Globalization or Modernity?

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Ever since the emergence of world system theory, the problem of dealing with the world as an entity with systemic properties has become a major preoccupation across a variety of discourses. Nevertheless, during the last decade there has been a return of the sociological "master narrative" (Therborn, 1992) or what can be called the "paradigm of modernity". Simultaneously, there has been a proliferation of calls for a more global perspective which transcends the Eurocentric biases of this traditional paradigm. In this context, the debate about global culture and the growing interest in globalization reflect an intellectual effort aimed at the development of a new frame of reference. This emergent framework is far from being complete or explicit. The "new gaze" needs explication and clarification and its consequences for the study of societies, cultures, and civilizations have to be explored.

In the following, I attempt to contrast this global perspective with the traditional "paradigm of modernity" and trace its consequences with respect to world system theory and cultural analysis. I shall argue that adopting a global perspective with respect to the study of civilizations and their interactions over time necessitates the relativization of the "paradigm of modernity". Western modernity has been only one of the stages of the globalizing process and its current proliferation throughout the globe signifies a new stage in globalization which cannot be reduced to linear explanations postulating the inevitability of Westernization (diffusion, "modernization theory", and so on). I will exemplify the consequences of adopting a global instead of a modernist view through a discussion of the different consequences of each "gaze" for the emergent properties of the global field, namely the concepts of the self, the nation-state, and the international system of states.

The Paradigm Of Modernity

As Habermas (1981:3-14) has noted, the "modern" is a term first used to separate the Christian world from the pagan Ancients. However, since the end of the eighteenth century, the term has acquired the connotation of indi-

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eating a gap between the modern capitalist world and all preindustrial societies, a gap corresponding both to a chronological distinction within the Western world as well as a gap between core and periphery within the global system. The term "modernity" crystallizes the identification of the non-Western Other as part of a "tradition" and a culture which are juxtaposed against the West. The movement from "tradition" to "modernity" becomes a linear process, often times seen as inevitable under the lenses of evolutionism or the Marxist dialectic. The "West" is identified with "modernity" whereas the non-European Other is designated as "pre-modern", "primitive", or even "non-human" (Todorov, 1984; Said, 1978). Beneath this labeling process lies an implicit claim about Western civilization's universality and a Eurocentric perspective that views alien societies as uncultivated versions of the West. Western social thought has been instrumental in producing "narratives" that view Western modernity as the only possible path towards "civilization". Weber's opening statement in the "Authors' Introduction" of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism exemplifies the ways in which the Western standpoint has served as a frame of reference in structuring the field of sociological investigations and determining the nature of the problems under consideration:

A product of modern European civilization, studying any problem of universal history, is bound to ask himself to what circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance and value (Weber, 1958:13).

In this statement, many of the implicit assumptions forming the Western discourse of modernity are made explicit: the fact that this kind of reflection is in itself a product of Western social thought; that a great division takes place between "Occident" and "Orient" as distinct conceptual categories; and that the West is being credited with the positively valued ideal of universality. When such an approach is adopted, a creeping evolutionism propels the construction of binary oppositions between the Western and the non-Western. At the same time, it is asserted that a "line of development" exists which renders the rise of the West a phenomenon of universal value. Although Weber does not endorse evolutionism, it is clear that his viewpoint is extremely prone to collapsing into an evolutionary narrative.

Similar visions of modernity prevail in the theories and critiques produced within the West: Marx, Weber, the Frankfurt School, and even world-system theorists all postulate the uniqueness and the inevitability of modernity (Smart, 1990:14-30). In all these perspectives, the common cultural
dualism of the West prevails: a "material" aspect of life is contrasted with a "cultural" or "ideal" aspect. This dualism is particularly pronounced within the Marxist tradition. Thus, for Wallerstein (1990:31-56), the material aspects of life weigh much more heavily in the final analysis than any other factors. For cultural theorists such as Weber and Habermas, rationalization becomes the central feature of modernity in the form of a double-faced Janus figure responsible for all the achievements of the West but also for the growing disenchantment of the world (Ashley, 1990:88-107). Within the Western discourse of modernity, the preoccupation with production reflects the value hierarchy of the West and the elevation of materialism into a universal explanans. The issue of "modernization" becomes a matter of economic development or a matter of adopting Western values that will enhance developmental processes. This rationale implies a deep conviction in a global convergence towards a single model best captured in Rostow's (1960) theory of the stages of economic growth. Giddens's (1985) "discontinuist" interpretation of modernity is the most recent example of the tendency to think along these lines. Giddens proposes a grand synthesis that follows close the Weberian narrative of the rise of the West. Modernity is seen as inherently disembedding — that is, permanently altering the traditional setting — and then moving on to conquer the non-Western world. For Giddens (1990), modernity is a distinctly Western project whose features are being diffused in non-Western areas, a process Giddens calls the "globalizing of modernity".

Given such an interpretation of modernity, an "idealist" rather than a "materialist" view of modernity tends to look upon "civilization" as a basically Western project that is being diffused throughout the globe. At the opposite side of the political spectrum, this very same concept of "modernization" is seen as a manifestation of Western "cultural imperialism". From this viewpoint, contact with the West is seen as the origin and cause of cultural underdevelopment, the inability to articulate a local cultural identity, and confusion between the traditional local cultures and the imported elements of Western culture. Although these interpretations of modernity stand in opposition to each other, they share the main assumption of the "paradigm of modernity". Both of them understand modernity as a uniform entity identical to Western modernity. Modernity is seen as a cultural condition produced by a process of modernization, by which:

- the social world comes under the domination of asceticism, secularism, the universalistic claims of instrumental rationality, the differentiation of the various spheres of the life-world, the bureaucratization of economic, political and military practices, and the growing monetarization of values (Turner, 1990a:6).
When modernity and modernization are seen in this manner, there is a considerable lack of differentiation between the objectified products of modernity, that is, the forms in which modernity is being codified, and the "spirit" or the culture responsible for the creation of these products, namely the content present in the various forms of modernity (Simmel, 1950). The two analytical aspects of modernity are fused into one. It is silently assumed that the meaning of a cultural item is universally "fixed" or "centered" and that its presence within a non-Western cultural milieu necessitates the existence of meaning-contexts identical with those of the Western cultural milieu. This failure to recognize the autonomy of local meaning-contexts has been particularly pronounced within the old modernization theory, which interpreted signs of "modernization" as indicators of a movement duplicating the Western cultural experience. Like Turner in the above statement, Western authors are situated within the core of the global system and consider the world around them to be "modern" without any differentiation between their own culture and the Other. If this perception of the concept of modernity is upheld, it is only a step further to designate the route to modernization as identical with the route to Westernization. This conceptualization of the term takes Western experience as a universal standard and is inherently Eurocentric rather than global in its character.

The origins of this "grand narrative" of modernity can be sought in the particular experience of Western nation-states (and more specifically, Germany) as it is reflected in the thematization developed during the classical period of sociology (1890-1920). The strains of industrialization in Western Europe led to the cultivation of a nostalgic element in the societies and intellectual elites coping with the discontents of modernity. Its most clear manifestation is in Toennies' (1887) famous distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, a distinction later adapted in various reincarnations by a multitude of authors including Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons. According to this classification, nostalgia surfaces in the form of the desire to reconstruct the "community" that was allegedly lost because of the coming of modernity, a theme that characterizes the Western response vis-a-vis the "problem of modernity" itself. For the purposes of the following discussion, "modernization" refers not to a uniform process but to a concept whose historical character and selective deployment prevent its use as an invariable and universally identical entity. The term represents a power relationship among societies, states, and civilizations, with some groups being more "central" and others being more "peripheral". Modernization is seen as a discourse generated by social agents attempting through its use to advance their own particular goals. In this sense, modernization involves the existence of specific designs or blueprints of modernization—that is,
specific programs aiming to update or “improve” the status of a collectivity to “better” forms of understanding or organization—and a range of specific modernizing projects peculiar to particular civilizations (Kavolis, 1982:33).

This revision of the meaning of “modernization” also necessitates the articulation of a global perspective which in contradiction to the “paradigm of modernity” awards no privileged position to the West. Such a perspective should acknowledge that the West provides us with a limited number of historical cases which share many common features and traditions dating back to the early Middle Ages, and cannot be used as a good comparative basis to make generalizations applicable to the globe (Mann, 1986:500-517). The theoretical research program informed by such a perspective postulates the globe as the unit of analysis, in the manner of Wallerstein (1974) and the world-system theorists. However, a critical difference of the global perspective from world-system theory is the attempt to turn the utilitarian basis of Wallerstein’s approach “on its head” (Bergesen, 1990:67-82) and highlight the cultural factors involved in the making of the global system.

Restoring the status of cultural factors to world-system analysis involves opening up the theoretical space beyond the purview of economic explanation. In this context, the category of “culture” as representing a “way of life” becomes central to the discourse of globalization. This reconceptualization of the modern world system is a departure from world-system theory to the extent that the latter still remains part of the Western philosophical tradition. As such, it constructs an opposition between capitalist world economy and pre-capitalist totalities and treats the globalization of the capitalist market as a process in which the rules governing the capitalist economy are mechanically extended into newly incorporated regions. There is no reflexivity with respect to the applicability of Western conceptualizations of the “economy” to non-Western regions. World system theory reproduces within its explanatory apparatus the Western dichotomy between the “material” and the “ideal”, often times seen as an opposition between the “economy” and “culture”.

In Wallerstein’s writings, even the multilayered conceptualization of social structures that characterizes the work of French historians such as Bloch (1961) and Braudel (1972) is absent. Wallerstein’s analysis departs from the Annales’ school in abandoning the goal of producing one histoire global (Stoianovich, 1976) and attempting to make historical complexity conform to postulates derived from a modified version of classical Marxism. Instead of a multiple determination of social conditions and an open acknowledgment of the limits of such an enterprise, Wallerstein attempts to explain the global sociocultural transformation of the “rise of the West” on the basis of narrowly conceived economic activities.
Culture, Globalization, And The World System

Unlike Wallerstein, the global perspective does not award primacy to economic factors. In so doing, it avoids the mistake of failing to acknowledge what Baudrillard (1975,1981) calls the "political economy of signs" or the differences in the meaning of symbolic representations as imprinted on cultural objects. The "embeddedness" of economic action into the social context of a particular milieu (Granovetter, 1985: 481-510) is recognized and, consequently, interpretations that conceive the "economic" factor as a disembedded force are rejected. Instead of trying to explain culture as the byproduct of economics, an approach which has been subject to harsh criticism (Sahlins, 1976), a more balanced account between consumption and production is proposed. Therefore, attention is directed not only to the Industrial Revolution but to the Commercial Revolution as well.

Although no common agreement exists regarding the specific date of the Commercial Revolution, all historical evidence points to the conclusion that a major transformation took place in Europe between 1500 and 1800 regarding the cultural status of commodities. Eighteenth century England is a paradigmatic case of this process. It represents a clear case of a society becoming immersed in the desire for the constant consumption of objects thus giving birth for the first time in history to the reality of consumer culture. This revolution affected not only the wealthy but all classes thereby radically transforming the relationship between people and cultural objects. As consumption came to be a "way of life", a "modern autonomous imaginative hedonism" (Campbell, 1987:77-96) emerged propelling the desire for the acquisition of new material goods. To the extent that the desire for constant accumulation of goods represents an aspect of the Faustian image of modernity as an eternal developmental process (Berman, 1982:37-86), the consumerist orientation is one of the prime manifestations of the modernist spirit. The rise of consumerism led to division of cultural artifacts into "traditional" and "modern". This led to a fascination with everything that did not belong to the new world of fashion and commodities. Objects and customs outside the realm of "modernity" were designated as "traditional" and became the objects of a new fashion, that is, they were designated as relics and appropriated by the urban classes as "fashionable cultural commodities".

This culture of materialism originates back to the sixteenth century, a period in which the influx of material goods from overseas expansion led to the creation of a materialist world view. Materialism is not only the result of changes in the mode of production but also an indispensable part of the Western viewpoint. The materialist outlook views goods as commodities
thereby ascribing to them a meaning which in itself constitutes a prerequisite for late eighteenth century capitalism. Simmel (1978) is the only sociologist of the classical period (1890-1920) who explicitly addresses the cultural transformations related with the rise of capitalism. For Simmel, the value of an object is an attribute that resides not in the object itself but rather in the eye of the observer; and, consequently, the problem of recontextualization of the meaning of objects becomes central for the interpretation of modernity. The constant production of commodities creates an eternal conflict between the objectified items and the consumer who has to confront them. From this perspective, modernity becomes the eternal present (Frisby, 1985), an interpretation of modernity also advanced by Berman (1982).

In Berman's account, modernity constitutes a cluster of sensibilities centered around cultural artifacts such as the main street, the department store, and the desire for constant innovation. The force that propels this process of perpetual destruction of the "old" and celebration of the "new" is modernism. From a global perspective, it is meaningful to speak of modernism as a disrupting force that upsets the social order of "traditional" societies as the capitalist world-economy spreads over the globe. It is possible to acknowledge the global influence of modernism, while, nevertheless holding that "modernity" is not always the outcome of modernization since modernism can be present even in societies which can not be called "modern". Employing this distinction makes it possible to avoid the a priori extension of Western utilitarianism to non-Western parts of the globe. Instead, the incorporation of these regions into the world-economy raises the issue of local societies dealing with imported concepts and categories, and constructing their own "routes to modernity".

European expansion throughout the world was a process that brought together preexisting regional networks and created a global system. According to Wolf (1982), this interactive process involved both European "civilized" conquerors and the "primitive people without history". Drawn by the systemic forces of this long term process "into convergent activities, people of diverse origins and social make up were driven to take part in the construction of a common world" (Wolf, 1982:385). In this sense, globalization refers to the awareness of the Other that is unique to the modern global system. The reconstruction of the concepts of space and time and the gradual imposition of homogeneous measures upon the sociotemporal order of human experience are key processes for globalization. The superimposition of common sociotemporal measures created an awareness of time and space unique to the contemporary world in terms of the uniformity of the experience of space and time and the emergent image of the globe as a common eucomene. Therefore, globalization can be thought as a process of
increasing contact among civilizations, aptly described by Kavolis (1991:124-43) as the "polylogue of civilizations".

There are two alternative but not competing conceptualizations of globalization: globalization can be conceived as a very long term process, closely related with the problematic of the civilizing process (see Robertson, 1992:115-37); and globalization can be conceived as a process operating simultaneously with the rise of the modern world system, and expressing the "cultural" — as opposed to the purely "economic" — confrontations between radically different meaning systems. In the former case, globalization constitutes a very long term process that emphasizes the degree to which cross-cultural interrelationships, communications, and the diffusion of ideas and material achievements have been involved in the creation of supposedly original and distinct civilizational entities; in the latter case, globalization is seen as an integral part of broadly defined "world system studies". To a considerable extent, this distinction is based upon the differentiation of the notion of a "world system" as such from the "modern (or global) world system". In world history prior to the sixteenth century, "mini-world systems" have existed united by extensive networks of communication. In the world of 1400, it is possible to refer to the globalizing process as the process through which these different systems were coming in contact with each other (not only in the field of commerce, but also with respect to culture and the gradual diffusion of knowledge and innovation across Eurasia). However, after the sixteenth century globalization refers not only to this process but also to the expansion of the capitalist world economy throughout the globe, an expansion that carried with it important cultural as well as economic repercussions. This process continues up to the present and involves a perpetual reshaping of local identities. Especially since the eighteenth century, local identities have been significantly transformed through the notions of "nation" and "ethnicity", and the late twentieth century shows no signs of this process coming to an end.

Looking upon the dynamics of the modern world system in this manner offers the possibility of a solution to the thorny problem of the specific "distinctiveness" of the modern world system. That is, once one conceives of the world as a network of interconnected units, the issue of the boundaries separating one "world system" from another emerges and with it the impossibility of defining the peculiarly "modern" character of the post-1500 world in purely economic terms. According to Braudel (1982:600), the explosion of the market economy was a worldwide phenomenon that influenced societies around the globe in the period between 1550 and 1800. However, this was only a "necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the formation of a capitalist process" since the structural conditions that favored capitalist
development were present in Europe long before that period. In fact, a persuasive argument can and indeed has been made about the existence of a worldwide trading system dating back to the thirteenth century (Abu-Lughod, 1989). More recently, evidence has been presented regarding the existence of world systems dating back to Antiquity and even prehistoric times. Despite Wallerstein’s dissenting view, it is possible to conceive of “world systems” by projecting the theoretical apparatus of world-system theory back into the flow of history or prehistory. Such a “reading” of the historical record, however, is only possible through the selective use of the existing evidence in a manner that excludes material that does not “fit” the theoretical scheme. By the logic of the “production paradigm” this attempt reduces historical totalities to economic organizations whose logic and function is presumed to be identical across different places and transcendental across different historical time periods. To some extent this enterprise is self-defeating since it further exemplifies the need for cultural variables to be included as constitutive elements of a “world system”.

In cultural terms, the entity Wallerstein has called the “modern world system” can be seen as a global field originating around 1500 (the exact date being a subject for empirical examination) whose existence has simultaneously constituted and been constituted by the capitalist world economy. Mapping the properties of this field involves the clarification of the conceptual categories granted primacy for explanatory purposes, and of the structuration mechanism operating within the field. With respect to the former, I propose a distinction between relationships of domination and affective relationships. Relationships of domination or more general power relationships between Self and Other involve the monopolization of opportunities within the field and the distribution of resources under conditions of overt or covert conflict among individuals and/or collectivities. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that social goods involving access to resources and opportunities are socially sanctioned and relatively scarce. Affective relationships involve the establishment of emotional ties among selves mainly through rituals and manipulation of symbols. The same process is duplicated at the level of collectivities with the criterion of difference employed in a systematic manner in order to provide for the creation and maintenance of stable boundaries across groups. In terms of the structuration of the social groups and the crystallization of different entities within the global field, the key mechanism operating as a means for establishing group cohesion and maintenance is that of social closure. The key factor governing group genesis and existence is the dual process of inclusion of a group of agents within a unit accompanied by the Other’s simultaneous exclusion from the unit. The social closure mechanism is responsible for the perpetuation of divisions
and the make-up of symbolic hierarchies within the global field. This description of the proposed conceptual principles and the structuration mechanism has been abstract, a defect that can be rectified once specific entities are named. Thus, the power relationships between a self and institutionalized status quo within the global field can be seen as an expression of two emerging properties standing in close relationship to each other, namely the self and the international system of states. In this domain it is possible to locate issues pertaining to the military balance of power, legal rights, and negotiating mechanisms responsible for the maintenance of the system. It is important to emphasize that, although many of the legal and social rights pertaining to the domain of power relations regulate the distribution of rights between an individual and a state, the international system of states has been responsible for the articulation, preservation and proliferation of these rights throughout the globe.

In terms of affective relationships, it is necessary to clarify the particular nature of the groups involved in the structuration of the global field. In the most abstract terms, affective relationships between Self and Other are established through the creation of a social group bounded from other similar groups via a social closure mechanism. The principles that can be selected for this closure can vary from gender to race to religion. However, in the modern era, it has been the principle of nationhood that has gained momentum and overshadowed as previous forms of affective association. To some extent, this is not an entirely new process since ethnie or ethnic communities have existed in earlier times. However, the passage from ethnie to nationhood is a particular mark of the Modern Era and furthermore, the articulation of nationhood as a general principle governing the structuration of the global field is a process unique to recent centuries. The historical conjunction between the articulation of nationhood as a cultural property and the desire to establish states that would guarantee the completion of the project of nation-building has produced nationalism as one of the most powerful particularistic forces of the last two centuries. The ideal goal implicit in every nationalist program, the nation-state, stands in a close and ambivalent relationship vis-a-vis the excluded Other. In this instance, the Other includes the totality of humankind that stands outside the "nation". In spite of the fact that nation A is as much a part of humanity as nations B, C, and so on, the national(ist) idea proposes a qualitative break with respect to the fundamental similarity of all humankind. In so doing, a nation is articulated as qualitatively different from the rest of humankind. This discussion has served to provide an analytical elaboration concerning the classification of the properties of the global field. A historical justification of their centrality could be seen as a more appropriate strategy for this task but the current
analysis is concerned with establishing their theoretical viability rather than their historical validity. The concepts of the self, the nation-state, the international system of states and humankind are seen as the key emerging properties of the global field. These properties have precipitated the creation of the world economy but also they have been further modified and reformulated by the world economy once the latter was established. This form of relationship between "culture" and "economy" offers the practical advantage of replying to the long time of critics that have pointed out the independence of institutional factors from the "economy" in the making of the global system. It opens up the theoretical space for an examination of intercultural encounters and selective responses to outside pressures that avoids economic reductionism and addresses cultural issues on their own right. Different civilizational units throughout the globe are seen as participants of the globalizing process simultaneously preserving their own cultural characteristics, "traditions" and particularities and coming under the influence of global processes. In coping with globalization, each civilizational unit develops its own particular "selective response" by means of which certain features from within or outside the social unit are selected as structural principles that play a dominant role in its orientation to the world as a whole.

The Properties Of The Global Field

This particular "gaze" upon global dynamics involves a shift from looking upon materialism as a principle of interpretation to looking upon materialism as an expandum. In this reconceptualization, the genealogy and the mode of proliferation of the properties of the global field become objects of inquiry. To a considerable extent, the properties of the global field have had their origins in the West and as such they can be seen as intellectual forms produced by the West since 1500. Conceiving of them as properties of the global field necessitates the specification of their own particularity and content in a critical manner that avoids creating binary oppositions which condemn the non-Western Other to the status of an inevitably inferior state of being. This becomes possible by postulation the existence of two simultaneous processes: the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism.

Universalistic criteria are impersonal in nature and constitute the necessary prerequisite for the effective functioning of capitalism on a world scale. Particularistic criteria such as gender, ethnicity and race are also incorporated into the capitalist world economy. However, these two categories should not be seen as part of a binary opposition in which universalism is present
in the West and particularism in the rest of the world. This idea ignores the particularistic bases of the universalistic criteria themselves and obscures the fact that universalism is itself part of the Western philosophical standpoint. From a global perspective, the dual process of the universalization of particularism and of the particularization of universalism constitutes the mode of participation in the global field for particular civilizations. The properties of the global field are simultaneously diffused and recontextualized as they proliferate around the globe. In this process, cultural homogenization and heterogeneity coincide. Criteria and categories initially applicable only to the West become universal points of reference whereas at the same time these categories are being reinterpreted in light of local meaning-contexts. Universalistic and particularistic categories coexist with each other. Only the existence of context-specific cultural hierarchies determines which particular aspects of a concept are to be highly valued (Dumont, 1983). The notion of a cultural hierarchy provides the foundation for the symbolic ordering of values and ideas that can be found throughout the globe but which are differently appreciated by various collectivities. In what follows, I will briefly explore this issue by discussing three of these properties: the concepts of the international system of states, the self, and the nation-state. My goal for doing so is to demonstrate the autonomy the form of these concepts enjoys vis-a-vis their content and therefore to argue for their applicability as global categories for cultural analysis.

Firstly, the idea of an international system of states represents a basic building block for the global field since it provides the political forum for international politics. Indeed, this mode of state organization around the globe has demonstrated a remarkable stability and uniformity not easily reducible to other kinds of explanation. The international system of states is not identical with a global “international society”. For a considerable period of time, the international system of states included only European states in a constant state of conflict with each other. Through this chronic conflict, the ideas of treaties and rules governing conflict slowly emerged and with them the concept of diplomacy as well. Also, the chronic need for finance led the local rulers of the European system to enter into agreements with independent cities and other powerful agents of the fragmented European scene, exchanging financial support for the granting of rights to particular locales. This slow process led to the articulation of citizenship as an emerging property of the European and then of the international system of states. A slow and gradual or in some cases violent and revolutionary process of proliferation over the course of the nineteenth century transformed this bundle of rights into universal rights for all citizens of a particular state. State centralization and a considerable increase in the degree of surveillance was
accompanied by this expansion of rights which provides up to this day the foundation for democratic politics.

The Ottoman Empire, the only non-Western European entity involved in this process, was drawn into the dynamics of European politics from the sixteenth century onward. However, due to the different legal and religious standards employed by the Ottomans in their dealings with the West, the Empire did not become part of this system. Instead, as it began a long term decline from the seventeenth century onward, it was dealt with as a pariah entity which was excluded from the international law on the basis of its different tradition. This short summary should make clear that the bases of the idea of "international society" have been Western and that many of the standards and practices of contemporary politics are of explicit Western origin. The global state system preceded the creation of the majority of the nation-states and was used as a baseline to determine the compliance of a state with an emerging global standard. But does this mean that international "law and Order" is just a Western invention fabricated in order to further the goals of "cultural imperialism"? I do not think so. Although it is entirely possible for certain states to dominate within such an emerging organization, the proposition that the organization itself is an instrument of dominant is rather simplistic.

The global perspective draws attention to the creation of international cultural and legal artifacts as reflecting the movement towards globality as such rather than the domination of particular societies. Two good reasons can be given in favor of such a viewpoint. Firstly, the international system of states was used as a baseline to determine the formation of many of the European states themselves. For these states, the notion of the "concert of Europe" was a device that fostered internal cohesion demanding the orientation of state agencies towards the interstate system as such (Polyani, 1957). Secondly, the creation of an international system of states during the nineteenth century as well as the establishment of the legal and cultural "standard of civilization" during the same time period are examples of international artifacts that constitute entities created through an interactive global process. Although the Ottoman state served as a polar opposite for the creation of the so-called European notions of politics (Anderson, 1974:397-400), in other areas of the world, Muslim, Chinese and Hindu rulers were actively involved in negotiating with the West and participating in the making of the "global" international system of states. In itself the establishment of this increasingly global system has further served the goal of providing an environment for international communication based upon shared rules which are not culturally specific. In fact, the international system of states represents a mode of organization whose elements (bureaucracy, armies,
police, national symbols, etc.) are almost entirely formal; the meaning of these particular forms has to be examined in light of the local meaning-contexts.

It is in connection with this problematic that the category of "culture" becomes a central concept as the domain that accounts for similarity and difference vis-a-vis the Other as well as the recognition of the Other as part of a common symbolic universe (McGrane, 1989). But since "culture" has been a term closely associated with attempts to classify the Other as part of binary oppositions that reproduce the value hierarchy of the West, it is important to make it clear that advocating a global perspective does not mean a return to idealist as opposed to materialist perspectives. This is more important for the concepts of the self and the individual. The two concepts need to be distinguished from each other and their differences should be clearly acknowledged. Postulating the idea of the self as one of the properties of the global field does not imply that this "self" is identical with the concept of the individual. Rather, the concept of the individual is seen as representing a particular conceptualization of self. Towards this goal, an examination of the peculiar cultural changes that connect the category of the individual with the rise of West can serve as a means for demonstrating both the particularity of the Western cultural experience and implicit value judgments associated with its uncritical application in cultural analysis.

Rationalization has been the crucial change traditionally associated with modernity. Within Western culture, rationality has played a key role in shaping cultural institutions and attitudes from the beginning of the early modern period and onward. Habermas (1984) and Weber (1968) identify the development of rationality as the most fundamental characteristic associated with the Western mode of thinking. Calculability, predictability, and efficiency are in themselves cultural traits peculiar to the West and are closely related with the notion of individualistic, self-interested orientation to action. Far from being a universal incentive, the concept of self-interest has been fabricated throughout the last four centuries in an effort to provide a stable political and social environment.

The idea of self-interest was used as an alternative to the "passions" for glory which had been the standard motivation for the aristocracy of medieval Europe. Later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the concept was popularized by the philosophers of the Enlightenment and it became legitimate to speak about the "interests of the people." The liberal philosophers used the term to justify the ideal of representative democracy and to claim that the concept can be used as an universal determinant of human behavior.21 The idea of the self-interested utilitarian agent is also linked with the notion of a contractual basis for societal organization and
hence, with the concept of the individual as an active, independent agent with moral consciousness, standing apart from the different roles (persona) that he/she plays within the social context. The construction of the Western concept of the individual has been a process that originated in the fifteenth century. During the early modern period, from 1500 to 1800, the concept of the individual became dominant in Western thought displacing the Medieval theocratic view that advocated the sanctity of ascribed roles. During the nineteenth century, the concept came to be associated with the Romantic movement, and with an emphasis on uniqueness and personal expression. Nevertheless, the concept of the Western individual has preserved the close association between self-restraint — including control over one’s public persona — and the ideal of the “civilized self”. Through the construction of the “isolated individual” it becomes possible for Western philosophy, and for Hobbes in particular, to invent and eventually solve the so-called “problem of social order”.

The “isolated individual” and the “rational agent” represent those aspects of the West which are recognized as responsible for a variety of intellectual achievements but also for their cultural specificity. The “grand narrative” of modernity commits the fallacy of treating this history as part of human evolution as such, thus failing to provide theoretical space for the articulation of cultural experiences that do not fit into this scheme. In sharp contrast to the “paradigm of modernity” and its universalistic tendencies, the global perspective does not privilege Western discourse, but instead acknowledges its particularistic bases and allows room for scenarios other than the sociological “master narrative”. Therefore, when the category of the self is to be employed outside or even within the Western cultural milieu, it should be clear that it is not identical to the category of the individual. The issue that needs to be addressed and which cannot be resolved a priori without reference to the concrete empirical record pertains to the ways in which the concept of self is utilized as a frame of reference in historical and cultural analysis. When applied to a different context, its meaning has to be considered a variable depending upon the particular configuration.

Lastly, the concept of the nation-state has to be disembedded from its Western origins. Modernist views on the rise of the concept of nation-state look upon the social transformation of Western European societies as the main cause of the appearance of the “nation”. In particular the Neo-Marxist perspective on nationalism considers nation-building as a process that has been facilitated by state administrators and other agents of the state machinery. In this view, nationhood becomes a concept that is “fabricated” in order to provide ideological support for state policies. In a more diversified version of this argument, the concept of the nation is seen as emerging out of
the combination of capitalism with technological transformations such as printing. In this case, a psychological element is added as well; the argument is that the extension of Western European societies into the New World generated an emotional gap between the settlers and their traditional identity and this vacuum was filled by the concept of the nation (Anderson, 1983). These perspectives disregard the existence of ethnic communities in precapitalist times and conclude on the basis of the socially constructed character of nationhood that the concept itself and its associated mode of attachment, national identity, are phenomena unique to the modern world system. They see these two concepts as an important means through which the mechanism of capitalism operates at the cultural level. In so doing, these perspectives fail to address cultural phenomena in their right and instead choose to operate on the implicit basis of a distinction between “economy” and “culture” reminiscent of classical Marxism.

In contrast, the non-Marxist perspective on nationalism attempts to address nation-building as a problem not reducible to economistic explanations. In this case, emphasis is placed upon citizenship as an integral part of nation-building. Exemplary of this perspective is Greenfeld’s (1991) recent work. She associates the birth of nationalism with the development of democratic institutions in sixteenth-century England and she views nationalism as a force closely associated with parliamentarism. This initial spirit of nationalism changed, however, when the concept migrated to the Continent. In this case, class resentment by the local elites vis-a-vis the English caused them to alter the egalitarian character of the term and to substitute particularistic criteria in the place of English universalism. Germany, France, and Russia are seen as examples of such cases. Greenfeld’s analysis, despite its insights, also falls prey to the modernist “grand narrative”. Universalism becomes a property of the British Empire and its offsprings whereas particularism is assigned to the Continent and the rest of the nations around the globe.

Greenfeld remains silent with respect to the repression of the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish, all of whom had their separate identities subsumed by Great Britain. But even more significant than this omission is her confusion of two analytically distinct aspects related to the appearance of the nation-state. That is, the growth of citizenship is seen as identical with the rise of nationhood. Greenfeld does not differentiate between the two concepts and this confusion allows her to judge the adoption of nationalism in other areas of the globe as a process that failed to preserve the democratic character of the British tradition. The fact that the two concepts are related is undeniable; but in Greenfeld’s view, the “correct” gaze upon nationalism values citizenship above nationhood, a particular form of hierarchical relationship pre-
sent only in the Anglo-American world.

Brubaker's (1992) study of the relationship of the two concepts in France and Germany exemplifies not only the different nature of the two concepts but also the important differences in the way that the concepts are hierarchically positioned in different political traditions. In France, universalism has served as a legal quality present in the form of alliance with the French state since the time of the French revolution. The creation of an ethnically homogeneous society has been seen as a quality that emerges out of the universal equality of ass Frenchman. On the contrary, in Germany the road to citizenship has been very different. Citizenship was articulated not through a revolutionary break with the past but through a gradual process of cities granting rights to citizens. The unity of the German nation was established on the basis of particularistic criteria, namely membership in a cultural community, and citizenship has been seen as a right that emerges out of this membership. The hierarchical relationship between the two is the reverse of their relationship in the French context. Therefore, to provide an adequate account of the particular type of nationalism and its epigone, the nation-state, one has to examine the concrete ways in which the relationship between the two concepts has been articulated in different contexts. The assumption that the British model of nationalism is the "correct" one because of its historical precedence reveals a value judgment that creates a binary opposition between "Us" and the Other and serves as a justification for viewing other forms of the same concept as less developed types of one's highly valued cultural ideal.

The Globalization Of Modernity

The discussion thus far has illustrated the particularistic bases of "universalistic" categories and the ways in which these categories can and should be employed outside the European context. The distinction between content and form has been instrumental for this operation. I have argued that the proliferation of a cultural form does not imply the proliferation of the content associated with it in a particular milieu. This idea can serve as a basis for revising the discourse of modernity in a manner that makes it part of the global perspective.

Toward this end, I would like to develop a thematization of modernity with respect to the distinction between its form and its content. On the one hand, there is the content of modernity, or the cultural heritage or "tradition" of the West best exemplified by the ideal-type of the rational, utilitarian agent, which from the fifteenth century onward has been responsible for generating the intellectual and cultural preconditions of a variety of techno-
logical and intellectual achievements (henceforth, Modernity 1). On the other hand, there are the objectified products of this process, consumer goods and all sorts of material items as well as the intellectual goods produced by the West (henceforth, Modernity 2). By the term “intellectual goods”, I designate the specific forms of organization that were generated under the influence of the West, that is, the notions of “civilization”, state, citizenship, nationalism, “culture” as an analytical category, and formal, rational bureaucracy. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive classification but only a means for clarifying, in concrete terms, what I mean by Modernity 2.

For the people of the non-Western world, to be “modern” is a matter of mastering the form which appears to endow the West with its supremacy and effectivity. The “gaze” of the non-Western native is addressed toward these forms — whether they be “civilization”, “culture”, “tradition” or the “nation-state” — and not toward the underlying factors presumably responsible for the creation of these forms. In most cases, the issue is to adapt one’s local culture by making the “best of two worlds”: Western forms are fused with local institutions, and new “traditions” emerge as the outcome of this interactive process. The forms designated as Modernity 2 operate as signs that indicate the “modern” character of a culture or a region, but by no means indicate the incorporation of Modernity 1 by that region. These signs correspond to very different meanings depending upon the cultural context in which they are interpreted. Because of its purely formal character, Modernity 2 constitutes a common frame of reference for individuals and societies throughout the globe and can be seen as a significant force that shapes the cross-cultural meaning of globality as such. Consequently, the cultural objects and intellectual goods that constitute Modernity 2 extend their influence throughout the world. By and large, the diffusion of Modernity 2 throughout the world is responsible for a global “culture of modernization” consisting “in the widespread sense across the modern world of the possibility and, to different degrees, the desirability of societal modernization” (Robertson, 1991b:211). For local societies, the issue is how to acquire the signs that allow for prestige and power within the modern world system, and not how to substitute their own “identity” with an alien cultural code (that of Modernity 1).

It is worth pointing out that Western sociology has conceived of “modernization” in terms of the diffusion of Modernity 1 throughout the globe as if “mimicking the master” is the only possible “route to modernity”. The same mistake is repeated in discussions of “globalization” (for example, Giddens, 1990). It should be clear, however, that, given the aforementioned distinction between Modernity 1 and 2, it is possible to speak of the “glob-
alization of modernity”, insofar as it is clear that this notion refers to Modernity 2. The purely formal character of Modernity 2 allows it to operate as a frame of universal reference, in the sense that it is applicable to all cultures, and its formal aspects can be reinterpreted and accommodated within each region. Modernity 2 should be seen as a concept that operates as a point of universal reference for nation-states and individuals around the world. The multiplicity of meanings that can be attributed to it promote cultural heterogeneity as part of the process of globalization and not as an opposite tendency. By this line of thinking, each state and culture around the world can be seen as involved in the dual process of the recontextualization of Modernity 2 signs and the adaptation and reinterpretation of its own identity vis-a-vis the world as a whole.

This process raises the issue of identity for all actors inhabiting the globe. The problem of identity becomes a central problem not only for the West but for all countries and regions that have undergone “modernization”. The reinterpretation of Modernity 2 and the constant need to articulate linguistic, cultural, and racial ties as aspects of a community, whether that community is a nation, a subculture, or a religion, creates the problematic of the local and the global. In other words, the problem is to articulate an identity vis-a-vis the world as a whole. The appearance of social movements such as religious fundamentalism or the ethic revival of the 1980s constitute phenomena intrinsically related to this problem.28

Conclusion

The Western narrative of modernity is built upon the creation of a binary opposition between the West and the Other whose goal has been to “essentialize” the Other and thus perpetuate the West’s symbolic domination over the globe. Additionally, Western social thought has been polarized by the existence of a conflict between materialist and idealist viewpoints. The global perspective involves a rejection of both characteristics: materialism is seen as an emergent ideology of the Western tradition and binary oppositions are seen as stereotypes that fail to recognize the particularistic bases of the Western philosophical tradition. The concept of a hierarchy that orders universalistic and particularistic tendencies within a cultural configuration serves as a principle that transcends the simple opposition between universalism and particularism. The “modern world system” can be reformulated as a global field with the concepts of the self, the international system of states, the nation-state, and humankind as its properties. The relationship of these entities with the “economy” is a reciprocal one: they have simultaneously contributed to the making of the capitalist world economy.
and been constituted by capitalism. This formulation makes globalization analysis part of "world system studies" but not part of the utilitarian and reductionist interpretations typically associated with it. To sustain the applicability of these properties of the global field as entities that do not entail a surrender to theories of cultural imperialism, I have surveyed the genealogy of the international system of states, the self, and the nation-state, in order to reveal both their particularistic bases and to demonstrate the difference between the "modernist" and the global interpretation of these concepts. My argument has been that the proliferation of these concepts around the globe divorces them from their Western origins and thus turns them into forms of structuration whose content is being reinterpreted in light of the local traditions and meaning-contexts.

This same distinction between form and content has been applied in order to revise the concept of "modernity" in a manner that can help us elucidate the relationship between globality and modernity. I argued that it is necessary to differentiate between the cultural and intellectual heritage of the West (Modernity 1) and its objectification in terms of cultural and intellectual goods (Modernity 2). Modernity 1 is related with the Western concept of the rational and utilitarian agent and, as such, is culturally specific to the West. Modernity 2 is being diffused throughout the world via the process of globalization. Since it operates at a purely formal level, Modernity 2 is being recontextualized and its signs are being reinterpreted in the light of local meaning-contexts. This recontextualization of cultural and intellectual artifacts raises the issue of identity vis-a-vis the world. The explosion of new signs, and the constant fusion of local particularism and Modernity 2 universalism, generates the need for a constant reformulation of collective identity all over the globe.

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Notes

1. There is plethora of statements that advocate the necessity of such a perspective (Giddens, 1987:22-51; Archer, 1991:131-47; Albrow, 1990:3-16; and Turner, 1990b:343-58).
2. See the discussion in the special issue of *Theory, Culture, and Society* (1990) and the review of different conceptualizations of global culture by Buell (1992:127-42).
4. On nostalgia, see Turner (1987: 147-56) and Robertson (1990a: 45-61). Parsons is a noteworthy exception to the grip of nostalgia over sociological theory.
but his modernist vision constitutes one of the most uncritical applications of the Eurocentric dichotomy between “tradition” and “modernity”.

5. The global perspective proposes a “voluntaristic” framework in place of the “deterministic” viewpoint of world system theory building upon the “revisionist” critique of world-system theory (Bergesen, 1980:1-12). The use of the term “voluntaristic” to describe its general theoretical framework was a source of criticism of the emergent perspective on the basis that it “postulates a Durkheimian inevitability of moving, sooner or later, toward a universal value hierarchy” with the ideal of humanity as a whole as its highest value (Kavolis, 1987:10). Such an interpretation, however, distorts the meaning of the term “voluntaristic” as employed in the global perspective. The voluntaristic element refers to the character of the orientation vis-a-vis the process of globalization itself and not to the outcome of this process (Robertson, 1987: 20-30).


7. The relationship between “antique” and “modern” pervades Western philosophical thought ever since the collapse of the Graeco-Roman world. As LeGoff (1992:21-50) has observed, the “modern” is a term that has been subject to continuous reinterpretation throughout the centuries. The terms “traditional” and “modern” as employed in the essay follow the analytical distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (Toennies, 1988/1877) and refer to the classification of cultural goods by their consumers.

8. See Kern (1983) and Zeburavel (1981) on the standardization of time and space during the late nineteenth century and the expression of this new awareness in works of art. Also Harvey’s (1989:201-326) discussion of this “global mapping” includes a number of important insights.

9. See Gillis and Frank (1992:521-87) and the reply by Wallerstein (1992:561-619). Also see Chase-Dunn (1992:313-33) for a review of the problems involved in establishing with theoretical clarity the boundaries between “world systems”.

10. The image of the global field and its properties is adopted from Robertson(1992) with one terminological difference. The concept of nation-state is referred to by Robertson as “national society”, a term which appears to conceive nation-states as culturally integrated entities. Also, in the initial formulation, there is no attempt to relate the global field to the world economy.

11. The distinction between affective and power relationships aims at including both dimensions of human experience as parts of the theoretical classification. A preliminary attempt addressing the same issue was undertaken by Collins (1975). The proposed classification views humans not only as power-driven beings a la Nietzsche but also as emotional beings in constant need of support, solidarity, and affection (Denzin, 1984).

12 The concept of social closure is adopted from Parkin (1979) and Murphy (1988). According to Murphy, the work of a number of researchers (Bourdieu, Collins,
Giddens) can be subsumed under the rubric of social closure.

13. The notion of ethnic community in pre-capitalist times has been explored by Armstrong (1982) and Smith (1986;1991). According to the latter author, modernization involves the transformation of ethnie into nations.

14. See the critiques of Zolberg (1981:253-81), Skocpol (1977:1075-90), Chirot and Hall (1982:81-106), Robertson and Lechner (1985:15-52), and Boyne (1990:57-62). World system theorists have implicitly accepted some of these criticisms (Hopkins, 1979:21-52) but Wallerstein (1990:31-56) has consistently denied the autonomous status of factors other than the “economic”.


16. See Wallerstein (1983:75-96). Of course, this point constitutes the backbone of the post modern critique (Baudrillard, 1975) which takes issue with Marxism with respect to the latter’s lack of reflexivity vis-a-vis the primacy of the economic factor and the lack of attention to the symbolic order.

17. To many, the category of humankind might appear as “universal” by definition. The issue is more complicated than it seems since the idea of Universal Otherhood is a concept that originated during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the West (Nelson, 1969;1981). However, the issue of similar conceptualizations by other civilizations remains open and for this reason I have refrained from discussing the concept in this essay.

18. Tilly (1992) and Bendix (1977; 1978) offer two contrasting narratives of this process with the former emphasizing the oppressive nature of the process and the latter highlighting the importance of the entrance of the masses into the political scene. Also, Poggi (1978) describes the gradual establishment of estates as a means that facilitated the creation of a “civic society”. On the expansion of these rights during the nineteenth century, see the classic statement by Marshall (1965).

19. Such an approach would deny the distinction between form and content and argue for the overdetermination of content by form (Castoriadis, 1987). This line of argument underestimates the agents’ ability to impute different meanings to identical forms.

20. On the issue of the creation of an international system of states, see the collection of essays by Hedley and Watson (1984). See, also, Gong (1984) on the gradual construction of the legal standard of the “civilized” state in nineteenth-century Europe. The issue of the interactive character of the relationships between Western states and non-state entities is discussed by Wolf (1982) and Hall (1986:390-402) in a manner that raises doubts with respect to the linear nature of the process of “incorporation” of new regions into the world economy.


23. The work of Hobsbawm (1990; Hobshawn and Ranger, 1983) exemplifies the
Neo-Marxist perspective. The general foundation of the modernist view is given by Gellner (1983) whose analytical narrative can be interpreted both in a Marxist and a non-Marxist manner. For a critical assessment, see Schlesinger (1987:219-64).

24. The works of Bendix (1977;1978) and Kedourie (1960) are classic statements of this viewpoint.


26. The proposed distinction between Modernity I and II takes the last 500 years or so as its field of inquiry. If this long durée is modified, then, Modernity I can be seen as a form born out of long term social changes both in power relationships and the psychological make up of the Western actors. The work of Norbert Elias and other researchers (see, Mennell, 1992) working within this tradition exemplifies this perspective.

27. The obsession East European consumers displayed vis-a-vis Western goods is all too well known to everybody who ever visited the countries of the ex-communist bloc. Additionally, Iyer’s (1988) image of contemporary Asia testifies to the extent that the symbolic display of Western forms as signs of “modernity” has become a globe wide phenomenon. Often times, however, this symbolic display is interpreted as a manifestation of Western symbolic domination. The proposed distinction between the form of a cultural item and its content can serve as a means for the clarification of this issue.


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