

# Globalizations *Avant la Lettre*: A Comparative View of Isomorphization and Heteromorphization in an Inter-Connecting World

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## 1. THE STANDARD VIEW

The academic world has undoubtedly become smaller in recent decades. Chinese-, Spanish-, English-, Arabic-, French-, Russian-, German- and Italian-speaking academics, intellectuals, and feuilletonists discuss ‘the end of history’ or ‘the clash of civilizations.’ We all seem driven by the cycles of boom and bust that govern the planetary intellectual marketplace. New concepts such as ‘modernization’ or ‘post-modernity’ periodically appear in the centers of academic and political power, then diffuse through mechanisms of persuasion and mimicry, until they become part of mainstream discourse—only to disappear ten or fifteen years later under the impact of other key concepts that come to conquer the minds of a new generation of scholars and intellectuals. Nowadays, such processes of diffusion and convergence are called globalization. Indeed, globalization itself is such a buzz word that seems to have achieved hegemonic status in the social science vocabulary.

No global understanding has been reached, however, as to the exact meaning and implications of ‘globalization.’ Considerable debate has evolved, not only about the more obvious economic, but also the political and cultural as-

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pects of this process. ‘Hegemony’ versus ‘resistance against globalization’ mark two opposite poles in the political science and political sociology debate; ‘homogenization’ versus ‘heterogenization’ are juxtaposed in social anthropology, cultural sociology, and cultural studies. Let me briefly summarize these two debates.<sup>1</sup>

Many authors maintain that globalization leads to cultural homogenization, threatening the diversity of existing socio-cultural practices (Godelier 1996; Hamelink 1983; Schiller 1976; Gans 1985; Iyer 1988). A completely Westernized (Latouche 1996), McDonaldized (Ritzer 1993), Coca-colonized (Howes 1996), McWorlded (Barber 1996) or consumerist (Sklair 1991:75–81) culture of global span seems to be the *horribilum* of this group of authors, most of whom share a background in sociology. Only a few welcome the new era as bringing a truly global civilization for the first time in human history (Perlmutter 1991).

Most authors, however, disagree with the homogenization thesis and observe creolization, hybridization and emerging cultural syncretisms, the mixing of global and local elements generating new cultural forms (Hannerz 1993; Hall 1991; Lull 1995; Robins 1991; Tomlinson 1999; see also references in Appadurai 1996:32). To be sure, the cunning local David knocks down the brute global Goliath, to take up Hannerz’s metaphor (1995), in most anthropological narratives. Here, globalizing cultural practices are transformed and sometimes even reversed in their meaning as soon as they are drawn into local symbolic universes (cf. Miller 1995). Some cultural sociologists see globalization as a process mainly driven by such local dynamics of meaning making; the global appears only in, and depends on, local manifestations (cf. the term “glocalizing” invented by Robertson 1992). Such local processes may become more important in our times because in a global age they are freed from the control and surveillance of homogenizing nation states (Beck 1997:85ff.).

On a more conceptual level, new analytical tools have been developed to grasp the essence of cultural globalization. Appadurai (1996), for example, has experimented with the terms “floating narratives” and “global ethnoscapes”; other authors have taken up the notion of ‘cosmopolitanism’ and attached a whole range of different meanings to it (see Vertovec 2000); Hannerz’s “global ecumene” (Hannerz 1989) has risen to some prominence over the past decade; and James Clifford (1997) has proposed what he calls “the ethnography of traveling,” a new technique of representation where the restless observer floats across the globe, much like the discourses he describes. It is still a matter of considerable debate whether these concepts and analytical narratives do in fact promote a better understanding of our post-national, post-colonial, and, not to be forgotten, post-modern times as compared to older, established notions such as ‘diffusion,’ ‘syncretism,’ and so on.

Authors disagree even more sharply on the political implications of global-

ization and its potential for developing new forms of solidarity. Some optimists euphorically welcome the new era, pointing to the possibilities for cross-national alliance building and global political campaigning after 'the demise of the nation state' (cf. Albrow 1996; Held 1995; Axtmann 1997). Others strike a more pessimistic note, lamenting the lost virtues of the pre-global age. Zygmunt Baumann, in his recent (1998) volume, deplores the loss of solidarity in a deterritorialized world, where the lower classes can no longer exercise moral and social pressure on the elite, since both depend on face-to-face interaction and hence spatial proximity. Sklair (1997) underlines the steering capacities and hegemonic powers of an emerging transnational class of corporate managers, top national officials and politicians, functionaries of international government organizations, professionals in think tanks, and mass media leaders.

Most studies, however, underline that globalization is not an uncontested, hegemonic process, but meets resistance, and therefore may lead to political and cultural fragmentation rather than integration, to decentralization rather than central control (cf. Geertz 1998). For some, resistance takes the form of fundamentalist counter-reactions trying to save the cozy home of intimate sociability and cultural traditions from the estrangements of the globalizing world from which they remain excluded (Castells 1997). Right-wing neo-nationalist movements all over Europe, ethnic wars in Bosnia and Africa (Menzel 1998, ch. 2), a French peasant's attack on McDonald's shops, and Islamic fundamentalisms (cf. Barber 1996) are favorite examples of such reactions. More 'progressive' political forces such as feminism, trade-unionism or environmentalism (Cohen and Rai 2000), but also global organized crime (Mittelman 2000) are regarded as evidence that counter-movements against globalization have gone global themselves. While some see a global alliance of such 'progressive forces' appearing at the horizon, and hope for a transformation of the global system or even the emergence of a global state controlled by a world-wide civil society (Held 1995), others deplore the particularist outlook and focus of resistance movements and doubt that there will ever emerge a powerful, unified counter-hegemonic force at a truly global level (e.g. Wagar 1996; Sklair 1995; Walker 1994).

These are some of the empirical and conceptual issues currently debated in the social sciences. Most of these approaches agree on two points, however. First, as is often the case, the scope of the issue determines the scale of reasoning, major issues seemingly demanding grand theory. Most authors diagnose a mega-trend: the end of territorially anchored social forms and the emergence of deterritorialized networks of belonging; the gradual disappearance of cultural diversity and the rise of a global consumer culture; the decline of the nation state and the rise of global social movements and transnational organizations. Globalization thus represents an epochal shift, a profound transformation of the human world. Globalization having entered the arena of history, nothing

is as it used to be (see among many others Albrow 1996; Axford 1995; de Sousa Santos 1998; Ohmae 1995; Tomlinson 1999; see also references in Amoore et al. 1997:182). This even holds true for the more sophisticated accounts that acknowledge the previous existence of global networks of trade, power, and meaning in the age of empires and of the belle époque (Held et al. 1999). The novelty of contemporary globalization rests on an unprecedented velocity, intensity, reach, and on an all-pervasive transformative power—together, these justify the metaphor of a new chapter opened in the book of history.

The second point of agreement is that globalization is a process with a goal: the ever closer connection of different social systems. It means convergence of different paths of development into one single stream of a global, interconnected world society. This integration leads to what I would like to call an isomorphization<sup>2</sup> of social structures around the globe: Micro-, meso- and global levels of social organization are more and more finely tuned to each other and orchestrated by the master machinery of globalization, by the logic of global markets for capital, consumer goods, labor, information, and images. As a consequence of this increasingly dense web of linkages, previously different logics of social organization are transformed into one single social type—the “network society” (Castells 1996:21f.), modernity *tout court* (Giddens 1999), rational forms of state organization (Meyer et al. 1997), or culturally-specific expressions of democracy-cum-capitalism (Fukuyama 2001).<sup>3</sup>

The more sophisticated accounts of this process take into account its contradictory aspects and the feedback links between global and local systems—they tell not a story of overwhelming and overpowering, but one of contradiction and resistance that gives rise to complex constellations of power and meaning. These complexities may further heterogenize cultural practices on a global scale through creolization and hybridization, or they may preserve cultural styles and historic idiosyncrasies, but nevertheless support what is perceived as a general trend of integration (i.e., more interconnectedness) and isomorphization: While cultural practices may well become more heterogeneous, creolized, etc., people around the globe are nevertheless drawn into, and subjugated to one single, overarching principle of social organization that dominates their lives (usually global capitalism in its post-Fordist form).

To cast the standard view in an image: It may well be that some people start eating hamburgers with sticks (creolization), thus creating new cultural practices not known before, or everybody may eat hamburgers in ways conforming to one standard practice (homogenization), usually thought of as being of American origin. In any case, both groups of authors share the view that people do so in McDonald’s shops—within an institutional setting that is structurally similar all over the planet and has replaced street kitchens, family homes, workshop canteens, and other ways of organizing eating (isomorphization). Some writers emphasize that people organize attacks against McDonald’s shops as symbols of globalization and Americanization (resistance) and that the global alliance

of such movements may one day give rise to a democratically reorganized way of food production and consumption. Others maintain that the global management easily escapes such protest by geographical dislocation of its McDonald's or by fragmenting and selectively adopting the protest discourse (hegemony). Both groups, again, share the belief that hegemonic forces as well as counter-movements act within a globalized political field where one single, post-national logic of network politics prevails (isomorphization). In short, globalization is perceived as a unique and novel, uniform and directed process leading to an integrated world society following the same principles of organization. Divergence from this standard view is still rare, but includes important works such as the massive volume of Held et al. (1999).

The standard view owes its preeminence to what I perceive as two chronically weak points in social science thinking. The first is the tendency to overestimate the singularity and uniqueness of present-day developments. This temporal-centrism has been dear to every generation of social scientists since the beginnings of the last century, that is, since the past lost its defining power over a future that becomes undetermined and open (a characteristic of modernity, according to Therborn 1995). Second, social scientists stick to functionalist and teleological modes of reasoning, despite all the criticisms that have been raised against functionalism and teleology, and notwithstanding the ritual disclaimers against unidirectionality, linearity, etc. that we find in many introductions. Standard social science continues to think that social change is essentially uniform and directed, and so is globalization, replacing older master terms of teleological reasoning such as differentiation, individualization, or modernization.

This essay is meant to give some evidence against this dominant view on globalization. My first point will be that globalization is a non-linear process that includes phenomenon that may be described as bifurcations; similar developments occurring in the economic or political sphere may give rise to different transformations in the cultural sphere, and vice-versa. Globalization may therefore lead to the *heteromorphization* of the global social system. Disjuncture and conjuncture, synchronization and desynchronization, iso- and heteromorph are all possible outcomes of globalization, a point very often overlooked due to the conviction that everything is ever-more connected, changing in the same direction, becoming alike.

This leads me to the second point, underscoring and reinforcing a still heterodox body of literature showing that globalization does not involve the turn of an era, but has been with us since the dawn of time.<sup>4</sup> One wonders why we have, until very recently, forgotten the trajectory of dependency and world system theory: From an analysis meant to understand current problems of underdevelopment, it ended up deep in history, describing the world systems held together by porcelain and silk trade (cf. Frank 1993; Wolf 1982). One also wonders whether current manifestations of globalization are indeed more momen-

tous in changing the world than previous ones, as maintained by most authors sensible to the history of global relations (Held et al. 1999; Guillén 2001; Carnoy and Castells 2001), and whether current processes really imply a quantum leap or even a change in the basic principles and mechanisms of globalization.

In developing these positions and themes I will not argue on the level of generality just outlined, but confine myself to a narrative of much narrower scope. I will start in a most concrete and empirical manner by telling two stories of social transformations. The first takes place in the valley of the Greater Zab river, which runs through the northernmost portion of present-day Iraq. The second story will bring us to Zinacantán, a large village near San Cristóbal de las Casas in southern Mexico. Both stories date back to the period extending between the mid-1800s and the end of World War II. In the fourth and fifth section, I will compare the two cases of social transformation and draw my two conclusions—rather straightforward ones and no more novel than the empirical issues they address. I hope, however, that they are important enough to recall them and to illustrate them with new material.

## 2. KURDISH SHEIKHS

The first story takes us to a small town called Shemdinan, located in the far southeast of present-day Turkey. To understand the developments in this particular corner of the world, I must first describe the general political context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is, largely, the story of an empire struggling for its survival.

The Ottomans made several efforts to reform the basic principles of political integration in order to compete successfully with the rising European powers, which began to threaten the Empire's domains from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Starting with Sultan Selim III's failed attempt to break the power of the Janissaries, a long period of more or less successful reforms unfolded. Despite the different emphases given by subsequent generations of reformers, beginning in the 1830s with the Tanzimat reformers, then the Young Ottomans, Sultan Abdulhamid, and the Young Turks, they had a common goal: the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and its transformation into a centrally administered, integrated state of Ottoman citizens, replacing the principles of indirect rule and communitarian segregation that had prevailed before.

The foremost aim was to strengthen and modernize the army in order to fight European powers more effectively. Economic development would provide the necessary resources for an expanded military force. Military reform and economic development in turn depended on a centralized and uniform administration capable of collecting taxes effectively. The modernization of the education system was intended to provide both army and administration with adequately trained staff, something the religious schools of the mosques and churches were clearly not capable of supplying.<sup>5</sup>

Economic reforms were directed mainly at agriculture, trade and infrastructure. Large parts of the land owned by the state and given as (in principle not inheritable) fiefs to administrators and soldiers were privatized in order to stimulate agricultural production for export. Railroads were built, most of them in regions of agricultural importance, and steamboats were introduced.

In the realm of politics, the year 1876 saw the first constitution, modeled after the Belgian one, itself a written version of the unwritten British constitution. The parliament was abolished by Abdulhamid two years later but reintroduced by the Young Turks after they seized power in 1904. Elections were run by trans-ethnic political parties, most of them taking a position along the axis of modernist/secularist versus anti-modernist/Islamist.

The education system underwent radical reforms. First, military and medical colleges were founded and a university run by the central state in Istanbul was established. Second, secondary education was introduced in the provinces, thus breaking the monopoly of religious schools. And third, compulsory and free basic education in state schools was introduced throughout the empire in 1913. While much of this educational reform remained only on paper—like many other projects—a substantial enlargement of the educational system was achieved. The number of upper secondary schools, for example, increased from 39 in 1857 to 386 in 1874 (Karpát 1973:99).

The introduction of parliamentary institutions and the reform of the educational system put the ethnic issue—as distinct from religion, which had always been a central principle of political and social organization—on the imperial political agenda for the first time. As soon as the government started to rule in the name of ‘the people,’ the identity and borders of this people had to be defined, and questions of representational justice became preeminent: when government officials have to be recruited from the people and in this way represent its distinctive character and outlook, culture and ethnicity become hotly debated matters (cf. Wimmer, forthcoming). This debate was intensified by the increased power of government and the expansion of the administrative apparatus. Who would dominate the modernizing state, and have access to its resources and the many positions of power, now that *sheikhs* (i.e., leaders of Sufi sects), notables, tribal leaders and representatives of urban communities were gradually being replaced by centrally appointed government officials?

The question of language becomes prominent in this realm, because it determines the opportunity for advancing within the bureaucracy. As soon as parliament was introduced and central government reinforced, Arab complaints about discrimination (in the new administration) and under-representation (in the parliament) were heard. The issue of ethnic representation became even more important during the implementation of later educational and administrative reform. It was the aim of the Young Turks to increase the efficiency of the new centralized administration by stipulating that Turkish would be the official language of the empire and of the newly founded secondary and primary



schools. Their attempt to replace the highly complicated and formalistic Ottoman by the more understandable and manageable Turkish was in part inspired by their belief that only the education of the larger segments of the population in their own language could finally eradicate irrationalism and backwardness<sup>6</sup>. This belief was nourished by the positivist credo of the late-nineteenth century, largely of French brand, that education could transform a tradition-bound, undisciplined society into a rationally organized body guided by the principles of science and reason.

In Kurdistan, the politicization of ethnicity was to dominate the course of history much later, and the principles of empire—indirect rule and communitarian segregation—remained unchallenged until 1914. However, the first signs of ethnic awareness with clear political implications can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> As with the early politicization of Arab ethnicity, the Kurdish claims were still tied to the ideology and principles of the Ottoman Empire. Kurdish grievances and demands were reactions to the language issue raised by the educational policy of the Young Turks and by the move towards centralization and the replacement of indirect rule through notables, *sheikhs*, and tribal leaders.

Most Ottoman notables of Kurdish origin belonged to the decentralist camp within the reform movement and advocated the introduction of a certain degree of regional autonomy within which administrative centralization should proceed, including the teaching of Kurdish in the new elementary schools, etc. As elsewhere in the empire, these elite groups, mostly based in Istanbul and other big cities, had some relationships with the hinterland inhabited by tribal groups and confederacies. The tribes reacted to the Young Ottoman efforts at centralization as they had since time memorial, by first maneuvering to remain independent from the centers of imperial power and their outposts in the countryside and, if this did not work and if power relations seemed to be favorable, by revolting against the new regime. They did this not in the name of ethnic or national self-determination—a distinctively modern discourse—but in the name of bringing the empire back on the line of true faith. One of the many revolts throughout Kurdish territory that opposed the direct rule of the Young Turk administration was led by a particular family of religious *sheikhs* in what is now northern Iraq. This family later produced the uncontested and internationally renowned leaders of Iraqi Kurdish nationalism, the Barzanis.

In order to understand the role of the Barzanis and other famous *sheikhs* of Kurdistan, it is important to know that relations between Kurdish tribes cannot be framed in the language of kinship solidarity (for a fuller account see Wimmer 1995a). It is therefore up to outsiders, who are not part of the web of kinship relations of the region, to act as mediators, arbitrators, and peacemakers between tribes and build confederacies among them (cf. Morsy 1984).

Until the demise of the semi-autonomous emirates in the middle of the nineteenth century, this role was performed by noble families (McDowall 1996, chs.



2 and 3).<sup>8</sup> After the centralization of the empire and the subjugation of the emirates, the time of the Sufi *sheikhs* had come. They were predestined to the role of mediators between conflicting tribes, because as religious leaders they were often charismatic personalities and, in search of followers, had settled in regions where they were not bound by kinship ties.<sup>9</sup> Depending on their political talent and ambitions, some of these *sheikhs* managed to build large tribal confederacies and to command a considerable number of armed men in times of conflict and war.

In the 1870s, when the Sultan had started to promote private property to replace the different categories of state holdings and fiefs, many *sheikhs* and tribal leaders became substantial landowners (Batatu 1978, ch. 6). The transformation of the land tenure system favored them largely because of their political power, and as further reforms came along under independent Iraq, their holdings grew substantially. Such was also the case for the *sheikhs* of Barzan (van Bruinessen 1989:305).

At the outset, their following consisted only of some religious disciples and a series of lineages of the surrounding tribes that had lost in factional fights and looked elsewhere for protection and political fortune. The sons of the *sheikhs* managed to enlarge their sphere of influence by mediating between the various tribal groups of the region. In this way, the Barzan coalition, a small confederacy, came into existence and still exists to this day (for details see Wimmer 1995a).

During the 1880s, another *sheikh*, Ubeidullah of Shemdinan, north of Barzan, raised a large following of armed tribal fighters and revolted against Istanbul. This earned him a prominent place in the gallery of ancestors of Kurdish nationalists, despite the fact that the revolt was headed by tribal notables and religious leaders who opposed centralization efforts of the Ottoman reformers but did not follow a genuinely nationalist program in the modern sense of the term.<sup>10</sup> The rebellion was finally subdued, and the remaining followers gathered around *Sheikh* Mehmed of Barzan. They declared him *mahdi*, the Islamic Messiah. He tried to conquer the provincial capital Mosul, from where he planned to march to Istanbul and overthrow the 'false caliph' Abdulhamid. However, he and his followers were captured shortly after their entrance to Mosul.<sup>11</sup>

After the end of Abdulhamid's reign, Mehmed's son *Sheikh* Abdusallam the Second allied himself with the Russian Tsar (Nikitine 1925:152), one of the fiercest rivals of the Sultan for regional hegemony. The purpose was to fight the Young Turks' plans for direct administration of the empire and thus to effectively break with the principles of indirect rule from which *sheikhs* and *aghas* had profited since the end of the emirates.

In 1908, Abdussalam sent a petition to Kurdish notables with close connections to the inner circles of the Young Turk movement. His demands show that the position and rhetoric of the decentralist camp had now been adopted by the

tribal leaders of the hinterland. Mehmed's rebellion twenty years before had still been phrased in the terminology of Ottoman-Islamic principles and was directed against the usurpation of the title of Caliph by Abdulhamid. In Abdussallam's petition, however, certain elements of a discourse of ethnic representativity appear for the first time in Kurdish history. He demanded the adoption of Kurdish language for official and educational purposes in the administrative districts surrounding Barzan; the appointment of Kurdish-speaking officials; the adoption of the Shafi school of law (dominant among the Kurds); and the administration of law and justice as well as taxation according to the *sharia*. The rebellion was eventually put down, after some initial victories over the Ottoman troops and their tribal allies. Abdussallam was hanged in 1914 in Mosul (Nikitine 1925:154f; McDowall 1996:100f.).

After World War I, Mehmed's grandson, *Sheikh* Ahmed, concerned about the growing influence of British rule, started to negotiate with the Turkish state born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. In 1932, with Iraq seeking to entrench its national sovereignty after having broken away from the British Empire, he launched a messianic revolt against the Iraqi government. But he was subdued by the Iraqi army and the British air force, and his family was deported and put under house arrest in Sulaymaniyya (Longrigg 1953:194f.; Schmidt 1964, ch. 7).<sup>12</sup>

While exiled in Sulaymaniyya, *Sheikh* Ahmed's younger brother, *Mullah* Mustafa, came in contact with urban Kurdish nationalists. As university students in Istanbul, these had been exposed to the romantic and anti-imperialist nationalism of Herder, Fichte, and other nineteenth-century German thinkers. The political and military ties between Germany and the Sublime Porte had also fostered an intellectual exchange leading to the creation of germanophile circles in Istanbul's academic community (Behrendt 1993:281ff.). Among these romantic nationalists were not only Young Turks, but also the sons of Kurdish-born Ottoman military leaders who, upon their return to Sulaymaniyya and other Kurdish towns in the region, circulated their newly adopted nationalist views in literary and cultural societies. Inspired by the concept of self-determination proclaimed by the American President Wilson after World War I, many Kurdish nationalists had great hopes of building their own nation-state out of some of the fragments of the former Ottoman Empire.

It was thus in the smoke-filled coffeehouses of Sulaymaniyya's old town that the *sheikh* of Barzan, *Mullah* Mustafa, heard for the first time the master narrative of political modernism: that each 'people' had a right to political sovereignty and self-determination. As a result, the political language the tribes had used to justify their claims for independence changed. No longer couched in terms of the ideal of religious renewal or of modernizing the Empire, it now invoked the aspiration to national liberation. In this manner, a modern semantics centered on national identity replaced the discourse of Islamic universalism and Empire. As for the Barzanis, they are today the champions of the Kurdish cause:

Mustafa's son, Massoud Barzani, now leads one of the Kurdish nationalist parties controlling the autonomous zone in Northern Iraq that was placed under American protection after the Second Gulf War.

### 3. ZINACANTECAN FIESTAS

The second story will take the reader to another periphery of the world system, an indigenous Mexican village. Let me again introduce this story by describing the larger political and economic transformations of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Mexico. Independence (1821) brought about the collapse of the colonial system. This system was again characterized by indirect rule via the old Indian aristocracy over Indian communities—grouped into semi-independent *repúblicas de Indios*—and by a strict legal separation between conquerors and conquered, framed in a system of hierarchically ordered, racially defined descent groups called *castas*.

With independence, power now came to the *criollos* (Mexican-born persons of Spanish origin) and light-skinned *mestizoes*, two *castas* that had been put on equal footing under the late colonial legal order and had drawn closer to each other in terms of social composition. Their vision of a Mexican state was inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution. Their goal was the creation of a popular state in which the hierarchical organization of colonial society into estates and racially defined *castas* was abolished in favor of the equality of all citizens. At the same time, the transnational fabric of the Spanish empire came unraveled. The royal functionaries were expelled, the ties with the metropolis were cut, and the authority and economic power of the Church were broken during the decades following independence.

In the process, the republican and Jacobinic ideology was gradually overlaid and supplanted by a nationalist project. The *criollos* saw themselves as embodying the future Mexican nation and monopolized the incipient state apparatus. The old caste order was transformed and transposed to the horizontal: the national project was embodied by *la raza blanca* (Creoles and socially 'white' *mestizoes*), called upon to advance civilization and progress against backward Indian barbarians. The segregationist and restrictive regulations, which had sheltered different groups in the mosaic of colonial society, were now abolished in the name of the equality of all citizens and of national progress. Both processes—nationalization of the state by a *creole-mestizo* elite and abolition of the restrictive and segregationist regulations of the Spanish empire—resulted in the dramatic political and economic marginalization of those sectors that were now classified as ethnic 'minorities,' even though they still represented the vast majority of the population.

However, this process did not gain momentum until the 1870s, when a dictator succeeded in filling the power void created after the collapse of the colonial administration and in bringing to fruition the project of nation-state formation. In the meantime, the Mexican political scene had been dominated by

*caudillos*, that is, regional rulers brought to the fore during the independence wars. At times these had acted as commanders of state troops, at other times they had filled political functions or led rebellions against the central government. Starting in 1876, the liberal dictator Porfirio Díaz quickly put an end to decentralization and regional autonomy; in parallel, the subordination and dispossession of the Indian population by the nationalized and modernizing state was taking shape.<sup>13</sup> The *caudillos* were incorporated into the new political and administrative hierarchy or eliminated in battle, the bandit groups were assimilated into or wiped out by the mounted constabulary (compare Vanderwood 1992), and the rival upper-class factions in the capital and the conservative clerical circles were tied into a system of prebends and overlapping alliances. The Indian communities now formed the last link in a chain of rigid relations of authority, reaching from the president via the governors appointed by him in the federal states and the *jefes políticos* of the districts, down to individual communities.

The *jefes políticos* were authorized to appoint municipal government more or less openly, for which they chose villagers who were wealthy and spoke Spanish. The previously relatively autonomous villages and hamlets in turn came under a small number of municipal capitals. In ethnically mixed municipalities, *mestizoes* and *creoles* now had unlimited access to power, for as parts of the future nation they were seen as being cut out to fill all important political posts. Via this political hierarchy, the Indian peasants were compelled to work on the plantations. In many regions of Mexico, they were enticed into debt servitude by employment agents who enjoyed the protection of the *jefe político*.

The liberal postulate of the equality of all citizens not only made the system of indirect rule vanish, which had given the Indian communities considerable autonomy and set them apart from other population groups; it also abolished the laws that had provided for economic protection. All regulations concerning separate settlement areas were rescinded, and merchants and agricultural entrepreneurs of Spanish extraction subsequently implanted themselves in the Indian villages. Collective land ownership—the economic backbone of the *repúblicas de Indios*—was prohibited under the *leyes de reforma* of the 1860s and by the colonization laws enacted under Porfirio Díaz, which eventually turned land into an object of speculation.<sup>14</sup> This allowed a formerly contained stratum of rural entrepreneurs to appropriate Indian lands and labor. The *hacienda*, whose production was meant to satisfy growing demand on the world market, thus came to extend further and further into the Indian hinterland.

In the central and southern federal states of Mexico, by the end of Porfirio's reign, 35 percent of the roughly 40 percent of surfaces held communally right after independence had been transferred into private property (Katz 1986:48). The land of an estimated 85 percent of Indian communities in Mexico was privatized, and much of it was lost to the newly established local elite or to *ha-*

*ciendas* and plantations.<sup>15</sup> A large number of villagers became laborers on the coffee, sugar, banana, cotton, and sisal plantations, often under conditions of debt servitude. Within a few decades, many of them lost their Indian identity and culture and dissolved in the *mestizo* population. Because of limited demand on the world market, and probably also because of the country's topography, there were limits to the feasible expansion of the *haciendas* and plantations, so that, in many regions of Mexico, Indian villages and *haciendas* co-existed in a kind of 'hostile symbiosis' (Wolf 1957).

The expropriation of the Indian communities and the complete political subjugation of their inhabitants were justified as being the only path towards liberating the fatherland from the grip of its colonial past, developing its economic potential, setting society in motion, and prying it from colonial paralysis (Zea 1968:294ff.). These ideas were developed above all by the technocratic presidential counselors (the so-called *científicos*), whose positivist faith in progress contrasted markedly with the liberalism and anti-clericalism of the independence movement. Their nationalism was fundamentally a negative one—in their eyes, 'the Mexican' was irrational, had a penchant for romantic utopianism, lacked self-control, and was technically and scientifically backward. Through education, the mentality of the people was to be trained in logic, and a nation was to be shaped that valued scientific rationality and economic efficiency, thus rising to equal rank with their big northern neighbor. Concrete plans were, of course, more modest, but for all that, Díaz enacted a law in 1888 that provided for compulsory primary education. The enforcement of this law was left to the individual federal states, which discharged their task unevenly.<sup>16</sup>

Let us now look more closely at an Indian village called Zinacantán located in Chiapas near the Mexico-Guatemala border and see what consequences these reforms had. In the 1840s, Zinacantán had lost a considerable part of its communal lands. In 1863, with all collective property banned by law, the remaining portions of communal land were sold to *mestizo* farmers (Wasserstrom 1983:144). The inhabitants of the different hamlets of Zinacantán became tenant farmers on the vast holdings of absentee land owners who resided in the regional capital, San Cristóbal de las Casas.

Under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, the political system also changed. *Mestizo* merchants from the town of San Cristóbal took advantage of the "pax porfiriana" by settling in Zinacantán, taking over the posts of village president and secretary, and maintaining friendly relations with the *jefes políticos* (Wasserstrom 1983:173).

What were the consequences of this twofold expropriation—political and economic—for the village people themselves? First of all, the old indigenous aristocracy lost control over the communal land holdings and the polity. Other families, benefiting from the privatization policy, became the village's *nouveaux riches*. Religious life also changed profoundly. The traditional brother-

hoods introduced in the seventeenth century by Catholic missionaries and henceforth controlled by the village nobility lost all their property. This wealth had previously allowed the village to celebrate the different Catholic saints by organizing splendid festivals involving fireworks, several days of carousing, and the lighting of thousands of candles to illuminate the interior of the church and bring to life the statues representing the saints.

The disruption of the social hierarchy and the downfall of the brotherhoods brought about a new social and cultural order. The *nouveaux riches* started to use their personal funds to subsidize fiestas to gain the respect of the villagers, who were distrustful of their newly acquired wealth. This became all the more important since the fiesta system represented the only source of political power for Indians, given that the bureaucracy was dominated by the *mestizo* mercantile class. By 1856 at the latest, with the brotherhoods completely ruined, fiestas for the saints were subsidized entirely by individuals (Wasserstrom 1983:142).

Between 1870 and 1873, the number of sponsored fiestas increased considerably. Finally, between 1890 and 1916, the various fiestas were ranked in a hierarchical order based on the importance of the saint and the cost of the festivities (Wasserstrom 1983:172). One could only climb this ladder to its top rung by sponsoring fiesta after fiesta and investing a fortune in thousands of liters of brandy, candles, and rockets. Those who succeeded could rank among the wise ones who formed the elders' council that came to replace the former aristocrats as political and spiritual leaders of the village.

To an outsider, for example a North American trained to save for a family home in the suburbs rather than waste money on splendid parties, this prestige economy could seem exotic and bizarre. An entire generation of American anthropologists studied what came to be known in their jargon the 'cargo system,' whether at Zinacantán or elsewhere in the region. The cargo system was represented as the characteristic political institution distinguishing Indian from non-Indian peasant communities, the symbol of Indian traditions and customs *par excellence*. Historical research like that of Robert Wasserstrom, who provided most of the data on which my interpretation is based, shows, however, that these practices came about only a few decades before the arrival of the first anthropologists. They resulted from the expansion of haciendas and capitalist farms seizing the new opportunities offered by economic globalization, and from the centralization of authority necessary to break any resistance against Mexico's entry into the globalized world. Finally, the buzz word globalization has reappeared amid the clouds of historical narratives.

#### 4. ISOMORPHIZATION — HETEROMORPHIZATION

What do these stories offer apart from their undeniably exotic appeal? How do they relate to the dynamics of globalization? There are, as always, different ways of comparing these two historical trajectories, and many modes of inter-

pretation. I have, obviously, fine-tuned the narratives in such a way as to help me establish the two central points of this paper: showing the possible heteromorphizing, disjuncting and desynchronizing consequences of globalization, and underlining the ancient character of such processes.

To establish the first point, I start by distinguishing between economic, political, and cultural aspects of globalization during the period under question, and I will now briefly describe the main characteristics of these processes on a global scale. Economics first, in particular the half century leading up to the First World War. This was a time of intense economic globalization, of enormously expanding world trade, and of a steady rise in the importance of foreign investment and transnational capital flows. Integration in the world markets for coffee, sisal, maize, sugar, and bananas, and other such commodities to satisfy the demands of a fast-growing urban population profoundly transformed the subsistence-oriented agricultural areas of the world. Some governments actively promoted integration in these commodity markets, others were forced to do so by colonial subjugation, and still others successfully resisted world market incorporation and thereby prevented the winds of globalization from blowing into their rural hinterlands.

On the political side, the period leading up to the First World War saw the spread of modern forms of government and administration all around the world. Pre-modern forms, typically based on the principles of indirect rule, as well as communitarian segregation and self-governance, were replaced by unified administrations directly taking decisions into their hands, irrespective of the capacity of local elites to resist and self-govern their areas. The two main motors of change were colonialism on the one hand and the spread of nation states on the other, and each had quite different consequences for local political processes, as is to be expected.

The half century before the outbreak of the First War was also a period of cultural globalization. New ideas were spreading rapidly across the world. The ideal of national self-determination and the concept of progress were perhaps the two most important cultural elements which experienced an unprecedented generalization and diffusion. All over the world, pre-modern, basically religiously defined notions of community and justice were replaced by nationalist thinking, which defined community in much narrower ethnic and historical terms. It abolished hierarchical distinctions—between *castas* in the case of the Spanish colonial Empire, between Muslims and Non-Muslims, and elites and commoners in the Ottoman Empire—in the name of the principles of equality and fraternity between citizens. History was no longer governed by the eternal rules of reciprocity between the gods and humankind, but rather was transformed into a success story of emancipation along the path of economic progress, political liberty, and cultural enlightenment.

At first glance, the Mexican and the Ottoman examples bear striking similarities. Both the Mexican and the Ottoman governments tried to ride the wave



of globalizing markets in order to compete politically and militarily with powerful neighbors—the United States, and Russian and European forces, respectively. Both the market-centered Mexican dictatorship and the last Ottoman Sultans responded to the pressures of globalizing markets by opening up their national economies, by privatizing land holdings hitherto controlled by corporations or the state, and by encouraging an export-oriented agriculture. These economic changes were in turn bolstered by the introduction (or attempted introduction in the Ottoman case) of a new system of government based on direct rule through a unified and hierarchically integrated administration meant to replace systems of indirect rule resting on *caudillos* or *emirs*. Further, both models of political and economic integration were designed by small groups of consultants: the *científicos* in Mexico, and the office of translation in the Grand Vezir's bureau in Istanbul. Both groups were inspired by the same positivist thinking of mostly French cast, prevalent at the time, which valued the rationalization and radical modernization of society through education and economic liberalization.

In both cases, there were similar economic consequences. Small landowners lost their land to agricultural entrepreneurs, whether *sheikhs* and tribal leaders or *mestizo hacendados* and Indian *nouveaux riches*. The transformation of relations of production also ran in parallel: In both cases, wage labor was introduced first by force (the system of *enganche* in Mexico and systems of semi-bonded, mostly Christian laborers under tribal leaders in rural Northern Iraq). In both cases, production of agricultural products for the world market rose dramatically. The grain exports of Iraq increased twenty-fold in the forty years before 1914, and Basra became the date capital of the world. In Mexico, coffee, sisal, sugar, and cattle were the main export products.

There were marked similarities in the expression of cultural globalization in the late Ottoman empire and in pre-revolutionary Mexico. In both cases, the idea of modern citizenship was introduced—as we have seen, it played an important part in the reforms under the last Ottoman rulers, and it was central to the Mexican independence movements and the political developments that followed. In both cases, nationalism was a major ideological force that motivated actions of rulers and ruled alike, albeit in different ways. In Mexico, the early independence movement and later efforts toward political and economic modernization were driven by the nationalistic idea of competing with the United States and of giving Mexico the voice it deserved in the concert of nations. Likewise, early Arab and Kurdish nationalism—not to mention the Christian *millets* transformed into nations such as the Greeks, the Serbs, or the Armenians—were a driving force in the process of dismembering the Ottoman Empire. Romantic nationalism—inspired largely by German theorists—was perceived by Ottoman intellectuals as well as by Mexican nationalists of the nineteenth century. French rationalism and positivist ideas of ‘educating the nation’ served as guidelines for authoritarian reformers in both places.

So far, these developments conform with the dominant view of globalization as a process of isomorphization, synchronization, and parallel development toward a single economic, political, and cultural model. However, a closer look at these two cases reveals important processes of heteromorphization, desynchronization, and differentiation. These can be elucidated at the macro level by looking at further developments in what would later become Iraq and in Mexico.<sup>17</sup>

They emerge even more clearly if we turn to the regional and local level, and this is why I have included narratives of the two local trajectories of Barzan and Zinacantán. The two cases show that parallel developments at the national level, largely induced by processes of economic, political and cultural globalization, can produce opposed results at the local level. In Kurdistan, nationalism, one of the master narratives of modernity, was embraced by the *sheikhs* and tribal leaders who had become substantial landowners. This was to the detriment of the ideology of the caliphate, which postulated the indivisible unity of the *umma* (the community of believers) and assumed that the caliphs filled Mohammed's role in leading and uniting the *umma*. In its place, a different conception of a righteous world imposed itself—a world in which the *umma* was divided into nations based on ethnic and linguistic affiliation and in which the caliph's place was taken by political leaders destined to guide the nation toward freedom and sovereignty. It is by no means only of anecdotal interest to recall that *Sheikh* Mahmud Berzenji, one of the most brilliant and capricious Kurdish nationalist leaders of the 1920s, replaced the traditional Muslim talisman bracelet, containing transcripts of *surahs*, with a slip of paper on which President Wilson's twelve principles were written.

In the Mexican Indian example, one notes the reconstruction of a completely different model that had nothing to do with that offered by the globalizing world surrounding the villagers. After the downfall of the brotherhoods and the ensuing crisis of religious representation, the villages did not adopt pan-Indian nationalism, as one would expect if extrapolating from the Kurdish example and following the isomorphization perspective. On the contrary, a new system of religious *fiestas* and a new form of local government appeared as counter-models destined to withstand the forces of the globalized world. Spending a fortune on alcohol, candles, and rockets to be consumed in a few days of Dionysian folly hardly corresponds to the capitalist notion of economic efficiency or to the ideal of resource mobilization for the good of the nation. The political leaders of Indian communities such as Zinacantán became increasingly oriented toward the local political arena, and they developed a distinct discourse and practice of local solidarity, emphasizing cultural differences from other, neighboring communities. Eventually, Zinacantecos, Chamultecos, Chenalhoans, etc. became ethnic groups of their own. The much larger *repúblicas de Indios* were fragmented into a series of communities jealously guarding their independence vis-à-vis each other, and the hostile *mestizo* world—far from

the process of nation-building that *mestizo* intellectuals and politicians had dreamed of. Such a path of development is hardly comparable to the fusion of tribal identities that took place under the leadership of *sheiks* in Kurdistan, and eventually lead to a fragile and reversible, but nonetheless ever more established notion of a nation comprising millions of Kurdish speakers spread over several countries in the Middle East and the world.

Thus, the concentration and privatization of land ownership, high-yield agricultural production for the world market, the introduction of modern forms of government and administration through a unified bureaucracy directly intervening in the daily life of citizens, and the diffusion of nationalist ideologies and of the concept of progress, generated two completely different results: isomorphization and synchronization on the one hand, and on the other heteromorphization, differentiation and desynchronization through the creation of new cultural and political forms out of line with the globalizing model. Similar economic processes—the experience of expropriation, the reorientation of local production towards the world market, the introduction of forced labor—may produce completely different political and cultural consequences, depending on how these transformations influence the constellation of political power between actors in a social field (cf. Mann 1997 regarding the ‘decline of the nation-state’). Globalization is a non-linear process: incorporation into and closer connection with a new economic and political global order may entail counter-tendencies in the political and cultural fields, such as the distinctively non-capitalist and non-nationalist local society of Zinacantán. Let me clarify what this implies for current debates on globalization by making three points.

First, the example of Zinacantán shows something more than the usual anthropological point that globalization proceeds unevenly and through manifold local variations, increasing heterogeneity through creolization, new syncretisms, etc. While the nationalism of the Barzanis might be interpreted as a creolized version of a globalizing narrative resituating the principles of religious leadership within a nationalist context, what happened in Chiapas goes beyond creolization. The local political and cultural system follows a completely different logic than that of the globalizing world surrounding it. It is not a local version of, a syncretizing fusion with, or a hybrid variant of a global theme. This is what I mean by heteromorphization as one possible outcome of globalization. The new socio-political model was not, as Wasserstrom (1983) has suggested, the consequence of the Church’s attempt to reconstruct its sphere of influence—reduced through expropriation and disempowerment—by enticing the faithful to reinforce their spiritual efforts and resist the temptations of capitalism and nationalist rhetoric. Quite the contrary: one can show that the main periods of expansion and systematization of Zinacantán’s *fiesta* system coincide with times of local tensions with the Church hierarchy, and also with periods when no priest resided in the village or controlled the activities of believers (for details see Wimmer 1995b, ch. 5.4.1).

Second, the Zinacantán example also goes beyond the standard sociological process that uniformization leads to resistance by social movements defending cultural traditions, local solidarity, etc. against the global machinery, leading to political fragmentation rather than global integration and hegemonic control. Zinacantecos did *not* have the formation of a counter-model in mind—they would have been and would still be rather indifferent to an interpretation of their prestige economy as an antithesis to the logic of capitalist production, such as presented by Georges Bataille (1949). ‘Resisting’ was not what they had in mind when they forced the *nouveaux riches* of their village to take over the costs of the saints’ *fiestas*. Rather, they remained close to their particular local religious creed and wanted the *fiestas* to continue in order to maintain reciprocal relationships with the gods, to avoid a catastrophic ending of the world and to guarantee that the cycle of harvests and rains would continue.

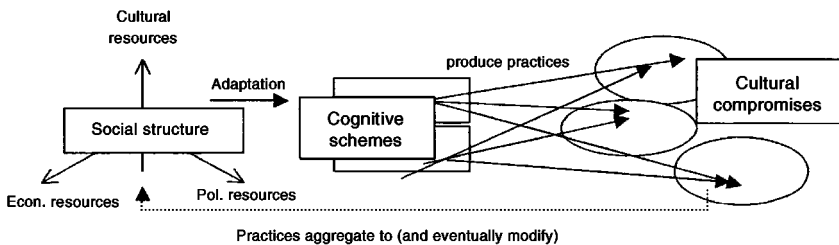
Third, we should not misinterpret the story of Zinacantán as an exception to or as a locally specific retardation of a general trend that will disappear over the long term and with intensifying globalization. While this may or may not be the case in Zinacantán,<sup>18</sup> it would not challenge the general argument made here if its fiesta system were replaced by a local variant of American-style Protestantism. My point is that world history is not a directed and well-orchestrated process with a foreseeable goal—there is no single *telos*, no functional coherence, and no irreversibility to processes of globalization. Bifurcations, chaotic breakdowns, and reversal of trends are to be expected in any complex, non-linear system. Such disjunctures, desynchronizations, and heteromorphizations—to use my terminology—have appeared on very large scales as well. My choice of local examples was solely due to my disciplinary inclination to get as quickly as possible to the level of ‘real people doing real things,’ as Radcliffe-Brown once defined the empirical object of social anthropology. The rise of the communist world, which then followed an internal economic, political, and cultural logic different from what came to be known as the West, is perhaps the best example of a large-scale process comparable—in structural terms—to Zinacantán’s trajectory. The communist bloc arose as the consequence of a global social movement and on the ruins of the tightly interconnected global society that had existed before World War I. With the exception of some neo-Hegelians inspired by New World optimism and triumphalism, nobody would rule out a comparable breakdown or reversal of global trends for the future. History may well continue.

##### 5. BEYOND ‘GLOBALIZATION’: TOWARD EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCES

How can we explain such divergent paths of development as those in Barzan and Zinacantán under similar pressures from a globalizing world? This is the foremost task of a comparative analysis of globalization: sorting out the conditions that, in the dynamics between center and periphery, dominant and domi-

nated, determine either incorporation through creolization and local variation, or heteromorphization and cultural invention, or a combination of both. The challenge goes beyond describing local variations on globalizing themes—and beyond recalling the old and somewhat commonplace wisdom that the general exists only in its particular manifestations. Rather, the issue is to determine what the dynamics of production of different political and cultural forms under conditions of global connectedness looks like. These dynamics have no preset telos—neither ‘resistance’ to globalization nor global uniformity and generality—but rather follow a generative logic open to a whole range of different paths of development that may lead to ‘multiple modernities,’ a term introduced by Shmuel Eisenstadt (1999).

A key to such a genetic analysis might be provided by the theory of cultural transformation that I have developed in recent years, modifying Bourdieu’s (1977) concepts of social space and habitus, and that I should like to summarize briefly here (see Wimmer 1996). The theory distinguishes between a distribution of economic, political, and cultural resources; a series of cognitive ‘schemes’ described by scheme theory in cognitive sciences tailored to specific positions within this space through processes of internalization and adaptation; and various institutionally organized fields of social practices generated by these schemes. The aggregation of social practices in turn represents the distribution of resources at a certain point in time, i.e. the social structure. In this way, an analytical full circle can be established from structure to action and back to structure again, as the following graphic shows.



The idea of a cultural compromise is central to the discussion of globalization. A cultural compromise emerges when the different actors have enough interests—determined by their position in the social structure—in common to negotiate a shared understanding of the social world, that is, a language in which the different points of view can be expressed. The ideal of the Indian community united against a hostile and insecure outside world represents just one example of such a cultural compromise; the ideals of the *umma*, of a Kurdish *ashiret* (a tribal group of solidarity), or of *la nación Mexicana* are others.

How can we conceptualize processes of change such as the ones induced by the forces of globalization? They result from transformations in the distribution

of resources among individuals (the social structure) that are due to changes in the relative value of different forms of capital. Such shifts can be brought about by the reproductive mechanism itself (by the accumulation of unintended consequences of action) or by the forces of globalization, for example through integration in or exclusion from world society devaluating certain forms of economic, political, and cultural capital and revaluating others.

Depending on the new mix of resources at their disposal, individuals develop new sets of strategic practices. These are generated, however, by relatively stable, though by no means 'cemented' cognitive schemes. According to the exact nature of the change in the balance of power, the practices of a certain group of individuals become generalized and existing cultural compromises are transformed, following the new constellation of forces that also redistributes the capacity to make one's own view of the social world plausible for others. It is these social dynamics that determine relative openness or closedness to new economic, political, and cultural practices constantly offered by the global space, which in turn is nourished by local developments in its centers of power and influence.

A globalizing practice therefore has no chance of being adopted if it does not fit into the strategic disposition of the actors in a social field. And this depends on two conditions: First, the new practices have to connect to already established and routinized modes of thinking and acting in order to make for an easy transition. Transposing the notion of tribal solidarity to the level of an entire nation—as in the case of Kurdish nationalism—allows for this kind of relatively smooth transformation.

Second, the new practices have to make sense from the point of view of powerful actors with wide visibility in the social arena. And these powerful brokers are only able to generalize the new practice (which is then 'globalizing locally'), if the practice offers sufficient (perceived) advantages for non-elites to make them part of their own repertoire of routinized behavior. Thus, the Ottoman nobles of Kurdish background had enough political and ideological resources to offer the local elite of *sheiks* and tribal leaders (*aghas*) to connect the pre-existing local discourse with the new, nationalist system of meaning emanating from the power centers in Istanbul and ultimately from the West. In the case of Zinacantán, the perceived interests of regional *mestizo* and local Indian elites simply diverged too much to allow for a comparable diffusion of ideas. The almost complete political marginalization of the Indian peasantry and elite during the Porfirian period—much more marked than the role assigned to Kurdish *sheiks* and *aghas* during the same period—thus explains why they did not seek inspiration in the ideology of modern nationalism, which was then undergoing a process of rapid globalization elsewhere and which had been adopted by the *mestizo* elite throughout the country.

It is beyond the scope of this article to follow this path of analysis further and establish a full comparative account. It was not my intention to provide a work-

able comparative model as such, but merely to suggest that the study of globalization should go beyond the debate on homogenization versus differentiation, overpowering versus resistance, if it is to reach the point of a non-teleological analysis grasping the diversity of experiences in different parts of the world. In order to arrive at such a comparative understanding of globalization, we may have to stop looking at 'globalization' as a master term guiding our theoretical thinking on the present condition, and continue to work on a general theory of social and cultural change, including globalization as one impetus and stimulus for such change.

From such a point of view, the concept of globalization simply denotes a process of connecting social systems on a global scale, without, however, implying that this necessarily and forcefully leads to isomorphization, synchronization, dedifferentiation and ultimately the establishment of a new type of society. Globalization thus provides a background for economic, political, social, and cultural changes which have to be comparatively explained by referring to analytical categories and processes *other* than globalization. Growing interconnectedness, in other words, and a truly homomorphized and synchronized world society should be kept separate: Globalization does not necessarily lead, and has not yet led, to a truly global society governed by one single logic of reproduction and transformation.<sup>19</sup> To describe globalization in terms of a theory of a global society thus directly leads us into the false alternative of homogenization vs. heterogenization, hegemony versus resistance. Globalization should be used as a descriptive term and not as the master concept of a teleological theory.

## 6. AGAINST TEMPORALO-CENTRISM

But even as a descriptive term, the concept of globalization is of little use when it is meant to denote a world historical epoch. For the two histories I have presented clearly show that the processes we are currently experiencing are not nearly so novel as our short memories may suggest. Various waves of economic, political, and cultural globalization have washed over the planet. Remember what economic historians have underlined (especially Hirst and Thompson 1999, ch. 2; O'Rourke and Williamson 1999:212ff.): The state of integration of the world economy was higher before World War I than it is now in terms of the proportion of production for the world market, capital market integration, and other relevant criteria. The spread of nationalism has probably exerted a more profound influence on culture and politics in various regions of the world than the consumer culture of our times will ever have.

Extending the case studies presented in this paper into the past could easily be used to show that other surges of cultural globalization preceded the golden era of world trade in which our two stories were situated. The culture of the indigenous inhabitants of Zinacantán, for example, was profoundly altered by the



colonial experience. Their gods were turned into Catholic saints; their divine calendars lost their public function; their temples were destroyed and churches were built upon their ruins. Similar accounts could be given of the Islamization of Kurdish society and its incorporation into Arab, Safawid, and later Ottoman Empires.

In many cases, the local traditions whose loss we tend to impute to the sinister forces of globalization are such hybrid cross-cultural forms resulting from previous processes of cultural diffusion originating in other political and cultural centers (cf. Friedman 1994, ch. 1). In deploring that Zinacantecan customs are withering away under the cold wind of globalization, Maya cultural activists and their anthropological supporters should not forget that these customs are in fact creations of long gone waves of globalization and cultural creolization.

That processes of globalization are hardly novel would perhaps be agreed upon by most of the authors writing on the subject. However, they would insist on the crucial difference between former and current forms of globalization, usually pointing to fundamental differences in the technological infrastructure of the process (Giddens 1999; Castells 1996; Held et al. 1999). They would call attention to new communication media and cheaper transportation giving rise to a new geographic mobility—of both migrants from the South and tourists from the North—and to an unknown degree of connectedness in overlapping networks of exchange (cf. Hargittai and Centeno 2001; Carnoy and Castells 2001).

And indeed, a Zinacanteco can send an e-mail to the main press agencies around the world to denounce the invasion of his village by Mexican government troops chasing Zapatista *guerrilleros*. Only hours later, in a smoke-filled coffee shop of Kreuzberg, Kurdish nationalists from Northern Iraq glance at CNN news, note recent developments in Chiapas, and discuss whether and how they can learn from the professional information management of *subcomandante* Marcos. Generalized mobility and the increasingly rapid exchange of signs have undoubtedly made the world smaller and made processes of borrowing and learning across great distances possible. In David Harvey's (1992) somewhat cryptic terms, 'time-space-compression' has led the 'factory of fragmentation,' as he sees global capitalism, to speed up gears, producing, among other things, postmodernism as a machine oil for this mechanism.

A second argument in defense of the epochal shift perspective refers to different political steering capacities then, and now: Current flows of meaning across the globe are no longer confined within or controlled by political institutions such as empires or nation-states. They crisscross political territories, they conquer, demolish, and rebuild cultural landscapes, following their own rationale (Albrow 1996:101; Robertson 1992:138–45; McMichael 1996:234). This is not to say, so the argument goes, that cultural globalization has no political implications—quite the contrary: the globalization of the human rights discourse through social movements, for example, bears witness to the politi-

cally explosive nature of cultural globalization. But these forms of diffusion and adoption are no longer controlled by the centers of political power. A new global space of communication populated by global social movements has emerged.

Present-day cultural globalization is therefore of a different nature, Appadurai (1996) maintains, for it opens up spaces of imagination, imitation, rejection, and transformation that elude control by political institutions. What could illustrate the declining state capacity to control social movements and global flows of meaning better than present-day Chiapas and Northern Iraq, both regions where no central state is present to enforce its agenda on local political discourses? Could one imagine more appropriate figures to sing the song of the decline of the nation-state than *subcommandante* Marcos or Massoud Barzani, both of whom have been visited and intensively venerated by promoters of progressive global social movements, such as Danielle Mitterand?

This essay is, evidently enough, not suited for providing counter-evidence to these two arguments in favor of the epochal shift perspective, simply because both historical trajectories evolved during previous waves of globalization and cannot be used for longitudinal comparison. Nevertheless, I should like to cast some doubts on the empirical salience of the two arguments, even if on anecdotal and sketchy evidence only.

First, historical figures show that the period in which my two stories are situated was a time of global mobility even more than is the present age. Settler migration to the colonies, large-scale labor migration of Indian *koullis* and Chinese contract labor around the globe, of African plantation workers across the continent, and of impoverished and fortune-seeking Europeans to the Americas (cf. Zolberg 1997). We know that, not in absolute numbers, but relative to population size, the peak in world migration movements was reached before World War I (Held et al. 1999, ch. 6). Massive institutional barriers to migration only developed after the War (Wimmer 1998). Historical research shows that even under conditions of high travel costs and slow media of communication, many emigrants maintained contact with their regions of origin over generations, formed what now are called transnational communities, and migrated back and forth to a far greater extent than is estimated by temporalo-centrist migration research (cf. Morawska, forthcoming; Foner 1997).

Long-distance communication, borrowing, and learning were common even before CNN, e-mail, and telephones. Many authors have noted that submarine telegraph cables connected the continents from the 1860s on, and made real-time commercial transactions on the globalized bond markets possible. News spread with similar velocity and political movements were, as they are today, connected across the globe (cf. Standage 1998). Kurdish nationalists, to return to my case examples, were often exiled, and published newsletters such as *Kurdistan*, *Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress Gazette*, *Kurdish Sun*, etc. from Cairo or Paris, distributing them across their elite networks all over the Middle East and Europe. Does it imply a qualitative change (not a mere quantum leap in ve-

locity of dissemination) that Kurdish activists nowadays publish their newsletters on the web?

This brings me to the second argument I wish to question, concerning the loss of political control over processes of cultural globalization. Kurdish intellectuals borrowed their main philosophical concepts from German nationalists, as we have seen. Peasant leaders of the Mexican revolution, to give an example as close as possible to Zinacantán, borrowed from various global sources in constructing their vision of a just society. Primo Tapia, from a Tarascan indigenous community in Michoacán (Central Mexico), had emigrated as a young adult to the United States, where he came to know the Magón brothers, two intellectual fathers of the Mexican revolution and its agrarian laws. Their ideas were in turn largely based on Kropotkin, Bakunin, and the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists (Anaya Ibarra 1955, cited in Friedrich 1970:65). Still in the United States, Primo Tapia organized strikes and protest movements for the trade union 'Industrial Workers of the World.' In 1920, he returned to Mexico and reorganized the agrarianist circles in his home village, where he became an uncontested and much venerated leader. His revolutionary ideas replaced the localist, religious world view centering on a *fiesta* system comparable to the one of Zinacantán.

Cross-national borrowing and learning between social movements, in other words, were quite common also during the last wave of globalization before World War II.<sup>20</sup> The history of the socialist international testifies to that. Global social movements do not seem to depend on modern techniques of communication. Whether or not empires and nation states were more powerful in steering cultural flows at that time, they were, as these two examples show, not powerful enough to prevent the spread of new ideas across national territories, and they could not avoid the profound transformation of the ideological and political landscape that resulted from such diffusion. The idea that states were sovereign beginning with the Peace of Westphalia and only ceased to be masters of political affairs with the recent advent of globalization belongs, as Krasner (1999) has shown, to the dearest myths of globalist intellectuals.

Nothing new under the sun? The anecdotes and sketches I have provided in this section may not be strong enough, in themselves, to seriously challenge the two arguments for the epochal shift perspective. They may suffice, however, to cast some doubts on them and to legitimate a plea for more longitudinal, comparative research. Only detailed case studies, supplemented by quantitative comparisons, of different waves of globalization will allow us to discover what is specific about the current age and what is simply another cycle of expansion of the world system—a boom in interconnectedness that may or may not be followed by another breakdown of global networks and flows, due to processes of heteromorphization and disintegration, comparable to that following the First World War. More precisely, one may ask whether zero-time communication and speed indeed make for decisive differences between the structure, reach, and

consequences of global communication processes now, and those of one century ago. A rigorous comparative perspective based on individual cases may also help us to evaluate Held et al.'s (1999:430f.) thesis according to which the different political infrastructures of globalization in the times of colonial expansion before the First World War, and during the wave of UN-monitored nation-state building after the Second World War (and especially after 1989), justify an "epochal shift" perspective.<sup>21</sup>

It is my intention to argue for such a two-fold research program: comparing historical trajectories at different places during the same periods and of comparing different periods at the same places, thus complementing and differentiating the typological comparisons between former and current waves of globalization that have recently been made (most prominently by Held et al. 1999). In developing such an intellectual enterprise, we may overcome some of the limitations of current social science discourse on globalization and arrive at a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of social and cultural change under conditions of worldwide interconnectedness. Once such a program has come to maturity, we may perhaps discover that the term globalization is a burden, rather than a useful tool in reaching our end. In the meantime, we will continue using it and hence, albeit *à contre cœur*, contribute to its global spread.

## NOTES

1. For a more comprehensive overview of the globalization debate see Guillén (2001) and Held et al. (1999, introduction).

2. The term is common currency in organizational sociology and describes there a process during which different institutions of a social field become increasingly similar in terms of organizational structure and culture (cf. DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The use of the term in relation to the effects of globalization goes back to Meyer et al. (1997:145).

3. My summary of the literature with regard to the convergence (isomorphization)-divergence issue conforms with the view of Amoores et al. (1997), but diverges from Guillén's (2001) interpretation. However, many of the authors he cites as advocates of the divergence thesis in fact refer to fragmentation (meaning ethnic nationalisms or fundamentalisms). Such is the case, for example, of Giddens's view on globalization cited by Guillén (2001). Fragmentation, however, is usually perceived as a corollary process to isomorphization, because, as Meyer et al. (1997:161) would have it, nationalist and fundamentalist movements usually use typically 'modern' and 'Western' forms of ideology and organization, and may therefore 'intensify isomorphism more than they resist it.' Fragmentation and differentiation thus allude to growing cultural heterogeneity and various forms of resistance that accompany, according to what I perceive as the dominant view on the issue, an isomorphization of social structures induced by globalization. Guillén is, however, certainly right when it comes to the literatures on economic policy or business organization, where there seems to be a convergence on the divergence perspective (see also the summary in Held et al. 1999:13).

4. Cf. on the economic side: Hirst and Thompson 1999 and O'Rourke and Williamson 1999; on political aspects: Krasner 1999; from a historical point of view: Sanderson 1995; with regard to migration: Foner 1997 and Morawska, forthcoming. See also the references in Held et al. (1999:13) and Guillén (2001).

5. The following draws on Yapp 1987, Lewis 1968, and Karpat 1972, 1973, and 1985.

6. One influential reformist thinker was Ahmed Riza, who stood close to the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (Yapp 1987:185ff.; Kayali 1997:41ff.).

7. The following section draws on van Bruinessen 1989:395ff., McDowall 1996:88–101, and Behrendt 1993:281ff.

8. Compare this with the structure of the confederacy of the Jaf, as described by Barth (1953:41ff.) in the 1950s. It represented a rudimentary copy of the former confederacies of the Baban emirs (see *ibid.*:60f.).

9. Van Bruinessen 1989:82f.; 303ff.; Gellner 1992:98f.

10. See the interpretations by McDowall 1996:53–59 and Behrendt 1993:214–22.

11. Different versions of the story can be found in van Bruinessen 1989:344f., Nikitine 1956:221f., and Nikitine 1925.

12. According to other—mostly British—sources, Ahmed turned heretic, had all the Korans burned, allowed the consumption of pork, and even converted to Christianity. He is then said to have launched attacks on other regions that refused to accept the new religion. Still other sources maintain that the uprising was directed primarily against the projected, or dreaded, settlement of Aramaic Christians (Assyrians) in the Barzan valley (Ibrahim 1983:323–28; Nikitine 1925; Schmidt 1964, ch. 7).

13. For Mexico, see Katz (1986); see also the local studies by Friedrich (1970, ch. 3), Lomnitz Adler (1982), Schryer (1990, ch. 5), and Dehouve (1990:236sq.).

14. In 1894, Porfirio Díaz abrogated the restrictions governing land acquisition (2500 ha maximum, and the condition that the land be used for agricultural purposes), and thus encouraged land speculation. *Compañías deslindadoras*, mostly foreign stock-holding companies, could declare ‘uncultivated’ land as *terrenos baldíos* and buy it from the state, although such land was often held by Indian *comunidades*.

15. Hansen 1981.

16. In each major Indian village in Guerrero, for example, at the end of the nineteenth century, the children were taught writing and counting in Spanish (Dehouve 1990:237f.). Compare this with Friedlander (1975:144sq.) for a village in central Mexico. Regarding the establishment of the education system in the Mixteca Alta in the 1950s, see Pastor (1987:439); for the Huasteca, see Schryer (1990:95sq.).

17. The characteristic tension between an Islamic Sunni universalism—the heritage of pre-modern Imperial ideology—and Iraqi nationalism gives cultural and political evolutions in this part of the world a very peculiar dynamic. This is not comparable to the *mestizo* nationalism developed in revolutionary Mexico during the thirties and thereafter, where the process of fusion and amalgamation of different “races” into one single “*raza cósmica*”, the Mexican nation, was glorified. Both developments result from different ways in which the global narrative of national sovereignty and grandeur were fused with already existing ideological structures, i.e., different variants of pre-modern Imperial concepts of society and politics. Put into more fashionable terms, there is a path-dependency in historical evolutions even under strong globalizing and homogenizing conditions. While this still conforms to the perspective of creolization, hybridization, syncretization etc., one could also show how political process was becoming heteromorphized at times, for example, when the Mexican revolution was no longer guided by the dynamics of globalization but by a different logic of its own. This led to less interconnectedness and—from a global point of view—the appearance of new pathways of development not deducible from the logic of the global system.

18. Some fiesta systems in Mexico and Guatemala have been strengthened in recent years rather than weakened, thanks, among other factors, to remittances of transnational migrants.

19. For similar skepticism regarding the existence of an integrated global economy replacing national economies see Wade 1996 and Zysman 1996.

20. Compare also the examples of nineteenth-century transnational social move-

ments in Keck and Sikkink (1998:41–72). In more general terms, this also contradicts the argument put forward by Hargittai and Centeno (2001), or more implicitly by Castells (1996), that older waves of globalization were based on hierarchical, one-way links between center and periphery, while today's global connections are multiple, networked and decentered. Baker (1981) provides a good example for the network character of links of trade, migration, finance, and politics in the territories surrounding the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea before World War I.

21. Going further into the past, we may wonder whether market integration—the dominant mode of connectedness in contemporary and nineteenth-century waves of globalization—does have different cultural, political, and social effects than political integration, which connected the different domains of early modern and pre-modern empires. We could thus take a fresh look at Polanyi's notion of a great transformation brought about by the disembedding of economic processes during the nineteenth century (Polanyi 1944).

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