THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL

Towards
a global, long-term and reflexive interpretation
of the African contemporary experience.

Elly Rijnierse

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From a continental, mid-term, outside-in to a global, long-term, reflexive interpretation of the African contemporary experience.

A reaction to the book Africa works: Disorder as political instrument by Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999 Oxford: James Currey).

by Elly Rijnierse

Introduction

Several years ago we were discussing during a seminar given by Ulrike Sulinowski how the phenomenon of Voodoo in Benin could be understood. A comparison with the structure and function of internet was suggested: in both 'systems' messages could, or were supposed to be transferred over a long distance in virtually no time, seemingly without any physical connection, and in both systems power relations were related on the one hand to the availability of information for a very selective and well aimed public, and on the other hand to the skills to 'read' this highly codified type of information effectively. An hypothesis that can be drawn from this discussion is, that power relations are created and handled in similar ways in the local Voodoo practice and in world-wide 'networks'. I was deeply struck when somewhat later during my stay in Benin I discovered that the word for internet in the local language, Fon, was gri-gri yovo: gri-gri meaning 'the fetish of the voodoo', yovo meaning: 'of the white'.

This was a striking coincidence, which I have carried with me for a long time, and which made me think. The comparison between the two phenomena appeared to me even more relevant after an interview I had in 1998 with a Beninese man, who had worked for almost twenty years in supranational institutions, and who was preparing himself for returning into Beninese politics. He prepared himself in three ways for his return: firstly, he was studying literature which he hoped could help him to understand and master the forces of the Voodoo; secondly, he was studying techniques of internet and computers extensively, so that he would not be in any way dependent on technicians and he would be able to create and participate in the international networks, and thirdly he was preparing an agricultural policy, agriculture being the main economic sector in Benin. So he was preparing himself for dealing with three different worlds simultaneously: local politics, national politics and international politics. These three worlds could only be addressed in three different 'languages', the language of the Voodoo, of formal politics and of international networking. This was the way he intended to link the 'realities' of the local, to the national and the global. I will call his orientation, which aims at linking the three 'levels' of politics, a transnational perspective.

From former discussions, as mentioned above, I supposed that the 'language' of Voodoo and 'language' of internet could be rather similar in nature in terms of communication and power relations, and these theoretical considerations were thus sustained by my empirical findings. In this article I will propose a conceptual framework which makes it possible to link theory and empiricism in a transnational perspective systematically. This conceptual framework builds on the framework as outlined in the book of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz: Africa works: Disorder as political instrument (1999 Oxford: James Currey), but it contains simultaneously a fundamental critique.

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1Elly Rijnierse is political scientist and based at the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden. She is at the moment working on her doctoral thesis on Democratisation in Benin in transnational perspective, which is subsidized by the Dutch Foundation for the development of research in tropical areas (WOTRO).

I would like to thank Professor Adebayo Williams, Professor Wim van Binsbergen and Professor Gerd Junne for their contributions to the elaboration of the argument. I owe also more than he probably knows to Professor Thomas Bierschenk. The inspiration for this text stems from the many interviews ans experiences I had during my stay in Benin in 1994-1995 and 1996-1997. I thank anyone in Benin who shared his/her opinions and feelings with me during the interviews and who facilitated my participation in seminars, congresses and political manifestations.

2The lecture was given by Ulrike Sulinowski at the African Studies Centre in Leiden.
Most fundamentally, the two conceptual frameworks I will discuss in this article deal with different ways to understand African contemporary history. While accepting the same facts, our frameworks contain opposite interpretations of these facts. The conceptual framework in the book of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz leads to an understanding of African culture as fundamentally different from Western culture and therefore hypothetically not apt for development. I will argue, on the contrary, that recent interpretations of Western social and political reality neutralise these fundamental differences almost totally.

Contrary to the thesis of the present authors, which bears the risk of the legitimisation of non-communication between Africa and the West, the new framework might help to facilitate the deepening of dialogue between Europeans and Africans. In my view this is an absolute necessity, because our common history of slavery, colonialism and its legacy in the form of unequal terms of trade in the global economic system does not seem to be dealt with effectively. On the contrary, this part of the global history seems to be repressed in the collective Western mind. Addressing the facts of this history and linking them to current socio-political settings still appears to be a taboo.\textsuperscript{3} But not dealing with this history in real terms risks to culminate these days into a system of global apartheid. I hope that the proposed framework, and the research and debates it might imply, will help to overcome the global 'schism' that exist today between the African and the Western culture.

The book Africa works: Disorder as political instrument Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz offer an alternative framework as opposed to theories of Jean-François Bayart, which he had formulated in 1989.\textsuperscript{4} The results of the research done thus far within the 'Bayart-ian school' are clear: the African political culture, carefully studied in relation to its social and economic counterparts, practically inhibits a developmental process of any kind. Every new research would predictably lead to conclusions of the same sort. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz take stock. They wonder whether it is still justified to hope for some sort of development on the African continent given these pertinent results and the apparently unchanging structural conditions.

In this article I will formulate some fundamental critiques on the interpretative framework as is outlined by the authors. Actually, rather than criticising the argument; I will draw the argument further, and expand it from the narrow scope of the African continent to a global perspective; I will replace a linear by a non-linear understanding of the global historical trajectory; I will make a distinction between the nature of the First and the Second Modernity (which I will consider for the time being as similar to the distinction generally made between the nature of modern and contemporary history) and argue that the African continent has entered the period of the Second Modernity already since the beginning of the slave trade, while the start of the Second Modernity in the Western context is periodised only since the beginning of the 1960s. Furthermore I will introduce the interdependency-paradigm (not to be confused with the dependency paradigm); and finally, but most crucially, I will introduce a new understanding of the individual in the Western context.

This must seem vertiginous, but a new, unexpectedly simple, interpretative framework will appear out of this surgery. The new framework has in my view the capacity to turn a sense of desperate powerlessness and impotence vis-a-vis the current African declining spiral into a set of active social and, ultimately, ethical choices to be made by individual and collective actors in the West, within supranational institutions and in Africa.

The structure of this article will be as follows: After positioning the book of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz within the current mixture of research on Africa, I will outline briefly the theoretical framework as used by the authors. Then I will indicate where, how and on which grounds, I think the theoretical framework should be expanded to a global scale, and I will propose a beginning of a new scheme of interpretation. This scheme will still be full of

\textsuperscript{3}See for example the debate around the book written by Edward Ball, Slaves in the family, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998). Another example is the tour President Clinton made in West-Africa in March-April 1998. The history of slave-trade was brought to the fore by Africans. Apologies for America’s role in it were asked for, but not given. See: Boston Globe, March 24th and April 9th 1998.

\textsuperscript{4}(Bayart, 1989)
contradictions. Even more, I will not be able to give well elaborated examples of how this might work. Nevertheless I will be able to give some indications of research that is being done already within the framework of a new paradigm, which does not seem to be integrated yet in the tradition of political science. This is outlined in the section on 'reflexive research'. Then I will conclude.

The 'Bayart' school and the reaction of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz

In their book Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz build upon and react critically to a young tradition of research within the field of African political studies which originated initially from the theoretical framework as it was offered in 1989 by Jean-François Bayart, when he published the book *L'Etat en Afrique. La politique du ventre.* (Fayard, 1989). The authors of the book *Africa works* offer an modified and adjusted theoretical framework, in which the concept of the *instrumentalization of disorder* (by the African elite) is central. In order to assess their new framework, I would like to return shortly to the context in which Jean-François Bayart's theory got shape.

Bayart's now well-known phrase 'the Politics of the Belly' is a metaphor for his understanding of the nature of politics in the African context. It signifies the notion that African politicians or bureaucrats tend to enrich themselves by all means. His aim when he introduced the metaphor was to provide a methodological and interpretative scheme for further research. In his own words:

"My more modest intention is to put forward a means of reasoning and analysing and to sketch out a model capable of helping future studies or comparisons and to inject new life into a scientific debate which has abated somewhat since the great theoretical discussions of the sixties and seventies".  

This initiative has proved to be a fruitful one. Hundreds of empirical studies have been executed in different countries and they have provided material for a more general scientific discussion, which ultimately has played an important and provocative role within the international political discourse on development co-operation and supranational politics with regard to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The innovative power of the framework was the adoption of a research methodology from the field of anthropology within the traditional realm of political science: the study of the political elite and its relation to civil society. The anthropological research methodology contains means for *conceptual* research, aimed at digging up and analysing "*problématiques*", tensions between social realities which are different in nature, with contradicting inner logic's. This provided the researcher with a *conceptual guide for analysis* without the restrictions imposed traditionally within the field of political science by more complex and overarching theoretical frameworks. It is a fundamentally different conceptual approach, which offers powerful means for communication which are traditionally reserved for the field of literature or art. Again in Bayart's own words:

"I am vain enough to think that *The State in Africa* prepares the way for a comprehension of this trajectory (the African historical trajectory) insofar as it is intended to be a reflection on the *incompleteness* of politics, on this game of Fullness and the Space of which Chinese painters talk: 'Everywhere Fullness makes the structures visible, but the Vacuum structures the usage'. I can admit it now that in the end *The State in Africa* is less a book on Africa than an essay on the theme Fullness and Vacuum in politics, a theoretical and comparative essay for which Africa is the pretext and provides the empirical material... "  

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6For instance: (Bierschenk, 1996)
7For instance: (Hibou, 1996)
8(Freedon, 1996)
Bayart indicates here that in an analysis it is important to analyse what is there, but also to analyse what is not there. In other words, it is important to learn to listen to voices which are not heard. Especially with respect to the idea of democracy, this is the most pertinent capacity a political scientist might be willing to learn. When we were discussing where and when and under what circumstances new voices could be traced or expected, a Beninese anthropologist formulated it this way: ‘Il faut savoir écouter pousser l’herbe’ (‘On must be capable to hear the grass growing’). Such an analytical attitude is comparable with a common analysis of music. Music exists by virtue of the existence of silence. Silence within the framework of melodies, harmonies and rhythms means tension. If one cannot understand the meaning of silence, one cannot understand, let alone compose, music.

Despite this important innovation within the field of political science, this scientific discussion seems to reach a deadlock. The aim of this body of research may well have been to trace different African trajectories, in order to come to a comprehension of the nature of African politics, that would provide real grounds for an alternative understanding, and therefore for alternative and diversified policies with regard to Africa. But current empirical evidence, provided by researchers within and outside this ‘Bayart-school’ alike, seems to indicate that by all standards no significant development takes root. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz seem to react on this conclusion. By offering an alternative concept, the ‘instrumentalization of disorder’ as opposed to the idea of ‘criminalization of the state’ as proposed by Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis and Beatrice Hibou, they try to provoke a new debate. Although there are major differences between the frameworks of Jean-François Bayart on the one hand and Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz on the other, which are significant for further discussion, here I will discuss and comment only on the framework of the latter.

The purpose of this article is to extend the framework for interpretation and to facilitate research in a transnational perspective. While drawing on the achievements in terms of research methodology of the ‘Bayart-school’ and the counter propositions of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, and without denying the empirical evidence nor underestimating the seriousness of the current ‘decomposition’ of the social cohesion in the African Sub-Saharan, I think that some fundamental critiques on the interpretative framework can be formulated and that a new, more or less coherent and operational framework can be constructed.

Some loose ends and contradictions in the theoretical framework of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz

The general conclusion of research done so far in the field of Political Anthropology, the absence of significant dynamics that could lead to sustainable forms of development, is the central point of departure for this article. In this Jean-François Bayart and Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz do not differ fundamentally.

The generalisation of the overall negative dynamics in developmental trajectory is prominently reflected in chapters of the book of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, which have been headed ‘The Re-traditionalisation of Society’, and ‘The Productivity of Economic Failure’. As a conclusion of this analysis, the authors suggest that Africa might follow a different, decidedly non-Western path: that of ‘modernity without development’.

The final suggestion of the authors, in order to understand the developments in Africa, is whether the African post-colonial cultural order doesn’t constitute ‘a distinct universe’. They conclude that, at a macro-sociological level, what is occurring in Africa is the negation of the Western type of development and that, as far as the (political) actors are concerned, this type of behaviour may well turn out to be most eminently rational. In according with this argument, they come to the question whether Africa does not need a cultural adjustment programme.

10 Lazare Sehoueto, personal conversation.
11 (Bayart, 1998)
12 Closely related to this interpretation is the book (Bayart, 1998)
This is the key question. Should we, although reluctantly, conclude that the African culture has proven to be not fit for modern development? Taken to its ultimate conclusion, would that mean that we are forced to accept that the African culture is bound to disappear, just like other cultures have disappeared in the course of human history? Or otherwise, should the African culture be transformed in order to fit into the modern world? This question has, understandably, not been posed overtly over the last forty years. It has been circumvented, but it could be read in the desperate or cynical eyes of many Western politicians, development workers and entrepreneurs, and in the callous or tormented eyes of many in the African elite. Bringing this question to the fore is the ungrateful, but courageous task of the authors. The book is written, according to the authors themselves, in a sense of great frustration and with the ultimate wish to provoke a new debate, to construct a new framework for further research.

As far as I can see and understand the current literature and empirical evidence thus far, the core of the argument of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz is perfectly valid. It is the tension between the limited scope of the research on the one hand and the generalised nature of their interpretations on the other, that causes a problem to me.

The main argument outlined in the book is based on the aspect of the Weberian theory, according to which the formation of the modern state relies on the overcoming of patrimonialism. The authors argue that the modern state could come into being, because of the more and more institutionalised distinction between the private and the public. Politics was gradually emancipated from society, and increasingly autonomous political institutions have been shaped. A professional and competent civil service has come into being, and it is only by virtue of the minimal conditions of predictability and judicial protection that a modern economy can flourish.

The installation of the colonial state has been a first step towards the formation of a modern bureaucratic system. Chabal and Daloz accuse the former colonial powers to have been not too preoccupied with this project. But more than the 'failure' of the colonial powers, they emphasise 'internal' African dynamics, which led to a rapid disintegration of the colonial legacy and they assert, on the basis of extensive empirical evidence, that African governments and civil services generally and progressively fell prey to particularistic and factional struggles. They go even further by arguing that one can not only speak of total disorder because of the disintegration of the modern state structures, but on the contrary, that ever since independence the political elites systematically tend to instrumentalise this disorder in order to profit from it in terms of power and the appropriation of resources. It is because of this set of interests that every effort to reinstall any kind of formal and stable set of institutions is bound to fail.

Then the argument is drawn beyond the analysis of economic interests. It is not only due to a clear-cut power play that the project is predictably a failure. The resistance vis-a-vis the project of the modern state seems to be rooted deeply in religious and cultural values as well. First they mention the notion of the individual. The Western concept of citizen appears to be of little relevance to Africa, because African identities incorporate a communal notion of the individual. Individuals are not perceived as being meaningfully and instrumentally separate from the (various) communities to which they belong.

The resistance to the acceptance of the model of a modern bureaucracy and it's related notion of the individual appears to be even more fundamental, given the structure of belief which is found extensively over the African continent. Apart from a 'scientific, intellectual rationality', a 'social rationality' is to be distinguished. In the Western context, this 'social rationality' is often dismissed as the irrational, and is therefore not considered to be legitimate. On the contrary, in the African continent this social rationality seems to be dominant over the 'scientific, intellectual rationality'. Political leaders, acting in accordance with the logic of this social rationality therefore easily gain a certain legitimacy. For example, the social rationality is linked with the ancestor. Human being, politicians and non-politicians alike, are bound to serve

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16(Chabal, 1998), p. 3.
their ancestors and therefore they are eternally linked to their locality of birth. This logic provides to a certain extend ground for legitimacy of ethnically and locally oriented politics. Such a notion appears to the authors to be irreconcilable with the idea of the separation of the private and the public, and the creation of a healthy and impartial civil service.\textsuperscript{20}

As a consequence of this complex rationale, the post-colonial state structures appear to have been 'Africanised' systematically. In the words of the authors:

"(...) it is that the structure of the post-colonial state has enabled those Africans who have held power to instrumentalise ethnicity into political tribalism in order to serve their patrimonial interests. In so doing they have suppressed a crucial aspect of their past and failed to create new, more impersonal, forms of accountability, which, in the present context, would obviously not be to their advantage."\textsuperscript{21}

Thus far the argument has been completely clear in its explanation why, in the African context, the modern state could not take root, and why it is not to be expected in the near or mid-term future that the modernisation project will enrol. All social dynamics tend to develop in a direction opposite to the direction 'desired' by the modernisation paradigm.

The next section of the book seems to be more speculative. I think I have traced some contradictions and it is in these contradictions that I will find room to build my argument, and to enlarge the state-centred approach of Chabal and Daloz to a global perspective. I start from this point in order to 'jump' from a linear and mid-term to a non-linear and long-term historical approach.

First I will address the question of the irrational. On the base of empirical research it is argued that the logic of witchcraft is easily extended to the modern world.\textsuperscript{22} African politicians or scientists do not necessarily see the opposition as understood in the Western society between the rational and the irrational. In fact in daily reality in Africa modernity and the irrational appear to go hand in hand. Here the authors start to question the Western mode of thinking:

"Can we seriously understand what is happening in Africa unless we go beyond an analysis which considers the 'irrational' strictly from the perspective of the gradual secularisation of modernising societies? Do we not need to use an approach which will allow us to understand how the irrational may be compatible with a certain type of development which differs fundamentally from Westernisation?"\textsuperscript{23}

Somewhat further they argue:

"Africans do not recognise a meaningful conceptual difference between what in the West would be identified as two different worlds. (...) Secondly, the world of the irrational is one which binds the individual with the community in ways which are not open to choice."\textsuperscript{24}

Most important seems to me the following conclusions:

"It is striking to see how systematically successful African politicians have been at explaining the problems of their country in terms of outside culprits: colonialism, imperialism, dependence, globalism, the World Bank, etc. Our argument is that such a causal approach to political accountability is possibly more than mere opportunism; it finds an echo in the collective cultural and religious consciousness of the general population. (italics added)\textsuperscript{25} (...) We want to suggest some of the ways in which witchcraft is relevant both to the notion of power and to the practice of modern politics. Indeed, what is interesting about witchcraft today is the extent to which it has managed to modernise, to respond to the demands of the contemporary world and to adapt to the needs of Africans in the post-colonial societies in which they live."\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{21}(Chabal, 1998), p. 60.
\textsuperscript{22}(Geschie, 1995)
\textsuperscript{23}(Chabal, 1998), p. 64.
\textsuperscript{24}(Chabal, 1998), p. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{25}(Chabal, 1998), p. 69.
\textsuperscript{26}(Chabal, 1998), p. 73.
These arguments are most relevant. There is a contradiction which is not easily understood with respect to the question of the irrational. While the irrational has been considered to be the obstacle for the creation of a modern bureaucracy and judiciary and therefore to development, the phenomenon of sorcery seems to flourish in the new demands of the contemporary world. What these observations might imply is not well explained. I will elaborate on this contradiction within my framework of analyses. Notice that the authors use the word contemporary for the first time.

Secondly the authors address the issue of the international dimensions of the problem of development. I will continue here with a series of quotations:

"In the real world, it seems clear that dependence is a structural condition of African countries and that it has become an integral part of the workings of their economic and political systems. What this means is that dependence is to be conceptualised simultaneously as a constraint and as a resource."27

"Not only has dependence been an integral part of Africa's political economy but its relative importance to the continent has increased over time."28

"The origins of dependence lie in three distinct areas: the continuation of the economic connections with the former colonial powers: the place of Africa's economies in the world trade system and the growth of economic borrowing. (...) The point here is ... to understand how such patterns of international relations formalised the use of foreign aid as a political instrument. Outside powers were willing to offer aid as a means of purchasing client states in Africa. Conversely, African elites considered foreign aid as one of their negotiable commodities. Both sides knew that foreign aid was politically open to bargaining and it became in this way one of the most dependable economic resources available to African governments."29

"The second reason for Africa's dependence - its place in the world trade system - derived naturally from the fact that, during the colonial period, the continent was primarily a supplier of raw materials and agricultural products to the imperial centres and beyond."30

The third point concerning the increasing debts speaks for itself. The main and crucial conclusion is that:

Dependence was thus one of the chief instruments which enabled African elites to obtain the means to continue to feed the patrimonial systems on which their power rested. (...) The means by which African rulers have managed dependence are various but they are part of an overall strategy which has its roots in the colonial period and which one of us has called 'the politics of the mirror'.31,32

This analysis of dependence and the role of the elite is in my opinion appropriate.

Indeed, even the Structural Adjustment Programmes have been Africanised, and African rulers have succeeded in preventing Structural Adjustment from undermining the patrimonial and prebendal foundations of the state.33 Even more, the money involved in the SAP's has been used again, just like co-operation aid, to sustain that very foundation.34 Again, it is not the presentation of the facts that causes a problem for me. Merely, it is the interpretation of the authors that puzzles me.

With respect to the question of the irrational, the authors were open to reflect on the possibility of the relevance of the observation that there might be a relation between the nature of sorcery and the nature of power relations in the contemporary world. This opens the door for

29(Chabal, 1998), p. 112.
32See for the concept of "the politics of the mirror": (Chabal, 1996).
an extension of the analysis. But concerning the **international dimensions** of the contemporary developments in Africa, they focus only on one side of the mutually Western-African induced process: the African side. This leads to the following interpretation:

"If we study, empirically, what is happening in most African countries, we believe it is reasonable to ask whether the continent is not following a different agenda. It is, in fact, quite possible that this part of the world is heading in a distinct, decidedly non-Western, direction; modernity without development. **This might well mean that Africa, though economically marginalised, is still capable of playing its part in the world of international exchange: globalisation in the opposite direction, as it were.** (italics added). It is to this perplexing question that we devote this chapter."\(^{35}\)

They call this themselves a perplexing question, and indeed it is. This conceptualisation contains the risk of shutting the door for any form of communication between the West and Africa. It, indeed, leads to an interpretation of the post-colonial order as 'a distinct universe'.\(^{36}\)

My objection to this interpretation is that it is void of any reflection on the political and economic policies of the West vis-a-vis Africa and the underlying cultural values, although they do mention the Western part in the relationship.

In my opinion, the nature and the very existence of the political elite in Africa is a consequence of the violence the continent has endured over centuries, subsequently through slavery, colonialism and the liberation of international trade in the post-colonial period. The definition of the African continent as 'a distinct universe' would mean the new and latest form of collective violence: it would on forehand throw a barrier for communication, and this would mean a deadly exclusion in a world which is actually going through a transition from a market economy to an information economy\(^{37}\), the *economy of knowledge*. In an economy of knowledge, the legitimization of non-communication by defining the other as 'fundamentally different', would isolate Africa even further and exclude the continent from any possible form of development.


\(^{37}\)(Castells, 1998)
Schematically the history of the Western-African relationship would look as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Domination through</th>
<th>Period of competition</th>
<th>Africa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16th-18th century</td>
<td>Diplomacy &amp; violence</td>
<td>Robbery &amp; slavery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Military domination</td>
<td>Period of competition</td>
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<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Domination through</th>
<th>Period of industrialisation &amp; competition for</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19th-20th century</td>
<td>Imposition of the state.</td>
<td>Raw materials in Europe and the United States</td>
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<td>Political domination</td>
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<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Domination through</th>
<th>Global economy of trade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>Exploitation of unequal terms of trade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic domination</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Domination through</th>
<th>Global economy of knowledge</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st century</td>
<td>Definition of 'otherness'</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural domination</td>
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The scheme shows how Africa has gone through a history of continuing violence, over time in newly invented forms. The African population has been rather defenceless vis-a-vis these forms of domination, due to several specific characteristics of the continent: the general absence of written languages in which a cultural legacy could have been preserved and conveyed, as well as the general absence of long-lasting architecture and art as tangible transmitters of cultural values. While dangerously attractive to the European explorers, in cultural as well as in economic terms, through the availability of the natural resources and cheap labour, the continent has been equally vulnerable. As a consequence the relation of domination between the West and Africa has had right from the beginning either a devastating impact on the self-image of Africans vis-a-vis Europeans, or has led to a reaction of retreat and self-enclosure. Europe has simply been physically and intellectually stronger. Africa on the contrary nurtures emotional rationality, which has been well recognised and explored by Western artists.

The continuation of the aggravation of the economic marginalisation of Africa, in the latest form of exclusion by definition, would lead to a further deterioration of the process of social disintegration which is ongoing already for centuries and ultimately has taken the form of civil war in various regions of the continent.

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38The African continent has often been associated with the image of the woman, while Europe has been seen as the man in this relationship. See: (Comaroff, 1991) Culturally the Western civilization has drawn extensively from the African civilization. See: (Rubin, 1984)

39For example by Pablo Picasso. In an exhibition of his work in de Kunsthal in Rotterdam (13th of March - 4th of July 1999), he is portrayed as The Artist of the Century. He has drawn extensively from African art, for which he had the ultimate respect. This is documented by the art-historian William Rubin, while discussing the meaning of the term 'primitivism' by art-historians: "Objections to the adjective "primitive", ... focus not unfairly on the pejorative implications of certain of its many meanings. These have had no place, however, in its definition or use as an art-historical term. When Picasso, in the ultimate compliment, asserted that "primitive sculpture has never been surpassed", he saw nothing contradictory - and certainly not pejorative - in using the familiar of now-contested adjective "primitive" to identify the art."(Rubin, 1984), p. 5.
Given these considerations, related to the question of the irrational and the international dimensions of the development of the African continent, the key questions will be the following:

Instead of asking whether Africa should be considered as 'a distinct universe', a conceptualisation which could have devastating consequences for the participation of Africa in an economy of knowledge, one could ask whether and how communication might be possible between Africa and the West.

And secondly, instead of asking whether Africa can play a role in the world with an ultimately different non-Western agenda, one could ask whether it would be possible to start a mutual process of coping with this long common history of domination and opportunistic defence (politics of the mirror).

The choice to formulate the key questions this way is a political, social and ultimately ethical question. I am very well aware of the fact that the ability to put it this way depends largely on the perception one has of the real possibilities to realise such an approach, as well as the faith one has in such a speculative and insecure undertaking, and the value one attaches to the possible outcome. Therefore, in order to get out of this merely emotionally and morally driven statement of the problem, it is crucial to construct a comprehensible and operational interpretative framework, which would offer an alternative to the above outlined structure of thought. In the next section I will try to open some new perspectives in this sense.

The extension of the given conceptual framework to global, long-term and non-linear (=reflexive) dimensions.

The definition of some conceptual tools

The aim of this section is to provide conceptual tools which enable the analyst/participant to 'travel' conceptually from the local to the global level, from the short-term to the long-term, and from the outside to the inside perspective and vice versa.

First I would like to adopt a rather unconventional definition of globalisation, as it was relatively recently formulated by Wim van Binsbergen:

"Globalisation is not about the absence or dissolution of boundaries, but about the dramatically reduced fee imposed by time and space, and thus the opening up of new spaces and new times within new boundaries that were hitherto inconceivable."

This is an interesting definition of globalisation, because it allows us to travel in our mind over time and space, not only today, but also in our understanding of history, and from different perspectives. It is an important definition, while it defines space and time within certain boundaries, within conceptual boundaries. That means that people can enter or leave or even form such spaces through self-definition and the adoption or creation of a common identity. One can also shut out people from these 'defined' spaces, by defining the other as 'different', not belonging to the commonly defined identity.

Therefore, the concept is linked to the idea of inclusion and exclusion, belonging or not belonging to these spaces. Finally, the definition is important, while belonging or not belonging to these spaces might be determining for the redistribution of resources. To be included to certain spaces might give access to jobs, friendship, information, contracts. To be included or excluded can therefore be a matter of life and death.

In the Western perception today, the fee imposed by time and space is rapidly reducing because of the technological developments. Technological developments offered the possibility of shipping, railroad traffic, road traffic, aircraft and information technology. Therefore we experience in real life new realities. Through the possibilities of travelling and communication, we experience more different-worlds simultaneously, and therefore we have to change our

40(Binsbergen, 1997), p. 3.
41(Binsbergen, 1997), p. 4.
understanding of the world, and as a consequence new alliances, new shared identities can be imagined and formed.42

In my opinion these developments lead more generally (in the sense of more widely experienced throughout society) to an experience of space and time as it has been lived already for long in exclusive international political, economic and financial circles on the one hand, as it must be mastered in high level team sport (!) on the other, and, thirdly and may be surprisingly, that might be similar to the experience of space in time in non-industrialised societies. Let us compare the nature of manoeuvring in these three worlds.

In non-industrialised societies people tend to perceive time and space in a 'holistic' way. Often in these societies one defines oneself as linked to the universe, to the powers of nature, as subordinated to the laws of nature, and as a consequence human beings can develop imaginative powers that transcend time and space, and especially conceptual boundaries. This self-perception, the perception of the relation of the self to the other and to the material world, might allow for forms of communication that in the Western perception might be inconceivable. These worldviews are represented in eastern philosophies unlying for example yoga, acupuncture and shiatsu, as well as African knowledge systems like the Fa-system. Nevertheless, the same kind of perception develops naturally and necessarily in a sailor on the ocean. A sailor is literally subordinated to the powers of nature and he'd better be very conscious about it, while otherwise things may become physically very dangerous for him (or her). He has to develop a tremendous consciousness of the laws of nature as well as the ability to react to and play upon them, in order to reach his or her goal. The sailing boat actually is an instrument which allows him to do so. Fatal can be the effective communication and collaboration with fellow mates, who are in the same boat. Succeeding or not succeeding in understanding these laws and to react collectively accordingly, can be a matter of life and death.

Similarly, in the world of international business and finance, one has to study, understand and mostly respect the 'laws' of world politics and of the global market, in order to be able to allocate investments and finance in the most profitable way. A financial advisor referred to the informations exchanged in stockmarkets and for example short-term previews analysing the development on the financial markets as 'an immense communal body of knowledge'.43 Understanding the laws of the global financial markets for bankers is as vital as understanding the laws of the oceans for sailors. However, there is one main difference between sailing on the ocean and 'sailing' on the international financial markets: the laws of nature to respect on the ocean remain unchanged by the act of sailing itself, while the act of investment and speculation might influence the 'laws' and forces of the financial market.44

It is my hypothesis that there are major similarities with respect to the awareness of interdependency (between the individual and the material, and between the individual and the restricted community of those 'who are in the same boat') and the awareness of the need for effective and incredibly fast communication through common codes (for survival or for winning in competition), as it has developed in non-industrialised societies and as it develops in whatever kind of team sport or by working for example for an international bank, that has to 'navigate' in the uncertain environment of international finance.

Likewise one can argue that time and space are differently perceived by those who are included than by those who are excluded in these conceptual spaces. For example, a colleague of mine in Leiden went to Mali, to work among the Fulani. The first question they asked her was how things developed with respect to the mad cow decease in Europe. For them, this was a very important question, because a major reduction of exports of meat to West-Africa would

42(Binsbergen, 1998)
43Based on a documentary on the ABN-AMRO, one of the worlds ten largest financial banks. VPRO, De Nieuwe Wereld, 7th of March 1999.
44George Soros outlines this argument, when he formulates his critique on the epistemology of Karl Popper. He argues that Popper's scientific method is appropriate for the study of natural phenomena, while it does not suffice for social phenomena. The difference is that 'in social sciences the thinking is part of the object of study, while natural sciences are occupied with phenomena that occur independently from the thinking' (my translation). On the basis of this observation he developed the concept of reflexivity: a feed back mechanism that works in two directions between thinking and reality. (Soros, 1998), p. 8.
raise the prices of meat in their region, and therefore offer them better opportunities on the market for themselves. So while the Fulani are very far away in the European perception, Europe is very close in the Fulani's perception, while decisions made in Europe might influence directly their living conditions. And obviously they, as Fulani, are not involved in the network, the space, in which the battle over the meat production is fought, and the decisions over exports are made. So whereas they are affected by the decisions within this space, they are excluded from it, they do not have opportunities to enter the debate and give voice to their interests. Ultimately, this is a question of definition and valuation.

As a consequence, my hypothesis here is that the definition of Sub-Sahara Africa as a 'distinct universe', following 'a different agenda' can have an exclusive result in terms of redistribution of resources. It might provide a legitimisation for exclusion from 'spaces' in which decisions which directly concern the African economy are taken.

In cultural terms it might have similar serious consequences. The idea of conceptual spaces and conceptual boundaries as linked to cultural identities is discussed by Wim van Binbergen in his inaugural lecture.\(^{45}\) In his lecture he warns for the threat that cultural relativism, that is the acceptance of the existence of different cultures alongside each other without valuation and mutual communication, may become a nightmare: a permit to reduce the contemporary society to a pattern of positions, among which on pure theoretical grounds no open communication, identification and reconciliation is possible any more (my translation).\(^{46}\) Cultural apartheid, defined and fixed in this sense, he observes, has led already to processes that are horrifyingly real: the nazi Holocaust and the ethnic purifications in the late twentieth century Europe and Africa.\(^{47}\) This is a terrible hypothesis, but nevertheless it might well make sense. If we focus on the 'otherness' of Sub-Saharan Africa, and thus create legitimisation for non-communication, this may well constitute conceptual boundaries that cause (and have caused already for a long time), a system of 'global apartheid'.

A second conceptual tool I would like to introduce is the notion of Reflexive Modernity,\(^{48}\) as opposed to the notion of modernity as it is understood in the modernisation paradigm. The notion of reflexive modernity is currently developing in the Western context in the field of sociology and political science as a consequence of the process of globalisation. One could, for the sake of simplicity, call orthodox modernity First Modernity, and the reflexive modernity Second Modernity.

The conceptualisation of the difference of the First and the Second Modernity corresponds with the notion of modern history as opposed to contemporary history\(^ {49}\), or modern art as opposed to contemporary art. The real time-schedules within the field of art, history and sociology/political science that would indicate the transition from a modern to a contemporary understanding does not necessarily correspond\(^ {50}\). The real time-schedules for the periodisation and even the 'direction' of the developments do not correspond between Western societies and non-Western societies either.

The concepts of First en Second Modernity are models for two different understandings of human and social relationships, that correspond with different understandings of the individual and collective power relations.

The First Modernity has been shaped in the West mainly by the technological revolution. Technological inventions led to the process of industrialisation and made possible

\(^{45}\) (Binsbergen, 1999)
\(^{46}\) (Binsbergen, 1999), p. 8.
\(^{47}\) (Binsbergen, 1999), p. 14.
\(^{48}\) (Beck, 1994)
\(^{49}\) (Barraclough, 1964, 1967)
\(^{50}\) (Dante, 1997) Barraclough draws the line for Western political-economic history as follows: "Looking back from the vantage point of the present, we can see that the years between 1890, when Bismarck withdrew from the political scene, and 1961, when Kennedy took up office as President of the United States, were a watershed between two ages. On one side lies the contemporary era, which is still at its beginning, on the other there stretches back the long vista of 'modern' history with its three familiar peaks, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution." Note that in the transitional period, 1890-1960, two World Wars took place (Barraclough, 1964, 1967), p. 10.
the exploitation of overseas territories, for the simple reason of the availability of ships and weapons for example. Competition between France, England and Holland pushed up the processes of international trade, industrialisation and colonisation. These developments caused social tensions within the Western societies, and therefore led to the development of the nation-state. The formulation of the social contract by Rousseau has formed the basis for a political system which allows for the redistribution of wealth within the society. The French revolution brought the emancipation of the citizen within the nation-state. The Weberian definition of the state conceptualised the linkage of the political system of redistribution to a fixed territory. In order to sustain this order, the monopoly on the use of force had to be contributed to the state. Weber recognised that the Protestant religion played a key-role in the process of the development of the nation-state: it provided the combination of a workers-ethos and the faith in God, which facilitated the emergence of a collective economy based on the notion of mutual trust.\textsuperscript{51} Within the framework of the nation-state a bureaucracy took shape, in which public and private spheres became functionally distinct. The emergence of a functional civil service is, following Weber, "a complete break from the notion that the holders of political power possess any legitimate claim on the assets or resources which they administer."\textsuperscript{52} Such a bureaucracy provides a structure of predictability and juridical protection for the individual entrepreneur, which are both prerequisites for flourishing entrepreneurship and therefore for a growing collective economy. These developments have strongly influenced perceptions of social relations and power relations. It led for example to the separation of religion and politics, the formation of the nuclear family as the cornerstone of society and the process of individualisation.

In current times again technological developments have outstripped the dominant social and political order. As discussed in relation to a Western understanding of globalisation, these developments change the Western perception of the social reality. This change in perception is alternately the cause and the consequence of the transition for the First to the Second Modernity. Technology has diminished again dramatically the fee on communication and transport all over the world. This has facilitated the outgrowth of a global economy, driven by multinational enterprises and international financial institutions, that surpass national bureaucracies given their capacities in economic and political entrepreneurship on a global scale.\textsuperscript{53}

The growth of the global economy, as facilitated by technological developments, has disrupted the ecological balance as well as social equity on world scale. The destabilising consequences of these developments give rise to tensions which can not be solved within the framework of the nation-state. Supranational institutions have been created, and are recreated continuously, in order to stabilise these imbalances. Conflicting interests emerge within these institutions: the pursue of national interests by means of 'using' the supranational institutions versus the aim of rebalancing global social or ecological disruptions. For the time being, Robert Cox predicts widely experienced confusion in this respect: 'Multilateralism [...] will be schizophrenic—one part of its being involved in the present predicaments of the state system, another part probing the social and political foundations of a future order.'\textsuperscript{54}

The process of democratisation of the access to technology and knowledge in the Western societies has linked social organisations and individuals to these international networks.\textsuperscript{55} In short, a Network Society is emerging which effectively circumvents the national bureaucracy, and therefore it undermines its function as a stabilising structure intermediating between social classes.\textsuperscript{56} Access to networks is determining for access to resources. And in real terms on global scale, the reallocation of resources may well take place mainly through the mechanisms characteristic of these networks, rather than through the redistributing mechanisms of the modern bureaucracy (either at national level or at the level of the European Union and the

\textsuperscript{51}(Fukuyama, 1995)
\textsuperscript{52}(Chabal, 1998), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{53}(Held, 1995), p. 20.
\textsuperscript{54}(Cox, 1997), p. 7.
\textsuperscript{55}(Biekart, 1999), see chapter 5: 'Private Aid Interventoin Strategies in Central America' and Chapter 6: 'Assessing Civil Society Building Performance'.
\textsuperscript{56}(Castells, 1998).
United Nations Structures). Therefore modern notions on power and democracy, as they emerged within the structure of the nation-state, become more and more obsolete. In the West the emergence of a global Network Society marks the transition from the First to the Second Modernity. Ulrich Beck describes the transitional process as follows:

"If simple (or orthodox) modernisation means, at bottom, first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by industrial social forms, then reflexive modernisation means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity".\(^{57}\)

Ulrich Beck brings up the following questions with regard to the transitional process from the First to the Second Modernity:

"The West is confronted by questions that challenge the fundamental premises of its own social and political system. The key question we are now confronting is whether the historical symbiosis between capitalism and democracy that characterises the West can be generalised on a global scale without exhausting its physical, cultural and social foundations. Should we not see the return of nationalism and racism in Europe precisely as a reaction to the processes of global unification? And should we not, after the end of the cold war and the rediscovery of the bitter realities of 'conventional' warfare, come to the conclusion that we have to rethink, indeed reinvent, our industrial civilisation, now the old system of industrialised society is breaking down in the course of its own success? Are not new social contracts waiting to be born?"\(^{58}\)

This fundamental questioning of the virtues of Western civilisation is for me the key to the understanding of the failure of the modernisation project in Africa as well as the opening to a mutual rethinking of the Western-African relationship. For example, how can it be that the democratisation process in Africa has consisted mainly in the introduction of democratic institutions which are based on the premises of the social and political structure of the First Modernity in Europe, while Africa has never gone through a comparable industrialisation process, with all the implications it has had in the individual, economic, social, cultural and religious spheres? On the contrary, Africa has been violently robbed of its economic\(^{59}\), cultural\(^{60}\) and social resources\(^{61}\) that are \textit{prerequisites} for such an development. And secondly, how can it be that these institutions are introduced in Africa at a moment that the same institutions appear to become obsolete in the West?

\textit{Similarities between the nature of Pre-Modernity and Second Modernity}

With the above defined notions of Globalisation and First- and Second Modernity, we can start the comparison of the characteristics of these 'configurations'. The idea of First and Second Modernity can only exist by virtue of an idea of Pre-Modernity. Anthony Giddens and Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz refer to this notion as 'traditional societies'. Taking into account that 'traditional societies' as such do not exist, I prefer to translate this notion into the concept of Pre-Modernity. Pre-Modernity will be defined as a social configuration that exist when the industrialisation-process has not affected society, and when no forms of high technology have integrated the social environment. This configuration contains some characteristics. I will argue that there are major overlappings between the characteristics generally attributed to the concept of Pre-Modernity (or traditional societies for that matter), and

\(^{58}\)(Beck, 1994), p. 1
\(^{59}\)Raw materials and cheap labour.
\(^{60}\)Think of the Musée l’Homme in Paris, the colonial museum in Brussels, the imposition of European languages and education at the detriment of African languages and cultural notions, the libraries with literature on Africa in European Capitals while the libraries in Africa which are relatively empty, think of the African musicians under European and American contracts.
\(^{61}\)Think of traditional family structures that have been destroyed, while an economic base is lacking for the restructuring of society. Urbanization in Africa therefore means poverty and social cestabilization.
the characteristics attributed by Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash to the Second Modernity.

I will outline here Ulrich Beck's, Anthony Giddens' and Scott Lash's understandings of the implications of this transitional process from the Modern society to the contemporary Network Society in the West for 1) the notion of the individual, for 2) the place of the nuclear family in society, 3) the understanding of power relations in society, 4) the relation of the individual to the community and for 5) the notion of democracy. I will consider these notions as the characteristics of Second Modernity.

Firstly, the word 'individualisation' in the Second Modernity obtains a new content, as opposed to individualisation in the First Modernity. The transitions to the Second Modernity means the loss of certainties, as provided by the modern bureaucracy. Therefore the individual has to learn how to cope with uncertainty, and to create its own chances.

"(Individualisation) does not mean atomisation, isolation, loneliness, the end of all kinds of society, or unconnectedness." (...) "Individualisation means, first, the disembedding and, second, the re-embedding of industrial society ways of life by new ones, in which the individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves."62

This perception of individualisation means, that individuals must learn to 'navigate' in an 'environment of uncertainty' by the understanding of the existence and the mechanisms of the fluid conceptual spaces, and by learning the skills of 'navigation' within these networks. Therefore one has to learn that one can not rely on the external structures as provided by the First Modernity any more, but on the contrary how one can and must have faith in one's own 'skills of navigation'.

This idea can be extended to the collective. I would suggest that it is something like understanding that air can actually bear you, if you know how to navigate in the air. Aircraft and flying was something inconceivable at the moment that aerodynamics was not yet developed in the field of physics. Now that this is well understood, aircraft has become a reality in the life of many, although the passengers individually do not understand the principles of aerodynamics at all. In the Second Modernity, the relation between the individual and society is conceived fundamentally different from the way it is perceived in the First Modernity. The bearing power of the relations between individuals or between institutions is the bearing power on which one has to rely. The individual has equally the capacity to create such a bearing power, on which they themselves, as well as others can rely. The art of building and making use of this bearing power is the art of Networking. In a Network Society it is crucial to develop the skills of networking, and therefore it might be crucial as well to develop "the theory of social aerodynamics". This idea, I would suggest, is nothing new for business relations for example, but it is new for the majority of the population in the Western society.63, 64

Secondly, in the period of transition from the First to the Second modernity, the idea of the nuclear family is breaking up as well, but new clear-cut forms have not yet been established.

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63 For example management systems and educational systems are currently fundamentally reoriented, in order to enable people more generally to cope individually and collectively with the demands of the Network Society.
64 The idea of 'social navigation on networks' is comparable to Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'war of positions'. However the concept 'war of positions' is embedded in a social theory that departs from assumptions of mutual distrust (hereafter I will call this 2nd Modernity based on active distrust). 'Social navigation on networks' can be interpreted as the positive, that is creative, constructive, inclusive) counterpart of this idea (2nd Modernity based on trust).

The opposition I propose here between trust and distrust might be comparable with the contribution of Sigmund Freud to the theory of psychiatry. While until that time most psychiatrists mainly formulated theories on the illness of the mind, Freud developed a complete psychology or anthropology on ill and healthy people. This resulted in innovations concerning researchmethods, therapy and theory. (Based on the VPRO Television program "De echo van Freud", 21-3-1999.) So while most theories of historical sociology concentrate on 'social illness', the contributions of among others Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Scott Lash for example elaborate seemingly for the first time theories on 'social health'. Comparable developments in anthropology and rural sociology has led to innovations in researchmethods and theory, as I will show later on in the section on 'reflexive research'.
"The classical empirical-operational definition of the class concept makes use of the family income, that is, the income of the 'head of household', an inclusive word, but one that clearly bears masculine features in practice. That means that women's labour participation either does not 'register' at all in class analysis or is 'averaged' away." 65
This model does not fit any longer in the reality of the Second Modernity. It seems that men and women have to find each other 'apart together' in new networks, new conceptual spaces. The establishment of the relation of the 'new' individual to state structures or transnational networks has not yet been worked out, and this may force individuals into contradictory situations.

Thirdly, within the model of the Second Modernity, the concept of power changes. One cannot obtain power any more simply because one occupies a certain position in society. Positions are not any longer secure, but have to be maintained and regained continuously, through skilful manoeuvring within networks. In the First Modernity, a rather static conception of power has taken root. In the Network Society the concept of power regains its relational and fluid connotation. The sociologist Norbert Elias formulated already an extensive critique on the modern notion of power in relation to the notion of the individual, which underlie theories of Max Weber. 66 He formulated a relational understanding of power 67 which ranges from the individual to the collective level, and which is related to the value one attaches to the relation to the other. 68

In the fourth place, the awareness of interdependency is crucial to the understanding of the Second Modernity. At the individual level (understood as a person or for example a company), it is the capacity to deal with the fluid realities of the ever changing networks. The idea of interdependence has definite consequences for the notion of the nation-state:

"A world of 'complex interdependence', it is argued, has dramatic implications for the sovereignty, autonomy and accountability of the state. Interdependence involves a sensitivity and vulnerability to external developments, compromising the independence of states, and crucially eroding the boundaries between the internal and external domains. Moreover, the growth of regional and global institutions is interpreted as further evidence of the limited capacity of the state to resolve independently the key policy problems which confront it." 69

In the fifth place, the emergence of a global Network Society has dramatic implications for the modern concept of democracy, which is bound to the Weberian notion of the nation state, and therefore bound to territory. In the First Modernity, three basic notions of democracy have co-existed.

"First, the idea of participatory democracy, a system of decision-making about public affairs in which citizens are directly involved. Secondly, there is liberal or representative democracy, a system of rule embracing elected 'officers' who undertake to 'represent' the interests or views of citizens within delimited territories while upholding the 'rule of law'. Thirdly, there is a variant of democracy based on a one-party model (although some may doubt whether this is a form of democracy at all)." 70

Given the fact that economic and social resources are increasingly redistributed through networks, rather than through national bureaucracies, all three models are becoming obsolete within the framework of the global Network Society. David Held formulates the problematique as follows:

"Territorial boundaries demarcate the basis on which individuals are included in and excluded from participation in decisions affecting their lives (however limited the participation might be), but the outcomes of these decisions often 'stretch' beyond national frontiers. The implications of this are considerable, not only for the categories of consent and legitimacy, but for all key ideas of democracy: the nature of a

66(Mennell, 1998), p. 3. See the chapters 7 and 15.
70(Held, 1995), p. 5.
constituency, the meaning of representation, the proper form and scope of political participation, and the relevance of the democratic nation-state, faced with unsettling patterns of relations and constraints in the international order, as the guarantor of the rights, duties and welfare of subjects. Of course, these considerations would probably come as little surprise to those nations and countries whose independence and identity have been deeply affected by the hegemonic reach of empires, old and new, but they do come as a surprise to many in the West."  

Alain Touraine points at the same crisis of democratic structures within Western societies in a general way as follows:

"Procedural democracy lacks passion, and participatory democracy lacks wisdom. The alternative is democratic action aimed at freeing individuals and groups from the constraints that weigh on them."  

Although principles for democratic procedures as they could function in a Network Society are not formulated yet, it is clear from the above that new forms have to be found.  

When I compare the notions of the individual, of the family, of power and of public institutions in a global Network Society with the idea of Pre-Modernity, I can not escape the impression that there are striking similarities between these understandings in the Second Modernity and in non-industrialised societies. In this, interdependency, although fundamentally unequal, and uncertainty are keywords. It is my major argument that there are major similarities between the conceptualisation of the individual, the relation of the individual to society and the nature of power relations as they are lived and conceived in the Second Modernity and these notions as lived and conceived within Pre-Modern societies. This is actually recognised by the theorists of the Second Modernity. For example Ulrich Beck speaks, with reference to the Second Modernity, of the "return of uncertainty" as well as of "individuals return to society".  

Moreover, I would suggest as well to reconsider the opposition between the rational and the irrational. Is that really a workable opposition? Could one otherwise replace the idea of the rational by collective Intellectual Intelligence (IQ), as it is recorded in libraries, data-bases, and made accessible through information technology on the one hand, and the so-called irrational by collective Emotional Intelligence (EQ), as it is reflected in managerial organisation, managerial skills, communication skills on the other? This refers to the managerial revolution that actually takes place in the West. The conciliation of emotional and intellectual rationality is no new theme. It a central issue in feminist theory. Likewise Martha Nussbaum has re-analysed Greek philosophy, the very base of the Western theories of democracy, in the same sense.  

Could it be that there is actually one basic difference between traditional societies and the Second Modernity, namely the incorporation of technology? Therefore, could it be for example, that there are major similarities in terms of power relations and systems of redistribution of resources (like money, jobs, prestige etc.) between the traditional African concept of the palaver and the contemporary model of the 'round table' conference?  

New concepts: 'Triple Chevauchement' and the Politics of Survival  

An implication of above outlined reasoning is that Pre-modernity, First Modernity and Second Modernity exist nowadays in real life simultaneously. Political actors are well aware of that reality, as the example at the beginning of this article suggests. So, one can even live the

71(Held, 1995), p. 60.  
72(Touraine, 1994), p. 11.  
73See for example: (Beck, 1998)  
76(Castells, 1998), p. 337.  
77(Freeden, 1996), see chapter 13: 'Feminism: the Recasting of Political Language'.  
78For example in the book: (Nussbaum, 1986)  
three realities personally in one day and learn skills to 'play' on these realities simultaneously, in order to benefit most.

In the West we conceive the three 'realities' as historical processes that have followed one another in due course of history. The 'outsiders-perspective' does teach us differently. African countries have lived the Second Modernity ever since the beginning of Slavery, and simultaneously with the realities of Pre-modernity. The notions of the First Modernity have been introduced later by colonialism. However, these notions of the First Modernity never took root firmly, because the continent was simultaneously deprived from the economic resources needed for the structuring of the First Modernity. Consequently, psychological and religious changes did not take place in the European way either. This has led to resistance to the Western concept of development. Contradictory policies by Western states have prevented the rooting of First Modernity notions as well. For example, while the French state financed and supported a Western, First Modernity style education at all levels, African governments were simultaneously confronted with the politics of French multi-national companies, often partly owned by the French government, that forced African administrations to function in ways similar to the Dahomean state (note 80).

As a consequence, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the structures of the Modern state have been mainly 'Africanised'. So the 'Second Modernity - logic' have been dominant in the reality of the African elites in their relation to the West. It is this awareness of possible different perspectives on the same reality, which David Held refers to in the quotation above (in the part quoted in italics).

The hypothesis that one can live these three realities simultaneously, and that the African political elite has been bound to play on these three realities already since the beginning of the era of colonialism, is an extension of a concept which is known as 'straddling' or in French: 'chevauchement'. 'Chevauchement' means that the African elite has to work between two realities at the time: the world of the traditional society and the reality of the modern state.

"At the advent of independence, there was no indigenous bourgeoisie in Africa and state power was appropriated by what was initially referred to as a "political elite" and later as a "political class" or a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie". It mainly consisted of often well-educated top officials, party leaders and high-ranking officers. It was characteristic of this group that it generally did not exert control over the means of production, but utilised its position in the state apparatus to provide itself with an economic basis by setting up state and private enterprises and engaging in other economic activities (often within the informal economic sphere)." The French word 'chevauchement', literally 'overlapping', 'living two different but interrelating realities simultaneously' seems to me to be more appropriate than 'straddling', a term that suggests the existence of two separate, rather static realities, in which one could 'jump' from the one to the other. While the concept of 'chevauchement' or 'overlapping' refers to idea of playing on the Pre-modern conditions and the conditions of the First Modernity simultaneously, one could extend the idea and think of a 'triple chevauchement' or 'triple overlapping'. In this the elite, while still not controlling the means of production, could use its formal position, offered by institutions of the First Modernity, in order to play on the informal, local, Pre-Modern realities on the one hand, and on the informal, global, contemporary realities on the other. By informal and global realities, one could think of trade in

80 For example, the source of the growth and enforcement of the state of Dahomey lies in the ability of the Dahomean elite to integrate into the international slave trade networks, by organizing slave-raids in neighboring environments and the creation of a bureaucracy that facilitated the slave trade from the 'hinterland' to the world market (Polanyi, 1966), p. 23.
81 (Kabou, 1991)
82 For example la Companie française pour le développement des fibres textiles (CFDT) and Elf Aquitaine.
83 (Roitman, 1990)
84 (Buijtenhuijs, 1993), p. 9.
incorporated through education with regards to the public sphere. At a conceptual level these insights might be terribly conflictive, but if a new comprehension of the fluid transitional realm between the private and the public sphere appears as a result of the resolution of this conflict, and this understanding is accepted as well by the husband (he might have played an active role in the formulation of the outcome, that would be the ideal), it cannot be otherwise than that this new understanding has consequences with respect to the allocation of resources in terms of time, money and energy between husband and wife within the private sphere. (This does not mean that the wife should be active in public life in order to be part of the 'contemporary world'. Other forms may be found, as long as it is the outcome of a mutual understanding and communication). A changing perception of the husband of his wife is reflective in the sense that it will change inevitably his self-perception as well.

I have elaborated on the possible conflictive conceptual spaces at the individual level and the real consequences a new understanding inevitably has as an analogy for social processes taking place between the researcher and the researched at the local, national as well as the global sphere.

The reflexive mode of thinking has been developed amongst others in the fields of anthropology and rural sociology. Through the preoccupation of these disciplines with research at local, village level, it has become undeniable that the researcher is an observer as well as an actor in his field of research. Besides, the researcher is a powerful actor, while he has the real power to give a representation of the village to those who do have power over allocation of resources concerning that community, like a government or an institution. The consciousness and the recognition of the responsibility that these facts imply has had major implications in terms of orientation and organisation of the research in these fields.

A network that obeys to a large extend to this logic is the Dutch-Beninese inter- university network in the field of agricultural studies, in which the universities of Wageningen, Utrecht, Amsterdam and Cotonou are involved. The long-lasting confrontation of theory and practice has led to a paradigm-shift, as formulated for example by the sociologist Norman Long\textsuperscript{95}, which allows for a better communication between the researcher and the researched.\textsuperscript{96}

Jean-François Bayart, as a political scientist with a traditional focus on the state as a unit of analysis (although with an unorthodox perception of the state), has drawn this reflexive mode of thinking, as derived from the field of anthropology, to the level of the state and the study of the relation state-civil society. Again, the consciousness of the importance of interaction between the researcher and the researched has had major implications for the organisation and the focus of research. For example, Professor Thomas Bierschenk has built his research to a great extend on the theoretical framework as offered by Jean-François Bayart. His research-activities over the last decade in Benin has led to the emergence of a transnational research- and educational network, and he has on principle presented the research-results at the national level. This has certainly influenced the public debate on the state-civil society relations between journalists, members of the political elite, donor organisations and civil- or farmers organisations.\textsuperscript{97}

In my understanding, within the field of political science, we have arrived at the point that we can make a next step, as a follow -up on the initiative of Bayart in 1989, and extend the logic of reflexive research on national, even continental, level to the global level. It will imply the study of the current relations between the West and Africa as a mutual process, in which the political dynamics, interests and political discourse is studied at both sides simultaneously, and in a long term historical perspective.

\textsuperscript{95}(Long, 1992)
\textsuperscript{96}Rock Mongbo has applied this model with regard to the problem of rural development in Benin: (Mongbo, 1995)
\textsuperscript{97}For example the special issue on Benin of the journal Politique Africaine (no. 59. October 1995), of which he was the editor, has been distributed on the meeting of the Global Coalition for Africa which was held in 1996 in Cotonou. That same year, he was one of the organizers of a conference in Cotonou, which resulted in the following proceedings: (Bierschenk, 1996)
This kind of research has been done for example on the period of slavery in a study by O. Patterson, which accounts for the social psychological consequences of the underlying conceptualisation of the other. They show how the conceptualisation of the other as 'different' (and at that time inferior) simultaneously serves as a legitimisation of the idea of slavery on the one hand, and to the interiorisation of the inferior self-image, or the option of self-isolation, on the other hand.98

A similar study in the same reflexive paradigm has been done on the period of colonisation by J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff.99 Concerning the specific realm of agriculture, the same historical, global and mutual account has been given by Frederic Cooper et. al..100 In the field of International Political Economy, I would like to mention the work of the political scientist Karl Polanyi.101 He also drew on the one hand from the experience of empirical research,102 as well as methodologically from approaches in the field of anthropology, which eventually led to a holistic understanding of social processes at global level.103

These globally oriented studies have led the authors to formulate a paradigm-shift, comparable to the understanding of Norman Long at local level. Concrete studies in this line are now being done for example by P. Geschiere104 and F. Huijzendveld105 concerning the production of rubber. The theme of economic exploitation is brought back in, but, as in the Bayartian tradition, the power relations involved are explained in an inclusive (holistic if you wish) understanding that relate cultural values, social and political structures to material conditions.

In my opinion, the insights which have been gained in these parallel fields, which account for a global, long-term historical and reflexive perspective, have to be thought through and integrated in the study of contemporary African history. I would suggest to consider the approaches and the results of these studies, as well as recent understandings of 'reflexive modernity' as it is understood in the Western society and see how these interfere with the interpretation of the results of the research done within the theoretical framework of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz. It is important to recall that Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz do not stand on their own. I think they rightly claim to represent a widespread mode of thinking, of which they have outlined the underlying premises. By doing so, they have created a forum for debate, which has been their primary aim. I have taken this opportunity to respond.

Contradictorily, the concept of the 'politics of the mirror', as it is formulated by Patrick Chabal,106 takes into account the politics of the image and the self-image in the relation between the West and Africa. He even warns for dangers implied by defining Africa and Africans as 'the other':

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98(Patterson, 1982)
99(Comaroff, 1991)
100(Cooper, 1993)
101(Polanyi, 1944)
102(Polanyi, 1966)
103(Block, 1984) It is interesting to see how Polanyi also derived his theories from supposed similarities between what I called Pre-Modernity and Second Modernity: "Polanyi sought instead to ground the possibility of socialism not in the development of productive forces, but in humanity's historic capacity to subordinate the economy to social relations. If market society was, as he insisted, a deviation in human history, then socialism would simply mark a return to the dominant practice of subordinating the market to social control. In this context, it becomes easier to understand why Polanyi devoted his career after The Great Transformation to the analysis of premarket societies. The social arrangements of premarket societies were the obvious place to begin to lay the theoretical foundations for a postmarket socialist society." (Block, 1984), p. 77-78.
104(Geschiere, 1995)
105(Huijzendveld, 1999)
"The paradoxical effect of the politics of the mirror is that in the failure to find an image of Africa which is congruent with our vision of ourselves (Westerners), we have tended to explain away what happens in Africa by way of its 'Africaness'."

How then can it be that this is exactly what Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz do by underlining the 'otherness' of Africans, and by defining Africa as 'a distinct universe'?

What kind of political configuration can one expect within a society that is economically dependent of the West, but which is simultaneously culturally isolated through the definition of that society as a "culturally different universe"? Such an attitude leads, given the context of the obvious relations of dependence, to a cultural imprisonment or isolation, a cultural apartheid on world scale. The political economy we witness actually in Sub-Saharan Africa can be compared with the political economy among prisoners. Solidarity among prisoners is more often an exception than a rule. In every prison, where prisoners are dependent from outside for their very existence and only scarce means from outside are available for redistribution through smuggling (drugs and weapons for example), a political environment of terror and moral decay will come into being.

That might be what we witness in the African continent, and the process of social decomposition has led eventually to civil wars, like we have seen in the Great Lake district, Congo and Sierra Leone. In accordance with the model of the Network Society, which does not coincide with borders, these conflicts are conflicts over material resources, but they have hardly any relation whatsoever with the idea of the nation state. Nevertheless, the conflicts are supposed to be resolved within the framework of the nation-state. Therefore a kind of schizophrenia might appear, comparable to the schizofrenia Robert Cox mentioned with respect to the multilateral institutions.

Ultimately one can distinguish in these conflicts at international, national and local level the theme of the contradiction between 'settlers' (related to the Weberian notion of the nation-state in combination with the First Modernity conceptualization of political and social relations), and 'nomads' (related to the notion of conceptual spaces in the Network Society in combination with the Second Modernity conceptualization of political and social relations). This theme, the logic of the 'settlers' versus the logic of the 'nomads' is, as mentioned by the novelist Bruce Chatwin, one of the central themes of the Bible as well. Given the antiquity of the theme one can not hope for the solution of the problem, but only for a better recognition and understanding of the contradiction. Then one can look for new ways of dealing with the problem, at any time, at any place.

Conclusion

In this article I have reflected on a theoretical framework as presented by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz. I have proposed to 'expand' the inner logic of their framework, which originates in and diverges from the conceptual framework of Jean-François Bayart, from a continental to a global scale. I have proposed some additional conceptual tools, such as the making a distinction between industrial modernity and reflexive modernity (or First and Second Modernity), and Active and Passive Trust and outlined how this exercise may cause a shift in interpretation of the empirical facts. I have suggested as a consequence to introduce the concept triple chevauchement, in order to be able to analyse the overlapping and interfering realities of the 'three modernities'. The practice of the 'juggling' within three different logics (and by doing so creating them as well), for which the Beninese man which I referred to at the beginning of the article was preparing himself, can be caught in the image of the Politics of Survival.

As a consequence, not the differences between Africa and the West, but the similarities are highlighted, and the necessity of looking for ways of communication between the West and Africa is underlined. Effective communication might appear to be the ultimate condition for the inclusion of Africa in the global economy of knowledge. Effective communication will inevitably lead to a process of dealing with the past, a process through which Africa and the West both may come to terms with the long common history of domination and opportunist defence.

The task of working through the proposed conceptual framework is beyond the scope of anyone's personal capacities. Therefore, I think that, if this scheme makes sense, it might facilitate systematic analysis of the African contemporary history in a global context. If the analysis leads to reflection and self-reflection, the results in the field of African Political Studies might be helpful in the social-psychological process needed\(^{108}\) in order to come to terms with our common history, both in Africa and in the West.

\(^{108}\)(Woodsworth, 1998)
Literature:


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Rijnterse, E. (1998). Democratisation and liberalisation policies: are they instruments for sustainable development or are they used as tools in the process of the 're-colonisation' of


