

# Situating globality: African agency in the appropriation of global culture

## An introduction

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### Background and acknowledgements

From 1997 to April 2002 one of the four theme groups at the African Studies Centre (ASC) in Leiden was devoted to the study of globalization and its local responses in Africa. This ‘Globalization and Socio-cultural Transformation in Africa’ theme group was made up of some of the ASC’s permanent staff members, affiliated and visiting researchers in and from Africa, and research associates from within the Netherlands. It was closely linked with the national research project, which was funded and coordinated by the Netherlands Foundation for Tropical Research (WOTRO), on ‘Globalization and the Construction of Communal Identities’ that was initiated in 1993 by Peter Geschiere and the theme group’s leader, Wim van Binsbergen. This project took its cue from work then beginning to appear on the cultural aspects of globalization especially in the articulation of identities, the dynamics of popular culture under globalizing conditions, and the negotiation of commodification.<sup>1</sup> Through the national research group, the ASC’s theme group was incorporated in a worldwide ‘International Network on Globalization Research’ (ING), whose prominent members included Arjun Appadurai, Seteney Shami, Mamadou Diouf, Partha Chatterjee, Jean and John Comaroff, and Ulf Hannerz.

To mark the end of theme group’s life-span, an international conference was convened in Leiden in April 2002 to take stock of the theoretical, methodological and empirical progress that had been made in the study of Africa’s globalization. It was hoped that the conference’s title ‘Globalization

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Appadurai (1990), Anderson (1992), Clifford (1992) and Hannerz (1987).

and New Questions of Ownership' would capture the dynamics of appropriation and repositioning which, as the Leiden research had suggested, were central — yet hitherto underexposed — aspects of the globalization experience in Africa. We set out below how this initial theme came to be amended during the conference and in the subsequent editorial process leading to the present book.

The convenors and the editors of this volume, Wim van Binsbergen and Rijk van Dijk, register their indebtedness to the African Studies Centre, Leiden, and to the Trust Fund of Erasmus University, Rotterdam, for funding the conference; to all participants and observers for their contributions to our ongoing debate; and to Marieke van Winden and her colleagues at the ASC for their logistical support.

The present collection is the result of that conference. It is based on the papers presented in Leiden, that have been substantially rewritten in the light of the conference discussions and the editors' suggestions, emphasizing what increasingly emerged as a central theme: *African agency in the appropriation of global culture*. This introduction highlights the arguments of this central theme against the background of achievements and problems in African globalization studies since the 1980s. Thanks to a generous grant from the African Studies Centre, the convenors were able to commission specific library research by Jan-Bart Gewald who explored the literature and produced a provisional report. The editors felt that this report would be put to best use if it were incorporated in this introduction, of which Jan-Bart Gewald therefore features as a co-author. We are grateful to the ASC's Library, Documentation and Information department whose literature surveys and excerpts, freely utilized in the following pages, have considerably facilitated the task of writing this introduction.

Finally, the editors wish to extend their thanks to the following persons and institutions who have been instrumental in the realization of this book: to all the contributors for sharing and inspiring our intellectual explorations on globalization and its African trajectories; to Ann Reeves whose excellent work as copy editor often extended into reminding the contributors and editors of their schedule responsibilities; to Mieke Zwart-Brouwer for preparing the layout of this book in her usual careful and efficient manner; to Nel de Vink for the beautifully drawn maps; and to Brill Publishers for professional and supportive cooperation in all stages of the book's production.

Having sketched the context in which the book came into being and thanked those who assisted in its delivery, the remainder of this introduction is structured as follows. In Section 2 we deal with globalization and Africa in broad theoretical terms, taking stock of what our years of research in this field have taught us, including the many major puzzles of conceptualization, theory and interpretation that remain. We formulate, in Section 3, what we see as the

main message of this collection, as summarized by our title ‘Situating Globality: African Agency in the Appropriation of Global Culture’. Then we briefly introduce the book’s constituent chapters from this overall perspective. A bibliography concludes the introduction and is a guide to the understanding of some of the most significant aspects of African transformations today.

## Globalization and Africa

### *Globalization as a concept, a phenomenon and an ideology*

[Globalization constitutes] the dominant international system that replaced the Cold War system after the fall of the Berlin Wall. (Friedman 1999: 7)

Over the past fifteen years, ‘globalization’ has become the buzzword in both academic as well as popular discourse dealing with Africa, and *a fortiori* with the world as a whole. This is indeed remarkable for a word that, according to Waters, did not exist as a processual term in academic literature prior to 1987.<sup>2</sup> In his presidential address to the Ninth General Assembly of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar in December 1998, Akilagpa Sawyerr stated that discussion of the ‘globalization process’ contained within it ‘strong doses’ of reality as well as mythology, and that globalization, both as reality and as myth, had had a profound impact on the daily life of people in Africa. Professor Sawyerr’s address is a fine introduction to the state of play in globalization and the social sciences in Africa, and emphasizes the ambiguity that has come to be associated with the term ‘globalization’. An ambiguity, which Sawyerr charmingly admits, ‘is not without its uses’ (Sawyerr 1999: 1).

And that, precisely, is the problem: globalization has come to mean all things to all people and in so doing has increasingly run the risk of losing its explanatory meaning. There are a number of fields in which globalization, as a process, is taken to mean something. Yet within and between each field, the meaning ascribed to globalization varies from author to author and from discipline to discipline. That is, the various meanings attributed to globalization within these fields are often not compatible, let alone between fields. Generally though, the term globalization is taken to describe processes that are currently taking place on account of changes in information transfer. Due to the recent rapid advances in information and communication technology (ICT), these

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<sup>2</sup> Waters (1995: 2). However, cf. Levitt (1983) and Robertson & Lechner (1985), in whose titles the term ‘globalization’ features.

processes, which may have been long in the making, have substantially changed the world. The transfer in information is quantifiably different from what it was in the past, and this has led to a qualitative difference. Unfortunately for much of the work dealing with globalization in Africa, the process of globalization in itself is taken as a given and events in Africa are viewed solely from within the confines of an implicit globalization-based paradigm.

It is necessary to provide a narrower definition of terms and to distinguish between the concept, the phenomenon and even the ideology of globalization. Often these three are confused in the application of the term.

For those seeking enlightenment as to what is to be understood by the term globalization, there is a multitude of definitions that all circle around and centre on the ever-increasing compression of time and space in the world. This is directly inspired by the early work of Giddens (1991) who proposed that, in terms of theory, account had to be taken of the fact that modernity entailed the increasing expansion of interconnectedness across social, cultural and class systems. According to Giddens, this in turn redefined the boundaries and interrelationships between these abstract categories and the people within them. Giddens proposed that instead of looking at the integration of bounded systems, people need to deal with the issue of order as one of time-space distancing — the conditions under which time and space are organized so as to connect presence and absence. Giddens noted that modern social systems ‘bind time and space’. They connect local activity with activities a long way away and create links across time and space that are not necessarily defined by local factors. Local temporal and spatial conditions can have an impact on socio-political and economic conditions far away. This is nothing new for there have always been cultural and economic exchanges between people; yet the intensity and centrality of these exchanges have expanded greatly with the onset of modernity, and intensified yet again to simultaneously bind all regions across the globe.

Malcolm Waters, writing on globalization in terms of its perceived cultural impact, has referred to globalization in terms of the phenomena that make for the system that Giddens had indicated and perceives of it as:

a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. (Waters 1995: 3)

Likewise, Geschiere and Van Binsbergen deploy the term globalization

as a descriptive term to draw attention to the rapidly accelerating circulation of goods, people and images on a global scale, since roughly the 1960s; the emphasis

here is on ‘rapidly accelerating’ since it is clear that global circuits were much older than this.<sup>3</sup>

There are ongoing debates regarding the origins of the phenomenon of globalization. Here the leading question is: is globalization a process that has been going on since time immemorial, or is it merely contemporaneous with and identical to capitalist development and modernization? Within the social sciences for instance, ideas relating to what has become known as globalization have a long antecedent. The work by Peter Worsley (1957) on ‘cargo cults’ in Melanesia and Terence Ranger (1975) on the Beni Ngoma in East Africa<sup>4</sup> heralded the later work of others, Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1991, 1996, 2000) and Ulf Hannerz (1987, 1996) in particular, on the manner in which concepts, ideas and material objects, once introduced into societies from the outside, can come to be used and deployed in ways that appear to be incompatible and illogical to the societies from whence they came. Whatever the position taken in that debate, it is generally agreed that the recent spectacular advances in information communication technologies have qualitatively changed the manner in which the world is perceived, experienced and acted upon.

Both inside and outside the ASC’s theme group on globalization, much of the Dutch research on cultural globalization (and in this it is in line with globalization research internationally) has elaborated the insight that ‘processes of globalization’ — the impact of modern communication and transport techniques, the spread of industrial commodities, new styles of consumption and new forms of knowledge on a global scale — do not necessarily lead to greater cultural homogeneity. On the contrary, many authors have recently stressed that these processes often reinforce parochial identities. Far from being subsumed in globalization, parochial identities appear to thrive on the impact of globalization. Furthermore, much of what is presented as being traditional in character could be shown, upon closer inspection, to be shot through with aspects of the modern world — indeed the globalizing world — to such an extent that it would be better to refer to these allegedly traditional identities as ‘pseudo-traditional’ identities.

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<sup>3</sup> Geschiere & Van Binsbergen, in press (Introduction).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Worsley (1957), Ranger (1975). ‘Cargo cults’ is the technical term for popular 20<sup>th</sup>-century social movements, mainly in Oceania, and emerged as a result of contact with the West especially in the context of World War II. These movements centred on the expectation of the arrival, by ship or by plane, of loads of valuable goods (including Western consumer goods) made available to the local population by the ancestors or other spiritual forces. The Beni Ngoma are early (pre-World War II) ballroom dance associations in East Africa, exclusive to Africans, whose grooming, style of dress and general comportment revealed Africans’ careful adoption of European models current at the time.

In the African context, Forben (cf. 1995) can be seen as working along a very different line, namely the interpretation of globalization as an ideology, or even as a policy directive. He is the director of the newly founded African Centre for Humanities (ACH) that was ‘set up in response to the need for alternative and innovative approaches to the current challenges facing both Africa and the world at large’. One such challenge is:

to devise and implement workable global structures which, while being relevant to all, also take account of regional, communal and individual differences — so that each culture and each individual are able to interpret global norms in a way that is most relevant to them locally, while also being consistent with the broader objectives of such global structures. (Forben 1995: 11)

While he broadcasts the desire to maintain cultural identity in the face of homogenization, his own contribution to the debate is basically a pamphlet meant to advertise his own organization and in a sense making use of the opportunities offered by globalization. But, one might argue, so much seems to apply to all Africanist research, especially if undertaken by non-Africans (cf. Van Binsbergen 2003). In terms of ideology, globalization appears to lead to debates on the pros and cons, and to the exclusion of neutral positions in the defence or rejection of the process. Bauman (1998) has argued in detail and with conviction that globalization divides as much as it unites — an observation that applies not only to the massive proliferation of new identities (of an ethnic, religious, cultural, gender, sexual or consumptive and lifestyle nature) in the face of the cliché of threatening McDonaldization (as in hamburger), but also and particularly to the element of worldwide, regional and local social inequality: globalization means the global availability of objects, services and ideas which on the one hand articulates the exalted class position of some, while on the other hand reinforces the subordinate, deprived and exploited situation of many others. Here we are close to the work of Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (1998) who situate globalization in the logic of the cultural production of capitalism and attempt to theorize the specific logic of the cultural production of the third stage of capitalism.

Thomas Friedman (1999), columnist for *The New York Times* and far from being an anti-globalist, indicates the dangers that emerge from the global functioning of capitalist financial markets and the unequal access developing countries have to these flows. As Thabo Mbeki, then deputy president of South Africa, noted on 28 September 1998 in a speech delivered at the African Renaissance Conference in Johannesburg:

The current international financial crisis has brought to the fore, very sharply, the fact of the accumulation of vast quantities of especially financial capital in the

developed countries of the North. The rapid movements of this capital, from one corner of the globe to the other, in search of immediate profit have contributed greatly to the problems which the world is experiencing today. On other occasions we have made the point that we are subjected to the strange situation that the process of the further reproduction of wealth by the countries of the North has led to the creation of poverty in the countries of the South. There has to be something out of joint where wealth begets poverty!

President Thabo Mbeki is<sup>5</sup> currently a major proponent of African Renaissance, never fully defined by himself as a collection of points, some of which are a desperate call for the inclusion of Africa in the maelstrom and perceived benefits of globalization.

Even now, we can reel off the list of things that need to be done in this regard, including human resource development, the emancipation of women, the building of a modern economic, social and communication infrastructure, the cancellation of Africa's foreign debt, an improvement in terms of trade, an increase in domestic and foreign investment, the expansion of development assistance and better access for our products into the markets of the developed world. (...) We must therefore insert ourselves into the international debate about the issues of globalization and its impact on the lives of the people and make our voice heard about what we and the rest of the world should do actually to achieve the development which is a fundamental right of the masses of our people. (Statement by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki at the African Renaissance Conference, Johannesburg, 28 September 1998)

The prime issue is the qualitative difference which space–time compression has brought. Hand in hand with the instantaneous transfer of massive amounts of money (with disastrous results for local economies) goes the equally instantaneous transfer of information. It has been noted that the 'global context remains an empty abstraction unless mediated and translated towards concrete settings where we can discern concrete actors' (Van Binsbergen 1999: 3).

This leads us to the question of how globalization affects daily life in Africa today. As the phenomenon of globalization appeared to have an impact on the world's economy in particular, its effects on continents such as Africa were first and foremost defined in economic terms. Under the influence of global institutions such as the World Bank, globalization came to mean a desired

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<sup>5</sup> Mbeki (1998). Although a London and Sussex-trained economist (BA 1962, MA 1966, 1968 in economics), Mbeki here simulates ignorance of classic Marxist economics according to which wealth (in other words capital) has no option but to exploit labour, with poverty being the unavoidable result. For the sake of convincing his audience steeped in liberal economics, he pretends that a causal relationship between wealth and poverty is surprising, theoretically unforeseen, therefore undesirable and repairable.

policy and end-state, a prescription for a failing integration in world markets and a guideline for the interventions of singular states. But to gauge this effect, we must first look at the implications of this ideological and prescriptive thinking for Africa's economy.

*The economy and a globalist ideological paradigm*

Figures released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the year 2001 indicate that the continent of Africa is a marginal player in the world economy.<sup>6</sup> Global 'Foreign Direct Investments' (FDI) consisted of US\$760 billion in 2001, of which US\$225 billion consisted of FDIs in developing countries. The upbeat news was that whereas global FDI fell by nearly 50 per cent in 2001, FDI in Africa increased by nearly 20 per cent from €9 billion in 2000 to €11 billion in 2001.<sup>7</sup> On the down side, this investment was overwhelmingly concentrated in Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco and South Africa, and was driven primarily by a series of mergers and acquisitions, as well as privatizations of state-owned enterprises. Furthermore, in terms of global FDI Africa accounted for a mere 1.5 per cent, whilst even in terms of developing countries' FDI Africa accounted only for a mere 5 per cent. What these figures indicate is that Africa is to all intents and purposes cut off from the world economy. The only bright spot might be the implication that, in terms of these figures, Africa is not necessarily directly affected by global economic downturns.<sup>8</sup>

The staggering comparisons vex the minds of many social scientists and economists. The bulk of existing material dealing with globalization and Africa is written from an economic perspective, and its production has been funded by global institutions that seek to regulate the global economy, notably the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),<sup>9</sup> and so forth. A reading of this material is interesting precisely because it underscores the underlying belief in the virtues of the mythical free market, as well as in globalization as an inevitable and necessary condition.

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 'FDI Downturn in 2001 Touches Almost All Regions', Press Release, TAD/INF/PR36, 21 January 2002.

<sup>7</sup> To put the figure of US\$11 billion in perspective, this is the same amount as the US government wants to spend over two years to protect the nation against biological terrorism (*New York Times*, 4 February 2002).

<sup>8</sup> In effect, an echo of the 'uncaptured peasantry' concept; cf. Hyden (1980) and Geschiere (1984).

<sup>9</sup> Ongoing reports dealing with globalization statistics can be accessed at: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

Thomas Friedman (1999: 104) has coined the term the ‘golden straitjacket’ as the ‘defining political-economic garment of this globalization era’. He notes that countries either adopt the golden straitjacket of privatization, macroeconomic stability, fewer market controls, trade deregulation, small government and the like, or they fall behind. This state of affairs is in effect based on no more than a fundamental belief, albeit a belief that underlies the bulk of material emanating from global financial institutions such as the IMF. *Finance and Development*, the IMF’s quarterly magazine, devoted its December 2001 edition to ‘Globalization and Africa’, and in itself provides a fine introduction to the views and beliefs of this institution. Its editors state in the introduction that the articles it presents examine how Africa can reposition itself to take full advantage of globalization, and they argue that the articles ‘sketch a road map that could help make globalization work better for Africa’.<sup>10</sup>

In his contribution, Evangelos Calamitsis, the former director of the IMF’s African Department, suggests that:

most countries will probably need to implement stronger domestic policies and reforms designed to consolidate macroeconomic stability, enhance human resource development, improve basic infrastructure and spur agricultural development, accelerate trade liberalization and regional economic integration, promote a sound banking system, foster private investment, and ensure good governance.

However, much more far-reaching is the contribution by Seyni N’Diaye, National Director for Senegal of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) who argues that African states will have to undertake extensive institutional reforms to facilitate full integration into the global economy. N’Diaye notes that Sub-Saharan Africa is confined to the ‘peripheries of globalization’, and that this should be met with rigorous action, notably structural and institutional reforms, to allow the region to take full advantage of the benefits of globalization while minimizing the risks. To transform Africa, he calls for the institutional reform and transformation of the state, its civil society and the private sector. He views the state as interventionist and declares that ‘this interventionist system, ...[which], eventually ran out of steam ... did not give way to burgeoning private initiative’.

Having advocated a dramatic reduction in the state, N’Diaye then calls for an expansion in the role of civil society, which, in his view, predictably appears to consist of NGOs. It is described as being a mouthpiece for democracy, it is the chief challenger of the power of the state, limiting deviations from good governance and acting as a regulator in the political arena. It is clear that the role of opposition parties is of no importance, and that instead NGOs should

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<sup>10</sup> *Finance and Development* can be accessed online at <http://www.imf.org/fandd>

serve as watchdogs to contain market excesses and to guard against environmental abuse.

While the state is stripped of its powers N'Diaye sees the private sector as the 'main engine for growth' in the context of globalization. As such, 'its operations must be free of heavy-handed and cumbersome regulatory or bureaucratic procedures that could slow its expansion'. Freed of restrictions the private sector needs to be supported by a sound banking and financial sector within a liberalized institutional context.

N'Diaye's optimistic economic vision shows him to be co-opted by the North Atlantic hegemonism that is imposed on the African continent. In a similar vein is the work by El Toukhy (1998) that analyses the potential effects of the globalization of trade and finance on developing countries. El Toukhy focuses on the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the manner in which this relates to Sub-Saharan Africa. He argues that Sub-Saharan Africa, in seeking to reduce its losses and enhance any possible benefits from globalization, needs to:

develop and strengthen its competitiveness through expanded and diversified productive capacities and market diversification, improvement in marketing skills, quality control techniques and level of technology. (ibid: 481)

Where the necessary funding for these no-nonsense economic strategies is to be found is not indicated but the socio-political improvements which El Toukhy believes to be essential are listed as being, amongst others: macroeconomic stability, structural reform and good governance.

A reading of N'Diaye's work, and through it the underlying assumptions of the financial institutions that seek to regulate global trade and finance, underscores the analysis of Noam Chomsky in his collection *Profit over People*. This brings together articles and lectures written between 1993 and 1998 and Chomsky presents his views on corporate power, media control and the international economy. He argues that corporate power and the suppression of democracy have led to an increase in the personal wealth of a few in the First World at the expense of the majority. Writing on the new global order, Chomsky (1998) describes neo-liberalism as:

a set of market-orientated principles designed and propagated by the United States government and international financial institutions with the aim of liberalising trade and finance, setting prices according to market forces, privatisation and the curtailment of inflation. These doctrines are used by the powerful nations and

institutions to create a global order to serve the interests of the rich at the expense of the poor.<sup>11</sup>

Yet it is this fundamental belief that lies at the basis of much of the advice that is being presented to African states — and many of the regulations that (in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes) are being imposed upon them by the international financial institutions and bilateral aid partners.

A case in point is Nuwagaba's (2001) analysis of the Ugandan situation, in which he focuses on the interface between globalization and poverty reduction in Uganda. Incidentally, Nuwagaba adopts a very general use of the term globalization. In Africa the most vivid experience of globalization is, he says, 'through slavery, characterised by the exploitation of African labour in the Americas, Europe and Asia' (ibid: 32).

In the early 1980s Uganda adopted structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) with the aim of making the Ugandan economy competitive once again on the world stage. The programmes were meant to correct the structural bottlenecks and economic disequilibria that had arisen due to increased importation and increased government expenditure against the backdrop of declining exports and government revenue. These programmes have, however, contributed to the escalation of poverty among Ugandans. Nuwagaba argues that globalized markets require a much greater competitive capacity than the Ugandan economy can provide. In his opinion, most African countries have globalized through a series of shocks rather than by making use of opportunities. Nevertheless, global competitiveness is inevitable if the Ugandan economy is to catch up with global trends and patterns. Globalization must be cautiously embraced if development is to be sustainable, but in the last analysis African economies do not appear to have much of a choice:

For decades, there has been [a] massive flow of aid to support poor countries but donor fatigue has set in. Uganda must find its own solutions. ... The powerful and invisible forces that have given rise to globalization are impossible to resist. (Nuwagaba 2001: 51)

This is not exactly the position of the economist Yash Tandon (1997), who views globalization as capital's final conquest of the rest of the world. With the end of the Cold War, the movement of capital is no longer hindered by the West's need to compromise on account of communism. This has brought about fundamental changes in the global economic system: the strong can now extract what they will, the weak must surrender what they cannot protect. The case of Africa is ample illustration of this. Globalization has created a chasm between

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<sup>11</sup> See also [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/Noam\\_Chomsky.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/Noam_Chomsky.html)

the North and the South. Even land, one of the few assets Africans still hold, is threatened with being globalized. Ironically, whilst capital-led globalization is at the root of Africa's crisis, it is also suggested as its 'solution'. For in Tandon's opinion, the alternatives for the south are to slow down the process of further integration into the global economy; to strengthen local community-based systems of production and marketing; and to begin to steer local resources away from multinational corporations.

N'Diaye and like-minded powerful actors on the African continent may call for the trimming of the African state in the interests of African integration in the world's globalized economy. By contrast however, Nicolas van de Walle (1999) discusses and assesses a number of arguments about the impact of economic globalization on African democracies, concentrating on the economic dimension of globalization, which is simply defined as the process of integration of national economies. He tracks the progress of economic globalization in the recent past and reviews the reasons given in the literature as to why globalization might be viewed as undermining democratic rule. He argues that the international economy is much less globalized today than is increasingly being suggested. According to Van de Walle, globalization processes in Africa are in fact stagnant, if not in retreat. He further argues that the low levels of private capital flows to Africa serve to set the continent sharply apart from other regions of the world. Africa's increasing marginalization in the world economy means global economic integration has different implications for Africa than for Latin America or Asia. Interestingly, Van de Walle calls for the reintegration of African states into the global economy, believing that to do so would be to promote economic growth and limit the leverage of international financial institutions.

In financial terms, Africa appears to be barely involved in the globalized world. Fosu and Senbet (2001) argue that although the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa have generally been sheltered from the direct effects of financial and currency crises because of this disconnectedness, the indirect effects could be considerable. They refer to Africa's increasingly significant economic relationships with Asian countries and the impact of the crises in global markets on commodity prices. Furthermore, they argue that the crises provide important lessons for the African region, especially those that identify mechanisms for maximizing the benefits of globalization while minimizing its risks.

One commonly heard suggestion relating to what Africa should do in the face of economic globalization is regional economic integration. Here attention focuses on the creation of regional economic blocks as a fortress against international financial institutions. Tanoe and Diouf (1999) deal with the serious limitations of regional trade areas, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern

Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). They note that openness to world markets and the removal of barriers to international trade and investment are key characteristics of liberalization, and with it the globalization of world trade. There has been a proliferation of regionalized approaches to trade and economic development, however, in Africa. Tanoe and Diouf (*ibid*: 45-6) observe that regional integration arrangements leading to free trade areas or customs unions, which could serve as a protective barrier to the rest of the world, are only allowed as an exception to the most-favoured nation rule, in the context of the global multilateral trading system, under certain conditions. The members must also notify the arrangements to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for assessment and recognition. Thus far only COMESA has been notified.

In other words, it is as individual states and not as regional blocks that African states face immensely powerful regional trading blocks such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU). This, needless to say, places African states in a weak bargaining position.

This section discussed how the assessment of the economic impact of globalization on the African continent appears to be producing very different views and positions with regard to the question of how and to what extent African economies should become integrated in global economic systems. Some authors are hopeful in their diagnosis and the prescriptive policies they imagine, others remain pessimistic about the chances of such global integration. The next section shows that similar discussions can be seen to be taking place with regard to the socio-cultural impact of globalization on Africa.

### *Societal impact and the globalist debate*

Much analysis has been devoted to how Africans have been seeking to modernize and participate in the globalized world. This work is tellingly countered by that of James Ferguson (1999) who reminds us that in the recent past there were parts and aspects of Africa that participated in the global world as equal players in ways no longer replicated in today's conditions. In grim detail, Ferguson describes how Zambia, once lauded as the vanguard of an African industrial revolution, has moved into economic decline and been sidelined in the modern globalized world. As Ferguson (1999: 235) notes, 'Zambia, in the good times, had been on the map — a country among others in the "modern world"'. Now, Zambia is just another one of the many African basket cases. Ferguson uses the word 'abjection' to describe 'a process of being thrown aside, expelled, or discarded. But its literal meaning also implies not just being thrown out but being thrown down — thus expulsion but also debasement and humiliation' (*ibid*: 236).

It is this humiliation of Africans through the forceful termination of African participation in the globalized First World that is part of the focus of Ferguson's work. He cites an article from a Zambian newspaper:

Car owning remains a dream. A decade ago, young men in gainful employment were able to buy cars of all models. That era is gone, gone never to return again. (ibid: 1)

One of the aspects emphasized by researchers dealing with globalization is the uneven impact it has on African communities and societies. The now fairly dated work of Brecher and Costello (1994) sought to describe the process of globalization and its impact. Although they concentrated primarily on the economic impact of globalization, they coined the term 'downward levelling' to describe a process of cultural and societal homogenization that they argued was brought about by globalization. Similar views have been put forward by Barnett (1994) and Bauman (1998) who seek to highlight the reduction in cultural diversity that has allegedly been brought about by globalization — another version of the spectre of McDonaldization.

Interesting in the work of Brecher and Costello (1994) is the fact that they provide an overview of possible and actual strategies as to how globalization is to be countered. In so doing, they provide a description of the varied forms of resistance that have appeared to globalization in underdeveloped, newly industrialized, former communist, and industrial countries. The formation of transnational movements of opposition to globalization is particularly emphasized in their work. In this their work foreshadows the currently popular bestsellers by Hertz (2001) and Klein (2000).

In contrast to these negative views of the impact of globalization on societies is the work of Friedman (1999: 29) who coins the term 'glocalism' and defines it as follows:

healthy glocalization (...) [is] the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich that culture, to resist those things that are truly alien and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different.

Friedman argues that societies need to develop glocalism, and that failure to do so will lead to their further marginalization:

The whole purpose of glocalising is to be able to assimilate aspects of globalization into your country and culture in a way that adds to your growth and diversity, without overwhelming it.

Friedman's point of view would appear to be close to the position that we are defending in this collection and that will be highlighted in Section 3 of this introduction. However, as is often the case, the closer the affinity, the more one notices differences. Friedman appreciates the different forms that the impact of globalization can take upon a society but a weakness of his is that he sees such differential impact as the result, apparently, of pre-existing and more or less immutable features which that society had at the moment when globalization manifested itself there. However well intended, his whole approach to societies and their dynamics in a global context is static, mechanical and prescriptive. How can one speak of 'healthy' glocalisation, without burdening one's argument with a heritage of condescension ('we know what is healthy for you, my good man') that is only an enlightened form of North-South hegemonic subjugation? How could one use the word 'naturally' in the context of socio-cultural dynamics (agreed, by definition, to be learned and not genetically determined, to be 'nurture' and not 'nature'), unless as a slip of the pen? How could one revive the old, originally social Darwinist concept of 'weak' and 'strong' cultures and societies? How could one reproduce, without even a semblance of critical distance, the ideology of the multiculturalism<sup>12</sup> of the mutual cultural 'enrichment' of societies in globalization in the face of massive evidence to the effect that, if left to global market forces, globalization would amount to a process of cultural and class subjugation worldwide, so that any enrichment that took place (for example, the installation of ethnic restaurants and festivals) would merely obscure the real loss of identity, autonomy and participation that goes on underneath in the South and on the periphery in general. And how could one speak of 'truly alien', as if it were at all possible (presumably with state-of-the-art methods of cultural anthropology?) to identify that which is unmistakably proper to a particular culture and that which is unmistakably alien? Identity, self, identification and dissociation have been recognized throughout modern social-science studies of ethnicity and identity as highly selective, eclectic, situational and performative, so that, in a post-modern globalizing world, the 'truly alien' can only appear as a deliberate, situational, strategic construct (on the part of the owners of a particular cultural orientation, or on the part of the ethnographer), or both? Essentializing is inevitably part of the construction of identity in any globalizing context but one would hardly expect the social-scientific analyst to join in the game, as Friedman clearly does here.

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<sup>12</sup> Also compare Friedman's use of such evaluative, optimistic expressions such as 'enjoy' and 'celebrate' in this connection, which smack of American popular language use in the (often market-triggered and consensus-driven) exhortative, ideological construction of sociability, but that are out of place in analytical social-scientific discourse.

What we propose to retain of Friedman's view of glocalization is the awareness that the experience and the process of globalization may vary infinitely, due to factors that are related to the internal functioning of societies undergoing globalization. However, instead of looking for immutable features to explain this differential, we ought to be looking at different strategies of agency among members of those societies: modes of selection, appropriation, creation and transgression of boundaries, as applied by specific actors at a specific time and place, and (as we argue when discussing the present collection's project) in the context, not so much of new concerns brought and imposed by globalization, but of ongoing concerns towards whose conflictive realization globalization provides new material, new ammunition and new formats, without initiating these concerns themselves in the first place.

Implicit in Friedman's work is the same critique of societies as is to be found in the work of the prominent Orientalist Bernard Lewis, since 1986 a Princeton emeritus. The American historian Paul Kennedy recounts that in early 1979 as Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran from exile in France on 1 February, Bernard Lewis declared in *The New York Times* that the 'Shah's overthrow by Muslim clerics would lead not to social improvement and democracy but to a theocracy, intolerance and clerically controlled mayhem'.

Kennedy (2002) notes that Lewis's statements — which today would be recognized as remarkably insightful or even prophetic by many well-informed people outside Iran — ran counter to popular opinion that held that 'the Iranian people, freed from the Shah's yoke, would join the modern, anticapitalist, freethinking world'.

In essence these statements contain the issue that vexes all those dealing with globalization. Far from inevitably leading to homogenization, globalization can also lead to a rise of theocracies that appear in a traditional guise but that are in their organizational structure and technological resources thoroughly modern entities. Lewis's latest work, *What Went Wrong?* (Lewis 2001), deals with the responses of the Muslim world to the West over time, and would seem to support Friedman's assertion that a society's failure to successfully 'glocalize' will lead inevitably to its further marginalization.

Again Friedman helps us (albeit by inviting our disagreement) to articulate more clearly what globalization amounts to. Marginalization is a perspectival, relative concept. Only in a world that has just one focus, one centre, is it crystal clear where the margins are. It would appear as if the central struggle in globalization is not even any more about scarce resources such as wealth, weaponry and technology. It is also less and less about a recognition of outlying groups and identities by a self-proclaimed and powerful centre. The central struggle is increasingly between uncentrism and multicentrism. The illusion of uncentrism, with the United States as the uncontested focus of the global

economy, politics, monopoly over mass destruction weapons, morality, ethics and political blueprints (in such fields as human rights and democracy), is increasingly being contested from within and without Africa's intellectual circles. The Black Athena discussion<sup>13</sup> has been essentially about the inevitability of a perspective global multiculturedness for the sake of mankind's global future, yet argued on the basis of millennia-encompassing historical evidence which European/North Atlantic cultural hegemony has long managed to push under the table. Comparative philosophy and, more recently, intercultural philosophy in Africa have struggled to drive the message of the essential multiculturedness of human cultural and intellectual achievement home.<sup>14</sup> However, a far more explicit, intransigent, belligerent and violent challenge of (the US, hegemonic) uncentrism is to be found in militant Islamism. What is at stake in the latter is not so much the refusal of proudly self-conscious, militant Islamists to be marginalized *vis-à-vis* the US uncentre, but their rejection of the idea that the United States should be 'the' centre' *par excellence*. Failure to appreciate multiculturedness as an essential, positive feature of the contemporary world (and even of human history since the Late Palaeolithic) has brought Samuel Huntington (1996) to interpret its manifestations as the inevitable, religion-based *Clash of Civilizations*, lending a thin intellectual justification to a continued and intensified North Atlantic hegemonic project.

Thus, while Friedman and Lewis see globalization as intrinsically the imposition of North Atlantic hegemony, it would be analytically more rewarding to distinguish between two related processes:

- a) the fact that local individuals and communities are increasingly being drawn into global networks of communication, information and circulation; or
- b) the fact that such networks are not power-indifferent but tend to concentrate power in local, regional, national, continental and intercontinental centres, with less than a handful of centres aspiring to effective world centrality — with the post-Cold War United States as the most striking example.

Justifiably, most writers on globalization would include (a) in their definition of globalization but only a minority would consider process (b) as more than an

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<sup>13</sup> Bernal (1987, 1991), Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers (1996) and Van Binsbergen (1997).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Raju (1962), Mall (1995) and Van Binsbergen (2003).

accidental, ephemeral, regressive and essentially undesirable aspect of contemporary globalization.

Associated with the perceived decrease in cultural diversity is the ongoing loss of languages. When dealing with the global world and seeking to successfully ‘glocalize’, a society must of necessity acquire a full working knowledge of a global language among at least a sizeable minority of its members. Rabenoro (1999) argues that, to avoid being totally left behind, developing countries — and African ones in particular — need to rethink their language, cultural and educational policies in the framework of their development schemes. In Africa, the privileged minority are at least bilingual and have at their command both an African language and a language of international (in fact, intercontinental) communication, usually their former colonizer’s language. Rabenoro notes that the disadvantaged majority are generally monolingual or, if they are multilingual, their second language is a national, pidginized version of an intercontinental language, one that forces exclusion from rather than access to intercontinental circulation. As a result, these people have limited access to the modern sector. Rabenoro is critical of the propagation of multilingualism and multiculturalism, even though this had become part of the ideological politics of recognition by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his view, linguistic diversity hampers communication and hinders development endeavours. Of particular importance is the question of what language is used as the medium of instruction. As one of the possible ways of bridging the gap between the Westernized minority and the disadvantaged majority that are not proficient in a language of international communication, Rabenoro suggests including the teaching of international languages on African school curricula. Perhaps it would be more realistic to admit that this has been a widespread policy for decades but that it has been fatally thwarted by failing infrastructure, poverty and the intercontinental brain drain.<sup>15</sup>

Francis Nyamnjoh (2000) does not share Friedman’s normatively optimistic view and reminds us that global availability does not mean global affordability. He brings to the fore once again the fact that access to the global does not necessarily mean that benefits will accrue. He takes a critical look at globalization from the standpoint of the African experience of the West and discusses ‘modernization’, ‘development’ and ‘globalization’ as different labels for the same basic project or mission. This mission consists of freeing the African of his natural and cultural Africanness, and inviting him/her to partake of a ‘standardized, streamlined and global’ consumer culture.

Such a freeing, which Nyamnjoh appears to regard with sarcasm, cannot pass without further qualification. It could only be liberation in the positive

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<sup>15</sup> For an insightful collection of papers on related issues, cf. Fardon & Furniss (1994).

sense if one considered Africanness as something negative. The aim of the whole project of Afrocentrism is to counter such a negative conception of Africanness. However we understand the liberation which globalization is claimed to entail, granted the level of poverty in Africa, as only an elite few qualify to consume first or second-hand. Global availability is not synonymous with global affordability. The majority of Africans have to content themselves with what trickles down to them from relatives or patrons at the centre of power and resources. They have to be satisfied with what Achille Mbembe has called *lécher les fenêtres*, i.e. impotent window-shopping, with rising desire but without the financial means to actually make a purchase. In the face of such inequities, it is difficult to envisage how ordinary Africans can relate to the global (consumer) culture in any way other than with frustration and disenchantment.

Despite and perhaps as a result of such debates on the pros and cons of globalization at a macro level of interpretation, an increasing need was felt to obtain an empirically based understanding of the impact of globalization on local cultures. How are these processes of globalization, both in economic and cultural terms, situated at the mundane level of everyday existence? While it was evident that in terms of economy and culture globalization was transformative of local societies, the exact nature of those changes has remained a matter for further investigation. It was in the social sciences dealing with the intricate processes of social life that this need was particularly felt. In anthropology, social history, political science, human geography and religious studies, an interest for processes of globalization emerged based on empirical research, which did not *a priori* intend to speak out on the value or relevance of globalization but instead was aimed at a further understanding of the phenomenon, its ramifications and the ideologies and imaginations it fostered. In various disciplines the challenge was taken up of exploring the ways in which globalization has become situated in local communities and social processes in Africa. In the following disciplines specific answers are being formulated with regard to the place of the concept and the process of globalization in academic work, and the ways in which these can or should be studied in local situations.

### *History*

Sometime around 1760, Britain, then France and America took off to another world, one that was increasingly secular, democratic, industrial and tolerant in ways that

left many of the other regions gasping at the combined implications of such changes. (Kennedy 2002)<sup>16</sup>

Globalization is an eminently historical phenomenon, one that can only be truly understood in a historical context. Over time it has become increasingly possible for people to come into contact with one another in ever-quicker ways and at ever-diminishing cost. Yet, primarily due to the historical discipline's tradition of writing national histories, historians — with some notable exceptions, some of which we have already mentioned — have generally not dealt with globalization. heralding what could become another paradigm change in the social sciences, and the timely entry of historians into the field of globalization is the excellent introduction in the collective work edited by Anthony Hopkins (2002), not to be confused with the movie star of the same name! The essays presented in his book indicate that the history of globalization does not follow a linear trajectory but instead shows that 'historically, globalization has taken different forms, which we have categorized as archaic, proto, modern, and post-colonial' (ibid: 3). Tellingly he challenges historians to take up research on globalization.

Identifying the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of globalization, and exploring the links between them, is a starting point that should appeal to historians who are properly sceptical of definitions that commit them to a particular bias, whether economic, political, social or cultural. (ibid: 17)

At the same time he warns historians of the dangers

of using the term without also being aware that different claims about its longevity, novelty and significance are frequently founded on variations in the way it is defined. (ibid: 36)

These issues are not easily resolved and, having barely entered the debate, for historians to make hard and fast statements would be, in Hopkins's view, unwise. He ends his overview with a profoundly optimistic call: 'Historians now have an opportunity to cross disciplinary frontiers by engaging in this debate' (ibid: 36).

To be sure, the spread of people and ideas around the globe has a long and convoluted history. Generally speaking, historians tend to be confined to a few decades or, at most, centuries of history. Nevertheless, there are those who would dare to consider the several million years of human presence on earth. One such person is the palaeoanthropologist Clive Gamble (1993), who seeks to

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<sup>16</sup> For an innovative view as to why this should be so, see Allen (1999).

present an overview of the manner in which our ancestors covered the globe. As he notes, contemporary conceptions of prehistory are still bedevilled by the notion of progress, in that human evolution tends to be understood in terms of a development from inferior to superior. Gamble dispels some of the more persistent myths and distortions that this way of perceiving the human past has produced. He presents a synthesis of the archaeology and palaeoanthropology of the last two million years that concentrates on changes in behaviour and stresses the deliberate human purpose that our ancestors displayed when they encountered variations in climate and environment as they ranged across the world. He demonstrates this new way of looking at human prehistory by a study of global colonization rather than by a conventional reassessment of fossil remains and stone tools. He reconsiders the record of geographical expansion that began with the early hominids of Sub-Saharan Africa whose descendants spread to new continents.

Van Binsbergen (1999) employs the concept ‘proto-globalization’ in a manner that differs significantly from that used by Hopkins, and defines globalization as ‘the social (including economic, political, cultural and religious) effects of dramatic advances in communication technology’. He continues by stating that:

Given the globular shape of the earth, even fairly rudimentary communication technologies of earlier millennia (those of the footpath, the hand-written text, the horse and camel as mounts, the sailing boat) have given rise to early forms of proto-globalization: globalizing religious projects such as Christianity and Islam; globalizing intellectual projects such as the emergence and spread of philosophy and science. (ibid: 4)<sup>17</sup>

This is to be distinguished from events in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when developments in communications technology advanced so

dramatically as to reduce the costs of time and place to nearly zero. (...) this has produced massive qualitative changes in the world at large — changes for which the term globalization in the narrower sense of the word is appropriate. (ibid: 4)

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<sup>17</sup> As far as the spread of science is concerned, this argument is taken up again by Van Binsbergen (2003: Chapters 7 & 15). There too the global history of science turns out to be inextricably connected with the global history of (what we identify today as) pseudo-science, such as astrology and other forms of divination (particularly geomancy), that once – in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Greece, the heights of medieval Islamic civilization, and pre-modern Europe – constituted the very hallmark of science. Van Binsbergen’s fascination with proto-globalization springs from his tracing, since the early 1990s, of the world history of geomantic divination.

Van Binsbergen's words are echoed in those of Friedman (1999: xviii) who notes:

The globalization of the present is not new, but is different in its intensity and interconnectivity, this is the era of globalization as stage two or turbo-charged.

A recent article by Frederick Cooper (2001) makes for interesting reading, if only because of his apparent dislike (not uncommon among historians!) of generalizing blanket terms — of which globalization is clearly one. Indeed, for Cooper, African history reveals the inadequacy of the concept of globalization. He argues that what is missing in discussions of globalization today is the historical depth of interconnections and a focus on what the structures and limits of the connecting mechanisms are. Central to Cooper's work is a desire to seek alternative perspectives to a concept — notably globalization — that emphasises change over time but remains ahistorical, and that seems to be about space but ends up glossing over the mechanisms and limitations of spatial relationships.

What Cooper seems to be searching for is the right mix between transactionalist agency and structural determination — in other words a continuation of the debate on reductionist Marxist 'historiography' (more like historicizing political economy or sociology or anthropology) and its fallacies, back in the 1970s.<sup>18</sup> In this insistence Cooper is justified, both by the one-sidedness of much current globalization parlance and by the inconclusive state in which the original debate was left at the time the Berlin Wall collapsed, in dispelling Marxists in all directions and rendering them inarticulate.

Reading Cooper, one is struck by his insistence on clarity and sharp definition of terms and concepts, which, as he notes, is often the fate of concepts in the social sciences. Particularly galling for Cooper is the 'doing history backwards' of much of the work dealing with globalization and he comes close to formulating, in a nutshell, what could be termed 'the globalization paradigm'. In his view, scholars working within the concept of globalization have two complementary views of the present:

- the present as the latest in a series of globalizations each more inclusive than the last; and

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Thompson (1980). Much of that debate was inspired, indirectly, by Popper's (1957) philosophical attack on historicism, including Marxism. African history also went through a phase when Marxist-inspired structural history was very much in vogue, even temporarily affecting some of the finest historical minds such as Ranger's (1979, 1985).

- the present as a global age as distinct from the past in which economic and social relations were contained within nation-states or empires and in which interaction took place among such internally coherent units.

For Cooper, both views suffer from the same methodological fallacy: writing history backwards, taking an idealized view of the globalized present and showing how everything led up to it, or how everything, up to the arrival of the global age itself, deviated from it.

He notes that colonization does not fit the imagery associated with globalization as implying a condition of unboundedness and maximum access. Instead, Cooper reminds us of what historians of early colonial Africa have stressed all along, that colonial conquests imposed territorial borders on long-distance trading networks within Africa and monopolies on what was then a growing external trade, damaging or destroying more articulated trading systems crossing the Indian Ocean and the Sahara Desert and along the West African coast. He exhorts Africanists not to rely on imposed theoretical models but to investigate, once more, empirically, and with an open mind, what is actually happening in Africa. Cooper (2001: 207) notes that:

Africa is filled with areas where international investors do not go, even where there are minerals that would repay investors' efforts. To get to such places requires not deregulation, but institutions and networks capable of getting there.

In conclusion, Cooper argues that it would be better to

emphasize not a 'globalising' (or 'deglobalising') Africa (or China or Russia), but rather the changing *relationships* of externally based firms and financial organizations, of indigenous regional networks, or transcontinental networks, of states, and of international organizations. (ibid)

In other words, from a historical perspective, a politically inspired understanding of the process of globalization is indispensable for interpreting the impact of the spread of global forms such as that of the nation-state for African societies. However, as political scientists discovered at an early stage, this spread of global political forms in Africa certainly did not result in a full and unproblematic embrace.

### *Politics*

Writing on globalization, Thomas Friedman (1999: xxi) notes that 'if you want to understand the post-cold-war you have to start by understanding that a new international system has succeeded it'.

The oft-misquoted political scientist Francis Fukuyama, an exponent of United States triumphalism and unashamedly Hegelian in his ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism, wrote in 1992 that:

a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism. More than that, however, I argued that liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and the 'final form of human government', and as such constituted the 'end of history'.<sup>19</sup>

For Fukuyama (1989: 3), economic and political liberalism achieved a complete victory in the Cold War and this signalled:

the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

In a different though complementary way, the work of Noam Chomsky provides a healthy counterweight to the triumphalism of Fukuyama and others. In 'Consent with Consent: Regimenting the Public Mind', the second essay in *Profit over People* (1998), Chomsky argues that liberal democracy has been used, through the manipulation of public information, marketing and propaganda, to protect and maintain the position of powerful elites. Chomsky argues that transnational corporations, governments and international organizations manipulate societies in such a way as to manufacture consent.

One of the aspects highlighted by the process of globalization is, therefore, the decline in the importance of the nation-state and of national boundaries. In the African context, the validity of the boundaries of African nation-states, a residue of the colonial era frozen by mutual agreement within the Organization of African Unity, has been an issue of debate prior to and since independence. In the wake of the Cold War, the collapse of many African states has brought home, even more forcefully than the two preceding decades, the lesson of post-colonial African politics: the tenuous nature of the African state.

The fragility of the African state, though not necessarily in the context of globalization, is an issue that was already highlighted in the work of the grand old man in African history, Basil Davidson, in his *The Black Man's Burden* (1992). Following on from Davidson's work, and introducing the adverse effects of democratization on the African state, Naerman (2000) deals with the disintegration of the nation-state in the African context. Naermann's work, in his own words:

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/fukuyama.htm>

sets the disintegration of the nation-state in Africa and the disruptive effects of the democratization process within a historical perspective, which takes into account the artificiality of state borders and the ubiquity of crossborder migrations.

He demonstrates that the colonial national pattern is basically an irrational creation — preserved more in the interests of the new African elites than those of the grassroots. He explores local reactions to conditions created as part of the process of intensified globalization, arguing that the African position in this regard is fragile. He then focuses on the internal structures of the modern nation-state, dealing with the relationship between the traditional ethnic (national) groups' territorial domain and the present state set-up. He paints a broad canvas of the new patterns of conflict that have appeared in recent years, giving examples of how various configurations in a diverse spatial pattern are the primary basis for a popular affinity that is far stronger than is identification with a nation-state. Finally, he focuses on the situation in Kenya and the complicated ethnic divisions now structuring political action there. Naermann concludes by claiming that, although the academic discourse has found it difficult to imagine an African situation without the nation-state, it may be possible that new kinds of state structures, cooperation and networks will emerge.

The work of Puplambu and Tetey (2000) deals with the implications of globalization for African agricultural development in a situation in which the state collapses, or 'withdraws' as advocated by N'Diaye, and comes to be replaced by NGOs. Puplambu and Tetey note that, in the past twenty years, the crisis of the state in Africa has been a dominant feature of the continent's socio-political and development discourse. In a region where agriculture is the engine of development and the state plays an active role in agriculture, the crisis of the state (according to the authors) has created a vacuum in the institutional framework required for agricultural development. Consistent with globalization, NGOs have emerged and filled the vacuum as viable institutions for agricultural development.

In a similar vein to Chomsky, but complementing the latter by a specific application to Africa, is the work of Owolabi (2001: 71). He introduces his article by claiming that it belongs to:

the stream of articles that seek to redress the perceived wrongs of globalization and urge societal transformations which can be attained through political interventions.

Owolabi's essay argues that globalization is essentially aimed at the promotion of the imperialistic interests of Western society. He claims that this hegemony is sustained by propagating the philosophy of liberalism. Liberalism and its

defence of individual autonomy necessarily promote self-interest, whether at the level of the individual or the state. To avoid the injustice and possible anarchy that may arise as a result of this, the philosophy of liberalism must be reviewed based on criticisms from a communitarian perspective. The only way that globalization can attain a just integration and global peace is by jettisoning the individualism of liberalism for the altruism and sense of community as advocated by 'communitarianism'. Interestingly, and as a sign of the negative effects of globalization, this African author deploys the term communitarianism mainly with reference to North Atlantic 20<sup>th</sup>-century political philosophers<sup>20</sup> but largely fails to appreciate that, as an indigenous philosophy, communitarianism has a long (though not uncontested)<sup>21</sup> history on African soil.

Kwame Ninsin (2000) is critical not so much of the post-Cold War democratization project in Africa but of globalization and trade liberalisation, which he believes undermine democracy. He touches on the limits of political reform in Africa and states that the dominant discourse on democratization in Africa is premised on the necessity of establishing the basic institutional elements of democracy. This is why, argues Ninsin, elections and liberal constitutions in which the structure of state power has been crafted to safeguard liberty are the main features of political reforms. However, there is also a strong ethical foundation to democracy, which is embedded in liberty as self-development or progress for both the individual and the group. This presupposes an educated, economically secure and critically conscious citizen. The conflict between this richer conception of democracy and the narrowly defined procedural democracy is at the heart of the failure of the democratic revolution in Africa.<sup>22</sup> More specifically on globalization, Ninsin argues that its forces have eroded the capacity of existing social forces to implement the democratic project. He argues that the liberalization of markets has exacerbated the social and economic weakness of Africa's social classes.

Similar to the views expressed by Ninsin (2000) is the work of Francis Makoa (2001) who notes that one of the key demands of globalization, seen as a North Atlantic economic ideal, is that there should be no political interference in economic activity and investment decisions. Thus, according to Makoa, globalization presents the less-developed countries with what appears to be an intractable conundrum. While touting democracy as a condition for economic

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<sup>20</sup> Communitarianism (cf. Bell 2001) emerged as a philosophical challenge to the classical liberal position (the state is primarily to protect individual freedom) as defended by Rawls (1971). Among the contesting authors are MacIntyre (1988), Sandel (1998), Taylor (1985, 1999) and Walzer (1983, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Wiredu & Gyekye (1992).

<sup>22</sup> The 2002 general elections in Zimbabwe provide a graphic example of exactly what Ninsin has in mind.

success, the neo-liberal ideology that underpins globalization effectively removes the economy from the political agenda: for it advocates *laissez-faire* economic policies that preclude government involvement in investment decisions. As a result, private capital and the bourgeoisie are shielded from social and political scrutiny. Makoa outlines the broad political implications of globalization in eastern and southern Africa, and reflects on possible strategies that might cushion the regional states against its vicissitudes.

It is, however, not only international institutions, global liberalism or internal (ethnic) strife that should be held responsible for the failure of the introduction of the global political form of the nation-state on the African continent. The disintegration of the state also results from what can be called globalization from below: the urge through which African populations increasingly become involved in transnational movement and migration. Never before has the continent experienced such massive forms of mobility culminating in transnational and intercontinental movements of migration of unprecedented magnitude. They are of a magnitude well beyond the control of many a nation-state.

*The spatial dynamics of globalization: Migration and transnationalism*

One of the recurrent themes in the context of globalization is the ease and rapidity that have been technologically realized in the field of spatial displacement. These conditions have resulted in the greatly increased mobility of people, images and goods around the world. Initially many believed that this would lead to the disappearance of cultural differences but an ever-increasing bundle of recent research indicates that this has been far from the case. In seeking to come to terms with this paradox, Meyer and Geschiere utilized the concepts of 'global flows' and 'cultural closure'. They note (1999: 7) that:

There is much empirical evidence that people's awareness of being involved in open-ended global flows seems to trigger a search for fixed orientation points and action frames, as well as determined efforts to affirm old and construct new boundaries. For students of globalization it is therefore important to develop an understanding of globalization that not only takes into account the rapid increase in mobility of people, goods and images, but also the fact that, in many places, flow goes hand in hand with a closure of identities which often used to be much more fuzzy and permeable.

The work of Winston Meso (2000) deals specifically with the negative impacts of migration under the influence of globalization for African societies. Meso argues that the migration of skills and labour — human capital — is one of the key features of the globalization trend. The management of this process,

according to him, presents an enormous challenge to the economies of the affected countries.

As the work of Stoller (2002) points out, dealing with West African traders on the streets of New York in the context of globalization, transnationality involves more than only the movement of people across geographical boundaries. It also involves the creation of transnational spaces of cultural interaction and imagination, sometimes created through electronic devices such as the Internet, and in other instances forged through virtual interactions such as Sassen indicates for the financial flows between transnational cities.

Ideas of the transnational city in the context of Africa, as expressed by Ali Mazrui (1996), link in with the 'global city' hypothesis and debate as presented by James White, Saskia Sassen and Michael Smith. The most influential, though inevitably dated, book on the global city is Sassen's *The Global City* (1991), in which she establishes a paradigm for analysing cities in a context defined by post-1970s economic restructuring, and by the growing power of multinational corporations able to move massive capital swiftly around the globe. Cities, according to Sassen, have lost their positions as centres of manufacturing. Instead they have gained a new role as centres of corporate control, with centres of supporting service industries. In conjunction with this change there is, according to her, an ever-growing divide between the rich and the poor in cities. Her work has been challenged by White (1998) who argues that she overemphasizes the economy at the expense of political interventions, and that she follows an ethnocentric approach in believing that all cities will become like London and New York, as contradistinctive to Tokyo and Paris. Michael Smith (1998) rises above the debate between Sassen and White by arguing that the 'global city' does not exist in reality except as a social or intellectual construct, in other words as a space of imagination, cosmopolitanism and global interactions which can thus only be investigated in approximation. Smith argues for a comprehensive analysis of all cities as nodes within a network of relationships that overlap and intersect.

A useful corrective, meanwhile, to the grandiloquence about the global city is offered by Simone (1999) in his study of African cities and globalization. He reminds us that African cities are, at one and the same time, the most underdeveloped and the most contemporary. As they have not coalesced around industrialization, they lack the productive base to provide formal work or infrastructural support to their growing numbers, thus compelling continuous revisions or reinventions of largely rural-informed practices of survival, but they have also fostered socio-economic practices and forms of social organization potentially well adapted to globalized post-industrial economies. How to begin to register increases in urban economic productivity simultaneously with human development gains for urban citizens remains a

fundamental challenge facing cities in Africa. Particular challenges for African urban governance lie in the social and cultural domain as a result, amongst others, of the profound fissuring tendencies in urban Africa, increased levels of insecurity and crime, and a progressive dissociation of space within cities and across cities. Rather than pinpointing specific policy frameworks and programmes for urban managers to adopt, the author suggests particular ways of thinking about the city that are important precursors to the generation of specific governance practices.

The study of transnational movement in relation to the global interconnectedness of world cities (see Hannerz 1987, 1992, 1996) brings us in addition to the crumbling nation-state closer to an understanding of the spread and emergence of a range of other phenomena as well. While much of this can be studied in terms of style, fashion and music, the final paragraph of this section looks at the relationship of transnationalism with the emergence of new religious forms. New religious movements are emerging in Africa increasingly as a result, if not the product, of global urban interactions.

### *Religious studies*

A series of articles recently edited by Corten and Marshall-Fratani (2001) deals specifically with issues of global flows, migration and nationalism in relation to Pentecostalism. The editors note that over the past two decades, Latin American and African societies have experienced a phenomenal growth in Pentecostal movements. Describing a 'bricolage' of heterogeneous elements, the editors argue that contemporary Pentecostalism provides a striking example of the paradox of difference and uniformity, of flow and closure, that seems to be at the heart of processes of transnationalism and globalization. The studies in the edited volume reveal the diversity of Pentecostalism in Latin America and Africa, especially in its social composition. The dazzling complexity of the Pentecostal phenomenon in Africa and its globalization overtones are well captured, with chapters on the provenance of African Pentecostal theology in Nigerian Pentecostalism, in the Ghanaian Pentecostal diaspora, in the context of the Church of Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso and in the expansion of Pentecostalism to Francophone Africa (Benin and Brazzaville).

What is noted for these new religious manifestations of Christianity also emerges in the context of another world religion, namely Islam. Ousmane Kane (1997) examines the historical role and structure of Sufi orders in West Africa in relation to transnationalism. In the context defined by globalization, the breakdown of the state, and mass migrations, Kane argues that the network that Sufi orders create functions as a substitute for the state in the provision of social security. At present, with their increased mobility, the Sufi networks have been strengthened over ever-greater distances that extend beyond Africa. Parallels to

Kane's work are to be found in the work of Stoller and Van Dijk, both of whom deal extensively with transnational religious and trading organizations and their significance for African migrant communities. Roy Dilley offers a related argument in this volume.

However, while this interrelatedness between transnationalism and the emergence of new religious movements has been well documented, the explanation for the general public's fascination with these religious forms in a context of globalization has resulted in heated debates. Much research has concentrated on the collective imagination, the fantasies, that globalization brings about especially in the periphery of the global system and the way in which these are translated in religious terms.

In explaining this fascination for new religious movements, it is often pointed out that Africans have developed strands of reasoning that seek to explain and provide solutions to the confrontation with global systems and the feelings of exclusion that commonly result from such an experience. In this connection, Van Dijk (1999: 72) refers to 'the enchanted global economy and the moral perils of involvement with foreign commodities'. Here Africans hit on explanations that seek to deal with the world, and which to observers may appear to be absurd, fantastic and beyond the bounds of the rational. Moreover, these are ideas and explanations that seemingly withered and disappeared in Europe in post-Enlightenment times under the onslaught of rationalism. However, it is worth remembering that the European past and present provide a rich corpus relating to the world fantastic and attempts to control this fantastic world.<sup>23</sup>

Research on the issues of witchcraft and magic in Africa in the context of globalization has come to be dominated by the work of Peter Geschiere. His discussion on the modernity of witchcraft in Africa is best represented in his 1997 English translation of *Sorcellerie et Politique en Afrique* (1995). For Geschiere (1998), the obsession with witchcraft in many parts of present-day Africa is not to be viewed as some sort of traditional residue. On the contrary, it is particularly present in the more modern spheres of society. In the comparative, global perspective, this linking of modernity and witchcraft is not peculiar to Africa and Geschiere notes that in other parts of the world modern developments coincide with a proliferation of what have aptly been designated as 'economies of the occult' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999). Examples from situations as diverse as 17<sup>th</sup>-century Sweden and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Surinam

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. from among an extensive literature, Ginzburg (1966, 1989), Thomas (1978), Clough & Mitchell (2001) and Ellis (2001).

come to mind, both from the work of Thoden van Velzen and Van Wetering.<sup>24</sup> An African example is offered by the events at the Kansanshi copper mine in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), a good 100 km west of the later Copperbelt, in 1904. The scene offers one of the first<sup>25</sup> instances of the implantation of industrial capitalist relations of production in South Central Africa.

Tensions also existed at the Kansanshi mine (...) as became manifest in an ‘alarming rate of desertions amongst the African workers, apparently related to an early anti-white religious movement’. As Copeman, the Kasempa district officer, made investigations, he ‘learned that the Head Capitao [African foreman] and some of his friends appeared to keep the remainder of the native employees in a state of terror’. The Head Capitao turned out to be in the possession of a gruesome collection of skulls and human bones and all the paraphernalia of a witch doctor. ... The Capitao by claiming supernatural powers had sought to make as many as possible join in a horrible brotherhood of which he was the leader. Those who refused to have anything to do with it he used his position to ill-treat. It came out that he had boasted that he would live for ever, and that presently all the white men would die and he and his friends would take possession of their belongings. Those whom he persuaded to join his brotherhood were promised that they would share these benefits but before they were qualified to do so they had to go to the burial place and dig up the latest buried corpses and possess themselves of certain portions, they also had to break the arm and leg bones and suck out the marrow and indulge in other loathsome practices. (Van Binsbergen 1981: 342 n. 39, quoting from CO 3/4/2 Copeman Papers Box 6, in HM 6 Historical Manuscripts Collection, Zambia National Archives)

Copeman publicly destroyed the Capitao’s sorcery kit and humiliated him; with their leader. ‘Several of the Capitao’s neophytes were sentenced to periods of imprisonment, but the mass desertions ceased from this date.’(ibid)

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Thoden van Velzen (1977, 1995, 1998), Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering (2001).

<sup>25</sup> ‘One of the first’ because the demarcation between mercantile, agricultural and industrial capitalism is not easy to make in this early period of capitalist expansion in South Central Africa. Arab/Swahili and Portuguese traders had penetrated these lands from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards (cf. Van Binsbergen 1992: 4f and the wider literature indicated there). The use of the Portuguese term *capitao* suggests that early industrial relations at Kansanshi were at least in part modelled on local Portuguese examples. Moreover, as oral sources from western Zambia (Barotseland) indicate, from at least as early as the 1880s (i.e. before the onset of colonial rule), labour migration had existed from South Central Africa to capitalist workplaces in the south, first to the Witwatersrand, and soon also to the mining enterprises and large-scale farms in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. In Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), in addition to Kansanshi, capitalist, European-initiated mining was soon undertaken in Ilaland and in Broken Hill.

The power of contemporary African discourses on occult forces, according to Geschiere, is that they relate people's fascination with the open-endedness of global flows to the search for fixed orientation points and identities. Both witchcraft and spirit cults exhibit a surprising capacity for combining the local and the global. Both also have specific implications for the ways in which people try to deal with modernity's challenge.

Views similar to Geschiere's are to be found in Michael Taussig's pioneering work on commodity fetishism, in which he investigated the economy, the functioning of markets and the exchange of commodities in terms of culture (1980). Rijk van Dijk has continued this emphasis on the morality of commodities within the global economy (Van Dijk 1999: 71-89). Writing on commodities in the global space Van Dijk summarizes a common analytical approach to this topic in the following terms:

The penetration of foreign commodities into local societies takes place through their links with the market place; and foreign commodities seem able to elicit a sense of alienation, because the market mediates what is a rupture: between the places and cultures where commodities were produced and those where they will be consumed. Since the previous 'social life' of such commodities is unknown to the local cultures which consume them, (...) commodities appear to be enchanted, and to function in local systems as if they possessed a will of their own. The result is that their local appropriation and use are not considered as innocent, but as ridden with evil and embellished with forces that threaten society and personal identities. Social anxieties express these perils that arise when foreign commodities become objects of local social desire. (ibid: 71).

However attractive as a profound insight into African collective representations, Van Dijk (1999: 72) challenges this view, which in his opinion:

seems to primitivize the other's capacity to deal with the uncertainties and the porous quality of social life which result from engagement with the global economy.

Van Binsbergen (2001), in his contribution to Bond and Ciekawy's recent collection on African witchcraft, which is fairly independent of Geschiere's work, also seeks to correct Geschiere's presentist approach, advocating instead that witchcraft in Africa today is about the 'virtualized boundary conditions of the kinship order' — an order whose basic format goes back at least to the Neolithic, as does its basic defiance through witchcraft, even though under modern conditions of globalization the specific forms and occasions of witchcraft beliefs and practices have been subject to specific changes. The main advantage, however, of this line of work has been the exploration of the ways in which globalization appears to be refracted on the level of the local in terms

other than Western positivist science expected. Situating globality in the world of the unseen and the world of imagination became a field to which anthropology in particular had much to contribute.

### *Anthropology*

The important contribution that anthropology was to make to the field of globalization studies was the acknowledgement of the fact that an important aspect of Africa's economic marginalization is that Africans participate in the globalized world community not so much as consumers of manufactured material goods but as consumers and producers of mere images and ideas concerning the global world to which they seem to belong only marginally — again Mbembe's *lécher les fenêtres*. The anthropological study of globalization therefore came to include much more than the field of religion, spirituality, occultism and the like, but went into the exploration of what came to be known as the deterritorialization of culture. As globalization came to be seen as the process through which *a priori* assumptions about the relationship people-place-culture become problematic, anthropology began exploring the production of culture in other places and spaces. The media, expressions of popular culture in art, music, the theatre and so forth as well as the diffusion of consumptive styles of behaviour were turned into important areas of research. In addition it explored the situationality of the production of intellectual thought and images of the idea of Africa, and as such turned the analytical lens upon itself.

Seen from the North Atlantic, the place of Africa and Africans in globalization often has an even more cynical aspect: Africa and Africans tend to be reduced to mere symbols of extreme otherness by reference to which the Western, North Atlantic identity may be constructed through a process of denial, in facile binary oppositions such as:

North Atlantic, the West	Africa
rich	poor
developed infrastructure	failing infrastructure
law and order	legal and political chaos
democracy	tyranny and civil war
internalized discipline	absence of discipline
technological and organizational know-how	absence of technological and organizational know-how
developed	under-developed
civilized	uncivilized
scientific rationality	magic and superstition

Such illusory and hegemonic self-exultation on the part of the West only works as long as firm boundaries separate it from Africa, in other words and paradoxically, it only works under the very conditions that are increasingly undermined by the undeniable fact of Africa's globalization.

Anthropology, as a dominant mode of intercultural knowledge construction, is a child of (proto-)globalization, as a form of predominantly North-Atlantic scientific endeavour. It is largely part of the project of the West and implicitly may contribute to the West's exalted self-constructions. For these reasons the anthropology of globalization is fraught with contradictions, which cannot fail to be reflected in print. The manner in which researchers are to measure, categorize and represent such consumption and production is inordinately complex and confusing, and can lead, not surprisingly, to work and observations that may well be dismissed as 'glo-baloney'. Nevertheless, seeking to portray, understand and explain these processes is the self-avowed purpose of many researchers in the field of cultural anthropology today.

Brad Weiss, writing on northwestern Tanzania, has attempted to tackle the issue the 'imaginary' and the 'global' (2001: 1). As Weiss notes,

many of the tangible links through which a global order of relationships is concretised are dependent upon the dissemination of imaginative forms. (ibid: 3)

In addition he argues that

lived worlds distinctly situated as they may be throughout the globalised world are increasingly constructed through fantasies and fabrications that must first be imagined in order to be realized. (ibid: 4)

In this aspect of his work Weiss concentrated on young men in Arusha who congregate around barbershops. He has attempted to come to an understanding of how these young men imagine the world and structure their lives in accordance with this in the context of globalization. Writing on the recent history of Tanzania, Weiss notes that Tanzanian society was simultaneously opened up

to media, goods, and ideologies never before available, while the decline of state services and subsidies has led (after a brief flourishing of both the formal and informal privatised economy) to the collapse of a host of employment opportunities. This sudden crash on the heels of unprecedented and exhilarating possibilities — unrealised by the vast majority of Tanzanians as anything *but* possibilities — made it possible for a broad swath of people to desire the signs and styles of a global order, while facing ever narrower means by which to satisfy them. (ibid: 8)

Similar to the work of Weiss is Ferguson's 1999 anthropology referred to earlier in this section. He too has grappled to find words to describe what happens to the African imagination in the face of globalization. Africanist researchers, he observes, see that Africans are turned out of the global paradise but how can this process be described, including what goes on in people's minds and in collective consciousness? In studying the work of imagination and consciousness in difficult situations in the Zambian Copperbelt, Ferguson writes:

The experience of abjection here was not a matter of being merely excluded from a status [developed] to which one had never had a claim *but of being expelled, cast out* (...) from that status by the formation of a new (or newly impermeable) boundary. It is an experience that has left in its wake both a profound feeling of loss as well as the gnawing sense of a continuing affective attachment to that which lies on the other side of the boundary. (ibid: 237-38; italics added)

The views of Weiss and Ferguson are similar to those informing the work of Andreas van Nahl who attempts to describe the impact of globalization and the resulting marginalization of people in Kenya. Van Nahl (1999: 106) notes:

Rural [Kenyan] towns are nowadays full of young 'businessmen' who own nothing more than the suit they wear and a self-designed business card. Like consumer lifestyle, it seems that business lifestyle is an — at times, desperate — attempt to maintain the self in a world of disintegrating social ties and economic relations.

Weiss (2001: 4) has noted that there are 'models' and 'projections' that inform the 'modes of domination' which exist within the globalized world. Here he refers to the work of Carrier and Miller (1998) who deploy the term 'virtualism' to refer to such models and projections as have been established in a specific time and place yet inform daily practice in quite a different time and place. The similar concept of 'virtuality' has come to the fore in the work of Van Binsbergen (1997), for whom it is to be regarded as one of the key concepts for characterizing and understanding the forms of globalization in Africa. Van Binsbergen seeks to define virtuality and globalization, and to provisionally indicate their theoretical relationship. For him, virtuality is inspiring because it seems to offer part of the answer to anthropology's problematic heritage, notably the discipline's obsession with locality. Yet what exactly is to be understood by the term 'virtuality'?

Inspired by the earlier work of Korff (1995) and Jules-Rosette (1996), Van Binsbergen (1998a: 878) provides the following definition of virtuality:

Ultimately, virtuality stands for a specific relation of reference as existing between

elements of human culture ( $A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n$ ). This relation may be defined as follows: once, in some original context  $C_1$ ,  $A_{\text{virtual}}$  referred to (that is, derived meaning from)  $A_{\text{real}}$ . This relationship of reference is still implied to hold, but in actual fact  $A_{\text{virtual}}$  has come to function in a context  $C_2$  which is so totally dissimilar to  $C_1$ , that  $A_{\text{virtual}}$  stands on itself; and although still detectable on formal grounds as deriving from  $A_{\text{real}}$ , has become effectively meaningless in the new context  $C_2$ , unless for some new meaning which  $A_{\text{virtual}}$  may acquire in  $C_2$  in ways totally unrelated to  $C_1$ .

In short, the concept of virtuality reminds us that societies live their lives according to charters grounded in a historical past, in such a way that not only the society but also the interpretations of the historical charter change over time. In other words, ideas often outlive the context in which they were first thought up.<sup>26</sup>

Reading over anthropological work dealing with globalization as it is seen today, one is struck by people's attempts to control or understand the world as it is around them. This juxtaposition of historical and contemporary consciousness and imagination is fully elaborated on in a number of the contributions in this volume as is highlighted in the following section.

## Situating globality: This volume

### *Beyond 'Globalization and Ownership'*

The conference entitled 'Globalization and New Questions of Ownership', held in Leiden from 26-27 April 2002, intended primarily to explore processes of appropriation of diverse, globally circulating, cultural 'materials' on the African continent and the way in which they are woven into new or emerging social fabrics.

Most of the papers presented either took the issue of ownership in rather concrete terms or choose not to address it at all. Instead, a discussion evolved in which a dichotomized representation of issues surfaced. Globalization appears first and foremost as an arena of polarization suggesting an unavoidable and quite prescriptive formulation of the pros and cons, of perceiving its effects as the latest transformation of capitalist encroachment or as a domain of hybridity from where new cultural forms will emerge, as a process of victimization or as a process leading to greater proximity and vicariousness thus lesser estrangement and exoticism; a process to be studied by either the philosopher or the ethnographer.

The dissatisfaction, uneasiness or complete avoidance of the concept of ownership during the conference may have had two root causes, which now can

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<sup>26</sup> R. Ross in a personal communication.

and should be addressed in a different light. One reason for this apparent unacceptability of the concept may have been the polarized nature of the understanding of globalization: ownership as a Western concept has the implication of disenfranchizing others, creating ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in a static and often highly confrontational mode. Africa then appears as the disowned place *par excellence*. Yet not all the conference papers took this position. Wim van Binsbergen’s contribution, ‘Can ICT belong in Africa, or is ICT owned by the North Atlantic region?’, emphasized the fact that the question of ownership creates a dilemma, a tension between the view that in some respects ICT is not owned by Africa but by the North Atlantic region, and that in most respects this is a deceptive way of representing social and cultural realities. ICT was invented by a small intellectual and technological elite and subsequently had to be received — as an alien thing — by the ordinary inhabitants of the North Atlantic, and it has been similarly received, and effectively appropriated, in Africa along lines sketched in some detail in his paper. In his view, the question of ownership evokes the tension between inclusion and exclusion that is a major dimension of globalization, without the possibility of that tension being truly resolved either in the direction of exclusion (as if Africa were invariably and totally disenfranchized by globalization) or in the direction of inclusion (as if Africa were effectively and totally incorporated towards full participation in global processes).

Another cause of unease with the concept may have been the result of a highly individualized conceptualization of ownership, a kind of individuality which Western liberal economies now seem to market around the world, thus the product of a particular cultural and historical perception of personhood and subjectivity. Old, highly stereotyped and ideology-heavy dichotomies may have been at the back of the conference participants’ minds in this rejection of ownership: of the West as the place of the individualized self in possession of commodities versus Africa as the communalized place of self, of sharing in gift and exchange economies. This concept of ownership is simply too static, too inert and in a strange way not ‘globalized’ enough to be of use in what the conference eventually was to pursue: a dynamic common ground between these dichotomies, a productive middle terrain, a place of hybridity in the active voice.

During the conference an awareness emerged that it is no longer viable to perceive of globalization as either producing marginalization or victimization of the African continent, or on the other hand as the domain of unbridled chances and new cultural formations. Instead, a complex dialectic was emerging from the confrontation between these views. Key to that dialectic is the understanding of reflexivity, understanding how people in Africa create specific forms and domains in which particular arenas of reflexivity emerge in which the pros and

cons, the marginalization as well as the creativity of globalization are debated, lived and experienced. Forms and domains of such reflexivity are both cultural and historical, shaped by prevalent political and economic circumstances and by aspirations and imaginations of groups even entertaining a Utopian kind of view. And they can only be studied by philosophy and anthropology working in tandem. These forms and domains of reflexivity can range from what Habermas (1989) described as the bourgeois café in European societies to the wedding-bed parades in Niger as discussed in the chapter by Adeline Masquelier; from the site of Pan-Africanist thought in public speeches of engaged Pentecostal churches in Ghana as in Rijk van Dijk's contribution to the private and concealed domains of the inner quarters of family life as in Thera Rasing's chapter. Transformations can occur rapidly as these sites of reflexivity may shift from the inner house to the Internet café as in the chapter by Wim van Binsbergen, from the public newspaper readings to the proliferation of public media as described by Francis Nyamnjoh. None of these forms or domains of reflexivity remain frozen in time and what is at stake is that, through the process of globalization, they change in nature and in quality more quickly than ever before. Basically, we argue, these papers have shown us that the pivotal question tackled in these domains and sites of reflexivity is how globalization is or should be tailored to local needs, circumstances and imaginations. Local debates do not revolve around the question of whether one is either a victim or a conqueror of globalization but whether elements of globalization can be used fruitfully, for whatever purpose.

Interestingly, while only a minority of the conference papers explicitly pinpointed the contradictory innovatory dynamics of the tension relation between the inclusion and exclusion of Africa in globalization, and while some (especially those by some of the African participants such as Sichone, Osha and Williams)<sup>27</sup> instead dwelled at length on the misery and devastation created in Africa as a result of globalization, an unexpected theme emerged in many others and was reinforced in the stimulating discussion during the conference: the theme of resilience.

The papers by Judy Rosenthal, Ferdinand de Jong, Roy Dilley and Jan-Bart Gewald reminded us that, instead of perceiving African societies as creatively appropriating globally circulating cultural material or as being crushed by the political economy of globalization under North Atlantic hegemony, there is a third option: that of societies responding to globalization by the pursuit of at least two forms of social and cultural resilience. First, there is a form of resilience which emphasizes a proud conscious and innovative return to their

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<sup>27</sup> We regret that the papers by Owen Sichone and Odebayo Williams were not able to be included in this volume.

own time-honoured resources of spirituality, values, world view, forms of social and political organisation, and secondly, another form of resilience can contradict and contest globalization by resisting it on its own terms and by fighting its influence with its own weapons, so to speak.

The first form of resilience, which in recent years has been noted in the fields of African traditional religion, puberty rites, traditional rulers/chieftainship, and ethnic identity, seems to restore the balance against the overwhelming effects of global cultural imports into Africa, and favours a view in which Africa in globalization is eminently capable of creative responses. This form of resilience is successful not only in the appropriation of alien material but also in so far as the affirmation is concerned of that which has been Africa's own for centuries and which, after a few centuries of colonial and post-colonial suppression and exclusion, now (under the new challenges and the new technologies of communication and organization characteristic of globalization) proves capable of once more showing its true, splendid colours.

The second form of resilience, which is discussed particularly in the context of Jan-Bart Gewald's paper on the use of the Western media by the Somali warlords in their conflict with the United States, demonstrates quite a different feature of Africa's creative response. Here, the appropriation of global cultural imports appears to serve the specific interest of casting globalization back in an attempt to defend that which is considered truly inalienable. Globalization can thus not only be mocked and ridiculed but appears to provide, in its violent arrival, the material, the resources as well as the imagination to contest it on its own terms. Examples abound in the societal reactions to international interventions in Africa, to the spread of the global media and to the global spread of the state and the identities and socio-economic structures it stands for.

These forms of resilience may not be mutually exclusive but in certain circumstances may appear simultaneously or may even work in tandem. Furthermore, the convenors also wish to emphasize that discussions of the various conference papers bring to light the notion that not in all cases can resilience be assumed or taken for granted. Whereas anthropology can help us to understand the conditions that give rise to different forms of resilience, philosophy is invoked to elucidate the processes of reflexivity that produce for every movement a counter-movement and for every discourse a counter-discourse.

What the chapters in the present collection bring out almost unanimously is a specific appreciation of the form in which globalization manifests itself in Africa today. Globalization is not the inescapable, all-encompassing juggernaut that is relentlessly rolling on in its way, crushing everything it encounters. It is not the tyrannical outside force to which Africa and Africans have only to submit passively and without options. On the contrary, in the contemporary

African context, the specific form globalization takes appears to be largely determined by local and regional concerns and contradictions that were already in place before the recent intensification of globalization. The new objects, ideas and technologies that have become available in the worldwide circulation under modern technological conditions do not simply penetrate Africa merely of their own accord. They are appropriated and mobilized in concrete African situations through the agency of Africans pursuing concrete goals, which have largely been defined by these ongoing anterior concerns, rather than defining those concerns in the first place. The objects of globalization are locally co-opted to constitute new resources and ammunition in pre-existing local struggles about material and/or symbolic issues. Inevitably, such appropriation cannot fail to have a considerable impact on these struggles, even to the extent of partially redefining their stakes and their very format, yet this is only a secondary aspect. Inevitably, again, such appropriation falls short of the aspirations of the African actors involved, given the fact that their economic power is minimal in the world today. Inevitably, such conscious and deliberate appropriation of globally circulating objects and technologies can only take place within a wider context of a globalized world economy and world politics where parameters are set and reset almost entirely without Africans taking part in the decision-making process, and the outcome of which has devastatingly negative effects on African conditions in the fields of the macro-economy, security and well-being. The objective structural features of globalization cannot be adequately captured from a perspective centring on specific African actors' agency. Yet even so, the message of the present collection is that we will miss the essence and will merely continue to pay lip service to obsolete models of totalising hegemonic overkill until we appreciate the eclecticism and the agency attending the contemporary African experience of 'high globalization'.

With such an approach we hope to advance beyond what Held and MacGrew (2002) recently characterized as the 'transformationalist school in globalization studies'. With Featherstone and Hannerz as its main exponents, this school looks at globalization processes from the perspective of what impact they have on local societies. Transformationalists, therefore, do not view globalization as a homogenizing factor in the way of Wallerstein's (1974) 'world system', but point to local variations in the impact of globalization processes and in the extent to which (under such an impact) heterogeneity will persist and may even increase. Reversing the perspective from the outside to the inside, the advance in the present collection lies in the points of agency and reflexivity, highlighting African actors as conscious and creative strategic actors whose remaining choice, despite the constraints of objective globalizing conditions, is still considerable. In the following chapters, the African local groups and individuals are *not* what the rhetoric of anti-globalization has often made them out to be,

namely passive recipients and victims who, devoid of reflexivity, have been simply forced to adjust for better or worse to the impact of globalization. Instead, we show how these African groups and individuals are displaying remarkable creativity, resilience, flexibility and determination to survive and cope. These features (which incidentally were always indispensable in Africa during the colonial and post-colonial periods) are not being destroyed under the impact of recent globalization but are merely the conditions for a transformation as a result of which local groups and individuals are harnessing globalization for their own purposes.

We have already indicated the tension between such an agency-centred perspective and the wider (and inevitably more compelling) structural context of objective globalization of the economic and political domains. Another tension exists between, on the one hand, the conscious, rationally strategic perceptions and motives that we here attribute to Africans in globalization in the context of ongoing struggles and concerns and, on the other, the likelihood that what we construe to be rational choice may in many situations be clad in the trappings of ritual, apparently irrational beliefs (cf. witchcraft!), short-term perceptions and decisions in the here and now whose ultimate implications in terms of the strategic appropriation of globalization may remain utterly concealed to the actors themselves, in the same way as fundamental processes and collective representations of their society remain, inevitably, concealed to the consciousness of most actors in most societies anywhere and in any historical period. This collection suggests that the African selective appropriation of globalization usually takes place as strategic choices in the context of local and regional conflicts and contradictions. It leaves for further research and reflection the question of whether such conflict is necessary for the selective African appropriation of globalization or whether, instead, there is also room for such processes outside the sphere of direct and open conflict.

### *The individual contributions*

We have structured the contributions to this collection into three parts. Part I contains this introduction, while Part II includes chapters seeking to make pronouncements about globalization and the African continent as a whole. Given the emphasis on religion in the ASC's research programme on globalization, it is understood that our case studies, discussed in Parts III and IV, are mainly derived from the religious field.

In Part II, 'Globality through appropriation: Analyses at the continental level', the emphasis is on the media which, through 20<sup>th</sup>-century technological advances, has been a major factor as well as product of globalization.

The Cameroonian anthropologist Francis Nyamnjoh deals with 'Global and local trends in media ownership and control: Implications for cultural creativity

in Africa' and discusses the crystallization of resistance to the cultural homogenization favoured by global consumer media and cultural production, stressing that, in most of Africa, threats to a free, open and participatory media system and society come as much from repressive governments as from the interests of rich nations, international financial institutions and the global corporate media. Too cautious to take any serious risks, especially in marginal and highly unpredictable zones of accumulation like Africa, global capital needs public support and regulation to insulate itself against the vicissitudes provoked or exacerbated by its tendency to put profit before people. Africa's predicament notwithstanding, and as a convincing example of the emphasis on agency and self-reflexivity which our overall characterization of this collection above brings out, Nyamnjoh is critical of meta-narratives that celebrate victimization at the risk of obfuscating the reality of negotiation and survival strategies, and discusses some of the myriad ways devised by Africans to ensure cultural participation for themselves as active agents in local and global processes.

Just how this may work out in concrete situations is aptly illustrated in Jan-Bart Gewald's chapter entitled 'Global media and violence in Africa: The case of Somalia'. Gewald begins by citing the general opinion — which he shares as little as Van Binsbergen, the author of the following chapter — that Africa has allegedly been sidelined in the global ICT revolution. African societies appear to be cut off from the global flows of information. Nevertheless, the manner in which war was waged in Somalia between 1991 and 1994 indicates that this global revolution has affected not only the manner in which war in Africa is reported but also, and more importantly, the very manner in which war is waged in Africa. African societies may be cut off from owning and controlling the streams of images that reflect their continent but, as Gewald argues, they may at times come to temporarily hijack and divert this stream of images and in doing so, ensure that images that support or reinforce their political aims come to be released into the global flow. In the case of Somalia, the real-time images of dead US soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu were sufficient to compel the United States to end their involvement in Somalia. Globalization offered Africans the means of defeating an immensely more powerful foe at its own game.

Against this background, the question that Wim van Binsbergen poses in the following chapter on ICT's role in Africa takes on considerable relevance. ICT, as a technological innovation and a major factor in globalization, poses particular problems of ownership and identity with regard to the African continent. What is the place of ICT in Africa, and what is the place of Africa in a world increasingly dominated by ICT? Van Binsbergen seeks to explode the apparent contradiction between Africa and ICT. By confronting African thinkers like Mazrui and Gyekye who have argued the incompatibility of

African culture and ICT, and advancing a detailed argument to the effect that ICT is just as much and as little owned by Africans as by any other collectivity in the contemporary world, he highlights some of the ways in which the African appropriation of ICT is taking shape and provides illustrations of the agency and self-reflexivity in the light of pre-existing, ongoing concerns and struggles, which we identified above as the specific form which globalization often takes in Africa today.

Strategic appropriation, but then almost in Marx's literal sense of 'primitive accumulation' (in other words, high-handed theft), emerges again in the following chapter by the Nigerian philosopher Sanya Osha entitled: "'Man will live well": On the poetics of corruption in a global age'. The point of departure is Osha's observation that the difference between philosophical and anthropological practices in Africa is becoming exceedingly glaring, maybe because a dominant tradition in the analytical school of African philosophy is limited by a strain of British empiricism. However, new conditions of existence, which conventional tropes of analysis in African philosophy seem unable to handle, are emerging within the African post-colony. While anthropology has produced a voluminous literature on the issue of corruption in Africa, philosophy has largely remained aloof of this eminently important topic. How then has the problem of corruption been addressed in African philosophical practice? Kwame Gyekye, the Ghanaian philosopher, has tackled the problem of political corruption by employing discursive strategies derived from the Athenian philosophical traditions. Osha argues that Gyekye's conceptualization of the problem does not fully describe the emerging conditions in the post-colony. On the other hand, Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, the French anthropologist, analyses the modes of social organization, forms of sociality and the conditions of contemporary globalization that necessitate a more subtle theorization of the problem of corruption in Africa and the ways in which it can be approached conceptually. A comparison between these two approaches makes Osha conclude that a more acute analysis of the situation in the African post-colony is still required.

Part III brings us to a discussion of (the possibility of) African globality through world religions, notably Christianity (in the first chapter of this section), and Islam (in the other two chapters). Rijk van Dijk's chapter, "'Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia": Pentecostal Pan-Africanism and Ghanaian identities in the transnational domain' provides an excellent transition from the preceding, Pan-African-orientated Part II, in that it combines a Ghanaian case study with a consideration of the Pan-Africanism by which that case study is informed. Rev. Mensa Otabil, the founder of the International Central Gospel Church in Accra, is considered an influential representative of a new Pentecostal-inspired Pan-Africanist ideology. His book *Beyond the Rivers of*

*Ethiopia* lays the foundations of a Pentecostal Liberation Theology that proclaims a Christianized sequel to Pan-Africanism. Operating from Ghana, his ideas concerning Africa and 'Black Consciousness' have spread to Ghanaian migrant communities worldwide. While Otabil has been successful in transforming ownership of the intellectualist production of Pan-Africanism by tailoring it to the needs of the ordinary Pentecostal believer, it has not been adopted so extensively among all Ghanaian migrant communities in the West. By exploring Ghanaian migrant communities and their Pentecostal churches in the Netherlands, where the staunch identity politics of the Dutch government leave little room for the assertive proclamation of 'Africanness', Van Dijk demonstrates that Otabil's ideas do not act as a main source of inspiration everywhere in the Ghanaian diaspora. The Pan-African ideology crumbles in the face of the internal divisiveness of the contemporary Ghanaian experience.

Islam has occasionally<sup>28</sup> been characterized as a (proto-)globalizing project initiated by the expansion of early Islam beyond the confines of the Arabian peninsula in the course of the 7<sup>th</sup> century of the Common Era (or rather, and more appropriately, the 1<sup>st</sup> century of the Hijra Era). Hence the contradiction between local particularisms and Islamic universalisms has been a recurrent theme throughout the history of Islam. With regard to West African caste systems, which captivated scholarly attention throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE, a particular illustration of this overall contradiction is offered in Roy Dilley's chapter entitled 'Global connections, local ruptures: The case of Islam in Senegal', in which he examines the relationship between Islam and caste in Senegal. He investigates how new meanings of caste identity have been negotiated in view of the differing conceptions of Islam that have taken hold within the country. Twentieth-century CE reformist movements challenged the predominant role of Sufi brotherhoods, bringing about a reassessment of the relationship between caste and Islam. The Nyasiyya brotherhood provides the basis for a brief case study, showing that the popularity of this religious order abroad is not matched by its reception in Senegal. Some of the possible reasons are examined for this disjunction between the global connections that the order establishes on the one hand, and the local ruptures it engenders within the local Muslim community on the other. The chapter traces the dynamics of Sufism and reformist Islam to reveal a double-edged thrust of global connections brought about by an internationalizing Islam, and of local ruptures mediated through caste identities.

West-African caste systems were noted in the earliest Arabic sources on that part of Africa and were certainly not a product of the introduction of Islam. Thus Dilley's argument is clearly about the strategic negotiation between the

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Breedveld *et al.* (in press) and Van Binsbergen (1998b).

time-honoured local and the more recent global in a West-African setting largely informed by Islam. In this respect the chapter has considerable parallels with that by Adeline Masquelier entitled: 'How is a girl to marry without a bed?: Weddings, wealth and women's value in an Islamic town of Niger'. In Niger, bridewealth has become the target of Izala, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century CE reformist Muslim organization that condemns ostentatious expenditure and promotes frugality. In the Muslim town of Dogondoutchi, where Mawri residents are increasingly being exposed to Western bourgeois values, the Izala ban on excessive bridewealth and extravagant weddings has angered many for whom gift exchange is inseparable from social worth. Mothers struggling to equip their daughters with the latest trappings of modern domesticity thus reject Izala expressions of Islamic frugality. For them, prosperity is not antithetical to Islamic piety. This chapter looks at a young woman's insistence on receiving a Formica bed from her impoverished mother. In another illustration of this collection's central points concerning agency, self-reflexivity and strategic choice in the context of African globalization, it shows how the acquisition of such a bed is implicated in the reconfiguration of a domestic lifestyle that owes as much to local understandings of matrimony and morality as to Western bourgeois domesticity.

World religions such as Islam and Christianity are, by definition, globalizing projects, offering a myriad of specific contexts in which the subject matter of this book can be subjected to specific empirical research and conceptual reflection. However, the contributions in Part IV take us to an aspect of contemporary African life that would, at first sight, appear to be far less obvious as an arena of globalization strategies: the domain of traditional African religion. However the authors manage to bring out how this collection's central message also works for them in the specific Senegalese and Zambian contexts they describe.

Ferdinand de Jong's chapter 'The social life of secrets' opens Part IV. By looking at initiation rituals, he argues that it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of secrets in a given society in a globalizing world. The secret emerges in a performance of complicity involving both initiates and non-initiates, and secrecy produces a shared subjectivity between initiate and non-initiate. Such complicity is often denied in ethnographic texts that claim authority for a subject (the anthropologist) penetrating the secret of the Other. De Jong claims that these ethnographic poetics make a distinction between subject and object that, in the case of secrecy, seems untenable. Had he been tempted to explore the philosophical implication of such a position in addition to its anthropological application, he would have realized that the whole thrust of post-structuralist modern philosophy (especially Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Guattari, and Lyotard) supports this line of analysis; the theory of secrecy on

which he bases himself is in essence an implicit, anthropologically appropriated product of post-modernism, and as such eminently in tune with the age of globalization. In the concrete empirical setting of southern Senegal, accepting the untenability of the subject-object distinction as far as secrecy is involved implies recognition of the co-ownership of secrets. The secrets performed in a globalizing world can no longer be localized properties. As ethnographic cases in the chapter demonstrate, secrecy creates a translocal intersubjectivity that requires recognition in ethnographic texts — especially since it provides the anthropologist with a dispensation that appears to be much better founded, as far as the epistemology and the politics of transcontinental knowledge production are concerned, than anything that can be offered by the habitual mystique of fieldwork as a unique penetration into the uniquely Other.

Strategies of agency and self-reflexivity are also manifest in Thera Rasing's account of 'The persistence of female initiation rites: Reflexivity and resilience of women in Zambia'. Rasing focuses on female initiation rites in Zambia today and shows how Zambian women, in the context of a globalized environment, reflect on their culture and religion. She examines how initiation rites, as part of this culture and religion, are so resilient that they can still be performed today, in the same format as centuries ago, by middle-class women in the urban environment of the Zambian Copperbelt. Despite many changes in society, this rite has remained a major institution even in present-day globalized and Christianized urban Zambia. The initiation rights are considered primordial and valuable for all women, even for religious sisters. Women are showing reflexivity and resilience in their performance of these rites and in adapting them to modern urban life.

In conclusion, through the exploration of these case studies we aspire to demonstrate the multifaceted ways in which the appropriation of global forms, ideas, objects and resources is taking place in various African societies — ways that may strike us as infinitely creative and resilient given the marginalized predicament of many of these communities. This diversity in the ways globalism is situated in such local circumstances is at the same time an exploration of the infinitely rich texture of agency, whether individually or collectively defined. While globality appears to create new structures in ways that can often only be interpreted through the chaos theory, the domain of resilient agency in the context of these emergent structures awaits further study, to which this present volume should only be seen as a modest beginning.

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