Pananthropoi – Towards a Society of All Humanity

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Abstract: How can we imagine a society that encompasses all humanity and excludes no one? Can we theoretically develop a sociological concept of a society that goes beyond thinking of “us” and “them”? In this essay, I attempt to outline a sociological imagination of what I call, in analogy with the supercontinent Pangaea, the “Pananthropoi” – the society of all-humanity that encompasses all and excludes no one. Seven theses describe some characteristics of the Pananthropoi. Arguing that humans’ capacity to crossing borders (in a metaphorical and literal sense) is greater than the desire for its opposite, I interpret the long durée of global history as a process of overall societal convergence. The asymmetry of “unsocial sociability” of the conditio humana, with sociability prevailing over the capacity to disconnect, drives humanity gradually towards one society dawning on the collective horizon of this world: the Pananthropoi.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, globalization, sociological imagination, universalism, world society

A society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal.
(Durkheim, 1915/1971:422)

1 While societies always have changed, expanding at some times and shrinking at others, our epoch witnesses the radical transformation of multiple different societies into one society.[1] From this transformation process of creation and recreation emerges an ideal, which simultaneously reshapes societal reality and moulds the society from which it originates.[2] In this article, I propose the metaphorical outlines of what such an ideal might be.[3] I suggest that, unless communications techniques collapse or natural disaster catastrophically strikes, one all-encompassing society[4] will emerge, resembling what I call the “Pananthropoi” (All-Humanity).[5] a social Pangaea[6] – in analogy with the geological Pangaea (All-Earth) and Panthalassa (All-Sea).[7]

2 At the beginning of the twenty-first century the conditio humana cannot be understood nationally or locally but only globally (Beck, 2002). Yet the sociological imagination (C. Wright Mills, 1959) so far has been mostly a nation-state imagination. The main problem now is how to redefine the sociological frame of reference in the horizon of a cosmopolitan imagination (Beck, 2002:17). The term Pananthropoi offers a sociological imagination for a quickly integrating world, an understanding of the human condition as a whole. Just like the conceptualization of the geological Pangaea, which refers to all lands and not individual continents, or Panthalassa, which refers to all seas and not individual oceans,[8] the Pananthropoi,[9] as a sociological concept, [10] refers to a society that includes all human beings.[11] The name in itself points at a future that is firmly rooted in a profoundly non-inclusive past. The Greek plural “anthropoi” refers to humanity, mankind, or indeed “men” and the singular “anthropos” is sometimes used the same way. On the other hand, when “anthropos” refers to a particular individual, that individual is always a man, never a female. There has been no greater exclusion than the millennia-long exclusion and marginalisation of women, that is, half the human race in the intellectual creation of our world. This has fostered a world deeply out of balance – as our times demonstrate. It is time to restore the balance.
With the analogy of Pangaea in the idea of the Pananthropoi, I first seek to emphasize the “organic” character of the emerging all-encompassing society.[12] The Pananthropoi is not merely the result of an imposed political project, a capitalist conquest, a contrived plan of global elitists, a corporate conspiracy – but essentially driven by the quintessence of human nature, namely the ambition to always cross borders, tear down walls and go beyond. I see this capacity and will to cross borders, in a geographical as much as an intellectual sense, as a human trait that is overall stronger than its opposite – to build walls, to stay within marked boundaries or to withdraw. Surely, human beings have demonstrated a great capacity to segregate, to dominate, to control; yet ultimately these walls came down, these regimes were overthrown. Somehow eventually the will and capacity of human beings to communicate seems greater than the will and capacity to disassociate, and I argue that this discrepancy within the dichotomy of social and anti-social behaviour, communication and non-communication creates an agency sui generis, that is the driving force behind the gradual emergence of the Pananthropoi.

In that way, I see the concept of the Pananthropoi as related to Luhmann’s “world society”[13] or Beck’s “cosmopolitan society.”[14] However, the cosmopolitan society has the connotation of an individual choice, of a direction that the “cosmopolitan citizen” chooses, and that element of choice is largely absent in the conceptualization of the Pananthropoi: I emphasize that the all-encompassing society of the Pananthropoi largely emerges as a society sui generis, the choice of some perhaps, but not of all. And while the idea of the cosmopolitan society has a normative element to it (a presumption of shared values), with the Pananthropoi, I want to emphasize that an elevation of norms, values, and culture is not necessarily the essential trait of one all-encompassing society. Second, interconnection is the qualifying factor of the Pananthropoi, and not homogeneity of culture,[15] nor global consciousness or a cosmopolitan law.[16] Even though these qualities might (or might not) emerge within the context of the Pananthropoi, the first premise is connection and connection only.[17] The “invisible hand” that drives the making of the Pananthropoi is more inclined to reach out to meet another human being as a companion, friend, or partner, than to ignore it, or worse, control, dominate, segregate, or kill him or her. This is not to say that these inclinations might not equally be there, and history has shown that they are part of what humankind is capable of. Yet my argument is that their overall power is weakened and their agency is less influential than the power of the will to cooperate. The invisible hand of the homo sociologicus[18] does not just regulate, but communicate; this invisible hand does not create markets, but communities. The invisible hand that defines us as essentially social beings drives us to become one society, and one people.

Like Luhmann’s world society, the idea of the Pananthropoi refers to the aspect of growing global interdependencies, communication, and connectivity. With the Pananthropoi, I add to the debate on globalization, cosmopolitan society, and world society a visualization of the long durée[19] of globalization: namely as an age-old process of integration of different societies into one all-encompassing society. World society “is,” or “will be,” or “might be” one day, however, the Pananthropoi is always becoming. The shape and content of this destination of globalization are essentially unknown other than that it will encompass all human beings, directly or indirectly like a wave in the Panthalassa. This immediately raises the question of the definition of human connection and I will discuss that later.

Third, with the social imagination of the Pananthropoi, I want to add to the debate an imagery of a process of growing connection and dependence that allows for a disrupted development. Through a process of continental convergence[20] or societal divergence (and growing interconnection) altered with times of continental divergence or societal divergence (isolation and separations), the Pananthropoi has been slowly developing until its presence has become visible in contemporary times. [21] While we might see connections falling apart, the long durée is clear: growing connection, and if this tendency continues, the grand finale of globalization is maximized connection. Nevertheless, we do not know what that is, or what it will look like other than that the Pananthropoi – that brief static resultant of previous movements consisting of connections between all parts – will be fragile. It might last only very short, until it will fall apart. Since human life is characterized by change, the ultimate maximized connection, optimum functioni, can only dissolve and never be permanent. The process of growing interconnection has therefore a quality that is more permanent and more intrinsic to human history, than the moment of maximized connection ever will be. The symphony itself is more important than the grand finale.

Fourth, the imagery of the Pananthropoi offers some insights in the dramatic eruptions and clashes that go hand in hand with social convergence. Globalization creates the Pananthropoi, as much as it creates fundamentalism, separation, movements of withdrawal, and disintegration. Divergent tectonic forces caused the breakup of the original geological Pangaea, splitting the Pangaea up into its constituent parts.[22] Tectonic movements, whether towards divergence or convergence, caused earthquakes as sudden and unpredictable cataclysmic events, resulting from built up stress and friction;[23] they coincide with volcanic eruptions of catastrophic
Thus, the observed motions of the Pananthropoi are driven by overall societal convergence and (not divergence as with Pangaea) this does not imply a lack of friction. Human being's connection is not defined solely (and as some would argue, less and less so) by physical attachment or connection but also by proximity of the mind and increasingly so. Social eruptions can be interpreted and understood as social earthquakes caused by the process of societal convergence. Yet I will not discuss social earthquakes as examples of societal convergence in this article. While such an imagery can be helpful in sketching a framework for understanding of contemporary phenomena, I aim instead describing the contours of the land that arises on the horizon of a world that can no longer be understood nationally or locally, but only globally.

This raises the question: how does the concept of the Pananthropoi relate to the concept of globalization? Following Martin Albrow's definition of globalization ("all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society") as well as Anthony Giddens' ("the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa"), the Pananthropoi is then the result of growing interconnection towards a one world society of maximized interconnection and social relations. I propose the following seven theses to describe some characteristics of the Pananthropoi.

**FIRST THESIS: Societies once characterized by inclusion and exclusion are evolving into one society that includes all individuals of the human race**

Societies in the sense known to us include some and exclude others. Societies are placed within the regional boundaries of the nation-state, within the borders of smaller entities such as counties, localities, or tribes, or within the borders of larger geographical areas such as regions. The boundaries of these areas are mostly artificial and impossible to hold rigorously. This leads to a permanent pressure on expansion of existing societies into a society enclosed within a geographic boundary that is not artificial and that has the qualities to hold out persistently. As there is no geographical border that has those qualities, societies – unless communication techniques collapse or natural disaster catastrophically strikes – are evolving towards one society that is enclosed within the single boundary of our planet; and this society is the social Pangaea of the Pananthropoi.

As long as humankind has not succeeded in establishing permanent extra-terrestrial human habitation, the quintessential trait that can be attributed to the Pananthropoi is inclusion. Pananthropoi's incongruence with exclusivity is derived from the notion of its all-inclusivity. This characteristic implies a radical shift in the sociological conceptualization of a society. The Pananthropoi differs from any known society in that it does not include some and exclude others, but that it refers to all individuals of the human race and does not exclude anybody. The idea of a society that excludes no one demands a radical new way of thinking for sociologists and requires us to rethink the very concept that lies at the heart of our discipline.

**SECOND THESIS: The incongruence with the quality of exclusion replaces the external enmity of known societies with the permanent presence of an internal enmity within the new society**

I argue that the notion of all-inclusivity implies that the Pananthropoi lacks those characteristics that come with the power to exclude, as attributed to traditional and modern societies. Since external, "other" societies no longer exist, an external human enmity is non-existent. External enmity is gradually replaced by an enmity within. The concept of what I call a global internal enmity is a second trait that can be attributed to the all-encompassing society. Within the context of an external enmity, society can aim for defeat and the creation of security through successful exclusion. However, physical borders cannot be held persistently, which leads to a permanent pressure on the transgression of borders. This real situation, which is at odds with an ideology of successful exclusion, becomes manifest when societal convergence proceeds. The ideological concept of an external enmity then necessarily transforms into the de facto concept of internal enmity.

Permanent internal enmity can never be excluded or fully defeated. This implies that security has to be created within the context of permanent insecurity and stability within permanent instability. The society characterized by permanent internal enmity rather than external human enmity, replaces the aim of ultimate defeat with the strive for a decrease of eruptions of violent destruction. Not coincidentally, the arrival of the Pananthropoi is announced by the drumbeats of global crises, reflecting a human enmity that emerges from within and an environmental enmity that cannot be escaped by moving. Within the Pananthropoi exit is no longer an option. To some extent and more specifically vis-à-vis environmental issues, we have become our own...
Abandoning both the flight and fight option, staying and negotiating become the viable alternatives. This connotes renouncing a notion of shared invincibility, based upon defeat of the enmity as a source of social cohesion. Instead, I argue that within the emerging Pananthropoi – characterized by all-inclusivity, interdependence and interconnection – social cohesion is built upon the notion of shared vulnerability. No longer is our strength what defines us as a society, but our weakness. No longer do we seek to triumph over “the other,” we now have to triumph over ourselves: humanity needs to radically change in order to survive.

THIRD THESIS: The Pananthropoi occurs as the result of a social imperative, not of individual choice

In contrast with Beck’s cosmopolitan society, which is largely a construct of choice, an ideal based on certain convictions and values, I argue that the Pananthropoi, emerges not as an ideal nor as a product of choice, not even as a choice of a powerful elite, but merely as the result of a social imperative. Just like Kant’s categorical imperative addresses assumed universal laws of morality, I argue that there is a social imperative that drives the all-encompassing society, namely the human trait that the capacity and inclination to connect is greater than the need to disconnect. The desire to cross borders is greater than to build walls, and the desire to explore new lands is greater than to stay at home.

This capacity for crossing borders is in fact what I see as the essential trait that drives human development: we want to go faster, live longer, be wiser, know more, go further. Sure, we want to build borders too, to protect ourselves, to consolidate. But this inclination is always overall less dominant than the will to explore the horizons. Eventually all walls of segregation will come down. While Kant discusses “unsocial sociability,”[36] as an antagonism within society that spurs development, I suggest that our propensity and capacity for sociability is stronger than the propensity and capacity for isolation and that this discrepancy drives societies to expand, and eventually become one all-encompassing society. “Thanks be to Nature, then, for the incompatibility, for heartless competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess and to rule!” writes Kant. But equally, the domain of sociability is the place where collaboration creates innovation. Thanks for the insatiable desire to get to know the other, to learn new languages, to discover the endless riches of humanity’s diversity! We are rulers; but explorers too.

It is this asymmetry between the propensity to isolate and to associate that has driven the development of societies and without which individuals would be static, categorical – and societies closed off. Thus in the long durée of globalization, all societies are merging into one society as the result of a social imperative not of individual choice but unwittingly imposed by the collective.

For those within sub-Pananthropoi societies acting from a cosmopolitan belief system, the all-encompassing society still might seem the desirable result of an individual choice. However, this is the prerogative of the happy few, as an individually chosen cosmopolitan belief system cannot be equalled with the collective reality of societal convergence towards the Pananthropoi. Therefore for others, the awareness of the world as a whole comes as a shock, as an imperative that is felt as something that is imposed, even as a conspiracy, rather than as a chosen belief system.

The movement towards the Pananthropoi is not new and possibly as old as mankind. Yet its power will be perceived stronger when societal convergence proceeds. When the all-encompassing society is expanding, the erosion of sub-Pananthropoi societies is stronger felt. Movements of societal convergence might appear as the not-intended irrational outcome of rational choices on the micro-level.[37] However, at the same time these movements can be interpreted as the rational, if unfathomable result of irrational, largely non-intentional actions on the individual level.[38] Yet whether attributing the intentional and rational qualities mostly to the individual level or more to the collective level, the question needs to be addressed what the very nature of the gradual transformation from disconnection to interconnection is.

FOURTH THESIS: The Pananthropoi is the result of a substantial, not a categorical transformation

Societal convergence towards the Pananthropoi can either establish a categorical or a substantial transformation. I suggest calling the transformation process “categorical” when convergence is established without generating any fundamental change or progress other than a growth of interconnection. To a certain extent the geological Pangaea might be interpreted as a process of categorical transformation. The nature of these movements can then be compared to a reunification of the continents into a new Pangaea just like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The result of the restructuring of the pieces into a greater whole does not intrinsically change the very nature of the distinctive parts, which can fall apart similarly.
On the other hand, convergence can have the character of a process of substantial transformation, too. In that case, convergence is not just a movement from disconnection of the parts towards interconnection, culminating in a whole that is merely the sum of the parts (and not more than that), establishing no fundamental change in either the parts or the sum – but a process that remodels both parts and the sum: substantial transformation.

Since the process of societal convergence towards the Pananthropoi addresses the movement of disconnection to increasing interconnection between all the individual members of the human race, it is unlikely that it will be a categorical transformation and that the parts will not change their substantial qualities. Pieces of a puzzle do not change when they come together. Yet communication and interconnection amongst human beings generate substantial changes. The Pananthropoi therefore is unlikely to be the product of a categorical transformation and more likely to be the result of a substantial transformation.

The first premise of this transformation is, as stated in the first thesis, that borders cannot be hold persistently. No human society can ultimately successfully isolate itself. This establishes a process of connection that brings about a substantial transformation. This transformation, while originally physically driven, is not necessarily physical. In other words: the human physical landscape does not necessarily change. Connection within the Pananthropoi, I argue, is ultimately connection of the mind. What is the nature of this process of substantial transformation?

**FIFTH THESIS: Within the Pananthropoi the universal cosmopolitan condition that refers to the unraveling of an objective truth unfolds**

The nature of this substantial transformation can be derived from the process that it is driven by. This process has been defined as a gradual development from disconnection to interconnection, or a societal convergence towards a social Pangaea. The nature of the process is therefore essentially a gradual increase of communication amongst the different parts, culminating in the fragile end phase of the Pananthropoi in a maximized interconnection from which maximized interdependence between all parts, i.e. between all human beings, is derived. Which substantial transformation will be brought about by increased communication and eventually even maximized connection?

The range of matters subject to change under the influence of increased communication is endless. Since communication characterizes that part of a human being that addresses its social nature, increased interconnection penetrates and changes all aspects of social life. To investigate the nature of the substantial transformation that can be brought about within a situation of increasing interconnection within the Pananthropoi, I examine one aspect of communication. A distinct aspect of human communication is the transfer of knowledge. The question therefore needs to be addressed if the transformation process implies a growth or a decline of knowledge.

Knowledge can be – and is frequently – lost. Knowledge can be lost through disconnection and therefore through a lack of communication. Knowledge can also be lost through increased interconnection and communication that hastens the process towards replacement with new forms of knowledge. The process of societal convergence is defined as referring to *growing* connections, culminating in *maximized* interconnection. It is therefore unlikely that the substantial transformation that will be brought about is a loss of knowledge through disconnection. However, increasing communication can cause that existing knowledge is being quicker replaced and thus lost. Yet in this way, we are only addressing the qualities of the process and not of the result.

The Pananthropoi is argued to be all-encompassing, as well as to be the end phase of a process of disconnection to interconnection. In its end state the Pananthropoi is characterized by maximized interconnection between every part. A situation of maximum interconnection between all parts of humanity as represented within the Pananthropoi implies that all knowledge possessed by every individual member of the human race is interconnected.

This suggests that every single individual can make its knowledge accessible to all, while at the same time all can access the knowledge of every single individual. Within the Pananthropoi thus a universal library gradually unfolds, that in its end state is ultimately created by all and accessible to all.[40] It is therefore concluded that knowledge within the Pananthropoi will not decline. What is less useful might not be used any longer, but essentially knowledge will grow. If a growth of knowledge and not a decline can be attributed to the Pananthropoi, the question arises: does this substantial transformation relate to the approaching of an objective truth?[41]

If knowledge will grow and all existing knowledge will not be lost but be still accessible
then a gradual progress towards an objective truth can be distinguished that is “the ideal limit towards which we are constantly approaching, but which in all probability we shall never succeed in reaching” (Durkheim, 1915/1971:445).

I suggest that the Pananthropoi thus generates the universal cosmopolitan condition in which the search for an always approaching but never fully found objective truth is fostered.

**SIXTH THESIS: Universal knowledge is never produced by a sub-Pananthropoian society in isolation. No universal quality can therefore be attributed to any sub-Pananthropoian society, neither to its knowledge nor to its values and convictions.**

A process of societal convergence and increased interconnection will culminate in an all-encompassing society and the unfolding of an objective and universal truth. However, I argue that this truth is never the product of any sub-Pananthropoian society, but is necessarily universal in its origin as well. Therefore no sub-Pananthropoian society can, sui generis, claim to have discovered universal knowledge, or, similarly to represent universal values and convictions. Universal knowledge, values and convictions only unfold gradually in the process of societal convergence. Universal values are universal not just in its consequences but in its origins as well.

While universal knowledge might be discovered during the gradual process of societal convergence, objective truth will never be reached until the potential of the Pananthropoi has materialized fully. Yet as argued before, we will probably never succeed in reaching objective truth – which would truly mean the end of history. The Pananthropoi is therefore static in its quantitative all-inclusivity, yet dynamic in its qualitative development. Universal values never are, but always become.

**SEVENTH THESIS: Universal values unfold in the Pananthropoi in the context of profound inequality.**

The quality of all-inclusivity of the Pananthropoi precedes the quality of objective truth. However, we must conclude that within the process of amalgamation not all societies or forms of knowledge are allocated with the same weight or accessibility. The knowledge of some societies is not given the same weight as the knowledge of others societies. The idea of one all-encompassing society does therefore not imply equality, but in fact coincides with a strong notion of inequality. Objective truth as derived from subjective truths produced by sub-Pananthropoian societies can only be achieved when, in the process of societal convergence, these different subjective knowledges and truths are accessible and overt. Just like with the geological Pangaea: when continents with different weights collide, one could be subducted and its resources will be lost (like the Pacific plate underneath the North America Plate), while at other times a collision raises mountains (Weyman, 1981). I have argued that the Pananthropoi in its quality of all-inclusivity occurs as the result of a collective, social imperative. However, a universal cosmopolitan condition in which objective truth can be found presupposes that all available knowledge of sub-Pananthropoian societies is equally accessible and can be scrutinized upon its validity and that is the product of individual choice. We could sink together or thrive together. In that sense, humanity has a collective destination.

**Conclusion**

The conditio humana can be understood increasingly only globally and not nationally or locally. Yet most sociological imagination of society is based on the nation-state (Beck, 2002). How to redefine the sociological frame in the horizon of a cosmopolitan imagination? In this article I have attempted to offer such a global sociological imagination. I have introduced the term “The Pananthropoi” which, in analogy with the Pangaea and the Panthalassa, can be understood as a social Pangaea. With the introduction of idea of the Pananthropoi, I have contributed in four ways to the debate on globalization, the global understanding of the sociological imagination. I have introduced the term “The Pananthropoi” which, in analogy with the Pangaea and the Panthalassa, can be understood as a social Pangaea. With the introduction of idea of the Pananthropoi, I have contributed in four ways to the debate on globalization, the global understanding of the conditio humana and the emerging one society (Durkheim’s “collective horizon”).

First, the idea of the Pananthropoi offers a global imagination of an all-encompassing society that includes all human beings and that differs from all other known societies that it includes all and excludes no one. The all-encompassing society is a theoretical novelty within sociology as we are used to define society only in contrast with other societies. In contrast with many political imaginations of a world society I have offered an imagination that is a society sui generis and emerges as the result of universal traits that can be attributed to the human condition, namely a discrepancy in Kant’s “unsocial sociability,” in such a way that the propensity to the “social” is stronger than the inclination to the “unsocial.”

Secondly, I have offered a global imagination that sketches the emerging one society as a process of growing interconnection, which is defined by connection and connection only. Third, with the Pananthropoi, I also contributed a global imagination to the
debate on globalization that allows for disrupted development towards one all-encompassing society. Indeed, there might be times of stagnation, or even divergence, withdrawal, yet nevertheless the overall process is unmistakably one of societal convergence. Fourth, while the process might have been gradual, by no means it is friction-free. The Pananthropoi is the result of violent eruptions and what I have called social earthquakes. These “social earthquakes” (eruptions of violence, revolutions, clashes) occur precisely because of social convergence; and they might become stronger the more the Pananthropoi develops.

I have offered seven theses that describe the main qualities that I contribute to the coming into being of the Pananthropoi. A process of societal convergence and increased interconnection, driven by humankind’s propensity to asymmetric “unsocial sociability” on one hand and the impossibility to hold borders persistently on the other hand, will culminate in an all-encompassing society, the Pananthropoi (First Thesis).

However, while all encompassing, this one society is not a utopian (or what some might call “naive”) concept but theoretical. The quality of all-inclusivity creates by definition an incongruence with exclusion – and therefore with external enmity. I argue thus theoretically that the absence of “exit” options effectively means that the concept of external enmity is replaced with what I have called a “global internal enmity”: a permanent threat from within (Second Thesis).

In contrast with global imaginations of a cosmopolitan society and the elevations of ideals, I contribute to the debate an imagination of one world society as the product of a collective social imperative and not of individual choice, a political plan or an ideology of the happy few. The contested character of all boundaries and humankind’s propensity towards asymmetrical “unsocial sociability” drive all societies into one, the Pananthropoi (Third Thesis).

With a collective horizon that largely emerges as the result of an innate collective social imperative, the transformation of societies is not categorical, but substantial; not an assemblage but a new entourage (Fourth Thesis). I argue further that the essence of the substantial transformation is, through growing proximity of the collective human mind, the gradual unfolding of an objective truth (Fifth Thesis).

Within the Pananthropoi, a universal library generates the universal cosmopolitan condition within which the objective truth can unfold – which we will never witness. For universal knowledge and universal truth always become and never are. With the concept of the Pananthropoi, I contribute to the debate on universality of norms and values that these norms and values are not only universal in outcome but also in origin. I argue that universal laws and values are never the product of any sub-Pananthropanian society and that they thus never are but always become as the product of interconnection and dialogue. No sub-Pananthropanian society can make claims to universal values or knowledge or convictions, for ours is the call to discovery (Sixth Thesis).

Finally, with the Seventh Thesis I emphasize that the movement towards the Pananthropoi can only be understood within the context of profound inequality. The pre-condition for the creation of a social Pangaea is that all continents are given the same weight, all voices are heard, and all knowledge is equally accessible. That is not the case. Thus, for the sake of the search for objective truth, within the process of societal convergence towards the Pananthropoi, in itself a collective imperative, inequality is a reality; yet equality can (and I would suggest must) be deliberately chosen (Seventh Thesis).

Within the perspective of the Pananthropoi looming at the horizon (unless the levels of interconnection will dramatically drop through circumstances that we now cannot foresee), I suggest that some of the recent developments can be seen in a different light. At the same time, the development towards all-inclusivity emerges within the context of profound inequality and strongly experienced exclusion by large parts of the world population.[50]

While exclusion might be globalization’s current feature, I argue that it is not its destination. One might suggest that it would be rather naive to draw conclusions about the human condition, based on a history that was written by a very limited subsection of humankind; or to assume that the truth of few holds for all, including those who were never heard, but who were instead excluded, rejected, ignored, marginalized, silenced and even forced out of the domain where the search for truth takes place, or ideally, should take place. I do not think that the past economic, intellectual and social exclusion for so many will determine a future of inclusion for all, now that some of those unheard voices finally come to the fore in the painfully slow democratization of the search for truth.

If society can neither create nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal, as Durkheim would have it, then I defend that globalization’s unfolding ideal is the Pananthropoi: the grand finale of a process of growing interconnection.
culminating in one all-encompassing society, our collective horizon.[51] The Pananthropoi, the society of the human race, is globalization’s destination.

Notes

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[1] See for example Luhmann (1997) for the concept of a single world society instead of global system of regional societies (Parsons, 1971); Albrow (1990) for globalization as “leading to one society and the rise of humanity as a collective actor;” Robertson (2003) for the historical development of global consciousness; Albrow (1996) for growing reflexivity of global consciousness as a feature of the global age; Giddens (1990) for a definition of globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa;” (1990:64) Wallerstein (1976, 1984) for world-system theory; and Van Der Bly (2012b) for different concepts of world society.

[2] As Sachs (2005) points out, the Millennium Development Goals are historic in the sense that, for the first time in history, all 191 member-governments agreed on a purpose and direction and on ultimately world-inclusion of the poor. I observe that the title of We The Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century reflects a paradox of unity and diversity (“we the peoples”) that is not characteristic for the Pananthropoi (“we the people”). From the perspective of the Pananthropoi, this historical document can be interpreted as a transition-document: already “we,” yet still “the peoples.”

[3] The idea of for this article about an emerging Pananthropoi was first conceived in 2006.

[4] Global society or world society? See e.g. Shaw (1994) for a distinction between “global connections” and “global society” and Castells (1996) for a distinction between world economy, i.e. in which capital accumulation proceeds throughout the world and a global economy characterized by time and space compression.


[6] The Pananthropoi can be understood as a social Pangaea. As far as I am aware of, the concept of the Pananthropoi has not been introduced to sociology before. Schäfer (2003) makes a comparison with the geological Pangaea and two kinds of global history: geophysical history (Pangaea One) and revolutionary techno-scientific history, Pangaea Two. See also Schäfer (2013) for Pangaea II “as the clear and present challenge to domesticate ourselves and the human planet all together.” Schäfer (2013) further elaborates Pangaea II as the product of human ingenuity creating a “virtual supercontinent.” This links the geological Pangaea and the man-made virtual supercontinent created by new technologies in an interesting way. One could argue that humanity somehow needed to build a virtual supercontinent to link together the original Urkontinent that had fallen apart. I do not distinguish between geophysical history (see: Sloterdijk’s “terrestrial globalization”) and revolutionary-technical history, but suggest that like earth and sea, which where once all-connected (and as some argue one day will be again connected), so can humanity become one, one day – united in one society: the Pananthropoi.

[7] In this article the term social Pangaea will be used to stress the comparison with the geological Pangaea, i.e. especially when referring to dynamic movements of societal convergence. The term Pananthropoi will be used when referring to the situation of all-inclusivity.

[8] To quote Wegener’s introduction to his revolutionary book: “If drift theory is taken as a basis, we can satisfy all the legitimate requirements of the land-bridge theory and of permanence theory. This amounts to saying that there were land connections, but formed by contact between blocks now separated, not by intermediate continents which later sank; there is permanence but of the area of ocean and area of continents as a whole, but not of individual oceans or continents”
9] Not to confuse with the concept of the Pananthropos, the universal All-Man.

[10] Parsons (1971) argues that there is a parallel between the emergence of humans as a biological species (one species) and the emergence of modern societies. “While closure of the genetic composition of *species* is enforced through cross-species sterility, discrete *cultures* can under certain conditions communicate fruitfully. Modern societies, for example, already include ingredients of diverse cultural origins, by no means all Western. As the process of cultural inclusion will probably go much farther than it has, the culminating version of the modern system may prove less parochial than many observers now expect or fear” (Parsons, 1971: 3).

[11] The thesis of an emerging Pananthropoi embroiders on Parson’s line of slowly growing cultural inclusion. However, the discreteness of cultures is questioned (see fourth thesis), and the argument for all-inclusivity is made. Whether the new culture like a Pidgin-language consists of recognizable elements of discrete cultures or transform into a new culture, a new language, is a discussion beyond the scope of this article. See for example Robertson (1992) for discussion on the universalism/particularism issue within the globalization debate, Pieterse (1995) for globalization as hybridization.

[12] “Society” not: “world government” or utopian concepts. “Society” as defined by the Oxford Dictionary (“the community of people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws, and organizations: the ethnic diversity of British society” OED, on-line version 5 August 2013) includes both aspects of one-ness and of diversity – ergo not necessarily (cultural) homogeneity, nor necessarily one political unity or one economy. We might see the emergence of one society with shared customs, laws, and organization, and a shared sense of belonging to one particular region (i.e. “the earth”). Applying the idea and *modus operandi* of the nation-state on the world limits the imagination of what is possible, or how a one-people society will develop. After all, this all-encompassing society is radically different from everything we, as sociologists have conceptualized before, and poses huge challenges and opportunities for our discipline.

[13] With interdependencies as its quintessential feature, Luhmann (1997) argues that we have to accept “the fact of a world society,” that “has reached a higher level of complexity with higher structural contingencies” more unexpected and unpredictable changes (some people call this “chaos”) and, above all, more interlinked dependencies and interdependencies” (Luhmann, 1997:75).


[15] For homogenization as Americanization, see for example Schiller (1976) and for homogenization as a wider process of distribution of Western (rationalized) business principles, see Ritzer (1993).

[16] Cosmopolitan law refers here to “those elements of law – albeit created by states – which create powers and constraints, and rights and duties, which transcend the claims of nation-states and which have far-reaching national consequences” (Held et al., 1999:70).

[17] On the other hand, it might be hard to imagine the emergence of a homogeneous culture, global consciousness or a cosmopolitan law without increased interconnections.

[18] Coined by Ralph Dahrendorf in 1959, the term highlights the different roles that actors perform on the stage of society. In the context, I would tentatively suggest using the idea of the *homo sociologicus* to explore the idea of the realization of oneself, through the other, whereby the communication is the essence rather than a means towards an end.


[20] In Pangaea, convergence refers mostly to continents. We can argue that to some extent within the Pananthropoi a similar continental convergence-movement takes place. However, as the Pananthropoi is a social Pangaea (where physico-geographical convergence is only part of a wider picture) I will refer to “societal convergence” as Pananthropoi’s equivalent to Pangaea’s “continental convergence.”

[21] Robertson (2003) sketches globalization as a process of growing interconnections slowly enveloping humans since the earliest times, and now bringing forth what Robertson calls “global consciousness.”
Albeit some argue that a new geological Pangaea will be shaped within two hundred million years (see for example Yoshida and Santosh, 2011).

See for example Weyman (1981).

Sloterdijk (2005) similarly refers to an expansion of boundaries by terrestrial globalization. Sloterdijk perceives the global, capitalist system as the concluding phase of terrestrial globalization.

Proximity of the mind does not necessarily imply physical proximity. In fact, it can even imply the opposite. Global space and time-compression (Harvey, 1990) can coincide with local disintegration (Van Der Bly, 2007).


See Giddens (1990:64).

Form and content of this article are strongly inspired by Kant’s short essay: “Idea for a Universal History from A Cosmopolitan Point of View” (Kant, 1784/1963). Most theses are derived from insights coming from four years of in-depth small-scale empirical fieldwork on processes of economic and cultural globalization in Ireland.

The concept of globalization leading to a Pananthropoi that is all-encompassing, is seemingly the opposite of conceptualizations of globalization especially coming from world system theory, in which the very characteristic of globalization is what the philosopher Sloterdijk has called its “inevitable exclusivity” (Sloterdijk, 2005).

The Pananthropoi as an imagined collective horizon, referring to expanding terrestrial aspects of globalization that ultimately defeats geographical boundaries, does a priori refer to the “spatial” inclusivity of all human individuals. Social exclusion within the Pananthropoi does not interfere with its essential quality of what I call spatial all-inclusivity.

Held et al. (1999:15) similarly use a concept of “expansive spatial connections” when locating globalization on a continuum with the local, national and regional.

I.e. a prevalence of one global boundary over regional boundaries. Similarly, Luhmann (1997:73) argues for describing the single world society without reference to any regional particularities, i.e. conceptualizing social theory with difference not as the independent, but as the dependent variable.

As Luhmann argues modern society excludes via functional systems that presuppose the inclusion of every human being, but in fact excludes persons that do not meet their requirements (Luhmann, 1997:71)

My concept of a “global internal enmity” is related to the idea of a “Weltinnenpolitik,” a term first used by the German physicist and later philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (1978) in the seventies. However, “Weltinnenpolitik” or “World Domestic Policy” or “Global Governance” refers to the idea of a central organizing body that oversees the world as a whole, or alternatively to the introduction of global regulations between the nations within a world that now is seen as one. I reject a centralistic approach, and with Arendt (1970) argue that the idea of power and violence are different in concept and antithetical. In a world defined by categorical differences such as race, religion, nation, destructive forces can be attached to such distinctions. As Arendt (1951) identified megalomania as the origin of totalitarianism and Jewry as a proxy, I argue that within the emerging Pananthropoi these categorical differences gradually disappear, so that destructive forces can no longer be attached to some sort of a subcategory of humankind, but become incidental, violent eruptions more so than “wars.” As form and nature of enmity therefore intrinsically change – from external to internal, from macro-level “wars” to micro-level violent eruptions – the governing response, I argue, needs to change accordingly, i.e. from centralized power, to decentralized power.

See Giddens (1990:64).

From Kant’s Fourth Thesis: “By “antagonism” I mean the unsocial sociability of men, i.e., their propensity to enter into society, bound together with a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society. Man has an inclination to associate with others, because in society he feels himself to be more than man, i.e., more than the developed form of his natural capacities. But he also has a strong propensity to isolate himself from others, because he finds in himself at the same time the unsocial characteristic of wishing to have everything go according to his own wish” (Kant, 1991 [1784]).
Robertson (2003:265) sees globalization as part of the human condition and argues it (globalization) is "part and parcel of the eternal human quest for security and well-being."

Or, as Kant argues in *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*: “It might be possible to have a history with a definite natural plan for creatures who have no plan of their own” (Kant, 1991).

Societal convergence does not necessarily imply increasing homogeneity. Elsewhere I have discussed “the inner paradox of the “heterogeneity of culture,” when applied to humanity as a whole (Van Der Bly, 2012c) as well as the idea of “one heterogeneous world culture” (Van Der Bly 2007).

Wikipedia might be a prototype of a universal encyclopedia created by all and accessible to all. Still, Wikipedia is very far from a universal library in that it is created by and accessible only by a very small part of the world population. But developments go fast.

Durkheim (1915/1971) mentions in this respect “the collective horizon.” “It is this international life, which has already resulted in universalizing religious beliefs. As it extends, the collective horizon enlarges; the society ceases to appear as the only whole, to become part of a much vaster one, with undetermined frontiers, which is susceptible of advancing indefinitely” (Durkheim, 1915/1971: 445).

Really and truly human thought is not a primitive fact; it is the product of history; it is the ideal limit towards we are constantly approaching, but which in all probability we shall never succeed in reaching” (Durkheim, 1915/1971: 445).

This refers to what Kant has called the *universal cosmopolitan condition*: “This gives hope that finally after many reformatory revolutions, a universal cosmopolitan condition, which Nature has as her ultimate purpose, will come into being as the womb wherein all the original capacities of the human race can develop” (Kant, 1991).

Based upon the premise that knowledge gives access to (subjective) truth and that all-knowledge gives access to all (subjective) truths, within which the objective truth ultimately is revealed. This thesis is closely related to Kant’s second thesis: "In man (as the only rational creature on earth) those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reasons are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual" (Kant, 1991). From a sociological perspective, I argue that it is within the Pananthropoi, the all-encompassing society of the human race, that these capacities can be fully developed.

Kant sees the “perfectly constituted state” at the end phase of what he calls “nature’s secret plan.” The concept of the Pananthropoi does not refer to a state, or an international supra-government, a “universal civic society, which administers law among men” (Kant, 1991).

In other words: if the continent of Africa has produced in-depth knowledge of spirituality and the continent of North-America has produced in-depth knowledge of economy, then in a process of societal convergence these different knowledges need to be equally accessible and attributed the same weight in order to find objective truth.

The main manifestation of this inequality is ironically that universal history is often associated with the universal values of Western societies being spread and made universal worldwide.

Scholte (1997) rightly argues: “Contemporary globalizing capital presents a challenge not to the survival of states, but to the realization of democracy. (...) The obvious question to ask is whether growing inequality and declining democracy in the contemporary era of globalization are not connected, and whether more democratic global governance and greater global distributive justice could not go hand in hand towards a more equitable future” (Scholte, 1997:352).

Weber (1958:13) famously wrote that only in Western civilization cultural phenomena with “universal significance and value” have appeared, “as we like to think.” Robertson (1998) argues that the phrase “as we like to think” shows that Weber was registering a significant caveat with respect to the nineteenth century tradition of universal history.

Sloterdijk (2005) highlights what he calls the inevitable exclusivity of globalization, “a world inhabited by one and a half billion people benefiting from globalization; three times this number are left standing outside the door.”

This dominance of a collective human destination over individual choice includes therefore individual choices exercised through national democracies as well.
Durkheim argued: “There is no people and no state which is not part of another society, more or less unlimited, which embraces all the peoples and all the States with which the first comes in contact, either directly or indirectly; there is no national life, which is not dominated by a collective life of an international nature. In proportion as we advance in history, these international groups acquire a greater importance and extent” (Durkheim, 1915/1971:426).

Literature


Two.” *EWE (previously EuS)* 14: 75-88.


