## Anthropology, Culture and Society

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### THIRD EDITION

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matisation of black and Indian citizens, and which suggests that ethnicity is not a mere tool of dominance but expresses a need for order, classification and boundaries. In the earliest of times, according to the myth, there was on the shore an enormous crocodile, Kavwokmali, which flapped its huge tail, front legs and hind legs so that soil and water were continuously muddled together in an unpalatable mixture. Everything was mud: there existed neither land nor water. The great culture hero Kevembuangga then came along, killing the crocodile with his spear. The mud sank, and the distinction between land and water was a reality. Boundaries, outlines, clear distinctions appeared for the first time.

This myth, not dissimilar to the Judeo-Christian myth of origin described on the first pages of Genesis, exemplifies the social production of distinctions and classification – differences that make a difference. The production of ethnic distinctions may be regarded as a special case of this general phenomenon, which has been discussed in Chapter 15. Perhaps the fact of ethnic conflict and ethnic discrimination is better analysed not as a result of ethnicity but rather of unjust social arrangements. Perhaps when we speak of the tragedy of nationalist war, the problem is war and not nationalism.

Finally, we should keep in mind that neither ethnic groups nor nations are eternal. They appear, they flourish, are transformed, and eventually vanish. Since history is always written by the victors, it is easy to forget that for every successful nationalism there are perhaps ten or more unsuccessful ones. The members of such potential nations, or their descendants, were either exterminated or assimilated in the long run.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: An Inquiry into the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn. London: Verso 1991.
Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell 1983.
A.D. Smith: *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic*. Oxford: Blackwell 2008.

# 19 ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE PARADOXES OF GLOBALISATION

Every culture must liberate its creative potential by finding the correct equilibrium between isolation and contact with others.

— *Claude Lévi-Strauss*

One reason why anthropologists have so often approached globalization through the formula of 'the global and the local' is precisely that 'the local' often turns out to be quite resilient, even as it changes, and that a grasp of its earlier forms is thus very valuable in understanding the present.

— *Ulf Hannerz*

An anecdote is told about a tribe of transhumant camel nomads in North Africa, whose annual migration had taken place in March since the dawn of time. Recently their migration was several months delayed. The reason was that they did not want to miss the final episodes of *Dallas*.

The point is not whether or not this tale is true. What it may tell us is that the world is no longer what it used to be – or rather, perhaps, what anthropologists and everybody else used to imagine it to be. For it is easy to find evidence that changes in the world have been dramatic in earlier times too, that there has been extensive and regular communication and contact between societies, and that truly cosmopolitan cities like Byzantium and Timbuktu existed already in medieval times. The opening words of the first classic of twentieth-century British social anthropology, Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, reads as follows:

Ethnology is in the sadly ludicrous, not to say tragic, position, that at the very moment when it begins to put its workshop in order, to forge its proper tools, to start ready for work on its appointed task, the material of its study melts away with hopeless rapidity. Just now, when the methods and aims of scientific field ethnology have taken shape, when men fully trained for the work have begun to travel into savage countries and study their inhabitants – these die away under our very eyes. (1984 [1922], p. xv)

Malinowski's worries concern phenomena which are today sometimes described as imperialism, or cultural imperialism, and sometimes as the globalisation of culture; that is, the worldwide dissemination of certain cultural forms and social institutions because of colonialism, trade, missionary activity, technological change, mobility and the incorporation of tribal peoples

into states and large-scale systems of exchange. When the first American anthropologists began to return from Bali in the 1920s, they described, in a concerned tone of voice, how Balinese culture was about to be completely destroyed by mass tourism (which still, in the early twenty-first century, does not seem to have come about; see Wikan 1992; Howe 2005) – and similar grim predictions have been made on behalf of many of the peoples who have been explored anthropologically. Ever since the feeble beginnings of modern comparative anthropology, practitioners have been worried about the disappearance of the cultural variation which it is our aim to explore. In the 1960s and 1970s many spoke of the importance of 'urgent anthropology', which entailed recording the culture and social organisation of the peoples still living in a traditional way before they disappeared from the face of the earth. In recent years, new concerns have to some extent replaced these, and anthropologists now investigate, in different ways, the new complexities engendered by the increased contact between societies.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

What has become of the peoples first explored by anthropologists during colonialism? Nearly all of them are, to varying degrees, integrated into larger – in the final instance global – economic, cultural and political systems. To some, such as the Tsembaga Maring of Papua New Guinea, this integration is still of relatively minor importance in their everyday life. Although wagework and a monetary economy have entered their society, they still get their livelihood from pig-raising and horticulture. Because of the increasingly efficient state monopoly of violence, it has nevertheless become difficult to go to war in the highlands. Missionary activity and labour migration, however, has made an impact on the lives of many peoples in the New Guinea highlands for years, and organisations aiming to preserve and disseminate local cultural forms have been set up.

For many of the other peoples dealt within earlier chapters of this book, the changes have been more radical. Among the Azande of Central Africa, proletarianisation has been widespread – many found wagework in cotton and peanut plantations – and yet, the basic social institutions, including that of witchcraft, still function. The Yanomamö in Brazil and Venezuela have reluctantly been drawn into the global economy too – notably, gold has been found in their territory – and, simultaneously, they now have professional spokesmen travelling around the world to promote their interests as an indigenous population. A majority of Yanomamö still chiefly live off subsistence horticulture, although the monetary sector is becoming increasingly important. A more tragic part of recent Yanomamö history has been the spread of diseases such as measles, relatively harmless to Europeans but deadly to isolated, formerly unexposed groups. As for the Mundurucú further south in Brazil, as early as the 1950s they were being drawn into a capitalist economic system. Several of the villages depended on wagework on rubber plantations,

and in this setting their pattern of settlement was changed: the men's house was gone, and men lived with their wives and children in nuclear families. In general, the Murphys report (1985), the women were happy with the changes, which meant that men contributed more to the household; whereas the men spoke in nostalgic terms about a largely mythical past, when they fought heroic battles and game was abundant.

One of the most important changes among the Dogon since the period of French colonisation in Mali has been the fact of peace. Their old enemies, the Fulani, have been prevented from attacking them and thus the Dogon have been able to expand their territory. Like the Fur, the Fulani, the Hausa and many other peoples, however, the Dogon have been severely hit by the combination of recurrent droughts in the Sahel region and population growth. The Dogon are today in many ways integrated into the nation-state of Mali; the children go to school, are vaccinated and learn French as a foreign language. The monetary economy has become more widespread and certain industrial products, such as factory-made clothes, transistor radios and bicycles, have become common. As with many other African peoples, Islam has been an important factor in cultural change among the Dogon. In this respect, the increased peaceful contact with the Fulani, who are Muslims and active missionaries, has been particularly important.

Turning to the Nuer and Fur, their greatest problem apart from devastating droughts has been the long-lasting civil war in the Sudan (1983–2005), which made trade difficult, apart from draining off both economic and human resources from their societies. Many Nuer fought and died on the south Sudanese side in the war against the Islamic north; in accordance with Evans-Pritchard's model of segmentary oppositions, they were occasionally integrated at a higher level of segmentation than they used to be, fighting side by side with the more numerous Dinka. In Darfur, as in many other local communities in the Sudan, large numbers of refugees from politically unstable Ethiopia led, particularly in the 1980s, to a further strain on already very scarce resources. Darfur has also been a region where war and unrest did not end with the signing of the peace treaty in 2005. Unrest between some of the ethnic groups of the region (including the Fur and Baggara) was corroborated by the intrusion of Arab militias known as the Janjawid, who were believed to have been responsible for massacres, arson and rapes around 2003. Fighting, raiding and massacres have nevertheless continued since then, and hundreds of thousands of Darfurians have been displaced. At the time of writing, the entrenched conflicts surrounding Darfur, involving both ethnic conflict within Sudan and border disputes with Chad, are presently (2010) unresolved, although an important peace treaty was signed in 2007.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the Trobriand Islanders largely seem to have adapted to processes of modernisation on their own terms (Malnic and Kasaipwalova 1998). Modernisation has led to changes in political organisation, in the economy and in the politics of identity, but both the

kinship system and the system of ceremonial exchange still function, even if they do not have the same overall significance as before

The kind of diachronic perspective implied in these snapshots of change provides a starting-point for anthropological studies of local life which alters and which is connected with systems of enormous scale. The main task of anthropology can no longer be to explore and describe alien ways of life for the first time, but rather to account for processes taking place at various points and various levels in the global system.

## A GLOBAL CULTURE?

As the quotation above from Malinowski indicates, since the early days of twentieth-century ethnography, anthropologists have been aware of tendencies towards what we may call cultural entropy – that historical process which is sometimes described as 'cultural globalisation', as 'creolisation' or 'hybridisation', or again, rather inaccurately, as 'Westernisation'. However, one may still wonder if we are not presently at the threshold of a new era in the history of humanity, the era of the global information society. The previous three chapters have dealt exclusively with phenomena belonging to modern contexts; in some cases, as with nationalism and minority issues, these topics have only been relevant for a few decades in large parts of the world. In these final pages, we investigate in what sense it may be reasonable to consider our time a 'global age' and, above all, look into the relationships between the global and the local. First of all, we need to look more closely at the currently fashionable term 'globalisation'. For this word does not mean that we are all becoming identical, but rather that we express our differences in new ways.

If by the word 'modernity' one refers to everything that capitalism, the modern state and individualism mean to human existence, modernity has been hegemonic in the world at least since the First World War; that is to say, it has dominated. The dissemination of modernity has nevertheless accelerated since the Second World War. During the last few decades, there has been an intensified flow of people, commodities, ideas and images on a global scale. Since the appearance of the jet plane, and after satellite television became common in many parts of the world, and even more recently, since the phenomenal rise of the Internet from the early 1990s, the limitations on cultural flow represented in space and time have been significantly reduced. We have witnessed a formidable time-space compression, to use the words of the geographer David Harvey (1989).

Modern communication technology contributes in two ways to the disembedding of certain cultural phenomena from space. First, a multitude of phenomena – including aspects of 'youth culture', prestige commodities from Coca-Cola cans to pop CDs and jeans, popular films, and transnational political issues such as the environmental crisis – exist both globally (everywhere) and locally (in particular places) simultaneously. Second, the jet plane has made it possible for a growing number of people to move rapidly and comfortably

all over the world, while telephones, fax machines, the Internet and satellite video telephony make it feasible, in principle, to communicate with people anywhere in the world at any time. Space can no longer be said to create a buffer between 'cultures'.

To anthropology, which has historically concentrated on the study of local communities, or at least more or less clearly delineated sociocultural systems, these changes have implied new and complex challenges, both at the level of theory and at the level of methodology.

## MODERNITY AND GLOBALISATION

Although modern societies differ in marked ways, modernity has certain shared dimensions everywhere. These commonalities, or parallels, can be observed both at the level of institutions and at the level of cultural representations.

The state and citizenship are today nearly universal principles of social organisation, although they exist in many variants. Their meaning should not be exaggerated – it is still possible, in some parts of the world, to live an entire life without regular contact with the state. It is nevertheless becoming increasingly difficult. Virtually nobody in today's world can escape citizenship completely, and the state's power over its citizens is reflected in its double monopoly on taxation and legitimate violence. If agents other than the state collect taxes or commit violent acts, they are now guilty of crimes.

Wagework and capitalism are also important dimensions of globalised modernity. Capital is increasingly disembedded from territory, which means that companies and capitalists may invest virtually anywhere. If it is cheaper to produce computer chips in Malaysia than in Scotland, the microchip producer may easily move the assembly plant there. Such moves correctly presuppose that there is a globally available workforce prepared to enter into labour contracts.

Within modernity, consumption is by and large mediated by money. This simply means that people buy the goods they need in a market where general-purpose money is the dominant medium of exchange. Subsistence production and barter are becoming less important.

From this, it follows that both politics and economies are integrated in an abstract, anonymous and globally connected network of investments, exchange and migration. No single person can affect this system in decisive ways, and events taking place at one point in the system can have ramifications – frequently unforeseen – in other parts of it. If the Taiwanese exports of personal computers increase one year, a fashion shop in a middle-class area in California may go bankrupt. The reason is, simply, that many of the shop's former customers have lost their jobs in the Silicon valley computer industry. These processes cannot be described satisfactorily in simple causal or intentional accounts. They take place at the abstract level of the system and can be likened to what are sometimes spoken of as 'butterfly effects': a

butterfly flaps its wings in Rio de Janeiro and creates a small wind, triggering a long chain of events of growing magnitude, which eventually create a storm in New York.

One consequence of increasing systemic integration at a global level is the fact that certain political issues affect the entire planet. The environmental crisis is an obvious example. If the rainforests of Amazonia, Indonesia and Central Africa disappear, there is likely to be a climatic change perceptible everywhere. And when the Chernobyl nuclear reactor suffered a meltdown in 1986, newspapers in Venezuela, Japan and Mauritius carried daily, worried reports about the catastrophe.

The creation of agencies and NGOs with a worldwide scope also indicates the importance of globalisation. The UN and organisations such as the Red Cross and Amnesty International, as well as Fourth World networks, have contributed to the development of a global discourse about morality and politics, although the system of sanctions is still weak. In an earlier chapter it was argued that it is difficult to find universal criteria for human rights; because of the globalisation of culture, politics and economic and military power, it seems that such criteria are about to be developed – at least in theory (Wilson 1997; Mitchell and Wilson 2003).

The worldwide dissemination of AIDS is another instructive – if grotesque – example indicating that globalisation is not limited to contact mediated by abstract structures such as the mass media; contact across national and regional boundaries can be physical and direct.

## DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALISATION

Although it is neither true that globalisation leads to global cultural uniformity nor that global connections were unknown before the late twentieth century, there are sound reasons to concede that the interconnectedness of the contemporary world signifies a new situation regarding social and cultural dynamics. Some of the key dimensions of globalisation are the following (taken from Eriksen 2007b).

- *Disembedding*, including de-localisation. Globalisation entails that distance is becoming irrelevant, relative or at the very least less important. Ideas, songs, books, investment capital, labour and fashions travel faster than ever, and even if they stay put, their location is frequently less important than it would have been formerly. This aspect of globalisation is driven by technological and economic changes, but it has cultural and political implications. Disembedding, however, also includes all the ways through which social life becomes abstracted from its local, spatially fixed context.
- *Acceleration*. The speed of transport and communication has increased throughout the twentieth century, and this acceleration continues. It has been said that there are 'no delays any more' in an era of

instantaneous communication over cellphones, Internet servers and television satellites. Although this is surely an exaggeration – delays exist, even if only as unintended consequences – speed is an important feature of globalisation. Anything from inexpensive plane tickets to cheap calls contribute to integrating the world, and the exponential growth in the numbers of Internet users since 1990 indicates that distance, for a great number of persons, no longer means separation.

- *Standardisation*. Continuing the processes of standardisation begun by nationalism and national economies, globalisation entails comparability and shared standards where formerly there were none. The rapid increase in the use of English as a foreign language is suggestive of this development, as is the worldwide spread of, for example, similar hotels and shopping centres, as well as the growing web of international agreements.
- *Interconnectedness*. The networks connecting people across continents are becoming denser, faster and wider every year. Mutual dependence and transnational connections lead to a need for more international agreements and a refashioning of foreign policies, and create both fields of opportunities, constraints and forms of oppression.
- *Mobility*. The entire world is on the move, or so it might sometimes seem. Migration, business travel, international conferences and, not least, tourism have been growing steadily for decades, with various important implications for local communities, politics and economies.
- *Mixing*. Although 'cultural crossroads' where people of different origins met are as ancient as urban life, their number, size and diversity is growing every day. Both frictions and mutual influence result. Additionally, at the level of culture, the instantaneous exchange of messages characteristic of the information era leads to probably more cultural mixing than ever before in human history.
- *Vulnerability*. Globalisation entails the weakening, and sometimes obliteration, of boundaries. Flows of anything from money to refugees are intensified in this era. This means that territorial polities have difficulties protecting themselves against unwanted flows. Typical globalised risks include AIDS and other contagious diseases, most recently swine flu, transnational terrorism and climate change. None can effectively be combated by single nation-states, and it has often been pointed out that the planet as a whole lacks efficient political instruments able to deal with and govern the technology- and economy-driven processes of globalisation.
- *Re-embedding*. A very widespread family of responses to the disembedding tendencies of globalisation can be described as re-embedding. In fact, all of the seven key features of globalisation mentioned above have their countervailing forces opposing them and positing alternatives. The fragmented, fleeting social world made possible through disembedding processes is counteracted through networks of moral commitment,

concerns with local power and community integration, national and sub-national identity politics, cultural 'authenticity' and rooted identities. New social movements based on dissatisfaction with global capitalism also fit into this picture (Maeckelbergh 2009).

Moreover, acceleration is counteracted through social movements promoting slowness in many guises, standardisation is counteracted by 'one-of-a-kind' goods and services, transnational interconnectedness through localism and nationalism, movement through quests for stability and continuity, mixing through concerns with cultural purity, vulnerability through attempts at self-determination and relative isolation. Globalisation is thus a dialectical process, where, for example, processes leading to the weakening of boundaries are met with bids to strengthen them again; where the wealth generated by transnational trade also results in a growth in poverty (witnessed in the spread of urban slums); and where transnational migration is often accompanied by cultural revitalisation and a strengthening of ideologies emphasising rootedness and origins.

## World Music

Processes of cultural mixing do not imply that 'everything is becoming the same' or that all kinds of cultural flow are equally susceptible to mixing. Many forms of knowledge and practice remain local, and many are more influenced by others than they themselves influence others.

An area of signification which is often mentioned as a happy breeding-ground for the exchange of diverse influences is contemporary rhythmic music. Blues, jazz and rock are thus often described as 'creolised' forms developed by the descendants of African slaves in North America. More recently, and particularly since the mid-1980s, a new trend in rhythmic music has been showcased as an expression of the creative intermingling of discrete traditions; known as 'World Music' or 'World Beat', it features non-European musicians in a European environment, using modern studio equipment and electrical instruments to convey, for example, 'the spirit of Africa'.

There are conflicting views on the nature of world music. Some argue that it represents a commodification and commercialisation of authentic tribal music; that the Western record companies have merely adapted African and Asian music to cater to the jaded palates of Western consumers, and have destroyed it in the act. On the other hand, it could be pointed out that 'Westernised' artists such as Youssou N'Dour are also incredibly popular in Africa itself — so how could their recordings be regarded as adulterated and 'inauthentic'? In most cases, the domestic popularity of artists is actually boosted by their recognition abroad. Steven Feld (1994) sees the trend of world beat

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largely as a reinvigorating force for rhythmic music in general, where Fela Anikulapo Kuti may just as well borrow from James Brown as Peter Gabriel may hire a group of African drummers. The 'Africanization of world pop music and the Americanization of African pop', Feld writes (1994, p. 245), 'are complexly intertwined', although he also discusses issues of copyright and power inequalities between the metropolitan artists and record companies, and the non-European artists.

In a later article, Feld is less sanguine about world music. In 'A Sweet Lullaby for World Music', he describes how 'any and every hybrid or traditional style could ... be lumped together by the single market label world music' (2003, p. 195), adding that this signified not only the triumph of the commercial, but also a disquieting banalisation of difference. Taking as an example a song, 'Rorogwela', composed by Afunakwa, a Baegu woman from the Solomon Islands, Feld goes on to show how oral and indigenous music is being transformed and re-created by Western musicians, and describes the difficulties involved in giving the original composers recognition and their rightful part of the revenues generated. In discussing this topic, Feld touches upon a much larger family of issues, namely those to do with intellectual property rights (IPRs). In an era where the cultural production of traditional peoples is being repackaged as commercially palatable 'exotic' products, it has become a question of key importance to many, especially indigenous peoples themselves, to be able to defend their legal rights to their music, literature and handicrafts (see Kasten 2004).

The flows of musical influences often have paradoxical effects. Lewellen (2002) describes the development of the Congolese rhumba from the 1920s to the 1940s, a guitar-based style borrowing from Cuban music. By the 1970s, the influence from soul was also apparent: partly African in origin, Cuban music and American soul returned to Africa to be merged with locally developed styles. Later, a variant of Congolese popular music, the *soukouss*, became popular in Europe, where it was regarded as '*la vraie musique africaine*'. However, *soukouss* was hardly listened to in Africa itself, where the lyrics sung in local languages, often strongly political, were as important as melody and rhythm.

Musical discourses are fields where identities are shaped, and for this reason, the global flow of popular music can be a fruitful field for studying contemporary cultural dynamics as well as the political economy of meaning. The debate about authenticity is in itself interesting, as it reveals conflicting views of culture: as unbroken tradition, or as flux and process. These issues are not merely aesthetic ones, but are inevitably politicised and have a bearing on personal identity.

## LOCAL APPROPRIATIONS OF GLOBAL PROCESSES

At the level of interaction, global processes are expressed in a many areas. The 2001 terrorist attack on the USA was discussed instantaneously in Chinese villages and Iranian towns; the election of Obama for the presidency of the USA was commented upon by newspaper columnists in every country; Michael Jackson's death in the summer of 2009 filled headlines from Argentina to Uzbekistan and so on. A majority of the world's population has probably been exposed to these events. Occasionally, moreover, political events affecting every corner of the globe, such as the climate crisis and transnational terrorism, engage people everywhere although they are not directly affected. There are, in other words, situations where a large proportion of the world's population take on an identity as 'citizens of the world' in the sense that they are concerned with problems relevant for all the world's inhabitants.

The fact that a cultural phenomenon is 'global' does not, however, imply that it is known to everybody or concerns every individual on the face of the earth. Even the Coca-Cola logo, possibly the single most famous image in the world, is not familiar to everybody. The point, however, is that such phenomena are disembedded from particular places. An event like the Winter Olympics has a truly global dimension (Klausen 1999), even if the majority of the world's population is ignorant of it. Whether one happens to be in Montreal, Milan or Birmingham, one can follow such a sports event simultaneously, thanks to webcasts and television. This does not, we should note, imply that everyone who relates to these cultural forms perceives them in identical ways: global symbols and globalised information are interpreted from a local vantage-point (and contribute to shaping that vantage-point). In this way, a fashion magazine like *Vogue* is read differently in a tropical island such as Mauritius compared with Paris; and a soap opera like *The Young and the Restless* takes on a different meaning in Trinidad compared with the USA. These and many other cultural phenomena are global in the sense that they are not located in a particular place; at the same time, they are local in that they are always perceived and interpreted locally.

Cultural flows do not simply take place from North to South. Food, literature and music may just as well move in the opposite direction. Events taking place in a remote location may be interpreted into a situation of local struggles, so that, for example, the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip in 2009 led to violent demonstrations among minority youths in European cities protesting just as much against the discrimination they experienced from greater society, as against the Israelis.

## TOURISM AND MIGRATION

One perspective on globalisation consists in investigating how people, wherever they are, can participate in a shared production of meaning, appropriate the same information and yet interpret it into widely different

life-worlds. A complementary perspective may be an exploration of the ways in which people move physically from place to place. Tourism and business travel are widespread forms of movement, which so far have not received significant attention from anthropologists (but see Hannerz 1992; Appadurai 1996; Löfgren 1999; Yamashita 2003; Hitchcock et al. 2008). Is it, for example, the case that place, in the meaning of locality, is entirely irrelevant to tourists and business travellers; that international business hotels are 'the same' everywhere, that a shared 'business culture' exists and that there is a shared, global 'leisure' culture – identical in Cancun (Mexico) and the Canary Islands? Further, could these cultural forms, evident in hotels, airports, boardrooms and beach clubs, profitably be seen as 'third cultures' mediating between different local cultures? In a historically oriented study, Orvar Löfgren (1999) charts the rise of tourism from the nineteenth century to the present, indicating how the phenomenon has shifted in meaning as new groups (from middle class to working class) have increasingly come to replace the elite travellers. Among other things, he is fascinated by the sheer growth of the tourism sector. If one goes to the northern shores of the Mediterranean on holiday, one might as well get used to staying at a permanent building site; such is the growth rate. According to forecasts from the WTO (here: World Tourism Organization), the number of tourists going abroad will be 1.6 billion by the year 2020. In 2000, it was already about 1 billion.

Moving a step further, Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) have investigated ways in which a number of ethnic groups in Southern Africa have developed 'corporate strategies' to profit economically from their cultural identities, largely through the sale of commodities and cultural tourism. In opting for a commercialisation of identity rather than its politicisation, some of these groups have enjoyed considerable success without posing a political threat to the nation-state.

A related field of interest, which has been researched much more thoroughly, is migration – immigration or emigration, depending on which country one sees it from, or simply transnationalism, which covers both countries and especially the ambiguous, or liminal, cultural space between them (Vertovec 2009).

Labour migrants move within the parameters of modernity. They carry passports and are citizens; a precondition for their movement is their willingness to take part in wagework. For labour migration to be possible, the migrants must already be, at least partially, integrated into the cultural logic of capitalism.

Several possible analytical perspectives may shed light on their situation. One approach is to focus on the relationship between majority and minority in the host country; another is to compare the situation, culture and social organisation of migrants in the home country and in the country of destination. A third approach might be to compare different perspectives on migration. For example, Kuwait and other Gulf states attract many thousands of immigrants or 'guest workers'. From the dominant perspective of the

Kuwaiti, these migrants are a 'necessary evil'; they are necessary because they carry out manual work, and they are an evil because they are seen to constitute a potentially threatening foreign element in a country where only around 20 per cent of the population are of Kuwaiti origin. From a humanist European perspective, frequently invoked in sociological studies of migration, the situation of the migrants can be described as a case of severe exploitation; they are underpaid, overworked and lack certain rights which – thanks to the globalisation of culture – are regarded as universal. From a third perspective, namely that of the migrants themselves, the position may appear to be different. Thousands of Malaylees from Kerala, south India, eagerly await their chance to work in the Gulf. When they return to their hometown they bring money and gifts, and they frequently return to the Gulf given the chance (Wilhite 2008). The Indian minister of finance praises them publicly for bringing hard currency to the country.

Where you stand depends on where you sit. Every social and cultural phenomenon can be interpreted in a multitude of different ways, according to the perspective from which one sees it. Where interaction within the global system is concerned, ambiguities of this kind are typical, and they may remind us that people do not become 'the same' just because they engage in increased contact with each other. People's lives are neither wholly global nor wholly local – they are *glocal*.

Additionally, it becomes increasingly clear that the term 'Western culture' is notoriously inaccurate. Depending on definition and delineation, 'the West' contains between 700 million and 1 billion inhabitants. It is not, in other words, 'a culture', but a very large number of societies and a large number of strikingly different cultural environments. Besides, the emerging patterns of cultural variation due to migration and cultural globalisation imply that 'the West' exists just as much in a middle-class suburb of Nairobi as in Melbourne, and that Buenos Aires may be seen as a more typical 'Western' city than Bradford, where a large proportion of the population are Muslims of South Asian origin. 'The West' cannot meaningfully be conceptualised as a kind of society; it must rather be regarded as an aspect of culture and social organisation not localised in a particular 'cultural area', namely what has here been called 'modernity'.

## MIGRATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

A salient feature of the world at the beginning of the third millennium is mobility, displacement and exile. More than 200 million people lived outside their country of birth in 2008, and the number is growing fast. In addition, many descendants of migrants (who are born in their present country of residence) tend to form, whether voluntarily or not, minorities (Chapter 18). An area which has a turbulent past and present in this respect is the Caribbean, and some of the most important anthropological studies of migration have been carried out here.

Karen Fog Olwig's studies of Caribbean culture and history (1993, 2003, 2007) reveal clearly why so much contemporary anthropological research can neither have a community focus nor be synchronous 'snapshots'. In her analyses of Nevisian society (Olwig 1993; Nevis forms part of St Kitt's and Nevis, and has about 10,000 inhabitants), she shows that this society has never been self-sufficient politically, culturally or economically – or indeed demographically. The ancestors of the present inhabitants arrived there as slaves and planters, and the Afro-Caribbean culture and social organisation in the island have developed in the interface between local factors and global processes. As part of a worldwide capitalist system, Nevisians are dependent on external forces; but Olwig also shows how they have actively shaped their own way of life. The high level of out-migration in the decades after the Second World War – few Nevisians do not have relatives living in metropolitan cities such as London, New York or Toronto – could similarly be seen as an expression of extreme dependence; but it can equally well be studied as a result of entrepreneurship and remarkable cultural adaptability.

Studying Nevisian migrants in Britain, Olwig shows that the codification and indeed creation of a distinct Nevisian identity takes place there, in intense contact with alien culture, as a counterforce to the local British identity. Further, perhaps more surprisingly, she argues that the annual Caribbean carnival in Notting Hill, West London (see also Abner Cohen 1993) can be seen not just as a construction of a Caribbean cultural identity, but also as a revitalisation of a lost English carnival tradition. Migration, far from severing ties with their island of birth, strengthens the local identifications of Nevisians, who talk of Nevis with compassion and nostalgia. They regularly send remittances to their families and many even invest in real estate in Nevis. The migrants and their children thus become important actors in both cultural and economic projects in Nevis, even if they live on the other side of the Atlantic.

Cultural identity is a major issue among many migrant or diasporic populations. Calls for purity and 'authenticity' are met – within and outside the minority – by pleas for individual rights, change and choice. In the societies described as post-traditional by Giddens (1991), tradition does not go away, but it has to be chosen self-consciously and defended against its alternatives. As described by Gerd Baumann (1996) in a study of a multi-ethnic English neighbourhood, the options available are as numerous as they can be controversial.

## EXILE AND DE-TERRITORIALISATION

*The Satanic Verses* (Rushdie 1988), the novel which earned its author a *fatwa*, or death penalty, from Shi'ite imams in Tehran, is not primarily a book about Islam. Rather, it is about the condition of exile; about being on Air India's Flight 420 halfway between Bombay and London – permanently. In the book, Rushdie shows how the shift in perspective entailed by exile creates doubt and

uncertainty, because the person in exile discovers that the world, the past and (ultimately) even the truth appear differently when viewed from different positions. Ethnic revitalisation among migrant groups may be understood within this perspective. Drawing on nostalgia and a sense of alienation, such movements contrive to re-instil a sense of continuity with the past, ontological security and personal security.

Although it has received intense attention from anthropologists and sociologists, ethnic and religious revitalisation represents only one side of the coin. Clearly, the processes which sometimes inspire revitalisation, but which may also lead to the opposite (namely uncertainty, ambivalence and individualism), merit attention. These are the processes of globalisation, whereby people become embedded in shifting social and cultural networks of sometimes staggering scale, where society, in Zygmunt Bauman's view, 'proclaims all restrictions on freedom illegal, at the same time doing away with social certainty and legalizing ethical uncertainty' (1992, p. xxiv).

From an anthropological point of view, this needs to be studied empirically (see Eriksen et al. 2010). Some years ago, Appadurai (1990) proposed a framework for exploring cultural flow in the contemporary world, which is drawn upon (and often modified slightly) in much contemporary research on cultural complexity. He distinguishes between five dimensions in global cultural flow, which have different ways of functioning.

The *ethnoscape* refers to 'the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live'; in other words, the demographic attributes of the world – tourism, migration, exile, business travel, but also stable communities.

The *technoscape* means the 'global configuration ... of technology', which in important ways shapes the flow of cultural meaning, and also includes the uneven global distribution of technology.

The *finanscape* is the flow of capital, which has increasingly become disembedded from territories. Together, these three dimensions form a global infrastructure of sorts, but it is by no means predictable, since each 'is subject to its own constraints and incentives'.

The final two dimensions, which are ideational, are the *ideoscape* and the *mediascape*; referring, respectively, to ideological messages and mass media constructions.

A major point in Appadurai's article, and one that later writers on globalisation have also made, is that de-territorialisation – which does not merely amount to large scale, but also to the reduced importance of the spatial dimension as such – necessitates new conceptualisations of the social and cultural world. Ideas, technologies, people and money can be, and are, moved about more frequently, quickly and easily across the globe in the contemporary age than ever before. One result, often described in terms of displacement, is the growth of populations on the move or living in exile. Another consequence is the self-conscious construction of place, since place, as a space imbued with cultural meaning, can for many people no longer be taken for granted. One's place of residence may change dramatically, or one may move somewhere

else; and places are also multivocal like symbols in the sense that they mean different things to different people or in different situations (Rodman 1992). All this does not mean that people are becoming de-territorialised, but that the construction of place becomes a project in its own right – like that of cultural identity – whereas formerly it could be taken for granted. It also means that 'place' becomes a fluid term, so that 'Nevis' becomes a network with nodal points in London, Nevis and elsewhere. The fact of migration in an era of fast communications thus also paves the way for *long-distance nationalism* (Anderson 1992), whereby the political scene in a given territory may be partly shaped by the agency of migrants. In an account of Tamil immigrants to Norway, Øivind Fuglerud (1999) shows that the overarching concern for many of the migrants does not consist in integrating into a European society, but supporting the separatist movement in Sri Lanka. Ideological differences and tensions among the migrants reflect differences in Sri Lanka, not in Norway. The Rushdie affair, in other words, was just a spectacular instance of a more general process whereby territorial boundaries do not vanish, but are challenged by telecommunications and diasporic populations.

Some walls are torn down and others appear. The idea of an unbounded world has not been realised through the contemporary processes of globalisation; rather, old tensions are rephrased, and new tensions occur. A growing number of persons find themselves in a culturally complex situation, where their cultural identity, values and practices cannot be taken for granted, do not go without saying and have to be defended actively.

We now move on to a few further consequences of globalisation (or 'glocalisation') for anthropological research.

## SOME CONSEQUENCES FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

The globalisation of culture does not entail that groups and individuals become culturally identical; rather it engenders the growth of new kinds of cultural difference in the interface between the global and the local. Before moving on to some empirical examples, I should like to sum up the discussion so far regarding the consequences of globalisation for anthropological thought and research.

- It is becoming increasingly clear that the concepts 'tradition' and 'modernity' refer to a purely analytical distinction; that is to say, it is untenable to speak of traditional and modern societies in an empirical sense.
- The concepts of society and culture have become more problematic than ever before. The networks of communication, migration, trade, capital investments and politics cross virtually every boundary; with a few exceptions, neither states nor local communities are really clearly delineable in every regard. 'Cultures' are neither closed nor internally uniform.

- Since it has become impossible, in many cases, to delineate clearly the system being investigated, it has become increasingly interesting to explore specified groups or specified cultural phenomena (such as the football World Cup, tourism, migration) which do not make up autonomous systems in a social or cultural sense, but which can nevertheless be isolated for analytical purposes.
- Classic fieldwork has become quite insufficient as the sole method of collecting the data and insights required to understand social and cultural life on the planet. Fieldwork, which is now often translocal or multi-sited, must generally be supplemented with additional sources giving access to the wider context of the phenomena being explored through participant observation – statistics, mass media, locally produced texts and so on.

## THE 'INDIGENISATION OF MODERNITY'?

As early as the 1960s, the media theorist Marshall McLuhan introduced the concept of 'the global village' (McLuhan 1962). This notion was intended to account for the new cultural situation in the world, following the spread of modern mass media, notably television. The world had become one place, McLuhan argued, and he called this place a global village. He did not, incidentally, view it as a harmonious place, but one characterised by friction, conflict and insecurity. (Like, an anthropologist might add, many real villages.)

An essential point in anthropological research on globalisation lies in the necessity to account for the relationship between the global on the one hand, and the village, or the localised environment, on the other. To an anthropologist, McLuhan's term therefore implies an unhealthy mix of two levels, the level of interaction and the anonymous level: micro and macro.

The central paradox of globalisation is, perhaps, that it has made the world both larger and smaller at the same time. It has become smaller in the sense that it is possible to travel anywhere in less than 24 hours, and that it is practically possible to have the same lifestyle anywhere in the world. On the other hand, it has become larger in the sense that we thereby know more about remote and 'exotic' places, and thus more easily recognise our mutual differences. Jonathan Friedman once phrased it like this: 'Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenisation are not two arguments, two opposing views on what is happening in the world today, but two constituent trends in global reality' (1990, p. 311). There is, in other words, a movement towards integration into ever larger systems – where a growing majority of the world's population takes part in a perfectly unlimited system of exchange – and, at the same time, a localising emphasis on cultural uniqueness. What needs to be studied ethnographically, Sahlins argues, is 'the indigenization of modernity' (1994). This, as noted in Chapters 17 and 18, frequently takes the form of 'traditionalist' movements, often presented as ethnic or nationalist

ones. Remarking on the modernist, reflexive conception of culture and its global dissemination, Sahlins writes:

'Culture' – the word itself, or some local equivalent – is on everyone's lips. Tibetans and Hawaiians, Ojibway, Kwakiutl and Eskimo, Kazakhs and Mongols, native Australians, Balinese, Kashmiris and New Zealand Maoris: all now discover that they have a 'culture'. For centuries they may hardly have noticed it. But today, as the New Guinean said to the anthropologist, 'If we didn't have *kastom*, we would be just like white men.' (1994, p. 378)

On a more specific note, Edvard Hviding (1994) has showed how Solomon Islanders, whose kinship concepts and practices have strong cognatic leanings, have in recent years begun to emphasise patrilineal descent, which proves more efficient in the formation of corporations and for making land claims. Whether this should be labelled 'indigenisation of modernity' or 'modernisation of indigenity' is an open question, but it is clear that the shift in kinship practices and concepts is related to sociocultural change and the spread of the idea of culture as a political resource.

## TWO LOCALISING STRATEGIES

Paris is one of the most important 'African' cities in the world, and it attracts thousands of musicians, students, labour migrants and refugees from the Francophone parts of Africa. Many Parisians have West African parents and a personal identity partly connected to Senegal, Cameroon or the Ivory Coast, and many West Africans travel to and fro between the city and the home country.

Friedman (1990; see also Gandoulou 1989) has described a particular category of labour migrants to Paris. They originate in Brazzaville (Congo), where they are collectively known as *les sapeurs* (literally, 'the underminers'). Most of them are of humble origins, but they manage to travel to Paris, where they work very hard and consume as little as possible, in order to buy expensive fashion clothes to display publicly in the streets of Brazzaville at a later stage. This kind of consumption strategy falls squarely into the general category described earlier as conspicuous consumption: it expresses rank and prestige. What is interesting about 'les sapeurs' is not only the fact that they are much poorer than they look, but also that most of them belong to an ethnic group no longer in power. Friedman thus interprets their conspicuous consumption as a local political strategy: as a way of challenging power by overcommunicating one's own superiority and success. 'La sape' thus appears as a local counter-cultural strategy drawing on local evaluations of prestige and power, which in turn draw on what is globally prestigious; that is, expensive fashion clothes. It would not have been possible to understand this phenomenon in its full context without knowledge of both the local and the non-local levels.

An example of a rather different kind is Katarina Sjöberg's (1993) study of the Ainu, a Japanese minority. Officially, the Ainu have no status as an

ethnic minority, since the Japanese government does not recognise the existence of minorities. Instead, they are categorised as an 'underdeveloped group'. Like indigenous people elsewhere, the Ainu have been subjected to systematic discrimination (they resemble Europeans and have historically been considered pale, hairy, unattractive people); they lost their traditional right to land generations ago and suffer from high rates of alcoholism and unemployment. Until the 1970s, it seemed as though Ainu identity was about to disappear completely. The language was nearly extinct, and the Ainu seemed to be about to become a Japanese underclass instead of an ethnic group. Then an ethnic revitalisation movement emerged – as with many other indigenous peoples during the same period. In the 1970s and 1980s an active revitalisation movement developed, its aim being to make the Japanese state recognise the Ainu as an ethnic group with a right to its own customs and its own language. The strategy, however, largely consisted of presenting Ainu culture as a commodity. Old rituals, traditional dress, handicrafts and culinary specialities were revitalised and presented in a commercialised, 'touristified' way. In this way, Japanese tourists to the Ainu north might discover that the Ainu 'had a culture' worthy of their respect, but the language of that 'culture' first had to be translated into the global language of commodity exchange, so to speak. In 2008, the Ainu were finally recognised as an ethnic minority by the Japanese state.

Commenting on Sjöberg's work and his own, Friedman (1990) notes that the strategies of both '*les sapeurs*' and the Ainu may look like recipes for cultural suicide, since they are based on cultural premises which are not indigenous. The Congolese express prestige and individuality through the appropriation of foreign symbols; the Ainu express (and create) their ethnic identity by turning it into a commodity; they adapt it to a commercial market. The anthropological point in this respect is nevertheless not whether the 'cultures' expressed 'as a matter of fact' are local, 'authentic', etc., but whether they are efficient in promoting the experience of identity and political interests among the groups in question.

## A SEAMLESS WORLD: HOMOGENISATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

As the last chapters have shown, cultural identity and 'uniqueness' have become, since the 1960s, coveted political resources in large parts of the world. A growing number of groups 'discover' their cultural uniqueness and exploit it for political purposes. Why does this happen?

A simple explanation might be that social identities become important only from the moment they feel threatened, and that tendencies towards the globalisation of culture, appearing to eradicate cultural distinctiveness, more or less automatically trigger counter-reactions in the shape of ethnic or traditionalist movements.

A related, but probably more accurate explanation – which is also consistent with the account of ethnicity and nationalism in the two previous chapters

– would be that the demarcation of boundaries about social identities (1) is perceived by many as necessary as a result of intensified contact between groups, and (2) becomes practically possible because of technological and cultural changes resulting from modernisation.

Concerning the cultural consequences of globalisation, a strong case could be made for both homogenisation and differentiation, depending on one's point of view. Indeed, as the examples of the Ainu and the Congolese '*sapeurs*' indicate, people may in fact favour both at the same time, in the sense that localising strategies are framed in 'global' terms – in the languages of commodity exchange and individual rights.

One important point to be made here is that the interrelationship between culture and identity is subjective and intersubjective, not objective. A social identity, whether ethnic, national or something else, can be created in a variety of ways. Anthropologists, for example, have a shared identity wherever they are; they form a community of sorts, however loosely incorporated. As with ethnicity, the double criterion for a social identity to be socially valid is 'self-ascription and ascription by others' (see Chapter 17).

Another important point concerns power. Economic dependence in poor countries and poor localities has largely been studied through a focus on underpaid labour, unequal exchange and unequal relations of production. A stronger focus on, and a critical view of, the notion of cultural dependence, coupled with analyses of economic dependence, would certainly give increased depth to studies of the globalisation of culture. For even if people may choose their strategies, they do not do so under circumstances of their own choosing – and these circumstances differ greatly, not only with respect to differential access to, say, CNN on TV, but also regarding personal autonomy and the right to define who they are.

\* \* \*

In an interview, Lévi-Strauss related the following anecdote. He was visiting South Korea, and his hosts eagerly took him around to show him the great advances made by this much publicised NIC (newly industrialised country). They showed him sports stadia, freeways, skyscrapers and factories. Lévi-Strauss was not particularly interested, and wandered off as often as he could to museums where he could study old masks. 'Professor Lévi-Strauss!', his hosts eventually exclaimed, 'you are only interested in things that no longer exist!' – 'Yes,' he replied sullenly, 'I am only interested in things that no longer exist.'

To Lévi-Strauss, the cultural variation within modernity was not sufficient to call for his attention; to him, Seoul appeared more or less identical with Paris. To another anthropologist, keen to explore diversity within modernity, Seoul would definitely not appear similar to Paris.

Seen from this kind of perspective, it is clear that the cultural variation of the world has been radically narrowed. Fewer and fewer anthropologists today

encounter radical otherness of the kind described by Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes tropiques* (1976[1955]). In this beautiful, melancholy book, he describes a field trip to Amazonia, where he met natives who were so close that he could touch them, and yet they seemed infinitely far away: he could not understand them.

A little less than a year before his death in 2009, Lévi-Strauss celebrated his hundredth birthday, and was duly visited by President Sarkozy, France being a country where politicians can still build prestige by associating with intellectuals. Lévi-Strauss told the president that the world, in his view, was now too full. *Le monde est trop plein.* Presumably he meant that it was overfilled by humans and the products of their activities. At the time of his birth in 1908, the planet was inhabited by a grand total of 1.7 billion persons; the global population now stands at more than 6.5 billion, and the percentage with their own Internet accounts and mobile telephones increases every year. No matter how one goes about measuring degrees of connectedness in the contemporary world, the only possible conclusion is that many more people today are much more connected than ever before in history. There are more of us, and each of us has, on average, more links to the outside world than our predecessors, through business travel, information, communication, migration, vacations, political engagement, trade, development assistance, exchange programmes and so on.

From a certain point of view, the world is becoming progressively disenchanted, to use Max Weber's expression about modernity (*Entzauberung*): it seems to hide fewer and fewer secrets. The white spots on the map are gone, and there are probably no peoples left who have not, to a greater or lesser degree, been in contact with the modern world. Halfway through the twenty-first century, there may be no matrilineal peoples left. A sense of loss is apparent not only among anthropologists, but among very many of the peoples of the world. Yet – and that has been the perspective of this chapter – new cultural forms and social projects are continuously being developed in local settings all over the world, and the processes of change take place in unpredictable and frequently surprising ways. There will, in other words, always remain variations in world-views, ways of life, power relations and life-projects that are certain to provide ample challenges to anyone who is committed to trying to understand the differences and similarities between humans in societies. Precisely the very fullness of the world, which Lévi-Strauss so regretted, could indeed justify another century of anthropological research into human diversity.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Arjun Appadurai: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996.
John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff: *Ethnicity, Inc.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2009.
Ulf Hannerz: *Anthropology's World: Life in a Twenty-first-century Discipline*. London: Pluto 2010.

# EPILOGUE: MAKING ANTHROPOLOGY MATTER

So what might anthropology become in the twenty-first century? My guess is that the general premise of universal movement will lead people to seek stable order in the least and most inclusive levels of human existence, that is the self as an identity and the world as a unity; and especially in the construction of a meaningful relationship between the two.

— *Keith Hart*

[W]e may be faced with a world in which there simply aren't any more headhunters, matrilinealists, or people who predict the weather from the entrails of a pig. Difference will doubtless remain – the French will never eat salted butter. But the good old days of widow burning and cannibalism are gone forever.

— *Clifford Geertz*

What is the ultimate point of social anthropology? One may, obviously, use the subject to collect academic distinctions and eventually get a job in research or teaching. On the other hand, in most cases there are faster and more rewarding methods, at least in a pecuniary sense, of acquiring a livelihood. Fortunately, there are also other reasons for becoming involved in the subject.

The single most important human insight to be gained from this way of studying and comparing societies is perhaps the realisation that everything could have been different in our own society – that the way we live is only one among innumerable ways of life which humans have adopted. If we glance sideways and backwards, we will quickly discover that modern society, with its many possibilities and diversity in life-projects, its dizzying complexity and its impressive technological advances, is a way of life which has not been tried out for very long. Perhaps, psychologically speaking, we have just left the cave: in terms of the history of our species, we have spent but a moment in modern societies.

As well as offering knowledge, insight and perhaps a drop of wisdom, anthropology has its problematic side too – at least if we try to turn it into a moral philosophy. Although cultural relativism is a research method and not a world-view, there is an inherent tendency among students of anthropology to invest it with a moral dimension: as long as one can justify some notion or other as 'cultural', one feels committed to defending it. The result, of course, is that one becomes unable to pass moral judgement on anything at all. It must therefore be said that it is possible to understand without liking. 'You don't have to be one to know one', as Geertz once put it. It is possible to understand