Introduction

The theoretical aim of the present chapter is to argue for the importance of holistic interpretations in the understanding of the contemporary global order and its most recent transformations. The current effort and interest in the restoration or at least maintenance of a holistic perspective are perhaps more obvious today when it appears necessary in order to grapple with a contemporary world that social sciences have relinquished to the joys of chaos, parts, “partial truths,” and various forms of assemblage. It is still evident in quasi-prophetic calls for a shift in mode, from a holistic approach, focused on the study of a culture, toward a contemporary approach focused on assemblages, problematizations, rationalities, and so forth. (Rees in Rabinow et al. 2008: 79)

In order to counter the above vision and even the particular use of the term, however, it is important to be clear concerning that to which we refer since the word itself has a long and varied history. It is neither necessary nor possible given the constraints of the current chapter to discuss the issue of holism at length. For our purposes we can note that holism has two broad usages. The first is simply the assumption that the social realities that we deal with can be understood as wholes, as structures, as orders of different elements linked to one another in comprehensible ways. Holism, in this sense, refers to the assumption that social reality can be understood in terms of the interrelation of its different parts or phenomena, and that the latter are connected in some systematic way. Functionalism represents the empiricist variant of this approach insofar as it is assumed that wholes are tangible, concrete, and observable phenomena, while structuralism assumes that wholes are theoretical constructs that account for or explain phenomena that are otherwise disparate and apparently unrelated to one another. The structuralist point of
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view is identical to that of the natural sciences, where fundamental properties of reality are not themselves observable but rather posited as underlying features that account for our observations. You cannot see gravity but you can see its effects. It is this that resonates with Marx’s dictum,

All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided. (Marx and Engels 1967: 797)

This holism is simply about the act of understanding itself, the reduction of the phenomenal to its underlying principles, a set of systemic interconnections.

However, there is another usage of the term “holism” that is emic rather than etic and that follows from the work of Dumont on India and on its comparison with the West. This holism in the most general sense refers to a particular social order in which fundamental categories encompass all others, which become subsets of the former. Thus the well-known contrast between Homo hierarchicus and Homo aequalis (the titles of Dumont 1967 and 1976, respectively) is an argument for a distinction between a society within which the individual is encompassed within the larger social order and one in which the individual is the dominant value or, in other terms, category so that the social order either is generated via interaction or exists as an imposed order with respect to the individual. But in the latter case as in the former, the individual is a socially determined category and individualism as such is not a sign of real autonomization with respect to the social order – not, at least, in etic terms. This is a crucial distinction, one between holism as a theoretical approach and the proposition that there are social orders in which social encompassment is the dominant organizational principle.

Dumont represents both usages of holism in his work on India and on the history of individualism. “Holism” refers, on the one hand, to a holistic general understanding of the social order, one that assumes that if social life were random there would be nothing to understand. As my professor of linguistics once taught me, the purpose of theory is to account for departures from randomness. On the other hand, as stated above, holism also offers a particular view on the relation of the individual to society, one in which the social is always primary, even in individualistic societies, insofar as the individualized subject is itself a product of a particular social order. Actors are, of course, autonomous subjects in one sense or another, but if men do have free will, the will is not free. At least this is a working hypothesis of such an approach.

Global Systemic Anthropology

The term “global system” might appear contrary to what has been conceived as an abandonment of what is disdainfully referred to as “modernist scientism,” not least as the abandonment is understood by those involved, as an intellectual evolution or
even a transcendence. The term has, thus, a function in denoting something that I feel is important, not least in this era of fantasy concepts such as “millennial capitalism,” “fear of small numbers,” creolizations, hybridizations, assemblages, and the like, terms that have filled the vacuum left by scientific thinking. The terms are enmeshed in the discourses of globalization which came, not from anthropology and certainly not from research in our field, but from business economics, economic geography, and, more recently, postcolonial cultural studies. In the latter versions that have been appropriated by certain anthropologists, we have arrived at a new era, and certain anthropologists have even gone over into that other, global world and beckon us, as prophets, to join them. This is not merely an anthropological delusion. Even quasi-philosophical works such as *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000) are full of biblical quotations and allusions, almost all to the prophets. And all of it is, it might be suggested, based on personal experience of a particular position in the world, that of the traveling elite scholar, and here the real source of the new discourses is the presumably the “class consciousness of the frequent flyer,” since in fact the figure that has become a sacred object of adoration, *the nomad* (completely misconceived from an anthropological perspective), is not a more representative phenomenon today than it was a century ago, to say nothing of previous centuries. While not dwelling on this problem, there are particular features that are important to note. First is the implicit evolutionism based on the assumption that we have moved from the local to the global, understood as caused by technological change. Second is the tendency, especially among certain postmodern-oriented writers such as Appadurai, to deny the value of holistic accounts in general. The latter has done this from the start, most clearly in his critique of Dumont.

There is a fundamental set of misconceptions in Appadurai’s appreciation of Dumont. First, for a critique that pretends to discover the way in which external categories are applied to falsely characterize populations, his own assumption that Dumont’s association of caste with India is a form of “incarceration” as are all classical anthropological categorizations that link geography to particular cultural traits is a simple and deliberate misconception of the latter’s work, which deals with the nature of caste as a kind of social logic and not as a geographical container. Dumont does not try to essentialize India but to understand the workings of a particular structure. And he discusses all kinds of empirical cases that are at variance with the “pure” model as well as engages in debate with other anthropologists on this issue. Appadurai offers no critique of Dumont’s conclusions or his model but, instead (something that is all too common), seems to attack him by mere labeling (i.e., a guilt by association). The net result is that we should be wary of holism as a dangerous colonial ideology. In the same article Appadurai praises diffusionism as liberating (1988: 39) without considering its basis in European racialism. The agenda is clear: fragments are good, wholes are bad, locality is incarceration, and movement is freedom.

This is not so much a critique of emic holism but of what is conceived as the essentializing tendency inherent in holistic models (i.e., that there are specific
structures or cultural forms associated with specific populations). His own view of the global as consisting of divergent scapes and riddled with chaos is a prime example of an antisystemic and antiholistic perspective. To say, as Appadurai does (1990), that technoscapes, financescapes, ethnoscapes, and so on are divergent in the era of globalization is to simply deny the strongly systemic relations that connect the phenomena so artificially divided. To call them scapes at all is also a dangerous reification of phenomena that are deeply intertwined in broader social logics.

Global systemic anthropology begins at the other end, with an attempt to grasp the significance of the global with respect to whatever local phenomena are under study. It begins, in fact, with a foundational argument of Lévi-Strauss’s work on kinship. The elementary structure (or atom) of kinship is an atomic global system and the expression of the all-encompassing nature of such social relations. No societies have ever been isolated except by acts of isolation, by either self or others, and such acts are themselves expressions of the existence of the larger relational context. This does not imply, of course, a universal uniformity. On the contrary, the global in this argument is simply the larger space of total social reproduction within which differences are maintained and themselves reproduced. If the global has properties of its own, they are emergent properties of the larger reproductive processes themselves. There is no contradiction between practice and structure here since “structure” refers not to concrete manifestations, like institutions, buildings, and the like, but to the properties of social practices. This is also an interpretation that Lévi-Strauss properly understood in his debate with Sartre in *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962). In other words, structure refers to structural properties of social process and not to their products, for example, the kinds of behavioral relations that were the ultimate reality for Radcliffe-Brown. For structuralism it is about the generation of phenomena and not the phenomena themselves. *This implies that global systems are not geographically delimited entities but the properties of the global processes that both produce and transform such entities in time and space.* The issue of boundaries is an internal issue of the practice of bounding within particular social orders and not of some kind of objective boundaries.

It is in this kind of argument that “globalization” was conceived not as an evolutionary stage but as a phase in a pulsating system of expanding and contracting centers. This implies a reconceptualization of all phenomena that fall within the discourse of globalization. No understanding of the so-called scapes, for example, is possible without an understanding of the categories that constitute such phenomena. Ethnicity is a particular phenomenon that is culturally variable in the way it is constructed. The notion of ethnoscape implies a homogenization of what are very different realities, thus the very essentialization that Appadurai abhors. Ethnicity in whatever form it is practiced cannot be simply combined with a spatial-demographic notion of scape. The fact that large parts of the crisis-ridden world are experiencing what is referred to as “ethnicization” can only be comprehended by placing practices of ethnicization in a structured articulation with demographic movement, the collapse of social mobility, and the increase of situations of potential
conflict, all of which can be linked with the condition of “hegemonic” decline in which processes of homogenization turn into their opposites, processes of fragmentation and heterogenization in the zones of decline, not for example in China, where the inverse is the case, however strained.

Global systems neither are systems somehow out there, above the local, nor produce the local. They refer to the structural properties and/or logics, of the processes of reproduction that link and constitute-by-articulation localities, and the latter are local in the social sense rather than a geographically reductionist sense. The global does not come after the local, but is always, from the Mother’s Brother and up, constitutive in the interactive sense. It is not an empirical (as in world systems literature) but a structural concept, one closer to the notion of “order of orders.” In the following, I shall make a go of integrating the holism of global systemic analysis with the holism of structures of representation and organization that are fundamental to the contemporary period of sociocosmological transformation.

Hegemonic Decline and Cultural Transformation

Horizontal/vertical polarization

The broader transformation referred to above is one in which modernist-based identities have declined. The latter were founded on movement away from cultural roots toward a more abstract sense of development, of both self and society. The cultural was reduced to lifestyle, a question of roles, of clubs, of voluntary association, rather than a deeper sense of belonging. The overriding tendency of this earlier period, one that transformed the cultural order of Western societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was a distancing from the fixed and culturally embedded, one that was often expressed as a liberation from “tradition” (even though, as Marshall Sahlins has so well put it, this liberation process is a particular Western tradition in its own right; Sahlins 1999). It was underpinned by real social mobility, not primarily geographical (although urbanization is certainly part of it) but also an increase in life chances often based on the gains of bottom-up class struggle. And it was all dependent upon the increasing economic expansion of the West and its achievement of world hegemony. As the limits of this development approached, modernism began to lose its punch; the evolutionary future began to fade and the past loomed as the more concrete “real” future, hence the rise of the practice of rooting, of religiosity, ethnicization, and indigenization. The decline of hegemony has led to four large-scale tendencies to collective reidentification:

1. Regional: Regional minorities began to assert themselves from the mid-1970s (Bretons, Occitanists, Catalans, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, and numerous others).
This is documented in numerous texts and studies of the new ethnic movements and in classical works such as Tom Nairn’s *The Break-Up of Britain* (1977). It has continued even today at the highest level with the ambivalence of English identity in relation to “Britishness.” Even the English can be said to have been forced to deal with themselves as a regional identity within Britain, where the former imperial identity is no longer dominant. Regionalism is an expression of the fragmenting of the larger national unity.

2. *Indigenous:* Indigenous populations (according to the UN definition) were hardly an issue until the mid-1970s, but the category has undergone an explosive development since then in large parts of the world. However, it is most drastically pronounced within the declining hegemonic spheres, in the West and Japan and in their internal and external peripheries. From a situation in which such groups were disappearing and by and large ignored, there has emerged an increasing self-identification (according to some sources, almost 500 million) and the institutionalization of global representation within the UN system.

3. *Immigrant:* In periods of expansion, there is a strong tendency to vertical integration within host countries, as was the case during a large part of the twentieth century where both labor migration and refugee-based migration fed into a substantial assimilation or at least ordering of populations within receiving states. The reversals spoken of above are expressed in the declining capacity of states to integrate immigrants and a consequent marginalization, enclavization, and diasporization of identity (i.e., the maintenance, revival, and/or reinforcement of long-distance ethnic identities).

4. *National:* There is a shift in this period from nationality-as-political-citizenship to nationality-as-cultural-citizenship. The culturalization of nationality in Europe is also an expression of the ethnicization process. This is not a mere reaction, as some have suggested, to globalization or to mass migration. It appears to have occurred in the wake of a broader transformation.

I have suggested elsewhere (Friedman 1994) that the reason that these “new” identities work is because they are rehabilitating for those who participate in them. This is an important aspect of the process that should not be forgotten. It is not merely about fragmenting, but from the individual subject’s point of view about rebirth. Thus fragmentation at the state level implies simultaneous integration at the subnational or substate level. It is important to note that these are always partial statistical tendencies that are themselves filled with variation and even conflict. The relation between the cycle of hegemony and the changing practices of identity can be depicted in terms of the graphic in Figure 13.1, one that was first suggested in the 1980s but still appears to be suitable as a rendering of this process.

I have referred to this process in terms of horizontal fragmentation or even polarization, since the former often leads to the latter in periods of increasing competition and crisis. Multiculturalism or more generally pluralism can be more or less deduced from this process. It is simply the breakup of larger modernist political
spheres into smaller self-identified fragments that compete for "recognition" within those spheres. This is reflected in the intellectual discourses that emerge in the period (from the late 1970s onward) in which all larger formations, whether scientific paradigms or nation-states, are attacked as Foucauldian sources of homogenizing power. Thus postmodernism and its postcolonial variants perfectly express this change in vision without being able to account for it. In anthropology, for example, this is the period of declining structuralisms and Marxisms and rising culturalisms. The Left that had once identified itself in terms of the overturning of capitalism became something quite different. From having protested against American imperialism, understood in structural and material terms, it turned to the critique of American and then all of Western culture as the very basis of this imperialism, now understood as cultural imperialism. This was an era of class mobility for many academics, including those from the upper classes of the Third World (Dirlik 1997), notably in a period in which real working-class wages were on the decline. The mobility of these populations is an essential aspect of what is referred to as "vertical polarization." The struggle became relocated within university departments, especially in the United States, and thus began the era known for the use of the term "political correctness." Former leftists who refused to follow suit (such as erstwhile SDS leader Todd Gitlin [1995], and Russell Jacoby, who has made an interesting contribution to the issue with his *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* [1999]) were reclassified by many as reactionary or at least regressive in relation to the new liberal multiculturalism (represented by, e.g., Stanley Fish). It is interesting to follow the fate of particular authors as markers of larger changes in the state of the world system. The latter change in state, also described in part by Jacoby, is what can be called the inversion of ideology, represented in part as shown in Table 13.1.

Jacoby states quite simply what he sees as an inversion of left ideology: "We are witnessing not simply the defeat of the left, but its conversion and perhaps inversion" (1994: 11). After noting the rise of multiculturalism and its politics – going back to
Horace Kallen, who was more pessimistic about the idea because he saw mass migration creating so much opposition – Jacoby argues that pluralism has become a substitute for radicalism: “The rise of multiculturalism correlates with the decline of utopia, an index of the exhaustion of political thinking” (1994: 33).

The linkage between global transformation and the emergence of multicultural ideology connects declining hegemony with the decline of modernism, the inversion of leftist ideology, and the replacement of material critique by the critique of Western culture, of the national as essentialist and homogeneous. In this process, hierarchy also returns as a figure of an alternative future. Among those who have been involved in the recent Balkan conflicts, there are those on both Left and Right (I shall return to this interesting fusion) who have begun to think of something like the Habsburg Empire as a solution to such ethnic strife. And among many “post-colonial” authors, the Ottoman Empire has been celebrated for its successful multiculturalism and is defined in opposition to that awful phenomenon the Western nation-state, all the while forgetting the actual social order of that empire and its violently oppressive character (which ought, of course, to be expected from any imperial order). Even the caste order, at least under the Raj, has come in for celebratory praise, for compared to contemporary Mumbai with its Hindu nationalism things were better in colonial India, which was, perhaps, the true multicultural paradise lost where there was a place for everyone, including the poor. Opposing the violence of contemporary Hindu nationalist rule, Appadurai harks back to a past (that turns out to be the British Empire) where things were much better, even for those at the bottom of the social order.

The truly destitute were always there, but even they fit into a complex subeconomy of pavement dwelling, rag picking, petty crime, and charity. (Appadurai 2000: 629)

Appadurai then turns to the recent change that upset this ordered hierarchical life: “Sometime in the 1970s all this began to change and a malignant city began to emerge from beneath the surface of the cosmopolitan ethos of the prior period” (Appadurai 2000: 629). The implied contrast is that between an exclusionist nationalism and a

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**Table 13.1  The inversion of left ideology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality (sameness)</td>
<td>Hierarchy (difference)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cosmopolitan pluralism based on a cultural division of labor, all the more peaceful since everyone knows their place. It might be suggested that Hindu nationalism, not a fixed entity, is primarily the expression of a strong nationalization process, typical for periods of hegemonic expansion. It should not be assumed, then, that it is indicative of the kind of ethnic fragmentation discussed above.

In any case, the fact that the increasingly obvious identity conflicts that characterize much of the world are seen as a deplorable error by many “cosmopolitan intellectuals” provides an important linkage between that fragmentation and a vertical polarization that has produced a vigorous new cosmopolitan identity. Since the 1980s, there has been a rapidly increasing class stratification in the West. It is expressed in the divergence between rising middle- and upper-class incomes and the downward mobility of the lower-middle and lower classes. Gini Indexes, the major statistical measure of income inequality, provide some idea of this process which has increased since the mid-1980s and 1990s, not least in central Western countries such as the UK, the US, and even Sweden, once famous for its extreme equality and where the Index increased by 25 percent over a 4-year period in the beginning of the 1990s. And it is not merely an issue of the astronomical incomes of certain financial capitalists. There is a new breadth to this process that includes various elites: media, cultural, academic, and not least political. In our research on Sweden and France, we have noted that this is a question not just of national class identity but also increasingly of a cosmopolitanization of the elites, who identify more as citizens of the world than of their particular countries. The former CEO of media giant Bertelsmann, Thomas Middlehoff, said concerning his role in the American media world:

We’re not foreign. We’re international…. I’m an American with a German passport. (Quoted in McChesney 1999: 4)

But even in the case of a Swedish minister of integration, who when asked if he was Swedish replied, “NO definitely not!” what can be detected here is an emphatic identification out of the nation-state and, more specifically, out of the nation. This is not a quirk but a systemic effect of the inversion of Western ideology coupled with the rise of a new “postnational” elite. This is the distinct expression of the cosmopolitanization of the elites of the world system and not the moral imperative of a new class of do-gooders.

Cosmopolitanization

Cosmopolitanization is a cultural identification process that tends to create a rather closed group over time, in spite of the usage of words like “open to the larger world,” “citizen of the world,” and the like. Members of this category often associate only with their own “kind” in positional or class terms and are often part
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of increasingly endosocial and even endogamic networks. This is not a particularly new phenomenon. On the contrary, it can be suggested that cosmopolitan identity is a structure of the long run, perhaps even longer than modern capitalism, since similar representations of self and world can be found in a great many previous eras, going back at least to the Hellenistic states. What has been referred to as the “cosmopolitan bourgeoisie” (Jones 1987) of the pre-corporate period in Europe exemplifies precisely this pattern:

Those traditional firms were operated by families with Liberal inclinations and a relaxed attitude to nationality. Many of them had moved from one state to another within the past few decades. Now as far as local cultural and political circumstances would permit, they inclined to mix freely with families of their own sort, regardless of origin. (Jones 1987: 91–2; emphasis added)

Recent research on foreign elites in France (Wagner 1999) reveals the closed nature of this openness, and that it is founded upon a genealogical mode of identification which is a crucial aspect of closure itself:

I have expatriate blood…. I am American by passport and nationality but my family and that of my wife have a great many branches in many countries, which entails that one always has one foot in the United States and one abroad. (Informant quote in Wagner 1999: 116; my translation)¹

My father was something of a vagabond, we have it in our veins. My brothers are the same: I have a brother in Austria, one in Finland, a sister in Spain. My father moved often and I must have learned it from him. (Informant quote in Wagner 1999: 116; my translation)²

Here the cosmopolitan is certainly not hybrid as a social category even if it crosses all sorts of national boundaries. It defines a status that is quite distinctive with respect to national categories, whether they are mixed or not. It is noteworthy that it is transformed into terms of blood as is the traditional practice among most aristocrats of the past. In order to share hybrid blood it is necessary to maintain a significant degree of endogamy, thus producing a closed group, no matter how it announces itself to the world. The curious contradiction in all of this for many multiculturalists and self-proclaimed hybrids is the fact that mixture is here associated with roots and blood, which appears on the surface to be an impossible combination of openness and closedness, of essentialism and hybridity. Now aside from the fact that this is simply a problem of faulty thinking, it demonstrates a deeper confusion. The fact that people network across national boundaries does not in any way contradict the fact that they live well within other social boundaries. This may sound trivial, but it is exactly the error committed by those who celebrate cosmopolitan hybridity as a New Age, a world without boundaries. On the contrary, cosmopolitanism is yet another example of diaspora (in social terms)
formation in which ethnicity may well be transnational, but is nevertheless an expression of social closure. One might add that this extreme embodiment of mixture is a strong form of precisely what the hybridists abhor in essentialism. But this essentialist identity represents itself as the epitome of ouverture:

Curiosity, openness, tolerance are terms used to designate the qualities of this position. (Wagner 1999: 142; my translation)³

And opposed to this are the Others, the people who inhabit the bottom end of the social order and who are represented as “terrestrials”:

The earthling, then, is someone who occupies a limited space. His activities are concentrated on the lands that he possesses. If another person is seen on his lands he will not accept him. He is attached to his family, his children, whom he wants to keep at home, because it is his family that cultivates the land…. I think that the popular classes are more attached to their origins. The English in France are usually middle class. In England the popular classes are more nationalist than others, less open. (Wagner 1999: 189; my translation)⁴

The nationals, the “people,” the popular classes, the dangerous classes, and the indigens are all part of a vast process of categorization, a cosmology within which particular categories are positioned but where there is also a great deal of variation.

Concentric Dualism, Hierarchization, and the Remaking of Political Space

While the above discussion is concentrated on self-identification and identification of others within a larger population, this process dovetails with a broader transformation of the political order. Cosmopolitanism implies a potential cosmopolitics. The we–they opposition enunciated by these elites might seem to contradict their self-image as world encompassing, but this is not a logical contradiction, simply a confusion of categories. Dumont noted long ago, in relation to the logic of caste, that encompassment was a form of asymmetrical (concentric) dualism. This was also a crucial argument of Lévi-Strauss when analyzing the difference between what he called diametric and concentric dualism in kinship-based societies. The former is typical for a balanced opposition in which there can only be two groups or multiples of two, whereas the latter represents an opening up toward third, fourth, or n groups, but now organized in a hierarchical continuum. This particular relation might be used to tackle the political logics of the contemporary state order in transition. If the political elites are a crucial element in this process of cosmopolitan expansion, if they tend to climb to a higher order of identification,
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European or global, then there are a number of elements that can be combined into a new order of governance in this part of the world. These elements are as follows:

1. The emergence of new public management as an alternative to democracy. Interestingly, it is Bertelsmann, one of the world’s largest media concerns, that was most deeply involved in this development with their international project on better local government in which prizes were given primarily for increasing efficiency of the governmental process via downsizing and outsourcing.

The past decades have witnessed the emergence of a new public management discourse, not least in Washington and London think tanks. New managerial philosophy is linked in international networks referred to as transnational discourse communities like the Network for Better Local Government, financed by media giant Bertelsmann. The strategies developed are carry-overs from private sector strategies of effective administration which use techniques of marketing in the reorganization of government. This implies the replacement of such clumsy practices as voting, political debate based on a plurality of ideologies[,] by more efficient market based mechanisms. Governance, in this approach, is no longer an issue of specific political goals but of mere practical solutions to immediate problems….

NPM discourse is constantly confronted with a powerful counter-discourse of “public sector values” stressing democracy, equality, accountability, participation etc. In NPM discourse, the contradiction does not exist; management techniques are said to provide the same benefits as classical democratic institutions: to be responsive to customers is equivalent to democratic control, measuring performance is the essence of accountability, choice is pluralism, and so on. (Bislev and Salskov-Iversen 2000: 27)

2. This has entered the debates concerning development of what has been called “organic” democracy, that is, democracy without the demos whose function is reduced to legitimizing the organic process, one that is based on negotiations between principal actors, MNCs, ethnic and other corporate actors, and government itself.

3. In this process of management, the categories of Left and Right largely disappear, replaced by praxeology. And the latter is expressed by the Right in some countries, and the Left in others, as la voie unique giving rise to New Democracy in the US, New Labour in Britain, and, even better, Neue Mitte in Germany. In this there is a transition away from dependence upon a “people.” That is why Blair could be referred to as “Thatcher without the handbag,” and Giddens, referred to by Bourdieu and Wacquant as “le messager du prince,” can argue that sometimes “progressive” can mean something quite different than what one usually assumes. Sometimes the only way to increase welfare is by dismantling the welfare apparatus. This can be represented as in Figure 13.2.
The people become the dangerous classes in this transformation, and quite popular leaders often become the opposite of what is deemed truly democratic, whether they be Rod Livingstone ("Red Rod"), who became mayor of London against the wishes of the Labour Party, or Joerg Haider of the Austrian nationalist right, who won 30 percent of the vote in a national election. It makes no difference, as long as they are external to the respectable core. And being not respectable is equivalent to being undemocratic. But in this process the term “democratic” becomes an essence, an embodiment of virtue, defined as respectability itself. Thus, when the Swedish foreign minister was assassinated some years ago, it was said that she was murdered in the midst of carrying out her democratic duties. She was out shopping at an expensive department store. Is that democratic practice? This would imply that no matter what a certain minister who is an elected representative of the people happens to be doing, it is automatically defined as the practice of democracy. Sweden actually had a minister of democracy, a position held by the daughter (Britta Lejon) of a previous minister of justice (Anna Greta Lejon) who said in an interview that it was through her mother that she was awarded the position. Is this part of a redefinition of the political field in which all actions by the “correct” people are necessarily of a democratic nature?

This transition is a mere tendency and is surely contested and incomplete. But if realized it would imply something that is partially accomplished on a fairly broad scale in a set of discourses and practices that elevate the state above those who it represents. This would seem to imply a historical retransfer of sovereignty from the people to the state. The tendency is evidenced in the recent elections and postelection activities in France, where a new centrist “democratic” party has been created and where the new conservative president, Sarkozy, has successfully recruited several famous socialists to participate in his government. In Italy the new “democratic” party is a strange fusion of Christian Democrats and leftists.
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Vertical polarization is a decisive factor in the logical transition to multicultural states. The distance created by upward mobility toward the cosmopolitan stratosphere recreates a positioning similar to the cosmopolitan Freemason elites of the nineteenth century, and is one in which a quite particular relation emerges between the governors and the governed.

The cosmopolitan bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century came to adopt a perspective on 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, realised the primordial alienation from the community which is the precondition for market relations, exploitation of wage labour, and abstract citizenship. (Rosenstock Huessy 1987 [1961]: 364, quoted in Van der Pijl 1998: 99)

This “foreignness” is the basis of the liberation of the elites from the role of representative and embodies the possibility of a reconfiguration of sovereignty. This is exemplified by the attempt in Sweden to constitutionally introduce a multicultural state in place of the former nation-state. Sweden is an extraordinary example because of its particular history of being extremely homogenizing and then suddenly declaring itself to have a new organization based on an increasingly multicultural or even multiethnic foundation. In the government proposition of 1997–8 that is the basis for this transition, it is stated that Sweden no longer has a common history and that it instead consists of a number of different ethnicities, including Swedes. This is a formula for the transformation of the nation-state into a plural society, one that has been partially implemented in recent years. The vertical polarization which leads to the emergence of a political class identified as outside or beyond the nation transforms the latter into an ethnic group along with others and negates the notion of peoplehood. The state thus becomes a neutral actor above society. And this combined with new public management creates a power thrust toward an absolutist order of governance. The proposition contains the following revealing statements:

The point of departure for a new politics according to the government: Society’s ethnic and cultural plurality should be the basis of the formulation of general policy and its implementation in all the domains and levels of society. As a process, integration concerns the way in which different parts are united in a larger unity. A country’s history often serves to integrate individuals in a larger unity. As a large group of people originate from other countries, the Swedish population now lacks a shared history. (Government of Sweden 1997–8: 19, 22, 23)

The upward mobility of elites has also been described for France, although here in a situation in which republicanism (i.e., a strong sense of nationality) has been
Friedman maintained, albeit with numerous conflicts. Work by Julliard and Joffrin has tried to show the way in which a Left elite substituted cultural politics for class politics and in which the people have again become a dangerous class. In this process, the move to pluralism is again part of the same logic.

The exhaustion of the social democratic model has transformed militants of the revolution, then of reform, into militants of cultural liberalism. (Julliard 1997: 201; my translation)

This is expressed in the following shift in politics:

For workers it has substituted immigrants and has transferred to them the double emotion of fear and compassion that the proletarian once inspired. However, the immigrant is not only the victim of social exclusion, but also of ethnic exclusion, in other words of racism. (Julliard 1997: 201, 105; my translation)

Indigenization

At the lower end of the social order, this polarization provides a mirror image of the cosmopolitanism of the elites. Here also we see the ambivalent relations that develop in an arena in which there is both extreme ethnic fragmentation and class polarization. The indigenization referred to in Figure 13.3 is a product of the collapse of the recognition of class identity and class politics.

The downwardly mobile find refuge in national identity or in a stronger localism in which rootedness is a central figure. The most extreme examples of this process are revealing with respect to the larger structure. There is the example of the Washitaw Indians (self-identified) who inhabit several states of the US South.
and who are black. This is a new tribe whose name is related to the Wichita, who appear to have adopted runaway slaves in the nineteenth century, but who today represent an emergent indigenous identity. They claim to have come to the New World when Africa was still joined to that continent (i.e., before the arrival of the Red Indians). They demand sovereignty, have a home page and empress, and are allied with the Republic of Texas a well-known white racist militia group. How can this be, one might ask? The answer lies in their common goals and common enemies. They demand autonomy and control over their own territory, as do militias. They do not seek to take over the state. Their main enemies are Washington, Rome, the Jews, and all other cosmopolitans and their agenda of world rule. The head of the KKK in St. Petersburg, Florida, was once a local head of SDS. He sports a poster of Che Guevara in his office. But he trains together with a local black power group. Again, the two unlikely partners agree to be separate from one another and they have the same enemies as the previous group. These are indigenizing localist movements that cannot be confused with the state-focused ideologies of fascism and Nazism. They display similarities with the European New Right which is multicultural in some ways, supporting the rights of all culturally identified groups while rejecting mixture. It is worth noting that indigeneity can leave the framework of the nation-state at the bottom, just as cosmopolitans leave it at the top. Internationalist racism just as the international organizations of indigenous populations share a common structural position.

This process is also related to the general ethnicization of lower-class mixed zones in the world, where turf wars abound and identities are tribalized. There is a fragmentation, grassroots as well as state implemented, and this occurs in a situation in which locals or nationals are equally part of the process, leading ultimately to a state of generalized tension and conflict. In the fascinating book *Redneck Manifesto*, this discourse from the bottom is quite explicit:

I tried living in the big-city multicultural thingie for twelve years, only to realize that most of multiculturalism’s proponents – rich white people – didn’t want me. So I moved to a neighborhood that is redneck, blue-collar, white trash. Low rent. Low class. Lowlife. Truckers, welders, meth dealers, pit bulls, rotted picket fences.

St Johns is most notorious for its high white-trash quotient. Yet more blacks and Mexicans live here than in most parts of the city. For economic reasons, the trash – be it black, brown, or white – have always lived side by side in America. It’s the Gold Card whites who’ve always paid to segregate themselves, leaving the rednecks, niggers and spics to fight over day-old cookies. (Goad 1997: 35)

Here the consciousness that the fragmentation is strongest at the bottom of the social order is salient as well as the fact that the bottom is itself a class phenomenon. This generates an explicit aggression against those “cosmopolitans” who are held responsible for multicultural ideology while they themselves live entirely segregated lives with respect to the real problems of these dangerous zones.
The polarization addressed here is a local-global articulation within the world system that has had a massive effect on the reconfiguration of territorial states, in this case nation-states, producing rising cosmopolitan elites who identify with a unified globalized world and declining middle and lower classes who engage in a process of indigenization. The polarization generates a complementary opposition between the two so that they each identify themselves by contrast with the other. These are not, as we have stressed, new oppositions, new categories. What have changed are the sharpness of the conflict and the saliency of the categories themselves. The multicultural representations of the elites divide and fragment the earlier representation of “peoplehood” and even of class, while the indigenizing ideologies of the lower reaches of society invest in precisely this representation, now turned into either national-ethnic identification or subnational secessionist identities.

Geopolitical Fracture in the Global Order

Above, we discussed the way in which hegemonic decline was expressed in the form taken by fragmentation as identity politics and the tendency to the formation of minority communities of different kinds: regional, diasporic, indigenous. The diasporic, we argued, was the product, not of demographic movement but of the way identity is practiced in such movement. In Paris, where there were only a handful of mosques in 1970, the number rose to well over a thousand in the 1980s and has continued to increase. Among North Africans who were once economically integrated into the French economy and even “the Republic,” the long economic decline led to increasing long-term unemployment. In an interview, a woman from one of the northern banlieues of Paris recounted how her life in La Courneuve had changed since the 1970s. She was herself white and had been married first to a North African and then a black African, and had children in both marriages. In the early days, she said, there was a strong sense of class solidarity and generosity, and ethnic differences were marginal phenomena. Today things have become quite the opposite. She is afraid for her children, who are often attacked by members of other groups, and she longs to live elsewhere with her family. There is a high level of gang violence within the area, and any sense of local solidarity is all but gone. In this period, many North Africans who were brought up without knowing Arabic are now (re)learning the language, and Islam, which was a minor affair in the past, has now become a dominant form of identity, not least political identity.

Here there is a further connection to a geopolitical fracture, that which has become evident since the attack on the World Trade Center, and one that has again made Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) into a hot issue of discussion and debate. There are numerous accounts of this phenomenon, and without
discussing them here, it might be suggested that the model of hegemonic decline that we have suggested is a useful frame of analysis. There is an interesting interpretation from within the Muslim world, that of Zaïki Laïdi, who links the current conflict to what might be called the “Ottoman blues”:

This idea of loss of status, of demotion of the Muslim world is central. In the Muslim imaginary, belonging to a powerful civilizational complex that rivaled and even surpassed the Occident is essential. Without this historical fact going back more than ten centuries, the feeling of demotion would probably not have the same force. (2001: 14; my translation)

There is a geopolitical vision here, one that is similar to that of the West, one that is typical of all imperial civilizations as well. But the fact that it has been mobilized at this point is significant, since it would seem to coincide not with the formation of (American) Empire, but with its decline and failure. This does not necessarily mean that there is a real contention for world power involved, although the idea of an alternative world government based on Sharia is perhaps the only fully developed example of “alter-globalization.” The diasporic connection itself clearly plays an important role, since many of those who were earlier recruited to the cause of Islamism were themselves immigrants to the West – and often economically privileged, to say the least – but, at least in some cases, apparently snapped, realizing their ultimate marginalization by what they saw as a decadent civilization whose values were suddenly entirely rejected. The support for acts of terror in the ghetto areas of the urban zones was often based on a similar set of interpretations among a population that was increasingly self-enclavizing. Muslims cannot be said to have been the least well off in Europe and the US in the years previous to the escalation of conflict, and even today those most discriminated against belong to other groups, such as Africans (non-Muslims included) and Roma.

What is specific in this “clash” is the mobilizing potential linked to precisely the geopolitical imaginary that is today invoked by those intellectuals and others engaged in Islamist struggle. To deny this and to account for their activities in terms of US aggression, Israeli aggression, or internal corruption in the Middle East are totally inadequate. It is a typical “Occidentalist” posture of many Western intellectuals who, ensconced in the inversion of ideology referred to above, do not understand the degree to which they, in this way, totally pacify the Islamist actors who are reduced to mere re-actors. They are in this way robbed of any project that they might in reality possess, and closer examination reveals that there is indeed a real project involved here. In identity terms, Islamism can be related to the process of indigenization, but it is certainly not a localizing strategy. The similarities are primarily related to the strong form of unitary identity and cultural closure which has made it attractive for a number of actors on the Right and especially the extreme Right which share the opposition to the cosmopolitan elites.
The highly orchestrated reaction to the publication of the Mohammed caricatures in Denmark is further evidence of the consolidation of this identity. It is not so much about the different issues that have occupied so many intellectuals, although there are interesting issues involved. Images of Mohammed are not strictly forbidden, and there are plenty of historical examples of such images. Some of the caricatures may well have been insulting but certainly not all or even most of them, and some were instead critical of Pia Kjærgård, leader of the nationalist Danish People's Party, Dansk Folkeparti. Among the images that were taken by a particular Danish Islamic representative to ignite the issue in Egypt and elsewhere were a number of misrepresentations, including one drawing from a "pig feast" in the south of France. Caricatures in Middle Eastern media of both Christians and Jews have proliferated at least throughout this century, long before the establishment of the state of Israel. The issue is not, then, simply a question of insult, but of the political orchestration, quite selective, of insult in a historical conjuncture in which Occidentalism can be maximally exploited.

The role of the inversion of ideology is crucial here, the notion that all world problems emanate from the expansionist power and the culture of the West. This "Occidentalism" (Buruma and Margalit 2004) is not new, of course, but its periodicity is interesting in global terms. While the West is totally occupied by the issue of terrorism, China is busy expanding at an enormous pace in former peripheral zones, such as Africa and South America, where both markets and raw materials are a crucial goal, just as in previous periods of Western imperialism. In this case the material process of global reproduction extends beyond the logical wholes that are emergent in this period which are organized around a former geopolitical scheme, including the Middle East and Europe (and the West, more generally). The latter can be represented as shown in Figure 13.4.

This figure, which can be understood as an extension of Figure 13.3, depicts a polarization between an emergent cosmopolitanism and indigenization of the downwardly mobile within the nation-state. The extension here is toward a more complete geopolitical encompassing of potential global oppositions. As we have suggested above, this opposition is based on the history of shifting imperial power as it exists in the political imaginaries of the West and of the Middle East. This is not necessarily a vindication of the views of Huntington, but it does support the ideological shift that is implied in his analysis, even if the mechanisms involved are quite different. Huntington, as we suggested above, has been attacked on numerous grounds, not least his lack of consideration of the great variation within the Muslim world. In this analysis, however, it is not a question of local variation but of potential mobilization, and here the model does, I would argue, make sense. This implies that the only really existing alter-globalization movement is Islamism, insofar as it proposes an alternative model for the organization of society on a world scale. This schema is meant to delineate a field of identification and of intentionality that encompasses more limited projects which may, of course, be partially contradictory with respect to the larger field.
the support for terrorism, many Islamists and moderate Muslims would clearly be critical at the same time as they might be understanding with respect to the motives of terrorists based on a reaction to the imperial designs of the West. While particular political positions within this field are variable, I would argue that there is a common logic of interpretation. The exploration of this field is the subject of a forthcoming study and cannot be elaborated on here. What is crucial here is the suggestion of an encompassing logic that frames subjective experience and practice.

**Conclusion**

Holism is not a mere assumption. It is a research proposal or direction in which it is assumed that there are structured orders of social reality that can be discovered and understood, and that the world is not the mere result of interaction of individual subjects. These orders are not overt but consist of the properties of social life that are by and large inaccessible to those who participate in it. The wholes are in this approach equivalent to the underlying logics of the social order. They are not immediately observable, unlike their effects. They are the products of hypothetical thinking, which is always asymptotic insofar as hypotheses are inadvertently...
limited and as such falsifiable. The holistic program is nothing more than the search for adequate explanations. And the latter are hypotheses concerning the wholes that account for the observable in terms of the relation between them and their parts.

This might seem drastic to many who have been critical of the modernist scientific paradigm, but if this is admitted as a possibility, then there is no reason to deny, out of hand, the possible existence of holistic accounts. Our analysis has linked cyclical patterns of expansion, contraction, and global shifts in hegemony with large-scale economic political and cultural crises and consequent sociocultural transformation. The holism that we think is required to grasp these complex relations is opposed from the start to current antiholistic trends in the field, and we suggest that the latter can themselves be understood as an aspect of the collapse of modernism which is the substrate within which holism was able to propagate as a scientific approach. Our diagnosis of much of current postmodernist discourse, as well as much globalization discourse, is that it is primarily an ideological effect of the reconfiguring of the global system. This might be turned around, of course, and our own approach criticized for merely being the expression of a previous era of modernism connected to the expansionist phase of Western hegemony. Here it is important to distinguish between the nature of scientific argument, or any argument about the nature of reality, and the social conditions within which such arguments emerge. I have suggested that postmodern and globalization discourses are ideological products of a particular positioning in a period of hegemonic decline in which there is an emergence of new elites. But I have not suggested that the content of such ideologies comprises immediate products of such social conditions, only that certain conditions are conducive to their development. The argument for the existence of global systems within which globalization is a particular historical process is a hypothesis that is open to falsification. Globalization discourse itself is bereft of hypothetical statements. On the contrary, it is a set of propositions about the nature of the world, expressed in descriptive terms. In the absence of hypothetical language, such descriptions are easily conflated with their interpretive assumptions, hence their ideological character. Global systemic analysis surely contains ideological elements as well, in its propositions concerning cyclicity, hegemony, hybridity, and the like. But the latter are hypothetical proposals rather than mere descriptions. Thus the approach as such is not ideological. It is surely the case that cyclical models of historical process might be related to particular social conditions. Ibn Khaldun, Spengler, and Toynbee are all representatives of eras of crisis of hegemonic decline and shifting power relations, even if their explanations for such processes vary in the extreme. What is important here is an attitude, a necessary distance to propositions about the world and an acceptance of a principle of falsification.

Is this Popper? Is it modernism? Is it therefore historically limited and perhaps outdated in today’s world? It is outdated if we assume that whatever dominant ideology prevails, it is an expression of historically progressive change. Modernist
science is, in our approach, an extended metaphor on simple trial-and-error learning. It is not just the socially determined set of representations particular to modernism or even modernity. We need to deal with the broad repertoire of modes of thinking which are quite universal but which are historically selected. This, as Lévi-Strauss argued, is that which relegates particular kinds of thought to dominant positions in particular social orders. The so-called savage mind is universal in this approach. It is not a specific mentality of the “primitive.” Lévi-Strauss argued as we interpret it here, that in the circumstances of modernist culture, the scientific—that is, the trial-and-error approach to reality—becomes a dominant paradigm, while the paradigm that is dominant in kinship-based societies becomes the marginal, if no less important, stuff of dreams, myths, and their analysis. We suggest that political orders are also part of this mythical universe which is why we can analyze them as we have done. The cosmological unconscious and its imaginary logic provide the form within which power structures are configured and reconfigured in this modern world. Thus holism, even in the emic sense, is alive and well in a modern social order that would deny its existence.

Notes

1 The original is as follows: “J’ai le sang ex-patrié.… Je suis américain, de passeport et de nationalité mais ma famille et celle de ma femme aussi, ont un grand nombre de ramifications dans beaucoup de pays, ce qui fait qu’on a toujours eu un pied aux États-Unis un pied à l’étranger.”


3 The original reads, “La curiosité, l’ouverture, la tolérance sont des termes souvent employés pour désigner ces qualités.”

4 The original: “Alors le terriens, c’est quelqu’un qui a un espace limité. Son activité se concentre sur la terre qu’il possède. Si l’autre va sur sa terre, il ne l’acceptera pas. Il est attaché à sa famille, à ses enfants, qu’il veut garder chez lui, parce que sa famille cultive sa terre.… “Je crois que la classe populaire est plus attachée à ses origines. Les anglais en France sont plutôt des gens des classes moyennes. En Angleterre les classes populaires sont plus nationalistes que les autres, moins ouvertes.”

5 The original reads, “Le constat de l’épuisement du modèle social-démocrate a transformé les militants de la révolution, puis de la réforme, en militants du libéralisme culturel.”

6 The original is as follows: “Aux ouvriers elles ont substitué les immigrés et ont reporté sur ceux-ci le double sentiment de crainte et de compassion qu’inspire généralement le prolétaire. Or l’immigré n’est pas seulement victime de l’exclusion sociale, mais aussi de l’exclusion ethnique, autrement dit du racisme.”

7 The original reads, “Cette idée de déclassement du monde musulman est centrale. Dans l’imaginaire musulman, le fait d’appartenir à un ensemble civilisationnel puissant qui rivalise, et parfois dépasse l’Occident est essentiel. Sans ce fait historique, remontant
à plus de dix siècles, ce sentiment de déclassement n’aurait probablement pas cette force auraïque.”

8 See the excellent yet rarely cited book by Favret-Saada (2007) on the caricature crisis.

References


