MANFRED B. STEGER | **Political Ideologies and Social Imaginaries in the Global Age[1]**

Abstract: This article argues that proliferation of prefixes like 'neo' and 'post' that adorn conventional 'isms' have cast a long shadow on the contemporary relevance of traditional political ideologies. Suggesting that there is, indeed, something new about today's political belief systems, the essay draws on the concept of 'social imaginaries' to make sense of the changing nature of the contemporary ideological landscape. The core thesis presented here is that today's ideologies are increasingly translating the rising global imaginary into competing political programs and agendas. But these subjective dynamics of denationalization at the heart of globalization have not yet dispensed with the declining national imaginary. The twenty-first century promises to be an ideational interregnum in which both the global and national stimulate people's deep-seated understandings of community. Suggesting a new classification scheme dividing contemporary political ideologies into 'market globalism', 'justice globalism', and 'jihadist globalism', the article ends with a brief assessment of the main ideological features of justice globalism.

KEY WORDS: globalization, global imaginary, national imaginary, ideology, market globalism, justice globalism, global justice, jihadist globalism, American Empire, modernity, proliferation of prefixes.

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Introduction

The defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 and the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1991 enticed scores of Western commentators to relegate 'ideology' to the dustbin of history. Proclaiming a radically new era in human history, they argued that ideology had ended with the final triumph of liberal capitalism. This dream of a universal set of political ideas ruling the world came crashing down with the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Since then, both U.S. President George W. Bush and Australian Prime Ministers John Howard and Kevin Rudd have argued that the contest with jihadist Islamism represents much more than the military conflict. It is, as they put it, the 'decisive ideological struggle of our time'.[2] Thus, far from being moribund, competing political belief systems are live and well in our post-9/11 era.

But which ideologies? Liberalism? Conservatism? Socialism? This is where the confusion starts. Although we now recognize that ideology has not ended, we still grope for words to name what's actually new. What have we come up with so far?

Neoliberalism. Neoconservatism. Neofascism. Postmarxism. Postmodernism. Postcolonialism. And so on. The remarkable proliferation of prefixes like 'neo' and 'post' that adorn conventional 'isms' casts a long shadow on the contemporary relevance of traditional political ideologies. No longer confined to the ivory towers of academia, this gnawing sense of sailing into uncharted conceptual waters pervades today's public discourse. Is there, indeed, something genuinely 'neo' about today's isms? Have we really moved 'post' our familiar political ideologies and social imaginaries? If so, what are the implications of the changing ideological landscape for conceptions of global justice?

I suggest that there is, in fact, something different about today's political belief systems: a new global imaginary is on the rise. It erupts with increasing frequency within and onto the familiar framework of the national, spewing its fiery lava across all geographical scales. Stoked, among other things, by technological change and scientific innovation, this global imaginary destabilizes the grand political ideologies codified by social elites during the national age. Thus, our changing ideational landscape is intimately related to the forces of globalization, defined here as the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world space.[3]

The rising global imaginary finds its political articulation not only in the ideological claims of contemporary social elites who reside in the privileged spaces of our global cities. It also fuels the hopes, disappointments, and demands of migrants who traverse national boundaries in search of their piece of the global promise. Thus, the global is nobody's exclusive property. It inhabits class, race, and gender, but belongs to neither. Nor can it be pinned down by carving up geographical space into watertight compartments that reflect outdated hierarchies of scale.[4] The multiple inscriptions and incomplete projections of the global on what has been historically constructed as the national have become most visible in the proliferation and reconfiguration of what counts as community and who should be included. For this reason, one of globalization's most profound dynamics has been the messy and incomplete superimposition of the global village on the conventional nation-state and its associated key concepts of 'citizenship', 'sovereignty', 'territoriality', 'borders', 'political belonging', and so on. At a bare minimum, we are witnessing the destabilization of taken-for-granted meanings and instantiations of the national.

Consider, for example, today's asymmetric wars pitting shifting alliances of nation-states and non-state actors against amorphous transnational terrorist networks that nonetheless operate in specific localities—usually in 'global cities' like New York, London, or New Delhi. New global pandemics expose the limits of our national public health systems. Nationally framed environmental policies cannot respond adequately to accelerating global climate change. Conventional educational and immigration schemes based on national goals and priorities

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3 For my definition of basic concepts related to globalization, see Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

4 For a masterful treatment of the multiscalarity of globalization, see Saskia Sassen's pioneering work on the subject. Her most recent study is, *A Sociology of Globalization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).

are incapable of preparing shifting populations for the pressing tasks of global citizenship. Cultivating global fan clubs of millions members, European football teams like Manchester United or FC Barcelona have long escaped the confines of nation-based geography. And the list goes on.

This article can only offer a brief assessment of the changing ideological landscape and its implications for ideas of global justice; I have provided a much more systematic treatment in a recent study.[5] But there is little doubt that the fundamental changes affecting political belief systems have not been adequately described or analyzed in pertinent literature. Well-intentioned attempts to "update" modern political belief systems by adorning them with prefixes resemble futile efforts to make sense of digital word processing by drawing on the mechanics of moveable print. The failure to redraw our ideological maps appears most glaringly in leading academic textbooks where the grand ideologies of the national age—complemented by various neo-isms—continue to be presented as the dominant political belief systems of our time.[6] To grasp the novelty of today's political belief systems, we must realize that large chunks of the grand ideologies of modernity—liberalism, conservatism, socialism, fascism, and communism— have been discarded, absorbed, rearranged, synthesized, and hybridized with new ideas into ideologies of genuine novelty. However, before we discuss the dynamic underlying the changing ideological landscape—the gradual shift from the national to the global imaginary—let us establish the foundation for our analysis by considering 'ideology'.

Ideology as Invective versus Ideology as Political Belief Systems

Ideology is a loaded concept with a checkered past. Most people today regard it as a form of dogmatic thinking or political manipulation. Virtually no one associates it with analytic clarity or scientific rigor. And yet, this is precisely how *idéologie* was envisioned by a French aristocrat at the height of the Reign of Terror. Count Destutt de Tracy coined the term for his rationalist method of breaking complex systems of ideas into their basic components. His postulation of ideology's scientific truths was to guide the practical improvement of the new French Republic and the small circle of Enlightenment thinkers affiliated with the newly founded National Institute of Arts and Sciences in Paris. Young Napoleon Bonaparte, too, embraced ideology on his rise to power, but swiftly discarded its social prescriptions when the 'absent-minded *ideologues*' of the Institute dared to impede his political ambitions.

As the nineteenth-century progressed, the term acquired additional derogatory punch in radical circles inspired by the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Their *German Ideology* defined it as a deliberate distortion of material reality that served the ruling classes as a convenient cloak for economic

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5 Steger (2008).

6 See, for example, Ball and Dagger, *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal*; Leon P. Barat, *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); Matthew Festenstein and Michael Kenny, eds. *Political Ideologies: A reader and Guide* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005); Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Houndmills, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Lyman Tower Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: A Comparative Analysis*, 14th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2008).

exploitation and political oppression. At the dawn of the twentieth century, ideology continued to be condemned as a tool of mass manipulation employed with equal skill by ruthless captains of industrial capitalism and radical left-wing revolutionaries. The crimes of these 'ideologues'—a term now reserved for modern dictators and their unscrupulous propagandists—reached new heights in their genocidal regimes, ghastly concentration camps and sprawling gulags.[7]

Attentive to the public's disaffection with these 'ideological' excesses, shrewd postwar politicians quickly fell back on Bonaparte's successful strategy of presenting themselves as level-headed solvers of concrete problems with nothing but contempt for anything that smacked even remotely of 'ideological thinking'. And yet, their professed pragmatism was belied by an Iron Curtain that separated the world into two opposing isms.

Academics, too, found themselves deeply entangled in the sticky web of Cold War ideology. Soviet dialecticians invented new categories for the many degradations of 'bourgeois ideology', while their Western counterparts contrasted the 'highly emotive' content of (communist) ideology with 'value free' (liberal) social science. The latter also disparaged ideology as the pernicious product of tyrannical minds obsessed with discovering 'how populations and nations can be mobilized and manipulated all along the way that leads to political messianism and fanaticism'.[8] Following Arendt's influential conflation of ideology with totalitarianism, Western academics developed new typologies and classification systems designed to capture the essential features of such ideational 'pathologies'. The least derogatory meaning bestowed upon ideology during these polarizing Cold War years was 'party affiliation', used by public opinion researchers as a scientific measure for voters' electoral preferences.[9]

With the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites precisely two centuries after the French Revolution, communism was pronounced dead and the Anglo-American variant of liberal democracy was elevated to the 'final form of human government'.[10] Triumphalist voices in the West celebrated the 'end of ideology' as though competing political ideas had overnight turned into curious relics of the past. China's gradual shift to a party-directed capitalism and the rapid decline of Third World Marxism only seemed to confirm the 'passing of on illusion', as a nonchalant French commentator referred to the demise of communism.[11] As noted above, it took the al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September 2001 to expose the naïveté of such premature hopes for a 'de-ideologized world'.

As some political and social theorists have suggested, however, it makes much sense to move beyond the invective and consider ideology as evolving and malleable

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7 Hannah Arendt, 'Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government', *The Review of Politics* 15 (July 1953), 303-327, p. 315.

8 Giovanni Sartori, 'Politics, Ideology and Belief Systems', *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969), 398-411, p. 411. Though shorn of its Cold War rhetoric, the ideology/science binary still abounds in social science literature.

9 See Gayil Talshir, 'The Objects of Ideology: Historical Transformations and the Changing Role of the Analyst', *History of Political Thought* 26/3 (Autumn 2005), 520-549, p. 539.

10 Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?' *National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 3-18, p. 4.

11 Francois Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

political belief systems. Their pejorative connotations notwithstanding, ideologies play an integrative role in providing social stability as much as contributing to fragmentation and alienation. They supply standards of normative evaluation as much as displaying a tendency to oversimplify social complexity. They serve as guide and compass for political action as much as they legitimize tyranny and terror in the name of noble ideals. Emerging during the American and French Revolutions, political belief systems competed with religious doctrines over what ideas and values should guide human communities, particularly the rising nation-state. Although ideology represented a secular perspective on these fundamental questions, it also resembled religion in its attempts to link the various ethical, cultural, and political dimensions of society into a fairly comprehensive belief system. Imitating its rival's penchant to trade in truth and certainty, ideology also relied on narratives, metaphor, and myths that persuade, praise, condemn, cajole, convince, and separate the 'good' from the 'bad'.

Taking seriously these indispensable functions of political belief systems irrespective of their particular contents or political orientations, I define ideology as patterned ideas and claims to truth that are codified by social elites and embraced by significant groups in society.[12] All political belief systems are historically contingent and, therefore, must be analyzed with reference to a particular context that connects their origins and developments to specific times and spaces. Linking belief and practice, ideologies encourage people to act while simultaneously constraining their actions. To this end, ideological codifiers construct claims that seek to 'lock in' the meaning of their core concepts and thus remove them from contest. Political theorist Michael Freeden refers to this crucial process as 'decontestation'.[13] Successfully decontested ideas are held as truth with such confidence that they appear as 'common sense' rather than contingent and open-ended assumptions.

Following Freeden, then, I suggest that ideologies possess unique structures or 'morphologies' in the form of decontested truth-claims that serve as potent instruments for facilitating collective decision-making. These interlinked semantic and political roles suggest that control over language translates directly into power, including the decision of 'who gets what, when, and how'.[14] Thus, ideologies are not merely justifications of economic class interests or impractical metaphysical speculations, but fairly comprehensive maps that help us navigate our political universe. Far from being distortions fated to disappear with the emergence of rational political orders, ideologies are indispensable ideational systems that shape and direct human communities in specific ways.[15]

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12 See Manfred B. Steger, *Globalism: Market Ideology Meets Terrorism*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

13 Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 54-5. See also Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996). The ideological function of 'fixing' the process of signification around certain meanings was discussed as early as the 1970s by the French linguist Michel Pecheux and intellectuals associated with the French semiotic journal *Tel Quel*. See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 195-7.

14 Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When and How* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958).

15 For a useful summary of the main functions of ideology, see Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). A short summary of Ricoeur's arguments can be found in Steger (2005), pp. 7-8.

Ideologies and Social Imaginaries

To understand the main causes and impacts of the fundamental changes affecting the ideological landscape of the twenty-first century, I suggest analyzing political ideologies as ideational structures linked to overarching 'social imaginaries'. Constituting the macro-mappings of social and political space through which we perceive, judge, and act in the world, these deep-seated modes of common understandings within which people imagine their communal existence. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's account of the imagined community of the nation, Charles Taylor argues that social imaginaries are neither theories nor ideologies, but implicit 'backgrounds' that make possible communal practices and a widely shared sense of their legitimacy. The social imaginary offers explanations of how 'we'—the members of the community—fit together, how things go on between us, the expectations we have of each other, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie those expectations. This background understanding is both normative and factual in the sense of providing us both with the standards of what passes as common-sense.[16] Much in the same vein, Pierre Bourdieu notes that the social imaginary sets the pre-reflexive framework for our daily routines and social repertoires. Structured by social dynamics that produce them while at the same time also structuring those forces, social imaginaries are products of history that 'generate individual and collective practices—more history—in accordance with the schemes generated by history'.[17]

Despite their intangibility, however, social imaginaries are quite 'real' in the sense of enabling common practices and deep-seated communal attachments. Though capable of facilitating collective fantasies and speculative reflections, they should not be dismissed as phantasms or mental fabrications.[18] As shared visions of self and community, social imaginaries often find expression as namable collectivities such as 'Americans' or 'Hutus'.[19] Endowed with specific properties, social imaginaries acquire additional solidity through the social construction of space and the repetitive performance of their assigned qualities and characteristics. Thus feigning permanence, social imaginaries are nonetheless temporary constellations subject to constant change. Social imaginaries acquire additional solidity through the (re)construction of social space and the repetitive performance of certain communal qualities and characteristics. And yet, they are temporary constellations subject to change. At certain tipping points in history, such change can occur with lightning speed and tremendous ferocity.[20]

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16 Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 2; 23-6; and *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), Chapter 4. As employed throughout this article, my key concepts of the 'national' and 'global' imaginary draw on relevant arguments presented in the works of Charles Taylor, Benedict Anderson, Pierre Bourdieu, and Arjun Appadurai.

17 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 54-5.

18 This propensity of social imaginaries to give birth to ideologies that serve primarily on the level of 'fantasies' constructing political subjects has been emphasized by Slavoj Zizek, *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 1-33.

19 See Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1987), p. 148.

20 On the useful notion of historical 'tipping points' as particular combinations of dynamics and resources that can usher in a new organizing logic, see Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), Chapter 4; and pp. 404-5.

The eighteenth-century social revolutions in the Americas and Europe, in particular, made visible the transformation of the social imaginary in a dramatic way. For many generations, the old modes of understanding had reproduced divinely-sanctioned power hierarchies in the form of tribes, clanships, trading city-states, and dynastic empires. Between 1776 and 1848, however, there arose on both sides of the Atlantic the familiar template of the 'nation' now no longer referring to the king at the pinnacle of the state hierarchy, but to an abstract 'general will' operating in free citizens fighting for their homeland. The political message was as clear as it was audacious: henceforth it would be 'the people'—not kings, aristocrats, or clerical elites—that exercised legitimate authority in political affairs. Over time, the will of the people would replace monarchical forms of communal authority based on transcendental powers emanating from a divine realm beyond the nation. Thus, modern nationhood found its expression in the transformation of subjects into citizens who laid claim to equal membership in the nation and institutionalized their sovereignty in the modern nation-state. But who really counted as part of the people and what constituted the essence of the nation became the subject of fierce intellectual debates and material struggles. Seeking to remake the world according to the rising national imaginary, citizens exhibited a restlessness that became the hallmark of modernity.

Countless meanings and definitions of modernity have been put forward in the last two centuries. They extend far beyond familiar designations referring to a historical era in the West characterized by its radical rupture with the past and its ensuing temporal reorientation toward notions of infinite progress, economic growth, and enduring material prosperity. As philosopher Juergen Habermas reminds us, modernity is inextricably intertwined with an expanding "public sphere"—the incubator of modernity's tendency to 'create its own normativity out of itself'.[21] Various thinkers have elaborated on the main dynamics of modernity: the separation of state and civil society; conceptions of linear time; progressive secularization; individualism; intensifying geopolitical rivalries that facilitated the formation and multiplication of nation-states; new orders of rationality and their corresponding domains of knowledge; the uneven expansion of industrial capitalism; the rapid diffusion of discursive literacy; the slow trend toward democratization; and so on. The detailed genealogy of these features need not concern us here. What we ought to consider straightaway, however, is the centrality of the national in the modern social imaginary.

Ideologies and the National Imaginary

New treatments of nationality and nationalism appearing on the academic scene since the early 1980s have advanced convincing arguments in favor of a tight connection between the forces of modernity, the spread of industrial capitalism, and the elite-engineered construction of the 'national community' as a cultural artifact. As Eric Hobsbawm notes, 'The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything associated with it is its modernity'.[22] Even scholars like Anthony

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21 Juergen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), p. 7.
22 Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 14.

Smith who reject the modernist view that nations were simply 'invented' without the significant incorporation of pre-modern ethnic ties and histories, concede that nationalism represents 'a modern movement and ideology, which emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth century in Western Europe and America....' [23] Smith's definition of nationalism as an 'ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of a nation' usefully highlights the idiosyncratic ways of processing and disseminating secular ideas that emerged in the nineteenth century as a distinctive feature of modernity. As Tom Nairn explains, 'An ism ceased to denote just a system of general ideas (like Platonism or Thomism) and evolved into a proclaimed cause or movement—no longer a mere school but a party or societal trend'.[24] In other words, ideas acquired alluring banner headlines and truth claims that resonated with people's interests and aspirations and thus bound them to a specific political program. Having to choose sides in these proliferating battles of political ideas, like-minded individuals organized themselves into clubs, associations, movements, and political parties with the primary objective of enlisting more people to their preferred normative vision of the national.

There is, however, a serious downside to Smith's definition: it turns nationalism into an ideology of the same ilk as liberalism or conservatism. This begs the question of how nationalism can be both a distinct political ideology and a common source of inspiration for a variety of political belief systems. Sensing the overarching stature of the national, Benedict Anderson and other social thinkers with an anthropological bent have resisted the idea that nationalism should be seen as a distinct ideology. Instead, they refer to it as a 'cultural artifact of a particular kind' that is, a relatively broad cultural system more closely related to 'kinship' and 'religion' than to 'liberalism' or 'conservatism'.[25] Following their intuition, then, I suggest that we treat the national not as an ideology in its own right but as a crucial component of the modern social imaginary. As such, the 'national imaginary' corresponds to what Benedict Anderson has called 'modern imaginings of the nation' as a limited and sovereign community of individuals whose knowledge of each other is, in most cases, not direct, but mediated in linear time through the diffusion of discursive literacy. To a large extent, this was made possible by the invention of printing technology embedded in nascent capitalism.[26]

Assigning a prominent role to the national imaginary in the making of the modern world might strike some readers as idealist obscurantism, or—as some Marxist thinkers would have us believe—as a 'reification' or 'mystification' inherent in the class bias of this author. But most Marxist perspectives on modern social

23 Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 1.

24 Tom Nairn, 'Make for the Boondocks', *London Review of Books* (5 May 2005), p. 13.

25 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 4-5; Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as Cultural System', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 193-233; Louis Dumont, *German Ideology: From France to Germany and Back* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. vii; and Michael Freeden, 'Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?', *Political Studies* 46 (1998), 748-65.

26 Anderson, (1991), pp. 6-7.

development propagated in the last century have been haunted by their consistent underestimation of nationalism's generative power. As Cornelius Castoriadis put it wryly, 'That a "mystification" has effects so massively and terribly real, that it proves itself to be much stronger than any 'real' forces (including even the instinct to self-preservation), which 'should have' pushed the proletariat to fraternization long ago, that is the problem'.[27] In short, the national decisively colored the modern social imaginary. Indeed, we ought to treat the national not as a separate ideology but as the background to our communal existence that emerged in the Northern Hemisphere with the American and French Revolutions. The national gave the modern social imaginary its distinct flavor in the form of various factual and normative assumptions that political communities, in order to count as 'legitimate', had to be nation-states.[28] Thus, the 'national imaginary' refers to the taken-for-granted understanding in which the nation—plus its affiliated or to-be-affiliated state—serves the communal frame of the political.

What, then, is the precise relationship between the national and ideology? Or, to reverse the question, what is the connection between political belief systems and the national imaginary? My thesis is that ideologies translate and articulate the largely pre-reflexive social imaginary in compressed form as explicit political doctrine. This means that the grand ideologies of modernity gave explicit political expression to the implicit national imaginary. To be sure, each ideology deployed and assembled its core concepts—liberty, progress, race, class, rationality, tradition, community, welfare, security, and so on—in specific and unique ways. But the elite codifiers of these ideational systems pursued their specific political goals under the common background umbrella of the national imaginary. Liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism, and Nazism/fascism were all 'nationalist' in the sense of performing the same fundamental task of translating the overarching national imaginary into concrete political doctrines, agendas, and spatial arrangements. In so doing, ideologies normalized national territories; spoke in recognized national languages; appealed to national histories; told national legends and myths, or glorified a national 'race'. They articulated the national imaginary according to a great variety of criteria that were said to constitute the defining essence of the community.[29]

But whatever ideologies purported the essence of the nation to be, they always developed their truth-claims by decontesting their core concepts within the national imaginary. Liberals, for example, spoke of 'freedom' as applying to autonomous individuals belonging to the same national community, that is, the liberties of *French*, *Colombian*, or *Australian* citizens. The conservative fondness for 'law and order' received its highest expression in the notion of *national* security. Tellingly, even the ostensibly internationalist creed of socialists and

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27 Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 148.

28 Liah Greenfeld, 'Is Modernity Possible without Nationalism?' in Michel Seymour (ed.), *The Fate of the Nation-State* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 31-51, p. 40.

29 Craig Calhoun argues that such nationalist 'essentialism' represents one of the guiding assumptions in modern thinking on matters of personal and collective identity. See Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 18-20.

communists achieved its concrete political formulation only as *German* social democracy or Soviet *Russia's* 'socialism in one country' or 'socialism with *Chinese* characteristics'.

For two centuries, the partisans of political ideologies clashed with each other over such important issues as participation, the extent of civil rights, the purposes and forms of government, the role of the state, the significance of race and ethnicity, and the scope of political obligations. Clinging to their different political visions, they hardly noticed their common embeddedness in the national imaginary. Insisting on their obvious differences, they hardly questioned their common allegiance to the overarching national imaginary. After all, the business of modern political belief systems was the formidable task of realizing their core values under the banner of the nation-state—the ceaseless task of translating the national imaginary into competing political projects. By the early decades of the twentieth century, ideologies had been so successful in (re)producing the modern order of nation-states that national identity seemed to be the natural endpoint for all human communities.[30]

Ideologies and the Global Imaginary

In the aftermath of World War II, new ideas, theories, and practices produced in the public consciousness a similar sense of rupture with the past that had occurred at the time of the French Revolution. Novel technologies facilitated the speed and intensity with which these ideas and practices infiltrated the national imaginary. Images, people, and materials circulated more freely across national boundaries. This new sense of 'the global' that erupted within and onto the national began to undermine the normality and self-contained coziness of the modern nation-state —especially deeply engrained notions of community tied to a sovereign and clearly demarcated territory containing relatively homogenous populations.[31] Identities based on national membership became destabilized. During the early decades of the Cold War, the changing social imaginary led prominent thinkers in the First World to proclaim the 'end of ideology'. As evidence for their assertion, they pointed to the political-cultural consensus underpinning a common Western 'community of values' and the socio-economic welfare-state compromise struck between liberalism and democratic socialism. Conversely, detractors of the end-of-ideology thesis seized upon the decolonization dynamics in the Third World as well as the rise of the counter-cultural 'new social movements' in the 1960s and 1970s as evidence for their view that the familiar political belief systems were being complemented by 'new ideologies' such as feminism, environmentalism, and postcolonialism.

The most fundamental novelty of these 'new ideologies' lay in their sensitivity toward the rising global imaginary, regardless of whether they were formulated

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30 See, for example, Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

31 See Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); Martin Albrow, *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Ulrich Beck, *Power in the Global Age: A new global political economy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005). Albrow's epochal theory postulates the 'end of modernity', whereas Beck argues for a seismic shift from a 'first modernity' to a 'second modernity'.

by the forces of the New Left or the cohorts of the New Right. Starting in the late 1970s, and especially after the 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ideas of the New Right gained the upper hand across the globe. By the mid-1990s, a growing chorus of global social elites was fastening onto the new buzzword 'globalization' as the central metaphor for their political agenda—the creation of a single global free market and the spread of consumerist values around the world. Most importantly, they translated the rising social imaginary into largely economistic claims laced with references to globality: global trade and financial markets, worldwide flows of goods, services, and labor, transnational corporations, offshore financial centers, and so on.

But globalization was never merely a matter of increasing flows of capital and goods across national borders. Rather, it constitutes a multi-dimensional set of processes in which images, sound bites, metaphors, myths, symbols, and spatial arrangements of globality were just as important as economic and technological dynamics. The objective acceleration and multiplication of global material networks occurs hand in hand with the intensifying subjective recognition of a shrinking world. Such heightened awareness of the compression of time and space influences the direction and material instantiations of global flows. As sociologist Roland Robertson has pointed out, the compression of the world into a single place increasingly makes the global the frame of reference for human thought and action.[32] Globalization involves both the macro-structures of community and the micro-structures of personhood. It extends deep into the core of the self and its dispositions, facilitating the creation of new identities nurtured by the intensifying relations between the individual and the globe.[33]

Like the conceptual earthquake that shook Europe and the Americas more than two hundred years ago, today's destabilization of the national affects the entire planet. The ideologies dominating the world today are no longer exclusively articulations of the national imaginary but reconfigured ideational systems that constitute potent translations of the dawning global imaginary. Although my account of this transformation emphasizes rupture, it would be foolish to deny obvious continuities. As Saskia Sassen notes, the incipient process of denationalization and the ascendance of novel social formations depend in good part on capabilities shaped and developed in the national age.[34] Today's discursive preeminence of the 'market', for example, harkens back to the heyday of liberalism in mid-Victorian England. And yet, this concept is no longer exclusively tied to the old paradigm of self-contained national economies but also refers to a model of global exchanges among national actors, subnational agencies, supranational bodies, networks of nongovernmental organizations, and transnational corporations. Our New World Order contains a multiplicity of orders networked together on multiple levels.

32 See Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1992), p. 6. For similar arguments see, Albrow (1997); Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000); John Urry, *Global Complexity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003); Ulf Hannerz, *The Transnational Connection* (London: Routledge, 1996); and Malcolm Waters, *Globalization*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

33 See Anthony Elliott and Charles Lemert, *The New Individualism: The Emotional Costs of Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 90.

34 Sassen (2006), p. 402.

Disaggregating nation-states struggle to come to grips with relational concepts of sovereignty while facing unprecedented challenges to their authority from both subnational and supranational collectivities.[35]

As I have argued elsewhere, 'market globalism' emerged in the 1990s as a comprehensive ideology extolling, among other things, the virtues of globally integrating markets.[36] Ideationally much richer than the more familiar term 'neoliberalism' suggests, market globalism discarded, absorbed and rearranged large chunks of the grand ideologies while at the same time incorporating genuinely new ideas. The outcome was a new political belief system centered on five ideological claims that translated the global imaginary in concrete political programs and agendas: 1) globalization is about the liberalization and global integration of markets; 2) nobody is in charge of globalization; 3) nobody is in charge of globalization; 4) globalization benefits everyone; 5) globalization furthers the spread of democracy in the world. But no single ideational system ever enjoys absolute dominance. Battered by persistent gales of political dissent, the small fissures and ever-present inconsistencies in political ideologies threaten to turn into major cracks and serious contradictions. As the 1990s drew to a close, market globalism found itself challenged on the political left by 'justice globalism', an alternative translation of the rising global imaginary propagated by a global justice movement (GJM) arguing for 'globalization-from-below'.

Starting in the late 1980s, social activists around the world had begun to engage in what social movement expert Sidney Tarrow calls 'global framing', that is, a flexible form of 'global thinking' that connects local or national grievances to the larger context of 'global justice', 'global inequalities', or 'world peace'. Tarrow argues that most of these activists could be characterized as 'rooted cosmopolitans', because they remained embedded in their domestic environments while at the same time developing a global consciousness as a result of vastly enhanced contacts to like-minded individuals and organizations across national borders.[37] Indeed, the forging of global attitudes inside and alongside the national identities by social activists was one particular manifestation of the eruption of the global imaginary inside the national. In addition to articulating their particular concerns and demands within a global framework, the members of the GJM increasingly engaged in "multi-issue framing"—the ability to grasp how certain issues like environmental protection or the struggle against AIDS related to other issues such as patriarchy, race, or the debt burden of the global South. The organizational result of both global framing and multi-issue framing was a broader and more eclectic GJM that began to cohere ideologically through its opposition to market globalism. Let us briefly consider its main ideological features by analyzing claims made by Susan George, widely considered one of the GJM's premier 'idea persons'. A prolific writer-activist connected to global justice networks like ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens) and

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35 For a helpful discussion of 'disaggregating states' in the global age, see Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

36 Steger (2005).

37 Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 40-60.

think tanks like the Amsterdam-based Transnational Institute, George has the gift of presenting the main ideas of the GJM in exceptionally clear and condensed language.[38]

The Morphology of Justice Globalism

George's writings often contain spirited rebuttals of the common accusation made by the influential *New York Times* columnist and author Thomas L. Friedman and other market globalists that justice globalists are reflexively and unthinkingly 'anti-globalization'. Conversely, she reminds her readers that those who refer to themselves collectively as the GJM strongly object to the rather insulting label 'anti', preferring instead the less loaded prefixes 'alter' or 'counter'. What unites people who feel themselves part of the movement, she insists, is 'their belief that another world is possible and that today's pressing social problems are global issues, thus can no longer be solved individually, locally, or even nationally'.[39] George's emphatic embrace of the global imaginary, however, begs a whole series of questions related to its ideological articulation. Who, exactly, are those people who feel themselves part of the movement? How do they express their global collective identity? What do they mean by globalization? What do they mean by 'another world'? What are some concrete policy proposals that attest to the global vision of justice globalists?

In response to the question regarding the movement's collective identity, let us consider two 2001 WSF documents that bear George's intellectual fingerprints: the Charter of Principles and the Call for Mobilization, approved and adopted by the main networks that make up the WSF Organizing Committee. Both documents invoke a global 'we' defined as 'social forces from around the world' and 'organizations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world' that are committed to 'building a planetary society directed toward fruitful relationships among humankind and between it and the Earth'. These general declarations of global subjectivity are then further specified in a sentence referring to 'women and men, farmers, workers, unemployed, professionals. students, blacks, and indigenous peoples, coming from the South and from the North.'[40] Thus, the movement's affirmation of a 'global we' becomes tied to its irreducible plurality and diversity. In his careful analysis of five similar documents authored by transnational networks that belong to different sectors of the GJM, Donatella della Porta also underlines the construction of a global collective self respectful of differences of views and cultural and political traditions: '[M]ultifacetedness becomes an intrinsic element of the movement's collective identity, so intrinsic that it becomes implicit…'.[41] Likewise, scholar-activists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the authors of the international bestseller *Empire*, emphasize the process of 'finding what is common in our differences and expanding that commonality while our differences proliferate'.[42]

38 See, for example, Susan George, *Another World is Possible, If…* (London: Verso, 2004).

39 George (2004), pp. xi-x.

40 'World Social Forum 2001 Charter of Principles' and 'World Social Forum 2001 Call for Mobilization', in Jose Correa Leite, *The World Social Forum: Strategies of Resistance* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), 9-13; 181-6.

41 Della Porta, *Globalization From Below*, p. 68.

42 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Foreword," in William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah, eds., *Another World Is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum* (London: Zed Books, 2003), p. xvii.

As to the question of the GJM's decontestation of globalization, George seems to envision an 'engagement in the world as a whole' that is fundamentally different from or contrary to the 'inevitable' integration of markets according to market globalists like Thomas Friedman. To get a better grasp of her alternative understanding of globalization, she suggests, people must first recognize that the term has already been deeply imbued with ideas and values that 'best serve the interests of people who profit from the present economic, social, and political arrangements'. Indeed, she uses 'globalization' as a signifier that contains both a negative and a positive meaning. The former seeks to capture the distorted market-globalist articulation of the global imaginary. George's insistence on putting the qualifiers 'finance-driven' or 'corporate-led' in front of the term represents, therefore, an act of discursive resistance to the dominant narrative. The positive meaning of globalization refers to the possibility of an undistorted translation of the global imaginary in the interest of all humanity, not just for the benefit of a powerful few.[43]

At the core of George's notion of global justice lies her unshakable conviction that the liberalization and global integration of markets leads to greater social inequalities, environmental destruction, the escalation of global conflicts and violence, the weakening of participatory forms of democracy, the proliferation of self-interest and consumerism, and the further marginalization of the powerless around the world. Hence, she assigns the GJM two fundamental tasks. The first is ideological, reflected in concerted efforts to undermine 'the premises and ideological framework' of the 'reigning neo-liberal worldview' by constructing and disseminating an alternative translation of the global imaginary based on the core principles of the WSF: equality, global social justice, diversity, democracy, nonviolence, solidarity, ecological sustainability, and planetary citizenship. The second is political, manifested in the attempt to realize these principles by means of mass mobilizations and nonviolent direct action targeting the core structures of market globalism: international economic institutions like the WTO and the IMF, transnational corporations and affiliated NGOs, large industry federations and lobbies, the mainstream corporate media, and, the 'present United States government' [headed by President George W. Bush].[44]

George's vision of global justice is explicitly neither about reviving a moribund Marxism nor a return to the good old days of 1968. Although justice globalism contains elements of Gandhian Third-World liberationism and traditional European social democracy, it goes beyond these Cold War ideational clusters in several respects—most importantly in its ability to bring together a large number of New Left concerns around a more pronounced orientation toward the globe as a single, interconnected arena for political action. One example of the GJM's strong global focus is its publicity campaign to highlight the negative consequences of

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43 George (2004), p. 6.

44 Ibid, pp. 100-7; and World Social Forum 2001 'Charter of Principles' and 'World Social Forum 2001 Call for Mobilization', in Leite (2005), 9-13; 181-6.

deregulated global capitalism on the planet's environmental health. Indeed, in the first decade of the new century, the issue of global climate change has advanced to the forefront of public discourse around the world, second only to the specter of global terrorism and warfare.

Finally, as to the question of the GJM's global policy vision, George's book lays out in some detail familiar proposals offered by justice globalists. The programmatic core of these demands is a 'global Marshall Plan' that would create more political space for people around the world to determine what kind of social arrangements they want: 'Another world has to begin with a new, worldwide Keynesian-type programme of taxation and redistribution, exactly as it took off at the national level in the now-rich countries a century or so ago'. The author envisions the necessary funds for this global regulatory framework to come from the profits of TNCs and financial markets—hence ATTAC's campaign for the introduction of the global Tobin Tax. Other proposals include the cancellation of poor countries' debts; the closing of offshore financial centers offering tax havens for wealthy individuals and corporations; the ratification and implementation of stringent global environmental agreements; the implementation of a more equitable global development agenda; the establishment of a new world development institution financed largely by the global North and administered largely by the global South; establishment of international labor protection standards, perhaps as clauses of a profoundly reformed WTO; greater transparency and accountability provided to citizens by national governments and global economic institutions; making all governance of globalization explicitly gender sensitive; the transformation of 'free trade' into 'fair trade', and a binding commitment to nonviolent direct action as the sole vehicle of social and political change.[45]

Concluding Remarks

Our brief analysis of some key texts suggests that justice globalists offer an alternative translation of the rising global imaginary. Key figures of the GJM like Susan George construct ideological claims that challenged the principal decontestation chains of their dominant competitors. For justice globalists, globalization is not about the inevitable liberalization and global integration of markets, but about the global regulation of markets. 'Finance-driven' globalization is not a benign, leaderless market dynamic that generates prosperity or democracy for all. Rather, it is controlled by small but powerful global elites who benefit from the subordination of billions to the unjust and inegalitarian imperatives of free-market capitalism. 'Corporate-led' globalization is not inevitable, but, as massive alter-globalization demonstrations around the globe have shown, it can be resisted by transnational alliances and networks committed to building 'another world'. Finally, justice globalists insist that the global diffusion of American values, consumer goods, and lifestyles is not inherent in globalization. Rather, the 'Americanization' of the planet serves the interests of market globalists in the

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45 George (2004), Chapters 6-10. See also Fabian Globalization Group, *Just World: A Fabian Manifesto* (London: Zed Books, 2005); and Naomi Klein, *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate* (New York: Picador, 2002).

United States and their allies around the world eager to universalize American-style capitalism and consumerism.

As Michael Freeden suggests, in order to acquire a more substantive morphology, any evolving cluster of political ideas must accomplish two difficult tasks. First, it must appropriate, rearrange, and incorporate suitable chunks of older established ideologies. Second, it must contest and reconceptualize the primary decontestation chains embedded in contending political belief systems.[46] As we have seen, justice globalists accomplish the first task by selectively appropriating elements of democratic socialism and liberalism. After being welded together with such core issues as gender equality, ecology, and global justice, the resulting ideational structure receives coherence and definition when it is linked, in inverted fashion, to the main ideological claims of its dominant competitor—market globalism. By the end of the 1990s, the evolving ideational cluster had thickened sufficiently into a comprehensive set of decontestation chains that translated the rising global imaginary as the new ideology of 'justice globalism'.

To be sure, ideological challengers of market globalism on the political right also managed to present their ideological claims in similarly coherent fashion. Far from being a regionally contained 'last gasp' of a backward-looking, militant offshoot of political Islam, 'jihadist globalism' of the al-Qaeda (or militant Christian fundamentalist) variety represents a potent globalism of worldwide appeal. In response to the ascent of jihadist globalism epitomized by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, market globalism morphed into imperial globalism. This hard-powering of market globalism has been widely read as clear evidence for the staying power of the national, most clearly reflected in American Empire and its unilateral desire to remake the world in its own image. And yet, as Jan Nederveen Pieterse has suggested, American Empire is not at all incompatible with the rising global imaginary.[47]

Potent as they are, the dynamics of denationalization at the heart of globalization neither propel the world to an inevitable endpoint nor have these forces dispensed entirely with vast ideational and material arsenals of the nation-state. The national is slowly losing its grip on people's minds, but the global has not yet ascended to the commanding heights once occupied by its predecessor. It erupts in fits and starts, offering observers confusing spectacles of social fragmentation and integration that cut across old geographical hierarchies of scale in unpredictable patterns.[48] Consider, for example, the arduous processes of regional economic and political integration that are limping along on all continents. Still, expanding formations like the European Union—however chronic their internal tensions—have become far more integrated than most observers predicted only a decade ago. As the national and the global rub up against each other in myriad settings and on multiple levels, they produce new tensions and compromises. Putting the analytic spotlight on the changing ideological landscape not only yields a better

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46 Freeden (1996), p. 485.

47 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

48 For a discussion of such 'fragmegration', see James N. Rosenau, *Distant Proximities: Dynamics Beyond Globalization* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

understanding of the dominant political belief systems of our time, but it also helps us make sense of the accelerating compression of time and space. The short duration and unevenness of today's globalization dynamics make it impossible to paint a clear picture of a new world order. But the first rays of the rising global imaginary have provided enough light to capture the contours of a profoundly altered ideological landscape.

Manfred B. Steger
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology,
Melbourne

the global justice network