewpoint of the periphery, it is "too white", too industrial, too developed, and, most importantly, not eligible for claiming victimhood due to the absence of colonial experience' (Blagojević, 2009: 38; quoted in Grzechnik, 2019)

Grzechnik insightfully argues that the "Second World" 'remains locked in its position between aspirations of advancement and fear of regression, which produces mechanisms for distancing itself from those in a worse position: usually, various forms of racism' (Grzechnik, 2019:1011). European divisions then, rest on colonial hierarchies where Western Europe, the "First World" represents the 'standards against which the rest has to position itself' (Todorova, 2005:63). I shall return to this point later when thinking about the mainstream scholarly debate on the 'democratic backsliding' of Eastern European countries.

The contemporary crisis of authoritarian freedoms (Brown, 2019) is also linked to the very fundamental shift from regimes of 'securities' (for social policy scholars the regimes of social securities) to 'insecurities' (Lorey, 2015; 2022). 'State of insecurities' offers a critique of mainstream welfare state scholarship in terms of its uncritical assumptions of 'collective' and 'protective' securities and its failure to grasp the ways in which, through neoliberal governmentalities of decades, precarisation has become normalised and internalised. As Tyler (2013: 7) argues 'neoliberal governmentality […] have curtailed democratic freedoms, fractured communities, decomposed the fabric of social life and (re)constituted nineteenth-century levels of economic inequalities within the state (Tyler, 2013: 7). The challenge is to make social classification and 'declassification struggles' visible and forensically examine *'national objects'*, ''the bogus asylum seeker', 'the illegal immigrant', 'the chav', 'the underclasses', and the 'Gypsy', the figurative scapegoats, which are not simply a fabrication of false image, but rather a subjectifying force (ibid. 9). For Wacquant (2008) states of insecurities are linked to three main forms of symbolic and material violence: precariousness in the labour market, segregation in the form of relegating people to decomposing neighbourhoods, and extensive stigmatisation in daily life and in public discourses. He argues that neoliberal state-crafting functions through the production of 'social insecurities' in the body politic (Wacquant, 2010). The expansion of violence is a key element within states of insecurities. Nixon's work highlights the notion of 'slow violence' of fast 'onrushing turbo capital-

ism'. He argues that '[b]y slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that typically not viewed as violence at all' (Nixon, 2013: 2). Violence here needs to be seen as a contest over space, bodies, labour, resources, ideas and time, which often invisible or invisibilised, are unavailable for claim making.

Authoritarian freedoms (Brown, et. al. 2018; Brown 2019) are a 'new ethos of the nation, one that replaces a public, pluralistic, secular democratic national imaginary with a private, homogenous, familial one' (Brown, et. al. 2018: 19). Authoritarian freedoms are associated with the rejection of political and social justice, where the social and the public are not only economised but also familialised, and with 'a racially extended reach of the private, mistrust of the political, and the disavowal of the social, which together normalize inequality and disembowel democracy – that shape and legitimize these angry white right political passions' (ibid. 11). While authoritarian freedom in Brown's work is very much the tale of the Trump years in the United States, the work in its philosophical and political underpinnings can easily travel to many other countries and continents, including countries such as Hungary, Poland or Serbia, mapping the 'nihilistic disintegration of ethical values combined with neoliberal assaults on the social and the unleashing of the right and the power of the personal generates a freedom that is furi-

ous, passionate and destructive' (ibid. 29). The Orbán regime in contemporary Hungary, considered to be a flagship of new 'authoritarian', 'illiberal', 'fascist', 'far-right' movement of 'Europe', or/and of 'Eastern Europe' is an important site for glazing over authoritarian freedoms. For Jordan (2020) the rise of the authoritarian state in countries such as the USA and UK are the direct legacies of the 'coercive state' associated with workfare, sanctions, and welfare conditionalities. Authoritarian neoliberalism in Hungary and Poland involves a radical conservative socio-political engineering as both an ideological project as well as a radical redistribution of public resources towards privileged social groups (Lendvai-Bainton and Szelewa, 2020). Understanding new authoritarianism within critical theory, and in particular understanding its racialised dynamics usefully expands a class-based approach with an emphasis on 21st century dehumanisation, brutality and violence.

Mbembe: necropolitics, violence and the nocturnal face of democracy

Achille Mbembe's philosophical work has long been influential across disciplines such as critical theory, postcolonial studies, race theory, migration studies, global social theory and politics. His central puzzle remains understanding both historical as well as contemporary forms of dehumanisation, the crisis of democracy, race and the crisis of human existence. While his work is

rarely cited in social policy scholarship, it speaks extensively to contemporary crises of democracy, violence and statehood, and the crises of forms and practices of social citizenship. His work, I find, is particularly interesting in terms of throwing questions at issues such as eurocentrism, 'Europe', race, and democracy.

Central to Mbembe's work is the brutality of democracy; as he writes '[t]he hitherto more or less hidden violence of democracies is rising to the surface, producing a lethal circle that grips the imagination and is increasingly difficult to escape. Nearly everywhere the political order is reconstituting itself as a form of organisation for death. Little by little, a terror that is molecular in essence and allegedly defensive is seeking legitimation by blurring the relationship between violence, murder, and the law, faith, commandment, and obedience, the norm and the exception, and even freedom, tracking and security' (Mbembe, 2019: 6-7).

Historically, he argues, '[r]elying on one another, all three orders - the order of plantation, of the colony and of democracy - do not ever separate' (ibid.20). 'Democracy, the plantation, and the colonial empire are objectively all part of the same historical matrix. This originary and structuring fact lies at the heart of every historical understanding of the violence of the contemporary global order' (ibid.23). Crucially for Mbembe:

'The colonial world, as the offspring of democracy, was not the antithesis of the democratic order. It has always been its double or, again, its nocturnal face. No democracies exist without its double, without its colony – little matter the name and structure. The colony is not external to democracy and is not necessarily located outside its walls. Democracy bears the colony within it, just as colonialism bears democracy, often in the guise of a mask' (ibid. 27).

It is precisely this inversion of democracy that allows for the institutionalisation of unbound social, economic, and symbolic violence. 'Exit from democracy', in Mbembe's vocabulary is, 'the movement of suspension of rights, constitutions, and freedoms are paradoxically justified by the necessity to protect these same laws, freedoms and constitutions. And with exit and suspension comes enclosure – that is all sort of walls, barbed-wire fences, camps and tunnels, in-camera hearings' (ibid. 40).

For Mbembe, the exit from democracy is associated with a society of separation, the rebordering and rewalling of society, a desire for apartheid. Apartheid is separation, bordering and enclaving, the permanent reconstitution of 'us' and 'them' and the constant manufacturing of races, the reinvention of differences and disjunctive inclusions. Apartheid is also a process of borderisation, one where 'powers permanently transform certain spaces into impassable places for certain classes of population' (ibid. 99). Apartheid operates via both physical as well as virtual infrastructures, with digitalisation of databases, systems, tracking devices,

sensors; hence, the border is mobile, portable and omnipresent.

Race, for Mbembe, is a key signifier of violence and brutality. For him 'race, far from being a simple biological signifier, referred to a worldless and soilless body, a body of combustible energy, a sort of double nature that could, through work, be transformed into an available reserve or stock' (Mbembe, 2019: 10). Race here captures the very fundamental dehumanisation of life, where enslaved people were 'kept alive but in a state of injury, in a phantom like world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity' (Mbembe, 2003: 21). For Mbembe, Whiteness 'became the mark of a certain mode of Western presence in the world, a certain figure of brutality and cruelty, a singular form of predation with an unequalled capacity for the subjection and exploitation of foreign peoples (Mbembe, 2017: 45-46).

Race not only highlights the brutality of democracy but, as Mbembe argues, 'pro-slavery' democracies operate two orders, one where community of fellows governed by the law of equality, and the one for nonfellows, which is governed by the law of inequalities. It is precisely this that highlights how 'the capacity to create unequal exchange relations became a decisive element of power' (Mbembe, 2019: 19).

In *Necropolitics* (2019) Mbembe offers an eloquent and wide-ranging account of the principal of destruction of contemporary democracies. Financialisation, fast capitalism, the digitalisation and militarisation of everyday life, borderisation, warfare, material destruction of human bodies and populations, racism, and the subordination of the environment and nature are all forces of the 'darkness of our times'. I shall return later to a discussion on how Mbembe's work on democracy and race could inform a different kind of scholarly debate in European social policy studies.

Böröcz: "euro whiteness", "dirty whiteness" and racism in Europe

Jozsef Böröcz's scholarship has long centred on the notion that race is not extra-territorial to Europe; race has to form a central tenet of European academic scholarship. As such, Böröcz's work, as a kind of 'European Mbembe', centres around the problematisation of race and 'whiteness', and its erasures from academic debates, despite its powerful force in public perceptions and political imaginaries in Europe. His starting point is that '[w]hiteness is inherently unstable, heterogenous, and impure'. So is "eastern Europe". Making matters worse, the moral-geopolitical construct of hyper-real "Europe", rampant in post-WWII western Europe, has come to connote a claim to two global monopolies. One is an increasingly exclusive entitlement to "racial whiteness". Another, a claim of unique, essential "goodness". The reverse-synecdochic practice of labelling (putatively both white and benign) western Europe as "Europe" serves to conceal the many falsehoods, contradictions, and conflicts that inhere in that monopoly

claim' (Böröcz and Sarkar, 2017: 307). A unique feature of the EU as an empire lies in the fact that:

'Surviving colonial ties, re-emerging relationships with the historically dependent parts of the German and Austrian-dominated, land-based European empires, and constantly renewed neocolonial linkages to virtually the entire "former-second" and "third worlds" provide the EU with terms of exchange, raw materials, energy, labor, capital, and services that continue to subsidize the EU's accumulation process without the EU ever having to get involved in messy business of the social and environmental violence associated with the extraction of surplus. To a large extent precisely because of its distance from institutional locales where direct coercion happens, the EU is widely portrayed as the epitome of goodness in the world politics today, reinforcing a several-centuries-old Eurocentric ideology of superiority.' (Böröcz, 2010: 169)

As Böröcz highlights, a lot of work goes into the construction of 'a world model wherein the west European "White"-identified subject (1) creates a hierarchy of all people, (2) places itself on the top of that hierarchy, and (3) propagates the model as objective truth in which (4) all that including the most important, its self-placement at the top of the global human hierarchy, is fully transparent' (Böröcz, 2021: 1123). Here, "Whiteness" becomes "humanness" and this race-based categorisation becomes a moral/ideological/political/emotional instrument in governing.

Böröcz shares Mbembe's notion that '"Race" cognition has been a key tool in centuries of colonial oppression, normalizing a preposterous self-exception by, and in favor of the colonizer operating in a world marred by a devastating pattern of inferiorization' (ibid. 1123). Racism then for Böröcz is a multifaceted and interlocking regime along 5 dimensions:

1. The claim that humankind can be grouped into homogenous "groups", "populations", or in extremes "races"
2. A claim that these groupings can be scientifically analysed, arranged, fixed and the scientific analysis is valid
3. The resulting moral hierarchies that converge to a single constant
4. Ahistorical/decontextualised hierarchy can be mapped on skin pigmentation, body shape or other bodily features of "groups", "population" or "races'
5. "Whiteness" is a moral category, which is pseudo-empirically tied to low epidermic pigment levels, which is always at the top, while its opposite "Blackness" is always already at the bottom of that hierarchies (ibid. 1124)

Both Böröcz and Mbembe emphasise that whiteness is not skin colour but, rather, is a relational concept, one that produces powerful moral/geopolitical categories and legitimates the claim to global privileges.

Race, class and place in European peripheries

While welfare state scholarship in Europe has always been linked to capitalist state development and 'welfare capitalism', race has been notably absent from social policy literature outside the UK, and even more so from Eastern European literature in relation to understanding racial capitalism. Baker (2018:760), commenting on the race-blind nature of postcolonial studies in Southeast Europe, has argued 'the black feminist Gloria Wekker's observation that "one can do postcolonial studies very well without ever critically addressing race" (2016: 175) could thus readily describe most adaptations of postcolonialism in Southeast European studies'.

Racial capitalism is a theoretical perspective that asserts that 'capitalism expands not through rendering all labor, resources, and markets across the world identical, but by precisely seizing upon colonial divisions, identifying particular regions for production and others for neglect, certain populations for exploitation and still others for disposal' (Lowe, 2015: 150). Rather than treating race as an individual mentality or as an exception from normality, race is considered as a form of structural coercion that is built into capitalist structures, institutions and everyday practices. Racial capitalism is a mechanism through which capital produces race as a socio-political category of distinction and discrimination in the first place and capitalism 'con-

tinues to operate […] through racial projects that assign differential value to human life and labor, such as chattel slavery, settler colonial dispossession, racialised indentured servitude and the exploitation of immigrant labor' (Danewid, 2020). Racial capitalism is a multi-sited and multi-layered construct, through which, as Turner (2017) argues, violence and racism in the Global South is connected to the treatment of populations in the Global North. Here one might add that the same violence and racism is also connected between the Global West and Global East, or European 'centre' and European 'peripheries'. Racism shows itself in the form of insidious, visible and non-visible processes, procedures, conditions that produce through the category of "race" systematic, permanent and unquestioned marginality, inequality and discrimination (Gržinić, Kancler, Rexhepi, 2020). Racism and whiteness are the construction of spatialized hierarchies specifying which peoples and territories could have more and which less access to civilization and modernity (Baker, 2018).

Danewid (2020) uses the Grenfell tower fire in London as a case study to show how colonial borderlands are important sites for understanding racial capitalism suggesting that the 'makings' of Grenfell are inherently global-colonial in character and illustrate the importance of studying the local and global logics of race, class and place together. Danewid highlights how Grenfell can be seen as an exten-

sion and reconfiguration of the domestic space of empire, where the production of 'surplus' people is intimately linked to racialised policing, particular the dynamics of 'urban regeneration' and accumulation by dispossession. The absence of case studies and academic publications on Eastern European 'Grenfell's is noteworthy. It is also worth noting how social movements, NGOs and third sector organisations play a huge role in offering community support for traumatic events and moments of total human devastation.

Just as for Mbembe violence is internal to democracy, Robinson (2000) argues that racialism is 'internal' to relations of European people, the production of hierarchies through racialised narratives, economic exploitation, political marginalisation, and social exclusion. The many examples and sites of racialised hierarchies in Eastern Europe has been highlighted in labour market studies pointing to racialised segmentation, 'unfree' labour and modern slavery (Novitz and Andrejisević, 2020), extensive human rights violations such as LGBTQ+ free zones, and in education studies highlighting the educational segregation of Roma children (Greenberg, 2010), or the enslavement and forced labour of Roma communities across many countries in Eastern Europe. We have the many missing studies on Eastern European 'Grenfells', the racialisation of welfare systems, of international aid, trade and economic instruments, above all a postcolonial critique of EU enlargements and EU governance affecting all aspects of public policy.

Reflections

Mbembe and Böröcz's work, I argue, help us to make radical insertions/disruptions into a *dominant techno-legal vocabulary* of both the EU as a set of institutions, policies, and political imaginaries, as well as European social policy as a discipline. This techno-legal vocabulary at the level of the EU constructs a seemingly 'equal', 'fair', 'accessible to all' language, one that asserts unity, consensus and 'goodness' to all through a technocratic construct. Drawing on a range of legal instruments central to its governance, hiding behind the wall of legal rights, never to be enforced, and the egalitarian clouds of the universality of law, this techno-legal vocabulary removes the possibilities of seeing and speaking about the deeply racialised hierarchies that are produced.

I see the contemporary forms of new authoritarianism as, in part at least, a response to such an oppressive and colonial form of meta-governance at the EU level, a narrow straight jacket that burst. However, at best, I also see a co-production of authoritarianism, where techno-legal EU governance co-produces the radicalised, intolerant "other", where '[m]inorities are unwelcome, immigrants rejected, racism now uninhibited, and misogyny invigorated. Plural societies with diverse nationalities are not on the agenda' (Iveković, 2022). New authoritarianism, I would argue, is the nocturnal face of EU democracy,

one that sits at the heart and centre, not on the margins, of the techno-legal unification of "Europe".

From this position, both the political as well as academic discourses of 'democratic backsliding' in 'Eastern Europe' are hugely problematic constructs. "Democratic backsliding" is a form of historicism, where historical time is used as a measure of the cultural distance that is assumed to exist between the West and the non-West (Chakrabaty, 2008). Democratic backsliding is an argument that sends Eastern Europe back to the 'waiting room' of history. Here we are in the 21st century. As Chakrabaty (2008) notes, all our concepts such as citizenship, the state, civil society, public sphere, human rights, equality before the law, the individual, distinctions between public and private, the idea of the subject, democracy, popular sovereignty, social justice, scientific rationality, bear the burden of European thought and history. New authoritarianism therefore has to be understood within this burden.

"Democratic backsliding" is widely used within contemporary European political and social science circles (Vachudova, 2020). It is problematic (to say the least) as an argument/language/imaginary, as it assumes an up climbing and then a backsliding, it assumes a benign 'democratisation' by EU enlargement, and it offers an unproblematised linear account based on the EU's techno-legal order. Calling it 'democratic backsliding' is no less ironic given that the rise of the far-right 'can be seen as a consequence – at least in part – of the widespread critique, if not demonisation, of the liberal governments that managed the accession process' (Böröcz and Sarkar, 2017). It is also fascinating to see colonial language, 'the backwards east', re-surfacing in contemporary academic debates, reifying both the "eurowhite" EU with its civilisatory, benevolent, democratising forces and the reconstruction of the colonial subject of 'Eastern Europe'. One could instead problematise the EU's role in the 'democratising forces of EU Accession' and argue that the 'Accession' could be seen as de-democratisation, removing the democratic, political, economic and social conversations from the public sphere, and excluding society from engaging with future imaginaries (Sissenich, 2007). Racial capitalism needs to be extended to transnational capitalist relations and unfold the deeply racial dynamics within the European enlargement process. The EU enlargement has unleashed multidimensional and intensified processes of racialisation (Böröcz and Sarkar, 2017; Fox et. al. 2012). What is key here is that autocracy is co-produced within this transnational framework. Hungary's 'backsliding' is not 'external' to the EU, it goes to the heart of the EU integration project itself, and as such it is co-constituted. Classifications of the quality of democracy need to account for this co-constitution and co-production. As an example, Bozoki and Hegedus (2018) classify Hungary as an 'externally constrained hybrid regime', where the EU is seen as an 'external constraint', and hybrid refers

to an autocracy within a democracy; yet from a postcolonial and critical perspective, the 'external' is absolutely core and internal to 'democracy'.

Crucially, one has to also reflect on the language(s) of 'European social policy'. Reading Mbembe, one has to wonder about the necro politics of the EU, and the pacified and 'goodness' language of the social within the EU's techno-legal order. While 'European social policy' both as a policy discourse as well as an academic discourse, remains largely based on Western European language, it is a language of 'social pillars', 'activation', 'social investment', 'flexibilisation', 'social dialogue', 'rights' 'harmonisation', 'mainstreaming', the undisrupted flow of goodness. The European Social Pillar proclaims that 'Europe is home to the most equal societies in the world, the highest standards in working conditions, and broad social protection'. Yet, there is no discussion or acknowledgement of the very basic fact that the 20 key principles (i.e. gender equality, equal opportunities, wages, social dialogue, minimum income etc.) are deeply contested aspirations. The revolt against EU social policy, against the 'liberal' ideas of the European welfare state, and the rise of 'illiberal' regimes in a variety of European countries, are open contestations of notions of 'social investment', of 'equality', of 'social and human rights'. The deafening silence of this contestation in EU documents, and the resulting fiction of the European Social Pillar, is astonishing. In terms of the academic debate, at best, the academic

language talks about 'dualization', 'dual systems' but only in terms of social security, only at the national scale and only in terms of income levels, without a hint of racialised hierarchies, insecurities, dispossessions and dehumanisation. In academic discussions, 'welfare chauvinism' and 'welfare populism' (Bent, 2019) is the furthest one can go in unpacking the radical sites of populism, nationalism and authoritarianism.

We have to open up new conversations, both policy as well as academic, about the war of language, and the need to pluralise our language. Already in 2016, Paul Stubbs and I wrote about the need to 'trace European integration not as a linear, modernist process of catch-up, convergence and mutual learning but as a set of mediated, postcolonial encounters and translation, marked by the enactment and embodiment of performative fictions and frictions, as a series of "contact zones", involving "the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographical and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect' (Stubbs and Lendvai, 2016: 32).

The work that has to be done it terms of moving towards greater reflexivity within academic disciplines and discussions is vast. Critically reflecting on their own disciplinary parochialism, Bruff and Ebenau (2014: 12) argue that the comparative capitalism scholarship 'promotes a worldview which sanitises periods of crisis, assumes that economic development is a positive-sum game for all parts of society, seeks at best mere-

ly to ameliorate the profound inequalities that are characteristic of capitalism, contains an ingrained bias against labour (both as the source of wealth in capitalism and also as a social and political actor), upholds a formalist view of power which is by default gendered and racialised, and sees the move to a post-capitalist world as neither necessary nor desirable'. Social policy scholarship faces very similar challenges. Disciplinary parochialism has left 'European social policy' as a scholarship behind its time, rendering important sites and processes invisible. Reecia Orzeck's (2012: 1464) warning is important here:

'Academic research is, in its entirety, an unavoidably political endeavour – the extent to which what topics we investigate, what questions we ask, and what count as valid answers are all shaped by the concerns and biases of the time and place in which we work; by the prevailing conditions of knowledge production in that time and place; by the state of our disciplines; and by our subject positions'.

As scholars of social policy though, one cannot underestimate the enormously significant implications of new authoritarianism. This new authoritarianism does not sit in 'Eastern Europe', it sits everywhere in Europe; in Sweden, in Italy, in the UK, in all countries, centre and margin. Of course, new authoritarianism talks to specific, geographical, historical and political memories and as such is a plural and multipolar experience. As Rada Iveković (2022: 248), reflecting on current crises, argues '[i]n

some cases, as in Yugoslavia, post-Yugoslav countries, and now Ukraine and Russia, a general militarization through war has produced the current re-patriarchalization. But again, this is hardly a socialist or communist specificity. Parallel to the advancement of legislation regarding women in prosperous countries, we have a multipolar backlash against women from all sides, on all fronts, and in most if not all countries'. In Hungary, the emergence of *a racialised, ethnicised, gendered apartheid* has been in the making over the last 12 years. A radical new language needs to be developed to capture the way in which the Orbán regime militarises and weaponises the welfare state in its 'national renewal'. Orbán's regime goes way beyond the simple claim many political science scholars make, which is that ethno-populist parties have weaponized and racialized the claim that certain immigrants pose a cultural - even civilizational - threat (Vachudova, 2022). In a philosophical sense new authoritarianism is not about immigrants or refugees; it is about 'Europe' itself. It is the crisis of Europe and European divisions, of whiteness, of goodness, of democracy, of humanity.

However, one should not underestimate the damage the new authoritarianism brings in terms of militarisation, weaponisation, religionisation, and familialisation to already fragile welfare states. The 12 years of the Orbán regime in Hungary has seen the emergence of a Hungarian apartheid. Here, I am deliberately using a subversion of

language, to use a word that is considered extra-territorial to Europe. Can one speak of apartheid in Europe? Absolutely. The demolition of constitutional checks and balances in Hungary, de-legislating a wide range of economic, political, social and human rights, and the abolition of institutions responsible for safeguarding public services, transparency and accountability all point to radical new governmentalities. The political discourse in this Hungarian apartheid centres around hate, fear, anger and division. Walls are up in all spheres of life, not just those by the border, but those in schools, labour markets, communities, welfare schemes, and hospitals. The brutalisation of everyday language used in Hungary is matched with a radicalised political discourse which is in constant search for enemies. However, the Hungarian apartheid does not just live in discourses, words and language; it has worked through institutional practices extensively. Orbán's flagship ambition 'to end the welfare state' is in full force. 'Welfare' is no longer the concern of the state, it is claimed to be a self-responsibility. Poverty and social exclusion are no longer a domain of state responsibility. Education is no longer a site of learning and skills (for white Hungarian pupils only), it is a military camp for a new emergent form of social citizenship, one that places religion at the heart of new social responsibilities. Social citizenship studies are replaced by religious studies, and religious providers' funding for educational services far exceeds that for non-religious providers. Hospitals are no longer health care facilities in need of medical and health care management expertise; they are sites of a military management system, led by military personnel. In the Hungarian apartheid gender equality is an outdated 'liberal' idea, one that is replaced with 'family' mainstreaming. Rada Iveković's notion of re-patriarchalisation is in full force, as the regime bears down on women's lives, be it private, public, political, or economic. The apartheid spares no effort in humiliating and dehumanising women, whether it is the new abortion law, fertility-based mortgage schemes, domestic violence legislation or pensions. Humiliation and dehumanisation have become central to all welfare support services, whether it be compulsory public work scheme programmes, disability assessment changes, adoption and foster care, or housing support. The effect of large-scale dispossessions is already visible everywhere, no longer just on the margins. The production of social vulnerability is a key ambition of Hungarian apartheid that governs through anxiety, violence and brutality. COVID-19 has further intensified and fast-tracked legislative changes and institutional 'reforms' through 'emergency governance' and made Hungary the worst performing EU country in terms of excess deaths. However, as Mbembe shows, death does not matter anymore.

CONCLUSION

Domestic apartheids and transnational techno-legal orders are all falling apart, political sites are fragmenting to

the core, welfare/collective functions are under siege from both political pressures and market forces, and as such social rights are being systematically dismantled. We need a radical new language to be able to speak/contest/disturb contemporary dominant discourses. As Mbembe argues 'we will effectively require a language that constantly bores, perforates, and digs like a gimlet, that knows how to become a projectile, a sort of full absolute, of will that ceaselessly gnaws at the real. Its function will not only be to force the locks but also to save life from the disaster lying in wait' (2019: 189). We also need 'new' memories. As Sierp (2020) argues, 'European efforts for transnational historical remembrance have focused almost exclusively on the Holocaust and National Socialism as well as Stalinism, the EU remains curiously quiet about the memories of imperialism and colonialism' (on memory see also Stubbs, 2002). We need historical amnesias to be tackled to be better able to address contemporary forms and practices of "Race-cognition", 'whiteness', 'goodness', racialised hierarchies and their role in language, knowledge and claim-makings.

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