In this book, different aspects of the South African transition are discussed. Abebe Zegeye, one of the book’s editors, provides with his introduction the structural context for the seven contributions. Zegeye points at achievements and constraints of the South African transition, and argues that development processes specifically towards a more equal distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens are impeded by the demands of global capitalism. Hence the book’s title: *Globalization and Post-Apartheid South Africa*. In contrast to Zegeye’s introduction, most of the chapters have been written without globalization and its political, economic, and social consequences in mind. The various contributions are valid additions to the transition literature, in particular those highlighting aspects of the South African transition that are marginalized in current academic debate, for example the reintegration of former soldiers, the transformation in the police services, reproductive dynamics, or the collusion with the apartheid state. However, it is up to the reader to establish the link between the problems raised and limitations on the government’s agency imposed by globalization. Furthermore, the emphasis on globalization and its constraints distracts from the government’s bargaining leverage for example in setting priorities on its agenda.

Chapter 1, “Globalization, Global History, and Africa” by Tilman Dedering, starts with a comprehensive historical overview of how Eurocentric images influenced debates about Africa and explained the continent’s marginalization. It is followed by an assessment of the continent’s current exposure to the uncontrollable forces of globalization that not only raises fears of further marginalization, but also increases the desire to negotiate Africa’s position in the world, for example by exploring new ways to integrate the richness of African culture, history, knowledge, and experience into the global context. However, and here is the merit of Dedering’s contribution, he warns of the dangers of current debates on Africa’s location in the global order, in particular the recourse to perpetual suffering and victimization and the emphasis on the uniqueness of African culture. On the contrary, Dedering, citing Paul Gilroy and Achille Mbembe, argues that there is “no return to the idealized roots of African identity” (Gilroy, quoted p. 15) and stresses the importance of moving away from the “old refrain” of the legacies of the past (Mbembe, quoted p. 14) to a more cosmopolitan acceptance of the many facets of Africa’s identity.[1] In addition, Dedering highlights how the resort to giving terms and conditions such as tradition, cultural uniqueness, historical legacies, and uncontrolled global forces detract from the possibility of negotiating political aims and goals and using the available space of agency and choices.

Chapter 2, “Six Years of Neoliberal Socioeconomic Policies in South Africa” by Ishmael Lesufi, is an account of economic policy changes from the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy. The chapter fits in well with the large body of important GEAR critique in particular GEAR’s failure regarding poverty alleviation and job creation; however, it does not exceed the already well-known facts. This contribution could have emphasized the dual character of South Africa’s economy more explicitly, since Lesufi convincingly demonstrates the successes of GEAR in the formal, first world economy by stimulating growth and serving the interests of capital in contrast to the vastly marginalized third world economy, where GEAR failed to address the priorities and in-
terests of the vast majority of South Africans. An important discussion in this context would concern the interdependence of both economies, in particular how far the informal, third world economy contributes to wealth generation in the formal economy, the question of representation in democratic institutional structures, and the government’s role as a negotiator in the interest of its population not only of an affluent minority. The economy has to serve the people and poverty alleviation critically depends on job creation. In addition, increasing unemployment is also a characteristic of strong economies in industrialized countries, where economic growth occurs at the expense of employment. However, economic systems reflect values and saturated labor markets are not an unavoidable sacrifice in the interest of growth and economic stability. On the contrary, social stability depends on how resources and opportunities are distributed within society. Considering the value, social status, self-esteem, and personal well-being attached to employment, job creation, and employment levels are the most important indicators of successful economic strategies and emphasize the government’s role not only as a regulator but also as an employer.

Chapter 3, "Loyal Service and Yet "Demobbed"–What Now? Demobilization and Economic Reintegration of South Africa’s Demobilized Military Personal" by Ian Liebenberg, Rialize Ferreira and Marlene Roefs, is a summary of findings from a national study exploring the social reality of demobilized military personnel. This contribution looks at expectations and levels of satisfaction with current living conditions and the correlation between education, personal skills, and employment opportunities of former statutory and non-statutory force members not integrated in the new South African defense force. Despite differences in personal profiles and age structure, demobilized members of all armed forces had expectations regarding skills development opportunities provided by the government in exchange for services rendered. This is in a context, where the importance of the armed struggle is increasingly questioned, which is probably also reflected in the marginal attention former freedom fighters get—a probably costly indifference considering the nature of skills acquired in the army. Thus, the authors stress the importance of governmental programs based on the evaluation of their carefully collected data. In addition, they recommend a realistic strategy for an already saturated labor market, which allows using military skills in a socially constructive way: the creation of a Citizen Force for services such as disaster control, crime prevention, border and coastal patrols, or the prevention of poaching or stock-theft.

Chapter 4, "New Methods, New Motives? Appraising Police Behavioral Change in a Post-Apartheid Police Unit" by Monique Marks, discusses police transformation in the context of state change from authoritarian to democratic governance. The critical question of this study is why the police still resorts to problematic practices despite intensive reform processes and training programs and is based on a case study of the Durban Public Order Police (POP). The argument and discussion of this chapter allow for generalization by providing insights into a common problem of transitions: in contrast to far-reaching institutional change and democratization, worldviews, values, and attitudes of people are more resilient to change. Perceptions of other citizens, administrative personnel, social groups, or for that matter the police are shaped by history, state ideologies, socialization, personal experiences, and emotional aspects such as perceived threats or prejudices. It is difficult to overcome behavioral patterns that are shaped by the past in particular if there is competition for power and resources or in the context of this contribution under stress or exposure to provocations and antagonism of the public.

Chapter 5, “Environmental Entitlements and the Rural Poor in South Africa” by Julia Maxted, is concerned with the utilization of environmental resources by the poor. Maxted discusses the factors that mediate the relationship between the poor, the resources they have, and the commodities they need. Often poor people are considered either victims or unwilling agents of environmental change and Maxted shows convincingly how the regulated access to needed resources contributes to an effective utilization of environmental assets. Her focus is on land reform and redistribution and traditional institutions and social relations that mediate land tenure. Land reform is a burning issue within the national and regional context and I do not intend to minimize global constraints on land reform programs. However, Maxted also emphasizes the critical importance of overcoming local constraints, in particular traditional land distribution arrangements, because of the need of women to access land.

Chapter 6, “Reproductive Dynamics in the Context of Domestic Violence and Economic Insecurity: Findings of a South African Case Study” by Kamilla Naidoo, is a comprehensive assessment of factors that influence women’s decision-making patterns towards family planning. Naidoo’s findings emphasize the critical importance of the social and economic context, in particu-
lar the instability of relations, infidelity, economic insecurity, the burden on women with respect to childbearing, the exposure to violence and abusive relationships, and access to contraceptives. According to Naidoo, demographic transition theory does not explain attitudes towards childbearing. Naidoo’s assertion regarding women’s social and economic position and decision-making patterns is vindicated by the fact that although many women are very young when they first become pregnant there is a considerable gap between the first and second child; thus, women learn from their experiences. It is of critical importance to integrate her findings into the design of new family planning programs and to improve access to contraceptives, for example in order to reduce the number of unintended first pregnancies, especially of very young women. In addition, Naidoo’s contribution clearly shows that the child-support grant is not an incentive for young women to fall pregnant.

Chapter 7, “The Farce of Homeland Independence: Kwa-Ndebele, the Untold Story” by Stephens Ntsokae Phatlane, is an interesting account of patronage, collusion with the apartheid state, and personal ambitions during the transition to independence in Kwa-Ndebele, a former homeland. Although this discussion is clearly located in the apartheid era and not, as the title of the book suggests, in post-apartheid South Africa, it is a valid contribution providing insights into power struggles inherently linked to transition processes. In addition, the debate on collusion with the apartheid state by individuals from all different population groups for personal gains is an extremely painful but nevertheless important aspect of reconciliation.

Chapter 8, “Conclusion: Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Post-Apartheid South Africa” by Richard L. Harris and Pat Lauderdale, establishes the link to Zegeye’s introduction. The authors argue that globalization is one of the most important challenges South Africa faces today by discussing the different stages of the global expansion of capitalism: firstly through imperial conquest and colonialization, secondly, through the appropriation of land and the exploitation of commodities to serve the demands of industrialization and thirdly, through the current stage, where peripheral societies are integrated into the global economic system on terms dictated by powerful economic actors. Harris and Lauderdale emphasize the importance of the South African state as a development agent and the complex relationship between local decision-making structures, people-centered development, democracy, and external constraints imposed by the global economy. Without intending to minimize the impact of global capitalism, this discussion does not provide new insights. Thus, the question arises if it is necessary to provide a structural context for the different contributions, most of them anyway written without globalization in mind, as already mentioned. Globalization is a broad concept and suitable to provide a frame to accommodate different contributions. However, in the title of this book, *Globalization and Post-Apartheid South Africa*, it is not an indicator of its content. The concept is exhaustingly used and people tired of the available globalization literature might not consider reading this book and would miss out on relevant contributions to the transition debate.

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