Globalization and African Political Science

Okwudiba Nnoli

Abstract

Globalisation poses a number of challenges which African political science must address. To be able to do this, there is need to rethink its theoretical and methodological underpinnings. In spite of the centrality of power in the affairs of the African state, the study of African politics has not shown a sufficient concern for the study of power. Various perspectives in the study of African politics tend to focus on the social character (interests) of the state as opposed to its political character (power). This marginalization of power in political analysis meant the absence of a theory of repression, domination or popular empowerment. When, therefore, African states relapsed into authoritarianism and dictatorship there was no analytical tool to understand this phenomenon in such a way as to point the way forward for the people. Any tool of analysis capable of adequately understanding contemporary African politics must be clearly oriented to and informed by political power.

African Political Science Pre-Globalization

Globalization has raised a number of issues that African Political Science needs to address. To do so, the latter must either continue its previous pattern of analysis or change it in consonance with changing global conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to properly understand the past of this scientific activity in order to be able to predict possible changes in it. In order to understand African politics, African political science has focused study and analysis on the African state. This focus on the state is understandable. In general, the motive force of politics is the overwhelming power of the state, together with the possibility of its use for social, economic and cultural progress, but also for domination, oppression and exploitation. Of all forms of power, state power alone can enhance or threaten life, wealth and freedom legally. As the repository of sovereignty, the state has ultimate power. It monopolizes the means of coercion to an extent that is unknown to any substate or suprastate community.

Professor Nnoli is a former president of AAPS, and Executive Director of PACREP, Enugu, Nigeria.

Politics is about how to establish this power, control and use it for good rather than evil. It is for this reason that politics is often defined as the struggle for (state) power. There is no point in such struggles (politics) if power resources do not exist, especially if the state does not monopolize them. But power is inherent in all social relations. Therefore, politics can be claimed to exist in them. However, it is within the state that political intensity is greatest. Here the stakes are highest, power gives concreteness and intensity to struggles associated with it. In other words, as the relevance of the state diminishes so does that of politics, because ideally politics takes place within the context of the organization of power known as state. Hence, outside the state the application of the concept of politics can only be metaphorical. Only in this metaphorical sense do we speak of politics in the family, church, university, labour movement or international organization.

In Africa, the colonial origin of the state ensured that power was the defining element of statehood. History shows that the spread and consolidation of capitalism has been an authoritarian project. This authoritarianism is reflected in the enclosure movement in Europe and the consquidators in Latin Africa. In such cases as in the pacification of African colonies force, brutality and repression predominated over dialogue, discussion and bargaining as the driving force of capitalist hegemony. Unlike Europe, this early use of force in Africa was not replaced by the domination of the rule of commodities in the capitalist market with its accompanying rule of law, in which the state becomes autonomous of social forces in civil society and accordingly is legitimized and institutionalized. Instead, the vast majority of the indigenous African peoples of the colony remained subject to the rule of force (Ake, 1985:2; Mamdami, 1995; Ibeanu, 2003).

This primacy of force in African statehood has been expressed everywhere and anywhere by the state from the onset of colonialism to the present day, but especially as the state imposes a chain of command across the length and breath of its territory, extracts political allegiance and social surplus, makes and enforces laws, transforms subordinated social formations into a coherent economy and political society, and eliminates all resistance to the hegemony of its power. Thus the African state has been engaged in a phenomenally aggressive accumulation and projection of power. In the process, established and independent communities have been deprived of their autonomy; and power and status hierarchies in these communities have been destabilized. As the state has pursued economic activities and policies it has inflicted pain and hardship to pre-existing vested economic, social and cultural interests, through loss of land and other traditional means of production, pollution of sources of livelihood by oil and manufacturing companies, and loss of income from periodic changes in the terms of trade against primary crop producers.

This use of force by the state is often not provoked by the African people. It does not arise from perceived differences between the state and its victims. Instead, it occurs in the routine business of projecting state power in the process of formulating and implementing state policies to realize vested interests and sustain political domination. The differences emerge ex post facto from the coercive unilateralism of the state. Inevitably and eventually, a competitive opposition arises from the blatant abuse of state power in which the reckless projection of that power accumulates a critical mass of desperate enemies. These enemies vary from labour unions, students, women and counter elites, to local communities, ethnic groups and religious groups. The state is unwilling, or too arrogant and power-drunk to consult the people and negotiate a democratic concensus with them on the issues of policy, or to act in a transparent, accountable and responsible manner.

In spite of this centrality of power in the affairs of the African state, the study of African politics has been concerned with other than power. There are no treatises on, not to talk of theories of, domination, authoritarianism, dictatorship, repression and exploitation. African countries were thus able to experience military rule, one-party state, systematic impoverishment of the population and genocidal massacres without analytical instruments to understand, predict or prevent them. Although analysts frequently referred to state power as a concept, very little was done to understand the power arm of that concept, the nature, dynamics and consequences of power, as well as its relative weight in the concept. For the same reason there has been very little real understanding of democracy in Africa. For democracy is ideally articulated in the context of a national organization of power. It arises from the need and determination to tame state power.

Instead, African political scientists placed emphasis on the social character of the state, especially the interests that it serves. As Samir Amin has observed, certain kinds of questions were asked. (a) Who are the active agents of history: all individuals or only some of them, social classes, various communities and groups with their own unique qualities and statuses, nation, or societies organized as political states? (b) How is this history made? What real factors do these agents put to work? What strategies do they adopt and why? How and according to what criteria do they judge success? (c) How are real conditions transformed by their activities? To what extent do these transformation correspond to the goals of their authors, and to what extent do they diverge? (Amin, 1989: 97). Theoretical perspectives associated with capitalism and socialism during the cold war, and the ideological struggle between these two world systems conditioned this analytical frame of mind. Each perspective justified itself by the interests it served, the character of the

political actors in relation to these interests and how change can be brought about in the society in order to best serve these interests.

These questions were answered by grand theories, meta-theories or meta-narratives associated with capitalism and socialism. These explanatory schemes readily suggested how to interpret events and how to proceed, the specific power centres to focus on, ready-made allies to mobilize and tested modalities of struggle to utilize. Each camp had a vision of world progress, rationality and politics, a vision to which it was passionately committed. These theories gave rise to intense and pervasive ideological struggles that politicized every social space and every difference. Everything was charged with political significance that forced everyone to make political judgement and to take political stands constantly, even in matters of scientific nature. An African political scientist was "committed" or not depending on her position in the theoretical divide (Ake, 1997).

Accordingly, the African political science community was split into two camps. In the first camp were those who, while not renouncing their nationalist identity credited bourgeois theories and development models with universal validity. Therefore, they advocated them as the best way to overcome African backwardness. This position endeared them to most African governments, which also shared the same philosophical position. Most practitioners in this group ignored the limits of existing meanings, values and paradigms and did not consciously seek ways and means of transcending them. Their major scientific concern was how to indigenize the inherited theorities and adapt them to an understanding of the realities of the African condition. Some of them, however, were oriented toward introducing certain radical ideas within the existing system as well. Within the second camp are scientists who are opposed to the prevailing status quo of neocolonial capitalist rule. Between 1970 and 1990 they passed through two theoretical stages, the dependencia paradigm and the conventional Marxist socialist theory. With the collapse of the Soviet Union they are presently faced with paradigmatic disorder.

Comparing the contributions of these two camps one needs to point out that the assumption by the second camp that they are scientifically superior to the others is not tenable. The theoretical opponents of the status quo can be as sterile and inconsequential as those they criticize. However, African political scientists that have worked to sustain and improve the existing socio-economic system have failed woefully. Inspite of all the advantages that they enjoy nationally and internationally, they have not been able to help to stop African societies from sliding into the worst socioeconomic crisis and political regression ever.

Similarly, with all the help from the IMF and World Bank since 1980, they have not been able to radicalize the conventional paradigm to attempt

to avert the universally acknowledged African crisis. It is interesting that the World Bank has written off African universities at the time when they are in the hands of these status quo academics, and when donors are in a position to influence directly their research and training programmes. On the other hand, the anti-status quo academics have spent most of their time protesting against the status quo. They have not made radical innovations to their inherited theoretical framework in their search for solutions to the African crisis (Mafeje, 1994a, 1994b).

Part of the problem of the two theoretical camps has been the grandness of their theories and more particularly the grandness of the issues they focused on. These issues include the complete and revolutionary transformation of state and society, modernization, development, underdevelopment, new international economic order, national liberation, class struggle, imperialism, neocolonialism, international division of labor, and unequal exchange. Other studies analyzed the politics of socio-cultural groups and categories in society but essentially in terms of "who gets what, when and how", in terms of interests and not power. Even then these latter studies were looked down upon because many of them were not integrated into the grand theories that ruled the cold war world.

Nevertheless, all these studies share an emphasis on the social character of the state (interests) to the neglect of its political character (power). Even such issues as military rule and the one-party state in which the factor of power and dominion would have been obvious, were analyzed from the perspective of interests and not power, and description not theory. The coercive unilateralism of the African state arising from the desire to project power failed to see the analytical light of day. There was no attempt to construct theories around state power or even lto engage in a descriptive analysis of power and its various expressions.

Methodological Disorder at the End of the Cold War

In analytical terms, the cold war spanned a period of methodological effervescence, theoretical inquiry, if not creativity, intellectual certainty and paradigmatic order. This period has since passed with the end of the cold war and increasing pressure on the nation-state by the forces of globalization. The end of the cold war ushered in epistemological, methodological, paradigmatic and theoretical crisis within the world scientific community, including the community of African political scientists. This crisis has produced intellectual uncertainty and paradigmatic disorder. Historical knowledge has splintered as a result of the demise of the grand theories of the past. In their places are short-range theories that seek limited projects and actions that are possible in the short-run. Major aspects of the new theories include doctrinal fragmentation and judgmental relativism.

Following from the character of these short-range theories, the current analytical fashion is descriptive sociological. It provides some useful information about changes affecting contemporary society, including good descriptions of social and political organizations. However, it stops at this level of description, unable or unwilling to raise questions about the future of society; rejects emancipatory projects; and denies the validity of the proposition that human beings make their own history and that modernity is a permanently moving process of this human intervention rather than a system that is closed and defined once and for all. This sociology also focuses on limited concerns, de-emphasizes power relations, avoids confrontation of analysis with the holistic nature of real social systems; falsely opposes holistic and individualistic methodologies; and emphasizes relativism and culturalism.

However, as Zeleza has argued, this apparent analytical fragmentation should not be over stated because a semblance of order underlies it. Alongside the seeming chaos and trends towards narrowness and specialization, there have developed trends within and across specialized fields. An example is the post-modernist and post-structuralist perspective. Although it focuses on fragments of reality it is, nevertheless, itself a grand theory. It sees human life as a series of events that are not necessarily interconnected. Each event needs to be understood in its totality and on its own terms. It is hostile to social projects, especially grand ones. It is even hostile to the nation-state project. As a grand theory it differs from its cold war counterparts only because it contradicts them (Zeleza, 1997).

Developed in Europe and North America this analytical perspective has a strong dose of euro-centric chauvinism. Like the analytical perspectives that preceded it, this new one still favors the understanding of politics from an evolutionary standpoint. Euro-American political history is the norm with which other histories may be understood. This comparison is often done implicitly even at times when the analyst is claiming to evaluate each system on its own terms.

Such histories are to be studied within the context of Euro-American political experience. The contemporary form of that experience is one in which economics is in command and capitalism has stabilized to such an extent that the market dominates society. Politics is presented as a system of allocations similar to those of the market except that such allocations are authoritative. But it de-emphasizes the people who make the allocations and focuses on the patterns of allocation. This is because the struggle for who should make the allocations was settled a long time ago. But the decision about who they should be may be the crux of politics in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World.

Similarly, it assumes that the general rules and regulations governing the allocations are already known. A system is already in place. All that is needed is to understand it and how it works. But the struggle for the establishment of the system, its rules and regulations, as well as the manner of their establishment may not only be one of the most important aspects of politics, but may also set the tone, context and content of politics. In other words, this perspective assumes the nature of the political system as given and only worries about how it operates. Very clearly, political phenomena such as revolutions and national liberation struggles are banished from analysis. They are treated as aberrations with very little, if any, analytical significance. Since premium is put on authority and revolution leads to the breakdown of existing authority, this perspective does not consider revolution as politics, but as the breakdown of politics. Such a conservative outlook seeks to divert attention from the failure of a political system that can be traced to the fundamental character of the system itself, and can only be remedied by the complete destruction of the system, and its replacement by a more progressive and just one. Emphasis is placed on reforms. Such reforms are not dictated by the dynamics of the African condition, especially the constraints inherent in this condition, but from the desire to catch up with Europe and America.

By couching itself in abstractions and mathematical models or describing authority structures as if they exist in Europe and America, this perspective seeks to avoid addressing concrete political questions of importance to Africa such as repression, exploitation and domination (forms of power), which tend to arise from authority structures themselves. The main goal of such analysis is to promote the Euro-American system of politics. It encourages people to think of how to reform the authority structures, but never to question the fundamental basis of the structures themselves. Attention is diverted away from questioning and evaluating the appropriateness of the authority structures and the character of the values that they espouse. Invariably, this perspective ignores or downplays concrete political struggles within African societies, especially those that challenge capitalism, and the concrete institutional and material expressions of these struggles. It puts emphasis on subjective factors and pays no attention to political and economic structures that surround, saturate and signify these subjectivities.

Unfortunately, this Euro-American analytical perspective has successfully resisted challenges to its dominance. This is a reflection of the ascendant technological and productive power of Europe and America. These challenges had come from confrontations of Euro-American history with Third World histories, and the expansion of the epistemological boundaries as a result of feminist, environmentalist and social history movements. These movements

not only introduced new currents and ferment in both scholarship and society but also transformed both disciplinary epistemologies and global politics. Yet this Euro-American perspective has persisted. This perspective has proved to be quite resilient. It has not only waxed triumphant, it has undermined the study of politics as championed by the grand theories of the cold war. While still not focusing on the power of the state, it has in addition undermined focus on the social characteristics (interests) of the state, with its hostility to the state project, particularly the African state project.

The vast majority of African political scientists employ this dominant Euro-American perspective in one form or another. They were trained either directly in European and American universities where this perspective is pervasive and where competing perspectives are harshly discouraged, or by those who were trained in these institutions. The majority of African governments, who share its philosophical and ideological underpinnings, also promote this form of analysis. Research foundations that sponsor African social scientists promote it by the kind of research methodologies that they endorse. These scientists are encouraged to undertake routine scientific work or normal science, which does not aim at overthrowing existing paradigms but at perfecting them.

Even the radical political scientists who intellectually reject this perspective had been formed in this Euro-American scientific mould. Therefore, their capacity to reject or relativise concepts and to develop perspectives that are truly transcendent was impaired. In most African countries there was no room for such scientists. Many were persecuted, imprisoned and ultimately forced into exile, with hardly any protest from their European and American political science colleagues. Out of fear, those who escape the wrath of their governments become truly acquiescent, or practice *Afghanistanization*, the phenomenon of analyzing all countries except one's own. Or they confine themselves to "applied" research tied to specific and narrow projects. They collect the data while their European and American counterparts do what theoretical work there is in such projects. Thus a point has been reached where any spontaneous growth of ideas is foreclosed.

Enter Globalization

This scientific and methodological setback for African political science is reinforced by the coincidental onslaught of the forces of globalization. This is a phenomenon of capitalist expansion and accumulation characterized by the dominance of transnational production, financial speculation, speedy movement of finance across the globe, radical transformation of the system of communication that enthrones information, the imposition of the structural adjustment programme on African and other Third World countries,

the privileging of the market over the state, and the subsumption of the society by the market. This phenomenon has not come about as a result of the negotiation of a democratic consensus among nation-states but by the force and coercion that usually accompany capitalist expansion. The necessities of global capitalist production have produced large powerful multinational companies with enormous resources and unprecedented reach. Backed by their states of origin, they are involved in a high stake competition of immense intensity. In the process they have sucked even the most marginal companies, states, groups and individuals into their vortex, bringing everyone into close proximity, shrinking everything into one small intimate space, which has to be fought over incessantly (Ake, 1997).

The enormity of the power of globalization is such that it has forced through certain changes in the world community, which impact on the African state and/or African political science. These changes include: the intensive and extensive domination of external over internal economic processes in Africa; the imposition of austerity in Africa through the structural adjustment programme (SAP); the consequent imposition of authoritarianism in African rule, the whittling down of the state; the enforcement of intimacy among groups within states giving rise to conflicts through crowding peoples into ever smaller space with all their differences and mutual suspicions intact; the domination of the market over politics and the society; and the imposition of a new mode of communication. These changes could not have been made without overwhelming power. Thus power is a very significant element in globalization. Therefore, the latter and its consequences cannot properly be understood with an analytical perspective that does not integrate power. Nevertheless, the old Euro-American analytical perspective has continued to prevail, even with a much stronger conservative bent than before.

In the relationship between internal politics and external affairs, globalization has shifted the balance of power in world economy and society from territory-based governments to transnational corporations. Transborder production, markets, monies and businesses are now important elements in African economies. But they readily evade most political controls that are attempted through the African state. Moreover, no mechanisms have been devised thus far to guarantee transparency, open debate and accountability in relations between African states and the supra-territorial companies operating within them. This poses organizational problems for African political struggles and the study of such struggles. As Ake has observed, it is at best confusing to organize against oppressive power that is impersonal, invisible and fluid; power that is always flowing into spaces beyond the people's grasp and which is immune to local institutional checks on power (Ake, 1997).

It is even more difficult to study such power. The problems of study and analysis are heightened by the equally difficult political task of negotiating large and more powerful coalitions, than before, across a vast landmass, with a disorienting sense of spacelessness, involving little room for political action. Political mobilization is virtually impossible in the fluidity and anonymity of this new political space. It is not clear what the power centres and power resources should be the object of focus of efforts. There are hardly any obvious power centres to attack because the oppressors are not easily identifiable. Under these conditions there are not only political disorientation and popular disempowerment but also analytical impotence.

The structural adjustment programme (SAP) imposed by the leadership of globalization also creates serious problems for African political science. The advanced capitalist states, international financial institutions and the transnational companies insist that the forces of globalization are inexorable and beneficial to all peoples of the world. Consequently, they are forcing African countries to remove all obstacles, within their territories, against profitable operations of these forces. The reluctance of the African states to comply with this demand has met with a determined imposition of a set of austerity measures on them, in the form of a package called SAP. The whittling down of the state and its activities, currency devaluation, removal of subsidies on social welfare goods such as education, health and food, reduction of the size of the labour force, reduction of employment, provision of incentives for foreign investments, and the removal of all restrictions against the importation of foreign goods and services are involved. These are draconian measures that forced down the already deplorable standard of living of the African people. These measures were justified as a bitter pill necessary to overcome the prevailing severe economic crisis. Instead, however, they have reinforced the crisis.

Under the circumstance, African political science was put under severe pressures. Hemmed in by the internal pressures emanating from the economic crisis and the coercion of the forces of globalization, the leaders of the African state have become very insecure. As their ability to meet the needs of the people declined, they have become hostile to the people and increased the use of force against them. In addition, all those who give any hints of taking the side of the people also become enemies of the state. They include African political scientists who are seen to be oriented toward criticism of government. In the pre-adjustment period this official expression of hostility to African political science took the form of the non-establishment of Political Science departments in Francophone African countries, and the renaming of such departments in Anglophone Africa as Departments of Political Science and Public Administration. Emphasis was shifted from

research and analysis to the training of personnel to work in the public service. In the post adjustment period emphasis has shifted to government harassment and repression of political scientists and other social scientists. Popular struggles by students and academics against SAP have led to the closure of universities, undermining the professionalism of the scientists.

At the same time these scientists suffer the hardships attendant on the SAP, which diminish their ability to practice their profession. Threatened in their livelihood, academics were tempted to drop, and some have actually dropped, the higher but increasingly famished pursuit of academic excellence to attend to the lower but more lucrative interests of personal survival. Consultancy work now takes precedence over basic research. In addition, the ordinary day-to-day business of trying to organize academic work in the face of power interruptions, lack of potable water, shortages of various commodities including medicine, has worsened. Such business takes time away from academic pursuits. The situation is made more intolerable as research equipment becomes scarcer and scarcer, leaving academics with little or no institutional facilities for research and teaching. Such facilities include access to books, journals, secretarial support, even supplies of paper on which to write, funds for organizing or attending conferences and publishing outlets (Ki-Zerbo, 1994). Funding agencies and foundations have shifted from funding basic research to funding the quick fix activities of the non-governmental organizations. Under pressure from SAP, these organizations are sponsored by globalization to take over the activities being abandoned by the state as it diminishes in size and function.

However, the most illuminating aspect of the impact of globalization on African political science concerns how African politics is viewed under this emergent condition of a diminishing state. Some African scientists have followed in the footsteps of their teachers, mentors or role models in the advanced capitalist states in their unrestrained attack on, and hostility to, the African states and their leaders. Emphasis on subjective factors in analysis has led to what Zeleza refers to as scholarship-by-epithets and the pathologisation of African politics (Zeleza, 1997). Mkandawire notes that as the onslaught of globalization on Africa advanced, the African state began to be denounced by Euro-American Africanist scholars for distorting markets, creating monopolies, blunting incentives and generally being a bane on society (Mkandawire, 1995:18). Epithets, anecdotes and caricatures replaced sober analysis as the African state was variously described as predatory, prebendal, decadent, precarious, patrimonial, neo-patrimonial, swollen, collapsed, criminalized, greedy, non-developmental, kleptocratic, crony, venal, vampire, soft, weak, irrational, incomplete and impotent. Certain grotesque and insulting specificities were attributed to African politics. They include "politics of the belly" (Bayart, 1993); "the banality and

vulgarity of power" (Mbembe, 1992a; 1992b); parasitic statism, militarism, dictatorship, corruption, insufficient accountability of public officials, ineffective political socialization, and differential incorporation of ethnic groups resulting in conflict (Sklar, 1993; Callaghy, 1987; Diamond, 1987; Joseph, 1987; MacGraffy, 1987; Rothschild and Chazan, 1988; World Bank, 1989; Sandbrook, 1990; Fatton, 1990; 1992; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Bayart, 1993; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Zartman, 1995; Young and Turner, 1985; Bates, 1983; Graf, 1988; Hyden, 1980; 1983; Chazan, 1988; Shaw, 1982; Nyangoro and Shaw, 1989).

It is difficult to find in these analyses the dynamics of the struggles being waged by African peoples for their daily existence. Available evidence shows clearly that after their disappointment with the immediate post-colonial nationalism and the hardships of the SAP, African peoples are waging a militant anti-imperialist struggle, which has taken various forms but which is not socialist. Similarly, after their rejection of the hegemony of the one-party state and military rule, they are waging a struggle for democratic pluralism. The major theoretical question of the day is: what is the content and theoretical status of these two sets of struggles? In what ways, if any, are these two struggles linked? What are the prospects of reconciling the need for political hegemony with cultural and social diversity? What is the substantive meaning of democratic pluralism in Africa in the age of globalization? What alternative development strategies are feasible in Africa? These are some of the substantive issues that await answers from analysts of African politics (Mafeje, 1994a:70). They cannot be, and have not been, addressed by abusing the African state and pathologizing African politics.

Relapse into cultural revivalism in analysis cannot address them either. In their daily lives many Africans have confronted and are daily confronting the forces of globalization in various struggles that have sometimes exploded into violence. Some others have adopted the strategy of survival. This includes return to the security of the clan and homeland, and recourse to primary identity. This latter strategy has also found scientific and analytic expression. Some elements of African political science seek a return to the clan as the focus of political organization and analysis in Africa. They share an underlying belief that development in Africa is impossible without a return to African culture. Therefore, they impute Pan-African cultural continuities where none exist historically and anthropologically.

Proponents of this viewpoint argue that as a closer level than the state to the local situation, the clan attracts greater loyalty from the people. It redresses the balance in attention, use of resources, consumption habits, interests, values and concerns between external and internal realms in favor of the latter. By directing attention to the immediate needs and problems of

the people, a clan focus is deemed capable of galvanizing local energy and resources for development. It is more likely than the state to provide opportunities for increased accountability, given the close face-to-face relationships that characterize the clan. The attraction of this viewpoint to the African scholar is inescapable. At one and the same time it valorizes the pre-colonial past of the African, denounces and dismisses the colonial impact and affirms the fondest dreams of the African masses to do their own thing and be both the subject and object of history. It is possibly a revulsion against foreign domination in what is supposed to be independent Africa and an expression of social and political disillusionment with African rulers who have sold out to globalization.

The motive, which leads to the view that focus on clan and other subnational entities in political science is the best way of rescuing Africa from the present crisis of the nation-state, is understandable. The state and society of Africa are in crisis stemming, in part, from the disarray consequent on the exhaustion and even collapse of the great projects of our time, especially the socialist project, but also that of the nation-state. And in times of deep crisis there is a great temptation to revert to a pre-modern standpoint (Amin, 1998). However, a clan focus is fraught with the same difficulties as the new meta-narrative, which celebrates particularities, specificities and uniqueness. It is oriented towards a limited project; and is informed by doctrinal fragmentation and judgmental relativism. Therefore, such a focus would increase the marginalisation of power in African political science analysis. Clan identities are static identities that are not conducive to the pursuit of a serious political objective or the formation of a coalition of such spread and depth as is required to counter the threat of globalization. By seeking to manage history by the democratic administration of pluralism at the grassroots level such a focus would end up accepting the essential features of the global capitalist system, including the rule that the market dominates everything. Short-term improvements become the goal of socio-economic and political action.

Most important of all, the clan does not have the consummate power of the type associated with the state, sovereign power. The power of the clan is everywhere hemmed in by custom, tradition, morality and social norms. Furthermore, the prospects of developing such power are relatively dimmed by the existence of a greater natural sense of mutual obligation in the clan than in the nation-state. This also makes the need for political arrangements less compelling. Therefore, the need to shift the focus of political science research from the state to the clan is less compelling. Globalization may have whittled down the state, but the latter remains the most important organization of power in the African society.

Finally, the clan analytical viewpoint asserts that the nation-state has failed in Africa. There is no doubt that the African state is facing a serious crisis of production and self-realization. Equally, there is no doubt that over the years it has made enormous progress in material production, scientific knowledge and social and ethnical values. Such progress had to be fought for and won in often-prolonged struggles, and is equally often beset by setbacks, which are always accompanied by deplorable crimes. These setbacks cannot be a reason to give up the struggle to go forward, and to relapse into merely coping with the present reality. There is no valid argument that the clan is in a better position to sustain this progress and improve on it, or overcome the setbacks.

The state has been an important instrument of the African in her/his struggle to carve out a decent place in the "global village". It must play its rightful role by mobilizing the social base of society for a broad-based popular struggle for national autonomy, equality and justice within the global scheme of things. The clan is too narrow in its membership, organization and resources to make any significant impact in this struggle. It cannot, therefore, be the focus of politics and political analysis on the continent. The focus on the clan is a very unfortunate analytical relapse at a time when African political science is called upon to provide theoretical perspectives to reconcile African ethno-linguistic diversity with the need for an expansive political and economic hegemony within the continent. The demand for a return to the clan without any reference to objective constraints and possible scientific limitations or disadvantages is an irrational response to the setbacks of the African states. It detracts from a serious theorizing of development problems in Africa.

Apart from the problems posed by the whittling away of the state, there is another caused by the spread of the market as a result of globalization. The latter has so strengthened the capitalist market relative to other institutions in Africa and elsewhere that the market now effectively subsumes society in a way that is greater than liberal theory had argued. Now the status of the market is much higher, approaching something close to a global theology. As the values and operative norms of the market thus pervade and dominate society consumer identity becomes the overriding identity. As the market thus spreads, politics recedes. This is because the market is governed by individualism, particularism, self-seeking and purely private concerns while politics is driven by common concerns. Such concerns are usually concrete expressions of common cause, collective interests and some shared characteristics, all of which converge in the public realms, the basis for politics and governance (Ake, 1997: 287). The public realm deals with civil morality, citizenship, political obligation, public interest and public

opinion. The state itself is a public asset for managing the affairs of this public. Globalization is removing the conditions that make the public possible.

Such rampaging by the market dilutes and diverts analytic attention away from politics and political variables. The focus of research and analysis shifts away from state power, the essence of politics, to issues such as privatization, debt and its relief, rural development, urban development fiscal policies, WTO and the trade system, the so-called informal sector, and how these are related to globalization. Emphasis is placed, as usual, on interests not power. But Samir Amin, Archie Mafeje and others have suggested that in Africa, and probably in the rest of the Third World, politics not economics as in the advanced countries drives the society. Politics is in command. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, made a similar observation but from the viewpoint of a practical African politician, when he enjoined his followers in particular and Africans in general to "seek ye first the political kingdom and all else will be added unto you". Although this issue has not been seriously addressed, and remains unresolved, all indications point to the precedence of politics over economics in the present historical juncture in Africa (Mafeje, 1994b: 203). The leadership of globalization realized this point belatedly when they added political conditionalities to their earlier economic conditionalities, following the failure of the latter to lead to successful structural adjustment of the societies.

Politics is dominant in Africa because the flowering of the market is blocked by the inequality of exchange between Africa and the advanced capitalist societies, and by the rulers of African societies who are not hostile to this inequality. As a result market society, built around formally free, separate, self-interested and equal commodity bearers, has not become dominant. Therefore, force has to be used to regulate the society rather than the usual ideology of the market. In other words this market has to rely on anti-democratic norms and actions in order to survive. Because it was never really accepted by most groups as the guarantor of their collective security, the economy and associated political force remain widely contested. This contest is expressed both vertically in the relation between the state and constituent groups, and horizontally in the relation among communal groups.

This is a question that should be addressed by African political science both empirically and theoretically. What political conditions are necessary for successfully waging an integrated struggle against the domination and exploitation of the African country by forces within the world economy on the one hand, and against local exploitation of the individual African on the other hand? What are the possible outcomes of this struggle? What tools are needed to secure the desirable outcome? How is this outcome to be sustained? What is the appropriate role of the state in this struggle? How can this struggle be

accurately and objectively described? What concepts and theories are necessary for understanding it? These are some of the questions that demand answers from African political science in this age of globalization.

Claude Ake has also correctly identified another impact of globalization on society that has consequences for the practice of political science in Africa. In his view the globalized information system creates an atmosphere or condition that is not conducive to the existence of political life. This system presents information through modems, storage devices and computer screens. Once it is delivered and received, this information becomes just a record disconnected from social praxis (Ake, 1997: 289). Thus political will and political choice are presented as mere facts and statistics, rather than as dynamic processes involving the living experiences of people who prefer to express their will, and actively engage in struggles on matters of common concern. In this system of communication political mobilization is abstract and concentrated in the mass media while political will and political choice achieve concreteness only as opinion polls. Delivered to the people in the relative isolation of their television, computers faxes and modems the relevant information is still born, passive, intransitive and non-dialogical. As speech without response, it does not allow for reciprocity, especially dynamic and antagonistic reciprocity. It isolates individuals rather than integrating them, and does not elicit a sense of sharing in a social entity. Nevertheless, the critical role of political mobilization seems to be increasingly concentrated in this globalized information system. The result is more and more information but less and less politics (Ake, 1997).

In another respect the globalization of information technology places African political science at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other areas of the world. Africa is usually the last continent to modernize its tools either in production or in the scientific realm. Therefore, while today information technology is very widely used in the advanced capitalist countries and other areas of the world outside Africa, it is yet to be easily accessible to the African people, including African political scientists. As a result, the latter are lagging further behind their counterparts elsewhere in the world in access to new scientific productions, the dissemination of their scientific findings and activities, and exchange of scientific ideas. Most of these now take place on the worldwide web. Effective participation in this information-sharing system requires constant and affordable electric power supply, the existence of Internal Service Providers, access to computers, associated accessories and softwares, as well as a reliable and cheap telephone service. In this era of the SAP, the availability of these appurtenances is, to say the least, problematic. Under the circumstance African political science cannot realize its full operational potential.

Concluding Remarks

Thus the search for the appropriate analytical tools for understanding African politics has taken a number of twists and turns. Nevertheless, the marginalization of power in political analysis has remained constant. On the other hand this search has emphasized interests. It has done so consistently too. During the period of the cold war the relevant interests were grand-ones, which often resulted from visions of the future of Africans and their needs in relations to other peoples. This was the period of grand theories, of large-scale and long-range projects such as national liberation, socialism and modernization. The searchlight was focused on the interests associated with these projects, how to identify them, and how to maximize them. Very little was done in order to understand the complexity of the relationship between the power of the state and the pursuit of these interests. There was no theory of repression, domination or popular empowerment.

Therefore, when African states relapsed into authoritarianism and dictatorship there was no analytical tool to understand this phenomenon in such a way as to point the way forward for the people. Under the circumstance Euro-centrism filled the gap. Neoliberalism provided the only analytical viewpoint. It was based on liberal democratic theory. But it was clearly inadequate. This theory has reduced democracy to multiparty election, which is no longer threatening to African despots. It provides them with international respectability without constraining their absolutism, authoritarianism, corruption and ineffectiveness. It does not require the reform of the inherited and repressive state structure and does not need to address the problems of the poor such as poverty, ignorance and disease, which constrain them from effective political participation in multiparty elections. This liberal democratic theory fails to capture the substance of the contemporary struggle for democracy in Africa, the pressure for a "second independence". The objective this time is popular empowerment. Social and economic spheres are as important as the political sphere. The emphasis is on concrete rights. There is as yet no theory that seeks to capture this struggle and its objectives. The meta-theories of the cold war period certainly made no progress in developing such a theory.

The situation has worsened with the appearance of the short-term theories. Their fatalistic analytical attitude sharply contradicts the demands and outlook of popular empowerment. They even diminish the importance which the long-range theories attached to interests by fragmenting these interests. And they are hostile to political power. Hence they emphasize social relationship in which power is not a central concern. For the same reason they are oriented towards an analytical focus on the clan rather than the state. Popular empowerment on the other hand, is a broad and long-range

social phenomenon motivated and oriented toward political power and needs a powerful state to have no claim to significance. Therefore, any tool of analysis capable of adequately understanding African politics must be clearly oriented to and informed by political power. The short-term theories do not meet these criteria. An analytical focus on the clan misses the point.

What is needed is a theory of politics, which integrates the concerns of the meta-theories of the cold war era with the demand for understanding the role of state power in the empowerment or disempowerment of the people. It must take into account the structure and distribution of power in the country. Of particular importance here are the legitimacy of the state, the power structure and its concentration, the way power evolves, the other centers of power that compete with state power, the openness of the political system; the framework for consensus building; the role of the key institutions of the state such as the armed forces, the legislature and the judiciary; the role of civil society organizations; and how all these impact on the demand for popular empowerment. This is a formidable task given the low level of ideological competition, which undermines the factor of interest and the increasing influence of globalization, which downsizes the African state, the repository of political power. The answer may be found in a political science that is tied to a popular struggle against globalization and an analytical struggle against Euro- centrism.

Bibliography

Ake, C. (1994) "Academic Freedom and Material Base" in Diouf, M. and Mamdani, M., eds. *Academic Freedom in Africa* Dakar: CODESRIA

Ake. C. (1997) "Dangerous Liaisons: The Interface of Globalization and Democracy" in Hadenius, A. ed. *Democracy's Victory and Crisis:* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ake, C. (1985) *Political Economy of Nigeria*, London: Longman.

Ake, C. (1979) *Social Science as Imperialism:* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press

Alavi, H. (1971) "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh" *New Left Review*, 74: 59–81

Amin, S. (1989) *Eurocentrism*, Translation by Russel More, New York, Monthly Review Press.

Amin, S. (1998) *Spectres of Capitalism: A Critique of Current Intellectual Fashions.* Translated by Shane Henry Mage, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Appiah, K. (1992) In My Fathers House, Africa in the Philosophy of Culture NY: Oxford University Press.

Bates, R. (1983) *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bayart, J.F. (1993) *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. New York: Longman.

Bratton, M. and N.van de Walle (1994) "Neo-patrimonial Regimes and Political Transition in Africa", *World Politics* Vol.46: 453–489

Callaghy, T. (1987) "The State as Lame Leviathan: The Patrimonial-Administrative State in Africa" in Ergas, Z., *African State in Transition* (London: Macmillan).

Chazan, N. (1988) "State and Society in Africa: Images and Challenges" in Rothchild, D and Chazan, N. eds, *The Precarious Balance: The State and Society in Africa:* Boulder, Co.: Westview

Davidson, B. (1992) *The Blackman's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State*: New York: Times Books.

Davidson, B.(1993) "Comments on Mamdani" *Monthly Review,* July-August: 49–57

Diamond, L. (1987) "Class Formation in the Swollen African State" *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol.25, pp.67–597,

Diop, C.A. (1996) *Towards the African Renaissance: Essays in African Culture and Development 1946–1960: Lon*don: Karnack House

Eyo, D. (1996) "From Economic Crisis to Political Liberalization: Pitfalls of the New Political Sociology for Africa" *African Studies Review*, Vol.39 No.3 December.

Fatton, R. (1990) "Liberal Democracy in Africa" *Political Science Quarterly:* Vol. 105: 455–473

Fatton, R. 1992 *Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa.* Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner.

Graff, W. (1988) *The Nigerian State* :London: James Curry.

Hansen T.B. (1995) "Inside the Romanticist Episteme" in Arnfred S., ed. *Issues of Methodology and Epistemology in Post-Colonial Studies.* Occasional Paper No.15 Roskilde: International Development Studies, Roskilde University.

Harvey, D. (1982) *The Limits to Capital,* Oxford: Blackwell

Harvey, D. (1995) *The Condition of Post-modernity,* London: Blackwell

Hyden, G. (1980) *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hyden, G. (1983) *No Shortcut to Progress,* London: Heinemann.

Ibeanu, O., (2003) "Communal Conflicts and Population Displacement in Nigeria; an Exploratory Analysis",in O. Nnoli, ed., *Communal Conflict and Population Displacement.* Enugu, PACREP.

Jackson, R. and Roseberg, C. (1982) *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant.* Berkely: University of California Press.

Jinadu, A.L. (2002) "AAPS, African Political Science and Globalization: Which Way Forward? *"African Journal of Political Science,* Vol.7, No.2, June.

Johnson, R. (1977) "Sekou Toure: The man and His Ideas" Gutkind, P and P Waterman, eds. *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Joseph, R. (1987) *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigerian.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaunda, K. (1967) *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation. Part 1,* Lusaka: Zambian Information Service.

Kenyatta, J. (1938) *Facing Mount Kenya* , London: Seeker and Warburg

Kershaw, T. (1998) "Afrocentrism and Afrocentric Method" in J.D. Hamlet ed. *Afrocentric Vision: Studies in Culture and Communication,* London: Sage

Ki-Zerbo, J. (1994) "The Need for Creative Organizational Approaches" in Diouf, M. and Mamdani, M. eds. *Academic Freedom in Africa,* Dakar: CODESRIA

Ki-Zerbo, J. (1989) "The Teaching of the History of Africa", paper presented at the Meeting of Experts on Textbooks and Teaching of History in African Schools, UNESCO, Nairobi.Lamb, G. (1975) "Marxism, Access and the State" *Development and Change* Vol.6, pp.119–135

Langdon, S. (1976) "The State and Capitalism in Kenya", *Review of African Political Economy*. Vol.8: 90–99

Leys, C. (1976) "The Overdeveloped "Post colonial State: A Re-evaluation" *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.5: 38–48

Lonsdale, J. and Berman, B. (1979) "Coping with Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State, 1895-1914", *Journal of Africa History,* Vol.20 1979 pp. 487–505.

Macgaffey, J. (1987) *Entrepreneurs and Parasites: The Struggle for Indigenous Capitalism in Zaire,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mafeje, A. (1994a) "African Intellectuals: An Inquiry into their Genesis and Social Options" in Diouf, M. and M. Mamdani, eds. *Academic Freedom in Africa,* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mafeje, A. (1994b) "Beyond Academic Freedom: The Struggle for Authencity in African Social Science Discourse" in Diouf, M. and M. Mamdani, eds. *Academic Freedom in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA

Mamdani, M. (1995) "A Critique of the State and Civil Society Paradigm in Africanist Studies" in Mamdani, M and E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, eds *African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy*, Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mbembe, A. (1992a) "Provisional Notes on the Post-colony" *Africa* Vol. 62.

Mbembe, A. (1992b) "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarity in the Post-colony" *Public Culture*, Vol.4.

Mboya, T. (1963) *Freedom and After,* London: Andre Deutch.

Mkandwire, T. (1995) "Fiscal Structure, State Contraction and Political Responses in Africa" in Mkandwire, T. and A. Olukoshi, eds. *Beyond Liberalism and Oppression: The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Africa,* Dakar: CODESRIA

Mulemfo, M. (2000) *Thabo Mbeki and the African Renaissance: The Emergence of a New African Leadership,* Pretoria: Actua Press.

Muruiki, G. (1974) *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500–1900,* Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Nabudere, D.W. (2002) *Africa in the New Millennium: Towards a Post-Traditional Renaissance,* Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press

Nabudere, D.W. (1998) The Contribution of the Social Sciences to the Crises of Africa" in *African Journal of Political Economy,* Vol.2, No.1, 1988.

Nabudere, D.W. (2002) *The Epistemological and Methodological Foundations for an All-inclusive Research Paradigm in the Search for Global Knowledge.* African Association of Political Science (AAPS) Occasional Paper Series Vol.6 No.1

Ninsin, Kwame, (2000) *Globalization and the Future of Africa.* African Association of Political Science (AAPS) Occasional Paper Series Vol.4 No. 1.

Nnoli, Okwudiba (2000) "Globalization and Politics in Africa" in Okwudiba Nnoli, ed. *Government and Politics in Africa* , Harare: AAPS.

Nnoli, Okwudiba (1986) *Introduction to Politics,* London: Longman

Nyangoro, J. and T.M. Shaw, eds., (1989) *Corporations in Africa: Comparative Analysis and Practice,* Boulder, Co.: Westview.

Nyerere, J. (1969) *Freedom and Socialism,* Dar es Salaam; Oxford University Press.

Ogot, B. (1967) *A History of the Southern Luo,* Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House.

Paya, Ali (2002) "On the Benefits of Dialogue" in *CSD Bulletin,* Centre for the Study of Democracy, Vol.9 No.2 London: University of Westminster.

Rothchild, D. (1987) "Hegemony and State Softness: Some Variation in Elite Responses", in Ergas, ed.

Rothchild, D. and N. Chazzan, eds., (1988*) Precarious Balance: the State and Society in Africa*, Boulder, CO.: Westview.

Sandbrook, R. (1990) "Taming the African Leviathan", *World Policy Journal,* 675–701.

Saul, J. (1974) "The State in Post-Colonial Societies-Tanzania" *Socialist Register,* London: Merlin

Saul, J. (1976) "Uganda: Unsteady State: Uganda, Obote and General Amin", *Review of African Political Economy, Vol.5.*

Sawyer, A. (1998) "Globalization and Social Science in Africa", Presidential Address, CODESRIA General Assembly, Dakar Senegal, December 1998

Senghor, L. (1964) *On Socialism,* New York: Praeger

Shaw, T. (1982) "Beyond Underdevelopment: The Anarchic State in Africa", African Studies Association

Simiyu, V. (1987) "The Democratic Myth in African Traditional Societies" in Oyugi, W and A. Gitoga, eds., *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* , Nairobi: Heinemann.

Sklar, R. (1993) "The African Frontier for Political Science", in Bates, R.V. Mudimbe and J.O'Barr. eds. *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, L.T. (2001) *De-colonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples,* London: Zed.

Soedjatmoko, (1994) "The Social Sciences and Global Transformation" in John Trent and Paul Lamy, eds., *Global Crises and the Social Sciences: North American Perspectives* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press .

Stiglitz, J. (1994) "Scan Globally, Reinvent Locally: Knowledge Infrastructure and the Localization of Knowledge". Keynote Address to the First Global Network Conference, Bonn, Germany 1 December.

Von Freyhold, M. (1977) "The Post-colonial State and its Tanzania Version", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.8.

World Bank (1989) *Sub-Saharan Africa from Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long-Term Perspective Study,* Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Young, C. and T. Turner, (1985) *The Rise and Decline of the Zairean State,* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Zartaman, I. ed., (1995) *Collapsed State: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority,* Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner

Zeleza, T. (1994a) *Maasi,* New York: Rosen.

Zeleza, T. (1994b) *Kamba,* New York: Rosen.

Zeleza, T. (1994c) *Mijikenda,* New York: Rosen.

Zeleza, T. (1997) *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises,* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Ziemann, W. and Lanzendorfer, (1977) "The State in Peripheral Societies" *Socialist Register,* London: Merlin.