HOMELANDS AND DIASPORAS

Holy Lands and Other Places

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CHAPTER 6

Diasporization, Globalization, and Cosmopolitan Discourse

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One of the most common concepts currently in fashion among globalizing academics and intellectuals is "diasporization." It is in some ways the most obviously concrete manifestation of globalization itself, the movement of culturally identified peoples across the world. It is a direct expression of the globalization metaphor itself in all of its diffusionist connotations. Tonnbee in his Study of History predicted that in the future worldwide diasporas would replace nation-states. Appadurai has recently made a similar statement (1996), and a similar diagnosis is made in innumerable postcolonial discourses of the future state of the globalized world. The notion of diaspora has a rather long and confusing history. In the Old Testament it is used to refer to Greek colonization. Later it was used to refer to the Jewish dispersal from the homeland Israel by imperial powers. It has been used to refer, following this definition, to all groups that define themselves as having been dispersed throughout the wider world by expanding state and imperial powers. Currently the word is often used to refer to all transnational social formations. Some would take issue with this and call for a restriction of the term to a more clearly delineated phenomena, and it might be well argued that the word has become uselessly diluted. I do not intend to enter into a discussion of definitions. I choose instead to use the term without defining it precisely, quite simply because it is not a theoretical term as such but part of the self-definition and definition of social phenomena by those who participate in them. What is crucial is that we are able to distinguish the enormous differences in the phenomena to which the term is applied. In what follows I shall be attempting to work out some of these differences and to argue for a slight change in focus in their comprehension.

A World on the Move?

It is commonly assumed that the world is on the move today in a way that was not the case in previous generations, and it is surely this that has metaphorically extended the meaning of the term diasporic into new domains. This may indeed be the experience of many intellectuals and not least academics (Friedman and Randeira 2004). Certainly global media and global tourism, via the increasing speed and cost-efficiency of transport, have made larger portions of the real globe accessible to increasing numbers. But the demography of movement is quite the inverse of the academic experience. It is of course true that global migration has been on the increase over the past decades and that this can even be characterized as mass migration. But this is not a new and certainly not an evolutionary phenomenon. Even if we admit the existence of large-scale movements, it should be noted that mass migration does not mean that everyone is on the move. Less than 3 percent of the world's population is on the move in international terms. The overwhelming majority stay more or less put. Of course, populations may well be on the move within smaller or sometimes much larger state territories, however, as when one hundred and fifty million Chinese migrants constitute that country's "floating population." But this is largely ignored by those who argue that we are entering a new globalized era. International migration is in fact a historically delimited phenomenon. It was at least as massive at the turn of the last century as it is today. In fact, what is referred to as globalization is also a phenomenon of this type, reaching enormous proportions between 1870 and 1920, only to be reversed after that. The experience of movement is something altogether different from the phenomenon of migration. It is constructed out of specific subjective experiences of things out of place of crossing borders, and this experience is primarily the experience of those positioned in the upper reaches of society, where they can conceive of people and things circulating from above so that they are located within a particular field of vision. This vision can be the subject of media elaboration to such an extent that it may become institutionalized. One need only watch CNN's advertising for itself, or ads for Intercontinental Hotels, where one is at home anywhere in the world with a touch of cultural difference to spice things up. It should be noted that the media operate to localize the global rather than to globalize the local. They bring the world into the minute spaces of individual living rooms and may imbue such spaces with an aura of globality, however virtual. The "globalization" of communication then, implies the possibility of less, not more, movement, even among those
whose access to such communication is instrumental in their lives. If such people are, nevertheless, more on the move than ever, it is not perhaps due directly to technological change. In her studies of global cities, Sassen has pointed out that even though transactions among multinationals and within such firms are increasingly carried out electronically, the personal meeting has become an ever more important instrument for cementing business relations. This accounts for the cultivation of certain urban centers, which are, of course, localized, as luxurious meeting places for executives.

It is the traveler-intellectuals who are the source for most of the current discourse of movement, with its boundary-smashing rhetoric of translocality, border crossing, de-territorialization, etc., terms that mirror CNN's self-image but do not add to our understanding of that image. The discourse of globalization as border-crossing in all senses of the word is part of the emergence of elite transnationalist identity, a positioning in the world, or rather above the world. The discourse expresses their own experience and not that of those whose existence they consume as objects in the formation of their own hybridized identities, an issue to which we return below. There is evidence that this kind of representation is not a mere intellectual product but is constitutive of a particular position. When, in 1998, Thomas Middelhoff, head of the media giant Bertelsmann, was asked about whether it was acceptable that a German firm controlled 15 percent of the American book market, he replied, "We're not foreign. We're international. ... I'm an American with a German passport" (in McChesney 1999).

There is a crucial structural concern in the analysis of demographic movement. This is simply the requirement of fixity in order to define movement itself. Boundaries cannot be crossed unless they already exist. If everyone crosses boundaries, then they become empty categories in the political sense, but any consideration of the demographic realities entails that this is clearly not the case. In other words, the framing of movement implies the framing of the relation between those who move and those who do not. There is no de-territorialization without territory, and if the latter disappears as a category we are merely left with a larger category which defines the limits of movement. Movement between becomes movement within, and that spoils all the fun of being trans-x. The love of transnational, translocal movement is, paradoxically, the love of the borders that make it all possible. This accounts for the logical necessity of maintaining roots in order to define routes. And it is this distinction that is the basis of one of the more important theoretical discussions of the issue of diasporas. This paradoxical inclusion of place within movement as a practice of identity is one of the classical prop-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6.1.</th>
<th>Elementary Forms of Movement and Collectivity*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ roots</td>
<td>- roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ DISPERAL</td>
<td>Other referenced diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jews (Zionists), Yugoslavs, Serbs, Greeks,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kurds, Indians, Muslim</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self referenced diaspora</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gypsies, U.K. Blacks, certain orthodox Jews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Boyarin's model)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- DISPERAL</td>
<td>National/indigenous identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closed nationalism or ranked</td>
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<td></td>
<td>multi-ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Modernist identity / citizenship open</td>
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<td></td>
<td>multiculturality</td>
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* This is a simple cross-tabulation of dispersal and rootedness which provides a preliminary classification of forms of displacement and localization. It is not an account but a preliminary partition based on the criteria used by many writers on the subject.

terties of the diasporic, even if, as we shall see below, there are cases in which origins may become insignificant, at least in certain historical conditions. Clifford makes use of a double set of distinctions in his well-known article on the subject, roots, and geographical dispersal. Table 6.1 is an attempt to capture the way in which the distinctions might be said to generate different kinds of identity. But the argument, as we shall see, can easily become self-contradictory.

Clifford's elaborate essay on diasporas deals with the contemporary popularity of the term and its related cultural studies cognates: travel, contact zones, creolization, and hybridity. He stresses the unifying principle of these discourses in their focus on movement, travel as opposed to fixity and closure. But these discourses are elite discourses, as Clifford also admits. They do not necessarily reflect larger realities than those whose experience and cultural politics they reflect. In his discussion of Gilroy's (1993) and the Boyarin's (1993) analyses of respectively the Black Atlantic and Jewish diasporas, he struggles through the problems of essentialism that these authors take as the central issue. Diasporas for both are creative counter-cultures of modernity and of purity. They hybridize their surroundings, the image being one whereby a population with culture C from X moves to Y and changes via its interaction with Y, producing a culture C', a process that continues over time and in open fashion. Continuity and change are combined. The word "transformation" would do well as a description. On the other hand, to privilege just diaspora culture in this way is to underprivileged the continuous
change that goes on in all cultures where import routinely occurs. This is Lévi-Strauss’ point in his (in)famous second discussion of ethnicity and race.

This stress on hybridity has a clear political dimension as well. Since diasporas are associated with the interstices of the global arena, situated in between essentialized entities, they represent a threat to such essentialisms. The empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling here assumes solidarity and connection there” (Clifford 1997:269).

But this does not solve the problem as such, since diasporas in order to exist must also have a definite identity. Otherwise how are we to identify them? How are they to identify themselves? This is where the contingency/change paradigm is introduced. Now this can only confuse the issue. The fact that culture changes via, but not exclusively via, mixture says nothing about separation as such, which is a social issue and not one of cultural content. The threat of diaspora is not culture as such, but social differentiation, the potential of fragmentation of a larger unity. Thus, when the Boyarins assert that Zionism as a national essentialist ideology is destructive of Judaism as a diasporic culture, they state:

Diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from “mixing” but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing. Cultures, as well as identities, are constantly being remade. While this is true of all cultures, diasporic Jewish culture lays it bare because of the impossibility of a natural association between this people and a particular land—thus the impossibility of seeing Jewish culture as a self-enclosed, bounded phenomenon. ... Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another. (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993:721)

They go on to propose diaspora as a “theoretical and historical model to replace national self-determination” (p. 711). But in all of this liminality, identity seems to remain strikingly constant. The fact that Yiddish is a border language and perhaps a border culture does not imply a lack of social differentiation. For all the openness of Talmudic discussion and lack of reference to a return to Israel, there is always the distinction between Jew and Gentile. Yiddish culture is a culture of Jews, not of other people in their immediate vicinity. But the struggle to elevate the status of hybridity continues unabated. The distinction is “processual and nonessentialist” (Clifford 1997:275). In his discussion of Weinreich (1967) he argues that “difference, for Weinreich, is a process of continual renegotiation in new circumstances or dangerous and creative coexistence” (p. 276).

But all ethnicity involves exactly such processes! This was Barth’s point many years ago. There is no way of arguing against classification by invoking other classifications. It is in the nature of the practice of classification that boundaries are created. No matter whether they are porous or not, they are still boundaries and still function to separate. Otherwise they cease to exist. It is for this reason that one suspects an ideological motive in the discourse of hybridity. One that stresses a model of continual transgression of borders, as if such a state could be maintained as a kind of permanent revolution. The facts of history and ethnography would seem to be otherwise. The content of social categories and group identities may indeed change, although there must remain a thread of continuity in order to be able to recognize the categories throughout all of this transformation. But the categories remain. Group identity remains and identity is bounded, by logical necessity. Otherwise it cannot be identified. And if it cannot be identified, well, then it doesn’t exist as such. Modernism is a far more successful solution to the problem of cultural localization. One of the strategies of modernist identity is precisely the transcendence of culturally specific categories. But here it is a question of their replacement by the more abstract-universal categories of modernism itself: individual, citizen, class, and even nation-state, where the latter is emptied of its cultural content if this is at all possible.

I have argued elsewhere (Friedman 1997, 1998) that hybridity is an expression of a postmodern cosmopolitanism, one that is world-encompassing at the same time as it is culturally rooted. The latter is expressive of a genealogical mode of thought, where roots become mixed or intertwined as they become routes. The problem is that diasporic or transnational social worlds are not hybrid insofar as they maintain group identity. The latter would be impossible for their very reproduction. On the contrary such groups are some of the prime historical examples of strong ethnic identity and even homogenization, endogamy, endosociality, and symbolic closure. To take a bird’s-eye view of such phenomena in order to raise them to the status of post-national solution is to confuse this sky-born perspective, the fact that diasporas are culturally creative and changing, with the social facts on the ground and the perspectives of the members of such groups.

Robin Cohen (1997) has taken a more sociological approach to the issues, one that, however, seems to assume a more concrete, almost institutional, existence for diasporas. The usual features that, as Cohen has argued, hang together by means of a chain of family resemblances are as follows:

1. Features
   a. Movement
b. Homeland

c. Solidarity among those dispersed

1. Economic relations
2. Relations of sociality
3. Knowledge of
4. Identification with

Now these features can be divided into two, material or even physical, the movement of people, the migration process itself, and the way the latter exists in the lives of those who move and those who do not but form the context of such movement. As we see in Table 6.2, Cohen divides diasporas into five types, which he characterizes by the metaphor of gardening.

The gardening metaphor could use some unpacking here. It expresses in fact a totally essentializing view of the process that conflates movement itself with culture. The movement of people and the derivative movement of culture are identified and classified into true species. But our argument is precisely the contrary, that diaspora formation is based in a process of identification and with the material and symbolic practices that are bound up with such identification. The above types disintegrate in the real processes of historical change if taken over a long enough period. Weeding can become transplanting or layering. Transplanting can become layering or, in the ancient world, even sowing, in the right conditions in which relations of power are reversed. As for cross-pollinating, it is not clear that this is ever the case in the social reality of ordinary people as opposed to the intellectuals who construct the categories of hybridity. And then all of these categories can be transformed via assimilation, that is, they can disappear into their destinations. So the status of the categories is not at all clear in theoretical terms. The problem here, as earlier, is the perspective of the observer. Much of the discussion of diasporas has been based on a misplaced concreteness, an objectification of movement in such a way that it is cultures that move and not just people. If we stay with the obvious fact of the demography of the situation, then all the rest is a question of the way in which people practice their movement in conditions where other people are also practicing receiving and sending people across borders. Faist’s concept of “transnational space” (1998), which builds very much on the framework developed by Glick Schiller and Szanton-Blanc (1992) captures the social field in a most practical way, a social field characterized by cross-identifications by host states and sending states as well as migrant selves and local communities and a complex of different and contradictory strategies. In countering the use of the notion of diaspora he suggests the following: “Instead of stretching the term diaspora beyond its limits, it is more meaningful to speak of a transnationalized and segmented cultural space” (1998: 241).

Faist characterizes such spaces as zones of multiple possibilities, from assimilation to the national host society to various combinations of private/public accommodations in which the home cultures play differential roles. These possibilities are not, of course, subject to free choice but are expressions of changing and variable circumstances for individuals as well as larger groups.

The Role of Identification in the Existence and Reproduction of Transnational Worlds

Transnational formations such as diasporas are the product of a complex of practices. They are not the result of mere physical movement. The evidence of this is clear from the transformation of diasporas into local ethnic minorities by means of re-identification, by the equivalent but opposite strengthening of transnational ties via transnational endogamy, which may go under the official rubric of “family re-unification,” but is often better understood as “family formation.” Assimilation has been the classic area

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gardening Term</th>
<th>Type of Diaspora</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weeding</td>
<td>Victim/refugee</td>
<td>Jews, Africans, Armenians, Irish, Palestinians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowing</td>
<td>Imperial/colonial</td>
<td>Ancient Greek, British, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transplanting</td>
<td>Labor/Service</td>
<td>Indentured Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Sikhs, Turks, Italians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Layering</td>
<td>Trade/business/professional</td>
<td>Venetians, Lebanese, Chinese, today's Indians, Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-pollinating</td>
<td>Cultural/hybrid/postmodern</td>
<td>Caribbean peoples, today's Chinese, Indians</td>
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of research in the migration literature in the United States, a process that combines powerful apparatuses of socialization and strong desires for re-identification, often the result of the change of status (and social mobility) that such identification entails. The intentional process of identification with the place of residence is often blind to its own consequences, that is, assimilation is always a dialogic process. The Jews of Frankfurt became painfully aware of this in the 1930s when they became increasingly the subject of discriminatory acts which they failed to understand, being able to re-categorize those who were subjected to Nazi discrimination into categories related to disloyal and anti-national activities. "So and so was not taken by the police because of his Jewishness but because he was a communist or traitor or misfit of one kind or another." It was only when things had already gone too far that the reality of the Nazi strategy became evident. The identifying actors and their changing intentionalities is a fundamental historical determinant of any transnational situation.

Diasporas are reflexes of global systemic relations. In the most general sense they can be defined as trans-state or, in the modern epoch, transnational social formations. While there may be, as noted by Cohen, differing conditions of their formation, they are social organizations in which recruitment, membership, and a series of group-based activities and identity are clearly established within a global network. The origins of diasporic formations are probably much less important than the way they are reproduced/practiced at any historical moment. It is not terribly interesting to try and distinguish the different forms as if they were species, since they themselves may change quite radically over time and may at any given time consist of several forms of organizational praxis. If transnational social formations can be taken as the most general category, all populations that maintain an identity X upon which a set of activities, cultural, social, and economic are elaborated, a diaspora as a subset would refer to all such organizations that maintained claims on a homeland and a historical relation of dispersal by descent from a historical homeland, real or imagined. Now all of this requires an active attribution of meaning to the fact of demographic movement. It is a construction, not an arbitrary one, but one that is always made and remade in a present. It is, then, a form of social identification and as such is part of a process in which there are several significant positions of identification. "Wandering Jews" were not created by Jews but by identifications of the former by various host societies, which become part of a general identity discourse that is available to Jew and non-Jew alike. This should not be understood as a constructivist position, except in a very particular theoretical sense. The constitution of social realities is bound up with identifications, which are in their turn embedded in material realities that exist in a dialectic of continuity and transformation. And of course, transformation is itself based on continuity, otherwise what is there to be transformed? Constructivism often overlooks the fact that people live in already constituted worlds and that they do not construct themselves ex-nihilo.

The kinds of categories that can be generated by the various practices of grooviness in trans-state/transnational situations are sketched in Table 6.3.

The relation of identification to the process of transnational structuring always harbors a degree of rooting. This is a complex variable of course and it depends very much on circumstances, cultural strategies, and the way that they change over time. Thus all the groups in question can root themselves more or less intensively, even members of multinational corporations, and even mercenaries, which today are in fact organized as multinationals. The conditions of rootedness can be variable and these in their turn determine the degree of rootedness. On the other hand, certain types of organization are defined by their rootedness. These are mafias, diaspora L, and colonies. The others are dependent upon circumstances. Thus diaspora II groups can become rooted in periods of ethnification, just as ethnic minorities and mercenaries. On the other hand, transnational corporations are organized around not becoming rooted, especially if they are truly transnational and not merely multinational. This may not be an easy task to carry out. In a leading multinational French engineering firm, which was one of the first to invest in multiculturalism, recruitment from the global arena did not, as planned, create increased circulation while maintaining ties to home countries. A large number of the recruits met and married and established families in one or another country where they were temporarily established and became rooted in their new localities, refusing the idea of return. In the same way, the formation of mafia organization can occur in almost any transnational population, and mafias can be more or less rooted with respect to homelands depending on the particular historical context.

Another crucial aspect of transnational practices is the issue of levels of integration. It is important to assume that the group, identified externally, is a unitary formation, a corporate entity. Many transnational phenomena are primarily organized at the family or community level. Migrant members of a village maintain and develop economic and social relations with that particular village and not necessarily with the homeland as a whole. This is one of the most common research findings from studies of migrant communities from Turkey and the Middle East. So the relation between the actual operating units in transnational relations and the categories of iden-
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**Table 6.3**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories Generated by Various Practices of Groupness in Trans-State/Transnational Situations*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaspora</td>
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*These terms need some clarification. Group identity takes primarily to the identification of a group with some social organization outside the state. When these groups are not organized, they are not identified with some particular social organization. The term "social organization" refers to the existence of certain organizational forms, either among the people, or in their use, or in their absence. The term "identity" refers to the recognition of a group by the state, or by other groups, or by itself. The term "cosmopolitan" refers to the practice of transnational identity, which is to be distinguished from the practice of national identity, which is to be distinguished from the practice of transnational identity, which is to be distinguished from the practice of national identity.

In other words, the categories that we have discussed here are not meant to fix particular populations in particular classifications. On the contrary, our principal argument is that it is the practice of the transnational that constitutes any particular form of community and that such practices change over time. That even transnational corporations can tend to form communities of a certain type has been documented, and it is certainly one of the available models for such organization.

**Cultures of Movement**

The relation between practices of identity has also been discussed in terms of the social organization of movement itself, the way in which space is strategically organized into life processes. Someans are spread out over the entire world, perhaps more than any other single population, and it has been suggested by anthropologists such as Epeli Hau'ofa and recently Marshall Sahlins that this is a specific cultural organization of the movement of people in which rhizomatic practice is part of the basic structure of life. The latter, like many other Polynesians, understand their relation to the world not in terms of "islands in the sea" but as a "sea of islands," in which the ocean does not separate but joins. The reproduction of social life is not restricted to local resources but extends to a much wider region. This has generated a situation that, from the outside, is described as the ease of migration, but which from the inside, is not migration at all, but movement within a larger common world. The degree to which this can be applied to the modern situation of widespread labor migration is not clear to me and many have raised doubts. In any case, the reasons for movement today are vastly different than in the past, but there is an interesting practice of space, so to speak, that is invoked even in the contemporary situation. There are numerous cultures of travel and migration, such as those of certain Middle Eastern trading groups in the past and present. The specificities of this kind of relation to the larger world must be more carefully explored, but it is clear that the notion of life space is not restricted to the territorial state. This may be true for Palestinian and other merchant communities, for example, as well as for Polynesian peoples, and it is not only salient but crucial for the now increasingly documented Chinese transnational communities. The latter are a population of at least 25 to 30 million people who are active in the political and economic life of the home country, accounting for the major portion of all foreign investment in...
China. Studies of Chinese diasporic formations have demonstrated the degree to which they tend to be closed, tightly organized, often stratified, and even endogamous in a broad sense (Ong 1999). This is difficult to reconcile to the notion of hybridity. Of course new elements enter into the lives of transnationals, but, as we have suggested, they are absorbed and enclosed within community relations. It is also the case that such communities become class stratified in interaction with their surroundings. The Hakka Chinese of Tahiti represent a history of such social differentiation, with those who remained at the bottom of the social scale becoming increasingly “Tahitian” or local, and in this sense creolized, while those at the top becoming increasingly cosmopolitan but socially Chinese (Trémoç 2000).

That the maintenance of transnational organization requires a high degree of group control is illustrated by the example of a certain Hakka Chinese family living in Sweden. This family, “originally” from India, has branches in Southern China, India, Northern Europe, and the United States. This particular family, like many of the others, is in the restaurant business. They are extraordinarily well adapted to Swedish society, and they maintain a very low profile in contrast to other minorities, such as Arabs, that are very much engaged in cultural politics. The woman learnt Swedish as part of the national effort at integration, whereas the man in this particular family was very much isolated as the chief cook in his own establishment. He could understand but not speak Swedish after many years. The children went to school, and the eldest daughter caused a crisis that highlighted the diasporic strategy. She had become so integrated into her local society that she was not only fluent in Swedish, but refused to learn to write Chinese. She had her own social life with its own priorities. There was great consternation, especially in reaction to the language issue. Her mother was herself keen on living a Swedish life, but she had little leverage in this situation. A family reunion was called in New York and kin arrived from all parts of the world. It was decided that the local relation had to be severed. The family moved to another small city further north in the country, leaving a cousin to manage the old restaurant. The daughter was forced to learn to write her native language and the praxis of the diaspora was upheld. The mother was broken-hearted at having to leave the community in which she had rooted herself, but she understood that she had no choice in the matter.

The specificities of this conflict demonstrate more than the strength of a transnational ethnic or family strategy, they also highlight the zones of conflict. In a world in which imperial cities were organized into enclaves, such a conflict might not have arisen, since the possibilities of integration into another local world would have been almost inconceivable. But in the context of the nation-state the situation is vastly different. In any case, these are real conflicts that should not be reduced, as in the transnationalist ideology referred to above, to a moral issue. Thus, for a typical example of the latter:

...To understand homes in this way—as being synonymous with Durkheimian notions of solidary communities and coercive institutions in microcosm—is anachronistic, and provides little conceptual purchase on a world of contemporary movement...

...People are more at home nowadays, in short, in “words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat” (Berger 1984:64).

“Home” in Banham’s words, “is neither here nor there... rather, itself a hybrid, it is both here and there—an amalgam, a pastiche, a performance” (1992, xi). Or else, in a reactionary refusing of the world of movement, one is at home in a paradoxical clamoring for “particularisms”; in a multiplicity of invented “primordial” places for which one is perhaps willing to kill and die. (Rapport and Dawson 1998:7)

This is precisely the normative expression to which I referred earlier, chastising anachronistic, reactionary illusions and desires for place and a completely celebratory vision of people on the move. In this particular example the anthropologists are arguing for a broad shift in anthropological epistemology, much like Clifford, to a framework based on movement rather than place. It is quite extraordinary to witness the extremes to which what is clearly a self-identity can be imposed upon other people’s realities: “Palestinians are more worried about getting Israel off their backs than about the special geographical magic of the West Bank” (Appadurai 1996:165).

In the author’s personal vendetta against the obvious evil of the national, he does whatever he deems necessary to define it away, to expel the idea of place. Noting that what he calls “trajan” nationalisms are orchestrated by transnationals, he believes that nationalists, nationalists, ethnics engaged in violent assertion, don’t really know what they are up to. While he is aware that identities can become aggressive in certain periods, he has no global grasp of why so many in certain periods and not in others. On the contrary, he seems to think that this is a question of evolution toward a new, globalized world. Here of course the fact that the people that we actually study seem to be engaged in the same things that some of us poor reactionary anthropologists are describing is a problem to be denied. Where such a realization does occur, it leads to the most self-contradictory acts of denial. Thus: “...Anthropologists’ obsession with boundedness is paralleled by the ways in which the people they study try to deal with seemingly open-ended global flows” (Meyer and Geschie 1999:3).
So, not only have we got it wrong, but the people we study have also got it wrong! The error here lies not in the interest on movement, but in the poverty of its conceptualization. No one actually lives in movement, not even traveling executives and salesmen, since their traveling cannot be said to characterize entire lives. The movement to which these anthropologists refer is always movement between or among locations. Otherwise there is no way to describe the movement as such. This is a trivial point, but it needs, unfortunately, to be made. That people can make their homes in transnational contexts, as the Hakka described here do, does not imply that they are "dwelling" in movement. On the contrary, they are reproducing a set of relations across spatial boundaries that bind themselves into definite worlds. And all of this bounding, not fluidity, is the source of structural incompatibilities and real conflict in their lives.

The Interface of Transnational Practices and Territorial Political Fields

We have suggested several times that transnational relations are parts of a larger whole, the state systems within which they operate. The diasporic, as Clifford stressed, may be better suited to imperial parts than to the nation-state present. Rather than simply evaluating relative compatibility, it is more important to gain a purchase on the actual articulation between the social fields of nation-states and transnational formations. It is clear that potential contradictions are generated by the structures involved. The nation-state is constituted on the basis of a common project and a common identity with that project that is usually highly culturalized. It is also based on an elaboration of social organization around the relation between people and the state. Roots are the principal means of defining the territory and the combination of the disintegration of sub-state political forms of kinship and community solidarities are powerful historical forces in the formation of a new state-based identity. The latter leads to an individualization that is the basis of nationality, where identification is based on the formation of a state-based investment of the subject, a level of represented cultural commonality that enables a new kind of community sentiment. The latter is of course riven by other kinds of difference, especially class, but it has certainly demonstrated its effectiveness in acts of mobilization for war. In fact, class politics itself has been driven essentially on nationalist grounds, in which the We of "We the people" is the subject of the nation. The national political sphere is one defined as made up of individuals and not of groups and the entire legal edifice of such states expresses the issue of rights and duties in terms of individual subjects. This is clearly in contradiction with the existence of any subgroups that might form communities within the nation, irrespective of whether they are indigenous or immigrant. It also enforces a dynamic in which individualization and integration are pitted against the maintenance of group strategies.

The question of relation to home lands or home countries has been elaborated upon in recent studies of European suburban immigrant zones. There is a great deal of variation here, not least in the intergenerational changes involved in identification. The simplest division can be said to be that of the maintenance versus the rupture of the relation to a foreign place. But this in its turn is also quite variable. In one recent thesis on the subject (Schiff 2000), a dichotomy is suggested between the practice of local entrenchment and the practice of spatial otherness. In a cité north of Paris, Asian immigrants were commonly more connected to a homeland and for that reason not really part of the place. Their strategies were based on adaptation to the local situation, but the latter was primarily a resource within an enclave whose goals extended far beyond the locality or even the nation, and constituted an ultimate "working relation" between two or more points in the global arena. These people were not de-territorialized but dually or even multiply territorialized. They were classified by the host society as merely immigrants and low ranked in terms of the linked categories of class and residence, as of a banlieu. But they themselves did not participate directly in this classification, since their own life plans were located within a world defined by the transnational group usually at the level of the extended family. The second or later generation descendants of immigrants from North Africa and to some extent the Middle East, as well as new immigrants who had experienced failure in France, began to categorize themselves, or take on an identity in which their position in the larger society became more politically salient. They were at the bottom, they were discriminated against and they began, paradoxically, to identify as part of the larger society. Their identity became more localized at the same time as, for youth at least, it became more multicultural, since territory began to override origin. They were simply the population of the banlieu, les banlieusards, a new multicultural minority, reproducing and identifying the larger social category used to classify them. Among youth groups here one may even speak of a hybridization of sorts, insular as the local culture assimilated and elaborated elements from different origins (this is course is a general phenomena of all cultural production), but what is interesting is that it is not the sense of mixture that dominates but the homogenizing identity of spatial or territorial
closure. If the cultural origins of this group were diverse, their identity was unitary. A youth of French origins from the ghetto is no ordinary Frenchman. He may speak Arabic fluently and understand a good deal of the activities of other cultures simply by having been brought up together with them. His identity is that of the place and not of his national origins. This is ambivalent, of course, and throughout a life cycle, identity choices are made according to individual interest, changing environment, and social mobility both up and down. Thus the positions within the larger social field remain relatively stable with respect to the movement of individuals through the cultural categories that they generate. And these positions are themselves generated by the structure of the state or national society and not by some transnational formation. Banlieusards defined themselves in stark opposition to first generation transnationals in ways that simply extended the opposition of national/foreigner. They became, in this sense, a real status group, emically, within the French national structure, more similar to a culturally specific underclass than to an ethnic group.

Pluralist empires such as the Ottoman and even the Habsburgs were organized in terms conducive to the relatively autonomous, if hierarchical, accommodation of transnational and other minority communities. This is a very general issue in the understanding of the global that is not often clear in current theoretical discussions in which the nation-state is described as under siege by the forces of transnationalization (Appadurai 1996). In which a new world of diasporas is predicted as a new historical era. In this close evolutionist understanding, the nation-state is primarily understood as the "local" expressed in terms of the national. Globalization is interpreted as an externally orchestrated wave of the future to which the nation-state will inevitably succumb. This needs to be deconstructed. Who are the relevant actors? What are these forces that are supposedly external to the nation-state? The position adopted here is that the very formation of the nation-state was itself a global systemic phenomenon, a concentration and localization of capital accumulation and political control within a larger global field. Its European history was also one of the fragmentation of larger imperial formations. The nation-state is not a product of diffusion in this approach but an artefact of real global processes that take on distinctive local forms. This argument echoes in different terms the thesis of Elias concerning the formation of European states. In this sense, the nature of the trans-state sphere is structurally bound up with that of the state sphere. This logic can be seen most clearly in the contrast with the Ottoman or Habsburgs. If imperial orders, or even absolutist states and feudal kingdoms, are structured in such a way that enclaves are not only compatible but constitutive of their political

arenas, the nation-state tends, in its identification of the state with a particular community, to exclude such plural organization. Even here, however, I would insist on the variability of such structures over time. The fragmentation of empires can take the form of the localizing of community and the formation of strong ethnic sodalities. It might also be the case, as we shall argue here, that nation-states can transform themselves into more absolutist or even imperial formations as in the tendencies present today in the European Union. This would imply a movement toward a more plural organization, one that is tendentially evident in the current transformation of European states.

I suggest, then, that diasporas cannot be assessed in themselves, since their formation and reproduction are systemically related to the larger worlds that they inhabit. For the world of nation-states, we might suggest the following cyclical pattern. In periods of expansion a number of phenomena can be said to coincide. The state tends to nationalize and thus to homogenize. It tends to individualize its population via the dissolution of regional and local sodalities, a violent process of intervention including persecution, prohibition, criminalization, and new forms of socialization. This process is strongest in periods of the formation of imperial hegemony. In such eras there is a decline in cultural difference. Diasporas, where they exist, tend to be transformed into localized ethnic minorities under assimilatory pressure. The evolutionary model of integration of immigrants which developed in the United States in the first half of this century is based on a movement from immigrant community with strong diasporic connections, to an economic integration of the second generation, where ethnic communities may still maintain themselves in social terms, to a gradual assimilation of individuals into the host society, transforming real ethnicity into symbolic ethnicity (Gans 1979). The validity of this model may however depend on the period of expansion in which it was produced. This might account for the genuine surprise of ethnic researchers in the early 1970s at the ethnic identity that had made a powerful re-entry into the political arena after years of predictions of its imminent demise. The very history of ethnic discourse is revealing here. In the 1950s and 1960s assimilation or integration into the host society was considered progressive. More recently the movement from homogeneous nationality to multi-culturalism has been understood as the true progression of world history. In both periods the progressive is identified as that which is in some sense the obvious direction of change. In fact there is a clear reversal in which assimilation is replaced by differentiation, by a dis-assimilation or cultural fragmentation. The increase of interest in diasporas is part of the interest in multi-culturalism in general.
And this interest is a reflection of the changing balance between forces of state integration and fragmentation. This does not imply that the state is becoming weaker, although there has been a very long economic crisis of the state finance, its virtual bankruptcy in the West, followed by a contraction and retrenchment of state functions. This process might be called the de-nationalization of the state. The latter has become more of an instrument of global capital accumulation than a welfare machine. This is a process of lift-off: the state ascends into the stratosphere of Trilateral Commissions and Davos cocktails while the nation is left behind and chastised for its increasing xenophobia and backward anti-immigrant attitudes. The formation of the European Union shows clear tendencies to the formation of a suprastate with a low level of representativeness and accountability. If there is a tendency to the absolutization of the nation-state and the formation of larger regional institutions reminiscent of former imperial orders, then we should expect that conditions for the emergence and reproduction of diasporic social formations are excellent.

This cyclical pattern might well account for the different models of integration and multiculturalism that have appeared in the past century. While there was massive migration in the first part of the twentieth century, there were clear differences in the relation between migration and the nation-state in for example France and the United States. In the latter the category of ethnicity was practically non-existent, and while the percentage of immigrants was equal to that of the United States, assimilation was assumed to be natural, so that one was either not French or French. Membership in the French nation implied the self-evident necessity of becoming French, although this also provoked some heated debate at the beginning of the Century. That is, other cultures were not recognized as such within national borders, i.e. as ethnicity. In the United States, migration led to a major debate between proponents of multiculturalism and assimilationism. Even here, however, assimilation became the dominant policy from the 1920s on, but with a stronger tendency to the formation of subnational minorities. Thus there was a tendency for diasporic relations to become national ethnic minority relations even though there was a general tendency, much more pronounced in France, toward assimilative integration.\footnote{The current phase, from the 1970s on, represents an inversion of the previous tendency, a fragmentation of separate cultural identities within the larger state. This has occurred in France as well as the United States, where it began earlier. The fact that it has occurred in a strongly republican France as well indicates the power of the forces at work. The opposed tendencies involved in this historical movement are on the one hand homogenization and on the other heterogenization. The former tends toward the production of egalitarianism, which in politics such as the Swedish welfare state leads to the equation of equality with identity, in the sense that being equal means being identical. The latter tends toward the production of hierarchy, in which difference is the norm. Difference, in the sense of the freedom to be different, easily merges with actual social differentiation, in which inequality is acceptable and even laudable. The increase of ethnically differentiated labor markets in the United States, and more recently in Europe, is an example of this kind of process. The new textile industry in California is highly stratified ethnically, and the economy of the state as a whole follows suit. The transnational wage relations that are established by Asians and Central Americans are part of the very functioning of this differentiated labor market. This is a market that might seem highly questionable by the standards of labor union ideology, but in a world of neo-liberal globalization, union ideology is a thing of the past, and even an expression of racism. But then ethically stratified labor markets were also assumed to be a thing of the past, or at least an aberration, most recently in the organization of colonial and plantation economies. As the nation-state becomes, to varying degrees, a plural society, the relation between the social space of the territory and that of potential migrants changes significantly. In highly capitalized markets, ethnic differentiation generates the production of a labor force. The global cities that are emerging in many developed and even less developed countries are fueled by a supply of immigrant workers who fill definite niches in the urban economy. These are not necessarily only the poorest, although the latter are certainly the majority. Engineers, doctors, and other high-end transnational populations have begun to fill niches, the most salient being, perhaps, Silicon Valley in California. The discussions surrounding the recruitment process have focused on the nature of the potentials of the global market and the labor market bottlenecks of nation-states.}

The increasing differentiation of social worlds is an aspect of that transformation of the global arena referred to as globalization. This differentiation is driven by the increasing dominance of “cultural” identification over previous modernist (also cultural of course) forms of social classification in which the core figures were class, citizenship and the abstract individual, and a strategy of social development based on the desire for control by national, or territorially identified, populations over their conditions of existence. With the fragmentation of the national sphere and the promotion of political classes to higher cosmopolitan realms, the national project has lost its State, and commoner identification is being sought elsewhere, in rooted identities, national, immigrant, indigenous, but also regional, religious, and
sexual. In this emergent world, the transnational or diasporic is clearly on the rise, and in an important sense it is primarily the expression of the ethnification of global demographic movement.

Not Just the Nation-State: Historical Cycles of Diaspora Formation

It might be suggested that the kind of global transformation in the conditions of identity formation discussed above is applicable in different configurations to earlier historical periods. Certainly the emergence of nationalism in the wake of the decline of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires is also the production of diasporic identities, the latter usually linked to the process of nationalization itself. Thus Zionism, Armenian and Kurdish identities, even Greek diasporic identity (which began somewhat earlier) can be traced to the processes of fragmentation of the Ottoman empire. That this is not just a contemporary phenomenon is borne out by research in ancient history. Thus the emergence of Jewish identity in which diaspora was crucial during the Hellenistic era is also related to the process of imperial dissolution. While all the minorities of Hellenistic Alexandria were identified by geographical origin, they were also defined as Hellenes, citizens of the empire, similar to British subjects (Modrzejewski 1993:76), but this situation changed during the decline period which saw the rise of what can be described as national movements, such as that of the Maccabees in Judea.

As detected through the process of revival of national anthroponymy, more especially through the taste evinced for Biblical names, the Jews of Egypt have thus been imperceptibly moving from the situation of an ethnic group settled in an alien milieu to a diaspora community, drawing its vitality not only from its numerous relations with the “metropolis,” but also from an inner strength. The shift moreover implied the growing awareness of a particularism, that is, the formation of a diaspora situation perceived as such.

(Henigman 1993:125)

In other words, diasporas, like other ethnic phenomena, are historical processes involving the practice of identification as well as a set of social, political, and economic practices that are implied in group formation. Whether this identification crosses existent political boundaries or not is not crucial for understanding the nature or its emergence. The nation-state cycle described above moves from a period of cultural centralization/marginalization as hegemony is achieved to a re-emergence of cultural identities as hegemonies fragment. This kind of pattern can be said to characterize earlier empires as well, even if the fragments that emerge in periods of hegemonic decline need not take the form of nation-states. It should be noted, however, that there are family resemblances of a transhistorical nature here, insofar as a singular logic linking territory (place) and people seems to become salient.

Conclusion

Globalization and diasporization are both products of a major reconfiguration in the global system, one that has also led to indigenization, ethnification, and the emergence of globalizing elite identities based on the ideology of cosmopolitan hybridity. Globalization has not invaded the domain of the nation-state. Rather, the nation-state has transformed itself increasingly into a plural state in which multiculturalism is competing to become the dominant ideology. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that the state is the cause of the current situation. Globalization is, as we have argued elsewhere, a process related to declining hegemony in which there is a rapid decentralization of capital accumulation in the world, one that accompanies the rise of new economic zones and potential hegemons. However, the state is clearly a major actor in the globalization process, rather than its unwilling victim. It is the state that has created the legal and political infrastructure for many of these processes. It is easier to grasp the importance of the state-as-actor by envisaging the contemporary state as an apparatus whose function is increasingly to attract capital. Now the process of decentralization of accumulation entails that the state may indeed have to adapt itself to new conditions, but this is always a double process, one, in this case, where there is no politics of opposition, only a single way to get things done: a Third Way, a Neue Mitte, a vote unique. It is in this sense that globalization within the world system is generated from within the state itself, a state that tends in such periods to become a political class for itself. The discourse of cultural globalization, which is in very large measure about the global diffusion of culture, via commodities, information, and the movement of people with their “cultures” in their baggage, is itself part of this global change and needs to be analyzed as an ideological or positioned normative discourse. I have suggested that no understanding of diasporas or any other transnational formations can be achieved without accounting for the ways in which such groups emerge and are reproduced. This necessitates making distinctions among different positions from which meaning is attributed to the world. The celebratory representation of movement by elites may not necessarily
correspond to the representation of those who inhabit the lower classes of transnational movement. And these representations and experiences, as well as the social conditions that generate them, are themselves historically variable. It is crucial that demographic movement in itself implies nothing about the social form that it takes, a form that is, of course, culturally as well as historically specific. We have nonetheless suggested that there are some common patterns implying that the emergence and disappearance of transnational formations are dependent on the cycles of growth and decline of global hegemonies.

The current infatuation with the diasporic is, in the terms set out here, an ideological reflex, the experience of a certain segment of the elite, the experience of flying, of becoming cosmopolitan and being able to afford it. Real transnational populations and diasporas are, as we have suggested, not multicultural experiments, not hybrid formations. They are, on the contrary, relatively closed entities that practice closure in order to maintain themselves, and which, even if they assimilate new elements from their surroundings, are strict in the maintenance of their identities. These identities are not necessarily forms of resistance to the nation-state, but for those economically based transnational organizations that play such an important role in the contemporary world. Nor are they harbingers of a brave new world of cultural freedom. They are very much products of the state of the global system today, in which globalization and the transformation of state societies are systemic constituents. I would even venture to suggest that cosmopolitans also tend, as they have historically, to form relatively closed transnational groups, visiting the same international hotels, consuming the same foods, wines, high-end culture, speaking the same cultural codes, and even intermarrying. There are of course numerous hierarchical levels within this group, and there is a marked segregation of true blues from wannabe cultural elites. But there is a common participation in a similar set of social projects, and it is people slightly lower down on the scale who are often the most enthusiastic producers of cosmopolitan discourse. The only difference between transnational elites and those in the lower half of the social order is that the former tend to characterize themselves as open, which, as we have argued, is a well-conceived self-misrepresentation of their own social reality.

The latter may well be open with respect to national borders, but it is relatively closed as a world of elite social life, interaction, and a limited number of local venues, meeting places for those of the same "kind" (Friedman 2004).

I have sought throughout this discussion to displace current usage of nouns to that of verbs in the description of transnational and diasporic phenomena. I have suggested that it is the practice of transnational relations and

relations of identification which should be the locus of analysis. The emergence, reproduction, and demise of such relations can best be understood if they are construed as parts of larger global systemic fields within which both state formations and transnational formations emerge and disappear.

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on a major scale, such as those in China and Greece. But then it is typical of ideological thinking that it suppresses those realities that would contradict it.

3. “Homogenization” here is not akin to the notion of “essentialization,” in which identical subjects are produced by a state that aims at total cloning of its population. This notion is the basis of the claim of essentialism, but it is not the real meaning that authors such as Gellner had in mind. Homogenization concerns the establishment of a common set of public values, a homogeneous public sphere of political action and communication. It is not about taurized subjects, but about shared values.

4. The United States, a “racial formation” from the period of slavery, was never a totalizing assimilation machine like France, and it might even be suggested that the nature of the assimilation process was very different. What was assimilated to was much more a set of explicit values than a deeper or more complete cultural homogenization. This is a complex problem that has rarely been dealt with in comparative terms, so it rests here as a suggestion for future research and analysis. It does, however, serve to remind us that terms such as “integration” and “assimilation” need to be unpacked, since we all too often assume that they mean the same thing in all situations.

5. The Swedish word likhet, with cognates in Danish and Norwegian, means “equal” but also “sameness.”

6. And it is, of course, true that other forms of identity—ethnic, religious-based, regional—are also common in our nation-state system, forms that are not simply reducible to the latter.

NOTES

1. Personal communication from an employee of a leading French engineering firm.

2. But what then are we to make of the large number of nationalist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that engaged transnationals