

# **Globalization, Heterarchy, and the Persistence of Anomie**

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## **Introduction**

Introduced by McCulloch (1945) as part of a body of cognitive research, the notion of heterarchy has subsequently expanded across the social, political and information sciences, and gave rise, in particular, to several insightful and enlightening analyses of various complex systems interdependently organized around networks, nodes, and links (Crumley 1995, 2015). In this chapter we return, in part at least, to the roots of the idea of heterarchy and we explore the effects of the rising heterarchical world on the mindset, ideas, and perceptions that people hold. In particular, we concern ourselves with the manifestly negative reactions that the new world order or disorder, resulting from what has been referred to as the ‘dialectic of globalization and fragmentation’ (Cerny & Pritchard 2017; Rosenau 1990), often triggers within individuals. We suggest that this tension between integration and disintegration creates an anomic disjuncture between people’s prevailing state of mind and the reshaped world with which they are confronted. This anomic disjuncture may in fact represent a more enduring divergence between the ideational and material spheres and one which results in an inherent desire among individuals, elites as laymen to return to, and entrench themselves, in an outdated, largely idealized world view, rather than adjusting to and engaging with the ramifications of widespread global transformations (Bohas, Morley & Kinra 2021).

Combining the notion of anomie, as a disconnection between agents’ ideational matrix and their environment, with the concept of heterarchy holds the prospect of yielding new insights on the state of the current world order. We argue that the growth of heterarchy may, in no small way, account for the rise of these anomic ideas and mindsets. In other words, anomie appears to be a result and a part of the transition from a nation-state-centered world politics to

a heterarchical (dis)order. After rapidly presenting the theoretical elements of this study, we will reflect on the manifestations of anomie at the subnational, state, and transnational levels through individual profiles and short case studies, which shows how increasingly present and widespread this phenomenon is.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, we will draw attention to the close relationship between the pluralizing globalization and the rise of heterarchy. In the next section, we will consider the enduring anomic reactions which accompany this type of change in world order. In the following section, more substance will be given to these latter by sketching out illustrative corresponding profiles and case studies at subnational, state, and transnational levels. Following on from this, we will postulate key elements of what the relationship between heterarchy and anomie reveals about globalization.

### **Pluralizing globalization as a driving force of heterarchy**

While globalization has, as Robertson (1992) points out, been proceeding with occasional interruptions for some centuries, it has more recently come to be theorized as a wide re-spatialization of social and economic life (Jessop 2013; Scholte 2005) which consists of a deep pluralization. Different people are brought closer together, and fluxes of ideas, goods and values are spread throughout the world. Moreover, this process increases the level of cross-border and supra-territorial relations which implies an increase in interconnections and interactions across borders. It also qualitatively transforms how people live in their daily routines, as well as how they consume and work, because it compresses parts of the social world and disperses others. This process has provoked complex changes in people's minds, existence, and designs for living. The inherent complexity which globalization has thrown up has also been captured through the promulgation and popularization of various oxymorons such as Rosenau's notions of 'fragmegration' (Rosenau 1990), 'distant proximities' (Rosenau 2003), and the movement of 'fusion and fission' (Ferguson and Mansbach 2008, 61-2, 156-7), ideas which have been

further developed under the notion of ‘dialectic of globalization and fragmentation’ (Cerny & Pritchard 2017). In addition, the concepts of ‘hybridization’ (Pieterse 2009, 54) and ‘new anarchy’ (Cerny & Pritchard 2017) have been advanced to emphasize the uneven, heterogeneous, and incomplete character of globalization.

Irrespective of how they are characterized, the deep transformations that lie at the heart of globalization have resulted in various characterizations of those engaged in bringing about these profound reconfigurations of social, economic, and political spaces. Two main profiles have emerged, namely the *transnational capitalist* and the *cosmopolitanist*. The first profile has been coined by world-system thinkers. Indeed, in the neo-Marxist doxa, a new capitalist class should come out of a new mode of production that is now established at the global level. The members of the Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC) implement this new mode of global production, not only by their way of living, but also by having ‘outward-oriented global rather than inward-oriented local perspectives’ (Sklair 2001: 20, 98; Cox 1981, Robinson & Sprague 2018). They are ‘in the process of denationalizing, redefining [their] ties to [their] place of birth and forging new ties with global markets and partners’ (Sklair 2001, 256). The other profile is that of the cosmopolitanist. Cosmopolitanism is a model which has been successfully introduced across most social sciences. Described as a way of being which embraces globalization based on tolerance and difference recognition (Beck 2006), the cosmopolitan disposition has also been characterized by a reflexive and agile identity, coupled with an attitude of openness, engagement, and moral commitment to the world (Szerszynski & Urry 2002).

Although these two archetypes, cosmopolitanist and global capitalist, adopt postures which stand in contrast to each other, they both portray people seeking to, and as they see it, successfully reorientating their way of living, albeit in opposing ways, in order to adapt to globalization and to conform to its complex demands. To extend our focus beyond the mere assembling of oxymoronic theoretical *bricolages*, which of course have served as useful

heuristic devices, we cast our net wider in order to capture the actual dynamics of these global transformations among different people.

### **The enduring nature of the ideational and material mismatch**

Based on a focus on the concept of anomie, we postulate that a reconsideration of these divergences as more persistent and enduring states, as opposed to temporary ones, may offer stronger explanatory power in accounting for the reaction to globalization. The divergence between people's minds and the prevailing conditions which they experience in their proximal and distal environments has long been observed in the social sciences via the distinction between material and ideational spheres. However, this gap is commonly conceived as a temporary mismatch coming from inert minds which are expected eventually to adjust to and catch up with the prevailing conditions in their environment.

The practices literature makes it possible to capture these phenomena of divergence between the material and the ideational spheres by observing systematically individuals' understandings and behaviors and their environment. Observing this lag, Bourdieu went on to conceptualize 'hysteresis' as 'the persistence of the effects of primary conditioning which accounts equally well for the cases in which dispositions function out of phase and when practices are objectively non-adapted to present conditions because they are objectively adjusted to conditions that no longer obtain' (Bourdieu 1980, 104-5, our translation). He argues that it is this hysteresis which explains "the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them" (Bourdieu 1990, 59). As an idea, it is especially illuminating in generating insights into fields that are subject to change. It has been used, for example, in international relations referring to the case of Russian diplomacy lacking compatibility with the field of diplomacy where such terms are employed (Neumann & Pouliot 2011). Importantly, in terms of our argument here, this divergence between people's mindsets, the habitus, and their

environment has been seen as a temporary lag which eventually culminates in the individual adapting to the altered prevailing conditions.

In the late 19th Century, Durkheim used the term to designate the pathologies inherent in modern social regulation coming from the division of labor in society and the rise of organic solidarity (Durkheim 1967/1893, Besnard 1987, Orrù 1998). According to Durkheim, these disorders occur in a context of rapid social transformation which leave people ill-adjusted to the prevailing conditions in their new environment. Consequently, disorder emerges when new values and norms encounter and/or disrupt older social patterns, weakening formal as well as informal social control. Society and its institutions fail to effectively place normative limits upon individual desires and their efficacious pursuits (Durkheim 1930/1897). In times of radical change, traditional behavioral rules experience a loss of authority and collective representations start to break down. Merton (1964) and others have focused on the idea of a perceived lack of fit between goals and values, on the one hand, and the means and tools to achieve them on the other, as the fundamental wellspring for anomie. In Merton's conception, anomie as a notion can be drawn upon to explain different levels of deviance among and inside societies and can be considered a normal phenomenon in contemporary societies (Orrù 1998). While Durkheim also considered it a widespread phenomenon, he was broadly optimistic that actor-situation interactions would eventually culminate in a resolution of the mismatch.

The disconnection resulting from globalization as we advance it here should be distinguished from the hysteresis effect or the temporary mismatch signaled in the earlier literature. The distinction lies in the notion of the temporary, as postulated in sociological thinking, versus the more durable and persistent nature of the disconnect as we see it. In fact, there is a strong case to be made that an enduring and growing disconnection between the entrenched nation-oriented habitus of agents, and the 'fragmegrated' (Rosenau 1990) environment in which they live, is indeed underway. What needs to be underlined is that anomic

disconnection is not a temporary epiphenomenon of globalization, but rather is one of its key features. Its origins lie in the heterarchical elements thrown up by globalization and the incomplete and heterogeneous features resulting from deep and chronic changes.

### **The multiple levels of anomie**

Earlier we called attention to the profiles of the *transnational capitalist* and the *cosmopolitanist* as archetypes who initiate, participate, and embrace globalization. Concomitantly, there are others, of course, who experience the same or similar forces for globalization, but who adopt a different posture towards what they regard as the arcane changes that these forces throw up. One will refer to revealing cases of the relationship between heterarchy and anomie at the subnational, state, and transnational levels.

At the subnational level, nationalist movements have risen across Europe these last years. They take a defensive stand against globalization which questions national identity by introducing complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty in the clear view of a world ordained by nations. It also entails the disbanding of traditional hierarchies with the flattening of the world which remodels them in a horizontal manner. The rise of plurality which comes with the mobility of people and the emergence of mixed identity brings heterogeneity which can confound many people born and raised with the certainties of nation-state and a traditional western society. Consequently, in the face of such changes and in need of familiar and common references, people – elites as ordinary individuals – can be tempted to retreat to old and idealized visions rather than pursuing the demanding path of adaptation to the new situation. In this respect, aspects of Brexit have been likened to a desire to go back to a clear, simple, and parsimonious vision of the world and to stick with it irrespective of any associated costs, economically and politically. So, while the decision to leave the European Union may be read with reference to earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century glories, the United Kingdom remains deeply engaged with and involved in contemporary globalization, most notably with its City of London Financial

Centre. In the same manner, although the Trump phenomenon in the United States remains to be fully analyzed, Trump's America-first, national-exclusive and gender-biased discourse may have appealed to a number of ordinary voters in the United States because it referred to an idealized and pre-globalized time of seemingly clear-cut and ordained societies and world order and because they feel threatened by social and economic transformations caused by globalization. It is worth noting that these two emblematic examples of anomie took place in countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, which have been deeply reshaped by globalization since the early 1980s with the arrival in office of neoliberal governments.

In the radically different context of Jihadist militants, one can also identify this search for certainty in a return to an idealized past through their quest for a pristine and pure Islam. Through their elimination of non-Muslim traditions, but also of non-fundamentalist Islam, they manifest an intent to deny the same movements of some of the ambiguities, uncertainties and complexities which surround heterarchy. The effort at suppressing any form of Islam different from their rather restrictive Salafi interpretation can be read as a case in point. In Syria, 90% of the destruction focused on Muslim artefacts such as shrines, altars and mosques, the latter dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Bohas 2016, 23). Modeled after the image of the iconoclastic controversy (8<sup>th</sup> century) and English Puritanism (17<sup>th</sup> century) in Christianity, jihadists invoke the idolatrous character of all devotion and of each place of worship, current or past, which is not directly addressed to God.

In this perspective, only Salafi principles can be an appropriate religious practice. The sacking of Nimrod and Hatra resulted precisely from application of this fundamental principal of Islam, which features on ISIL's emblem: 'لا إله إلا الله' ('There is no god but God'). This inferred that Shi'a, soufi and other kinds of syncretism were to be abolished since they diverged from the direct and non-mediated relationship with God. Consequently, any worship of other characters than God is viewed as polytheism. All remains, shrines, altars, and tombs of Prophets

Jonah, Jerijis, Seth, Daniel and Humu-al-Qadu were destroyed in the city of Mosul because they gave way to a particular devotion and integrated non-Sunni components.

A similar analysis has been made of the destruction of the mausoleums of Timbuktu, ‘city of the 333 saints’. Bohas (2013) has argued that these destructions can be read both as an attempt to eliminate key elements of the rising heterogeneity of the contemporary world in favor of a purer Islam, as well as a desire to inculcate a unique, simple, and singular religious form. It involves both a repudiation of enfolding complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty characteristic of globalizing world and a desire to return to an idealized and glorious time of the beginning vested in the recreating a Caliphate. It is worth noting that globalization as a movement of space and time compression have made this heterogeneity more glaring than in the past.

At the transnational level, one has unearthed manifestations of anomie within the daily routines and the expansion strategy of multinational corporations. We have shown western senior managers in charge of international affairs in a multinational corporation entrenching in an outmoded worldview centered on nations, reluctant to embrace heterogeneity and attached to an archaic style of management (Bohas, Morley, & Kinra 2021). Although they could be regarded as belonging to the transnational capitalist class by their professional career, their stand against the transnational, complex and heterogeneous dimensions of contemporary world appeared in stark contradiction with transnational capitalists’ view. Furthermore, their opposition against globalization and their return to a certain, clear, and idealized past differs from unchanged ethnocentric mindsets of past managers. Hence the idea of a growing disjuncture between their prevailing mindset and their globalized environment has been encapsulated within the notion of anomic mindset.

Multinational corporations’ brands and identities can be regarded as anomic. The Volkswagen Company has established a discourse on the ‘Made in Germany’ label even if it has developed manufacturing worldwide. Indeed, of a total of 66 car production sites, 16 were

located in Germany and 18 in China (Volkswagen 2016, 14–29). The remaining factories are located in 20 countries. All types of production sites can be identified outside Germany, whether they manufacture parts (component site) or assemble vehicles (vehicle site). This global presence has conditioned its development and its worldwide success. As a result, the iconic model of the group, the Golf, appears as a genuine global product. It is assembled with components coming from over 20 countries present on four continents (Head 1992, 70) – and this number doesn't take into account the countries where the parts of the components are actually manufactured.

Nevertheless, it has built a real cultural competitive advantage which draws upon a specific discourse on national identity to global audiences. By its association with Germany, the Volkswagen Company benefited from a label which was well-established (Head 1992, 10). In other words, since it rose with the internationalization and then the globalization of economies in the second half of the 20th Century, it has successfully associated its name with a dominant discourse on nationality coming from late 19th Century Europe. The Volkswagen Company has focused on embodying the 'Made in Germany' automobile through its marketing and advertising campaigns. First, the language is part and parcel of the Germanness claim. Constituting the ultimate mark of authenticity to refer to the narrative and imageries of nationality, it clearly includes a performative effect on identities and worldviews which give them legitimacy.

The flagship brand of the Volkswagen group is the Volkswagen brand whose global slogan was 'Das Auto' between 2007 and 2015. Through this motto pronounced with a male German voice, the company makes the claim that its products are the quintessence of what every car should be. The use of the national language is emblematic of what a company wants to convey. It symbolizes the certificate of authenticity of Germanness. The article 'Das' makes the strong claim of Germanness for any good car, while the word 'Auto' is German, yet

understood by non-German-speaking people. In the domain of advertising, there is strong evidence that Volkswagen tried to stick to the doxic caricature of supposedly German behavior such as the German accent in English, their obsession with detail, and their ordered and well-organized way of life (Marcantonio, Abbott, & O'Driscoll 2014). In this regard, Martin Winterkorn, the former CEO of the Volkswagen Group, followed the very behavior that consumers would expect from the caricature of a typical German manager (Verdevoye 2015). In addition, Volkswagen cars are said to be 'made in' or 'engineered in' Germany, like other automotive and industrial German goods. This label conveys the intrinsically positive aspect that German products are supposed to have. The *Deutsche Qualität* is renowned worldwide and exerts a major impact on the success of German products themselves. Besides, the 'Made in Germany' label corresponds to the misleading image of a unified and national industry located within German borders. Volkswagen aimed at making their car models the reference point of the sector in terms of reliability, robustness, and rigor. To this end, a rather conservative policy has been implemented in design and assigning names by keeping the same name for decades. As previously mentioned, the bulk of its production is still named Polo, Golf and Passat.

At state level, anomie can also be identified by a disjuncture of mindsets from their external environment in a search for old certainties and a return to an idealized past especially in contexts of heightened uncertainty and complexity. For instance, the way most statesmen have first reacted to the covid-19 crisis by drawing on repertoires of war reveals all the trappings of a world consisting of well-ordained and clear-cut nation-states where military power and nations are the ordering principles. It has led some politicians to preach nationalism, attributing a foreign nationality to the virus and appearing xenophobic towards foreigners. It also neglects all the complex interdependences that link societies with one another, constitute as many ways for the virus to spread and ignore that curbing the virus depended less on national-level policies than on micro-level individual behavior. More recently, the sort of legal fundamentalism that

constitutes the originalist interpretation defended by several Judges of the U.S. Supreme Court presents characteristics of a search for clearness and certainty in the past without adaptation to current times (Talbot, 2022).

## **Heterarchical world politics and its anomic reactions**

### **Anomic reactions to a heterarchical world**

This desire to return to an outdated reality and the manifest opposition to changes provoked by globalization, while at the same time being immersed in it, come from an heterarchical world deeply reshaped by the overlapping dynamics of integration and fragmentation. The idiosyncrasies of heterarchy with a ‘predominance of cross-cutting sectoral mini- and meso-hierarchies above, below and cutting across states’ (Belmonte & Cerny 2021, 235) serve to explain these anomic reactions from people experiencing these deep changes in their daily conditions.

First, the world is still transitioning from a world order ordained by states to one in which the destination and ultimate outcome remains unclear. The incomplete and complex process of globalization makes the external environment puzzling for individuals, elites as ordinary people, who have difficulty understanding and making sense of the waves of ongoing transformations. Although individuals see a weakening of nation-states, an increase in transnational fluxes and a rise in non-state actors, they remain essentially entrenched in statocentrism. This entrenchment creates a disjuncture between their prevailing mindset, focused on the preservation of divergence, and their environment laced with forces for convergence.

Second, these uncertain and highly complex situations made of overlapping authorities and transnational interests make the idealized certainties of states’ world politics attractive. Its external facing machinery comprises clear-cut borders, economic competition, and predictable

diplomatic and military relationships. Its internal functioning is governed by key reference points including a comforting hierarchical social order and integrated political regimes.

Third, people engaged in their daily routines increasingly inhabit an environment imbued with uncertainty, along with encountering events which can engender a feeling of cultural and economic vulnerability, and a perceived undermining of the heretofore taken for granted material and ideational stability characterizing their lives. This state is often reinforced in situations where space-time compression results in individuals feeling threatened by, rather than being able to embrace, those with unrelated identities and with different designs for living.

Fourth, remaining state institutions whose power comes from the inertia of pre-globalization mindsets and machinery serve to boost national identity in an effort to retain legitimacy, which can further contribute to confusing people. When confronted with paradoxical situations, people may fall back on protective, pre-established perceptions rather than adapting or changing substantially their worldviews to deal with the paradox. This sheds light on the enduring nature of national knowledge as a deeply rooted reference point for understanding the world.

### **Anomie and the heterarchization process**

Linked to the previous point, people's ideational matrix appears ill-equipped to face such a changed world. Although they are already all involved and for many engaged in globalization processes, their cognition remains poorly endowed to endure such uncertainty, heterogeneity, and diversity of heterarchical world politics. Dominant worldviews, the doxa, depend on combinations of economic and social forces which impose a constructed vision of the world with specific concepts and meanings. The reproduction of the national tropism in collective representations favors the storytelling of nations and, as a result, the national level of governance through the early socialization, education (Gellner 1983), mass media (Anderson 2006, Sobe 2012, Mihelj 2011). Governments also exert an impact on their own image which

results from the choice of policies they decide to put into place. Their diplomacy and their economic and cultural policies influence, domestically and internationally, people's reference points, ending up with each nation distinguishing itself from other neighboring ones. Indeed, as Bohas (2019) suggests, most of them reinforce national worldviews and practices in people's habitus through their communication policies and their and their offerings.

Ultimately, anomie appears to be not only a reaction to heterarchical world politics but also, by this very response, a part of the heterarchization process in the ideational world. It serves to entrench the coexistence and conflict of many unranked identities and values which overlap and cut across each other.

### **Conclusion**

Anomie, characterized as a disjuncture between people's ideational matrix and the prevailing circumstances of their environment, can be viewed as a phenomenon which directly results from the rise of heterarchy in world affairs. This heterarchical unranked world order made up of multiple and overlapping hierarchies and fragmented governance complexes can trigger an idealization of things past in which individuals galvanize their opposition to globalization and seek a return to an indefectible, if outdated, world. While global transformations have reshaped world politics, people's worldviews and practices have not changed accordingly. Not only have national imagined communities proven to be enduring, they have also in many ways been reinforced, while concomitantly the pluralization of the world has not been integrated into collective representations.

Far from being a phenomenon of the mind which recedes as the transition from a nation-state world order to a heterarchical order proceeds, it may be the very heterarchy itself that has served as the wellspring for the rise of anomie. Current anomie should not be reduced to inert minds since it constitutes a reaction to transformational changes. This failure in correspondence between individual mindsets and the global environment in which they operate generates

perceptions, understandings and explanations which yield little by way of resolution. The more effective management of rising global issues and transnational dynamics may by their very nature, demand a more cosmopolitan, a more inclusive, and a more state-free mind.

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