From Ollamaliztli to Pelota mixteca and beyond : the role of globalization in the historical development of an indigenous Mexican ballgame

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Chapter 4. Theories of cultural globalization and identification.

The following chapters aim to explore several questions. Why did people start to play pelota mixteca? Why are there less players of pelota mixteca today, than there were a few decades ago? What has been the attitude of the state towards pelota mixteca? How, and why, has this attitude changed over the years and how have players of the game responded? And what can we say about the possible future of pelota mixteca? While these questions might seem straightforward, they can only be answered by examining them within a broader framework that takes into account the social, historical and cultural processes that have affected the game and its players over the past 100 years. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, globalization and the onset of 'modernity' have significantly impacted the lives of Mexico's population and altered the ways in which identities and communities have been formed and maintained. In this chapter, I will argue that the questions raised above can only be sufficiently answered by thinking about them within this framework of a 'globalizing' world and a 'modernizing' Mexico, and by taking into account the role that issues of identity and community formation have played and continue to play in the historical development of pelota mixteca. Additionally, an examination of how globalization has altered the context in which meaning is attributed – and, especially, who has the power to attribute meaning – to select cultural phenomena is essential to understanding pelota mixteca's current situation (see also Tomlinson 1999). As Jonathan Friedman (1994: 117) notes, "cultural realities are always produced in specific socio-historical contexts and it is necessary to account for the processes that generate those contexts in order to account for the nature of both the practice of identity and the production of historical schemes". It is these socio-historical contexts that I will try to outline here, in order to be able explore questions that might, at first view, appear basic.

This chapter is an overview of prevailing ideas concerning the impact of globalization and the onset of modernity on (cultural) identity. It mostly serves as an attempt to get a grip on the slippery notions of globalization and identity and to understand how, over the course of the past century, global social, cultural and historical processes have changed the ways in which individuals identify themselves and create and sustain new cultural identities. In chapter 5 and 6 I will examine the importance that notions of community and identity hold for players of pelota mixteca. In chapter 7 I will examine the relationship between (players of) pelota mixteca and the Mexican state and try to understand how the global processes explored in this chapter have influenced the game and its players

Globalization

According to David Held and Anthony McGrew, two of the leading scholars on globalization theory, "the phenomenon of globalization – whether real or illusory – has captured the public imagination. In an epoch of profound and unsettling change, in which traditional ideologies and grand theories appear to offer little purchase in the world, the idea of globalization has acquired the mantle of a new paradigm" (2000: 1). However, while, and probably because, globalization has become the new leitmotif for our current era, no universally agreed upon definition of the word exists. Held and McGrew, themselves, define globalization as a, "shift or transformation in the scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's major regions and continents" (2000:4). Others define globalization as "the intensification of global interconnectedness, suggesting a world full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction and exchange" (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 2), or "the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life" (Tomlinson 1999: 2).

While some definitions (such as Held and McGrew's) may stress the political/power relation aspects of globalization, others (such as Inda and Rosaldo's) put more emphasis on the cultural side of the phenomenon, or on the changes that globalization brings about in our social lives (Tomlinson). Naturally, this difference in emphasis is an outcome of the extreme diversity of phenomena that globalization can refer to, ranging from the political to the economic, the cultural, or the social aspects of global (and local) life. Globalization can be, and is, conceived of as a phenomenon related to the internationalization of trade, production and financial markets, the erosion of borders and of the importance of the nation-state in political processes, or the global diffusion of cultural elements, any of which can be seen to be or not to be causally related and interconnected (Risse 2007: 126). In this way, globalization can be supplied as a general explanatory framework for, among many other things, tax evasion by multinational corporations, the large-scale migration of African and Latin American football players to other continents, the transfer of decision-making power from nation states to the European Union, and the popularity of Chinese cuisine worldwide. Globalization is, quite obviously, not an uncontested, nor a unified, phenomenon.

Apart from the basic question of what globalization actually entails and in which areas – economics, culture, politics – it has its deepest and most significant impact, one of the basic controversies in the globalization debate is the historical depth that should be attributed to the process. Some think that globalization is an age-old process, with roots going back to Ancient Greece or beyond, arguing that " overall processes of globalization (and sometimes deglobalization) are at least as old as the rise of the so-called world religions two thousand and more years ago" (Robertson

1992: 7). It has also been put forward that the roots of modern-day globalization go back as far as five thousand years, to connections between populations of 'the Old World' and that there is a continuity of processes of transformation and globalization, through the Middle Ages and the 'modern' period up to the present (Friedman 1994: 18). Others claim that globalization is a consequence of modernity (Giddens 1990), the historical period that started around 1860, that it is a phenomenon that is coeval with the rise of modern capitalism in the 1500s (Wallerstein 1974), or that it is a process that only really took off in the latter half of the twentieth century (Conversi 2010), when global trade and investment really started to take shape. Generally, one could say that, as with the question of where globalization has its biggest impacts, these different definitions of the time-depth of the phenomenon can be accounted for by the different disciplinary backgrounds that their proponents represent. While economists tend to be interested mostly in the rise of global capitalism and multi- and transnational corporations, sociologists focus on 'the rise of modernity', and historians, in turn, are more concerned with cross-cultural contact and trade, as well as with the spread of different cultural elements across the globe (Nederveen Pieterse 2009: 16; Held and McGrew 2000: 3).

Nonetheless, even though many aspects of the phenomenon of globalization are under heavy debate, most scholars agree on some aspects of the globalization process. For instance, that globalization is shaped by technological changes, that it leads to the reconfiguration of states, and that not all areas of the world are affected evenly by processes of globalization and that these processes do not create a 'level playing field' for all concerned (Nederveen Pieterse 2009: 8). The most basic agreement among scholars on the impact of globalization in today's world, is the realization that globalization brings about a 'shrinking of the world'. In the words of Held and McGrew, because of globalization, "distant occurrences and developments can come to have serious domestic impacts, while local happenings can engender significant global repercussions […], globalization represents a significant shift in the spatial reach of social action and organization towards the interregional or intercontinental scale" (2000: 3). A similar definition of this 'shrinking of the world' is given by Giddens, who defines globalization as, "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa" (1990: 64). Of course, local happenings have always been shaped by events occurring miles away. One need only think of examples like the Inca or the Roman Empire, in which decisions made in the capital could lead to significant changes in the lives of individuals thousands of miles away. However, it is only with the advent of twentieth century globalization that these processes become truly global in scale.

This shrinking of the world is brought about in large part by the technological advances that have been made over the past century in the field of communication and the media. Radio, television, the telephone, and, more recently, the internet have led to a "fundamental reordering of time and space" (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 5), as individuals in all parts of the world can communicate in real-time, depending of course on their access to these new technologies. Naturally, these technologies have not only enabled communication between individuals around the world, but they have also revolutionized global business, trade and finance, leading to increased flows of capital around the world. These capital flows are accompanied by global flows of people (ranging from executives of multinational companies travelling to overseas branches to 'illegal' immigrants looking for a better life in more affluent countries). Capital flows are also accompanied by global flows of (cultural) commodities and images, which are distributed by global media. This last aspect of globalization, its influence on local and global culture, is not as easily measured in quantitative terms as, say, the increase in global flows of capital. Nonetheless, as Roland Robertson has noted, "globalization does not simply refer to the objectiveness of increasing interconnectedness. It also refers to cultural and subjective matters" (1992: 183). In other words, globalization is not only about the quantitative increase of global flows, but also about qualitative changes in culture and in the way that people understand and envision their own position inside this newly emerging global space. Global cultural flows present individuals with new cultural options and, consequently, with new ways to identify themselves in relation to local, national and global phenomena. In the words of Roland Robertson (1992: 46), "globalization involves pressure on societies, civilizations and representatives of traditions, including both 'hidden' and 'invented' traditions, to sift the global-cultural scene for ideas and symbols considered to be relevant to their own identities" (see also Hall 1996; Held and McGrew 2000; Nederveen Pieterse 2009; Tomlinson 1999, 2007; Robertson 1992; Featherstone 1990; Friedman 1994; Castells 1997, Hannerz 1992, a.o.). As such, an important consequence of globalization for the anthropological analysis of culture is that culture can no longer, if it ever really could, be seen as belonging to one specific place or group of people. As Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (2002: 11) note, "the inclination in anthropology has been to assume an isomorphism between place and culture. Culture has been seen as something rooted in 'soil' … Nowadays, though, it is impossible, or at least rather unreasonable, to think of culture strictly in such localized terms, to view it as the natural property of spatially circumscribed populations. Globalization has radically pulled culture apart from place."

In this study I will mainly be concerned with the cultural aspects of globalization. However, economic and political dimensions cannot be disregarded. Concretely in the case of pelota mixteca, economics were the main reason for (indigenous) inhabitants of Oaxaca to migrate within and

outside Mexico, and (cultural) politics have significantly influenced the way in which pelota mixteca is/was adopted by the Mexican state and represented in Mexican national discourse, as well as the number of people that play the game. These historical developments can only be understood if we think about them in relation to broader global (cultural) processes. In the discussion below the term culture is used somewhat interchangeably with cultural identification. This might seem to confuse the two terms, but as Friedman (1994: 28) notes, culture change "is primarily a process of change in identity and simply a question of the learning of codes." In other words, there can be no change in (local, national, global) culture, without a change in the identities that individuals attach themselves to, and that are attributed to them. As a result, the outline of cultural globalization-theory below is followed by a short overview of literature on identity formation.

Globalization and culture

In 1996, Stuart Hall (1996: 274), in a book chapter that attempts to give an overview of the impact of globalization on processes of cultural identification worldwide, wrote "it is impossible to offer conclusive statements or to make secure judgments about the theoretical claims and propositions being advanced … The trends are too recent and too ambiguous, and the very concept we are dealing with – identity – too complex, too underdeveloped, and too little understood in contemporary social science to be definitively tested" (Hall 1996: 274). Not surprisingly, over the past two decades, a central concern in sociological and anthropological studies of globalization has been to explore how and to what extent this global phenomenon has impacted and transformed, strengthened and weakened the development of national, regional, and individual cultures and identities.

Within this discussion of the way globalization makes itself felt in the local context and the influence it has on individual, local, national, and global ways of (cultural) identification, three main perspectives have, to some extent, crystallized. The first of these assumes that, under the influence of accelerated globalization during what is termed late-modernity, the strength of (local/national) cultural identities is eroded, which leads to global cultural homogenization (e.g. Latouche 1996). A second perspective on the relation between globalization and the formation of cultural identities is that, rather than bringing about a global uniform culture and cultural identity, particularistic (local) identities are strengthened due to efforts to resist the homogenizing tendencies of (Western/US American) globalized commodified culture (e.g. Barber 2003; Huntington 1996). A third perspective on the same problem stresses the creation of new 'hybrid' identities, that are composed of different elements from several source cultures (e.g. Nederveen Pieterse 2009). According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, these are the only three possible perspectives on cultural difference in a globalized world,

"cultural differentialism or lasting difference, cultural convergence or growing sameness and cultural hybridization or ongoing mixing. … Each represent a particular *politics of difference* - as lasting and immutable, as erasable and being erased, and as mixing and in the process generating new translocal forms of difference." (2009: 44, emphasis in original; see also Hall 1996: 300). These three paradigms could be summarized as 1. Cultural homogenization/McDonaldization, 2. A 'Return to Roots', and 3. Hybridization.

Despite their prevalence in the literature, however, I feel that these paradigms often tend to focus too strongly on global structures and pay too little attention to the agency of individuals. In the words of Thomas Risse (2007: 128), "many approaches to globalization are committed to an overly structuralist ontology. Structuralists tend to argue that some anonymous forces – be they financial markets, be they global production networks – command the global economy as a result of which [individuals and states] have lost almost all autonomy and freedom of choice." Cultural homogenization in its purest form, for instance, assumes the imposition of a global culture by hegemonic forces, with individuals worldwide simply conforming and complying. In contrast, in this work I will follow a social constructivist approach, as proposed by Risse (2007), which searches for a middle ground between structure and agency. Apart from the structure versus agency question, but equally as importantly, I feel that it is impossible to argue for just one of these paradigms, since all three of them are applicable to the analysis of pelota mixteca, depending on which lens we use to look at the question (i.e. at the level of government policies, players' motivations, social status of the game). I hope to clarify and substantiate this claim in the analysis chapters 5, 6 and 7. With the objections raised above in mind, I will present a short summary of the three paradigms, not only because of their prominence in the literature, but also because I feel they all have their specific analytical value and are not as mutually exclusive as they may have been presented.

Cultural homogenization

The view of globalization as cultural homogenization seems to be most widespread in popular culture and media reports on the cultural consequences of globalization. According to this paradigm, which has also been termed 'McDonaldization', a homogenization of global culture is taking place, under the economic, political, and cultural influence of the strongest centers of the world economy. Whereas colonialist globalization led to the Europeanization of the world, modern-day globalization would lead to the Americanization of global culture. Globalization, understood as cultural homogenization, according to John Tomlinson (1999: 6) "presents globalization as synchronization to the demands of a standardized consumer culture, making everywhere seem more or less the same." In short, this view presents cultural globalization as a form of Western 'cultural

imperialism', which includes the worldwide spread of the icons of Western capitalism (McDonald's, Coca-Cola, etc.), the domination of English as a 'world language', and the global screening of Hollywood movies and North American soap operas. Hence, globalization is seen to function as a steamroller that flattens local cultures and threatens to obliterate global cultural diversity. An academic version of this view is voiced by Latouche, who argues that "the time of one finite world has well and truly begun, and its beginning was the end of the plurality of worlds. If there is only one world it will tend to be uniform" (Latouche 1996: 23). This uniformity will take the form of 'Western' culture, which Latouche describes as "a collection of values whose dominant feature is *universality*" (*ibid.*: 32, emphasis in original). The Westernization of the world will lead to processes of 'deculturation' and the loss of 'receiving' non-Western nation-states of their own culture and cultural identity, as they try to adapt to the dominant globalized Western culture by forms of mimesis of Western cultural practice, since only by 'playing the game of the West' better than others can they succeed in a globalized world. As such, according to Latouche (1996: 73), Western globalization "universalizes loss of meaning and the society of the void." Due to its emphasis on the threats of globalization and the 'Doomsday-rhetoric' of authors that support this paradigm, Ulf Hannerz has referred to this paradigm as "the Alarmist position" (2002).

Naturally, the main reason that this homogenization scenario is popular among the general public is the fact that the cultural icons that originated in the West *are* spread over virtually all parts of the globe. As Inda and Rosaldo (2002: 15) put it, "there is an abundance of evidence suggesting that western cultural forms have a ubiquitous presence in the world. It would thus appear that there is no denying that the world is becoming to some extent homogenized." However, as a wealth of empirical research has shown, the case is not as clear-cut as it might seem at first sight. The McDonaldization of the world can also be understood along the lines of global localization, or glocalization. Again in the words of Inda and Rosaldo (2002: 17), "the influence that foreign programs have on their audiences, is rather more complicated that the discourse of cultural imperialism […] cultural materials just do not transfer in a unilinear manner. They always entail interpretation, translation, and customization on the part of the receiving subject." In keeping with the term McDonaldization, a concrete example of the products that global localization creates is the country-specific meals that McDonald's have introduced in different nations. In The Netherlands the McKroket, a burger that was introduced on the menu of Dutch McDonald's restaurants was served. It consists of a 'kroket', a traditional Dutch snack made of ragout in batter, served on a standard McDonald's bun, combining the quintessential Dutch snack with the quintessential American icon. This creation of local forms of international products - McCamembert McGoulash, McSushi - is a perfect every-day example of the local reception, interpretation, and translation of globally diffused

commodities. In view of these processes of glocalization, the view of globalization as global cultural homogenization, in the sense of Westernization/Americanization, has been largely discredited on empirical grounds within academia. While the displacement and destruction of local cultures by 'the steamroller of Western culture' is a commonplace in popular discourse, it has been largely discarded as a paradigm in academic circles because of the rise of new cultural identities under the influence of globalization. According to Hall, "cultural homogenization is the anguished cry of those who are convinced that globalization threatens to undermine national identities and the 'unity' of national cultures. However, as a view of the future of identities in a post-modern world this picture is too simplistic, exaggerated and one-sided as it stands" (1996: 304). As such, americanizationhas not taken place in this extreme form thus far and, considering the enduring power of local cultures, is not likely to come about in the future.

The homogenization-hypothesis, however, is not only concerned with the 'content' of cultural synchronization around the world. Roland Robertson (1992) has argued that global localization is actually an inevitable outcome of a (meta-)form of cultural homogenization. That is to say, even though processes of global localization definitely do occur, they do so within a globally homogenized cultural structure/sphere that creates the categories within which localization can take place (i.e. McDonald's is American, after all, and it is the dominant paradigm within which other things are localized/hybridized). In Robertson's words, "I do not mean that globalization involves in and of itself the crystallization of a cohesive system. Yet I do maintain that globalization involves the development of something like a global culture – not as normatively binding, but in the sense of a general mode of discourse about the world as a whole and its variety" (1992: 135). This homogenized cultural sphere is one that is modeled on Western fundamentals.

In a similar vein, John Tomlinson has argued that "what is being universalized [in the process of globalization and the homogenization of culture] is not any particular set of values, not, indeed, any substantive cultural 'content', but rather an *institutionalized mode of social being*" (2007: 163, emphasis in original). What is universalized or globalized is the framework within which people can live their lives, express themselves, and identify themselves as members of certain groups. Similarly, according to Latouche (1996: 3), this spread of a Western way of life and Western institutions, while not being a form of Westernization or cultural hegemony in the sense of content, is still a form of Western hegemony: "the worldwide standardization of lifestyles, in its main features, is not a 'natural' process springing from a fusion of cultures and histories. It remains domination, with the attendant clashes of views, subjection, in justice and destruction." As such, if we follow Robertson, Tomlinson, and Latouche, even when we consider globalization to be expressed mainly in forms of glocalization, the current flow of globalization, which takes the Western, modernist, capitalist

system as a basic frame of reference or mode of existence, is still one of cultural homogenization – the McKroket or McCamembert is still always served in a McDonald's 'restaurant'.

Thus, there is an important difference between popular views on the outcomes of globalization, generally considered to lead to a situation in which "we are all going to eat at McDonald's, drink Coca-Cola, listen American Rock 'n' Roll, and watch Hollywood movies in the end – from Kampala to Shanghai to Paris" (Risse 2007: 135), as opposed to the more nuanced academic view of the relative homogenization of culture in which it is form rather than content which is being homogenized. A different paradigm suggests that, rather than becoming culturally homogenous, globalization actually brings about a stronger fragmentation in the world because different cultures assert their own identities in face of increasing global complexity. This view can be seen as a counter-movement to the 'global homogenization'-thesis, and could be termed a 'Clash of Civilizations' or a 'Return to Roots'.

'Return to roots' or the 'rise of identity'

According to Manuel Castells, "our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the *conflicting* trends of globalization and identity" (1997: 1, emphasis added). The general thrust of contemporary globalization, which brings about a certain degree of (cultural) homogenization around the globe, urges people everywhere to reconsider their place in the world, and the way they identify themselves *vis-à-vis* their neighbors, their fellow citizens, and the global system as a whole, and to claim a place for themselves in this complex system. In the words of Paul Gilroy (1997: 312), to many people "identity has come to supply something of an anchor amidst the turbulent waters of … 'globalization' and 'late-modernity'. … Discovering, possessing and then taking pride in an exclusive identity seems to afford a means to acquire certainty about who one is and where one fits."

The 'return to roots'-scenario, which has also been called a 'Clash of Civilizations' (Huntington 1996) or 'Jihad vs. McWorld' (Barber 2003), maintains that, rather than bringing about a global cultural homogenization in which all countries in the world conform to a Westernized uniform model, globalization will lead to increased conflict between different local cultures (or 'civilizational traditions'), which are increasingly brought into contact (and conflict) due to the extension of capitalism around the globe, resulting in an increase of local expressions of identity. According to Robertson (1992: 175), the 'rise of identity (fundamentalism)' can be seen as a reaction to globalization, an outcome of "space-time compression leading to the felt necessity for societies (and regions and civilizations, as well as 'subnational' entities) to declare their identities for both internal and external purposes." In this sense, the strong contemporary interest in local identities and their creation is seen primarily as a form of resistance to globalization (Hall 1996: 300). However, again

according to Robertson, this rise of identity is not necessarily a statement of resistance against globalization, but rather an inherent aspect of globalization. “Globalization in and of itself also involves the diffusion of the *expectation* of such identity declarations. […] it is crucial to recognize that the contemporary concern with civilizational and societal (as well as ethnic) uniqueness - as expressed via such motifs as identity, tradition and indigenization – largely rests on *globally diffused* ideas. Identity, tradition and the demand for indigenization only make sense *con*textually” (*ibid.*: 130, emphasis in original).

It should be noted that this creation and emergence of new identities is not restricted to the local level. Not only pre-existing local identities are strengthened or created. New identities also form on a higher level than before (Hall 1996: 302). One can think here of the creation of an identification like that of ‘indigenous person’ as an example. This global category, describing nations, peoples, and communities from Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas (Europe is often left out in this category) describes an historical state in relation to the colonial experience, both in regards to external and internal colonialism, which has become in many ways also a form of (self-)identification. I will return to this creation of new, broader frames of reference for the creation of identity later, when discussing the emergence of Mixtec identities as a consequence of migration and globalization, and the role that pelota mixteca might play in these new identity formations.

In accordance with Castells, Robertson, and Hall, Friedman also states that “the intensive practice of identity is the hallmark of the present period” (1994: 102). Nonetheless, he finds himself in disagreement with Robertson (1992) when reviewing the origins of this ‘rise of identity fundamentalism’. The main point of difference between the two authors is that Robertson sees globalization as a sort of ‘self-fulfilling’ prophecy: the spread of globalization and the awareness of the world as a whole ‘requires’ self-identification, whereas Friedman sees a decreasing hegemony, a process in which capital accumulation is no longer primarily performed in ‘the center’, as the cause of these new identifications. Friedman, thus, has a more economical view of the matter, whereas Robertson focuses on the socio-cultural/cognitive movers of globalization. (see Friedman 1994: 195-9 for a discussion of the differences between the authors). Still, the basic gist of the argument (that globalization produces new local identities) is quite similar, as we can see when we compare Robertson’s (1992) quote above with Friedman’s assertion that, “the global arena is … the precondition for the formation of local identities. … While [these] are localizing strategies, they are globally generated” (1994: 199).

A similar point is made by John Tomlinson, who argues that modernity and globalization lead to the institutionalization of (new forms of) identities. According to Tomlinson, the contemporary concept of cultural identity is essentially modern, since modernity “institutionalizes and regulates

cultural practices, including those by which we imagine our existential condition, our personal relations, and our attachment and belonging to a place or a community. The *mode* of such imagination which it promotes is captured in the notion of 'cultural identity'" (2007: 160, emphasis in original). As such, just like Robertson (1992), who argues that globalization produces a 'global consciousness' which requires people globally to culturally identify themselves vis-à-vis the other, and Friedman (1994), who sees the decline of American/Western hegemony as an historic event which facilitates the proliferation of local identities, Tomlinson argues that, rather than creating a global, homogenised culture, "globalization has been perhaps the most significant force in *creating and proliferating* cultural identity" (2007: 161, emphasis in original). Similar to Friedman's view that the decline of Western hegemony has led to an explosion in the number of new local identities created, Hall (1996: 274) argues that "the old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject." This fragmenting of the individual, unified subject, according to Hall (1996), means a move away from a Enlightenment conception of the subject, to a post-modern conception of the subject under the influence of globalization. In Hall's words, "in what is sometimes described as our post-modern world, we are also 'post' any fixed or essentialist conception of identity – something which, since the Enlightenment, has been taken to define the very core or essence of our being, and to ground our existence as human subjects" (1996: 275).

This move away from the Enlightenment conception of the subject, away from an essentialist conception of identity and culture, has had strong repercussions in academia, in which 'essentialism' is nowadays often seen as a kind of cussword or, at the least, a serious analytical shortcoming. In the words of Peter Burke (2009: 1) "one sign of the intellectual climate of our age is the growing use of the term 'essentialism' as a way of criticizing one's opponent in many kinds of argument. Nations, social classes, tribes and castes have all been 'deconstructed' in the sense of being described as false entities." This development is undoubtedly partly a much-needed countermovement to what Jan Nederveen Pieterse has termed the "nineteenth-century parochialism of an ethnically and culturally compartmentalized world" (2009: 98), that long held sway inside and outside of academia. However, this relinquishing of essentialism in academia, in itself a welcome change, is somewhat at odds with what is actually happening in 'the real world', in which we see the rise of 'new nationalisms' and the power of 'identity fundamentalism'. It seems here that there is a rift between academic debates and the actual lived experience of both dominant/hegemonic powers and minority/subaltern groups. Many groups fighting for (renewed) national (cultural) independence – ranging from Basks to Catalans, and Scots to Uygurs, but also indigenous peoples in Latin America and Oceania – construct and 'essentialize' (new) identities, in

order to have a stronger political voice, *vis-à-vis* the nation-state. One of the reasons for this use of essentialist images in movements of resistance is quite probably the fact that it seems hardly possible to construct a movement and politics of resistance on what are called 'hybrid identities', a theoretical paradigm that we will treat in more detail below. We will return later to this tension between different forms of essentialism, when discussing the relationship between players of pelota mixteca and the Mexican nation-state.

In the foregoing, I have tried to sketch two scenarios of cultural globalization that are each other's diametrical opposites, one argues that we are on the brink of an era in which local cultures will disappear under the homogenizing influence of Western capitalist consumer culture, the other maintains that local cultures will actually be strengthened in the face of, and because of, the same conditions. However, we have also seen that, in this discussion, there is a 'third way', that of global localization/inter-cultural hybridity/anti-essentialist deconstruction of culture. This scenario is often referred to as 'hybridization' and has caused a significant polemic in the literature. Below, I will present an overview of this third-way-scenario of global cultural development.

Hybridity

As Stuart Hall (1996: 310) notes, "it may be tempting to think of identity in the age of globalization as destined to end up in one place or another: either returning to its 'roots' or disappearing through assimilation and homogenization. But this may be a false dilemma." Hybridization/hybridity theory has been proposed as a third-way scenario between these two opposites, suggesting that globalization leads to the formation of new kinds of cultural identities that are neither the homogenic forms based in consumer culture, nor the 'traditional', local ones that were prevalent before the onset of global interconnectedness. However, this theoretical position, while gaining widespread support, has also attracted severe criticism. Below, I will present a short discussion of the hybridity polemic, drawn mostly from the writings of Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995, 2009), a very convinced proponent of hybridity theory, and Jonathan Friedman (1994, 1995), one of its (and Nederveen Pieterse's) most vehement critics.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse defines hybridity theory as "a terminology and sensibility of our time in that boundary and border crossing mark our times. […] hybridization is an antidote to the cultural differentialism of racial and nationalist doctrines because it takes as its point of departure precisely those experiences that have been banished, marginalized, tabooed in cultural differentialism. It subverts nationalism because it privileges border-crossing. It subverts identity politics such as ethnic or other claims to purity and authenticity because it starts out from the fuzziness of boundaries … Hybridity is to culture what deconstruction is to discourse: transcending binary categories" (2009:

55, 120). As a 'terminology and sensibility of our time', Nederveen Pieterse (2009: 54, 58) stresses the 'newness' of the theoretical approach of hybridity, which is intimately tied to globalization and the large-scale movement of people, the creation of diaspora communities, and the instances of culture-contact that these create. However, saying that hybridity is a 'new' theory seems overly optimistic, as evidenced by Nederveen Pietere's own assertion that "hybridization goes under various aliases such as syncretism, creolization, métissage, mestizaje, crossover" (2009: 55). Naturally, many of these terms have a long history in anthropological literature, especially with regard to the Mesoamerican culture area. The particular Mesoamerican forms of Catholicism, which combine catholic elements on the surface with significant Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican elements on a deeper level, have for a long time been seen and characterized, both inside and outside academia, as 'syncretist'.

However, even if we consider hybridity 'new' as a paradigm, we can ask if the 'cultural phenomenon' of hybridity – that is, the abundant creation of new 'in-between' identities that are combinations of 'stable'/'established' old ones – is actually a new thing itself. This seems highly doubtful, considering that (probably) every culture is hybrid, having formed as a result of contact between cultures, and that processes of hybridization take place continually (Burke 2009: 66). The fact that all cultures are in some sense hybrid is not contested by Nederveen Pieterse. Rather, he argues that "everything is hybrid, hybridity is an avalanche and discussing examples of hybridity is like drinking from a fire hydrant. It follows that only those forms of hybridity are worth discussing that illuminate the variety, spread, depth and meaning of hybridity, or that shed light on history, past or future" (2009: vii).

It is here that, to me, the essentially self-defeating thrust of hybridity theory, at least as proposed generalist theory to explain cultural globalization, manifests itself. I am inclined to agree with Jonathan Friedman, who sees hybridity as a form of "confused essentialism" (1994: 208). Hybridity posits two 'essentialist' cultures at the start, which are subsequently mixed to form new forms of hybrid culture. But if everything is indeed hybrid, as Nederveen Pieterse suggests, there can be no cultural mixture between two 'original' (read: essential) cultures, since these original cultures are themselves hybrids. What then is the use of studying 'hybrid cultures', which are themselves 'hybrids' of 'hybrid cultures'? This is not to say that I deny the essentially 'hybrid' origin of (probably) all contemporary cultures and many cultural elements. One need only look at pelota mixteca and my contention that the game is of Spanish origin and has been indigenized in Mexico to see that I am firmly convinced of this form of hybridity. However, I feel that asserting that "everything is hybrid" inevitably creates the type of circular reasoning outlined above and, with that, an unusable theoretical and analytical framework.

Nederveen Pieterse apparently acknowledges this problem himself, since he states that "if we accept that cultures have been hybrid *all along*, hybridization is in effect a tautology: contemporary accelerated globalization means the hybridization of hybrid cultures. As such, the hybridization perspective remains meaningful only as a critique of essentialism. Essentialism will remain strategic as a mobilizational device as long as the units of nation, state, region, civilization, ethnicity remain strategic: and for just as long hybridization remains a relevant approach" (2009: 88). My question here is: to whom would this be a relevant approach? Politicians, academics, minority/subaltern movements? Of course, I agree that challenging accepted 'truths' of nationalist identities by showing that cultures are hybrid and that no tradition or local cultural trait is age-old can be a powerful, and much-needed, form of critique to essentialist notions of identity. However, as mentioned, many minority groups actually make use of ('strategic') essentialism to claim their own place within oppressive societies. They seem to have little use for this kind of hybridity theory. Exactly because of Nederveen Pieterse's stress on the anti-essentialist potential of hybridity theory, Jonathan Friedman (1999: 242; 1995, 1997) has argued that, rather than being an academic approach to the study of society, "hybridization is a political and normative discourse" (1999: 242). According to Friedman, and other critics of hybridization, hybridity theory is used as a form of self-identification on the part of researchers who see themselves as cosmopolitans, at home in the world, rather than being an actual description of what is going on in 'the real world'. An example of this clash between 'hybridity theorists' and 'the real world' is Nederveen Pieterse's characterization of the historical cultural friction between 'the West' and the Islamic world as "one of the most contrived and exaggerated cultural divides ever. What is striking … is that it is a recent cleavage which follows centuries and millennia of intermixture" (2009: 128). While it is undeniably true that Islamic culture deeply influenced Western (defined basically as European) culture and vice versa, saying that the friction involved is contrived and exaggerated negates the historical reality that shows that, from the spread of Islam and the subsequent conquest of North-Africa and parts of Europe through the Crusades and the Reconquista to the 9/11 attacks, the cultural difference between the West and the Islamic world is real and imminent to the participants in these cultural conflicts (which, naturally, also have economic and political components). Culture, and the forms of self- and other-identification that are attached to it, has real-world political and economic consequences that cannot be neglected.

These consequences possibly derive from the fact that acknowledging oneself as a member of a 'hybrid' culture is not a very frequent phenomenon, at least not in the political arena. While certain communities and groups definitely do identify with multiple 'heritages', more often, cultural difference, even though superficial and obscuring the actual hybrid nature of the cultures involved,

leads to particularistic self-identification. Jonathan Friedman says, “creole [or hybrid] is a form of identification of others, a form stabilized by hegemonic arrangements that emerged in the global system. The mixed nature of other people’s cultures is only made real by means of establishing, even institutionalizing, social identities” (1994: 209). In this view, then, hybridity/creolization (terms that are used interchangeably in the literature) is something that people tend to say of ‘the Other’. Most people do not consider themselves to be ‘mixtures’, or their culture to be hybrid. They consider their culture to be, simply, their culture, and are not necessarily interested in the identification of the different (hybrid) origins of where the specific elements come from. As I have mentioned before, a partial explanation for this preference for non-hybrid identities might be that (strategic) essentialism awards communities a stronger and unified voice in political debates and struggles. Rights and privileges are often only acknowledged and granted when individuals or groups can make unequivocal claims to certain identities.

An example of this tension between hybridity and essentialism can be seen in the political ambitions and struggles of the Chicano movement in the 1960s and 70s, which aimed to further the interests of Mexican-Americans in the United States. Even though the Chicano label describes a community of people with a dual – hybrid – heritage (Mexicans living in the United States), the goals of the Chicano movement were focused strongly on the Mexican component of this identity, in a reaction to Anglo-American discrimination and the lower social position that Chicanos occupied in the United States. At the start of the Chicano movement in the 1960s/70s, two political positions were prominent. One held that the U.S. political system should be the framework within which resistance was enacted, so that the American authorities would take a more active role in guaranteeing the civil rights of the Chicano population. The other, more radical, position called for Chicano nationalism and was hostile to large parts of the socioeconomic and political order in the United States (Sánchez Jankowski 1999: 201). A good example of this ‘nationalist tendency’ of the Chicano movement is the “Plan Espiritual de Aztlán”, which was adopted by the movement at the landmark First National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in 1969. The plan, which took its name from the (mythical) Aztec homeland of Aztlan, described the territories that Mexico had lost to the United States in the Mexican War in 1848 as the homeland of the Chicano people and “presented an almost millennial vision of the future, painting an image of a separate Chicano culture and nation that ultimately would be reclaimed by the Chicano descendants of the ancient civilization” (Gutierrez 1995: 185). Thus, the plan presented a “quasi-nationalistic vision of the Chicano people which extolled a pre-Columbian, native ancestry while diminishing or even rejecting their connection with American culture and society” (*ibid.*: 185). While there were and are varying degrees to which members of the Chicano movement adhere to these principles of (cultural) nationalism, it is clear

that describing Chicano identity as hybrid is problematic, at least considering the way it was envisioned by many supporters in the 1960s. Rather, even in the context of communities of people with dual heritage, their new identities will form a new identity/culture which is often essentialized in the political arena. Jonathan Friedman suggests that this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that identification *needs* essentialism: "hybridity is founded on the metaphor of purity. … the essentialism of identification can easily obliterate all attempts to eliminate purity via hybridity. On-the-ground practices of trans-ethnicity cannot produce anything other than new categories of the same type" (Friedman 1997: 83). Thus, two distinct identities, forming a hybrid identity, will always form a new 'essential' identity of the same type. Another, related, factor is the fact that, rather than being an 'end-point', hybridity is a point along the way, at the moment when two cultures meet but have not yet joined to form a new culture. In the words of Peter Burke (2009: 46), "it is particularly clear that hybridity is often, if not always, a process rather than a state." When two cultures meet, and especially in the case of migration and the creation of diaspora communities, individuals live in-between two cultures, it could be said that they live in a 'hybrid' cultural situation. However, after several generations, these hybrid identities themselves usually turn into new, independent ones that include cultural elements from different 'mother-cultures'. In the words of Burke (2009: 66), "it is surely true … that every culture is hybrid and that the process of hybridization takes place all the time. All the same, some cultures are surely more hybrid than others. There are also moments of particularly intense hybridization, the consequence of cultural encounters. Following these moments, a kind of stabilization takes place, so that when there is another encounter and another wave of hybridization, the traditional hybrid culture is defended against the new mix." Concretely in the case of pelota mixteca, we could argue that the game was adopted by Mexican indigenous communities during an especially intense moment of hybridization, the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Over the years, it became 'stabilized' as part of indigenous culture, and now, at the onset of a 'new wave of hybridization' because of globalization and the large-scale cultural changes that this eventuates, pelota mixteca is 'defended against the new mix' because it has become a cultural element belonging to traditional indigenous/Mexican culture (and identity). Thus, because hybridity is a process rather than a state, a point along the way rather than an end-point, it is only certain very specific communities and individuals at particular very precise points in time that will self-identify as hybrids. It seems much more common for many people around the world *not* to acknowledge the hybrid roots of their identities, at least in the political arena.

Nederveen Pieterse responds by saying, "hybrid self-identification *is* in fact common: obvious instances are second-generation immigrants and indeed hyphenated identities. … Creolization in the Caribbean, mestizaje in Latin America, and fusion in Asia are common self-

definitions. In some countries national identity is overtly hybrid. Zanzibar is a classic instance (Gurnah 1997). Mexico and Brazil identify themselves as hybrid cultures" (2009: 105). While I cannot judge with regard to Brazil and Zanzibar, since I simply do not know enough about them, if Nederveen Pieterse's evocation of Mexico as a 'hybrid culture' is indicative of what he conceives to be self-described hybrid cultures, I feel his view is overly optimistic and denies the social realities that are hidden behind official discourse. While it is true that Mexican national discourse since the Mexican Revolution has tried to represent the country (and its history) as an amalgam of indigenous and Spanish, a 'hybrid' combination of 'the best of both worlds' (see below, chapter 7), in reality the indigenous population of the country has suffered centuries of oppression of indigenous culture and forced acculturation, and has actively tried to resist this forced assimilation into 'national culture'. As such, hybridization can be a strategy on the part of the nation-state to diffuse indigenous resistance to assimilation and the loss of their own culture. Concretely, in the Mexican case, the mestizo ideal was always presented as *the* model for Mexican post-Revolutionary identity. This mestizo identity was founded on a combination of taking pride in Mexico's pre-Columbian (primarily Aztec) past with a modernist rejection of living indigenous culture. The forced acceptance of this supposedly hybrid identity discriminated against traditional indigenous cultural practices and taught Mexico's indigenous population that, while the nation's 'founding fathers' were pre-Columbian indigenous peoples, in modern Mexico there was no room for living indigenous cultures. Of course, the non-indigenous mestizo (elites) of Mexico did identify to some extent with these hybrid identities, taking pride in the splendors of Tenochtitlan and Teotihuacan, but this form of hybridization is more akin to the appropriation of a past that was not really theirs than to the creation of a truly hybrid culture and cultural identity that incorporated all sectors of society. Thus, hybrid identity, at least in this case, is rooted firmly in power structures and actually works to the detriment of minorities.

A similar example is given by Charles Hale in his work on the conflicts between the Miskitu of Nicaragua and the Sandinista revolutionary movement and government. Hale (1994) shows how a hybrid ideology on the part of the Sandinistas, who incorporated the Colonial struggles of the Miskitu against foreign domination into national discourse and into their own identity, was used to actively criticize the Miskitu's 'ethnic essentialism'. In the eyes of the Sandinistas, "Indians no longer [existed] as a distinct social group (except on the Atlantic Coast), but the legacy of their struggles [formed] part of an enriched Mestizo national identity. Class, ethnic, and national consciousness [became] fused into one" (Hale 1994: 90). The Miskitu's calls for autonomy and land rights based on their 'cultural independence' from Mestizo Nicaragua were, at least initially, not acknowledged by the Sandinista movement, who considered the Miskitu identity to be a cultural attribute, rather than a political identity, since political identities could only correspond to class and nation (Hale 1994:

93). “To be Nicaraguan Mestizo now meant having Indian roots, celebrating survivals from this Indian past, and actively making use of them to construct a revolutionary future. For Mestizos it was a creative and liberating idea. For those who had shaped their identity in direct opposition to Mestizos, it entailed a call to assimilation and conformity” (Hale 1994: 92). In this case, the active hybridization of the identities of the elite, rather than creating a space of resistance for dominated groups, actually resulted in assimilation and cultural-historical appropriation. By identifying themselves as ‘part-Indian’ – by ‘hybridizing’ their own identities – the government diffused exclusive claims by the Miskitu to cultural independence (Friedman 1997: 81-2). In the case of Mexico, similar things could be said of José Vasconcelos’ work on the *Raza Cósmica*, which tried to incorporate indigenous culture into mainstream Mexican society (and identity), the result of which, rather than creating a true amalgam of the different cultural currents that existed in Mexico at the time, was the forced assimilation and loss of culture (mainly through the education system) of indigenous peoples. I will return to Vasconcelos and the *Raza Cósmica* later in this chapter.

In short, it seems that the value of hybridity theory, as mentioned before, lies mostly in its use as an anti-essentialist discourse. In the words of Nederveen Pieterse, “hybridity entails three different sets of claims: empirical (hybridization happens), theoretical (acknowledging hybridity as an analytical tool), and normative (a critique of boundaries and valorization of mixtures, in certain contexts and particular relations of power)” (2009: 120). However, as we have seen, the (empirical) fact that all cultures are hybrid is of little analytical value, and, similarly, hybridity as a theoretical position, in many cases, will often not bring us closer to an *emic* perspective on the culture we study. Thus, we are left with hybridity as a normative discourse. In the words of Nederveen Pieterse, “boundaries and borders can be matters of life or death and the failure to acknowledge hybridity is a political point whose ramifications can be measured in lives” (2009: 101). While, to me, this seems somewhat overstating the case, hybridity as a critical argument definitely has its merits. Nevertheless, as an analytical/theoretical position, I feel that, considering the wide-spread strengthening of local identities and cultures, hybridity has little to offer but the tautology that all cultures are hybrids of hybrid cultures. John Tomlinson expresses it best when he says, “it seems important that the idea of hybridization is kept close to the broader analysis of culture change … and used circumspectly to identify *aspects* of this process - rather than being taken independently as a *general* description of the global cultural condition. Apart from anything else, this is important to avoid overstating the cultural flux of globalization and losing sight of the tendency of cultural mixtures to re-embed themselves, however briefly, into ‘stable’ identity positions” (Tomlinson 1999: 148).

After having reviewed the three main paradigms on globalization and culture that are prominent in the literature, I feel that we could take Tomlinson's argument one step further and say that none of these three should be 'taken independently as a general description of the global cultural condition'. Processes of global cultural homogenization, hybridization and 'identity fundamentalism' all take place simultaneously under the influence of ever-increasing global cultural contact. Hollywood movies, Western music and European football clubs are indeed popular worldwide, and form a building block for the self-identification of individuals around the globe. Under the influence of international migration and the creation of new global power structures, new nationalist identities *do* (re)surface worldwide, both on the side of the nation-state and of nations that have never had their own state. And new hybrid identities are indeed formed, as they always were, under the influence of culture contact. These paradigms can all be used as tools to explain parts of real world occurrences. However, what is important to note here is that these forms of culture/identity change are only made possible because individuals in today's world are, to a certain extent, able to choose and create their own identities. As I have briefly touched on before, the possibility to self-reflexively create an identity for oneself, choosing different building blocks from an array of options presented to the individual, is a result of the onset of 'modernity' and globalization. Below, I will elaborate on the issue of how modernity and globalization have altered the ways in which people can (selfidentify.

Modernity, globalization and identity

Identity is a notably diffuse and multi-interpretable term. It is a complicated term not because nobody has ever heard of it, but rather because "more or less everyone knows more or less what it means, and yet its precise definition proves slippery" (Lawler 2008: 1). Nonetheless, over the past decades, 'identity' has become somewhat of a buzzword, both in political rhetoric, in academic debates, and in popular culture, in this last case especially in relation to troubles that individuals experience because they 'are not sure about their identity'. According to Paul Gilroy (1997: 301), the popularity and widespread usage of the term 'identity' even "derives in large measure from the exceptional plurality of meanings that it can harness."

One basic, but much-encompassing, definition of what is meant by 'identity' is given by Kathryn Woodward (1997: 1), who says "identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live, [it] gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live." Thus, identity is not simply just 'inside the individual', but is rather a social phenomenon that is determined in the relation between Self and Other and within social relations, constructed using resources such as history, language, and culture

(Hall 1996: 4). Identities carve out a unique place in the world for individuals and social groups by stressing differences that are not primordial or 'given in nature', but that are made and magnified, constructing meaning on the basis of certain cultural attributes that are given priority over others (Castells 1997: 6; Lawler 2008: 4). These identities, then, are created through narratives and discourse that are used to explain and understand the social position of individuals and social groups in the (globalized) world and can function as an antidote to uncertainty or anxiety about where one 'fits in' and what one's place in the world is (Gilroy 1997: 304; Hall 1996: 2; Lawler 2008: 17). This aspect of 'fixation of the individual in the world' also leads to the fact that 'identity' seems to be invoked largely when it is seen to be endangered, in trouble or has lost its fixed context or content (Lawler 2008).

Of course, the onset of globalization and modernity has led and continues to lead to large-scale displacements of people, ideas, and, consequently, identities, leading Homi Bhabha (1996: 59) to conclude that "we have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialize lost time, and to reclaim lost territories, creates a culture of disparate 'interest groups' or social movements." Individuals across the world are confronted with new possibilities (in the form of foreign cultural commodities, ideas, and ways of life) to use as building blocks for the construction of new forms of their identity. According to Anthony Giddens, this self-reflexive construction of identity, as opposed to living out an identity that is assigned to the individual by outside forces, is a specific feature and outcome of, what he terms, 'high' or 'late modernity'. "In the post-traditional order of modernity, and against the backdrop of new forms of mediated experience, self-identity becomes a reflexively organized endeavor. ... The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options" (Giddens 1991: 5). Only in the modern age of globalization are we confronted with such a bewildering array of choices of building blocks from which we can take meaning that we have to choose for ourselves which of these we prefer, in order to construct our own identities.

This understanding of identity as a self-reflexive, moldable, personal creation is, as I have mentioned before, a move away from the Enlightenment conception of the subject, which viewed identity as an essential and stable core of the person that was inside the individual from birth to death, ready to be discovered or made to surface. The modern, self-reflexive concept of identity of the age of globalization, on the other hand, "does *not* signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change; the bit of the self which remains always-already 'the same', identical to itself across time" (Hall 1996: 3). Naturally, this changed conception of identity did not only form as a reaction to globalization, in which the array of

choices and possibilities is much larger, it also has significant implications for the way that culture and cultural identities are impacted by globalization and are theorized. Cultural homogenization, a return to the roots, or hybridization become conscious choices, determined by the agency of individuals rather than by the obligations of worldwide structures.

However, saying that identity can be self-reflexively built and constructed, does not mean that there is a sort of 'free-for-all' for anyone to be whatever they want and choose to be, creating narratives that fit with their own self-images. Rather, because 'the self is a social product', individuals "are generally constrained to present images of themselves that can be socially supported in the context of a given status hierarchy" (Branaman 1997: xlvi). As such, in the words of Stephanie Lawler, "the idea that we can 'be whatever we want to be' relies on an illusory eclipsing of the social world, [because identities are always] *embedded within* and *produced by* the social world" (Lawler 2008: 144, emphasis in original). Thus, even though, in a globalized world, identities are often self-reflexively constructed because of our ability to select those cultural items and ideas that fit best with our self-images, these images and identities are always constrained by, and never independent of, the social contexts and the power structures in which we live out our lives. Here, issues of representation and discourse enter into view, since these are important ways through which social differentiation and status hierarchies are created, maintained, and enforced. Representation and discourse present us with symbolic systems through which we can make sense of our experiences and "create the possibilities of what we are and what we can become" (Woodward 1997: 14). However, these symbolic systems also "produce meanings about the sorts of people that would use [certain cultural items, and] the identities associated with [these]" (*ibid.*:2). To give a concrete example from the context of pelota mixteca: the game has always been represented (in national discourse) as a tradition associated with traditional indigenous culture and with Mixtec individuals. As a result, Mexicans who are not of indigenous ancestry would not take up playing the game, due to the fact that it is not represented as something that is fitting for an individual of their social background (considering the discrimination against indigenous peoples that has been prevalent in Mexico for a long time and the fact that even indigenous individuals were, and often continue to be, hesitant to identify themselves as such). I will treat this issue of representation of, and discourse surrounding, pelota mixteca in more detail later.

In line with this idea that identities are not always freely chosen, but are constrained by structural forces, it should be noted that some forms of identity were created not as positive, but as negative distinctive markers of populations, not as self-representations, but as classifications of others. In the words of Kwame Appiah (2005: 112), "some identities were *created* as part of a classificatory system for oppression […] Black, woman, gay, aboriginal – so many of the identity

categories that are politically salient are precisely ones that have functioned as limits, the result of the attitudes and acts of hostile or contemptuous others. Each of these categories has served as an instrument of subordination, as a constraint upon autonomy, as, indeed, a proxy for misfortune." Doubtlessly, the category of *indio*, or indigenous person, in Mexico would fall within this group of identities that were created as part of a classificatory system for oppression, and create structures which limit the possibilities for self-identification. One of the most important structural factors that we have to take into account when thinking about the impact that globalization has on processes of identity formation, is the increasing search for roots/authenticity/original identities, which can combine with a self-reflexive approach to identity. These authentic identities/this return to roots are mostly political strategies that resort to essentialism (instead of hybridity) either on the part of the state, trying to (re-)incorporate different cultural groups inside the nation, or on the part of minority groups, trying to liberate themselves from – or at least create a resistance identity *vis-à-vis* – the nation-state. As a result, in the political arena, identity "is more likely to be represented as the function of some pre-political, socio-biological or bio-cultural feature, something genetic […] that sanctions especially harsh varieties of deterministic or absolutist thinking about identity. In these circumstances, identity ceases to be an on-going process of self-making and social interaction. It becomes instead a thing – an entity or an object – to be possessed and displayed" (Gilroy 1997: 307). These (new) essentialist identities tend to use ('invented') traditions to imbue themselves with meaning and history and to create an 'aura of authenticity', much in the same way that nation-states have historically tried to create unified national identities for their subjects (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Anderson 1983). These identities are institutionalized and 'made real' through discourse, a narrative that individuals can identify themselves with, and representation, an image that arises out of the discourse that is used to represent the self and the other.

Discourse and representation are two key words of Foucauldian social analysis and the study of identity formation has been strongly influenced by the work of this French philosopher. Many of the authors that I have quoted above (e.g. Hall, Woodward, Lawler) follow Foucauldian lines of analysis focusing on issues of discourse and knowledge-power structures, in relation to the creation of the subject. Foucault's (1980) ideas on the creation of subjects and subject-positions through discourse has done much to influence these narrative/discursive approaches to identity. Subjects, in Foucauldian terms, are "figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge which the discourse produces" (Hall 1997: 56), and who can only make sense of, and take meaning from, these power-knowledge structures if they take up the subject-positions that are created for them through that same discourse (Foucault 1980). Hence, "through subjectivation, people become tied to specific identities: they become *subjects*. But also they become *subject-ed* to the rules and norms

engendered by a set of knowledges about these identities. They take up subject-positions – specific ways of being – available within discourse, understanding themselves according to a set of criteria provided by the experts whose authority derives from rationality and 'reason'" (Lawler 2008: 62, emphasis in original). As such, self-understanding is never an independent exercise and never outside power relations. A central question in relation to my research that arises from this discussion is whether – and, if so, in what ways – globalization and migration enable indigenous migrants to step outside of the hegemonic power-knowledge structures that have been prevalent in Mexico for centuries and create new discourses and new subject-positions for themselves, in order to empower themselves and reclaim a sense of pride in being indigenous. Or do these categories travel with them to their new homelands and are they only confronted with more discrimination, not just from the part of the mestizo Mexican state, but also by their new US American neighbors? Furthermore, what is the impact of this new social situation on the way that pelota mixteca is appreciated by indigenous peoples themselves, and the way that the Mexican state treats indigenous peoples and indigenous living traditions and heritage, such as pelota mixteca? In short, is there a positive, transformative potential for globalization and migration, or does globalization only impoverish Mexico's indigenous population and force them to abandon their traditional ways of life and migrate out of their home communities? We will return to these questions in more detail below.

As mentioned before, a narrative approach to identity, as opposed to the essentialist approach, allows more room for individual agency in the creation of self-identity. However, Foucault's discourse/subject-position approach has been criticized as being overly structuralist, paying more attention to the power structures that individuals/subjects have to conform to, than the power/agency of individuals to create their own stories. In the words of Scott Lash and Mike Featherstone (1995: 13), "both modernists and postmodernists have had as the cornerstone of their theory some notion of the irrelevance of identity, of subjectivity, of the social actor or agency … Foucault in his inaugural lecture spoke of subject positions which only were created by discourse." Similarly, Bourdieu's answer to the question "according to what principles do agents choose between the different sports activities or entertainments which, at a given moment in time, are offered to them as being possible?" (1978: 358) is framed in terms of class habitus, a set of predispositions that is determined by the overall societal structure. While there is no room or need to revisit the whole structure versus agency debate here, I feel it is important to stress here again that, in this work, I will follow a social constructivist approach, which searches for a middle ground between structure and agency. In the words of Thomas Risse, "the fundamental insight of the structure-agency debate […] is not only that social structures and agents are mutually co-determined. The crucial point is to insist on the mutual *constitutiveness* of (social) structures and

agents. The social environment in which we find ourselves defines ("constitutes") who we are, our identities as social beings. […] At the same time, human agency creates, reproduces, and changes culture through our daily practices" (Risse 2007: 128, emphasis in original). Giddens (1991: 2) makes a similar point, noting that, under late-modernity/globalization, "new mechanisms of self-identity are shaped by – yet also shape – the institutions of modernity." If we try to concretize, in a simple way, this criticism of structuralism within the framework of this research, we could say that a 'middle-ground approach' to the study of the migration of indigenous peoples from Mexico to Oaxaca would acknowledge the basic economic (structural) factors that facilitated – or should we say forced? – transnational migration from Mexico to the US, but would also take into account the choice (agency) that migrants make to leave their communities to work elsewhere, and the creative ways in which they use their agency to improve their personal (and collective) circumstances, at home and abroad.

Globalization, identity, and pelota mixteca

Above, I have outlined three ways in which globalization is thought to have affected and impacted cultures and cultural identities. While these three scenarios have often been presented in the literature as being mutually exclusive, I have argued that all these processes can take place simultaneously, because of the possibilities for individuals to self-reflexively construct their identities and understand and present their cultural traditions. In my view, only a case-by-case study of the ways in which individuals, communities and nations have decided to 'homogenize', 'fundamentalize' or 'hybridize' their own traditions and identities, can explain the particular forces at work in specific instances and create an understanding of how global structures and individual agency have contributed to continuity and change in cultural practices and cultural identities. I will try to substantiate this point in the next chapter by showing how processes of homogenization, identity fundamentalism and hybridity have all impacted pelota mixteca.

As Inda and Rosaldo (2002: 4) note, "anthropology… is most concerned with the articulation of the global and the local, that is, with how globalizing processes exist in the context of … the realities of particular societies … It is preoccupied not just with mapping the shape taken by the particular flows… that crisscross the globe, but also with the experiences of people living in specific localities." It is this dialectical interplay of the local and the global that I will try to understand in the following chapter, in order to sketch how globalization has impacted the players of pelota mixteca and the game itself, and how individuals, groups and the nation-state have used different homogenizing, fundamentalizing or hybridizing strategies. Considering the importance of issues of identity, discourse and representation and the role of the nation-state, I will also ask how the

general attitude of the Mexican state and of mainstream mestizo society towards indigenous people has affected the interaction between the state and indigenous people in the sporting arena. Which discourses were created by the state and by the indigenous players themselves surrounding pelota mixteca, and how do these relate, contrast, conflict, or unite? How does the appropriation by the state of pelota mixteca, or the lack thereof, reflect broader issues concerning the relationship between indigenous peoples and mainstream Mexican society? What role does pelota mixteca play in 'the transnational community', now that the game has been 'internationalized'? How have indigenous peoples themselves used pelota mixteca in processes of identity and community formation, and as a means of resistance to (Post-)Colonial oppression? Is there a positive or negative transformational potential in international migration and globalization for the position of indigenous peoples within Mexican (multicultural) society, and for the chances of survival for pelota mixteca? Below, I will attempt to treat these questions in more detail, starting with the role of pelota mixteca in the formation of (indigenous/migrant) communities.