

2 Microglobalization¹

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Introduction

What is microglobalization? In this chapter, I draw on earlier studies of global financial markets and of the new global terrorism to suggest that global configurations may be based on microstructures: on forms of connectivity and coordination that combine global reach with microstructural mechanisms that instantiate self-organizing principles and patterns. The basic intuition that motivates the concept of a global microstructure is that genuinely global forms, by which I mean fields of practice that link up and stretch across all time zones (or have the potential to do so), need not imply further expansions of social institutional complexity. In fact, they may become feasible only if they avoid complex institutional structures. Global financial markets, for example, where microstructures have been found, appear too fast and change too quickly to be contained by institutional orders.² Global systems based on microstructural principles do not exhibit institutional complexity but rather the asymmetries, unpredictability, and playfulness of complex (and dispersed) interaction patterns, a complexity that

¹ This chapter draws on material published in Knorr Cetina (2005). Microstructures can also be analyzed in terms of complexity concepts, a perspective I do not pursue in this chapter.

² The new terrorism involves different mechanisms, but it also has so far consistently out-run the capacity of state intelligence agencies and their “vast, lumbering bureaucracies” (Silberman and Robb, 2005) to counter its threat or track and identify its challenges.

results, in John Urry's terms, from a situation where order is not the outcome of purified social processes and is always intertwined with chaos (2003: 106, 17–38; see also Thrift, 1999). More concretely, these systems manifest an observational and temporal dynamics that is fundamental to their connectivity, autoaffective principles of self-motivation, forms of sourcing, and principles of amplification that substitute for the principles and mechanisms of the modern complex organization.

If the basic intuition is correct, microsociology—and the methodology of qualitative research—provide significant resources for the study of global systems. In other words, it is not correct to assume, as social scientists sometimes do, that global forms simply outstrip the capacity of the social sciences to study such forms empirically. In fact, the analysis of global microstructures helps to collect and assess empirical evidence for the architecture of the global structural forms of a world society. It also suggests a theory of microglobalization, the view that the texture of a global world becomes articulated through microstructural patterns that develop in the shadow of (and perhaps liberated from) national and local institutional patterns. Although I illustrate microglobalization by global forms that are disembedded from national societies and that exhibit a level of global integration, microglobalization is not limited to such forms. Microstructures are likely to come into play in what has been called “response-presence-based social forms,” in which participants are capable of responding to one another and common objects in real-time without being physically present in the same place (Knorr Cetina & Bruegger, 2002). Response-presence-based social forms tend to be bound together by information technologies, the arteries of global and transnational connectedness through which the interactions flow. Response-presence-based forms have to be distinguished from situations of physical co-presence, which is what microsociologists have focused on in the past. But microstructures may also come into play when seemingly small changes have global effects, a phenomenon that may be explained by the emergence of microstructural connectivities among distanced elements that lead to disproportional amplification effects. One example is the near breakdown of the Capital Management Fund, which has been attributed to the emergence of a microstructure (MacKenzie, 2005). Such microconnectivities may be of particular interest to the understanding of global systems that may experience more massive consequences of structural instabilities and phase transitions than local forms. The general point here is that microstructures can “carry” globalization and the patterns of a world society. They specify densities and time warps within the vast texture of a global world.

What Are Global Microstructures?

I have conceptualized microglobalization as being based upon structures of connectivity and integration that are global in scope but microsociological in character. I now want to emphasize four characteristics of global microstructures: they are “light,” institutionally speaking, as implied before; they appear to facilitate a certain non-Weberian effectiveness; they cannot simply be reduced to networks; and they tend to be temporal structures: the resulting systems exhibit flow characteristics.

Let us first consider lightness. By “lightness” I mean that the mechanisms and structures involved suggest a reversal of the historical trend toward formal, rationalized (bureaucratic organizational) structures whose beginning appears to date back to the medieval church (Lancaster, 2005). Thus although microstructures are on some level organized or coordinated systems, the coordinating elements involved are not of the kind we associate with formal authority, complex hierarchies, rationalized procedure, or deep institutional structures. In fact, the mechanisms involved may be akin to those we find in face-to-face situations, but at the same time they hold together distantiated arrangements and distributed systems (they are based on response-presence rather than physical co-presence). The notion *microstructures* is intended to capture this quality of the mechanisms involved.

A second characteristic of global microstructures pertains to the relationship between institutional lightness and the achievement of effects. Weber’s notion of rationalization was radical in that it postulated a particular organizing structure composed of legitimate authority, formal expertise, and rational instrumental procedure as an effective agent of modernization. The structure underlies not only the effectiveness of capitalist production economies, but also that of public service sectors and nation-state administrations. Postmodern consumer society also owes its success to a significant degree, it is plausibly argued, to the presence and proper functioning of such rationalized systems (e.g., Ritzer, 1994, 2002). Rationality, authority, expertise, and formalized procedures were interiorized in such systems. Global microstructures do not correspond to Weberian ideals of highly rationalized systems, yet they appear nonetheless effective. Their effectiveness derives at least in part from external support structures that amplify and augment a system’s effectiveness and provide for the conditions of its success. In other words, global microstructures may derive disproportionality benefits from decoupling internal operations from support structures that provide for the conditions under which operations can remain light. Sourcings of this kind point away from the inclusive notion of an internally rationalized system. To put it in economic terms, it is the systematic and reflexive use of externalities that helps account for the success of global microstructures.

The notion of “sourcing” here can perhaps be seen as the global equivalent of rootedness (and belonging). Sourcing relationships link microglobal structures with their environment and context without the localizing connotations of roots; that is, without the idea that the system supported by the source growth out of the latter, links its identity to the source, or is deeply embedded in it. Yet source–system relationships should not be cast merely as economic alliances. In global foreign exchange markets, almost the entire work of world making, of creating, on screens, the informational reality within which traders move, is outsourced to provider firms such as Reuters, Bloomberg, and Telerate. Clearly in this case the sources shape the core of trading. Also, source (e.g., Reuters) and system (e.g., electronic over-the-counter markets, see below) co-evolved over the last 20–30 years in a near-symbiotic relationship. Sources are not just financially and instrumentally, but also symbolically (e.g., through patterns of communication) connected to systems. This is perhaps more apparent when one considers the new terrorism that relies on an Islamic diaspora as its source (see section on “Scopic Media and the Information Societies of the New Terrorism”). In any

case, amplification and augmentation strategies such as the ones exemplified by sourcing relationships exploit the potential for disproportionalities between input and output or effort and effect, and they can overcome disproportionalities between actors who pursue conflicting goals (see also Cohen & Stewart, 1994; Urry, 2003: 7). Disproportionality effects can also be distilled from the working and use of media of various kinds that amplify and multiply system results. And they can be distilled, for example, from the use of technology and from scientific and other innovations. Finally, lightness may emerge in response to de- or underregulation that creates the space for an adaptive and adaptable self-organization.

A third characteristic of global microstructures is that they are not simply networks, although they may comprise a variety of relational arrangements. Networks are sparse social structures (e.g., Fligstein, 1996: 657); they essentially consist of channels or “pipes” (Podolny, 2001) through which information and resources flow between nodes. What flows through the channels carries much of the burden of explaining outcomes, as does participants’ selection of network channels over other means of distribution or coordination. But more is going on in global social forms than transfers between actors.³ For example, it would seem to be difficult to understand Al Qaeda, which can be viewed as a global microstructure, without taking into account the spiritual influence of Islamist religious representations, or its family structure and self-reproducing mechanisms. Although global microstructures tend to be flat rather than hierarchically organized systems, they are at the same time highly textured systems. The specific textures respecify and may in fact contradict assumptions about network structures (e.g., Knorr Cetina, 2003). The term “microstructure” is intended to point to the richness and diversity of elements and practices that layer global social forms. It is also intended to suggest that relational connectivity may not be enough to effectively organize complex systems.

Thus although all elements may play a role in organizing or integrating a microstructure, I want to specifically point to *scopic media* (see section on “Scopic Systems”) as mechanisms of coordination on a global scale. Scopic media enable flow architectures that are not territorially bound, but the specific character of these architectures varies greatly across microstructured domains. For example, global institutional currency markets, which can be seen as global microstructures and which are entirely electronic markets, include a level of intersubjectivity that derives from the character of these markets as reflexively observed by participants in temporal continuity, synchronicity, and immediacy. The observation is enabled by global reflex systems (GRS) that assemble and project the reality of these markets. As a consequence, these markets are communities of time, but in a different sense than the terrorist groups for which disconnections and “structural holes” are a characteristic of operative practice.

The time aspects just illustrated are a fourth characteristic of global microstructures that I would like to emphasize here. There is more than one temporal dimension that is of interest, but I want to specifically note that global microstructures appear to be time-based and work with time in ways that transcend temporal patterns in more local configurations. One suggestion here is that time articulation

³ Consider how much of Al Qaeda one can explain by simply doing a network analysis of known participants, as has been attempted (e.g., Sageman, 2004).

and time mechanisms substitute for the loss of spatially differentiated stability and articulation in global systems. In some respects, spatially stabilized configurations can be made more productive when they become part of a temporal stream. To again take the example of financial markets, spatially dispersed currency markets, that is, interests in trading and knowledge about prices have become integrated, since the 1980s, into a temporal stream of activities made possible by electronic information and dealing systems that connect participants across locations and time zones (for the details see Knorr Cetina, 2003). This development eliminated arbitrage as a form of transaction that exploits the geographical separation of buying-and-selling interests. Yet the transformation of a spatial system into a temporal stream of sequentially connected activities also arguably increased the liquidity and innovativeness of market transactions and contributed to the growth, global power, and reproduction of financial markets.⁴ Similarly, Foucault and Lepenies argue that premodern spatial arrangements and categories of knowledge were replaced by a temporal approach as knowledge became “historical” at the turn of the 19th century, a move that transformed the speed of knowledge production and the growth of knowledge (cited in Jokisch, 1996: 184–194).⁵

There is a second idea that is relevant here and it is based on Luhman’s notion of the “temporalization of complexity” (1984: 76–81). This is the idea that what is temporal in a “temporalized” system are its components; they are unstable, changing, even transient. The argument here is that temporally unstable components increase the complexity and thereby the stability of the larger system, because nonenduring components change in response to the irritations of an (always more) complex environment and help the larger system cope with external factors.⁶ In the language used here, it is “lightness” in the sense of nonentrenched, “nervous,” degenerating elements that exemplify microstructuration and that carry the system forward. Another way to put it is that continual disintegration on the microlevel creates the space for successor elements and this increases the complexity and the chances of survival of the overall system (see also Zeleny, 1981: 4–17). Note that this notion is in contrast to network notions that see strong and expanding rates of relatedness between units whose identity is unproblematically

⁴The rise in volumes of trading has to do with the increased availability of investment money (e.g., Bank for International Settlement, 2005), but finance theorists (e.g., Crane et al., 1995) also point to market internal factors, such as the elimination of information barriers and the possibility of increased risk taking and risk diversification on a global scale.

⁵We may also consider a counter-example, cultures. Cultures tend to be geographically distributed and they are separated by various boundaries. Participants tend to divide themselves up along ethnic, religious, corporate, professional, and other lines spatially, socially, and symbolically. In fact, the notion of culture is widely used to capture the idea of local patterns and traditions that emerge within a culturally differentiated landscape. What would it imply if a group of cultures transformed into a global stream? Clearly diversity would suffer and potentially disappear. Would cultural learning and change increase, as it sometimes appears to do when corporate cultures merge?

⁶One illustration here is the transition, in physics, from the idea of elementary particles as simple, spotlike, nonreducible elements to the transitory, decaying subatomic processes of today. In today’s physics, it is the nonidentity, fluidity, and speed of transformation of the basic units of matter that is of interest (see also Jokisch, 1996: 195–198).

assumed as a guarantee of success.⁷ The contrasting assumption here is that fluid, or, in Luhmann's parlance, temporalized elements lead to a continual change of patterns of relatedness, and this is a causal factor in the successful reproduction of the system. These concepts refer back to the notion that autopoietic systems are emergent and do not have (stable) "foundations" (see also Urry, 2003: 51).

For Luhmann, temporalized complexity, as he termed it, was simply a way to theorize process in systems theory. According to his reasoning, all social systems display temporalized complexity by virtue of the fact that system elements, which he took to be actions, are temporally limited events rather than stable enduring structures. But this is a formal definition that does not allow us to pin down and evaluate differences between spatial structures and flow structures. Nor does it allow us to conceptualize flow concretely as something more specific than process and the character of social reality when seen from an action perspective. In other words, it is useful to reenter the question and ask which systems become time-based and what this means.

The two cases I consider in the following, global foreign exchange markets and the terrorist group Al Qaeda, exemplify the temporal characteristics described, but in different ways. I first discuss the scopic mechanism of coordination that enables the flow architecture of the financial markets discussed. I also address market intersubjectivity as a central feature identifying how these markets are microstructured and at the same time temporal systems. The scopic mechanism is important in that it provides an alternative to network coordination. It shows how infrastructural electronic connections may be instantiated, in practice, by nonnetwork forms of coordination. Scopic projections also play an important role in the new terrorism of Al Qaeda, to which I turn next. Here I propose a different sort of temporality, transcendent time, to account for Al Qaeda's parallel structure of living and a level of global symbolic integration. I also use the example of Al Qaeda to say more about the role of sourcing and the fluid and mobile components of a microstructure, Al Qaeda's cells. Within the confines of this chapter I can only provide selective illustrations of these cases.⁸ But these fragments are important in that they illustrate the feasibility of a microglobalization research program and some of its results.

Microglobalization I: The Virtual Societies of Global Currency Markets

Unlike other financial markets, the foreign exchange market is not organized mainly in centralized exchanges but derives from interdealer transactions in a global banking network of institutions; it is what is called an "over-the-counter"

⁷ Actor-network theory provides an example of an approach that postulates such an effect.

⁸ For a full version of the analysis of Al Qaeda based on secondary literature, Web material, and news reports see Knorr Cetina (2005). For the analysis of financial markets see, for example, Knorr Cetina & Bruegger (2002) and Knorr Cetina (2003).

market (for descriptions of bond, stock, and other financial markets see, for example, Smith, 1981, 1999; Baker, 1984; Abolafia, 1996; Hertz, 1998). Over-the-counter transactions are made on the trading floors of major investment firms and other banks. On the major trading floors of the global banks where we conducted our research in Zurich and New York, between 200 (Zurich) and 800 (New York) traders were engaged in stock, bond, and currency trading involving various trading techniques and instruments. Smaller floors in Sydney, Zurich, and New York featured between 40 to 80 traders. Up to 20% of these traders will deal in foreign exchange at desks grouped together on the floors. The traders at these desks in interbank currency markets take their own “positions” in the market in trying to gain from price differences while also offering trades to other market participants, thereby bringing liquidity to the market and sustaining it, if necessary, by trading against their own position. Foreign exchange deals via these channels start at around several hundred thousand dollars per transaction, going up to a hundred million dollars and more. The deals are made by investors, speculators, financial managers, central bankers, and others who want to profit from expected currency moves, or who need currencies to help them enter or exit transnational investments (e.g., in mergers and acquisitions). In doing deals, traders on the floors have a range of technologies at their disposal: most conspicuously, the up to six computer screens that display the market and serve to conduct trading. When traders arrive in the morning they strap themselves into their seats, figuratively speaking, they bring up their screens, and from then on their eyes will be glued to these screens, their gaze captured by it even when they talk or shout to each other, their bodies and the screen world melting together in what appears to be a total immersion in the action in which they are taking part. The market composes itself in these produced-and-analyzed displays to which traders are attached.

Scopic Systems

The terminals deliver much more than just windows on physically distant counterparties. In fact, they deliver the reality of financial markets, the referential whole to which “being in the market” refers, the ground on which traders step as they make their moves, the world that they literally share through their shared technologies and systems. The thickly layered screens laid out in front of traders provide the core of the market and most of the context. They come as close as one can get to delivering a standalone world that includes “everything” (see below) for its existence and continuation: at the center the actual dealing prices and incoming trading conversations, in a second circle the indicative prices, account information, and some news (depending on the current market story), and further headlines and commentaries providing a third layer of information. It is this projection of a world assembled and drawn together onscreen in ways that make sense and allow navigation and accounting that requires further explanation. What make this world possible, I suggest, are scopic systems.

The term “scope”, derived from the Greek *scopein*, to see, when combined with a qualifying notion, means an instrument, and the like for seeing or observing, as

in “periscope”. Social scientists tend to think in terms of mechanisms of coordination, which is what, for example, the network notion stands for: a network is an arrangement of nodes tied together by relationships that serve as conduits of communication, resources, and other coordinating instances which hold the arrangement together by passing between the nodes. Cooperations, strategic alliances, exchange, emotional bonds, kinship ties, personal relations, and forms of grouping and entrenchment can all be seen to work through ties and to instantiate sociality in networks of relationships. But we should also think in terms of reflexive mechanisms of observation and projection, which the relational vocabulary does not capture. Like an array of crystals acting as lenses that collect light, focusing it on one point, such mechanisms collect and focus activities, interests, and events on one surface, from whence the result may then be projected again in different directions. When such a mechanism is in place, coordination and activities respond to the projected reality to which participants become oriented. The system acts as a centering and mediating device through which things pass and from which they flow forward. An ordinary observer who monitors events is an instrument for seeing. When such an ordinary observer constructs a textual or visual rendering of the observed and televises it to an audience, the audience may start to react to the features of the reflected represented reality rather than to the embodied prereflexive occurrences.

In the financial markets studied, the reflexive mechanism and “projection plane” is the computer screen; with the screen come software and hardware systems that provide a vast range of observation, presentation, and interaction capabilities sustained by information and service provider firms. Given these affordances, the prereflexive reality is cut off and replaced; some of the mechanisms that we take for granted in a lifeworld, for example, its performative possibilities, have been integrated into the systems, and others have been replaced by specialized processes that feed the screen. The technical systems gather up a lifeworld while simultaneously projecting it. They also “apresent” (bring near, see Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) and project layers of context and horizons that are out of reach in ordinary lifeworlds; they deliver not only transnational situations, but a global world spanning all major time zones. They do this from trading floors located in global cities (Sassen, 2001) which serve as the bridgehead centers of the flow architecture of financial markets. Raised to a level of analytic abstraction, the configuration of screens, capabilities, and contents that traders in financial markets confront corresponds to a global reflex system, or GRS, where R stands for the reflexively transmitted and reflexlike (instantaneously) projected action and other capabilities of the system and G stands for the global scopic view and reach of the reflex system. The term is intended to denote a reflexive form of coordination that is flat (nonhierarchical) in character while at the same time being based on a comprehensive summary view of things, the reflected and projected global context and transaction system. This form of coordination contrasts with network forms of coordination which, according to the present terminology, are prereflexive in character: networks are embedded in territorial space, and they do not suggest the existence of reflexive mechanisms of projection that aggregate,

recontextualize, and augment the relational activities within new frameworks that are analytically relevant to understanding the continuation of activities. With the notion of a GRS system, I am offering a simplifying term for the constellation of technical, visual, and behavioral components packaged together on financial screens that deliver to participants a global world in which they can participate on a common platform, that of their shared computer screens. On a technological level, the GRS mechanism postulated requires that we must understand as analytically relevant for a conception of financial markets not only electronic connections, but computer terminals and screens—the sorts of teletechnologies (Clough, 2000: 3) that are conspicuously present on trading floors and the focus of participants' attention—as well as the trading floors themselves, where these screens cluster and through which markets pass.

Sequential Markets and Communities of Time

Scopic systems of the kind discussed are comprehensive innovations. In the case considered, they enabled the transition from network-based markets to a global market. Over time (it took time to develop this particular, highly customized scopic system)⁹ they transformed spatially dispersed interests in trading and knowledge about prices into a temporal stream that connected participants across locations and time zones (Knorr Cetina, 2003). Let us first consider the temporal part of this transformation. As indicated, the emergence of GRS eliminated arbitrage as a form of transaction that exploits the geographical separation of buying and selling interests. Geographical separation had meant information barriers, which disappeared with the transparency of a common market. Reuters, the main developer of GRS at the time with respect to currency markets, assembled and pooled the information for this market. The firm projected, through its terminals and software, an identical market (dealing and indicative prices as well as contextual information) to all participants connected. But for the present market to emerge, more was necessary than the transparency that ensued. Dispersed parallel interests in trading had to become ordered sequentially according to price levels, a task originally accomplished through the presentation, on screen, of lists of prices that indicated what prices particular banks and traders were potentially willing to pay. This kind of successive ordering is now done by algorithms that are built into electronic broker systems (see Muniesa, 2003). As a

⁹ Screens began to present a dispersed and dissociated matrix of interests more directly only in 1973, when the British news provider Reuters first launched the computerized foreign exchange system "Monitor," which became the basis for this electronic market (Read, 1992). Monitor still represented the market only partially, however, because it, too, only provided indicative prices. Nonetheless it did, from the beginning, include news. Actual dealing remained extraneous to screen activities and was conducted over the phone and telex until 1981, when a new system also developed by Reuters, one which included dealing services, went live to 145 institutional customers in nine countries. The system was extended within a year to Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Middle East, resulting in a market with a worldwide presence (Read, 1992: 283 ff., 310–311).

consequence of this sort of sequential ordering any participant could buy or sell at the universally best price within the common global market. The best price was a present price; such a price is valid only at a given point in time, and at any one time, only one deal could be performed globally. Time and price became inseparably locked together, and time-price changes became the pulsating beat of these markets. The principle of only one deal at a time implies a second sequence, that of the succession of done deals and traded prices. This sequence of deals is indicated on screen; it articulates and defines a streaming market. As best prices are selected in dealing and recognized by the system, the price of a financial instrument at which a deal was done constrains and potentially selects (one also has to figure in volume) the next price.

One needs to appreciate the full force of this transformation. A world of parallel goings on (trading, information processing) as it occurs in spatially dispersed markets has been eliminated and replaced by a strict sequence of activities that are frequently separated only by split seconds. As a result, sequential changes have become not only the pulse, but also the personal memory, common history, and projected future of the streaming market. The present in this sequence is now “metastable”, to use a term borrowed from physics; it lasts potentially long enough for human intervention to occur, but not longer. Time itself would seem to have been transformed; the global market moves at accelerated, intensely punctuated speed. We may also say that the spatial cultures of trading linked by arbitrageurs have been transformed into a flow culture.

The argument just presented links scopic systems to the emergence of a flow market and explains the sequentialization of a streaming market. I now want to add a further conceptual level to the argument that (some) global social fields are microstructured by turning to the participants involved, that is, to traders. A global reflex system may enable market unification and sequentialization in the sense described, but there is also the question whether the participants involved, market-making traders, remain isolated atomized individuals as postulated by economic theory or whether we can assume a level of integration in global fields. To put this differently, a test case for the microsociological argument I offer is whether microsociological concepts allow us to go beyond the notion of atomized economic actors. The question is also whether they suggest an alternative to the sociological view which is that atomistic actors need to be seen as embedded in networks of social relationships that define the sociological component of these markets (Granovetter, 1985). Perhaps the concept most relevant to microsociological thinking when it comes to social binding is that of intersubjectivity. But ideas about intersubjectivity have been pitched at a fundamental level of social reciprocity that occurs in a small space; intersubjectivity “belongs,” one might say, to the territory of the face-to-face situation. Can we maintain that a level of intersubjectivity also obtains between individuals who are globally spread out in space? What passes between territorially separated individuals who may never share the same space on the levels of consciousness, interpretation, cultural orientation? Markets and in particular spot markets are purportedly classic examples of anonymous discrete exchanges ruled by supply and demand adjustments

rather than by intersubjectivity (Williamson, 1975, 1985; Powell, 1990). Can we nonetheless assume that a certain level of connectedness (intersubjectivity) is characteristic of some markets? In this section, I submit that participants' reciprocal observation of markets on screens—enabled by scopic systems—may constitute a basis for a form of intersubjectivity and integration of some global spheres. I discuss this by drawing on Schutz's idea of a "We-relation", a term that captures a community of time and can be related back to the temporal character of global foreign exchange markets (e.g. 1964, vol. II: 25–26).

Schutz's analysis of intersubjectivity can be summarized by considering two examples. The first is a situation where two individuals are oriented to each other in the face-to-face situation (Schutz, 1964, vol. II: 27–33; Natanson, 1962: 13). In his analysis of this situation, Schutz bracketed out the question why a particular interaction occurs and what individuals explicitly communicate to each other in order to focus on the more primordial nonverbal interaction that occurs; he described very vividly the "interlocking of the glances" and the "thousand-faceted mirroring of each other" which he saw as a unique feature of face-to-face situations (1967: 169–70). These mirrorings, he maintained, make another person's presence and consciousness accessible to an actor and define the situation as an intersubjective situation. The second example to which Schutz linked his analysis of intersubjectivity is not of two individuals facing each other, but two subjects watching a third object, a bird flying. In analyzing this situation, Schutz arrived at another idea which became central to his conception, that of temporal coordination. As one of his followers put it, "The reciprocal interlocking of the time dimension is for Schutz the core phenomenon of intersubjectivity" (Zaner, 1964). Why did Schutz associate intersubjectivity with time, a connection not commonly made in sociology? Schutz took the objects observed to be things that move or change over time. The experience of such events is temporal in that it is constituted step by step as the event unfolds. Two persons watching the same event are brought into a "state of intersubjectivity," so to speak, by their experience evidently changing in similar ways, in response to what unfolds. The basis of this sort of we-experience, for Schutz, was the temporal immediacy of events. Temporal immediacy allowed one to recognize and follow another person's experience of the bird in flight as contemporaneous with one's own experience.

Schutz attempted a number of formulations of temporal coordination, always associating it with sequential aspects of consciousness rather than with any content. He spoke of the coordination of "phases of consciousness," of the "synchronization of two interior streams of duration," and of the fact that during this synchronization, "we are growing older together" (1964, vol. II: 24–26). The point for us is that in emphasizing temporal coordination, Schutz moved away from any attempt to base social relatedness on the assumption of the shared content of experience or on any real understanding of other minds. Instead, he left things with the subject recognizing the other as a fellow human being here and now, evidently paying attention to the same event. What turned this experience into a "We-relation" as he called it, was the contemporaneousness of an event, one's experiencing it, and the indications of the other's attentiveness to it: "Since

we are growing older together during the flight of the bird, and since I have evidence, in my own observations, that you were paying attention to the same event, I may say that we saw a bird in flight" (1964, vol. II: 25).

It is his avoidance of any requirement of real understanding and his shift from two subjects engaged with each other to subjects engaged with a third object who notice this engagement that makes Schutz' ideas useful for conceptualizing the sociality of global fields, as a level of intersubjectivity and integration that obtains before any concrete relationship is entered into and before any economic transaction has been performed. To illustrate this in regard to financial markets we can start with the question what the "same events" might be that could plausibly be construed as globally observed in the same binding fashion in which events are observed in the face-to-face situation. These events are delivered, I want to argue, by the knowledge-created phenomena onscreen and the content of the supplemental channels to which traders are oriented. In other words, the bird that traders watch together around the clock is "the market," as it is assembled in identical (price actions, market analyses, news descriptions, etc. furnished by global information providers), overlapping (information exchanged through personal relationships), and coordinated fashion in the many windows and channels to which participants are attached. In these windows and channels the "same" market has a vivid presence; it speaks out to participants and demands their connected continuous attention and action. This action component is implicated in a second requirement associated with the We-relation, that of *reciprocity*: it must somehow be noticeable that others are watching the same events and that they are attuned to one another's presence. For Schutz, observing the other observe was crucial for any interlocking of subjectivities to come about; his emphasis was on nonverbal expressions as signals of the other's attention and attunement to the situation. On the global plane, this attention and attunement to the market—comprising price action, economic context, and a set of market participants—is presupposed and hardly needs to be expressed. One assumes that no professional trader or salesperson can survive financially if he or she pays no attention to the market, and that floor managers watch over participants' attention signals. Nonetheless, there is a variety of indicators of others' active interest in the market that traders observe: most notably the deal requests they make, the messages they send, and the price movements they trigger. Through these signals, absent market participants have what Goodwin (1995: 260) once called a "mediated" presence on screen. Market activities can be considered as signals not only of economic opinion but also of social connectedness of participants' reciprocal awareness of others' presence and constitutive involvement in an unfolding market situation.

The reciprocity just indicated marks the current context as also involving what Schutz called the "interlocking of motives characteristic of interaction in the We-relation" (1964: 55), the possibility of one's "in-order-to" motive becoming the other's "because" motive. A trader selling a currency in order to take a profit may trigger trading responses in others because of what he or she has done. Here reciprocity points to the fact that global financial markets are fields of interaction: at

any point in time all traders watch the same events and one another, but some also interact (trade), and in interacting they may add new levels of reciprocity and reflexivity (see Soros, 1994). But we should turn now to the third feature on which Schutz based the We-relation, that of temporal coordination (see also Zerubiavel, 1981). First, traders, salespeople, and others on trading floors located within a particular time zone share a *community of time*. They watch the market as it comes into view in the morning and builds up during the day virtually continuously in synchronicity and immediacy during their working (and waking) hours.¹⁰ All three aspects are important here: synchronicity refers to the phenomenon that traders and salespeople observe the same market events simultaneously over the same time period; continuity means they observe the market virtually without interruption, having lunch at their desk and asking others to watch when they step out; and temporal immediacy refers to the immediate real-time availability of market transactions and information to participants within the appropriate institutional trading networks. Local news is also transmitted on screen “live” when the events are scheduled at a particular time (e.g., announcements of economic indicators), or they are transmitted with as little delay as possible. Traders, investors, and others attempt to gain advance knowledge of special developments, but these pursuits presuppose rather than undercut the community of time which obtains with respect to the market.

Time coordination also involves, second, a temporal division of labor across time zones, to the effect that the community of time extends around the clock. As an example take the trading instrument of an option to buy or sell a currency at a particular point in the future, at an agreed price. In contrast to the instantaneously completed on the spot sales and purchases of currencies discussed so far, options expire weeks or months after the deal was made; hence unlike a spot trader’s accounts, an option trader’s accounts cannot be closed every night. One way to organize such long-term transactions globally is to pass on a desk’s option accounts every evening to the same bank’s option traders in the next time zone, who will manage the accounts and add deals during their working hours. The “option book” that circles the globe indicates global financial cooperation: one extends the surveillance of the “bird in flight,” the market, through the eyes of others, when it threatens to disappear from view during the night. As a result, the

¹⁰ As Harvey has argued (1989: 239–259), increasing time-compression is a characteristic of the whole process of modernity and of postindustrialization. A similar argument had been advanced by McLuhan (1964: 358), who proposed that electricity establishes a global network of communication that enables us to apprehend and experience media-transmitted events nearly simultaneously, as in a common central nervous system (see also Waters, 1995: 35; Giddens, 1990:17–21). These views anticipate global integration by means of a common (media) culture or consciousness rather than by means of economics, in contrast to other approaches (Waters, 1995: 33–35; Wallerstein, 1974, 1980). Yet what I am after here is something much less general in scope (most of the world is excluded from traders’ screen world) and more microlevel in character: a form of time coordination that penetrates all of the participants’ interactions and involves dozens of small mechanisms of binding participants into the same timeframe.

coordination of consciousness Schutz discussed becomes more inclusive, encompassing groups that are not simultaneously present but that take turns sequentially and overlapping in observing and acting on the market: traders coordinate trading intentions and philosophies with the next and the previous desk in time in evening and morning phone calls and emails, and the book remains on their mind (and available on their screens) while it is out of their hands. In other words, the circling book can be seen as an attempt to weave together the consciousness of those attending to it in different time zones, with the effect of creating an around-the-clock synchronization of observation and experience.

A third aspect of time coordination beyond this attempted global contemporaneity brings into view market *calendars* and *schedules*: dates and hours set for important economic announcements and for the release of periodically calculated economic indicators and data. These calendars and schedules structure and pace participants' awareness and anticipation. They create an atmosphere of collective anticipation and preparation for specific events that pace and interrupt the regular flow of market activities. Temporal structures of this sort recurrently focus a global field of watchers on possible changes of direction of the "bird in flight." They bind the field to specific timeframes around which global attention is heightened and in relation to which expectations build up. The ordinary temporal flow of synchronous and sequential time-zone observation is thus punctuated regularly by potentially trend-changing occurrences. The scheduled character of these events not only synchronizes experience on a collective and global level, but adds to it a measure of emotional arousal. Durkheim thought such arousals to be central to bringing about a feeling of "solidarity": he maintained that the We-experience arises when a group becomes excited. One should note that the Durkheimian "force field" (Wiley, 1994: 106, 122) of social solidarity is energized by feeling or sentiment but it also entails the unity of something shared. With Durkheim, this something shared was either moral or semantic, that is, a unity of meaning. In the present case, the unity of meaning has much to do with knowledge, with the punctuation of existing trends by new information.

The question that lies at the core of the notion of a response-presence-based social form that extends across global distances is: what are the possibilities of its inherent connectivity and integration as the key to overcoming the geographical separation between participants? I introduced the notion of a global we-relationship that is based on temporal coordination to suggest that a level of microintegration, or intersubjectivity, is possible in global fields. Other microstructures illustrated elsewhere for these markets include linkages through global conversations, the structural use of interaction means to maintain order, the form response-presence takes in the face-to-screen situation and ways of bodily anchoring that show how electronically mediated markets as collective disembodied systems nonetheless penetrate and reflect the bodily experience of participants (see Knorr Cetina & Bruegger, 2002). The point about selecting the phenomenon of Schutzian intersubjectivity as a mechanism of integration to be illustrated for the purpose of this chapter is that it also casts light on the temporal

makeup of microglobalized domains. One should note that the community of time discussed emerged in connection with the transformation of a spatial market into a flow market that circles the globe continuously with the sun: these time registers overlap, but they are nonetheless, distinctive. In Al Qaeda's case, to which I now turn, and which allows me to illustrate a different microstructure, time dimensions are also central, but they are of a different type than the ones discussed. I use Al Qaeda's case also to provide an example of sourcing and to illustrate the continued relevance of scoping systems.

Microglobalization II: The New Terrorist Societies

The new terrorism, as the 9/11 Commission Report of the U.S. Congress and President terms it, is sophisticated, patient, disciplined, and lethal (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: xvi, 47 ff.; see also Hall, 2004). The 9/11 attack was a complex international operation that could not have been mounted by just anyone in any place. Such an operation required, the Commission states at the end of a long and detailed investigation, a logistics network able to manage the movement of operatives and money. It had to find and transport resources, and it had to have reliable communication between coordinators and operatives, a command structure, planning, the ability to test plans, recruitment, and training (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 365–366). And yet it is clear that Al Qaeda is not an omnipotent evil empire, a massive multinational corporate structure, or a military-industrial complex. The Commission speaks of the active support of “thousands” of young Muslims for Bin Laden's message, not of millions (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 362). It also states that the group of conspirators which brought off the attacks was at the same time fragile, dependent on a few key personalities, and occasionally left vulnerable by the marginal unstable people often attracted to such causes (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 364).

How, then, are we to conceptualize sociologically this “hydra of destruction” which is simultaneously no more than a marginal group of conspirators that makes mistakes, whose tradecraft is not especially sophisticated, and which lives by donations? The new terrorism would seem to be a major exemplifying case for a global microstructure; for example, it exemplifies a lack of institutional form, self-organizing, emergent structures, and a surprising interactional effectiveness when it launches its attacks. What are the social morphologies of groups that operate on a global scale and are capable of such asymmetry effects? Modern industrial society created “complex” forms of organizations that managed uncertainty and task fulfillment through interiorized systems of control and expertise. But complexity was institutional complexity; it meant sophisticated multilevel mechanisms of coordination, authority, and compensation that assured orderly functioning and performance. Al Qaeda does not exhibit this sort of interiorized complexity. Instead it seems to lean toward a different form of complexity; one emanating from more microstructural arrangements and the rise of mechanisms of coordination akin to those found in interaction systems.

Transcendent Time: A Structure of Parallel Living

Although the Muslim belief system of Al Qaeda clearly has many aspects, I want to discuss it in terms of the lived time that potentially connects the members of the group. This may help to understand the character of Al Qaeda terrorism as a parallel world disjoined from the world of the host societies in which Al Qaeda volunteers live. A useful approach in this regard is to go back to early Christian communities and the way they lived time, according to Heidegger (2004; see also Guignon, 2000 and Ciborra, 2004: 23 ff.). Heidegger reconstructs the temporality of these communities from St. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. According to St. Paul, at the beginning of primal Christian spirituality lies the Annunciation as an experience that shapes religious life at the time and is, for the individual and the community, a moment of transformation. St. Paul refers to the "having become" that characterizes Christians after the Annunciation. In early Christian religiosity there is also the prospect of the "second coming" and the burning question of when this event will happen. St. Paul addresses the question by indicating how one should live the situation of waiting: it is not a matter of simply awaiting this future occurrence but instead of "running forward" toward it by living every moment in a distinctive way. In this "living-forward" one is resolute in assuming a context shaped by having become a Christian in order to be prepared for the Event which is already happening. Life becomes simplified in a certain manner as it is "brought into the simplicity of its fate" and pulled back from "the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves" (Guignon, 2000: 88–89). As the later Heidegger states, the world "does not become another in its content, nor does the circle of others get exchanged for a new one." Rather the transformation pertains to the "form" of everyday activity, leaving the content of the world unchanged (Dreyfus, 1993: 321f.). Thus, those who "have become" will still go about the business of everyday life and attend to what is demanded of them. But they will do so in a different mode; what has changed, to use a term borrowed from Williams (1977: ch. 9), is a structure of feeling, and the living of time.

I propose that such a "futural" mode of living based on a "having become" can also be seen to characterize the new religious terrorism. Like the early Christians confronting an eschatological promise, many members of Al Qaeda would seem to similarly ground their life in "moments" of transformation. They also appear to be pulled into living-forward toward the end, a parallel life that has been delivered over to a new temporality and commitment while it is at the same time participating in the business of ordinary life. In the terrorist case, the new temporality appears to actively confront if not embrace the possibility of personal death, as a transitional occurrence en route to a promised and visually pictured personal paradise. But it also runs forward toward an imagined and ecstatic success of "jihad" as "holy war" beyond personal death and toward the future of the community in whose history one's own death is enmeshed. These more collective ideas run counter to the Heideggerian concept of time as individual being-toward-death. Thus, the lived time of terrorism appears "transcendent" in regard to

personal life, and it transcends ordinary time by “shadowing” it with a second future that embeds everyday activities within a new meaning structure.

The assumption of a second transcendent temporal structure of terrorism is important in the following respects. First, it grounds modes of affectivity that appear to have served Al Qaeda in the past: two characteristic aspects of these activities have been patience and preparedness: the patience to wait for the right situation to strike while at the same time resolutely preparing for specific attacks, and the patience to call off projects and accept backlashes while simultaneously reorganizing and living forward toward the goal of an Islamic state. The members of Al Qaeda are not improvisers who act on the spur of the moment or in response to fleeting circumstances. But neither are they given to the strict schedules and modes of control that characterize rationalized systems of planning. As analysts have noted, Al Qaeda has shown a surprising degree of patience, sometimes giving itself years of meticulous preparation without indication of any hurry or deadline pressure (9/11 Report; Kean & Hamilton, 2004: ch. 5.2). At the same time, participants have undergone extensive preparatory training, often for concrete tasks (e.g., Gunaratna, 2003: 10–12); in other words, they resolutely assumed the context of becoming a fighter for a cause in order to be prepared for demands when they call. Second, this sort of temporality would also appear to bind together an otherwise dispersed and diverse community whose members derive endurance, tension, and lived significance from the act of giving themselves over to transcendent time.

Al Qaeda membership cuts across national, cultural, and language boundaries, and it includes and liaises with different Muslim religious orientations. Osama bin Laden has continually stressed the need for Muslims of different orientations to unite in the fight against Americans and “the degradation and disbelief which have spread in Muslim lands.”¹¹ Temporal coordination alleviates the problem of constructing unity from diversity and the problem of “other minds,” that is, of closely coordinating and shaping individuals’ thinking. It suggests that a level of intersubjectivity may develop among participants that live different daily lives and have experienced various cultural upbringings and national situations. For this argument to be plausible one needs to consider that transcendent time involves more than time reconstructed in terms of a new beginning and end. As in the case of financial markets, it also implies time structuring, a temporality punctuated by events that include widely communicated historical experiences and references (such as the Afghan war against Russia), successful terrorist attacks, public summons (fatwas), sermons and television appearances (e.g., Bin Laden’s appearance before the U.S. election of November 2004). Thus transcendent time would appear to be structured in terms of an historical sequence to which participants are oriented and which contextualizes individual time and effort. The sequence provides not only for a collective memory of the group, it also situates the collective project that is continually reinstantiated, extended, and reshaped as events are incorporated into the historical sequence. Time, here, may have to be thought of

¹¹ Al Qaeda recruitment video cited in Gunaratna (2003: 72).

as a “punctuated flow” (punctuated by a sequence of occurrences) into which individual participants are absorbed and feel integrated, a flow that runs on in the shadow of everyday time and the temporal orders of host cultures.

One implication of the temporal coordination postulated is that globality becomes possible as spatial mechanisms of coordination based on geographic closeness, routine face-to-face contacts, national political knowledge, and the like lose their importance. Another implication is that—as a form of coordination—the temporality postulated fulfills some of the functions Weber associated with rational authority structures. In other words, the theoretical argument here is that time structuring affords a form of coordination that can take the place of institutional control and social authority structures. We have thus given a first illustration of how the new terrorism is a microstructure that operates on a global scale. Transcendent time is the equivalent of the Schutzian intersubjectivity postulated for the financial markets considered. But temporal coordination here is less tightly woven. What is missing is the synchronicity, continuity, and temporal immediacy that locked together participants and activities in the global market.

Scopic Media and the Information Societies of the New Terrorism

The punctuated flow I postulated can only emerge and have integrative effects if the relevant events are widely transmitted. In this section, I want to consider the teletechnologies (Clough, 2000: 3) that accomplish the transmission. In Al Qaeda’s case, TV channels, the Web, videotapes and audiotapes, and their producers can be seen as the components of a dispersed scopic system through which the collective terrorist project becomes assembled and channeled. These media provide sensorily rich records and projection planes for the transmission of images, speeches, commentary, and events. The technical systems are “apresentational” in the sense indicated before; they bring near to receivers distant situations that are out of reach for ordinary lifeworlds. They are also a-representational, by which I mean that the content of the televised items should not be primarily decoded in a representational idiom. Although the representational truth of these items may be invoked, the contents tend to be media productions by TV stations and by authors such as religious leaders aiming at a range of performative effects.

The teletechnological media and media contents correspond to a scopic system that fills transcendent time with collective content, structures time in terms of events, and give concreteness and substance to the temporal coordination I have postulated. Many of the broadcast events are also intentionally moral and performative in the sense of “calling” the audience to particular forms of actions. These calls, exemplified by Bin Laden’s declaration of war against the Americans of February 1998 or his and Ayman al-Zawahiri’s “messages” of warning and threat in 2002, are not of the same order as the exchanges that coordinate concrete plans of action. But they may well have coordinating force on another level: that of reiterating and extending the transcendent project to which the audience is committed, that of renewing an affective community, and that of creating for this community a

background world that grounds their activities and experiences. In other words, one assumes that the images and messages have a binding effect on prepared participants, as these select and interpret the content within the framework of already existing commitments to a transcendent project. One also assumes that for those “having become” and regularly drawing on scopic presentations, the sequences of occurrences begin to constitute something of a referential world, a thick context that situates individual activities, provides frameworks of interpretation for further events, and is a venue for the renewal of emotional dedication. When scopic systems are systematically used they have “world-making” (Goodman, 1978) effects.

The world involved is informational rather than “natural” or “material.” This is implied by the notion of scopic systems and the mediated character of the communities they create. In communicating distant occurrences in identical fashion to distributed diasporic audiences, scopic systems are information systems, and Al Qaeda is part of the contemporary information society in that it uses its means and mechanisms. The informational makeup of this world is also apparent in its processual character. Most of our world notions imply that the world is a place (however extended) or perhaps a totality of objects (e.g., the physical universe) “wherein” we live, and “in” which factual (e.g., globalization) and symbolic processes can be said to take place. In comparison, the parallel world of Al Qaeda appears to be fluid, processual, and a-territorial. It is neither presupposed nor given, but constructed-in-going-along. As the flow of events into which Al Qaeda members are plugged is continuously reiterated, updated, and extended, the various temporal and other coordinates of this world are continuously articulated and changed as operational goals are adopted, religious commentary and messages are interpreted, new decrees are issued, and the activities of various “enemies” are observed and decoded. The very accoutrements of this noninstitutional timeworld change as new events take place and become food for imagined new scenarios and works. If the image I used in the section on “Transcendent Time: A Structure of Parallel Living” of Al Qaeda “running forward” toward the future by living every moment in a distinctive way is plausible, then it implies that Al Qaeda’s world is dynamic and quickly changing rather than static and in a state of equilibrium. This dynamism has a correlate in the mobility of participants. We know from various records and descriptions that Al Qaeda members themselves, and their camps, cells, and other bases, are extremely mobile. Participants travel, move, and change identity frequently. Cells are equally mobile, and the membership, leadership, and operational structure of the group also change. The mobility of Al Qaeda surely is a strategic element in its success; but it also points to the “placeless” character of the Al Qaeda microstructure, its floating, scapelike (Appadurai, 1996: ch. 2) form and the readiness of participants to interlock with any territory for specific purposes but to share none.

Cells and Diasporas

So far I have introduced two major elements of the global microstructure of Al Qaeda: transcendent time as a structure of orientation constitutive of parallel living, and scopic systems that deliver the “mediated presence” of remote participants

and update interpretations and events. The two elements enable a floating global microstructure to emerge and fuel its dynamics. I now address a last element, the organizational form of Al Qaeda. Central to the discussion is the distinction between its cells and a religiously defined Arabic diaspora on which Al Qaeda relies for external support. Several theoretical arguments can be linked to this organization. One is that the organizing principles invoked are microstructural; they involve trust, the analogy of family relationships, and a cellular organization. The second line of arguments brings up sourcing as a way to account for some of Al Qaeda's disproportional effects. The dual organization described offers an argument for how lightness of structure can be combined with enhanced effectiveness through strategies of amplification and augmentation. I also show, in this section, that lightness of structure amounts to more than a lack of formal, rationalized institutional structures. It implies a transition to a temporal complexity of a kind where system stability depends on and arises from the fluidity and instability of components.

Consider first the roles of amplification and augmentation in relation to Al Qaeda's organization. In the last section, I cited scopic media as a constitutive feature of the global microstructure of terrorism. Yet some of the most important of these media are not managed or "owned" by Al Qaeda but are independent agents (e.g., television channels) that broadcast to a wide and predominantly nonterrorist audience. The television channel Al Jazeera records and broadcasts terrorist messages and images, and it produces, in the eyes of observers, inflammatory programs that have disturbed not only Washington but also Arab governments. Yet it clearly also caters to the broad concerns of nonterrorist clienteles (it reaches an audience of 30 million to 50 million), it prides itself on being independent and impartial, and it is subsidized by and operates out of Qatar, the American-friendly state and U.S. ally in the Persian Gulf. Terrorist microstructures incorporate and use some teletechnological media, but they also draw on outside systems that are independent of their communities. The issue this raises is the dual organization of Al Qaeda: some functions are interiorized within its framework of organization, whereas others are outsourced to external agents and units not controlled by the Al Qaeda leadership and not directly engaged in its projects. These external components may not live transcendent time, that is, partake in Al Qaeda's parallel mode of living. They are nonetheless implicated in its projects, which they enable and support. In fact, Al Qaeda's lightness of structure can at least partially be explained by the externalization of some crucial components. Al Qaeda practices a form of sourcing: it delegates tasks to outside agents, and it takes advantage of outside agents' willing or unintentional promotion of its cause. For example, it takes advantage of media channels that broker communications and meanings to a wide audience of spectators, it sources much of the recruitment process to sales agents, the radical religious leaders who propagate relevant interpretations of Islam and head religious schools, and it has externalized much of its financing to independent NGOs, Islamic charity organizations, specific churches, and the like (for detailed overviews, see Gunaratna, (2003: ch. 3) and the 9/11 Report (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: XVIII).

Al Qaeda's sources can be understood in terms of what one may call, following Ho (2004), a "diaspora" of Islamic agencies and people. Ho describes the long existence of a diaspora of Arabs from Hadramawt, Yemen, across the Indian Ocean, and its confrontations with the British Empire from the 16th century onward. A diaspora, in this parlance, is not understood as a homogeneous group that spreads out across territories but is a composite; for example, the Hadrami in their movement throughout the Indian Ocean became natives anywhere, intermarried with the local population, and their offspring assimilated or developed a mixed creole identity. Ho extends his model to the current situation, arguing that Bin Laden is a member of the Hadrami diaspora, and his operations, spreading from East Africa to the Philippines, take place in an old theater of Arab diasporic mobility and activity. These geographical parallels mean that for viewers in South and Southeast Asia, the events unfolding on the television screen have deep historical resonances (2004: 234 ff.).

The notion of diaspora, then, recaptures the idea of a religious commitment introduced in the beginning but it gives it breadth and historical depth: it draws attention to a long-standing and persistent confrontation between a religiously defined Arabic diaspora and various Western empires. To be sure, the diaspora can no longer be regarded as limited to the Indian Ocean. America is not a colonial power, although it may come close to one in the diasporic imagination. Potential historical continuities of the sort implied are accomplished rather than simply given. The point I want to make by bringing up these historical references is not that the present confrontation echoes past ones precisely or that it is in fact identical with them. It is rather that Al Qaeda's global reach and microstructural effectiveness is easier to understand if we not only assume the existence of "sympathizers," but an historically anchored movement of Islamic people—with overlapping religious beliefs and a tradition of confrontation with non-Islamic powers—of whom a portion remains connected to the Arab and Islamic world. Awareness of the historical continuities and specific characteristics of such a diaspora may account for Al Qaeda's success in its global support and recruitment efforts. The dual organization I postulated captures the role of this diaspora in providing Al Qaeda with an external belt of potential capital: financial, social, cultural, and political capital. According to estimates by the CIA, Al Qaeda can draw on the support of some 6 to 7 million Muslims worldwide, of which 120,000 are potential recruits for its violent projects (cited in Gunaratna, 2003, p. 95). Al Qaeda's "few thousand" active members are augmented by millions of supporters that are linked to it by a diasporic history and imagination. In this sense Al Qaeda can maintain its lightness of structure, while at the same time mustering disproportional effectiveness with regard to selected outcomes.

If the existence of an historical diaspora provides a belt of potential resources, what is inside the belt? In other words, how are we to think of the other leg on which Al Qaeda stands, the second component of its dual organization? The consensual answer (for which I draw here on the summary account by Gunaratna, 2003, ch. 3) is that Al Qaeda is organized in terms of a cellular structure. Cells are units of 2 to 15 members placed in various settings to prepare for certain tasks,

or they emerge in a certain place as recruits living in a particular area become committed to Al Qaeda. Several defining characteristics of this cellular structure can be indicated. The first is that cells are independent and self-contained. Gunaratna (2003, p. 97) recounts that Al Qaeda's structure remains close to that of Egyptian terrorist groups, whose cells were called *anguds*, which is Arabic for a bunch of grapes. If a grape is plucked from a grapevine, its disappearance does not affect the others. Thus cells appear to have independent bank accounts, and their members may only know of their own role in a project and not that of other cells. A second characteristic, continuous with the first, is that cells are productive units. For example, cells or their members may come up with their own proposals for terrorist attacks, find ways of assembling the necessary materials and knowledge, carry out relevant research, and even take charge of financing part of the preparatory work and of their own expenses. Third, cells are mobile in regard to location and flexible in regard to membership. New members may join teams, previous members may transfer to other locations, teams may disband, and cells may relocate. Although the cell nodes are regional, regional nodes do not have a fixed abode. For example, after Al Qaeda relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan in 1996, its European and North American bureau moved to Turkey and Yemen, and the Turkish bureau moved again, to Spain, after the arrest of a key figure in Europe in 1998.¹² Fourth, the system of communication that links cells to leaders appears fractal and mutational, an apparent advantage when it comes to preventing transparency and leaks. There were some cell members among those involved in the 9/11 attacks who communicated directly with leaders in Afghanistan, but most cells appear to have been coordinated through "agent-handlers" who lived near the target location or in the "hostile zone" of Europe and America, and they reported only to them. This also implies that cell structure is decentralized and without formal hierarchy or system of governance. What substitutes for a formal hierarchy is a family structure in which "older brothers" may play a greater role than the others. "Family" frequently stands for nationality. Fifteen of the hijackers of the 9/11 attacks were from Al Qaeda's "Saudi family," which, perhaps in continuity with Ho's account of the Hadrami diaspora, appears to play a dominant role in Al Qaeda. Families function regionally, but individuals from different national "families" may also be "handpicked" and cross-posted outside their regions (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 98).

Al Qaeda's family organization responds to problems posed by cultural and linguistic barriers in a global organization; Anderson's imagined communities are put to specific uses here (1983). It is worth mentioning that high energy physicists, in conducting their large-scale experiments staffed by participants from many regions of the world, also frequently team people up according to national origin. But the metaphor of "family," like the metaphor of brotherhood ingrained in Islam, also appeals to trust and sentiment and suggests the constitution of community, at least

¹² Some of these movements and the travels of Al Qaeda members are recounted in great detail in Gunaratna (2003: ch. 3).

potentially. In other words, cells and families and the modes of diasporic assistance and affiliation they assume invoke microstructural principles of connectivity and integration. However, I also want to emphasize temporal complexity here. The characteristics of the cell structure I have outlined, in particular the mobility, flexibility, and mutability of cells with regard to membership and location, as well as their relative autonomy and planned disintegration, all point to the temporal nature of cells. Cells are not durable units but changing implementations of short-term projects sequentially replaced by new projects: they are units that their creators plan from the outset to abolish, abandon, and recreate as nonidentical units at a different location. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is this instability and nervous irritability of the components of a system associated, in the section on "What Are Global Microstructures?", with a complexity based on time that serves the stability and successful continuation of the whole group. The bureaucratically organized intelligence agencies and military machines that have been mobilized to fight Al Qaeda rely on elaborate interiorized systems of rules, authority, and control that offer legitimacy and transparency of procedure. What they do not offer is Al Qaeda's lightness of being manifest here in its sequentially recreated mode of functioning and nonidentical cellular structure.

Time-based complexity, one should emphasize, is continuous with the fluidity concepts some writers have discussed (e.g., Abbott, 2001; Urry, 2000; Bauman, 2000; DeLaet & Mol, 2000). Yet the distinction added here between the flexibility and fluidity of the component level of a system and its overall stability is an important one to make; it provides a particular angle on emergence, implies sequential learning on a microstructural level and refers us back to transcendent time, as a binding mechanism on a global level. A second distinction emphasized previously in this chapter is also important: that between a spatial arrangement where stability resides in fixed categories and traditions distanced from one another and temporal cultures that integrate things into a global stream. The natural history approach, according to Foucault and others, was a spatial arrangement of knowledge. Molecular biology (or experimental systems within it) appears today to be integrated global streams of processing superimposed on any remaining spatial logic (see Jokisch, 1996: 184–194). Al Qaeda distinguishes itself from all other terrorist groups that are nationally based by the appearance it gives of having become such a global stream. Transcendent time as described in the section on "What Are Global Microstructures?" lies at the heart of this stream. Sustained and extended by the scopic transmission of media content, it provides for a level of bindingness and integration of the terrorist project beyond the coordination of operational performance and mission planning. Beyond the level, that is, of the ever-decaying, ever-regenerated cellular structure. In the case of foreign exchange markets, the ever-regenerated structure is actuarial; agency resides with individual market makers, as illustrated elsewhere.¹³ The market case also showed how sequential, time-based systems may result from a particular historical transformation, from the development and use of a scopic system that came to provide a special global world.

¹³ See Knorr Cetina and Bruegger (2002: 913–114).

Some Implications for Globalization Research

Microglobalization implies that the micro (in the sense of microprinciples of patterning) and the macro (in the sense of global scope and extension) should not be seen as two levels of empirical reality that stand in contrast to each other. Rather, the micro in the form indicated instantiates the macro; microprinciples enable and implement macroextension and macroeffects. The hallmark of microsociology in the past was not the connection to the macro, but the separation from it. For example, Goffman called the interaction order relatively autonomous, and not prior to, fundamental to, or constitutive of, macroscopic phenomena (Goffman, 1983: 9; Collins, 1981; Knorr Cetina, 1981; Alexander & Giesen, 1987). This argument also came with an understanding of the microworld as situational: as tied to the concrete social setting and the social occasion, which were thought to be governed by principles and dynamics not simply continuous with or deducible from macrosocial variables (Goffman, 1972: 63; Alexander, 1987).¹⁴ Yet these assumptions, which have characterized much microsociological thinking in the past—that of the relative autonomy of microorders and that of their confinement to the physical setting—are theoretically no longer adequate in a world in which interaction can also be disembedded from local settings, in which space may be separated from place, as Giddens put it (1990: 18), and in which “situations” may link participants who are physically located in different continents and time-zones.¹⁵ Both assumptions were, from the present viewpoint, less analytical necessities than political moves: they had much to do with how macrosociology had been perceived earlier in social theory, as given to unrealistic abstractions and as losing sight of the human element in society. Early microsociologists attacked these tendencies. Goffman and others shifted the discussion away from the attacks and refocused it on the task of charting the territory for qualitative field work on areas of real life that had hitherto been ignored by sociologists (Collins, 1988: 380–384). What appears necessary today is that we rechart the territory of microsociology once again in ways that include distantiated spatial

¹⁴ Goffman defined the situation as “any physical area anywhere within which two or more persons find themselves in visual and aural range of one another” (1981: 84; 1972: 63). Ethnomethodologists have expressed similar ideas through the notion of the “local accomplishment” of social order, where local has meant “witnessable,” through seeing or hearing, in contrast to imputed or inferred. Ethnomethodologists have not restricted themselves to the physical setting through their definitions in quite the same sense in which Goffman did, placing greater emphasis on accomplishment, as, for example, in the observation that “witnessed settings” also have an accomplished sense (of objectivity, familiarity, and the like; Garfinkel, 1967: 9; Atkinson, 1988; Drew & Heritage, 1992). Yet this shift in emphasis leaves intact the tendency of ethnomethodological studies to equate fundamental reality with that which is highly focused in a small space, which lies in talk rather than writing, and which points to the nanoworld of the nonverbal signals that accompany such exchanges (Goodwin, 1981).

¹⁵ Giddens (1990: 21–29) used the notion “disembedding” to refer to the “lifting out of social relations from local contexts.” In this chapter, we are concerned with how interaction principles traditionally associated with local contexts shape global domains.

configurations. This chapter argues for an extension of microviewpoints that are pitched at the level of the local, and the situation as the prime social reality, to larger settings. If the hallmark of microsociology in the past was its emphasis on local social forms, one should now open the door to corresponding research on genuinely global forms.

Some microsociological notions such as that of the face-to-face situation will lose force in the process. They need to be replaced, I suggest, by the notion of response-presence and in some contexts by that of the face-to-screen situation. Some fundamental concepts we all share, such as that of a social actor, may acquire different connotations. My suggestion here is the increasing relevance of the notion of an observer. Meaning, with such a move, no longer simply resides in the minds of actors (in their intentions) but is in fact contextual. It becomes relocated in the strategies, distinctions (as in Luhmannian sociology, Luhmann, 1984; see also White, 1981), and perspectives (as in the sociology of knowledge) of third agents who observe (as financial analysts do) particular situations. Another concept that may become relevant and that I discussed in this chapter is that of global microstructures. Such microstructures specify cultures in which interlocking time dimensions and forms of embeddedness in time substitute for the loss of spatial rootedness and stabilization. Streaming markets, and the terrorist time warps discussed, provide examples of such time-based cultures. The flows implied demand methodological strategies and further concepts that pay attention to their decay, regeneration, and asymmetries and to underlying processes of information.

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