3

Indirect Relationships and Imagined Communities: Large-Scale Social Integration and the Transformation of Everyday Life

Craig Calhoun

Talk about the end of an era is once again widespread, perhaps a sign of another *fin de siècle* generation. Yet for all the variety of "postmodernisms" proposed, the modern era remains sociologically undertheorized. This means that most accounts of its transcendence do a poor job of specifying just what counts as an epochal transformation.

In this chapter, I will put forward an argument about two general features of modernity that social theory has pointed to but inadequately thematized and that help to provide a much stronger sociological foundation for grasping some of the phenomena to which postmodern thought calls our attention. The two features both reflect the modern production of an increasing split between the world of direct interpersonal relationships and that of large-scale collective organization. Conceptualizing the first in essentially social structural or network terms, we can call it the proliferation of indirect relationships—those mediated by information technology, bureaucratic organizations, and more or less self-regulating systems such as markets. Conversely, the second can be conceptualized in basically cultural terms as the production of imagined communities (borrowing the phrase from Benedict Anderson 1983). That is, people have come increasingly to conceive of themselves as members of very large collectivities linked primarily by common identities but minimally by networks of directly interpersonal

relationships—nations, races, classes, genders, Republicans, Muslims, and "civilized people."

Recognizing the role of indirect relations and imagined communities provides a way to understand the increasing split between everyday life and large-scale systemic integration, thus potentially informing and improving Jürgen Habermas's account of social versus system integration. This split is behind a good deal of the apparent fragmentation of meaning that is a long-standing modern motif and a special theme of postmodernism. It informs a variety of sociopolitical movements (and modes of understanding) in the modern world, from nationalism to populism to the various "new social movements" focused on legitimating the identities of previously repressed or marginalized groups. It is also a reason why theoretical understanding cannot be done away with in favor of a simple proliferation of practical attitudes and a relativism of different relations to the world. If we are to grasp the workings of large-scale social integration (rather than simply lament them), we require theory; they are uniquely different to grasp adequately through practical, nondiscursive knowledge.[2]

INDIRECT RELATIONSHIPS

Perhaps the most important transformation of everyday life in the modern era has been the sharpening and deepening of a split between the world of direct interpersonal relationships and the mode of organization and integration of large-scale social systems. Indeed, this split partially constitutes the contemporary notion of everyday life. We contrast the quotidian no longer with the extraordinary days of feasts and festivals so much as with the systemically remote, with that which "counts" on a large scale. Movie stars, corporate presidents, and famous politicians are thus distinguished from "everyday people."

Certainly, large-scale social organizations have always worked in distinctive ways. The medieval Roman Catholic church and the Imperial Chinese court and bureaucracy worked differently from local peasant villages. But during the modern era, such splits between the systemic and the face-to-face have deepened and taken on new significance, even while new media and changed structures of power have made the modern heirs of pope and emperor more visible and apparently more like everyone else. The capacity of large-scale collective actors and organizational systems has grown dramatically, largely on the basis of improvements in infrastructural (notably transportation and communication) technology. States have become able to administer remote territories far more effectively, businesses to organize dispersed activities, and armies to fight around the world.[1] At the same time, it is increasingly difficult for people to make sense of the organization of large-scale social systems and collective actors on the basis of extensions or analogies from the understanding of everyday, local life. This is not to say that people do not try to make sense of the affairs of nation-states and international markets by forms of reasoning developed in the context of the

family or the local community; they certainly do, and populist politicians make playing on this tendency a key part of their rhetorical stock-in-trade (Calhoun 1988). Rather, the point is that understandings derived from the world of everyday, direct social interaction are likely to be increasingly distorting when applied to the world of large-scale social integration and action.

Human society depends on the capacity to coordinate action. Beyond the level of a small-band form of organization, and indeed even to some extent within it, this requires various techniques for mediating distance in time and space. Internalized cultural norms, the fear of specific reprisals, oral traditions, communications technologies from print on, bureaucracies, and markets are all among the ways in which this is done, although this is not necessarily how we usually think of them. The modern world is constituted in part by the radical expansion and transformation of such capacity to coordinate action across time and space. And as Michel Foucault has shown, extension of systems of power was often paralleled by a transformation of interpersonal power. Direct coercion was partially replaced by normalizing discipline, and the workings of power actually intensified in the process.[2]

This concern with the coordination of action can be situated within the general issue of competing forms of societal integration. I propose to revise but appropriate the argument that modernity is characterized by a basic split between distinct "worlds" of experience or spheres of activity and organization—as, for example, between what Habermas (1984, 1988) calls the system and the lifeworld. I will suggest, however, that there are at least four "worlds" to be considered: the world of directly interpersonal relations typified by actual or potential face-to-face interaction, the world of imagined personal connection (through some medium such as television, but also tradition), the one-directional world of active relationships (such as surveillance) known only or primarily to one of the parties, and the world of systemic integration or coordination by impersonal and delinguistified steering media, which give the illusion of not involving human action or interpersonal power. These "worlds" are based on different sorts of social relationships, different forms of mediation, for even directly interpersonal relationships are not simply given materially but are constituted in communication and intersubjective understanding. But I will also suggest that the phenomenological language of "worlds" Habermas appropriates is misleading here, as the very interpenetration of these "different" modes of relationship is of crucial importance. That we should see something such as system and lifeworld as distinct worlds or spheres of life is a structure of modern consciousness that needs to be examined, not simply accepted.

Social Versus System Integration

Habermas's (1984, 1988) division of lifeworld and system is among the latest in the long series of binary oppositions used to characterize modern social life: *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, mechanical and organic, folk and urban, status and contract, traditional and modern, and so on. There are

limits to any binary conceptualization of modes of social organization, but Habermas's offers an important advantage over its predecessors. It does not suggest that one mode of organization has simply supplanted the other, dividing history into two neat phases. Rather, it proposes that modernity is characterized by a division between the world of lived experience and the increasing role of large-scale, systemic integration. The lifeworld does not vanish, but (1) it is able to organize only a constricted and shrinking subset of social activities; (2) it is not able to accomplish integration on a scale approaching that of system integration; (3) it is constructively rationalized by the growing differentiation of subjects and their reliance on communicative achievement of mutual understanding; and (4) it is colonized by the instrumental modes of rationality and the reified, typically cybernetic way of understanding the products of human action characteristic of the system world. Systemic integration does not organize all of life, but it does organize its most important political and economic infrastructure and its largest-scale units of integration.

The general theoretical problem behind this set of concerns is one that has occupied both functionalism and Marxism and a good deal of the rest of modern social theory. It is the question of how to relate understandings of social life and the cohesion of social relationships based on actors and action to those based on notions of self-regulating systems, unintended functioning, or structure. This is the age-old problem Giddens (1985a) has newly posed in his attempt to overcome such dualities with a language (perhaps a theory) of structuration.[3]

David Lockwood put forward a terse account of the distinction between social and system integration in 1964: "Whereas the problem of social integration focuses attention upon the orderly or conflictual relationships between the *actors*, the problem of system integration focuses on the orderly or conflictual relationships between the *parts*, of a social system" (p. 371; emphasis in original). Lockwood was particularly concerned with clarifying this distinction in order to address criticisms of functionalism that, in the 1950s and 1960s—largely because of the prominence of normative functionalism (particularly in Parsons)—were in his view overinvolved with disputes over the role of action and power and somewhat neglectful of more basically systemic issues. In particular, so-called "conflict theory" so completely absorbed the one-sided emphasis on actors that it tended to remove from its purview the basic issue of systemic contradictions:

Yet it is precisely Marx who clearly differentiates social and system integration. The propensity to class antagonism (social integration aspect) is generally a function of the character of production relationships (e.g. possibilities of intraclass identification and communication). But the dynamics of class antagonisms are clearly related to the progressively growing "contradictions" of the economic system. One might almost say that the "conflict" which in Marxian theory is decisive for change is not the *power* conflict arising from the relationships in the productive system, but the *system* conflict arising from "contradictions" between "property institutions" and the "forces of production." . . . Thus it

is perfectly possible, according to this theory, to say that at any particular point of time a society has a high degree of social integration (e.g. relative absence of class conflict) and yet has a low degree of system integration (mounting excess productive capacity). (Lockwood 1964, pp. 375–376)

Lockwood's argument is part of an apt attempt to show both that societal integration needs to be seen as differentiated as to kind or domain and that it needs to be seen as an empirical variable, not simply a theoretical postulate.

A decade after Lockwood's essay, Habermas (1978) introduced an identically labeled version of the same distinction. A reading of Emile Durkheim's early work provides his basis for drawing "our attention to empirical connections between stages of system differentiation and forms of social integration. It is only possible to analyze these connections by distinguishing mechanisms of coordinating action that harmonize the *action orientations* of participants from mechanisms that stabilize nonintended interconnections of actions by way of functionally intermeshing *action consequences*" (1988, p. 117). It is important that Habermas tries to maintain a nonreified notion of systems as still deriving from action, although working through more or less self-regulating feedback mechanisms based on action consequences rather than international governance or cooperation. This distinction, according to Habermas, calls for "a corresponding differentiation in the concept of society itself" (1988, p. 117). It is this differentiation that Habermas introduces as the distinction between lifeworld and system and pursues in his analysis of their decoupling in the process of modernization.

The contrast is at one level between the phenomena to which functionalist systems theories such as Parsons's (especially 1951) and Luhmann's (e.g., 1982) are well suited and those to which more phenomenological accounts (for example, Schutz 1967; Schutz and Luckmann 1973) are oriented. Our experience in modern society leads to divergent ways of trying to understand the social world and to an experiential and intellectual split between lifeworld and system world (or such common-sense analogs as "the people" and "the system," "everyday life" and "the big picture," and the like).

Habermas focuses little attention on social structural factors influencing such distinctions.[4] I want to claim that our tendency to posit such ad hoc analytic divisions in the course of everyday life derives from the contrast between directly interpersonal social relationships and the indirect relationships that are formed when social action affects others only through the mediation of complex organizations, impersonal markets, or communications technology. Indirect relationships permit a societal scale unimaginable on the basis of direct relationships and simultaneously encourage objectification and reification of their origin in human actions.[5]

Habermas begins with a qualitative distinction in forms of rational action: instrumental (oriented to success in relation to objectified goals) and communicative (oriented to reflective understanding and the constitution of social relations).[6] In his view, both of these develop naturally in the course of human history. They come into conflict when they give rise to competing

forms of societal integration: systemic and social (lifeworld). The latter is integrated through communicative action in which people seek mutual understanding.[7] The former is integrated through the feedback mechanisms of "delinguistified steering media," without any actors necessarily understanding the whole system or without such understanding playing a central role. Money is the paradigmatic example of the delinguistified steering media to which Habermas (following Parsons) refers, but a wide range of statistical indicators (of productivity, public opinion, and the like) share many relevant features. These media allow social systems to be "steered" as though they were independent of human action. Through systems theory, they may be understood in the same way. Indeed, the complexity of very large-scale social processes may dictate that they can be grasped better in cybernetic and other relatively abstract academic terms than in terms of the ordinary discourse of the lifeworld. Accordingly, Habermas uses systems theory in his analysis of system integration even while he attacks the reifying (and anti-democratic) tendencies of systems theory (see especially 1988). It is unclear, however, whether or how he maintains in his theory the ability to show that such large-scale indirect phenomona remain nonetheless human social activity and relationships.

What is needed, it seems to me, is a more explicit argument that a systems-theoretic account of very large-scale social organization is an intellectual convenience, a tool for understanding that is genuinely powerful but that must be counterbalanced by continuous reminders that it is a provisional view based on a bracketing of the "real" origins of these large-scale systems in concrete human activity. The existence of such large-scale organizational systems thus predisposes us to think of them in systemic terms; they incline us toward reification, but whatever sense in which they are systems is not one entirely divorced from human action. In other words, when relationships are directly interpersonal we are unlikely to fail to recognize the extent to which they are human social creations. But when they are highly indirect, mediated by technology and complex organizations, we are likely to need to approach their operation through aggregate statistics and cybernetic conceptions. These will tend to make it look as though the large-scale systems were somehow autonomously functioning entities rather than creations of human social action.

This is not the place to address Habermas's conceptualization in any detail. Rather, I want to take up the issue of how the distinction of direct from indirect social relationships might provide us with more of a social structural basis for a theory of contrasting modes of societal integration.

The Dimension
of Concrete Social Relationships

Trying to explain patterns of societal integration primarily by changing orientations to action can obscure the foundation of these patterns on concrete social relationships of different sorts. These concrete relationships form a sort of scaffolding for social integration, a scaffolding highly dependent

on infrastructural technology. Habermas's failure to develop this sort of foundation for his argument contributes to several problematic aspects of his generally stimulating and powerful theory: its difficulties in achieving cultural and historical specificity; its too-uncritical acceptance of the systems-theoretical description of systemic integration; its tendency to idealize lifeworld relationships; and its underdeveloped account of practical, situated activity that cannot readily be reduced to purely communicative, strategic, or rational action.[8]

The world of direct interaction, especially primary relationships, remains emotionally central to people in the most advanced modern societies and at the heart of most people's evaluative frameworks.[9] We have direct relationships with family, friends, neighbors, associates at work, and even people with whom we interact only briefly and in ways essentially defined by role performance—bank tellers, our children's school teachers, and similar groups. Within direct interaction, Cooley's (1909) distinction of primary from secondary relationships suggests a continuum of decreasing closeness, multiplexity, and completeness of grasp of the other. Nonetheless, even secondary relationships are marked by the potential for expansion direct interaction provides. In Schutz's words, "In the face-to-face situation the partners are constantly revising and enlarging their knowledge of each other" (1967, p. 230).

Schutz, indeed, had as much to say about directness and indirectness of social relations as any social theorist, although his account was always strongly phenomenological in that it focused exclusively on the consciousness of the experiencing individual.[10]

> In the face-to-face situation, directness of experience is essential, regardless of whether our apprehension of the Other is central or peripheral and regardless of how adequate our grasp of him is. . . . We make the transition from direct to indirect social experience simple by following this spectrum of decreasing vividness. The first steps beyond the realm of immediacy are marked by a decrease in the number of perceptions I have of the other person and a narrowing of the perspectives within which I view him. (1967, p. 219)

The world of mere contemporaries, those with whom we are not at the present time in contact, is nonetheless itself defined by the face-to-face situation that remains a possibility. Schutz suggests understanding the world of contemporaries in terms of regions of increasing anonymity. In the outlying, particularly anonymous regions lie contemporaries of whose existence as concrete individuals one has no specific knowledge, although one knows that a certain position is occupied or that a certain functional role is being fulfilled by someone; collective entites; and ultimately residuals of human activity such as the grammar of a language or physical artifacts.

The primacy of face-to-face situations is an important but surprisingly often overlooked feature of direct relationships. Webber (1967), for example, introduced the notion of community without propinquity to describe the increasing importance of relationships formed within special purpose as-

sociations, encouraged by access to transport, and often mediated by space-transcending communications technology. The descriptive insight was sound; such relationships have indeed grown more important. But the conceptualization was flawed. In particular, it obscured attention to the special features of locally compact communities, notably the much greater likelihood that relationships would be multiplex, linking people in several different spheres of activity or dimensions of their lives (Bell and Newby 1976; Calhoun 1980a). That contemporary neighborhoods may rarely do this is not proof against the argument that locality is important to such multiplexity but is only evidence that, for a mix of reasons, such multiplexity has declined. Following the Simmelian line of thought of Peter Blau's recent structural sociology (Blau 1977; Blau and Schwartz 1984), there is a tradeoff between the expansion of cross-cutting relations linking people widely in a population and the density and intensity of in-group relations within specific sub-populations, including local communities. There is an important sense in which the expansion of supra-local special purpose associations *has*, as the classical sociologists expected, contributed to the decline of community as a form of social organization, if not as a value.

Almost all major premodern forms of social organization depended primarily on direct interpersonal relationships. Kinship, community life, and even most stable, recurrent relationships of economic exchange all took place within the conscious awareness and usually the face-to-face co-presence of human individuals. Not only the immediate parties to any particular transaction but their implicit or explicit monitoring by a field of others directly linked to the main participants brought order to such arrangements. Such relationships could be more or less systematic and complex: Webs of kinship linked hundreds of thousands of members of traditional African societies. The actualization of each relationship as opposed to its latent potential, however, was normally directly interpersonal.[11] While state apparatuses certainly predate the modern era and occurred historically throughout the world, Giddens (1985b, p. 63) is surely right to argue that few if any were able to govern in the modern sense of the word; their capacity for regularized administration of a territory and its residents was very limited.[12] This was largely because power relations could not be extended effectively over large distances.[13] Although cultural variation was enormous and variation in specific patterns of social organization considerable, only rarely were premodern peoples able to produce the physical infrastructure and administrative practices necessary to large-scale social organization of much intensity. China probably went furthest, followed perhaps by Imperial Rome.

Modern political and economic affairs are distinguished by the increasing frequency, scale, and importance of indirect social relationships. Large-scale markets, closely administered organizations, and information technology have produced many more opportunities for such relationships than existed in any premodern society. This does not mean that direct relationships have been reduced in number or that they are less meaningful or attractive to

individuals. Rather, it means that direct relationships tend to be compartmentalized. They persist as part of the immediate lifeworld of individuals, both as the nexus of certain kinds of instrumental activities (such as the many personal relationships that smooth or enable business transactions [cf. Granovetter, 1985]) and especially as the realm of private life (family, friends, neighbors). Direct relationships help to make complex organizations work, even while such organizations mediate indirect relations. Direct interpersonal relationships organize less and less of public life, however—less and less of the crucially determinant institutions controlling material resources and exercising social power. Indirect relationships do not eliminate direct ones, but they change both their meaning and their sociological significance (Meyrowitz 1985; Calhoun 1988). As sociopsychologically and culturally powerful as ever, direct relationships are no longer constitutive of society at its widest reaches.[14]

The reproduction of embodied but social sensibilities, habituses (in Bourdieu's 1976, 1980 sense), is altered as social life comes more and more to be coordinated through indirect relationships. Thus, tradition as the passing on of culture remains alive and important in the modern world, but the social organization of indirect relationships undermines its effectiveness in reproducing preexisting patterns of social life. We are led to an apparently more rationalistic orientation to action (in Weber's sense), not just by a change in values or orientation but by transformations in basic aspects of social structure, notably those developed as part of the rise of capitalism and the modern state.

This growing importance of indirect relationships was recognized by both Marx and Weber. Capitalism, for Marx, was not established on the basis of direct interpersonal relationships. It existed only through the mediation of commodities produced and exchanged in the pursuit of capital accumulation. Indeed, Marx defined capitalism as an arena of totalizing relations based on abstract labor largely in opposition to direct interpersonal relationships: "their own exchange and their own production confront individuals as an *objective* relation which is *independent* of them. In the case of the *world market*, the *connection of the individual* with all, but at the same time also the *independence of this connection from the individual*, have developed to such a high level that the formation of the world market already at the same time contains the conditions for going beyond it" (1939, p. 161, emphases in original).[15] Capitalism means the creation of an abstract totality—the whole system of capital accumulation—through the mediation of human activity (in relation to nature, self, and others) by commodities. Marx and especially Engels were fond of borrowing Carlyle's phrase that capitalism left no other nexus between man and man than "callous cash payment" (see Marx and Engels, p. 487; Engels, p. 608). Just as capitalism must disregard or even attack the irreducibly qualitative nature of commodities, so it must disregard or attack the qualitative content of human relationships (Marx 1867, Chapter 1; Lukacs 1922, pp. 83–148). Not so a post-capitalist society. Where Marx envisages a communist future, he does not oppose

quantitatively interchangeable individuals to an abstract totality. Rather, he takes pains to stress that "above all we must avoid postulating 'society' again as an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual. The individual *is the social being*" (1844, p. 299; emphasis in original). But such a condition is a possible future to be historically created, not a timeless feature of human nature (other than in potential): "Universally developed individuals, whose social relations, as their own communal [*gemeinschaftlich*] relations, are hence also subordinated to their own communal control, are not product of nature, but of history" (1939, p. 162). Natural law and social contract theorists, Marx says at the same point in the *Grundrisse*, focus their attention on "merely objective" bonds among people and mistake them for the spontaneous relationships that are not possible in the existing state of society. So long as the abstract relationships of capitalism remain determinant, the analysis of concrete relationships will be the analysis of more or less arbitrary epiphenomena. When capitalism and the human self-estrangement of private property are transcended, there will still be a difference between activities carried out in direct communality with others and those (such as science) that depend less on the immediate co-presence of the group but that are nonetheless self-consciously social. But each of these will be self-determining in a way impossible under the domination of capitalism:

> Social activity and social enjoyment exist by no means *only* in the form of some *directly* communal activity and directly *communal* enjoyment, although *communal* activity and *communal* enjoyment—i.e. activity and enjoyment which are manifested and affirmed in *actual* direct *association* with other men—will occur wherever such a *direct* expression of sociability stems from the true character of the activity's content and is appropriate to the nature of the enjoyment. (Marx and Engels 1848, p. 298, emphases in the original)

For Weber, the commodity form was also key, but, characteristically, market rather than production relations were central; the "indirect exchange of money" was prototypical:

> Within the market community every act of exchange, expecially monetary exchange, is not directed, in isolation, by the action of the individual partner to the particular transaction, but the more rationally it is considered, the more it is directed by the actions of all parties potentially interested in the exchange. The market community as such is the most impersonal form of practical life into which humans can enter with one another. This is not due to that potentiality of struggle among the interested parties which is inherent in the market relationship. Any human relationship, even the most intimate, and even though it be marked by the most unqualified personal devotion, is in some sense relative and may involve a struggle with the partner. . . . The reason for the impersonality of the market is its matter-of-factness, its orientation to the commodity and only to that. When the market is allowed to follow its own autonomous tendencies, its participants do not look toward the persons of each other but only toward the commodity; there are no obligations of

> brotherliness or reverence, and none of those spontaneous human relations that are sustained by personal unions. (1922, p. 636)

Weber's ideal-typical market does not correspond to any actuality, of course, any more than Marx's pure model of capitalism does. But each expresses a distinctly modern tendency.

A convenient way to think about the issue is to borrow Cooley's (1909) language of primary and secondary relations. This conceptualized the idea—not unique to Cooley—that modern, especially urban, life was characterized by an increasing predominance of relatively attenuated, special-purpose relationships over richer, more deeply committed and many-stranded ones. Cooley was developing an implicitly Rousseauian critique of the inauthenticity of secondary relations. But he failed to see something that might have disturbed him further—the increasing role of indirect relationships in which the individual parties are not engaged in even the limited sort of face-to-face or personal interaction characteristic of secondary relations. I have elsewhere (Calhoun 1986 and forthcoming a) proposed extending Cooley's language with notions of tertiary and quaternary relations.[16]

Tertiary relations are those individual parties might in principle bring to full awareness and direct interaction, although in practice this might be impossible. When we write to an identifiable person whom we have never met—say, our congressperson, an official of the National Science Foundation, or the president of an airline that has treated us poorly—we are engaging in a tertiary relationship. How difficult it would be to make this relatively formal and abstract link direct varies. In some cases, a telephone conversation might make it somewhat more direct and might be followed by a face-to-face meeting. In most cases, however, such potential will remain unrealized; as a simple matter of scale, congresspersons cannot develop face-to-face relationships—even secondary ones—with all their constituents. Even more basically, modern large-scale markets introduce tertiary relationships in which there is no reasonable expectation that the abstract possibility of rendering them direct could be acted on. The innumerable steps between workers creating a consumer good—say, shoes in Italy—and the ultimate users of that good may preclude bringing the two face-to-face. Even if only through reified understanding, however, we do recognize that behind the impersonal patterns of the market and the mediation of bureaucratic organizations (wholesalers, department stores, and the like) a chain of concrete interactions exists.

This is more difficult for quaternary relations, those in which at least one of the parties to a relationship is kept systematically unaware of the existence of the relationship. Phone tapping or other instances of surveillance form a paradigm case of this, but, aided by modern information technology, the range of quaternary relationships seems to be multiplying. Credit card records can be analyzed for purposes far beyond any the user had in mind in performing the transaction or is ever likely to be aware of; so can census data and a variety of indirect indicators used in government, marketing, and other monitoring activities of modern life.

What is meant by indirect relationships in this context is, thus, relationships that depend upon the mediation of some combination of information-processing technologies and complex organizations, which may be either bureaucratically administered or self-regulating in the fashion of markets. In relation to Habermas's conception of system and lifeworld, we need to mark an important distinction among the kinds of indirect relationships that form the basis of systemic integration. Those quaternary relationships of surveillance, for example, are clear exercises of power hardly to be grasped by a notion of self-regulating systems, although that may fit markets reasonably well. And there is still another important sort of connection, a particularly illusory one but none the less powerful for that. I refer to the bonds felt among people who take as an important part of their personal identity their membership in categories of persons linked minimally by direct interpersonal bonds but established culturally by tradition, the media, or the slogans of political protest.

IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

I feel a oneness with other Americans, a sense of common membership with people I have never met or heard of as individuals, with people who in direct interaction might repell or anger me. In some settings, such nationalistic sentiments motivate people to die in wars for independence or freedom, or become martyrs in the struggle against colonial powers, to shed the blood of neighbors whose ethnic or religious identity challenges some sense of the purity of nationhood. And yet, the nationalist sentiments that have been important enough to die for in a struggle for liberation seem often to offer little defense against ethnic and other sectionalist divisions after independence. Such phenomena have puzzled social scientists throughout the modern era. From Marx to the present day, theorists of modernity have expected them to die out as part of the process of rationalization. Such phenomena are as difficult to fit into orthodox Marxism as to make sense of in terms of rational choice theory; it is often hard for us to see what "real" interests are being maximized.

Letters flow by the thousands to fictional characters in soap operas; viewers write to offer them advice on the fictional dilemmas and to ask their help in solving their own real ones. Americans felt that Ronald Reagan cared personally about each of them because he seemed so effortlessly and genially to come into their living rooms on television. In the early 1980s, Chinese scholars who had just returned to urban life from years of working with the peasants on a rural commune said they owed their rescue to the personal interview of Deng Xiaoping. Some told stories suggesting that the universities were told to accept deserving students on more academic bases than the "four goods" of party orthodoxy because someone wrote Deng a letter and he was moved by their plight, which newly revealed to him the abuses of the cultural revolution. By 1989, protesting students were equally apt to vilify Deng or Premier Li Peng, seeing them as personally responsible

for the absence of democracy in China. Although ostensibly seeking democracy, many of the protesters (especially outside the core student ranks) seemed so eager to find a new hero at the top of the official leadership that one wondered whether they would simply have traded malevolent dictatorship for a more benevolent one (Calhoun 1989b) and gone on assuming that the individual at the top mattered more than the system.

The fantasies of soap opera fans and the delusions of those who think the politics of modern large-scale states are essentially personal matters are more banal than nationalism, but they share a good deal with it. Here I want to explore those commonalties, not in empirically descriptive terms—that is, not by looking at television audiences and patriotic wars as such—but in terms of analytic developments that can help to overcome our puzzlement by both. The proliferation of indirect relationships I have just described is central among these.

Alongside the proliferation of indirect social relationships, we have developed a variety of cultural ways for identifying similarity and difference with other people. This has been necessary, not least of all, because we are drawn by large-scale organization of social interaction into contact with a wide range of people both like and unlike ourselves and because we are obliged to recognize our interdependence—happy or otherwise—with people distant from ourselves. Thus, we develop categorical identities like those of nations or within them those we ascribe to or claim as members of different ethnic groups, religions, classes, or even genders. Some of the time, at least, we imagine these categorical identities on analogy to the local communities in which we live. Even in social theory, when we identify community not as a variable structure of social relationships but as a form of common feeling, we encourage the notion that the community among neighbors and the community among citizens of the same nation are essentially similar.[17] I want to argue, however, that there is a great deal of difference between the social *groups* formed out of direct relationships among their members, although often sharing an imaginatively constructed cultural identity, and social *categories* defined by common cultural or other external attributes of their members and not necessarily linked by any dense, multiplex, or systematic web of interpersonal relationships.[18]

In his account of the structural transformation of the public sphere, Habermas (1962) describes a degeneration of publicity in which public discourse gives way to plebiscitary acclamation for leaders or policies. Bourgeois society (especially of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) had, according to his account, provided for a public sphere—admittedly small and framed by its implicit class character—that had brought men of property into a more or less egalitarian discourse in which arguments, rather than simple power, swayed opinion. A crucial condition for this public discourse was a private sphere that nurtured a strong sense of personal identity. In the late twentieth century, by contrast, Habermas argues that the public sphere has been undermined by a collapse of the public-private distinction and an expansion of its membership without the necessary

reconstruction of its basis. Among the results of this is a politics of identification. The public sphere does not exist as a set of discursive relationships but rather is created (or at least simulated) by political actors who put forth images they hope will garner the identification of large numbers of people who may have no discursive relationships with each other or with the political actors. Thus, the National Rifle Association calls for gun owners to identify as a community of interest, and the National Organization of Women calls for a "communification" of women. A key condition for this is that people do not enter the public sphere with well-formed identities, prepared to engage in argument, but rather in some need of identity and seeking not just rational discourse, cooperative social arrangements, or even instrumental ends but in one large part affirmation of their personal identity.[19] Even arguments themselves are no longer attempts to reach an understanding (as in the classical notion of parliamentary debate) but are staged displays, such as debates of presidential candidates—presentations of "symbols to which again one can not respond by arguing, but only by identifying with them" (Habermas 1962, p. 206). The reliance of modern large-scale democratic politics on mass media only accentuates this diversion of publicity away from real public discourse and, indeed, the paradox underlying Habermas's entire book—that the extension of democratic rights to the whole adult population should have resulted in a collapse of the public sphere rather than a more unambiguous progress of democracy.

The politics of identification Habermas describes point to a process of imagining communities; indeed, at one point he borrows R. Altmann's term "communification" to describe it. People without direct interpersonal relations with each other are led by the mediation of the world of political symbols to imagine themselves as members of communities defined by common ascriptive characteristics, personal tastes, habits, or concerns. These are understood at least sometimes as communities because of the strong sense of fellow-feeling, common interest, and shared identity. But at the same time, they are crucially imagined because of their differences from local communities and others based on direct interpersonal relationships. Imagined communities are essentially categorical identities. But although these imagined communities do not reflect dense or multiplex networks of direct interpersonal relationships, they still do reflect social relations. Imagined communities of even large scale are not simply arbitrary creatures of the imagination but depend upon indirect social relationships both to link their members and to define the fields of power within which their identities are relevant.

Benedict Anderson's 1983 account of the origins and spread of nationalism has already provided us with the term *imagined communities*. Nations, he suggests, are *"imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . [A]ll communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (p. 15). Anderson describes a long history of imagined communities—for example, of co-religionists. But these

communities were—at least earlier in history—imagined primarily through visual and aural means—that is, through a concrete iconography and participation in ritual reenactments. This sort of imagined community has a powerful historical importance, but certain developments associated with modernity not only produced nationalism but gave added reach and resonance to the process of constructing imagined communities generally. First and foremost among these was the development of *print capitalism*. By this term, Anderson suggests the importance of printing as a means of communication able both to send complex messages quickly across long distances and to store cultural traditions across generations without reproduction in constant retelling.[20] He emphasizes also the importance of capitalism to spreading the printed word far beyond the control of states or churches. He quotes Elizabeth Eisenstein (1968), saying "printed materials encouraged silent adherence to causes whose advocates could not be located in any one parish and who addressed an invisible public from afar" (Anderson 1983, p. 39) and follows up Georg Hegel's observation that newspapers (perhaps we should now say the "Today" show or NPR's "Morning Edition") serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers: "The mass ceremony . . . is performed in silent privacy. . . . Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (Anderson 1983, p. 29).

The nation in particular became imaginable, according to Anderson, because the new communications technology of print interacted with capitalism and with "the fatality of human linguistic diversity" (1983, p. 46). One might object that his account gives insufficient weight to certain features of the history of power and the division of the world into states—rather than empires or other political forms. My concern here is not, however, with the specifics of his account of nationalism but with his more general contributions to what I think ought to be a developing theory of imagined communities in general. And in fact, Anderson suggests one further major social support to developing nationalism that links up with my account of indirect relations above and is helpful for the more general notion of imagined communities. This comes in his account of the relationship of colonial bureaucratic careers to the emergence of nationalist ideology.

Colonial regimes, Anderson remarks, created a novel sort of modern pilgrimage: "In a pre-print age, the reality of the imagined religious community depended profoundly on countless, ceaseless travels" (1983, p. 56). Colonial administration called forth a class of pilgrims who journeyed from remote dominions to imperial centers and back again. Their careers were blocked above a certain level; moreover, in most administrations, they could not make lateral moves to other colonies. The Indian rising in the British Raj could not aspire to help govern Hong Kong. At the same time, colonial governance drew people from different provinces (or previously independent groupings) into a common administration and put them on career paths that might station them in several districts of the colony. This both shaped

these individuals' consciousness of the colony as a unity (and, therefore, potentially a nation) and gave them interests at odds with the governmental regime for which they worked. Equally important, from our present concern, it made them into mediators of the notion of nationhood for a much broader range of people. First in their capacity as agents of colonial regimes—for example, in propagating languages of state—and then in their capacity as "intellectuals," creating and distributing literatures of national leadership (and sometimes nationalist significance), these "new men" provided as a class a sort of mediation for the emerging imagined national community. Last but not least, this class of people (expanded beyond those specifically employed by colonial regimes to their cousins editing newspapers and teaching in secondary schools) provided a further mediation: They read of and imported the modular image of nationalism (and sometimes of revolution, war of independence, and various techniques for prosecuting these) from abroad. Nationalism was not simply invented anew in every setting (still less inherited from the primeval past); it was in part developed in accord with a model.[21]

Anderson does not pursue his account much beyond print media or much farther afield than his main concern with nationalism. But I would suggest that the building of imagined communities is dramatically accelerated by broadcast media[22] and applies well beyond the range of religions and nationalisms. Classes, he notes in passing, may be thought of as imagined communities—particularly large subaltern classes.[23] As I suggested earlier, so may genders, races, a wide variety of political groupings, and groupings constituted by their contrast to dominant sexual mores or identifications, musical cultures, and even tastes in consumer goods.

Contemporary communications media play an especially important role in constituting these imagined communities. Not only do both broadcast media and more specialized channels such as computer networks facilitate powerful mechanisms of coordination of action through indirect relationships, at the same time, some of these media—television especially—simulate directness of relationship. Television offers visual and aural information at the same time, something closer to the physical embodiment of experiential learning. Research suggests that people tend to trust television more than the written word because they believe they could tell better if someone on screen were lying or concealing something (Meyrowitz 1985). At the same time, television tends to introduce strong biases in the selection of what is shown—biases not as apparent as those that may shape *how* a story is reported in an ideologically oriented newspaper.[24] Not least, television dramas offer powerful images of categorical identities; they present over and over again several basic types—rich and poor, male and female, black and white, the rich, the devious and somewhat uncivilized Arab, and the fastidious, overmannered, upper-class Englishman. As these types recur, viewers are led to believe that they have observed them first-hand. This is not the place to review the literature on the ways in which mass media produce illusions of transcending space and achieving personal relationships between people

who have never met.[25] Here I want simply to posit that television and other mass media offer extraordinary potential for furthering the creation of imagined communities, both as objects of identification and as objects of antagonism.

The key issue to which media point in the present context is a need to distinguish the kinds of settings—principally in direct and recurrent interpersonal relations, especially communities—where the practical reason embodied intersubjectively in the regulated improvisation of the *habitus* forms a primary basis of social integration from those in which it cannot. Those in which it cannot are those organizations of indirect relations that accomplish large-scale societal and international integration today. This goes beyond the role of media to those of markets and administered organizations from multinational corporations to governments. Communications media, however, are paradigmatic bases for the passage of information to large audiences without depending on traditional transmission through the mouths and deeds of innumerable people engaged in practical activities of various sorts.

Tradition is often understood as simply the "hard cake of custom" (in Bagehot's phrase), as a static respect for that which has always been (Weber 1922). Shils (1981) suggests the error of such understanding by stressing the etymology of the term, the root sense of *traditio* as continually passing on or handing down. Tradition, in other words, is a form of social practice, an activity. It is akin to and overlaps with communication and should be understood in the same active sense. The stress must be on the passing on itself; it is not simply the length of time for which a practice has existed, it is the communication of the practice within a population that makes it a tradition. If the practice is dictated by external necessity, so that it continues as a response to the environment rather than as a learning from the other members of a society, it is not tradition. Conversely, a traditional practice of relatively recent provenance is no less traditional once established than an ancient one (contrary to the implications of Hobsbawm and Ranger [1983]). To show that a tradition has been created by identifiable actors may impugn its authenticity from the point of view of some internal to it—if, for example, it claims to stretch from primeval history—but this need not make us as analysts doubt that it is truly a tradition.[26]

We tend to associate tradition with authoritative transmissions monitored by specialists. But at a more primary level, much tradition—and more generally the reproduction of highly stable forms of life through tradition—depends on direct interpersonal relationships. In a nutshell, tradition requires a constant process of slight readjustment, of contained and regulated improvisation and adaptation. This is part of what is suggested by Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*—a socially constructed principle of regulated improvisation (Bourdieu 1976, 1980). When the transmission of tradition takes place through direct interpersonal relations, the practical situations, concerns, orientations, and skills of those involved accomplish this continual readjustment. The tradition is never a substance separated from the practical activity of concrete persons engaged not only in its transmission but in the

accomplishment of a variety of personal projects. The demands of these projects call on people to make subtle revisions in the stereotypes they carry, to absorb information conducive to the success of their actions.[27]

Various forms of mediation limit or remove this process of practical adjustment of tradition. Temple art, for example, once produced continues to inform generations of worshippers. Written texts make perhaps history's sharpest break, surviving their creators by millennia yet communicating complex, abstract, and often very precise information.[28] With television and related media, this break is furthered yet disguised by an especially compelling illusion of co-presence. The new media have a paradoxical effect on tradition. They can introduce a far wider range of information than word of mouth, thus allowing challenges to the received biases of various oral communities. Any sense that things must be as they appear locally is thus apt to be fatally undermined.[29] At the same time, these media tend to remove tradition from continual adjustment and somewhat from discourse—at least in everyday life as distinct from specialized centers of learning or cultural production. The reception is more passive and in many cases less likely to be shaped by application in concrete projects—after all, what Americans learn about Arabs, say, has its main practical effects through indirect relations such as government policies toward Israel or Libya, say, and not very often through concrete interactions. Changes in or challenges to received tradition are more likely to depend upon a self-conscious attempt to introduce change and less on nonexplicit adjustments in practice.[30]

Tradition, thus, is a different process when transmission takes place primarily through direct relationships or primarily through indirect ones.[31] A society such as classical China involved simultaneously a long flow of tradition through direct interpersonal relations, at local village levels and within central institutions such as the court, *and* a set of more authoritative institutions for passing on approved traditions, validating their transmission from generation to generation and attempting (albeit very imperfectly) to ensure their constancy. It is a distinctive feature of the great nonmodern civilizations to have accomplished these two forms of tradition simultaneously, in an assortment of improvisationally adjusted local traditions and in largely text-based efforts to convey authoritative statements with as little room as possible for adjustment to practical concerns or situational demands. Thus, we can understand the relationship between Vedic literature and local Hindu traditions, between the lore of Sudanese saints and the carefully protected and codified realms of Sharia and Koran. Medieval Europe showed some similarity to this, with its monastic scriptoria preserving manuscripts (albeit imperfectly, as errors of transcription crept in) and providing for one sort of tradition, while popular practices wove together pagan and Christian culture, festivals of the winter solstice and Christmas. In the modern West, capitalism and state formation—and eventually widespread literary and broadcast media—have pitted the directly interpersonal and the textual-indirect transmission of tradition against each other and enabled the latter to gain a decisive upper hand.

As postmodernist authors have argued, the rationalist Enlightenment account misunderstands this, implying that tradition has vanished in the face of reason.[32] But tradition has not vanished, it has merely changed its form. Television purveys information as dubious and untested as medieval myth, with far more effective reach. It also purveys modern knowledge derived from science, and this, too, is a tradition in many senses of the word. Thus, the legitimation of science, the sense of nationhood, and most people's understanding of the contemporary problem of homelessness all depend on the same sort of mass-mediated tradition. Such tradition may appear more rational and may even offer a seemingly democratic sort of equal access. But it also enhances the oligopolistic character of the elite of message senders and removes most people from direct participation in— and therefore shaping of—the passing on of such traditions. At the same time, face-to-face tradition continues, but it is unable to organize much of large-scale social integration and even on the local scale is undermined by the open-endedness of communication networks and the low level of the density and multiplexity needed to reinforce and reproduce such patterns of traditional organization of action. We appear, thus, to be on our own as individual actors—to depend on rational decisions, not conditioned practices.

The transformation of tradition did not, however, render everyone perfect rational actors. It could not do so for several reasons (many of them familiar limits to rationality within modern rational choice theory). People could not address a world of perfect heterodoxy because it implied that they would choose their beliefs and actions from a range of possibilities far beyond the horizons of potential human attention. The systemic world provided a variety of filters and condensations, giving a manageable order to the range of information but imposing biases in doing so (such as the inevitable and necessary, but generally invisible, selection biases of any television news program). The disruption of tradition thrust people into situations where they had to make more new sorts of decisions for themselves; by doing so, it set in motion a sort of vicious (or virtuous) circle: Each new decision represented uncertainty in the environment of other decision makers, leading them to shorten their own planning horizons, making them less predictable to those in their environment (including the first decision maker), and so on. Individual choice of actions (rational or otherwise) thus helped to undermine the foundations for individual rationality by making the world more complex and less predictable. At the same time, calling on people to act on their own decisions did not guarantee that they would be procedurally rational—that they would, for example, adopt transitive preference orderings. Last but not least, the very project of being a rational individual is one shaped by cultural foundations that were not chosen by individuals. And this self-understanding is only one of the most basic of the many "prejudices" (in Gadamer's [1975] term) that are necessary but unchosen premises for human choices.

To be a rational, individualistic actor in modern society did not mean that one was no longer constituted by the intersubjective, social patterns

of a habitus. What it meant was (1) that this habitus called on one to understand oneself as autonomous,[33] and (2) that the habitus had to provide for action with regard to large-scale organizations and systems, and not just other people. The very notion of being an autonomous individual consists substantially of freedom from the bonds of determination by direct relationships and certain ascribed statuses of traditional culture and the suppression from consciousness of the equally strong determinations of indirect relationships and disciplinary patterns of culture. This is why the market can be understood as a realm of freedom at the same time that people's actions with it are explained perfectly deterministically.

CONCLUSION

A world knit together by indirect relationships poses three challenges in the realm of everyday personal existence: to make sense through abstract concepts of forms of social organization for which everyday experience gives us misleading preparation, to establish a sense of personal rootedness and continuity of existence where connections across time are mainly impersonal, and to establish a sense of place and social context when the coordination of action—and the action of our own lives—constantly transcends locality. The small-town main street and rolling Kentucky hills of my youth still move me a little by nostalgia, but my sense of who I am now depends relatively little on those natural and built environments or even on my own current local community; it takes an effort to establish a sense of continuity. I know more of the lives of Martin Luther, Karl Marx, and Thomas Jefferson than I do of either of my own grandfathers. And although I think I have some understanding of the great systems of social organization, it is hard to apply in everyday life.

Both Habermas's distinction of system and lifeworld and modernist and postmodernist accounts of the fragmentation of meaning point to this disconnection. Postmodernists would often go further, asserting that the difficulties of meaning are insurmountable, that true understanding across lines of basic difference is impossible. At least implicitly, some also suggest that the notions of knitting together a human life to achieve a satisfactory continuity of existence or a human community to provide social roots that are more than mere repression are chimerical. Neither Habermas nor postmodernists, however, offer a satisfactory account of the divergent forms of concrete social relationships that underpin the disconnection of the everyday realm of more or less successful practical action from the "larger picture" of self-regulating systems, bureaucracies, fragmentation, repression, and the like. I have tried to sketch some first steps in such an account.

We need to address sociologically the coordination of action through indirect relationships and the formation of identity as members of imagined communities. Although not unique to the modern era, these are distinctively predominant features of it. The practical projects of achieving community and a personal sense of continuity of existence may have become much

more difficult, but this does not mean either that they should be abandoned or that social theory can dispense with notions of subjects or of solidarity (as some postmodernists imply). At the same time, the prevalence of large-scale structures of indirect relations and imagined communities poses stiff challenges for any movement aimed at increasing democracy or furthering the project of liberation. The various limits recent critics have shown in the Enlightenment project of simply advancing reason reduce hope for one path to a better future. But these difficulties do not seem to remove the need for social theory, for some way of trying to make sense of the world in order to act within it. On the contrary, they show why theory is needed and practical knowledge is subject to manipulation and radical limits without it.

NOTES

1. The general narrative of increasing capacity of states and other large-scale organizations has been retold and theorized several times in the last few years, notably by Giddens (1985b), Mann (1986), and Tilly (1990). But the stress here is not just on this increasing capacity but on the discontinuity in modes of coordinating—and understanding—activity, the theme of Habermas's (1984, 1988) distinction of system and lifeworld.

2. One might question whether Foucault (1977) does not exaggerate the transformation. Normalizing power does not seem altogether new nor coercive power altogether missing in modern societies. But the point that in the modern era, expansion of scope of power does not mean diminution in its intensity or effectiveness is an important one. And so is Foucault's emphasis on power as an impersonal force productive of social relations—although to refuse attention to distributive power is to deprive such an account of much of its potential critical edge.

3. The language of structuration was used earlier by Bourdieu, from whom Giddens has borrowed a great deal; Bourdieu, however, has avoided the claim that he constructed a "structuration theory."

4. This is partly because, as McCarthy (1985) suggests, Habermas accepts systems theory as offering an adequate account of this dimension.

5. This discussion follows the lines of Calhoun (1988 and forthcoming a). The notion of a contrast between direct and indirect social relations has been raised implicitly by a number of social theorists but not thematized. Parsons and Platt (1973) wrote of "delinguistified steering mechanisms." Something of the idea is present in the very notion of market as a supra-local, self-regulating system as distinct from a spatially bounded setting from directly interpersonal exchanges. It figures in Durkheim's (1893) conception of organic solidarity, society held together by the mutual interdependence and interactions among groups characterized by their differences. Schutz (1967) built a somewhat related distinction out of the contrast between direct and indirect social experience. Building on these bases, I want to try to distinguish the dimension of connection as such, more or less in network terms, from the variety of other aspects of mediation. In Parsonian language, I want to address patterns of interaction (even beyond the direct), as distinct from (although closely related to) patterns of integration. I want to keep the concrete social relations more clearly in mind, partly in order to consider them as part of the *basis* for societal integration, to be able to show the dimension of interaction that helps to make up the systemic, and thus potentially to dereify the latter notion.

Habermas follows the basic Weberian account of modernization as a move away from tradition and toward a rational orientation to action. He placed the *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* sort of opposition on a new foundation by suggesting a further split within the realm of rational action into "action oriented to reaching understanding and action oriented to success" (1984, p. 341). It is on this basis that he attempts to rescue the Enlightenment project of rationalization as progress from the Weberian iron cage of domination through rational, bureaucratic, systemic means.

6. Actually, this is the dominant distinction among several Habermas makes. At other points, he distinguishes also a four-type scheme of communicative, dramaturgical, normatively regulated, and teleological action (1984, pp. 75–96). Between purely communicative and purely instrumental action, there is also apparently an intermediate form of strategic social action by which, among other things, people try to determine the contexts, frames of reference, and modes of understanding for communicative action in situations where there is not already a preexisting basis for such communication. See Habermas (1988) and McCarthy (1978).

7. It is not the lifeworld in general Habermas wishes to defend but an idealized, purified form of communicative action aimed at interpersonal understanding. He conceptualizes this through the notion of an idealized speech situation in which certain validity claims (to comprehensibility, truth, appropriateness, and sincerity) that are always implicit in speech are universalized. All real historical societies fall short of this ideal, but they may be compared to it and evaluated in terms of an evolutionary scale of undistorted communication (Habermas 1978). Thus, something closer to the ideal emerges from the lifeworld through a process of rationalization: "Correspondingly, a lifeworld can be regarded as rationalized to the extent that it permits interactions that are not guided by normatively *ascribed* agreement but—directly or indirectly—by communicative *achieved* understanding" (Habermas 1984, p. 340). In this way, Habermas tries to processualize Kantian universalistic morality.

8. See McCarthy (1985), Fraser (1985), Young (1987), Benhabib (1986), Frankenberg (1989), Bernstein, ed. (1982), and my critical discussion in Calhoun (1988 and 1989b).

9. A radical loss of importance, even of reality, for this world of direct interaction and immediate social relationships is posited centrally by many postmodernists—especially Baudrillard (e.g., 1983) and his followers. This is part of what they mean by "the death of the social." I see little evidence for this even within the popular media on which they focus (television shows both about and oriented to families are as popular as ever). That is one reason why I think the issue is not a derealization of direct relationships per se but an increasing split between them and indirect relations of various sorts, combined with very problematic means for shifting understanding from one mode of relationship to the other.

10. Habermas (1988) has noted how Schutz remained caught within the philosophy of consciousness even while he, following Husserl, attempted to grasp intersubjectivity. Habermas does not really take up the notions of direct and indirect relations as Schutz suggested them, however; his focus is entirely on the concept of the lifeworld.

11. And the passing on of tradition was through such relationships, not by means of texts or other means dissociated from them. In this connection, we need to see tradition as more of an active verb than a static noun (see Shils 1981; Calhoun 1983). Note, however, the version of indirectness involved in marriage exchanges within a complex system of clanship, such as that of aboriginal Australians (see, e.g., Levi-Strauss 1949).

12. Such "administrative power can only become established if the coding of information is actually applied in a direct way to the supervision of human activities, so as to detach them in some part from their involvement with tradition and with local community life" (Giddens 1985b, p. 47).

13. This is a point recognized some time ago by Innis (1950) in his arguments as to the centrality of certain space-transcending communications media to the building of empires. See also Deutsch (1953, 1963).

14. This is one source of modern "populist" politics—the politics of local communities and traditional cultural values. This is a potent kind of politics, and it offers potentially radical and important visions of alternative modes of social organization. Many of its variants, however, are based on some combination of (1) systematic misrecognition of the opportunities for local autonomy available in a world structured largely by large-scale organizations of indirect social relationships, and (2) systematically biased analogies between the world of direct, personal relationships and that of large-scale organizations of indirect ones (e.g., "balancing the U.S. budget is just like balancing your family checkbook"). See Calhoun (1988).

15. "Comparison," Marx went on, takes the "place of real communality and generality." "It has been said and may be said that this is precisely the beauty and the greatness of it: this spontaneous interconnection, this material and mental metabolism which is independent of the knowing and willing of individuals, and which presupposes their reciprocal independence and indifference. And, certainly, this objective connection is preferable to the lack of any connection, or to a merely local connection resting on blood ties, or on primeval, natural or master-servant relations" (1939, p. 161). See the similar discussion by Engels (1880, pp. 627–628) and in the *Manifesto* (1848, pp. 486–487). It is, however, above all in *Capital*, especially in the relationship between Volumes I and III, that we see Marx creating precisely a theory of a mode of totalization that will make social life appear systematically as other than it is, make capital seem the cause and not the product of human action. If we can identify capitalism with systemic integration, it does not just "colonize" the lifeworld, as Habermas would have it, but constitutes the very severance of each from the other, the compartmentalization of the lifeworld and the reification of mediated action.

16. Abu-Lughod (1969) introduced the notion of tertiary interactions in a similar connection to note the prominence of mediated relationships in the modern city and particularly to supplement Park's classic definition of urbanness in terms of scale, density, and heterogeneity.

17. I have argued elsewhere both for the importance of the concept of community in the face of individualist reductions (Calhoun 1978) and for a social relational conception of community as a complex variable composed of density, multiplexity, and systematicity of interpersonal relationships (Calhoun 1980a).

18. Tilly (1978) has drawn attention to Harrison White's unpublished conceptualization of CATNETS as groupings that are simultaneously categories and networks, the issue being addressed here.

19. This account prefigures those Habermas (1965), Touraine (1971), Melucci (1989), and others developed of "new social movements" in which a politics of identity was central.

20. Habermas (1962) offers a very similar account of the importance of printing, both as a capitalist enterprise and in response to capitalist demand, in describing the role of newspapers and books in the creation of the bourgeois public sphere. The point is worth stressing because it is often overlooked in both accounts of printing that take a too narrowly technologically determinist line and accounts of capitalism that ignore books as insufficiently material. As Anderson comments, "In a rather special sense, the book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity" (1983, p. 38).

21. Anderson suggests that this model got its birth in Spain's Latin American colonies and its greatest burst of publicity in the European revolutions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

22. Anderson does mention, in a footnote, the importance of radio to the Vietnamese and Indonesian revolutions (1983, p. 46), but it is a point that deserves more stress.

23. "The relatively small size of traditional aristocracies, their fixed political bases, and the personalization of political relations implied by sexual intercourse and inheritance, meant that their cohesions as classes were as much concrete as imagined" (1983, p. 74). In my terms, direct relations sufficed for the most part to knit such aristocracies together.

24. Of course, this is only an extension of the notion of journalistic objectivity pioneered in newspapers as editorializing came to be confined to a special page and removed from news reportage as such (cf., Schudson 1979; Hallin 1986).

25. See Meyrowitz 1985 for the best account of this subject (although see also Calhoun 1988, both for other related points and for an argument that Meyrowitz somewhat underestimates the illusoriness of this mediated transcendence of space).

26. Our image of a high level of traditionality should not be drawn from European feudalism or even classical Chinese or Indian civilizations. Rather, we might look at kin-based societies in which there is no sharp break between the ordering of relations in immediate personal life (through the family and kinship) and in the most encompassing order of society (through kinship at higher lineage levels and sometimes clanship and age sets). I have in mind particularly Meyer Fortes's studies of the Tallensi of Northern Ghana (especially Fortes 1942, 1945; see also Calhoun 1980b); such African "acephalous" societies are particularly apt examples, although the same sort of phenomena figure in a variety of settings. A variety of features provides for such traditionality: internal homogeneity of a population, multiplex relations linking people in many different aspects of their lives, limits on the accumulation of personal wealth, and the like.

27. One should not conclude that prior historical periods thus produced any wonderful model of sound knowledge or openness; they generally did not (although it should also be noted that in many cases history has brought regress on this dimension—for example, in the once very cosmopolitan parts of the Middle East). The flexibility of tradition applied only within the relatively constrained limits of substantial personal contact and was not perfect even then (partly because people's interested adjustments might reflect the need for maintaining biases more than correcting them).

28. Note the variation this suggests on Derrida's (1967) theme of the contest between views of speech as originary truth-telling and writing as a source of tension, aporias, and rational-critical thought. Oral traditions necessarily embed tradition more substantially in practical projects that call for its continual readjustment. History also deconstructs written texts, of course, and interpretations vary. But oral tradition is supple and effective in providing for stable social reproduction precisely because it is so continually readjusted (without anyone necessarily assuming the role of self-conscious shaper of it). Whether their statements are more or less true, there is a new sort of fixity to written texts. These do encourage a kind of rational-critical thought missing from speech, as Derrida suggests, but the mechanism is partly the social one of their detachment from practical projects and the corresponding occasions for their continual invisible reformulation. This detachment, it should be stressed, does not mean that written texts are not created and interpreted as part of practical projects, often selfishly motivated ones. The detachment comes, rather, from their capacity to endure and disseminate beyond their producers' reach and capacity for

adjustment, to reach new audiences without the mediation of any new reproducer (and his or her practical concerns, talents, and projects).

29. Thus, Bourdieu (1976) resurrects classical language to describe the movement from *doxa* (the unquestioned self-evidence of how things are within a cultural view) to orthodoxy (an imposed authoritative view) and heterodoxy (the recognition of multiple competing opinions).

30. Although it should be said that television audiences are not just passive recipients of messages, they must interpret them and may make something different of them from what senders intended. Nonetheless, this fact is often overestimated by the "new audience studies" (cf., Fiske 1986). Television audiences can neither interrogate the senders of messages nor respond practically in ways that lead senders to adjust their views—except by mounting an organized movement or appealing to some powerful systemic actor.

31. All relationships are mediated to some extent—we communicate, for example, through speech—but the notion of indirectness suggests a sliding scale of increasing apparent removal of the communicator from the process of communication.

32. See, e.g., Baudrillard (1981, 1983); Lyotard (1984); and discussion in Calhoun (forthcoming b).

33. The notion of systematic misrecognition as a central feature of habituses is presented at length by Bourdieu (1976).

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, J. 1969. *The City Is Dead—Long Live the City: Some Thoughts on Urbanity*. Berkeley: Center for Planning and Development Research Monograph No. 12.

Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: New Left Books.

Baudrillard, J. 1981. *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. St. Louis: Telos Press.

———. 1983. *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*. New York: Semiotext(e).

Bell, H., and C. Newby. 1976. *Communities in Britain*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Benhabib, S. 1986. *Critique, Norm and Utopia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bernstein, R., ed. 1982. *Habermas and Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blau, P. M. 1977. *Inequality and Heterogeneity*. New York: Free Press.

Blau, P. M., and J. Schwartz. 1984. *Cross-Cutting Social Circles*. New York: Academic Press.

Bourdieu, P. 1976. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1980. *Le Sens Pratique*. Paris: Editions de Minuit.

Calhoun, C. 1978. "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in MacFarlane's Proposal." *Social History* 3(3):363–373.

———. 1980a. "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research." *Social History* 5(1):105–129.

———. 1980b. "The Authority of Ancestors: A Sociological Reconsideration of Fortes's Tallensi in Response to Fortes's Critics." *Man, The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, new series, 15(2):304–319.

———. 1983. "The Radicalism of Tradition: Community Strength or Venerable Disguise and Borrowed Language." *American Journal of Sociology* 88:886–914.

———. 1986. "Computer Technology, Large Scale Social Integration and the Local Community." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 22(2):329–349.

_____. 1988. "Populist Politics, Communications Media, and Large Scale Social Integration." *Sociological Theory* 6(2):219–241.

_____. 1989a. "Social Theory and the Law: Systems Theory, Normative Justification and Postmodernism." *Northwestern University Law Review* 83:1,701–1,763.

_____. 1989b. "Democracy and Science, 1989: A Report from Beijing." *Society* 26(6):21–38.

_____. Forthcoming a. "The Infrastructure of Modernity: Indirect Relationships, Information Technology, and Social Integration." In Neil Smelser and Hans Haferkamp, eds., *Social Change and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. Forthcoming b. "Culture, History and the Problem of Specificity in Social Theory." In S. Seidman and D. Wagner, eds., *Postmodernism and General Social Theory*. New York and Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Cooley, C. H. 1909. *Social Organization*. New York: Shocken.

Derrida, J. 1967. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Deutsch, K. 1953. *Nationalism and Social Communication*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

_____. 1963. *The Nerves of Government*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Durkheim, E. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Free Press.

Eisenstein, E. 1968. "Some Conjectures About the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought." *Journal of Modern Social History* 40:416–438.

Engels, F. 1880. "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific." pp. 605–639 in R. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.

Fiske, J. 1986. *Television Culture*. New York: St. Martins.

Fortes, M. 1942. *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1945. *The Dynamics of Clanship Among the Tallensi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon.

Frankenberg, G. 1989. "Down by Law: Irony, Seriousness, and Reason." *Northwestern University Law Review* 83:360–397.

Fraser, N. 1985. "What's Critical About Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender." *New German Critique* 35:97–132.

Gadamer, H.-G. 1975. *Truth and Method*. New York: Seabury.

Giddens, A. 1985a. *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

_____. 1985b. *The Nation-State and Violence*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Granovetter, M. 1985. "Economic Action and the Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3):481–510.

Habermas, J. 1962. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (English translation of *Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit*, 1989). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

_____. 1965. *Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon.

_____. 1978. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Boston: Beacon.

_____. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon.

_____. 1988. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. II: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon.

Hallin, D. C. 1986. "We Keep America on Top of the World." Pp. 9–41 in T. Gitlin, ed., *Watching Television*. New York: Pantheon.

Hobsbawm, E., and T. Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Innis, H. A. 1950. *Empire and Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Levi-Strauss, C. 1949. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Boston: Beacon.

Lockwood, D. 1964. "Social Integration and System Integration." Pp. 370–383 in G. K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch, eds., *Social Change: Explorations, Diagnoses and Conjectures*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Luhmann, N. 1982. *The Differentiation of Society*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lukacs, G. 1922. *History and Class Consciousness*. London: Merlin.

Lyotard, J.-F. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mann, M. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, K. 1844. *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Pp. 229–348 in *Karl Marx/Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 3. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

_____. 1867. *Capital*, Vol. I. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

_____. 1939. *Grundrisse*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.

Marx, K., and F. Engels. 1848. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Pp. 477–519 in *Karl Marx/Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 6. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

McCarthy, T. 1978. *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

_____. 1985. "Complexity and Democracy, or The Seducements of Systems Theory." *New German Critique* 35:27–54.

Melucci, A. 1989. *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Meyrowitz, J. 1985. *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. New York: Oxford.

Parsons, T. 1951. *The Social System*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Parsons, T., and G. Platt. 1973. *The American University*. New York: Free Press.

Schudson, M. 1979. *Discovering the News*. New York: Harper and Row.

Schutz, A. 1967. *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Schutz, A., and T. Luckmann. 1973. *The Structures of the Lifeworld*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Shils, E. 1981. *Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tilly, C. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

_____. 1990. *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990–1990*. New York: Blackwell.

Touraine, A. 1971. *Post-Industrial Society*. London: Wildwood House.

Webber, M. W. 1967. "Order in Diversity: Community Without Propinquity." Pp. 29–54 in L. Wirigo, ed., *Cities and Space*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Weber, M. 1922. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Young, Iris. 1987. "Impartiality and Civic Virtue." Pp. 56–76 in S. Benhabib and D. Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Comments

Gudmund Hernes

There are two basic problems with concepts such as *postmodernism*. It is hard to define what it *is*, what delimits it as a state from, for example, modernism. Hence, it is also hard to say *when* it began. Postmodernism is not a clearly demarcated phenomenon, nor is it a *theory*—it does not answer a *why*. These are criticisms Calhoun would be the first to make.