The study of class became a very unpopular subject in the 1980s and 1990s in many quarters of anthropology and other social sciences. This was an era in which culture became a dominant mode of understanding the world, even though in principle there is absolutely nothing contradictory about considering the two together. For many, class has been associated with other vulgarities such as exploitation and a whole array of material things, which are not considered sufficiently sophisticated for the culturally oriented social scientist. Some of the critique of class analysis is well taken. There was in many approaches a tendency to reduce the basic structures of social life to relations of exploitation, to “relations of production” as they were called in some Marxist discourses. The notion that there were general cultural features of modern capitalist society, for example, that were not class-based, was sometimes rejected by Marxists. In this perspective, culture was seen as a reflection of class position and as such had to be entirely dependent upon such a position. Commercial mentalities, cultural distinctions related to lifestyle, including housing, interior decorating, clothing, and Bourdieu’s “taste” were understood as direct products of social position (that is, including sub-class differentiation). It should be noted that the critique of such models was forthcoming even from those who were very much focused on the issue of class.

The shift away from issues of class is not simply a question of taste, but rather is related to a larger reconfiguration of identity and power in Western societies. An excellent example of this shift can be found in much of the sociological work on the advent of information society, globalization, new social movements, etc. The shift is one of the cornerstones of the writings of Alain Touraine (1992). The argument, oversimplified, is that capitalist modernity was based on a class polarization of society that pitted capital against labor in a political struggle for relative advantage. Since the 1980s that modernity, or at least the opposition on which it was founded, has disintegrated. The power of labor has decreased, the working class has fragmented, the middle classes have grown, and as a result working-class movements are being replaced by more local or alternatively more
generalized issues such as the environment, feminism, etc. – movements all based on cultural identity rather than class.

Within anthropology there has been a parallel shift of interests since the late seventies toward issues of culture and identity. This is clear enough in the United States, but similar tendencies have also been evident in Europe. The use of the term culture, for example, which was quite uncommon in Europe until the 1980s, became increasingly popular thereafter. This recent shift of interest toward things cultural is part of a more general movement characterized by the decline of some of modernism’s primary vehicles (Marxism, developmentalism, rationalism), and by an intensifying critique of science and of universalism that are typical of an emergent “postmodernism.”

Much of the discourse produced by cultural studies and anthropology alike in the past couple of decades has been based on this original turn away from class and toward culture. An especially striking reflection of this shift is the following; one well-known anthropologist of globalization, echoing Frantz Fanon (in a perverted fashion), is said to have remarked, “When I hear the word class I go for my gun.” It is clearly the case that class is not an adequate term when analyzing many of the social forms that are the concerns of anthropologists. Generalizing this insight to all aspects of the modern global system, however, poses serious problems to understanding the reality of the world in which we live.

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on that reality by suggesting a set of relevant links among phenomena that are quite salient today but that are not often connected. Doing so requires a rethinking of what has been referred to, often without serious analysis, as “globalization.” In my view, it is impossible to dissociate questions of the structure of state societies from those of cultural identity and from the larger context within which states are constituted and reproduced. This is not to argue that there is a higher order of determination, the global, above all the rest. On the contrary, it is to argue that the global simply reflects the emergent properties of the articulation of numerous local processes. There may well be hierarchies of control, but these are part of the nature of formal organizations themselves. UNESCO and the IMF should not be confused with global social processes. They may well have as their domains the regulation of international and inter-state relations, but they are largely responses to rather than determinants of those relations. In terms of their social impact, they are small, relatively self-contained worlds of their own, even where they span large geographical distances.

This essay thus seeks to contribute to an understanding of class formation in what has come to be known as the “era of globalization.” This requires a reassessment of the term “globalization” itself, so I shall begin with some terminological discussion.

Globalization has become a pop term not only in the media and in business economics, but also increasingly in postcolonial studies and anthropology. I shall not go into detail here, but shall instead briefly summarize the major tendencies and underlying assumptions of this discourse. There is, of course, a literature on globalization-related issues that has emerged in works informed by political economy, in economic geography, critical economics, and sociology. Much of this work is quantitative and is argued in factual terms. It documents a number of changing realities: the rapid increase since the 1970s of capital export in the form of foreign direct investment, the asymmetric distribution of these flows toward East Asia and to a lesser
degree to countries like India and Brazil, the increasing salience of multinational companies (sometimes called transnational, to stress what is in fact a false notion of deterritorialization), the enormous increase in financial and speculative transactions in relation to production, and the development of new speculative markets (such as derivatives) – the value of which is greater than the entire world economy measured in terms of goods and service transactions. Very often this development has been interpreted in technological terms, as the product of the computer and internet developments, which have speeded up transaction time and have totally transformed productive activity.

This account is of course anything but new, and it is interesting for an anthropologist who has been through the long critique of technological determinist evolutionism to encounter it yet again. The argument should be taken seriously, but even among otherwise empirically based researchers, the technological connection is simply assumed. In the second edition of his *Network Society*, for example, Castells is at pains to explain away the findings of economist Robert Gordon, one of the US’s major specialists on the economics of productivity. Gordon has painstakingly shown that, contrary to the assertions of advocates of the “new economy,” the productivity decline that began in the 1970s has *not* changed significantly since the advent of the “new economy.” The answer from globalization theorists appears to be, “Wait! Things will change.” Well, we are still waiting.

I am not, it should be noted, arguing against the reality of globalization, but about its world historical status. And while it is clear that the last several decades have been witness to novel developments, it is important to be able to challenge what appears as self-evident. In fact, it is the self-evidence that should make us wary. While the globalization literature is certainly important and exciting, especially when it deals with empirical realities, as in much of the work in economic geography and sociology, it is sometimes informed by ideologically based desires. The globalization literature that has found its way into anthropology, I will argue, is far more a concentration of such desires than an empirical and rationally critical endeavor.

**MODELS OF GLOBAL SYSTEMS**

The distinction between globalization and global systemic perspectives in anthropology is worth reviewing here, since the two approaches are quite different. Globalization has been proposed as a new stage of world history, an assertion that is based on an experience or a fantasy of things on the move. In anthropological terms this takes the form of a struggle against localism, and of a celebration of movement itself – of what might be called a displacement from roots to routes. In the interests of space, I shall only indicate some of the most general characteristics of the argument. These are reducible to three: (1) the necessary movement from smaller to larger units and from simpler to more complex organizations; (2) following from the latter, the notion that globalization is about the global era that we are now entering, an era fraught with conflicts perhaps, but one which promises a new diasporic way of life that may well supersede the nation-state (Appadurai 1993); in the globalization perspective, the nation-state is understood as the source of most of the evils of modernity, especially essentialism and its twin offspring, nationalism and racism; (3) a new world conceived
of as one of border crossing, hybridity, and experimental identification, but also (for some) of hypercapitalism, network society, and increasing exploitation, at least at the beginning. Hypercapitalism is sometimes referred to as millennial capitalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000).

Much of the discourse produced in the cultural globalization literature is saturated with a terminology of a trans-x and post-x sort. It is about transcendence of existing borders. A feeling of wanting to escape from all forms of fixed or grounded identities and a profound desire to belong to something higher and more expansive are common characteristics of this discourse. This desire to transcend the self is expressed in a most foundational form in certain versions of post-feminism (Butler 1993). The cultural globalization literature (Malkki 1992; Kelly 1995) finds cosmopolitans in the most dubious of places, and is wont to trash redneck indigenes as enemies of the world society to come.

What is the problem, one might ask? Why is it necessary to take sides in these issues? I suggest that this tendency is the product of a cosmopolitan agenda, one based on a moral classification that divides the world into dangerous classes and locals, on the one hand, and liberal and progressive world citizens, on the other. This popular and proliferating discourse is not, I suggest, an internal theoretical development within any particular social science. On the contrary it is the spontaneous self-understanding of those who occupy a certain position within the contemporary world-system in transformation. The true sources for the conceptualizations of globalization that have emerged from sophisticated academic circles, I would argue, can be found in the mundane activities of those who help manage the contemporary global order. Especially important in this regard is the way people communicate on the internet in certain multinational consultancies, in many of the media, and among top officials in diplomatic, international political and economic arenas, and the way the managerial New Age conceives of the New World. In sum, my assessment of globalization is that it is the expression of a positional identity within the global system rather than a description or theoretical perspective on the contemporary world.

The global systemic perspective is vastly different, not least with respect to the notion of globalization itself. The latter is seen not as a new world-historical stage, but as a phase phenomenon in the cyclical development of hegemonic expansion and contraction. Globalization in this perspective is the expression of hegemonic decline in which a decentralization of capital accumulation results in a shift in investment from old to new centers or potential hegemons (Braudel 1984), and in the process upsets existing sociopolitical and cultural arrangements. On the basis of detailed historical research, Arrighi (1997:2) argues that massive financial expansions of this kind have accompanied all the major hegemonic declines in the history of the European world-system:

These periods of intensifying competition, financial expansion and structural instability are nothing but the “autumn” of a major capitalist development. It is the time when the leader of the preceding expansion of world trade reaps the fruits of its leadership by virtue of its commanding position over world-scale processes of capital accumulation. But it is also the time when that same leader is gradually displaced at the commanding heights of world capitalism by an emerging new leadership.
This kind of approach has been fully developed in the work of Arrighi, but is also present in much of the world-systems literature. As early as the 1970s my own work led me to suggest that civilizations were all examples of such expansion and contraction processes, and that modern “world” systems were simply a continuation of much older processes. The similarities in this process can be expressed graphically as a set of cycles that tend toward a limit. The individual cycles express shifting hegemony within a larger systemic arena while the larger cycle expresses the ultimate limits of expansion of the system as a whole.

From a global systemic perspective, globalization corresponds to periods of crisis and hegemonic transition. As a phenomenon of transition, globalization has been well documented for the major shifts in hegemony in the Western-dominated world-system. The hegemonic shift from Italy to the Iberian peninsula and then from there to the Netherlands and then Britain, for example, was accompanied by major changes in investment flows from old to new potential hegemons. The most recent shift of this kind came at the end of the nineteenth century. The major themes of this period are similar enough to the present to warrant comment. There was massive globalization of capital, on a scale easily comparable to the present. Foreign direct investment, which had been a minor phenomenon relative to portfolio investment (investment in stocks and bonds) reached 9 percent of world output in 1913, a proportion that was not surpassed until the early 1990s (Bairoch and Kozul-Wright 1996:10). Openness to foreign trade was not markedly different in 1993 than it was in 1913. There were massive British investments in the United States, and Germany was rapidly becoming an industrial giant. Britain was no longer the world’s workshop. Its share of world manufacturing declined from close to 50 percent to 14 percent by 1913 as the United States increased its relative industrial dominance. The decline of hegemonic Britain at the end of the nineteenth century occurred in a situation of increasing competition, crises of overproduction, and recurrent depressions. There was also mass migration in this era, which occurred together with expanding trade.

Many of the current debates concerning immigration and “multiculturalism” were already prevalent in this period. This was also an age of technological revolution. Stock markets were connected by cable, and investment could flow between continents at revolutionary new speeds. There was also an enormous celebration of new technologies – electric lighting, telephones, automobiles, and even airplanes and X-rays. This was also a period that witnessed the rise of contradictory ideologies of the same kind that are prevalent today. At one extreme there was the Futurist religion of technology; at the other, cults of tradition, *gemeinschaft*, and the local. In terms of the relative merits of globalization versus global-systems perspectives, however, more important is the fact that this phase of globalization came to an end (by the 1920s), and that it was followed by a long period of de-globalization that lasted until the 1950s (and that involved a major world war). It was only in the 1950s that globalization began again. It has continued to intensify from the 1970s until the present.

This does not imply, of course, that nothing new happens in world history, but simply that some properties of historical processes have remained the same. Indeed, the similarities between the current end-of-millennium crisis and that of the period from 1870 to 1920 does not vitiate the equally important fact that there are also crucial differences in structure as well. The previous globalized era was characterized by
stronger national states and nationalism, and by a much lower ratio of direct foreign to portfolio investment. This was an era of national consolidation in the wake of the final breakdown of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. While there were equivalents to today’s multinationals, they were fewer in number and not nearly as complex. Much of this difference has to do with technological developments that have made the internationalization of productive processes a more profitable possibility.

It is often argued that today’s global financial economy is a new phenomenon, but here as well there are clear precedents. The very notion of finance capital, discussed at length in a variety of well-known works from the period, emerged in part in an effort to understand the massive expansion of the financial sector with respect to industrial production. This is a crucial issue, because it is a structural rather than an historical phenomenon. The relation between the accumulation of money capital and the accumulation of productive capital, that is, the capacity to produce industrial products and productive services, is a fundamental contradictory relation in capitalist reproduction. This contradiction is expressed in the shift of capital from productive to non-productive activities, a shift that usually occurs simultaneously with capital export (globalization). The latter process is simply the expression of the uneven distribution of profitability in the world arena. The fact that 50 percent of foreign direct investment in 1997 consisted of mergers and acquisitions is a product of a situation in which such activity is more rational than investment in new production. An important aspect of the cycle of expansion and contraction is the increasing divergence of “fictitious” from real accumulation as production becomes increasingly unprofitable in relation to other activities.

This is, of course, an oversimplification of a complex process, but the tendencies to which it points are important, nonetheless. It implies that in hegemonic declines there is not only a tendency toward the massive export of capital (in the form of globalization), but also to a shift from productive to non-productive forms of investment – to real estate, stock-market speculation, derivative markets. This is a process that increases the commodification of the world as demand increases for accelerating accumulation, and as reality is fragmented into clusters of property rights that can be sold on the market. The creation of private titles is a practice of capitalization that creates wealth out of named categories, irrespective of their relation to real production.

According to this model, it is in periods of globalization that international capitalist classes become most salient. This is not to say that they emerge only in such periods. On the contrary, I argue below that they are permanent features of capitalist civilization. What might be said to be specific to globalizing periods is the rapid elaboration of such elites and of the discourses that they produce or that are produced around them. The reason for this is in part the availability of funds to support globalizing elites, who struggle to generalize their particular perspective on the world. This is a perspective that can be characterized as “cosmopolitan.”

**Structures of the Long Run**

Categories such as globalization, cosmopolitan elites, national elites, middle classes, immigrant minorities, regional minorities, and indigenous populations are not cat-
categories that appear in a particular historical era. They are basic structural features of the capitalist state system, and more specifically the nation-state system. Their salience may vary over time, but they exist, at least potentially, throughout the history of the system. It might be argued as well that the nation-state itself is no constant in the history of the modern world, but rather that the conjoining of nation and state is a function of historically contingent relations forged among emergent class actors, including the state-class which in the process is transformed into a “government.”

While the national character of states is thus anything but a constant, there do appear to be certain tendencies in class formation that truly are of the *longue durée*. The tendencies to which I refer do not involve a particular set of fixed class categories. Instead, they refer to a process of distribution of positions, local, regional, and global, within the larger territorial entity. These positions define class relations between various kinds of elites and commoner populations. In the pre-nation-state era, for example, the state elites were at the same time cosmopolitan elites, aristocrats who participated in an inter-state realm in which royalties and aristocracies were joined in marriage and political alliances, in which they sent laborers, craftsmen, architects, and artists from court to court in generous gestures.

These states were not nation-states in any sense. They were aristocratic or royal domains linked by marriage and political alliances as well as by conflict and warfare. Territorial populations were not integrated into the larger territory as a mass of individuals. Instead there were numerous regional and local political structures. Migration was certainly an integral part of the dynamics of such states, and was the product of royal policies and demands for specialized labor. But insofar as ordinary people were subjects rather than citizens, they were essentially pawns in a larger set of strategies. National or ethnic identity was limited primarily to local groups and regions or to diasporic populations. And identification with larger political units was primarily the strategy of aristocrats and of those who could gain by becoming attached to royal courts.

What is important for this discussion is the continuum from the local to the inter-state level, and the potential oppositions that developed among them. However, it should be clearly noted that the very praxis of the absolutist state created a social field of national identity. Long before the French Revolution there were letters of “naturalization” offered to foreigners who came to live in the country, and as of 1697 they were forced to pay taxes. Immigrant status was inherited for three generations for those arriving after 1600. That is, it was defined in terms of descent from specific national origins. There was also a great deal of migration and aristocratic tourism between countries, especially following the war against the Augsburg coalition (1689–97).

As one contemporary described it, “Since the advent of peace, there was such an influx of foreigners in Paris that one could reckon 15 to 16 thousand in the quarter Saint-Germain alone. A year later there were 36,000 in this same quarter” (*Annales de la Cour de la Ville*, 1697–98, in Dubost and Sahlins 1999:15). And the word “nation” is used to identify individuals throughout the period, in terms such as the following (*Annales de la Cour de la Ville*, 1697–98, in Dubost and Sahlins 1999:378, 379, 380):

Anne Sauvage, *anglaise de nation* (English by nation), described as “not married in France, that she does not conform to Parisian custom and that she is not naturalized.”
Jacques Lieurard, a Protestant convert from the north of France wrongly taxed as “son of a foreigner, coming from Holland.”

“Imperfect Frenchmen.”

It is noteworthy that after 1600 immigrant status is inherited for a period of three generations, so that a notion of a local territorial population is clearly in evidence.

One detects in the writings of the period (Fénelon 1920 [1699]) a clear opposition to the urban, commercial, foreign merchants and the international from a position that can be interpreted as Christian and agrarian.

There is a twofold set of representations generated in this division between the peasant and the urban sectors of the larger territory. Urban groups insist on the royal strategy of the state elites to increase their economic base, demographically and in capital, while the peasantry develops on an increasingly salient notion of a national population, sedentary and exploited by the latter. It might be suggested that this growing opposition is the foundation for the French Revolution, in which “the people” are established as sovereign within the confines of the territorial state, thus creating the nation-state. The famous Abbé de Sieyès, one of the ideologues of the French Revolution, defined the Third Estate as the true basis of sovereignty, rather than the king (Sieyès 1963 [1789]).

It is noteworthy that there is a notion of the larger world in opposition to the local and the parochial, which appears as an historical invariant. It is more clearly expressed in the elite sector than in the popular sector. It accounts for the early appearance of religious doctrines that are clearly global in scope. In the early seventeenth century there are fairly clear expressions of a notion of a single humanity in need of a world order – an expression not entirely foreign to the interpretation of the Catholic Church. In 1614, for example, the Rosicrucians published a pamphlet entitled Fama. In that pamphlet it is proposed that all learned men throughout the world should join forces toward the establishment of a synthesis of science. Behind this effort allegedly stood an illuminated brotherhood – the children of light, who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Grand Order. This Brüderschaft der Theosophen (Theosophical Brotherhood) was said to have been founded by Christian Rosencreutz (1378–1484), who had become an initiate during his travels in the Middle East in the fifteenth century. He founded a brotherhood that is supposed to have operated in secret ever since.

It is somewhat less clear to what extent there were indigenizing or nationalizing tendencies in the early history of Europe. It is widely accepted, however, that the nation-state was very much a project of state-oriented elites – with the caveat that the latter produced an opposing project rooted in the exploited classes to capture the state and make it an instrument of their own needs. The various regional and local resistances that proliferated within emerging absolutist states are evidence that there were and are numerous sub-state identities of varying strength that have persisted right up into the present. It is necessary to find the resonant bases for the different collective identifications that characterize our history so as to avoid falling into the trap of envisioning such identities as mere intellectual constructs that people have somehow been seduced into accepting.
PEOPLE, CLASS, AND NATION

The notion of a “people” belonging to a relatively distinct region is at least a virtual category before the emergence of the nation-state, but a series of political reconfigurations of the state, including the French Revolution, established and institutionalized the nation as a replacement for God, as the foundation of sovereignty. These state reconfigurations include the entire relation of representative government and the tendency toward the elaboration of political democracy. The state is reduced to a government, a set of representatives of those granted the right to vote, even as the broadening of the franchise represents the extension of nationhood itself. The rise of representative government is associated with the establishment and institutionalization of national bourgeois elites in competition with the older aristocratic cosmopolitans, over which they gain a clear advantage in the nineteenth century. From this point on, people, nation, and class become an unstable trio of political contest. This applies even to the socialist movement, in which there is a vital and vicious conflict between internationalizing and nationalizing tendencies (with the latter becoming dominant by the time of World War I). The emergent logic here is that which links a definite population to the control over its conditions of existence. Here class merges with peoplehood or nationhood and fuses itself with statehood, which thereby becomes its political expression.

Nationhood is the product of sets of practices of socialization, but also of linkages between local experiences of community, landscape, and language, and larger symbolic orders of the state realm. The capitalization and commodification of society also produce an individualization in which intermediate sodalities increasingly disappear, leaving as an ideal type only the relation between the individual subject and the state. This process of disintegration may create even stronger identification with the nation as the sole concrete expression of a larger collective unity. While assimilation is a variable, both in time and in space, it tends to be strongest in periods of hegemonic expansion and economic growth.

In the above outline I stress the historical variability of such processes. Thus, in the contemporary period, assimilation has been reversed, so that there is a proliferation of identities – migrant, regional, indigenous, and national – all of which have developed simultaneously. This increase in cultural identification combines with growing class polarization to create a highly fragmented lower class of flexible, partly employed, partly legal, and increasingly desperate, disparaged, and enraged people – a “multitude,” a new globalized *lumpenproletariat*.

The word “indigenization” is used to indicate an intensification of localized or rooted identities among the downwardly mobile populations of the system at the same time that cosmopolitanism intensifies at the top. It is here we find culture and politics combining in important ways – in the form of an ethnification that generates conflicts among different populations at the bottom (expressed as racisms and nationalisms), and an emergent opposition to the elites themselves, especially the political elites. Some of the extreme examples of militia groups, whose members often come from very different political persuasions, and who express a localism whose main enemy is the class of cosmopolitans that they define as Washington, the Catholic Church, and the Jews (who are often described as allied in a project of world
domination). It is noteworthy that many of these groups are ardent supporters of Al Qaeda. The divisions within this lower class are not only politicized, but represent significant aspects of an emergent dominant ideology that pits a humanist elite against the dangerous classes.

France is one of the most interesting countries in which this phenomenon has been charted. The rising culturalism of the elites has replaced class with culture and in so doing has replaced class with ethnicity. Most significant in this fracture was the cleavage of the left itself. Juillard (1997) designates this split as between the moral left and the sociological left, the elite and the “people.” The political elite was (and is) also itself split on this matter, between a more republican and assimilationist and more multiculturalist and even cosmopolitan position. The loi Debré (the law introduced by Jean-Louis Debré, president of the National Assembly), which imposed stricter controls on immigration in 1997, sparked a counter-demonstration, while the newspaper Libération published a list, classified by professional category, of the signatories to the petition against the law (Juillard 1997:108). More than two-thirds had at least two years of university education and half had university diplomas equivalent to the MA. Only 4 percent of the signatories were workers. It can be argued that this represents a massive change in political identity, the lower end of the population sinking into nationalism or localism while the upper end is increasingly liberal and cosmopolitan. This interpretation is reinforced by the voting statistics from the late 1990s for the National Front, a political party of the extreme right. Upwards of 30 percent of the party’s support came from workers.

Juillard’s interpretation of these developments (1997:105) fits the model suggested here. There has been a vertical polarization in France. Elites have consolidated around a cosmopolitan identity – a set of representations of reality that are directly contrary to the interests of those whom the elites once thought they represented (i.e., the national working class). Indeed, elites can be said to have switched constituencies in this period.

The cosmopolitanism of certain elites is apparently a well-established European habitus or even tradition. This is clearly evident in the history of Freemasonry. The latter, after being taken over by aristocrats and then wealthy capitalists in eighteenth-century England and France, clearly expressed a set of values that are equally visible in today’s world. Thus the new-age managerialism that is so common in the contemporary world of elites has its more aristocratic forerunners in the Freemasonry of the past. These themes can be outlined as follows:

1 An opposition to organized religion in its Western form.
2 An attraction to Oriental religious philosophy, not least its holism.
3 An interest in primitive and ancient religions.
4 The individual as the center of spirituality and a direct link to the sacred or godhead, understood in pantheistic terms.
5 The superiority of the elect who can attain this relation to the sacred.
6 In political terms, an orientation to the world as a whole, to Mankind.
   A This implies opposition to the nation-state or any other sub-national units except as sources of spirituality.
   B The internal differentiation between leaders and followers, or the elect and the rest.
A millenarian view of the future, of the New Age that is to come. These beliefs represent the identity and ideology of an international elite class.

These themes incorporate notions of holism and of being chosen by higher powers. The elite is the “chosen few,” chosen to lead all of humanity to the promised land. This view implies distance rather than identity with populations that are under its rule and this provides a link to the pluralism that is so prevalent in both older and new versions of multiculturalism (Pijls 1999:99):

The cosmopolitan bourgeoisie in the 18th century came to adopt a perspective [towards its] own society as if it were a foreign one, a target for “colonial” exploitation. Freemasonry provided a cover for developing the new identity on which the exploitation of members of one’s own community is premised. By entering the Masonic lodges, merchants and those otherwise involved in the long-distance money economy such as lawyers and accountants, realized the primordial alienation from the community which is the precondition for market relations, exploitation of wage labor, and abstract citizenship.

Another aspect of this particular global position is its association with finance rather than industrial production, which is local and vulgar. Expressly opposed to manual labor, the British masonry defined themselves as above the earthly workings of the economy. They preferred “to sit above the commercial fray, pulling levers, dangling rewards and applying sanctions” (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1993:321). This important logic thus connects finance with the cosmopolitan, and in turn with a sense of a higher power and even mission. The values of the humanism that emerged in the Enlightenment are very much woven together with this particular version of cosmopolitanism.

The small worlds of cosmopolitanism

One of the outcomes of the continuity in the cosmopolitan elite as an enduring category of the modern state is the production of social worlds that are more or less bounded socially. Cosmopolitan identity commonly represents itself as world-encompassing, as opposed to the smaller worlds of national and other more localized populations. This is a significant misrepresentation of reality, one that confuses geographical with social closure. It has led to the absurd assertion, for example, that diasporas are instances of cosmopolitan openness. Such a claim flies in the face of practically everything that is known of such transnational groups, whose very survival depends on the maintenance of strict boundaries (which in turn implies high levels of endosocial relations, including endogamy and strict control over children).

In this respect, it is enlightening to investigate the life of transnational elites, which display some of the characteristics of diasporas. An interesting study of what has been called l’immigration dorée (“the golden immigration”) in France (Wagner 1999) reveals a number of interesting properties of the social life of such cosmopolitans. Focusing on foreign elite communities via their relation to international schools and
other associations, Wagner depicts a two-layered elite structure. One layer is newer, and is the product of the recent emergence of a transnational managerial class. The other layer is older, and is made up of more aristocratic cosmopolitan elites. Although she has concentrated on a relatively limited period of time, Wagner’s work shows that almost a third of all transnationals in her sample marry other transnationals (though not necessarily of the same nationality). They send their children to a limited number of schools, where education consists in learning to be transnational.

These transnationals, Wagner shows (1999:116), play at representing the world, at being a United Nations devoted to a celebration of cultural difference, and they often have official connections with these international organizations. But they also identify themselves in the idiom of blood, even where it is mixed (Wagner 1999:116).

“I have expatriate blood in my veins . . . I am American by passport and nationality but my family as well as my wife’s family have branches in many countries, which means that we always have one foot in the U.S. and one foot abroad.”

“My father was something of a vagabond. It was in his blood. My brothers are like that too: I have a brother in Austria, one in Finland, a sister in Spain. My father was always on the move and I learned from him.”

Indeed, they use the term “expatriate blood” to characterize themselves, thus expressing a combination of roots and routes of the kind announced in much of the postcolonial cultural studies literature. In this way the transnational is concretized in biological terms.

The self-definition of a cosmopolitan ethos, which is common to both aristocratic and managerial groups, is an essential part of the self-understanding of transnationals. “Curiosity, openness and tolerance are terms often employed to designate these qualities” (Wagner 1999:142).

This ethos is that of the world traveler always open to new adventures, to new kinds of experience and different kinds of people. But it should be noted that the actual social arenas of these cosmopolitans are limited to a relatively small number of associations, clubs, and schools. Here, they constantly meet and are able to identify one another by their common interests and tastes, but also by means of differences in national origins and cultures. Within these domains cosmopolitans express a clear opposition between themselves and more ordinary nationals, going so far as to refer to the latter as *terrestrials*. This opposition is based on the usual classification of the local as “other” (Wagner 1999:189, 204).

If a cosmopolitan orientation is a constant structure in the modern territorial and national state, it becomes increasingly salient in periods of globalization. One may even speak of an unstable opposition between the local, the national, and the international in which ideological dominance shifts markedly over time. At the very top of this hierarchy are the families that have been designated the *grandes fortunes*. This group keeps its distance from the others, has its own clubs and associations, and is listed and ranked (by members’ places of residence) in journals like *Le petit mondain* (The Little Socialite). Wagner (1999) presents the example of the comte de Chatel. His genealogy is mixed in national terms, and encompasses Italy, England, Belgium, and Argentina. It is anything but mixed, however, in class terms, as the family has intermarried exclusively with other *grandes fortunes* families in these
countries. The capital of the Chatels is directly linked to the family’s international segmentary structure. M. de Chatel is never an expatriate when he travels. He is always on his own property somewhere in the world. But he is also a professional chameleon, in cultural if not class terms (Wagner 1999:122). As Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot (1996:120) argue, “Cosmopolitan relations and a multiterritoriality extended to foreign countries are two essential components of ‘high society’.”

The differentiation between the upper crust and the managerial elite, besides being socially marked in very clear terms, is also reflected in identity. The cosmopolitanism of the grandes fortunes partakes of an aristocratic world that tends toward homogeneity. The cosmopolitanism of the managers, on the other hand, springs from a more multinational world in which cultures are compared and ranked. This may be more of a variation than a true difference, however, as in both groups there is a tendency for people to distance themselves from the local and the national and to identify with the international or transnational. In Wagner’s (1999:212) words, “The ability to be ‘at home’ materially, socially and symbolically, in several countries, the appropriation of a cosmopolitan identity which affects all aspects of the person, defines the model of emergent international managerial culture.”

**Cosmopolitanization and globalization**

I suggest that, during periods of strong globalization, such as we have today, elites have the tendency to cosmopolitanize themselves. This can be understood as a product of the convergence of social and spatial mobility, which situates its adherents above the world, where they can encompass the diversity that lies below without being part of it (except in the sense of being able to consume it in the form of products). This distinction creates an opposition to the local as something that is decidedly lower in status and conflates immobility with cultural poverty. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the encompassing self-representation of the cosmopolitan implies a real engagement with the world. Geographical movement, yes, but within a narrow sphere of class in which the relations that they establish are bounded and often highly segregated, in which identity is strong and homogeneous with respect to status and position. The negation of social praxis in the self-identification of cosmopolitans is a logical outcome of the nature of their social position within this system. The generalization of cosmopolitanism to all domains of transnational connection appears in this light to express a kind of struggle for ideological hegemony.

This generalization tends to equate cosmopolitanism with globalization itself and to argue for the evolution from local to global, referred to above. Locals are not merely at the bottom of this process, they are also represented as precursors to the present. They are in this sense primitive, but in a way that conflates Freudian primitivity, libidinous and inhabiting all of us, with a temporal sense of being backward. It is this, ultimately, which makes the local dangerous, as in the expression, “dangerous classes.” Primitive culture, of course, is perfectly wonderful, but it needs to be extracted from its lived context and transformed into objects that can be consumed without danger. The museological understanding of culture that has become increasingly popular in recent years expresses this sublimation or even displacement of libidinous otherness into objects of consumption/contemplation and
celebration. And it is this transformation that enables diversity to be collected and displayed in the salons of the elites. This is also essential to the identification of such elites with diversity and multiculturalism. The strength of this ideology depends on the balance of forces within which it is produced.

Cosmopolitanism tends to emerge simultaneously with and in dialectical relation to localizing ideologies, with nationalism, and other regional identities. This is happening today, just as it occurred in the previous period of globalization (between 1870 and 1920). It is interesting to compare the two periods in this respect. The British empire contained a core of cosmopolitanism that is quite central to developments later in the century. It was Cecil Rhodes and his Society of the Elect whose strategy was to set the agenda for the continued success of the empire. The founding of the League of Nations, one of the significant international developments of this period, may well have been conceived by this group, as was the Union of South Africa and the Commonwealth (Quigley 1981:29).

Despite its cosmopolitan orientation, when expediency required the group was perfectly capable of forsaking internationalism, and following 1931 it embraced the model of national economic regulation. While this all sounds like the extension of empire, the change in the group’s orientation must be understood as part of a broader process of hegemonic decline and increasing competition. The turn of the twentieth century was a period of the fragmentation of empire, not least of a formal empire, the Habsburgs. That empire was understood as traditionalist, religiously orthodox, and rigid, yet its ranks were swelled by a new liberal class of cosmopolitans, many of whom were Jews, and all of whom were protected by the imperial court. Thus the cosmopolitanism of this group, which would today be considered progressive, was at that time associated with the past, with absolutism. Nationalism, on the other hand, was understood as the way of the future.

While the situation was actually more complicated than this, since there were other powerful cosmopolitanisms in Europe, the emerging conflict in the world-system was spurred on by national competition, all of which led to the Great War (World War I). The configuration of the period is brilliantly captured by Gellner (1998:12).

Hence the deep irony of the situation: an authoritarian [Habsburg] Empire, based on a medieval dynasty and tied to the heavily dogmatic ideology of the Counter-Reformation, in the end, under the stimulus of ethnic, chauvinistic, centrifugal agitation, found its most eager defenders amongst individualist liberals, recruited in considerable part from an erstwhile pariah group and standing outside the faith with which the state was once so deeply identified.

This competition between states culminated in a world war, which strengthened some nation-states and created others, but which also established the League of Nations. It was riddled with all of the contradictions referred to above. In the end, however, the cosmopolitan was by and large defeated.

In the current situation there are clearly similar tendencies, but political organization seems to have a stronger tendency to empire formation. Thus it might appear that cosmopolitan tendencies are on the rise. International organizations, such as the United Nations (especially its most powerful ideological apparatus, UNESCO), the World Bank, and numerous other instances, such as the World Economic Forum
(WEF), have all converged on a similar set of representations of the world. And although hegemony shifted to the United States, there is nonetheless the heritage of the Rhodes group to consider, one that is visible in post-World War II clubs with overlapping membership. These include the Bilderberg, the Trilateral Commission, the Mount Pelerin society, and the WEF. Global media such as CNN also partake of this cosmopolitan ideology, which is significant, given the force of the media’s repetitive (if virtual) imaging and moral framing in the creation of everyday reality. It is also significant that a large number of intellectual elites, academics, and politicians have been socialized into this world-view. Academic anthropology has been deeply influenced by this trend, partaking of the “postcolonial aura” that celebrates movement in itself—and identities of movement (the transnational, trans-local, transsexual, border-crossing, etc.)—as “the good.” Also characteristic of anthropology that has been influenced by postcolonial studies is its tendency to denigrate the dangerous redneck locals, who are associated with nationalism, racism, roots, and that greatest of all evils, essentialism. This perspective has even generated a critique of what is characterized as the “general anthropological perspective,” well epitomized in expressions such as the following (Meyer and Geschiere 1999:3): “anthropologists’ obsession with boundedness is paralleled by the ways in which the people they study try to deal with seemingly open-ended global flows.” What a pity that the people we study have got it just as wrong as the rest of us. We are all obviously in need of re-education.

It should be noted that cosmopolitanism is not equivalent to internationalism. This important distinction even attracted the attention of Marcel Mauss (1969 [1920]:629), who argued that they were characterized by “deux sortes d’attitudes morales bien distinctes” (“two quite different moral attitudes”). He chose to define cosmopolitanism as a set of ideas and tendencies oriented to the destruction of the nation-state, while internationalism was merely against nationalism as such but was not opposed to the nation-state. Thus the socialist internationals struggled with these two concepts and eventually chose the international rather than the cosmopolitan. But there is another difference as well. The cosmopolitanism of the turn of the last century was largely modernist in the legacy of Kant. It identified itself with universal values, moral, rational, and scientific. Contemporary cosmopolitanism is the descendant of the aristocratic transnationalism discussed above. It is a self-identified status position, one that is quite the contrary of Kantian universalism, in that it celebrates and encompasses (rather than opposes) difference. This is why the notion of hybridity is a logical consequence of the formation of cosmopolitan identities. Cosmopolitanism today is not rationalist–universalist but rather is a fusion of all cultures, as expressed at the Band Aid concert for Ethiopian famine (held in 1984), at which the famous song “We are the World” (composed by Michael Jackson) was first performed.

Empire?

The large volume by Hardt and Negri (2000) is an interesting example of the continuing reinforcement of a particular ideology of the global. This can be seen in some of their major thematic statements. There is no question for them that we are entering a post-imperialist world, one revealed by the end of the Vietnam war, the
disappearance of the Berlin Wall, and the globalization of the world economy. They understand all of this in evolutionary terms, even if they are aware of the existence of previous empires, and understand that such structures are themselves fragile in the long run. The main changes that they signal are:

1. Rhizomatic transformations in the organization of power, as a result of which networks replace state forms.
2. A Foucauldian totalization of power conceived of as everywhere and nowhere, and therefore not in any one hegemonic place (such as the US).
3. The obsolescence of boundaries of all kinds, resulting in an extreme openness, so that there is no longer any “outside.”
4. The emergence of the “nomadic” as a dominant figure.
5. The formation of a “multitude” to replace the proletariat.

Hardt and Negri regard the United States as the forerunner in this development. Europe is still based on territorially strong national sovereignty, while the US has transcended all that. In the US model we already have the tendency to empire. Unfortunately the Indians had to go as they could never really be inside, but the project remains an open one, the frontier that has always to be confronted and transcended and therefore incorporated. This is little more than a self-representation of American pluralism, and therefore is positive for many, both right and left, who vote for the immigrant nation. For these authors empire is also inevitable. Consistent with current globalizing ideology, Hardt and Negri view the nomad as the wave of the future, as revolutionary, whereas the local is relegated to the backward. It is even depicted as having fascist potential.

Here is the strongest argument of the globalists. Not only do they represent the good and progressive, but their very existence is enough to perform the historical task of paving the way for the final revolution of the multitude. None of this is documented, and the “end of imperialism” that they announce could just as easily be interpreted as little more than the decline of one particular empire – as heralding the arrival of a new dark age, a new feudalism.

Where Hardt and Negri place themselves in all of this is not clear, but the totalizing style of the presentation is clearly something that has resonated with multiple audiences. The book, in its sixth printing, has been hailed from many quarters. It is widely regarded as an extraordinary text, praised by reviewers in such disparate places as Foreign Affairs and the New York Times, and lauded by authors close to journals like Public Culture. The text has a ring of radical chic, perhaps, claiming to transcend a number of former perspectives. The issue of class is relegated to the past. The latter is fast becoming a “multitude” whose principal characteristic is its lack of a single unifying identity or strategic goal. The resistance to emergent empire is the essence of all multitude activities, by definition, since these express projects that are not the dictates of higher powers. The world to come is one that is totalized under empire in the same sense that globalization is assumed to make the world into a single place. For both positions, there is no longer an outside. Hardt and Negri’s empire is defined as all-encompassing and boundary-less, and the multitude is characterized as migrant and nomadic. They are nomadic not because they are forced to be so, but because they are the essence of global desire, the desire to be on the move, to deterritorialize.
It is this that makes movement in itself, geographical movement, progressive while immobility is reactionary. The same underlying perspective can be found among other globalizers, who see the future in terms of a diasporic world of transnationals (Arjun Appadurai, John Kelly). The latter are regarded as expressing a higher evolutionary stage and higher status than the potentially redneck homebodies who, unfortunately for these authors, make up more than 98 percent of the world’s population. The opposition between cosmopolitans and locals is clearly marked in all its morality in their text, “Nomadism and miscegenation appear as figures of virtue, as the first ethical practices on the terrain of empire . . . Today’s celebrations of the local can be regressive and fascistic when they oppose circulations and mixture” (Hardt and Negri 2000:362).

There are interesting points of similarity and overlap here between this supposedly radical thinking and cosmopolitan ideology. They can be summarized in the following parallel lists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1998</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The national</td>
<td>The postnational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The local</td>
<td>The global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social(ist)</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneous</td>
<td>Heterogeneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monocultural</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality (sameness)</td>
<td>Hierarchy (différence)</td>
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These terms are meant to indicate the transition of self-identified progressive thinking over a period of 30 years. Although these oppositions are somewhat oversimplified, they nonetheless capture the nature of the shift. The post-national is today seen as the royal road to the future of mankind, whereas the national is a horrible leftover from a nationalist past that included essentialist and therefore racist tendencies. The global is also regarded as an expression of this new nomadic desire to transcend the prison of locality. Individualism has crept into the former collectivist (that is, nationalist or socialist) ideology and has managed to associate this with Foucauldian totalistic control. The heterogeneous has become a goal in itself, a generalized cultural pluralism of different identities, religions, and political projects. The multicultural quandary is an expression of the same shift toward heterogeneity. Culture is no longer regarded as part of the structure of existence, but rather is seen as a mere role set, as something that the individual can practice by choice, by elective affinity – like joining the golf club instead of the Wahabists, at least on Monday. In the process of this transition equality is increasingly replaced by hierarchy via an emphasis on difference. This is the key to pluralism as a political form, one in which elite rule is essential. Difference becomes the dominant value while equality is seen as an ugly result of totalitarian rule.

It is significant that a work so clearly marked by the radical politics of its authors can become a Harvard University Press bestseller in the United States, enthusiastically welcomed in the pages of Foreign Affairs as by authors connected to Public Culture.
This book provides a kind of political framework in two ways. It enables the cosmopolitans to reinforce their progressive identities, eliminating the relevance of class and pointing the way to a structure of global power in which the nomadic is defined as the wave of the future revolution. This is a fine piece of ideological fusion, one that is in many ways crucial for the hegemony of the new elites. Lévi-Strauss discussed, in another context, the way in which what he called diametric dualism, egalitarian in form, could be transformed into concentric dualism, which has the quality of being able to represent hierarchy as equality. This is dualism of center and periphery rather than left and right. In political terms the transition captures a process of hierarchization and centralization that is evident in the recent political evolution in Europe, where a former left/right opposition is currently being replaced by what is referred to as the “Third Way," or perhaps more revealing, the German Neue Mitte in which there is a fusion of social democracy and neoliberal politics, one in which social democracy is the shell and neoliberalism the core. But similar tendencies were evident in American “New Democracy” (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000). The hierarchic and encompassing theme is also expressed in the discourses of international organizations such as UNESCO, to say nothing of the already mentioned WEF. Empire is an almost uncanny expression of many of these tendencies in globalizing discourse and its ambivalent reference to Foucauldian global governance, without a physical center, but all-encompassing, is an excellent concentration of what seems to be “in the air” among certain globalizers. The popularity of the book among certain elites might well be due to the resonance of its message for those who are already tuned in. The relation between globalization, the reconfiguration of class relations, and the production of hegemonic representations is both a viable and important subject to which anthropology, endowed with a clear sense of structural transformation, should be able to contribute. But this cannot be accomplished by the kind of currently popular globalization approaches that are part of the object for which we need to account.

REFERENCES


