

## BOOK FORUM

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### Jonathan Friedman – *Politicamente corretto*

Edited by

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**JONATHAN FRIEDMAN**, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

Comments by

**George BACA, Giacomo LOPERFIDO, Christian GIORDANO, Piero VERENI.**

Response by

**Jonathan FRIEDMAN.**

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It is with Jonathan Friedman's latest book, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime* (2018) that we are launching the book forum, which brings together several critical comments by different authors, followed by Friedman's response. The readers will notice the extravagance of debating in English the Italian translation of a book originally written in English. This is because the book was firstly published in Italian, which at this moment remains the only available edition. As soon as the book came out in Italy, the issues polemically raised by Friedman's critique of political correctness triggered a broad debate that reached a readership usually unfamiliar with anthropological literature. This was also certainly due to the national political climate, with anti-political correctness being claimed by right-wing and xenophobic political forces against the alleged *buonismo* – a derogatory term for welcoming attitudes and practices towards migrants and refugees (from *buono* – good). We think this can be a proper start for launching a new space of discussion the aim of which is to speak to a broader readership beyond the strict boundaries of our discipline.

It is with great sadness that we learned the sudden passing of Christian Giordano. Like the rest of this *Anuac* issue, our first Book forum, to which he eagerly contributed, is dedicated to his memory. We are confident that his anthropological legacy will continue to encourage unconventional, passionate intellectual engagements.

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## BOOK FORUM

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# Multiculturalism, moralism, and the politics of a “new” nationalism

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Comment on JONATHAN FRIEDMAN, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

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Jonathan Friedman has written powerfully about the political and economic transformation of Euro-American societies since the 1970s (Friedman 1995; Friedman and Friedman 2008)<sup>1</sup>. Friedman rejects the view that finance capital represents a particular stage of capitalism. Instead, he sees present-day decentralizing of capital accumulation as the recurrent rise of finance and withdrawal of capital from production. He is in the excellent company of Fernand Braudel and Giovanni Arrighi – as well as John Maynard Keynes – in underlining the conflict between long-term, fixed capital and the speculative nature of finance capital (Braudel 1982; Arrighi 1994; Keynes 1936). As hegemonic centers of capitalist accumulation rise, so do the costs of doing business, which encourage the export of capital and the increasing importance of credit and finance to feebly, and fleetingly, step into the breach. The powerful industrialized nations that settled World War II, and rebuilt the global economy through the establishment of the Bretton Woods multilateral system, are presently experiencing economic decline, the unraveling of social institutions, and the rise of political instability that has accompanied growing disparities in wealth.

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1. This study was supported by research funds from Dong-A University.



The politics of multiculturalism has emerged during the same period when European and North American financial and political leaders have turned against Keynesian economic policies, especially capital controls, and implemented policies that exported capital and simultaneously rolled back social provisions of the welfare state (Baca 2006; Baca 2010). Befitting of Friedman's iconoclasm, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, highlights the moralistic nature of multicultural politics by taking aim at Sweden, for many, the poster-child of the welfare state. Friedman takes the reader beneath these positive images of Sweden to illustrate how neoliberal economic policies encouraged mass immigration from the Third World and readjustments in the welfare state. Moreover, he argues that a «rising elite», directing these social changes in the organization of Swedish society, have embraced multiculturalism. Furthermore, political leaders and prominent opinion makers have fashioned a sense of political correctness to shield questions of immigration from criticism. Those who dare to question mass immigration risk being classified as racists or right-wing extremists.

Friedman tends to present multicultural narratives that celebrate immigration as if they reject nationalism and the nation-state. However, nationalism, much like PC discourse, does not have a fixed content. Politicians and citizens are continually revising and elaborating national myths and symbols in relationship to social, political, and economic transformations. Many writers, including Friedman, have been too quick to announce the decline of the nation-state amid contemporary shifts from Keynesian macroeconomics to neoliberal economic policies. Rather than a dissolving nation-state, I see national politicians and financial leaders adapting the myths and symbols of the nation to meet the challenges represented by the export of capital and the retrenchment of the welfare state. In this process, multiculturalism – and its discourse of tolerance – exerts immense ideological power in elaborating nationalist myths of the liberal democratic state at a moment of increasing economic inequality. Moreover, these frames create a sense of creates a sense of sympathy for elites who are trying to maintain social solidarity in the face of anti-democratic threats – a theme being played in the United States as corporate elites embrace multiculturalism, and ideals of democracy, as they struggle with Donald Trump's regime.

Friedman's reluctance to conceptualize multiculturalism in relationship to nationalist politics stems partly from the unique impetus for this work. During the late 1990s, many Swedish social commentators, scholars, and anthropological colleagues attacked his wife, anthropologist Kajsa Ekholm Friedman, for being anti-immigrant and racist. The pain and duress that

Friedman experienced during this awful ordeal animate the book. *Politica-mente corretto* reads like one part defense of his spouse and one part extended case method of Manchester School fame (see Gluckman 1940; Turner 1957). Friedman employs a version of the extended case method to examine the twists and turns of the national controversy that enveloped his household for a decade. The controversy erupted in 1996 when Ekholm Friedman agreed to give a talk to a political group called The People’s Will and Mass Immigration (PWMI)<sup>2</sup>. Before she appeared, a major news show had already reported that she was a leader of the PWMI. Sweden’s largest national newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* expanded the sense that she had breached proper norms of a multicultural society by falsely reporting that Ekholm Friedman disparaged African immigrants for infiltrating the country with fake college degrees. In an attempt to quell the drama, she wrote a commentary in *Dagens Nyheter*. She admitted it was a mistake to speak before the PWMI and went on to clarify that she was not anti-immigrant. Instead, she came to understand, through her ongoing research, which was Guggenheim funded, that «ethnification» and ethnic politics during periods of increasing unemployment and economic decline represent a «serious problem».

Friedman’s depiction of the social drama lacks necessary details. Max Gluckman developed the extended case to focus analysis on the emergent qualities of a social formation, to examine cultural politics beyond the «apt illustration» and to bring the underlying issues of conflict under sharp analysis. Friedman arrays the data in ways that do not capture the emergent qualities of Swedish political economy. After all, Friedman argues that PC culture, and the sacred object of multiculturalism it seeks to protect, is part of the processes of the decline of western hegemony and the nation-state. However, he does not provide enough details of the various, and contradictory arguments and how these changed throughout the social drama. He tells us little about PWMI, dismissing them as an unthreatening group of elderly people who were concerned about mass immigration in Sweden. More problematically, Friedman does not provide the full text of Ekholm Friedman’s comments about immigration during the entire ordeal. Instead, he paraphrases her main idea: the Swedish government has implemented immigration policies in ways that has furthered processes of «ethnification» in ways that could threaten the Swedish welfare state. In other places, he tells us that she argued that multiethnicity is a real problem and it has explosive potential and must be taken seriously. Nevertheless, the primary question re-

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2. Folkviljan och massinvandring.

mains: what, and how, is multi-ethnicity potentially dangerous? In addition, how did Ekholm Friedman's perspectives on ethnic conflict, immigration, and the decline of the nation-state develop throughout the social drama?

Rather than engaging in constructive debate, anthropologists, including graduate students from Lund University where both the Friedmans taught, reacted bitterly to her words of redress. By questioning national immigration policies, they associated her with the subversion of the multicultural social order and its mores of tolerance. Most notably, four prominent Swedish anthropologists – Professors Gudrun Dahl, Ulf Hannerz, Kaj Århem, Karl Erik Knutsson – wrote a joint letter to *Dagens Nyheter* denouncing Ekholm Friedman for not only being destructive regarding immigration but for also confusing anthropological concepts of culture and ethnicity. For me, the most telling aspect of this «anthropological» response was that it highlighted the ways that multiculturalism works with, rather than against, nationalist politics. Hannerz et al., in a patriotic tone, declared that Sweden was «born as a country in relation to enriching long distance contacts. » From this nationalist mythology of long-distance contacts as an essential feature of the nation, they credit immigrants with further contributing cultural imports, ideas, and people that have «added to the wealth of the culture and tradition». Instead of criticizing this dreadful use of anthropological knowledge to support a nationalist politics, Friedman trivializes their claims as «cute, cozy, and consumerist». There is nothing cute about the way that these anthropologists used their authority to use multiculturalism to engage in politics, during a moment of downturn, to create the image of a «new» and «enlightened» version of the liberal nation-state (see Brown 2009; Povinelli 2002). Many years ago, Talal Asad pointed out this nationalistic aspect of British multiculturalism by showing that the idea of «rich culture-and-tradition» of the nation is already in place, as «an essence» which foreigners can contribute. This narrative of the nation creates an affinity «between what they bring and what is essentially there» (Asad 1993: 242).

These relationships of power raise a problem in how Friedman uses the term «rising elites». He draws this idea from previous criticisms of globalization discourses of the late 1990s whereby authors like Arjun Appadurai deployed the term globalization to invoke the sense of new and overwhelming cultural forces (Appadurai 1996). Such narratives conjured a sense of rupture whereby new and sweeping cultural forces have transcended borders and undermined nation-states and sovereignty. Friedman countered by showing that theories of globalization were elite representations, of a new cosmopolitan and transnational class, as opposed to analytic categories for the ex-

planation of these processes (Friedman 2002). However, the contemporary elites in Sweden, with their embrace of multiculturalism, are not simply a new and rising force. Indeed, many of these groups have profound connections to the interwar political establishment that embraced Eugenics, anti-Semitism, and fascism.

After the War, Friedman points out, Swedish leaders began fashioning a new image of the nation, following Ernst Renan's dictum «forgetfulness», or perhaps «historical error» are essential to nation-building (Renan 1990 [1882]). Postwar political and economic leaders silenced this unsavory past and promoted a new image as the «global good guy». Friedman jumps to the conclusion that this new project was a shift from a «strongly nationalist to anti-nationalist positions». Postwar politics changed, and Swedish leaders revised the narratives and symbolism of the nation. Swedish nationalism changed partly because of the disastrousness World Wars. Also, the US-led Bretton Woods system integrated the major capitalist countries into a multilateral system based on the ideals of cooperation. Moreover, the changes continued and moved in a different direction after the 1970s. With the shift away from the Keynesian political economy and the influx of Third World immigrants, dominant political and economic interests in the West have found multiculturalism a dominant discourse for revising of nationalism and its models of state power. In this way, multicultural politics carries forward the narrative of Sweden as a global good guy after the shift from Keynesian economic policies.

There is one important aspect that *Politicamente Corretto* does not fully address: the ways that the politics of multiculturalism seeks to discipline and structure the integration of immigrants into Europe, the US, and now, even South Korea. The guiding theme of the political correctness of multiculturalism is the discourse of tolerance. Tolerance works as a mode of governance that «iterates the normalcy of the powerful» at the same time it regulates the presence of the Other both inside and outside the liberal democratic nation-state (Brown 2009). In Korea, for example, the state has developed multicultural discourses and institutions through the master narrative of the nation to culturalize politics by neutralizing inequality and the exploitation of foreign workers as an expression of cultural differences (Baca 2017). Much like in Sweden, Korean political and economic leaders deploy the cultural idiom of the nation to reconstitute immigration as the progressive development of the state through the incorporation of new cultural values, which are to be protected by new values of tolerance and acceptance. As Wendy Brown points out, the ethics of tolerance legitimates the most illiberal actions of the state by employing a term consummately associated with liberalism

(Brown 2009). Friedman, by focusing primarily on the way the policies of immigration have threatened Swedish workers, he does not delve into the way multiculturalism exploits Third World immigrants. Unfortunately, this caveat dovetails with the way conservative criticisms of multiculturalism uphold the belief that multiculturalism promotes a relativistic tolerance and that it provides immigrant with rights without proper duties.

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## BOOK FORUM

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# Political correctness: A form of anthropological “do-goodism”

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Comment on JONATHAN FRIEDMAN, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

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In his new book *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, Jonathan Friedman once again hits the mark with his critical spirit often tinged with polemical tones. In fact, he cogently highlights the hypocrisy inherent in the ideological and political practice of what I would define as “do-goodism”, widespread in present-day anthropology as we shall see.

Jonathan Friedman aptly and strongly stresses that “political correctness” has become an ideological instrument of today’s elites. In my view, however, the term “elites” is ambiguous since it is semantically too broad, thus also too indefinite. Vilfredo Pareto had already been criticized in his days because of the concept’s lack of semantic clarity (Pareto 2006). Who are the elites? Are they the “political classes” as defined by Gaetano Mosca (Mosca 1958) or, quoting Robert Michels (Michels 1989), the political parties’ upper echelons or again the *power elites* mentioned by Charles Wright Mills (Wright Mills 1989), i.e. those who steer and monopolize parliamentary life? Could they be the upper spheres of bureaucracy controlling public administrations? Or again, those in a dominant position in the cultural and artistic spheres, i.e. those who successfully produce or manage cultural activities? Finally, to

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avoid drawing out this certainly incomplete list, we need to mention those who, rightly or not, are defined as academics, i.e. those holding university positions or active in similar institutions for scientific or humanities research.

Bearing in mind these differences, we notice that the term elite applies to persons in positions of power yet in very diverse activities and with highly dissimilar rhetorics of “political correctness”. In the framework of this brief contribution, which definitely subscribes to Jonathan Friedman’s arguments, we can hardly examine them all. Therefore, I will focus on one type of academic elites hailing from my own discipline who over the past twenty years have generated a specific form of “political correctness” that I like to call “anthropological correctness”.

With the term “anthropological correctness”, I am referring to a scientific discourse linked to a specific analytical terminology that must not upset the subjects from a socially and/or culturally different society studied during fieldwork. On the surface this may seem a sensible and commendable course of action to avoid forms of crass ethnocentrism. Thus, “anthropological correctness” first emerged also to exclude blatantly unacceptable concepts such as the one of race. In brief, at first its function was to ensure the discipline’s praiseworthy morality. At this point though, we need to put this concept in historical context and consider when it appeared and then began to spread.

Starting in the 1980s, anthropology went through a profound and beneficial process of self-criticism, widely known as the postmodern “reflexive turn”, essentially based on a deconstructive stance towards the then predominant anthropological currents of thought. Yet, notwithstanding its many positive aspects, the “reflexive turn” also generated negative consequences that have led to the still rampant fervour of “anthropological correctness” which continues to influence our discipline’s language and rhetoric.

In the aftermath of the postmodern “reflexive turn”, anthropology as a typically empirical discipline of social sciences undeniably developed a significant inclination for radical self-criticism. In fact, the detached or disenchanting, if not indeed sceptical or agnostic attitude towards societies that are unlike the one of origin of the person carrying out fieldwork has become less apparent.

In fact, in the book *Writing Culture* (Clifford, Marcus 1986), which may be regarded as the founding text of the “reflexive turn”, the two authors point up a number of fundamental flaws, i.e. capital sins of empirical research and consequently also flaws in the ethnographic description and finally and especially in anthropological theorization, both idiographic and nomothetic.

In the just mentioned book, James Clifford and George Marcus accuse the anthropological reflection of having an authoritarian approach. Indeed, even the theoretical paradigm of Clifford Geertz's interpretive anthropology falls under this category. The two authors propose a new “dialogical” and “polyphonic” theoretical paradigm that considers not only the anthropologist's voice, but also that of the “subjects” being studied, i.e. the “others” who have been viewed as “objects” for far too long.

Nothing to object, up to this point. However, the “reflexive turn” led to probably unwanted or unexpected consequences that in my opinion turned out to be negative especially in terms of the spread of “anthropological correctness”.

At present, in fact, we have to avoid embarking on research matter that may upset or even hurt the feelings of individuals or groups belonging to the societies being studied, especially if these are peripheral societies. Presenting this type of material at conferences or seminars, especially with reference to subaltern groups or socially or economically disadvantaged individuals, is viewed as “anthropologically incorrect”. This methodological oddity is noticeable in political anthropology in particular. Nowadays, in fact, a neutral or detached analysis of those phenomena that Western anthropologists deem immoral or uncivilized (such as clientelism or corruptive and Mafioso practices), or destructive (such as interethnic conflicts or family feuds and honour killings), is regarded with disapproval. This stance is now very widespread because showing one's participation or, better yet, involvement in safeguarding the “good guys down here” in societies regarded as defenceless or threatened by the social strategies of socially, economically and politically dominant classes, i.e. “the bad guys up there”, is almost mandatory.

Most of these practices that are deemed immoral from a Western, thus ethnocentric point of view, are instead attributed to the upper social strata and hegemonic political classes. In these cases, it is “anthropologically correct” to roundly voice criticisms, thus all ostensibly negative social practices are ascribed to those who can take advantage of economic and political positions of power.

Nowadays, whoever dares or continues to deal with subjects that are not “anthropologically correct” will be chastised, if not indeed discredited with specific epithets. One of the most widely employed terms to discredit someone is unquestionably “orientalist”. Whoever uses this term in a blatantly disparaging way is clearly referring to the title of the famous book *Orientalism* by Edward Said (Said 1978). It is not my intention to criticize Said's theses, which I consider absolutely praiseworthy and above all relevant, though at times a bit too unilateral, but I do believe that criticizing this term in connection with “anthropological correctness” is relevant.

To avoid the various forms of abhorred Orientalism, many of today's anthropologists tend to regard the "others" as having "our" same "spaces of experience" and "horizons of expectations", thus the same social knowledge. Consequently, one expects the same behaviour in the "others". Any display of alterity in an anthropologist is censured as the "invention of others", i.e. as a mystification conceived by those who claim to have studied diversity, namely anthropologists. These forms of anthropological correctness aim to avoid terminologies and themes that might even hypothetically hurt the others' feelings. The following is a typical example; nowadays using the term "gypsies" is practically impossible. According to the logic of "anthropological correctness", the proper term is Roma or, better yet, Rroma (with two R's) because allegedly the term "gypsy" has a negative connotation and is inherently insulting, thus socially discriminatory. Paradoxically, however, some of the Roma groups want to be called gypsies.

Objectionable social phenomena, according to the logic of "anthropological correctness" are regarded as irrelevant in those in low or marginal social positions or roles. Unlike the "good guys down here", anthropological correctness attributes all possible and imaginable abominations to the "bad guys up there". In fact, whoever holds power must perforce be a "bad guy". In the logic of this populist and do-goodery methodology, carrying out a dispassionate and unprejudiced research on the elites has become nearly impossible because it would amount to a sort of sacrilege.

We ought to add that paradoxically the dialogical and polyphonic approach proposed by Clifford and Marcus (Clifford, Marcus 1986) has generated a kind of anthropologically correct neo-paternalism that aims to contrast the moral virtues and positive forms of social solidarity of the "good guys down here" with the arrogance, abuse and arbitrariness of the "bad guys up there". Thanks to this logic, at present an anthropologist feels a specific moral pressure to highlight the positive human and social qualities of the members of the society being studied.

Given the drifts produced by "anthropological correctness", we can rightly wonder whether we might be dealing with a new anthropological fiction similar to the one of the "noble savage".

The sole difference lies in the fact that the "primitive man" has been replaced by the "immigrant", the "refugee" without documents, the "politically persecuted" and, more in general, by the "poor", the "exploited", the "marginalized", the "outcast". The "new noble savages" are precisely those who fall under these categories on the fringes of society. Personally, I wonder whether anthropology may be turning into a specific "social work" vari-

ant in quest of a hypothetical, but unachievable “good society”. Yet, anthropology cannot and must neither be the scientific crutch for “bleeding-heart” development agencies, NGOs and such like associations.

In the name of the current anthropological correctness, certain social representations and related practices that might cast doubts on the moral integrity of the so-called “powerless” as the “good guys” par excellence, have become rather deplorable in anthropology. In this context we need only mention themes that are considered disgraceful, such as representations and everyday strategies linked to mistrust in the public sphere or the frequent conflicts for status, reputation and honour. These behaviours instead are attributed, without empirical evidence, to the “bad guys up there”.

In line with “anthropological correctness”, if one wishes to be acknowledged and respected in one’s own “scientific community”, one can hardly avoid searching for unlikely relations, since they are missing, of communitarian trust, inclusion mechanisms, negotiation skills, hospitality institutions, grassroots democratic structures, social movements, civil society organizations etc. of the “good guys down here”. In any case, to avoid any charge of ethnocentrism and orientalism, current anthropology delights in researching and inventing fictional, subaltern “cosy worlds” that are despised and threatened by obscure and nefarious hegemonic powers.

Finally, we need to add that this anthropologically correct populism is strictly linked to a specific form of methodological individualism that most times results in a sort of naïve voluntarism by which men, aside from any social boundaries, act freely and build their own *Lebenswelt* to their own liking. This logically implies that social actors have the -clearly illusory- possibility of choosing among a practically infinite array of action strategies beyond the most diverse claims of social control. As such, social action is characterized by an indiscriminate “everything goes”.

Due to the above-mentioned “populism”, anthropology has lost its initial allure stemming from its ability to develop and achieve a healthy *regard éloigné* as in Lévi-Strauss or at least a realistic “interpretive approach” as in Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1973), who, I would underscore once again, drew inspiration from Max Weber’s *verstehende Soziologie* (Weber 1980).

In agreement with Jonathan Friedman, I can conclude that anthropological correctness, clearly one based on a do-goodery populism, is the social production of intellectuals and academics who rightly or not feel burdened by a guilty conscience because of their apparently higher social standing.

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## BOOK FORUM

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# Political correctness, and the relentless decline of critical reason

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Comment on **JONATHAN FRIEDMAN**, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

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I met Jonathan Friedman in the early 2000s, when I had decided to make my research training evolve from archaeology to anthropology. The wish I then expressed to Friedman was to study radical right wing social movements: a phenomenon that was – to my mind – poorly understood, and – at that time – largely ignored by the social sciences.

The early 2000s (perhaps not coincidentally the era in which many of the debates that spurred the writing of this book took place) was a time of social optimism in the West, and celebratory narratives of globalisation were predicting a bright future of freedom of movement and thought, racial diversity, and cultural hybridity. In this context, not many social scientists were happy to supervise research on right wing movements, cultural racism, and political violence of the neo-fascist kind. Friedman was then the one scholar (and such he remained for long) I could find, who was willing to engage in long discussions around this topic, and the one academic who accepted to supervise my MA, and eventually PhD research on this theme. I say all this in order to situate my relationship with the author, as well as the theme of right-wing ideologies (somehow involved in the topic of this book), which is in both cases certainly partial and biased.

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At the same time, if I were to pick one thing among the very many that I have learnt from Jonathan Friedman, it would be the crucial value of critique for the evolution of knowledge, and how science is always about the possibility of being wrong. This book itself, I would say, appears to me as a bold – if polemical – act of strenuous intellectual opposition to (I am tempted to write revolt against) the ever expanding breach of this principle. In my review, I will try to stick to this idea myself, and possibly use it against Friedman, by trying to bring to light what I am critical about, before I move to what I find important and productive.

The book represents an extensive effort to deal with the establishment of political correctness (PC) as a regime of sociality, and an attempt to understand it from the analysis of the general conditions of its emergence. The essay has an explicitly structuralist approach and – within this frame – it combines Marxian political economy with Global Systems theory, and a processual understanding of social reality, we could say, à la Victor Turner.

An important social fact Friedman puts into relation with the emergence of PC, is the establishment of multiculturalism as a political ideology increasingly hegemonizing governmental policies, established discourses, and the organisation of the everyday interactions in social life.

In this frame, Friedman sees PC situations emerge as a defence mechanism, protecting the ideological formations of multiculturalism from critical attacks, dissent, or even scepticism.

Such defence operates via repression of any critique, where those who are critical of – or simply do not comply with – the multicultural grand narrative, are silenced by means of moral accusation. The imputation itself is analysed in terms of the creation of associative chains leading to the re-definition of the accused through morally essentialized categories such as racism, fascism, nazism, and the like.

The very necessity of writing this book – Friedman tells us – originates from within the author's personal life. The theoretical/analytical work around PC was triggered by a series of attacks to Kajsa Ekholm Friedman -- the author's wife, herself an anthropologist – from different segments of Swedish academia and the press, after Ekholm Friedman gave a talk where some problematic aspects of policies were exposed (pp. 76-78) to an audience that the press initially categorised as “right wing” (pp. 78-83).

The organisation of the book – as it appears to me – is divided in three parts. In the introduction and the first chapter Friedman positions himself as a writer, and introduces the reader to the problematic of political correctness, while situating his work in relation to the existing literature. In the

second part (chapters two, three, and four) he describes the series of events and attacks, that eventually led to his and Ekholm Friedman's work on PC. The third part (chapters five, six and conclusion) is devoted to the analysis of the PC phenomenon and its structural conditions of emergence.

I find two issues problematic: one is more research/ethnography related, the second concerns instead some aspects of Friedman's analysis. I will start with the first and move then to the second.

I have been wondering if we can talk of this book as an ethnographically based anthropological work, and I have decided that it is. I do believe with Pierre Bourdieu (2003: 281) that «idiosyncratic personal experiences methodically subjected to sociological control, constitute irreplaceable analytic resources, and that mobilising one's social past through self-socio-analysis can and does produce epistemic as well as existential benefits», and this is certainly what Friedman does with his "participant observation" of the events, or even, following Bourdieu, his "participant objectivation". However, especially for a book that aims at being healthily polemical, there is a certain lack of clarity in the way ethnography and research are presented. Some of the texts Friedman refers to (from Ekholm Friedman's talk to – say – Sweden's "integration act", to media and academic reactions, etc) are simply evoked or summarised by the author, and poorly referenced (media quotes miss date and/or page, what was the radio/tv broadcast, etc). I think Friedman's polemical zest would gain critical momentum from actually presenting some more of these texts, while a more accurate referencing would provide us with further information about the context in which they have been used. Ethnographically, actors and characters should also be more precisely situated. «A group of (mainly female) anthropologists raises in indignation...» (p. 54); «A conversation with a Norwegian psychologists confirms...» (p. 284)<sup>1</sup>. Who are these people and where are they speaking from? How did Friedman get to interact with them, how did they get involved in the polemics? Friedman's argument would become more solid if they were presented with their own history and a description of the social relations they are immersed in. This would have situated them within the larger sequence of events and given the reader a more substantiated backup of the general theoretical argument.

With regard to Friedman's analysis, the Swedish situation comes about as the product of a decline (or rather collapse) of egalitarian individualism – in Dumontian terms –, and its fragmentation into a polarised geography of cultural identities, in competition with one another. Swedish individualism,

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1. Translation by the Author.



moreover, has peculiar local specificities, as powerful collectivistic ideologies (which have taken shape during post-war economic expansion), and a strongly centralised state, seem to have somehow weakened the process of individualisation in the first place. Within this context, declining individualism seems thus to turn established ideologies of social control from below into mutual surveillance and social paranoia. So, the emergence of multicultural ideology and PC regimes are presented as the tools of “new” elites trying to establish themselves in power. The struggle for power creates a situation of fragmentation, social uncertainty and insecurity in which multicultural ideologies and the PC regimes are used as mechanisms of social control imposed from above.

The newness of this elite and its competition for power have implications that are not thoroughly explored. Which are the old ones? What is the historical dynamic of conflict and replacement among old and new elites? What is their composition? Are we talking of private or public elites? Is it economic, political elite, or media power, or both? How are the old and new elites defined by their reciprocal positionalities? In other words, what are *the logics* of the struggle for power within which multicultural ideologies and PC regimes are mobilized? A more thorough class analysis of the Swedish state in its historical transformation, as well as a deeper exploration of the upper echelons of the global society that seem to have hijacked it would be productive, here. Without that, the lack of clarity concerning the elites leaves the reader wondering about the structural role that is given to PC: does it defend some identities against others, or does it defend this newly established order as such?

Despite these aspects generating some confusion, however, the book does a brilliant job of exposing a phenomenon that is increasingly paralysing western societies, by disabling criticism both in the dynamics of knowledge production and in political arenas. With his refusal to abide by the general doxa protected and consolidated by PC dynamics, Friedman seems to open up a space of knowledge that wasn't accessible before: the global systemic anthropological explanation of the PC phenomenon is powerful, thorough, and original. Especially the comparison with the social logics of sorcery accusations in other parts of the world (appearing in the long, conclusive sections), makes structural invariants visible in differing contexts. This allows the reader to scale up from the specificity of the cases presented by Friedman, to the larger logics of reproduction of social systems that – under the current crisis – are undergoing powerful transformational pressures. Throughout his long career as one of the world's foremost anthropologists, Friedman has always had the impudent courage of polemics and critique,

never in and for itself, but always in the intent to open up the box of intellectual debate, expose contradictions, and demystify grand narratives that had become hegemonic. Also, and importantly, he always has been more than willing to take criticism of himself and his own work.

It appears somehow ironic that some of the polemics that have emerged around this book have resulted in certain accusations of the author as “fascist<sup>2</sup>”. Daring to define myself a scholar of fascism, I would say that the most foundational functioning principle of this ideology is the repression of conflict and critique by means of externalization. Fascism as an ideology functions by creating a rigidly enclosed in-group and out-group, and repressing conflict and critique internal to the in-group via expulsion of the latter towards the out-group (Lefort 1986; Loperfido 2018; Sternhell 1984). What Jonathan Friedman does is precisely the contrary; his lucid work is so important because it brings the repressed critique back in, while rapidly verticalizing arenas of power suffocate critical discussions via the imposition of a PC logic.

While writing this review, I was tempted to suggest that some lack of clarity I imputed to the author might be coming from the emotionality involved in having to face moral attacks reaching into the intimacy of his personal life. Yet I decided not to venture into this territory. The private is private and it is only Friedman’s job to respond to critique about his work. He will do that, and will most likely conclude that regardless who’s right or wrong, a full, open possibility to discuss *anything* is what remains crucial for the progress of both, knowledge and society.

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## BOOK FORUM

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### A book that is out of sync with current times

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Comment on **JONATHAN FRIEDMAN**, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

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There is an interesting debate (at least in Italy) on whether the Left should adopt nationalism/souverainism as one of its principles or whether it should instead embrace cosmopolitanism/internationalism. This is a book entirely about the first issue, to the point that the Author (henceforth JF) employs what seems to be a historical oversimplification to support his view. According to JF, until recently – when a moral inversion occurred due to political correctness (PC) – the Left was solely focused on the interests of the domestic population, or common people, in a purely domestic setting while the Right was totally caught up in the international reach of its markets and its transnational ruling class. This biased historical perspective ignores the overly optimistic internationalism of the Left and the overly pessimistic isolationism of the Right, to say the least, but it is nonetheless interesting to see what JF is able to derive from such prejudicial attributions to the historical Left and Right and the “moral inversion” that subverted them.

Besides this historical bias, the basic issue with this book is that it is out of sync with current language. We no longer live in a predominantly politically correct public sphere. It is true that there may be some far-flung corners in the North where intellectuals, thinkers and politicians still believe that a

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*A book that is out of sync with current times*

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certain dose of political correctness and moral constraint should prevail in public discourse, but for the most part, politics and public arenas have gone wild in the last twenty years, and battles are now fought about reliability rather than courtesy, whatever the point of view. This very simple historical fact (that public discourse has largely moved on from political correctness) creates a sense of estrangement in the reader, who sometimes struggles to grasp references to contexts that have not existed for over two decades.

This is an astonishing essay indeed. One very interesting point is that it is (accidentally) a perfect example of that which it sets out to criticize. In order to demonstrate his view of what PC really is, JF employs exactly the same undocumented, preposterous moral dichotomies that he accuses PC of using. Although he wants to play PC basher, he uses exactly the same rhetoric and ontology as the worst PC fanatics. For instance, as an authorial strategy JF appears to be affected by the same outrage he correctly identifies in bell hooks and other champions of PC. While hooks just longs to murder «an anonymous white man», JF seems to wish exactly the same for an anonymous postcolonial, possibly coloured, dumb cosmopolitan member of the PC conspiracy. The central question revolves around social definition, namely the same question that can be asked of the shocking stance that hooks unashamedly maintains: who is the «anonymous white man» or «the elite(s)» that they refer to?

The word elite/elites appears 229 times, but is never defined. It is often connoted (national, Swedish, cultural, political, cosmopolitan, Western, new, centralized, established, rising, academic, globalized, dominant, emergent, European) yet never denoted. We grasp that the elite(s) just want to keep their status but we do not know what that status is: is it economic, symbolic or political? We are told that PC discourse is central to them keeping that status but why that should be so is not stated. The undefined presence of a mysterious elite plotting behind the scenes against the "common people" rings an ominous bell in the ears of those who have been following the transformation of political public discourse in the past twenty years or so. When researching a paranoid stance, you have to be careful not to use the same arguments as the people that you are studying.

On a more theoretical level, I find JF's theory on the relative weight of semantic and indexical categories extremely epistemologically weak. His repeated hypothesis is a very general statement: human beings communicate to talk about the world (semantics) and to locate themselves and others in that world (indexicality): «In normal situations the semantic content of communication is dominant and the indexical less marked, but in periods of

stress or in institutional situations of strong horizontal social control, the social indexical outweighs the semantic» (p. 260). Unfortunately, we are left with no clue as to what a “normal situation” could be, apart from considering “globalization” as a period of stress (associated in Sweden with a strong horizontal social control, I imagine).

A central critical point in JF’s view of PC is the connection with his previous scientific social theory. Kajsa Ekholm Friedman (KEF) and JF are famous for having questioned the vulgar idea that Globalization is a recent phenomenon, dating from the second half of the Twentieth century or, for some, from the late Nineteenth century. With KEF and JF’s work, we found out that the world has always been integrated at least at regional level and big chunks of the globe have exchanged goods, information and “culture” for centuries, long before airline deregulation in the US in the mid-1970s.

If this still holds true, and JF still believes what he published in 2008, we have a problem with his current theory of PC. According to JF, PC is rooted in multicultural ideology, and multiculturalism and multicultural policies are fiercely attacked by JF as the epitome of new and old cosmopolitan elites opposed to the “common people”, who would rather stick to their good old habits and local practises. Especially when dealing with the Swedish case study, JF pits a cosmopolitan elite (led quite oddly by Ulf Hannerz) in love with multiculturalism, with down-to-earth Swedish common people, who are represented as anxious pensioners afraid of being crushed by the elite simply because the former are annoyed by the general multi-whatever moral climate.

As an Italian with his own problems with populism and souverainism, though, I will not linger on this point. I would rather focus on the strange fact that whatever existed well before a multiculturalist ideology took off in Sweden is never debated or questioned in this book. JF confines himself to describing PC (in the form of multiculturalism) as «a drastic change in principle from a formerly culturally defined nation state». «Formerly» entails a whole century of nation building, not a natural Swedish-ness that was all of a sudden toppled by a plot hatched by a bunch of elitist cosmopolitans. If the theory of Global Systems (GS) is true, where were the pure Swedes totally ignorant of the world and desperate to maintain their traditions? Where did they start and end? And if, as in the GS theory, what was imported could be incorporated into the “cultural definition” by simply denying (or not knowing) its foreign origins, is that enough to explain the sense of horizontal solidarity among nationals? Should we not add a lot of political activity responsible for homogenizing the practises, imaginations, tongues and values

of the Nation? Why should multiculturalism be so dangerous and repellent in itself to “common people” as though they once naturally belonged to a culturally defined nation? I know very little of Scandinavia, but I know enough of Southern Europe to be sure that cultural homogeneity is not a natural condition in many, many cases and had to be produced, imposed, forged and often violently established. Why then should this «culturally defined» Nation State be taken as sacred or naturally belonging to the people, when so often the people that came out of the process were the victims of that production? If multiculturalism is functional to the new exploitation of the global masses (and I believe JF *has* a point when he states this), what about the link between national economies and national homogeneity? If we need REF and JF to understand the deep connection between new modes of deterritorialized production and cosmopolitan multiculturalist ideology, don't we still need Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner to explain the “history” of any national cocooning in the safe cradle of traditions? Why should the homogeneous be the standard, the benchmark of identity, and all intentional coexistence of differences be a fraud enacted by evil or stupid actors? Having worked in Greek Macedonia, that sounds like yet another attempt to impose a homogeneous model of identity where people have learnt to put aside cultural differences and focus on other unifying principles. Religion can be one, civil values may be another.

I am not denying there are a lot of problems with multicultural life in the Western world, but it is not cultural difference that necessarily creates the real problem for real people. Inequality of opportunities, ignorance and utter poverty: these are the real issues at stake.

Besides all these details, I want my point to be clear. In the representation of “ordinary” Swedes (and equally for the cosmopolitan and evil elites) there is no history, no cultural elaboration, no debate. They seem to have arrived on this planet as ready-made Swedes, only to be shattered by the evil forces of multiculturalism.

The graphic part of the book provided new input for an old project of mine, namely, to write an essay on how tables, charts and drawings have been used in social sciences to mimic the respectable formalism of harder sciences and – most of all – the visual sexiness of economics. Due to space constraints, I will not linger on the fact that in the book some figures have no textual description, no caption at all and are not numbered (p. 159), or that some curious axes feature undocumented names on the sides (what is «self-direct» and «etero-direct» in figure 3 p. 165? The State? The people? The Government?). I will focus instead on figure 8, «Hegemonic cycles».

From a purely graphic perspective, this is jaw-dropping: you have a sinusoid cycle in opposition to a co-sinusoid anti-cycle. One reads «Hegemony», the other «Homogeneity» (but we are told in the text that it should read «Hierarchy»).

There are two inexplicable points, or at least two points I could not figure out the reason for, although I worked on those pages for hours, truly.

Why are the curves represented as opposite, even though they apparently depict two dimensions in “direct” (that is “not inverse”) relation? Why is Hegemony at its zenith when Homogeneity is represented at its nadir? JF explains that «In periods of expanding hegemony the political center functions as an assimilation machine». I read this as a “direct (causal) correlation” between Hegemony and Homogeneity, if it is reasonable to take “assimilation” as a proxy for homogeneity. It is well known that the expansion of the power of the nation state as a political and economic model (from the 19th century to the first half of the Twentieth century) goes hand in hand with a strong process of internal (nation-building) and external (colonialism) homogenization at all levels, from the imposition of national languages to the standardization of more or less everything. Why are two clearly “parallel” and “directly” dependent processes represented in figure 8 as opposites? Unfortunately, we cannot rely on JF’s explanation, or at least I cannot, because this statement makes no sense to me: «The inverted curves represent the *inverse* relation between hegemonic expansion and decline and *accompanying* integration/assimilation and fragmentation/cultural identification» (p. 270 my italics). How can a curve be “inverse” and “accompanying” another curve at the same time? The Italian translators (whom I congratulate for their excellent work) had to resort to «quella [relazione] parallela» to translate “accompanying” and fell into the same trap as JF. The point is that each sinusoid curve does have an inverse relation, but “with itself” at different angles/times, and surely the curve «Hegemony» moved in time from «political integration» to «political fragmentation». This is the inverse relation. Similarly, Hegemony/Hierarchy moved across time from the national integral cultural identity to the fragmentation of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, but the two curves moved in a parallel sinusoid curve. Why does JF visually emphasize his mistake?

I would blame what he calls «associationism». «Associationism is based on the indexicality, or social sign value of statements, i.e. on those properties which can be used to classify statements or the subjects of statements into pre-existent categories» (p. 75). As we have already seen, JF relies on a Bourdieian model of communication as a social system of distinction. We can act, work and talk using «critical rationality» namely, «what is meant by a

statement» (this is semantics), or we can act and talk (and draw figures in our essays) «based on what that which is meant means in the wider social field» (this is associationism). There is no doubt that the figures in JF's essay look extremely elegant and very – I cannot find a better word – scientific. Two opposite curves immediately remind us of the cycles of growth and decline in economics, and their inverse relation to other curves (investments, welfare expenses, whatever makes sense to relate to productivity cycles). If you are able to draw such a figure in your essay, the wider social field categorizes the book and its author in the realm of true science. The real (rational) content of the drawing is pushed into the background while the relevant part becomes the association of the figure with the glittering world of rational-cum-scientific view.

However, as I said, there is another blind point in the drawing, besides this incomprehensible opposite curve relation, and that is the existence of “cycles” in what could be better represented as a timeline that starts in the late 18th century and ends in our time. Even though JF frequently writes about «hegemonic cycles» in global systems, there is no way to understand why a book about such a partial and time-limited phenomenon as “political correctness” should be analysed within a cyclical framework. Moreover, the emergence of PC (with its opposing cultural aspects, cosmopolitanism and indigenization) is always (from the subtitle) related to the «End of Hegemony». Hegemony of what? Of Western Politics and Economics, no doubt. Therefore, JF explains to us what happened to identities when Western hegemony began to fade away: the integrative process of states that still controlled (national and inter-national) economies has been slowly but steadily superseded by new economic centralizations that needed a newly established elite interconnected on a global level. That elite thus pushed towards multiculturalism for states and cosmopolitanism for themselves, causing a localist or indigenist reaction among “common people” that had incorporated as natural the old forms of national identity and do not want to accept the newly imposed interest and passion for diversity.

I definitely feel that this model is too simple and is missing central dimensions, but this is not the point. The point is that this is nonetheless a “historicist” explanation, not a “naturalist” one: there is a specific political-economic model, the nation state, with its own historical genesis and conformation that suffers the consequences of a worldwide reallocation of economic resources and the formation of new centralities. This historical phenomenon produces a cultural consequence, which is a shift from national (civic) to post-national forms of identities, either ethnic or cosmopolitan. The specific shape of post-national identities is still a historical issue, not a



natural one that can be explained in terms of cycles and rules. Without the historical Nation State there would have been no «cultural identity» the way JF conceives it in figure 8 as the starting point of a potentially cyclical process. National cultural identity has nothing natural about it, as historians of pre-modern-state empires and other political entities know very well. Citizens of the Roman Empire or the Most Serene Republic of Venice were not naturally endowed with the same «cultural identity» entailed in JF's model, which is national identity. That was because before the modern Nation State became the benchmark of world politics and economy, there was no shared citizenship as a complex of duties and rights packed into a common cultural frame. Instead there were other forms of collective identity (religion, kinship ties, locality, local “languages”) and the hegemonic crisis (of Rome or Venice, for instance) could not produce the same cycle of «de-culturalization» and «multi-culturalization» that is represented in figure 8.

Thus, the following question is crying out for an answer: why describe a purely historical event as though it were just a moment in a natural cycle? I cannot help finding an explanation once more in the potential association of natural cycles with natural sciences. From there, it takes very little to associate the social scientist with the “real” scientist in the lab, wearing his white coat while practicing real rational science against those magicians of the word who mesmerise the populace with empty praises for a post-national way of living together. Let us go back to crude reality, figure 8 suggests, where we have to face the natural laws of identity and power. I must admit I do not share this naturalizing view of what political and cultural identities are, as I think that anthropologists in general have a different notion of identities as historical processes. Indeed, I must have read too many “Po-Mo” authors<sup>1</sup> and been affected by their notion that it is historical idiosyncrasies, and not natural laws, that make up human life.

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1. Post-modernist literature.

## BOOK FORUM

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### “Do not disturb”

#### Why we need to be awake

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Response to comments by **George BACA**, **Christian GIORDANO**, **Giacomo LOPERFIDO** and **Piero VERENI** on **Jonathan FRIEDMAN**, *Politicamente corretto. Il conformismo morale come regime*, edited by Piero Zanini, translation by Francesca Nicola and Piero Zanini, Milano, Meltemi, 2018, pp. 348.

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First, and briefly, I would like to thank the reviewers for reading and criticizing my book. After so many years it is a real pleasure to have the issues discussed. And I, of course, greatly welcome all your attacks. Open discussion is best weapon against PC.

Vereni definitely has an ax to grind, which, although he accuses me of the same tactics as those whom I criticize, is not the case at all (see below). But he may make whatever assumptions he likes. The picture he paints is one in which I am the angry old man, leftist nationalist or rather sovereignist as he seems to presume. The best way for me to deal with his critique given the limited amount of space allowed is simple outline:

1. It is interesting that there is a debate in Italy on whether or not the left can embrace the national or whether it should be cosmopolitan. This is an old debate in the left, which I do discuss in the book, one that divided the early communist movement between national Bolsheviks and internationalists. Now the internationalism of the workers movement is not really the same as the cosmopolitan ideology of today even if there is a certain overlap.

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“Do not disturb”: *Why we need to be awake*

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George Soros and Trotsky do not have a lot in common other than what might be called a global intentionality. This is the difference between the International and what in France was referred to many years ago as «l'internationale du capital» (Dockes 1975).

2. Vereni states that PC is dead; that we have gone beyond all that; and that nowadays it's about being "reliable" rather than PC. It is true that some of the manuscript of the book dates from the first years of 2000 and two of the chapters are based on articles written in the late 1990s. I wondered myself over the years whether it was all still relevant. However circumstances have proved to me that the relevance has increased if anything. In my conclusion I do say that we have gone beyond PC, not to a more normal state of openness, but to one of open warfare. To say that PC is extinct is to be out of touch with what is happening in the US and in large parts of Europe, from "trigger warnings", to the new UN migration pact in which it will become more or less illegal to criticize immigration, to the expelling of employees who say the wrong things, all of which I refer to in the Postscript. The content of PC is the same but it is clearly more militarized, as in the current conflict between the "new populists" and the so-called traditional party complexes.

3. Is my argument of the same type as those whom I criticize? Do I make use of the same dichotomies as those whom I criticize? Am I out to kill the cosmopolitans? Is it wrong to make the connection between the new multicultural/hybrid discourses and the elites that I document have fabricated them? Where are the "undocumented, preposterous moral dichotomies" that he claims I make use of? This sounds like a very angry and vicious PC advocate, the kind who has applauded much of the so-called anti-fascist violence that is clearly on the rise. I do make a serious effort to document my arguments. I could have written a chapter on the history of elites, but I didn't think it was necessary in such a book, seeing that there are shelfloads of publications on the subject. Is there a real polarization in Western societies? All the increasing fear talk, not least in university organized conferences about the rise of populism is ample proof that this is real enough, to say nothing of the real politics of parties to the "gilets jaunes".

4. With reference to my use of the notion of "indexicality" to relate PC language to situations of instability, I am not sure that the critique is serious, even from the reviewer's perspective. Is the contrast between normal situations and situations of instability so counter-intuitive? After all I also illustrate the contrast.

5. In the remarks on the fact that Kajsa Ekholm Friedman (KEF in following references) and I have been writing about a global systemic anthropology for so long he finds it paradoxical that we can be so critical of globalists. I find this quite absurd and assume that the reader didn't do a careful job. First, trying to locate globalization within global systemic processes has been one of our priorities and has nothing to do with taking sides. Nowhere is Hannerz accused of leading a globalist movement. That would be absurd! On the contrary, he is described as more of an academic “wannabe”... not the same thing. This is just as false as the accusation that I say that PC is «rooted in multicultural ideology». What I do say and exemplify is that academics and other “intellectuals” have produced much of the ideological texts for the new elites.

6. Have I ever stated that cultural homogeneity is a “natural” phenomenon? Certainly not in this book. I have always discussed all identities as the product of practices and always in the process of production as such. The presentation offered here is a mere parody. If I live in a rental apartment, the history of its tenants does not eliminate my feeling of being home in it. This is typical globalist rhetoric, like accusing anyone who likes his home for being a racist. We are all nomads now!

7. Can it be maintained – as Vereni states – that «Inequality of opportunities, ignorance and utter poverty» is the real problem of multicultural society? It is a common explanation among liberals and leftists, i.e. it's all about class. Of course there is a connection which I have taken up many times, between marginalization of immigrants, poverty and criminality. This is, in fact, a principle argument of some populist parties for stopping mass immigration. They refer to the formation of a new underclass, not least where the labor market cannot absorb the newcomers. But this does not change the fact of ethnicization which occurs in such situations, one in which violence is often directed at the “other” group. And this is a generalized problem and not a product of the racism of the host society, something that has also been well documented. If it were otherwise, all poor people would be automatically redefined as culturally foreign.

8. I take it that my critic does not like my use of graphic representations. I apologize if there are some missing captions or numbers for some of the graphics (I think these are corrected in the longer American version of this book). I can only say that I have not been criticized for precisely these things before. He spends most of his argument on figure 8 in which I try to represent the inverse relation between processes of political-economic hegemonization and processes of cultural integration. First, these are two curves not sinusoid curves. And why is it that cultural integration and political-eco-

conomic hegemony cannot vary inversely to one another? I wrote an entire book about this in 1994 (Friedman 1994) and no one has ever informed me that this relation is impossible, especially in graphic form. Cultural fragmentation that is rampant in the West today but which began in the 1980s is, in my argument, closely related to the declining hegemony of the West, a process that is quite the opposite of what occurred in the period of increasing Western hegemony, something that I have been documenting for the past four decades. From the increasing regionalism in the 1980s, then the ethnic politics of immigration, indigenous politics, all have become increasingly salient, not least the shift in Europe to Islamic based immigration (see Tibi 2002 [1998], 2008) with serious consequences related to ethno-religious violence. This should not seem surprising for those who are not entirely repressed.

9. As for non-nation state social orders, I have been clear that the nation state is a recent phenomenon and in discussing the model to which the graphic refers I state that cultural homogeneity is common in the national order but ethnic hierarchy is the more general pattern of integration in the longer history of state orders. Both of these forms of integration break down in periods of hegemonic crisis. In fact the very proliferation of the nation state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is directly related to the crisis of, for example, the Habsburg Empire. Nationalism here was a product of the fragmentation of empire. The same might even be said for the emergence of nation states in Europe more generally. It has even been ventured that the French Revolution was essentially a nationalist project, pitting the “people” against a cosmopolitan aristocracy (Dubost, Sahlins 2000).

10. Vereni claims that I use a naturalistic rather than historical approach to issues of expansion and contraction of hegemony and that this is all an attempt to sound scientific. If there is anything that sounds “scientific” or natural it is the discovery that this “shit” has happened before, which could give reason to be a little suspicious about the functioning of the world or global system. Perhaps, as he says, he has read too much of the “Po-Mo” literature, especially if he thinks that using graphs is some kind of fake science.

George Baca’s discussion of the book is, of course, more to my liking and his criticism is thoroughly argued and I agree with much of his argument. However his focus on the issue of multiculturalism as a facet of the nation state is contrary to my own understanding of developments in Sweden as in other nation states in the West at least. There are a number of issues here. First, let me try to specify more clearly the nature of the argument concerning multiculturalism and immigration, not least because it is related to the

global systemic model that Baca seems to be in agreement with. Mass migration of populations with so-called different cultures, leads at first to a situation of cultural segregation and even enclavization, but this is dissolved when the host society is expanding so that immigrant groups are included in the national economy along with the host population. There are variations on this process, from the strongly assimilationist republican model of France to the more pluralist model of England and the even more complex model of the United States. So it is clear that the nation state has always absorbed new populations. But no one presumably would deny that there are serious contradictions involved that are distributed along a scale of increasing/decreasing integration. However the argument in the book is basically that global elite formation since the 1980s has been characterized by an identification of the latter out of the nation. In previous eras this was not an issue since aristocracies were not rooted in local territorial entities (although even that varied historically). Elites who have splendid residences all over the world and are married globally have been discussed before (Wagner 1999, Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot 1996, Friedman 2012). Their discourses define themselves as global citizens and their opposites are referred to as, e.g. “terriens”, terrestrials who inhabit limited spaces to which they are strongly attached (Wagner 1999: 204). This kind of discourse has been adapted by the new elites as well. I do try and demonstrate the extent to which some politicians identify out of the nation, and the section of the Swedish constitution which I quote recategorizes Swedes as an ethnic group among others and claims that we need a new way or forging unity in the new multi-ethnic world. Now one might well argue that this is still about the nation, but its content is greatly transformed in a way that turns political elites into a group positioned above the population over which it rules. The “will of the people” (now associated with Nazism) is transformed into the “wills of the peoples”. This political change is accompanied by a blade-runner like lower class formation that does not act as a subject but is divided into multiple groups with different cultural and even social orders that are maintained by multicultural decree as well as local circumstances, where criminality, aggression and violence increase and where no unity is achieved except within the local groups themselves. Could a national unity be forged out of this as occurred to some extent in the US as a result of WWII? That could only be realized in a world of nationalistic states and there is evidence that this is not the case although there are clear nationalist tendencies today, usually classified as populism.

The model of the EU is, to my mind, an excellent expression of this post-national elite tendency. Macron is its foremost symbol, combining his desire to be at Versailles with his attack on nationalism as opposed to “patriotism” whatever that is supposed to mean. Perhaps he means “for king and country” but his country seems to be the EU and he is intent on giving it its own army. The argument I think I made explicit was that there is a critical difference between a multicultural state and a nation state which resides in the dynamics of identification with the larger political unit and with its cultural content. Of course in countries such as the US the national culture is thin compared with Europe although there is a repertoire of attitudes, behaviors, and even forms of sociality that are quite distinct. Americans do recognize one another when they travel the world. The ethnicization of the country may have changed this significantly so that what was formerly American is now understood as white. In both the US and Europe, the contemporary multicultural trend has led in the direction of pluralism in the sense of segregation, enclavization and even cultural warfare. The new cosmopolitan elites, more visible in Europe, perhaps, are the main bastion of multicultural politics. While the latter is included geographically within the same state, I would not call this a mere variation on the nation state as such. The nation state project was also elite and did not emanate from some pre-defined “people”, of course, but the content of the project was quite different. As Benedict Anderson wrote «there is no tomb of the unknown Marxist» (1983: 10); the nation works in cultural terms but not the plural society. The Korean case is very interesting in this context because it is an example of an expansive order able to integrate foreigners into the workforce, which is the opposite of the Swedish situation as in other European countries. I wonder if the Korean state uses immigrants as a symbol of the good as opposed to Korean ethnics. Does this push me into the arms of cultural conservatives? Absolutely! But my point is to get the description right not to take sides. Lenin was a real cultural conservative... typical of Marxists once upon a time. As for Swedish elites and their politics, it’s true that they made a major change in the 1950s as they tried to become the world’s good guy, a position that they have tried to maintain, but this had nothing to do with multiculturalism and the internal restructuring of the country that occurred in the late 1970s and 1980s. As for my anguish... well maybe at the time but this is very much “anguish at a distance”. Was Kajsa the leader of an anti-immigrant group? Well they implied in the newspaper that she was leader of PWMI<sup>1</sup> and I would add that this was not so important since the group disappeared within a year or so. It

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1. PWMI stands for the People's Will and Mass Immigration (Folkviljan och massinvandring).

was more of an event than a movement. As for the exploitation of Third World migrants in Sweden, my point was explicitly that this was not the case since this was in no way labor migration but rather welfare migration and it was quite explicit at the time. There is even a Ph.D thesis about how papers were prepared in West Africa for entry into different European countries depending on the scale from work to welfare.

Both Loperfido and Baca indicate that I seem to have been emotionally involved with this subject. It is true that I would have never indulged in this subject matter out of a purely intellectual interest even if I think I would have been wrong not to have done so. Perhaps I was lucky in having been thrown into this situation which was quite an ordeal. On the other hand both my wife and I have a history of being apparently provocative to those in power, first from issues of Marxism in the late 1960s and 1970s, then global systems and now this! What a pain in the ass. Being a provocative person seems to come naturally to some, I suppose, but this is no explanation. Perhaps it's hubris, but I do think that science and political correctness are totally incompatible.

This book was not meant as an ethnography in the normal sense, but an anthropological analysis of a situation. I should clearly have developed the issue of method in the book but I suppose I was too engaged in my argument to really care enough about the methodology. I think that some of these issues are resolved in the longer English version of this book where I have dealt more explicitly with some of the anthropological problems involved in this research. As for the question of elites, who they are and where they come from, this is also dealt with in more detail in the English version. The argument is basically that there is a transformation of elite identities in the period following the 1980s in which the latter begin increasingly to identify out of the nation state. This is not only Swedish, of course, and there are plenty of examples of the phenomenon that I describe. The context of this is what I refer to as double polarization, a simultaneous fragmentation of cultural identities and a polarization between elites and people and even between new upper classes and former working classes who are downwardly mobile in this period. I do mention the fact that Sweden in the post-World War II period was known for its very egalitarian political order in which the political class was hardly existent as an autonomous actor, where their wages were low compared to other social groups and where they were accessible to all citizens. This changed rapidly after the 1980s as the country as a whole became significantly more stratified. It is this change that I discuss at some length in the book. And where does PC come into it all. It is not merely a tool of the rising elites. Stalin's PC is not the equivalent of today's PC. The former is an expression of raw power, the latter is built into a mech-



anism of shaming which works within the forms of sociality that already exist in a particular society which accounts the differences between the places in which it occurs. It doesn't appear as a top-down phenomenon although it may well be orchestrated in such terms. Rather it occurs in relatively "egalitarian and cooperative" milieu such as the contemporary academy. What is significant here is the conjunction of a major ideological shift that is linked to the rise of new elites. That shift is crucial; one that takes us from the rise of cultural identities in the late 1970s to the ethnicization of the social order, so that cultural identity eclipses class identity. The globalization of elites entails their encompassment of the cultural fragmentation over which they preside. This takes the form of multiculturalism, the celebration of diversity, especially in symbolic terms, in the accumulation of cultural specificity in art objects, artefacts, home furnishing all of which is a logical subcategory of cultural cosmopolitanism. PC comes into play in situations where ideologies are vying for dominance, in this case the new cosmopolitan multiculturalism. Those who identify with such ideologies are often academics, cultural personalities, artists, media "intellectuals" who are not elites in themselves but identified with the latter. It implies a moralization of the social field and the use of techniques of exclusion to secure dominance. All this is necessary since both the ideology and the social positions implied in the latter are not clearly institutionalized but, on the contrary, quite fragile. So to answer Loperfido's question as to who is being defended by PC, it is both the elites and the set of cultural representations with which they have identified. This is about the attempt to turn a particular cultural identity into a dominant ideology.

Giordano's review, which is perhaps too flattering, but I enjoy it of course, concentrates on what he calls «anthropological correctness» and which he locates in the emergence in the 1980s of the self-critical tendency of the "reflexive turn" associated with Marcus and Clifford (1986). The thrust of this, which he sees as positive for the field, was the critique of anthropological authority, the third person defined description of the "Other" as something different although not lower unless we are willing to forget the pervasive relativism of much of the history of anthropology. Even Geertz is attacked, although, especially in the case of Marcus it is not a substantial criticism. In my understanding Geertz is the real problem here since he insisted on the complete authority of the anthropologist and the entire project of writing culture is really the Geertzian mission. No multivocalism is welcome here no matter how literary the style. Part of this development included something more, not just the reflexive turn but the post-colonial globalist turn which came later and which Geertz, of course, was quite against. I cannot but agree

with his discussion of anthropological correctness which is the form that it took in our discipline; all about terminology and what can be said. I recall of course, that Sami did and often today also insist that they are Laps and not Sami which is a language label only. And I remember seeing the same kind of comments from the San who preferred to be called Bushmen. It is quite a story, this, quite absurd and shameful as well. When KEF and I worked in Hawaii we had issues with the white members of the movement who wanted us not to discuss matters close to the lives of people in the village where we worked on the grounds that it was akin to racism. The villagers were furious about this. So yes, the “do-goodery” populism invoked by Giordano is a serious threat to research, but I would caution against calling this populism, since it is very much limited to academics and I would say academic elites even if the latter term has been deemed incorrect by some. Popular among some even if it is based on a culture of fear, it is not the same as the classic notion of populism, even if I do understand what the reviewer has in mind. The populism that is scaring the crap out of the new elites is one that has its roots in movements like the famous American movement of that name, which from the late Nineteenth century was composed of workers and farmers and opposed both the capitalist and political classes.

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