Global Shadows

AFRICA IN THE NEOLIBERAL WORLD ORDER

James Ferguson

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS Durham and London 2006

3rd printing, 2007

Printed in the United States

of America on acid-free paper ♾

Designed by C. H. Westmoreland

Typeset in Galliard

by Tseng Information Systems, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-

Publication Data appear on the last

printed page of this book.

Contents

1

Globalizing Africa?

OBSERVATIONS FROM AN INCONVENIENT CONTINENT

The enormous recent literature on globalization so far has had remarkably little to say about Africa. Astonishingly, the entire continent is often simply ignored altogether, even in the most ambitious and ostensibly all-encompassing narratives. Popular bestsellers that seek to explain the new "global" world—whether in celebration or critique—have much to say about the newly industrializing countries of Asia, the manufacturing boom in China, the European Union, the causes of Middle Eastern "terrorism," jobs gained and lost in the United States, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its effects in Mexico, and the spread of Disneyland and McDonald's to France. But they manage to characterize "the globe" and "the entire world" in ways that say almost nothing at all about a continent of some 800 million people that takes up fully 20 percent of the planet's land mass. Academic blockbusters have not been very different in this respect. Saskia Sassen's *Globalization and Its Discontents* (1999), for instance, has nothing to say about Africa, except to note that African migrants sometimes show up in "global cities" like London and New York. Joseph Stiglitz's influential book, also titled *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2003), deals almost entirely with the operations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Asia and Eastern Europe, with only a few pages devoted to the African countries that have arguably suffered the most from the lethal IMF dogmatism he is concerned about documenting.[1] From the self-described radical left, meanwhile, Michael Hardt and Antonion Negri's celebrated tome *Empire* (2001), despite its nearly 500 pages of text and abundant concern for what the authors term "the multitude," cannot muster even a paragraph's worth of analysis concerning the continent. Again and again, it seems, when it comes to globalization, Africa just doesn't fit the story line. It is an inconvenient case.

This neglect is perhaps understandable at the level of real-world politics. Defenders of neoliberal structural-adjustment programs naturally find Africa an inconvenient example; they prefer to talk about Asian tigers and Southeast Asian dragons, since they have a hard time finding any lions among the many African nations that have taken the IMF medicine and liberalized their economies in recent years. But African examples are equally awkward for those termed "anti-globalization" critics, who often equate globalization with an expanding capitalism in search of new cheap labor for its factories and new markets for its consumer goods (stereotypically, Nike sweatshops and McDonald's hamburgers). Here, of course, the inconvenient fact is that Africa's hardships have very little to do with being overrun with Western factories and consumer goods. It is hard to find evidence of the depredations of runaway capitalist expansion in countries that are begging in vain for foreign investment of any kind and unable to provide a significant market for the consumer goods stereotypically associated with globalization.

But if Africa is an awkward case for globalization's polemical boosters and detractors, it seems equally inconvenient for more analytical theorists of globalization, who aspire to planetary "coverage" but somehow do not quite know what to do with Africa (cf. Paolini 1997). Here, Anthony Giddens's approach is typical. He begins his short book of lectures on globalization (Giddens 2002) with an anecdote that claims a planetwide scope for the analysis to follow. A friend, he explains, was conducting fieldwork in a village whose location he describes only as a "remote area" of "central Africa." She was invited to a home for an evening of entertainment, but instead of the traditional pastimes she expected, she discovered

that the family was to watch a video of a new Hollywood movie that at that point "hadn't even reached the cinemas in London" (Giddens 2002: 24). The point, clearly, is that even the ends of the earth—that is, the remotest villages of (what is identified only as) "central Africa"—are today swept up within a globalized social order. Yet the rest of Giddens's book does not make so much as a passing reference to Africa. Instead, the narrative repeatedly describes the world in terms of a traditional "before" and a globalized "after" that leaves no place for most contemporary African social realities except in the putative past. The collaborative volume on globalization by David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton (1999) is a more scholarly account, but it builds on a similar slippage. The volume's introduction claims to explicate a globalization explicitly defined by what the authors term "*worldwide* interconnectedness" (Held et al. 1999: 2; emphasis mine), but this is followed by substantive chapters that are explicitly restricted to what they call "states in advanced capitalist societies" (and it soon becomes clear that African societies are not "advanced" enough to qualify). Interconnectedness among six rich countries is documented most effectively, but the reader is left to wonder what, exactly, is "worldwide" about it.

Africa's inconvenience is not surprising if we consider that most of the dominant theories of globalization have been theories about worldwide *convergence* of one sort or another. From the earliest European projects of colonization to the latest structural-adjustment programs, Africa has proved remarkably resistant to a range of externally imposed projects that have aimed to bring it into conformity with Western or "global" models. It is striking that Africa today is the only world region where one will find huge populated swaths of the earth that are under the effective authority of no central, nation-state government (including most of the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC] at present, huge areas of southern Sudan, and nearly all of Somalia). It is worth emphasizing that these are not odd little patches but truly vast areas. As I like to remind undergraduate students, if you put the map of Europe inside the DRC, with London at the west coast, Moscow would lie within the eastern border; in southern Sudan, the area that was until recently out of the reach of even major relief agencies spanned an area bigger than France. Nor is this a question of brief or transitory political circumstances. The weak grip of the central state in countries like the Congo and Angola goes back for many decades, while much of southern Sudan has been out of the control of its national government almost continuously since it became independent in 1956. Even where nation-states *do* enjoy some measure of effective control of their hinterlands, formal similarities in political institutions betray stark differences in actual modes of functioning, as recent work on African states (discussed later) shows. Meanwhile, the property laws that are sometimes taken for granted as the bedrock of capitalism in its most familiar form are only very precariously institutionalized in many African settings (as might be attested by a foreign investor in Nigeria or a commercial farmer in Zimbabwe). Finally, as we know, in perhaps a score of African countries, a host of standard development indicators—from GDP per capita to access to health care and schooling to life expectancy—have in recent years been falling, not rising. This is true not only of countries wracked by war but also of many that have seen nothing but peace. In Zambia, for instance—the country I have studied most—poverty rates are today reckoned at some 73 percent. Diseases like malaria, cholera, and measles are resurgent as public-health countermeasures have collapsed. School attendance has dropped below 50 percent in some areas, and the population is said to be less educated than at any time since independence in 1964. Estimated life expectancy at birth, meanwhile, has fallen—mostly, but not entirely, due to AIDS—from around 50 in 1980 to just 32.4 years, the lowest in the world.[2]

All of this poses a profound challenge for global convergence narratives. It does not necessarily mean that such accounts are in any simple way "wrong." Indeed, in many domains, convergence arguments are often stronger than anthropologists (perhaps wishfully) allow. But the recent history of Africa does pose a profound challenge to ideas of global economic and political convergence. If the world's societies are truly converging on a single, "global" model, how is it possible to account for Africa's different, difficult trajectory? Is it simply a "development failure," to be placed at the

door of morally culpable elites? A "lag" that we need only wait to see overcome? A horrible accident, predicated on contingencies such as the AIDS pandemic? What is the meaning—*theoretically*—of what presents itself as a vast continental anomaly?

Where recent globalization theorists have addressed Africa, it has typically been as a negative case: an example of the price of the failure to globalize, as the IMF would have it; a "global ghetto" abandoned by capitalism, as the geographer Neil Smith (1997) would insist; a continent of "wasted lives" of no use to the capitalist world economy, as Zygmunt Bauman (2004) has recently suggested; or "the black hole of the information society," as Manuel Castells (2000) would have it. Such negative characterizations risk ignoring the social, political, and institutional specificity of Africa and reinventing Africa as a twenty-first-century "dark continent." For contemporary Africa is clearly *not* a featureless void defined only by its exclusion from the benefits of global capitalism, nor is it an informational "black hole."

Instead, I suggest that a reading of recent interdisciplinary scholarship on Africa can help to reveal the quite specific ways in which Africa is, and is not, "global" and thereby shed surprising new light on our understanding of what "globalization" may mean at present. What we see (as anthropologists have long insisted) depends on where we are looking from. Looking at "globalization" from the vantage point provided by recent research focused on Africa brings into visibility things that might otherwise be overlooked and forces us to think harder about issues that might otherwise be passed over or left unresolved.

In a highly schematic way, then, this essay reviews insights from recent Africanist scholarship concerning three elements usually identified as central aspects of "globalization": first, the question of culture (and the related question of alternative modernities); second, "flows" of private capital (especially foreign direct investment); and third, transformations in governance and the changing role of the nation-state. It argues that attention to the undoubtedly extreme situation in some parts of Africa can help to clarify what is, and is not, "global" about the contemporary transnational political economy.

Anthropologists first confronted notions of cultural globalization in relation to the question (or, for anthropologists, the specter) of cultural homogenization. What was the fate of cultural difference in a world where fewer and fewer people lived in conditions that could be understood as those of pristine isolation; a world where ever increasing proportions of people lived in cities, drove cars, and watched television; a world where such emblems of an expanding U.S. culture as the English language, pop music, blue jeans, and McDonald's seemed to be expanding across the globe? Was the cultural future of the world a sort of Westernized or Americanized global monoculture—the "Coca-Cola-ization" of the entire planet? And if so, what was the fate of the discipline of anthropology itself in such a uniform cultural world?

Fortunately—at least for the field of anthropology—it soon emerged that cultural globalization was not a simple matter of homogenization. As anthropologists like Ulf Hannerz (1987, 1992, 1996) began to remind us, transnational exchanges of cultural products, forms, and ideas were hardly a new phenomenon, and experience showed that such traffic in meaning was not incompatible with enduring forms of cultural difference. Cultural differences were produced, thrived, and took on their significance within social relations of interconnection, not in primordial isolation. For people in Calcutta to drink Coca-Cola would no more spell the end of Indian culture than the colonial adoption of the Indian drink tea by Londoners abolished Englishness. And one was entitled to wonder, as Clifford Geertz (1994) pointed out, whether the great cuisines of Asia were really in mortal danger of being outcompeted by the likes of Kentucky Fried Chicken. In fact, a host of local studies began to show that transnational traffic in meaning led not to a global monoculture, but to complex forms of cultural creativity—what Hannerz called "creolization"—whose result was not a numbing uniformity but a dynamic "cut-and-mix" world of surprising borrowings, ironic reinventions, and dazzling resignifications.

The idea that logically emerged from this was that societies and cultures were not to be understood as located along a continuum

between a "premodern" tradition, on the one hand, and a Eurocentrically conceived modernity on the other. Instead, Arjun Appadurai and others suggested that it was necessary to rethink our understandings of modernity to take account of the many different sorts of *modern* cultural trajectories that anthropologists were documenting. If non-Western cultures were not necessarily nonmodern ones, then it would be necessary to develop a more pluralized understanding of modernity: not modernity in the singular (where the question is, Are you there yet or not?) but modernities in the plural, a variety of different *ways* of being modern: "alternative modernities" (see Appadurai 1996; *Daedalus* 2000; Gaonkar 2001; Holston 1999).

This is undoubtedly a very appealing idea, but it immediately raises a number of problems, which critics have not failed to point out. One problem is the meaning of the term "modernity." Once we give up the benchmark of a singular modernity, then what does the term mean, analytically? If Cameroonians practicing witchcraft are in fact being "modern," as Peter Geschiere (1997) has recently suggested, then one wonders: What would count as non-modern? Or is every aspect of the contemporary world by definition modern—in which case, the term risks losing all meaning by encompassing everything. Another set of criticisms has pointed out that the focus on cultural flows and their creative reinterpretation can lead to an insufficient appreciation of the force of global norms and of institutional and organizational domains where one does indeed find, if not homogenization, at least a high degree of standardization. Sociologists of education, for instance, have shown such standardization in at least the formal aspects of schooling (see, e.g., Boli and Ramirez 1986; Meyer et al. 1992). Here I want to point to a slightly different problem with the idea, which derives from the way that *regions* matter for the modernity discussion.

In East and Southeast Asia, the idea of multiple or "alternative" tracks through modernity has for some years had considerable currency, even outside of academic discussions. There, the pluralization of modernity has been linked to the possibility of a parallel track along which Asian nations might develop in a way that would be economically analogous to the West but culturally distinctive. Such newly industrializing Asian countries as Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, in this view, can achieve "First World" economies, and the superhighways, skyscrapers, and consumer conveniences that come with them, without thereby becoming "Westernized." They can thus retain what are sometimes thought of as cultural or even racial virtues that the West lacks, while making their own, "alternative" way through modernity and enjoying a standard of living equal to or better than that of "the West" (Ong 1999: 55–83).

In Africa, however, such an economic convergence with "First World" living standards hardly seems to be in the offing. For this reason, a recent tendency for scholars of Africa to adopt the language of "modernities" in the plural has very different implications and proceeds from different motives.[3] In the face of decades of scholarship that insisted on seeing African societies as in some sense located in the "primitive" or "traditional" past, contemporary Africanists are understandably drawn to a way of thinking that insists on placing African societies in the same ("coeval") time as the West (Fabian 1983) and on understanding African ways of life not as an ahistorical "tradition," but as part and parcel of the modern world. It is this that leads Geschiere to insist on "the modernity of witchcraft": the desire to show that what is called "witchcraft" is *not* simply a holdover from the past but, rather, a set of contemporary practices that respond to such "modern" contemporary forces as the cash economy, class formation, and the state. Mamadou Diouf (2000) makes a related, and similarly convincing, argument for the "modernity" of the transnational networks of Senegalese Mourid traders.

Yet in Africa, modernity has always been a matter not simply of past and present, but also of up and down. The aspiration to modernity has been an aspiration to rise in the world in economic and political terms; to improve one's way of life, one's standing, one's place-in-the-world. Modernity has thus been a way of talking about global inequality and about material needs and how they might be met. In particular, it has indexed specific aspirations to such primary "modern" goods as improved housing, health care, and education. Yet now, anthropologists, having declared modernization theory defunct and development discourse passé, proudly announce that Africa, notwithstanding all its problems, is in fact

just as modern as anyplace else. It just has its own, "alternative" version of modernity.

As I point out in chapter 7, Africans are often puzzled by such claims. Africa's *lack* of modernity seems, to many people there, all too palpable in the conditions that surround them—in the bad roads, poor health care, crumbling buildings, and precariously improvised livelihoods that one cannot avoid encountering in the continent's "less developed" countries. Where anthropologists proclaim Africa always already modern, local discourses on modernity more often insist on seeing a continuing lack (see chapter 5 and chapter 7)—a lack that is understood in terms not of a cultural inferiority but of a political-economic inequality. For this reason, the question of modernity is widely apprehended in Africa in relation to the concept of "development" and the issue of social and economic standards of living. For all their manifold failings, the developmental narratives that have long dominated thinking about Africa's place-in-the-world—narratives that explicitly rank countries from high to low, from more to less "developed"—do at least acknowledge (and promise to remedy) the grievances of political-economic inequality and low global status in relation to other places. The anthropologist's evenhanded assessment of "modernities," however, by pluralizing without ranking the different relations to "modernity" of different world regions, runs the risk of deemphasizing or overlooking the socioeconomic inequalities and questions of global rank that loom so large in African understandings of the modern. In this way, a well-meaning anthropological urge to treat modernity as a cultural formation whose different versions may be understood as both coeval and of equal value ends up looking like an evasion of the demands of those who instead see modernity as a privileged and desired socioeconomic condition that is actively contrasted with their own radically unequal way of life.

The point I want to make here (one that is elaborated more fully in chapter 7) is not that anthropologists have been wrong to historicize cultural practices or to call into question the assumed linearities of Eurocentric progress narratives. It is, rather, that there is an unappreciated danger—which becomes especially visible in the African context—that a culturalized and relativized notion of modernity tends to allow the material and social inequalities that have long been at the heart of African aspirations to modernity to drop out of the picture. In their eagerness to treat African people as (cultural) equals, Western anthropologists have sometimes too easily sidestepped the harder discussion about the economic *inequalities* and disillusionments that threaten to make any such equality a merely ideal or sentimental one.

Let us turn to the economic domain and consider the question of the continent's relation to what is often called "global capital." It is striking how easy it is for Africa to figure in accounts of a globalized cultural world, in contrast to its near absence from most pictures of a global economy. No survey of world music, for instance, would be conceivable without a major section on Africa, yet it is common for surveys of the global economy to contain only the most cursory reference to Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet one of the key claims of dominant accounts of globalization is that deregulated markets and footloose capital today roam the entire globe. How does Africa figure in this? Consider the question of private capital flows.

CAPITAL FLOWS

It was one of the orthodoxies of post–World War II development theory that the poorest countries would naturally serve as magnets for capital, and that investment in those countries would yield such high rates of economic growth that they would soon converge economically with the rich industrial countries. Both assumptions, it is now widely agreed, proved to be wrong. The poorest countries today attract very little private capital of any kind. According to the former World Bank economist William Easterly, the countries that make up the richest 20 percent of the world population received 88 percent of private gross capital inflows in 1990; those countries making up the poorest 20 percent received 1 percent (Easterly 2001: 58–59).[4] The increase in transnational capital flows, of which we have heard much in recent years, has been "mostly a rich–rich affair," as the economists Maurice Obstfeld and Alan Taylor have put it, a matter less of "development" than of diversification. Indeed,

they go on to observe that "today's foreign investment in the poorest developing countries lags far behind the levels attained at the start of the last century" (Obstfeld and Taylor 2002: 59).

As for economic growth, recent studies show no tendency for the poorest countries to converge toward the rich ones. On the contrary, the data appear to show a strong tendency for the gap to widen, as rich countries have grown rapidly while most of the poorest have, in terms of economic growth, stood still or even lost ground. It is not a story about economic convergence, then, but—as the economist Lant Pritchett put it in the title of an influential paper—"Divergence, Big Time" (Pritchett 1997). In recent years, many of the poorest African countries have put in place IMF-sponsored reforms (chiefly, opening markets and privatizing state assets) that were intended to produce a flood of capital investment. But the result for most has not been a boom in foreign investment. More often, it has been a collapse of basic institutions (including major industries as well as social infrastructure such as schools and health care) and an explosion of official illegality.

When capital *has* come to Africa in recent years, it has been overwhelmingly in the area of mineral-resource extraction. In the midst of what generally have been very hard times on most of the continent, mining and oil extraction have boomed in several countries. Again, this is a matter that is discussed at some length later in this volume (see chapter 8). What needs to be highlighted for the present is only the extent to which this economic investment has been concentrated in secured enclaves, often with little impact on the wider society. The clearest case (and no doubt the most attractive for the foreign investor) is provided by off-shore oil extraction, as in Angola, where neither the oil nor most of the money it brings in ever touches Angolan soil. But even non-petroleum mineral extraction today very often takes place in capital-intensive enclaves that are substantially insulated from the local economy, or even in guarded fiefdoms protected by private armies and security forces (see chapter 8).

In an earlier period, mining investment often brought with it a far-reaching social investment. In the Zambian Copperbelt, for instance, investment in copper mining brought the construction of vast "company towns" for nearly 100,000 workers. These towns eventually came to include not only company-provided housing, schools, and hospitals, but even social workers, recreational amenities, and domestic-education programs (Ferguson 1999). Here, the business of mining involved not only extraction, but also a broader long-term social project. Its presence was, we might say, socially "*thick*." But nowadays, mining (and even more so, oil production) is socially *thin*; it has become much more capital intensive and relies on much smaller groups of highly skilled workers (sometimes foreign workers on short-term contracts). It depends ever less on wider societal investments. Today, enclaves of mineral-extracting investment in Africa are usually tightly integrated with the head offices of multinational corporations and metropolitan centers but sharply walled off from their own national societies (often literally walled off with bricks, razor wire, and security guards).

Consider the case of gold mining in Ghana. The privatization of the gold mines in that country, combined with generous tax incentives, has done just what it was supposed to do: bring in large amounts of private investment. Thanks to such investment, Ghana's gold industry has undergone a massive transformation since the mid-1980s. Foreign direct investment (FDI) of about $5 billion has flowed in, probably exceeding the value of FDI in all other sectors combined, while production has risen from 300,000 ounces in 1985 to 2,336,000 ounces in 2001 (World Bank 2003: 2). Gold has now replaced cocoa as Ghana's main export. Yet a recent World Bank report voices doubt about what the "true net benefits" of this "development" might be. As the report points out, capital-intensive mining by foreign firms has a high import content and produces "only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows" (World Bank 2003: 23). Tax revenues are also slight, due to the "various fiscal incentives" offered to attract foreign investors in the first place. Most important (and in contrast to earlier, more labor-intensive mining ventures), there has been little creation of employment for Ghanaians because of the "highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques" (World Bank 2003: 23).[5]

The report tellingly describes a "field visit" by World Bank staff to the center of the gold-mining country in Wassa District, which found "competition between mining and agriculture for arable

land, [a] poor state of local infrastructure, inadequate public services, and high unemployment" (World Bank 2003: 21). It concludes that "the local economy . . . does not appear to have benefited from large-scale mining through sustained economic growth and improved public services," and that "local people feel no perceptible benefit from the resources extracted from 'their' land" (World Bank 2003: 21). Unemployed youth, the report notes, had recently attacked local chiefs and destroyed their palaces out of frustration over "lack of jobs and insufficient access to land for cultivation" (World Bank 2003: 21).

Some other forms of mining on the continent—notably, for alluvial diamonds—are both less capital intensive and less spatially concentrated and thus harder to insulate from the wider society through enclave methods. But that does not stop a variety of powerful and well-armed interests from attempting (with mixed success) to carve out such exclusionary spatial enclaves. In the rich diamond-producing region of Mbuji-Mayi in the DRC, for instance, private companies routinely use military force in efforts to monopolize the collection of alluvial diamonds. The partly state-owned firm Société minière de Bakwanga (known as MIBA) uses both private security firms and what are termed DRC "police officers" (who nonetheless report to MIBA's head of security, not to any police superiors) to shoot, arrest, and beat up "trespassers." The partly Zimbabwean-owned firm Sengamines enjoys similar protection from the Zimbabwean armed forces. It is unclear, as a recent human-rights report notes, "what legal framework, if any, they are operating within" (Amnesty International 2002: 8). Both companies habitually shoot and kill local people unfortunate enough to attempt to dig diamonds on the companies' claimed "concessions," even though both the boundaries of the concessions and their legal basis are often highly unclear (see Amnesty International 2002; see also Global Witness 2004, which provides a useful overview of the use of violence to secure natural resources in the DRC in recent years).

Much more could be said about all this (see chapter 8), but here I emphasize only two points. First, the movement of capital that such enterprises entail does indeed crisscross the globe, but it does not encompass or cover it. The movements of capital cross national borders, but they jump from point to point, and huge regions are simply bypassed. Capital does not "flow" from New York to Angola's oil fields, or from London to Ghana's gold mines; it hops, neatly skipping over most of what lies in between. Second, where capital has been coming to Africa at all, it has largely been concentrated in spatially segregated, socially "thin" mineral-extraction enclaves. Again, the "movement of capital" here does not cover the globe; it connects discrete points on it. Capital is *globe-hopping*, not *globe-covering*. The significance of this social fact for understanding patterns of political order and disorder on the continent is discussed in the next section.

GOVERNANCE

The reforms demanded by "structural adjustment" were—according to their neoliberal proponents—supposed to roll back oppressive and overbearing states and to liberate a newly vital "civil society." The result was to be a new sort of "governance" that would be both more democratic and more economically efficient. Formal democratization has indeed swept over much of the continent (though far from all of it), and multiparty elections have invigorated the political life of a number of countries. At the same time, swarms of new "nongovernmental organizations" (NGOs) have arisen, taking advantage of the shift in donor policies that moved funding for projects away from mistrusted state bureaucracies and into what were understood as more "direct" or "grassroots" channels of implementation (see chapter 4).

But rather than setting in motion a general liberation, the best scholarship on recent African politics (as noted in the introduction) suggests that this "rolling back" of the state has provoked or exacerbated a far-reaching political crisis. As more and more of the functions of the state have been effectively "outsourced" to NGOs, state capacity has deteriorated rapidly—unsurprisingly, as Joseph Hanlon has pointed out, since the higher salaries and better terms of employment offered by NGOs quickly "decapacitated" governments by luring all the best civil servants out of the government ministries (Hanlon 2000). Those who remained were

often paid less than subsistence salaries, with the inevitable consequences of corruption and an explosion of "parallel businesses." Deprived both of capable staff and of economic resources, states quickly became "hollowed out," in the words of Christopher Clapham (1996), and state officials set about on a "privatization plan" of their own—what Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou (1999) have called "the criminalization of the state." Alongside, and interpenetrated with, the formal institutions of the state, informal networks of officials, local power brokers or warlords, arms traders, and international firms in many countries form what Reno (1999) has termed a "shadow state" that leaves the formal institutions of government little more than an empty shell. In such environments, it has been easy to mobilize irregular armies for private economic gain, and a vigorous transnational trade in arms has been one of the few economic areas of consistent growth. It is not that states have disappeared, or even simply that they are, as it is often put, "weak." It is, rather, that they have increasingly gotten out of the business of governing, even as they (or, rather, the politicians and bureaucrats who occupy their offices) retain a lively interest in other sorts of business. In this new era, it is not the organizations of "civil society" that are "nongovernmental"—it is the state itself.

For much of Africa, such a new political order has meant not "less state interference and inefficiency," as Western neoliberal reformers imagined, but simply less order, less peace, and less security. In a number of countries (now including even such traditionally "stable" states as Côte d'Ivoire), it has meant civil war. At the same time, the role of private security companies and professional mercenaries in securing economically valuable enclaves has mushroomed, as is now increasingly well documented (Lock 1998; Musah and Fayemi 2000; Reno 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Singer 2003; see also chapter 8).

In fact, the picture that seems to emerge from the recent scholarly literature is of two quite different kinds of governance, applied to the two different Africas that French colonialism once distinguished as "*Afrique utile*" and "*Afrique inutile*"—or "usable/useful Africa" and "unusable/useless Africa," as Reno (1999) has reminded us. Usable Africa gets secure enclaves—noncontiguous "useful" bits that are secured, policed, and, in a minimal sense, governed through private or semiprivate means. These enclaves are increasingly linked up, not in a national grid, but in transnational networks that connect economically valued spaces dispersed around the world in a point-to-point fashion.

The rest—the vast terrain of "unusable Africa"—gets increasingly nongovernmental states, and an array of extra-state forms of control and regulation that range from revitalized forms of local political authority (often styled "traditional") to open banditry and warlordism. This state of affairs is often violent and disorderly, but it should not be understood simply as an absence of government. As Janet Roitman has recently pointed out for the Chad Basin (2004), even banditry has its own intricate forms of social and moral order, and its forms of "regulation" often find points of attachment with the interests of both state officials and variously militarized illegal traffickers (for whom the "*inutile*" areas that are of little interest to foreign investors may turn out to be quite "*utile*" indeed). At the same time, areas in which states no longer project bureaucratic control are often effectively "governed" in a transnational humanitarian or developmental mode, as a hodgepodge of transnational private voluntary organizations carry out the day-to-day work of providing rudimentary governmental and social services, especially in regions of crisis and conflict. I have elsewhere described such "government-by-NGO" as a form of "transnational governmentality" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Like the privately secured mineral extraction enclave, the humanitarian emergency zone is subject to a form of government that cannot be located within a national grid, but is instead spread across a patchwork of transnationally networked, noncontiguous bits. (See chapter 4.)

Perhaps the most surprising finding of the recent literature concerns the relation between the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects for political reform and the desired goal of attracting capital and achieving economic growth. For the fact is that the countries that are (in the terms of World Bank and IMF "governance" reformers) the biggest "failures" have been among the *most* successful at developing capital-attracting enclaves. African countries where peace, democracy, and some measure of the

rule of law obtain have had very mixed records of drawing capital investment in recent years. (Zambia is unfortunately a prime example.) But countries with the "weakest" and most corrupt states, and even raging civil wars, have often attracted very significant inflows. Reno's book on "warlord politics," for instance, picked four countries for study based on their "widespread violence and extremely weak state institutions": Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo/Zaire, and Nigeria (Reno 1999). Was capital fleeing from these lawless spaces? On the contrary: The four soaked up over half of private capital inflows to Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) in his sample year of 1994–95. Indeed, countries with raging civil wars and spectacularly illiberal governments have on a number of occasions done surprisingly well, according to growth measures. Consider Angola, which during the war-torn 1980s boasted one of the better GDP growth rates on the continent, or Sudan, whose 8.1 percent annual GDP growth made it Africa's economic growth "star" of the 1990s, in spite of its horrific civil war and oppressive government.[6]

Such observations suggest that the picture of Africa as a place that has been simply abandoned by global capital has to be qualified. It is true that, as capital "hops" over "unusable Africa," alighting only in mineral-rich enclaves that are starkly disconnected from their national societies, much of Africa is indeed marginalized from the global economy, as several theorists of globalization have noted. But the situation that comes into view from recent scholarship is not exactly the featureless void that Castells (2000) evokes in his characterization of Africa as a "black hole" of the information society. On the contrary, specific forms of "global" integration on the continent coexist with specific—and equally "global"—forms of exclusion, marginalization, and disconnection. Indeed, it is worth asking whether Africa's combination of privately secured mineral-extraction enclaves and weakly governed humanitarian hinterlands might constitute not a lamentably immature form of globalization, but a quite "advanced" and sophisticated mutation of it. If so, the forms of "global economy" that have developed in some mineral-rich African countries in recent years might show us not just a theoretically interesting anomaly, but also a frightening sort of political-economic model for some other world regions that combine mineral wealth with political intractability. (This possibility is briefly explored in chapter 8.)

RETHINKING THE GLOBAL: AN EXAMPLE

I have suggested that a survey of recent scholarship on Africa might not only illuminate the situation on the continent but also help us to think more critically about the meaning of the global. I will now illustrate this with a brief example from the domain of environmental politics.

Discussions of the environment often rely on a language of the "global." Global warming, the ozone layer, acid rain, ocean ecosystems, Chernobyl, desertification—all seem to show with overwhelming clarity that today's key environmental issues are global ones that demand to be addressed at what we call the "global level," not merely the national or the regional level. Such common-sense turns of phrase invoke the "global" as an encompassing, overarching spatial *level*, a notion that has come to be widespread both in popular and journalistic understandings and in the scholarly literature on "globalization."

The implication usually drawn from such invocations of the environment as a global issue is that the "national level" is inadequate for environmental regulation and protection, since environmental crises do not respect national borders. So environmentalism, we are told, must "go global." Now, it is undoubtedly true that environmental crises reveal the limitations of the nation-state system in a particularly vivid way. But if the global is not, as I have argued, an enveloping *level* of coverage superior to the national but, rather, a form of point-to-point connectivity that bypasses and short-circuits all scales based on contiguity, then the "global" may be just as inadequate to environmental problems as the national (indeed, possibly even more so). This is so because ecosystems do not work "point-to-point" any more than they work nationally.

A great deal of what passes for environmental regulation and protection in Africa works according to the point-to-point model (and is thus well and truly "global" in my sense). National parks, of

course, are themselves guarded enclaves, existing in often fiercely combative relations with surrounding residents. Often fenced and militarily patrolled, these patches of internationally valued "nature" may be protected with "shoot-to-kill" policies against "poachers" who are often simply the local people who lost their land and their ancestral hunting rights when they were forcibly evicted to make way for the game park (see Adams and McShane 1996; Duffy 2000; Neumann 2001a).

More recent efforts in environmental protection and wildlife conservation in Africa have responded to the failures of the traditional "fortress conservation" approach by promoting a new approach based on "community participation." The idea is to involve members of "local communities" in the management of wildlife "resources," in the hope that they will be able to control poaching while also benefiting in some way from the existence of preserved wildlife (Hulme and Murphree 2001). Yet Roderick Neumann (2001b) has convincingly argued that the new model depends just as much as the old one on the coercive partitioning of space and the desire to "secure" selected rural areas as "resources" for internationally valued eco-tourism. In his case study of the Selous Conservation Programme in Tanzania, he shows that the creation of "buffer zones" for the use of villagers was designed to recruit villagers into a kind of anti-poaching self-surveillance. "Community participation" did not replace coercion; it supplemented it. Both state violence and the threat of it, Neumann argues, were essential to the working of the project. Indeed, his conclusion is that "community participation" and state violence worked together as "integrated forms of social control designed to meet the needs and goals of international conservation organizations and the tourism industry" (Neumann 2001b: 324). There is thus no contradiction in the fact that wildlife management in Tanzania has seen both increasing "community participation" and increasing militarization in recent years—as illustrated in a recent reported incident in the famed Serengeti Park in which game rangers allegedly arrested, lined up, and shot to death some fifty famine-stricken villagers who had entered the park armed with bows and arrows in search of small game (Neumann 2001b: 305).

Such spatial enclaving in the service of "nature" is not only the work of states. Environmental NGOs, too, often carve out their own spatial enclaves or turfs, perhaps targeting "hot spots" of biodiversity or seeking to preserve specific environmental "treasures" or endangered species. Such NGOs are indeed often "globally" networked (i.e., linked with similar organizations around the world), but it is a network of points, with most of what lies in between simply bypassed or ignored. Meanwhile, the generalized destitution, the undermining of state authority, and the spread of civil war on the continent pose fundamental threats to ecosystems that no system of protected enclaves can mitigate for long.

Consider the work of an environmental NGO called Africa Rainforest and River Conservation (ARRC). According to the group's Web site, its aim is to help preserve life that "has flourished in Africa's darkest regions" for millions of years but that today "is collapsing at the hands of man."[7] Its main work to date has been in the Chinko River basin of the Central African Republic (CAR), where President Ange-Felix Patasse reportedly authorized the group to create a wildlife preserve while developing a "counter-poaching program" to prevent the destruction of game by groups of armed poachers from across the Sudanese border.

A revealing article by a journalist writing for the *Observer* magazine, published by the British newspaper the *Guardian*, provides the details on how the conservation project in the CAR is being carried out (Clynes 2002). Apparently, the ARRC, led by its founder, the Wyoming physician Bruce Hayse, has hired mercenaries to attack the Sudanese poachers and to try to form a 400-strong local anti-poaching militia to patrol the Chinko River basin. The ARRC's "director of operations" is reportedly a former Rhodesian mercenary and a veteran of the South African private military firm Executive Outcomes who uses the alias Dave Bryant. In previous jobs in South Africa, Mozambique, and Malawi, Bryant moved easily across the "often blurry" line separating paramilitary and anti-poaching work (Clynes 2002: 5). He sees no conflict between military work and the task of conservation: "People don't like the fact that I'm ex-military, but who better to do this job?"[8]

Other activists in the field of African wildlife conservation appear uneasy with the idea of a foreign NGO using conservation funds to create a nongovernmental military force. "We wouldn't do

it," said Richard Carroll of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). "Can you imagine the headlines? 'WWF supporting South African mercenaries to kill Central Africans'?" (Clynes 2002: 6). But in a recent interview, Hayse defended the operation by claiming, "What we're doing is really not that extreme by African standards in terms of game parks," and noting (correctly) that shoot-to-kill policies have been used in nationally administered parks in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe. While people will certainly be killed, he noted reassuringly, "We're not proposing to go out and do any kind of widespread massacre."[9]

Asked for comment during this interview, an official named Peter Knights from WildAid, another conservation NGO, agreed that "extreme measures" had been used in wildlife conservation for some time on the continent. "And it's not just about wildlife," he continued:

> It's about resources in general, and it's unfortunately the scenario we find in Africa, where there's so many of these small civil wars. You often don't hear about it, especially not here in the United States, but there's a lot of wars, a lot of conflicts going on, and sometimes it's about wildlife. Sometimes it's about other commodities.

Indeed, those "other commodities" appear to be a part of the ARRC story, as well. According to the *Observer* article, the ARRC has responded to a funding crunch by seeking to raise its own money by selling diamonds dug in "its" area. The journalist Tom Clynes observed Bryant and others negotiating the acquisition and sale of the stones (though without great success, at least initially), and Hayse openly defended the new funding device: "Diamonds looked like a way to develop the project with some kind of secure financial foundation, and to provide a more equitable means for the local people to sell the diamonds they pick up" (Clynes 2002: 7). With a "flexibility" reminiscent of other actors in the region, the ARRC is apparently seeking to put its "conservation" enclave to multiple uses.

The ARRC is undoubtedly an extreme case in its explicit commitment to privatized violence in support of conservation. It is not unique, however. Deborah Avant (2004) has recently given a fascinating account of the process through which local officials of the WWF and the International Rhino Fund (IRF) ended up deciding to hire mercenaries to protect the Garamba National Park in the DRC. The WWF's national leadership eventually repudiated the effort, but the IRF (together with the WWF's local officers) has continued to pursue hired protection via private security firms, as well as via Ugandan troops operating near the park (Avant 2004: 376).

Mainstream conservation organizations like the WWF have kept their distance from such practices, at least in public—probably because (as Avant rightly observes) they derive much of their power from a perception of moral authority that could easily be eroded by such things as involvement with mercenaries. But many officials of these organizations are, by some accounts, more supportive of such measures in private. Indeed, according to the *Observer* report, the president and founder of the well-known Rainforest Action Network, Randy Hayes, was present on the ARRC's Chinko River expedition, and some officials are apparently glad that someone is willing to do this sort of "dirty work." According to one mainstream conservationist (as quoted in Clynes 2002: 6), "It's probably better that the WWF isn't involved. This is the side of conservation that the organizations with the panda-bear logos don't want to deal with. It's dirty, filthy work. And if you want to succeed, you don't put a choirboy in charge."

Perhaps the more important point, however, is that the practice of the ARRC is only a particularly uncompromising manifestation of a vision of nature and its relation to the "global" that is much more widespread. After all, it is not only environmental extremists who take as their object of intervention what they imagine to be pristine pockets of asocial nature. (The "hot spots" approach to biodiversity has been endorsed by many mainstream conservation organizations, including Conservation International and the WWF.) And it is not only wild-eyed "eco-mercenaries" who believe that a "we" group of well-funded First World activists can and should claim the moral authority of a planetary conscience in support of their own very particular interventions. Indeed, more "mainstream" environmental NGOs also appear very much a part of the larger "global" landscape that I have sketched here, operating as they do in a world of fragmented spaces, deteriorating state authority, enclaved environmental "resources," and privatized security.

This is assuredly not to say that transnational NGOs seeking to conserve wildlife and ecosystems deserve only our scorn and condemnation for their efforts. Their work is often extremely valuable and sometimes very sensitive to the sorts of concerns that I have highlighted. My point is not to dismiss the project of wildlife conservation but to point out the way that even such important and undoubtedly well-intentioned transnational projects, often driven by altruistic motives, have increasingly, through a logic of pragmatic adaptation to circumstance, taken on some of the forms of spatial organization that we more readily associate with the exploitation of enclaves for mineral extraction. The same could be said about humanitarian and relief agencies on the continent, which have also become increasingly reliant on extra-state mechanisms to establish patchworks of political order where states have become nongovernmental. As a worker for Save the Children observed of the private military companies in Sierra Leone, "They bang heads very efficiently, the fighting stops—and that's when babies get fed" (as quoted in Reno 2001a: 212). Saving rhinos, like feeding babies, is surely a noble cause. But a close look at the means by which such causes are pursued would seem to have much to tell us about how Africa is linked up with a variety of contemporary "global" projects.

We have grown accustomed to a language of global "flows" in thinking about "globalization," but flow is a peculiarly poor metaphor for the point-to-point connectivity and networking of enclaves that confront us when we examine Africa's experience of globalization (cf. Tsing 2001). Such language literally *naturalizes* globalization by making it analogous to the natural process of flowing water. Rivers really do flow. Like so many ecologically significant processes, a river's flow works via spatial contiguity—a river goes from point A to point B only by traversing, watering, and connecting the territory that lies between the two points. But as the contemporary African material shows so vividly, the "global" does not "flow," thereby connecting and watering contiguous spaces; it hops instead, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the spaces that lie between the points. Ecological processes that depend on spatial contiguity are, to be sure, not exclusively "local"—often they are regional and, indeed, sometimes even planetary. But neither the regional nor the planetary scale is easily addressed via today's "globe-hopping" political and economic forms.

If this is so, then so-called global forms of economy, politics, and regulation have no inherent advantage in dealing with environmental issues. Indeed, insofar as contemporary "global" interventions on behalf of "the environment" rely on the existence of protected enclaves subject to radically distinct and spatially discontinuous modes of policing and government, they reveal with great clarity the way that apparently universal and planetary projects in fact rely on sharp spatial divisions and violently policed zones of exclusion. Such interventions are indeed "global" in that they rely on the transnational organization of funding, institutions, and moral concern, but their very mode of operation reveals the selectively disordered and starkly divided landscape that, I have argued, is a foundational feature of Africa's contemporary mode of integration into "global society."

CONCLUSION

A review of recent scholarship on the political economy of Africa suggests that a continent that is widely understood to be simply backward or excluded vis-à-vis the newly emergent forms of global society may in fact reveal key features of how the "global" works today, and how it might work in the future. As I observed at the start: What we see depends on where we are looking from. What do we see about the "global" today from the vantage point of these recent studies?

The global, as seen from Africa, is not a seamless, shiny, round, and all-encompassing totality (as the word seems to imply). Nor is it a higher level of planetary unity, interconnection, and communication. Rather, the "global" we see in recent studies of Africa has sharp, jagged edges; rich and dangerous traffic amid zones of generalized abjection; razor-wired enclaves next to abandoned hinterlands. It features entire countries with estimated life expectancies in the mid-thirties and dropping; warfare seemingly without end; and the steepest economic inequalities seen in human history to date. It

is a global where capital flows and markets are at once lightning fast and patchy and incomplete; where the globally networked enclave sits right beside the ungovernable humanitarian disaster zone. It is a global not of planetary communion, but of disconnection, segmentation, and segregation—not a seamless world without borders, but a patchwork of discontinuous and hierarchically ranked spaces, whose edges are carefully delimited, guarded, and enforced.

Such an Africa-centered view does not show us the "true nature" of globalization—as if previous totalizing accounts of a globalized world could now be simply dismissed or replaced with a new one. Rather, the view developed here represents an attempt—an "essay"—to show the possibility of taking another perspective on the "global" and to insist that there is no view of "globalization" that simply "covers it all," that all views (even the most apparently all-inclusive and authoritative ones) are in fact views "from somewhere" (cf. Tsing 2000). The fact that an Africa-focused picture of globalization looks so unlike what most global theories lead us to expect does not mean that other accounts, "from" other "places," can simply be dismissed. But neither is it simply a matter adding a new piece to an otherwise intact picture (as in the old cliché about the five blind men and the elephant)—as if we could simply "add Africa and stir" and thus arrive at a truly all-inclusive picture. Instead, the view from Africa challenges us to develop new, more situated understandings of emerging global patterns, understandings that attend more adequately not only to exciting new interconnections, but also to the material inequalities and spatial and scalar disjunctures that such interconnections both depend on and, in some ways, help to produce. Above all, what the inconvenient questions coming out of Africa show us is how much more thinking, and how much more empirical social research, remains to be done before we can really understand a globalization that divides the planet as much as it unites it.