CHAPTER 2

Communication Technologies and the History of the Spectacle

2.1 Introduction

The world of social media renders sociality dependent on *images* – digitized shapes, sounds, movement and colours that are embedded in the surfaces disseminated on screens. This condition is the result of a long process of socio-economic development encompassing the growing dominance of sociotechnical apparatuses over the production of human relations. The saturation of the social world with media and images is especially preeminent in the age of the internet, but this sort of condition was well known decades before. An important account of these transformations appeared in the late 1960s, when French theorist Guy Debord published *The Society of the Spectacle*. The book was very popular among the radical left and student activists in France. Debord also produced a film about his powerful book. In the film he mixed various images – from Fidel Castro giving a speech to the fashion designer, Coco Chanel – with the reading of his book. The book is about a broad cultural development that emerged from modern capitalism: *the spectacle*. It comprises all of the media images in society taken together, but it is more than this. It has a very specific function that concerns Debord: 'The spectacle is not a collection (*ensemble*) of images, but a social relation mediated by images' (1992, 16). The

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spectacle stands between us and the real world, like a massive looking glass. People see everything *through* it, including themselves and one another.

In this chapter we will begin our exposition of the society of the selfie with a brief historical analysis of communication technologies in light of the rise of the spectacle between the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries. We interrelate the theories of Immanuel Wallerstein and Guy Debord to frame our analysis. From Wallerstein (1996, 1991), we are interested in the interrelationship of two structural processes: (1) the origins of the modern world-system, which depends on communication technologies at the same time as it depends on material structures (division of labour, commodity exchange, etc.); (2) the construction of a modern geoculture grounded in the transfers of cultural goods, including via communication technologies. We argue that these processes were the material basis of the Debordian spectacle – that is, they facilitated the mediation of social relations by images, in a process promulgated under the inertia of the valorization of capital. The world market has a world spectacle as its corollary (Debord 1992). The spectacle unifies the modern world-system in a geoculture, as the mass production of commodities sublimates world integration into/through images that circulate through the capitalist infrastructure. This is significant because the rise of the spectacle has always been a transnational affair, and it is precisely in this transnational sense that we understand the 'society' of the selfie. From this axis, we offer a constellation of problems *pari passu* with the new forms of relatedness via images: conditions of visibility, the logics of surfaces and projections of spectacular selves with digital devices in the twenty-first century.

2.2 From World Market to the Modern Geoculture

The constitution of the world market was an entangled historical process that assembled different forms of labour and asymmetrically integrated regions into transnational circuits of value, commodities and exchange. This system was organized in transnational divisions of labour between core regions (countries that profited from colonization since the sixteenth century and the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century) and peripheral areas (colonial or former colonial regions). Transnational commodity chains (Wallerstein 1996, 16–17) constructed the modern world-system as a complex that comprises dense flows of goods, people, ideas and labour.

This system was made possible due to the spread of automate, technical artifacts, which were both an effect and a condition of the structures of capital accumulation and valorization. The *couplage* man/machine was not a purely technical fact, nor a purely social relation, but rather a *sociotechnical* condition (Simondon 1989, 244–245), because technical processes were intertwined with new forms of sociality mediated by non-human mechanisms. From the 1850s

onwards, with the spread of industrial techniques and modern infrastructure for the increased velocity of the circulation of money and commodities through core and peripheral areas (railways, ports, steam engines, etc.), the integration was accelerated (Narita 2020). The modern world-system also generated a culture that extended into regions when and where the industrial techniques and global market extended. This cultural form was based on the circulatory effects provided by both material infrastructure and new means of communication. In this sense, communication technologies played a major role in the constitution of this growing *geoculture* grounded in material and cultural transfers among interconnected regions.

Between the 1850s and the 1870s, for example, the development of the telegraph counted on electromagnetic application in communications systems. With long-distance information transfers, electrical telegraphy was based on transcontinental transmission systems (Galison 2003). In this context, new spaces for communication and integration of the modern world-system were available for connecting, for example, the North Atlantic (via Western Union, 1857–1866) and submarine cables connecting Rio de Janeiro, Recife and Lisboa and another axis connecting Buenos Aires and Cádiz (Schäffner 2008). Terrestrial telegraph lines were also built with the Australian Overland Telegraph and the Indo-European Telegraph Line (Huurdeman 2003) at the same time as the colonization efforts of crossing the interior of Brazilian territory with telegraph lines (Naxara 2018). In the British Empire, the expansion of communication devices went hand in hand with colonial rule and played a major role in the incorporation of new publics into the growing geoculture of consumption and circulation of ideas (Potter 2007).

But the cultural symbol *par excellence* of nineteenth-century geoculture was the popularization of the printing press. It opened up new forms of socialization to the public in the biggest cities, be it in industrial countries like Paris, London, Chicago or New York (Thérenty 2007; Motte and Przyblyski 1999), or in peripheral areas like Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santiago and Buenos Aires (Luca 2018; Terán 2008; Narita 2017; Silva Castro 1958). There were many impacts on the public sphere, since the press amplified the sense of cultural circulation and deterritorialization of information (Kern 2003, 34–36) among urban middle classes and even popular groups (Williams 1961; Negt and Kluge 1993). With the refunctionalization of the consumption of culture with ads, posters and sensationalism (Habermas 1962, 258–262), the market orientation of printing culture counted on the establishment of regular illustrated newspapers. Mason Jackson (1885, 278), one of the pioneers in the study of illustration in the press, called it the rise of the pictorial representation of the world. With wood-engraving techniques, the steam-powered printing press, halftone photo-processes and photo-reproduction processes, the sublimation of everyday scenes into printed images rendered socialization dependent on the mechanical reproduction and exhibition of culture.

2.3 The Spectacle of Mechanical Culture

Image-mediated socialization, which constitutes the spectacle of modern communication technologies, gained momentum with photography and, in the end of the nineteenth century, the cinema. This new sensibility in modern geoculture turned the spectacle of industrial image effects into something beyond shapes: images *appear* to the senses (Didi-Huberman 2013, 356–359), that is, they interpellate and disclose visibility available through surfaces. Visual culture in the first decades of the twentieth century, was subjected to the mechanical reproduction of sensations, combining visual effects, sound, colours and movement. The aesthetic of industrial forms of communication produced new regimes of attention and subject positions, since the individual would be affected by visual stimuli in surfaces and abrupt flows of information (Crary 2001).

Walter Benjamin (1974, 113–114), reflecting on the 'shock experience' of modernity, located the modernization of the senses at the very centre of capitalist culture and the new sociotechnical relations with mechanical images. The multiplication of sensorial stimuli in urban life, with crowds and rapid succession of scenery, illustrates a broader cultural complex grounded in new social experiences connected to mass communication outlets. Technology and mechanical images displayed many dematerialized kaleidoscopic signals to consciousness and, especially with the cinema, the human sensorium was constantly subjected to the need for adaptation (*training*) in relation to the ever-changing surfaces. The mechanical reproduction of culture can also be conceived as the first act of the era of the spectacle.

If the printing press and illustrated newspapers paved the way for the mass consumption of culture, photography and the translation of its techniques into the cinema put the pictorial representation of the world in sequential frames. The projection of mechanical images in film entailed two innovations: movement and staging (Kracauer 1960). Both features reinforced the growing appeal to observers' senses, as the modern entertainment industry took shape, with its mass production of cultural items (Horkheimer and Adorno 2009), creating new needs and popular icons for the geoculture. A sociological figure emerged from this shift: the *anonymous masses* as a target affected by communication technologies. The mechanical reproduction of culture entailed the mass-production of the person, that is, the individual as a generic being (*Gattungswesen*) (Horkheimer and Adorno 2009, 159) that could be everyone and no one. The standardization of communication technologies rendered the individual person abstract amid the levelled, generalized masses.

In the early twentieth century, radio illustrated this condition under the need for spreading audio contents (especially news and advertisements) to a mass of anonymous, diffuse, generalized individuals. Radio extended the domination of media product to everyday life through the intrusion of narration

and rhapsodic voices (from Wagner's *Parsifal*, as in the first Argentinian radio broadcasting, to the news from distant fronts during the World Wars) into the private sphere (Wolf 2010). It was a cultural force that reached a wider public during its glory days in the 1930s and 1940s, serving as an artifact to unify the nation (Hilmes 2002). The radio spread rapidly through the United States, Britain, France and Weimar Germany (Führer 1997; Douglas 2004). In peripheral countries of Latin America, the first experiences with stable radio transmissions took place in Brazil (with the Radio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro and Radio Clube de Pernambuco between 1919 and 1923), Argentina (LOR Rádio Argentina in 1920), Mexico (XEB in 1923), Venezuela (Ayre in 1926), Peru (LIMA OAX-AM in 1925) and Colombia (HJN in 1929) (Dângelo and Sousa 2016). However, the massification of radio in the region occurred only in the 1930s under the aegis of its political uses, for example, with Getúlio Vargas in Brazil and the populist regime of Lazaro Cardenas in Mexico (Haussen 2001). With mass communication technologies, capitalist modernizing moves rearranged the public sphere and empowered the masses with a politicized culture and promises of a new protagonism (Morelock and Narita 2018b). At the same time, these technologies and their effects constituted and facilitated new forms of domination and a structural transformation of politics and culture in the twentieth century (Pavlik 1996; Hyden et al. 2002; Oswald 2009).

The great turning point in the production of contemporary mode of perception, dependent on the combination of images in movement and sound with the spread of these media outlets through broader publics, took place in the 1940s and 1950s. The television became the prototype of a sensorial revolution, since it unified image and sound with a massive industry devoted to the production of entertainment. It also promoted the personal use of technology, and the pervasive effect of images, displaying contents in surfaces, that became the medium of new forms of relatedness that traversed the globe alongside the expansion of market structures.

2.4 Era of the Television

The television is a potent metaphor for the cultural power of communication technologies in the twentieth century (Wolton 1990). The first experiments with it were in the late 1920s and 1930s in England, Germany and the United States. In the New York World's Fair of 1939, themed 'The World of Tomorrow', several companies presented televisions to the public for sale (Kovarik 2015). The spread of TV took off during *les trentes glorieuses*, that is, the 30 years from 1945 to 1975 that experienced great economic growth and the rise of a new sociotechnical milieu with the ubiquitous effect of duplication of reality (Habermas 2003, 208) into real life and images. Industrialization and markets expanded quickly, and cultures all across the world experienced rapid cultural

shifts (Hobsbawm 1994, 259–262). The process was an entanglement of technological innovation, market expansion, cultural change and urbanization.

In the years following World War II, the number of American TV stations expanded rapidly, and by the early 1950s, the television became a popular household item (Winston 1998, 95–102). In core countries, major networks like America's NBC and CBS and England's BBC broadcast for far and wide audiences. In countries on the periphery of the capitalist world-system like Brazil and Mexico, the first transmissions were only to small audiences on networks such as Brazil's TV Tupi and Mexico's XHTV-TDT, which were inspired by the massive market for television in the United States (Fox 1998). It was not until the mid-1960s that television became something people along the capitalist periphery privately owned and watched in their homes (Fox and Waisbord 2002).

Japan, which was in reconstruction after its defeat in 1945, was entering a phase of rapid economic development that included a rising high tech industry and a booming market for home televisions (Yoshimi 2005). And the cultural tensions derived from this were far from being residual: the exhibition of images for middle-classes desiring consumption, banal and of vulgar scenes, and many appeals for material success were articulated through mass media (Kim 2017).

During the Cold War, TVs and TV networks expanded their domain throughout both capitalist and socialist countries. Naturally, both sides (the USA and USSR) had a vested interest in improving their technologies faster, for purposes of national advancement in tandem with the competition between capitalism and communism for securing political allies and trading partners across the world. In this way, the space race and the arms race were two legs of the same beast. And the space race – agitated in 1957 with the success of the Soviet satellite 'Sputnik' – would connect with the spread of TV, in the sense that satellite technology became an enormous boon to the ability for televisions to broadcast distant events, and so also to connect disparate regions of the world. In 1964, the United States started this trend when the country used a satellite to broadcast the Summer Olympics from Japan. That year, 143 countries came together in the International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium (INTELSAT). The use of satellites for TV broadcasting expanded through the 1970s, which also entailed the expansion of international broadcasting and coordination (Kovarik 2015).

Television was rapidly becoming a central beacon of mass culture, and as such it could and did serve political functions that both supported the growing capitalist geoculture *and* fuelled popular protest within core countries. The expansion of television networks was a vital component for spreading ways of life, propaganda and even psychological warfare (Schwoch 2002). Yet the American Civil Rights movement, for example, gained many more sympathizers due to protests acquiring televised media coverage. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I have a

dream' speech at the Washington, DC Lincoln Memorial in front of 250,000 spectators in the 1963 March on Washington and the brutalizing of Civil Rights protestors by Alabama police in 1965 made lasting popular impressions.

In socialist countries, TV broadcasting also expanded vigorously. The political potency of television became evident, for example, when the screens reached and inflamed the audience in the streets during the Prague Spring (1968) – after the Soviet repression, even the Communist Party stimulated soap operas (with the dramatic serials of Jaroslav Dietl) in order to communicate with the public and negotiate the normalization of everyday life under late communism (Bren 2010). Televisual entertainment became a force for globalizing culture through the spectacle of mechanical images. The circulation of imported entertainment from Western countries, comprising cartoons, films and a variety of commercially produced programs, was significant in Hungary, Poland and especially in the former Yugoslavia (due to the relatively independent geopolitical situation of the country in relation to the Soviet bloc) (Mihelj 2012). In the late 1980s, Brazilian telenovelas and their eye-catching social realism became blockbusters in Poland and the Soviet Union (Mattelart and Mattelart 1990).

It was a turning point in the scope and form of communication. Communication technologies were important elements in the uneven integration of different regions (be it capitalist countries or planned economies of the 'actually existing socialism') into the modern world-system. The rise of mass communication devices in industrial core countries and the spread of technologies to peripheral areas created interdependent nodes of a vast network for the production and circulation of images. In this context of broadening cultural circulation, for example, Carmen Miranda could sell worldwide the Brazilian exoticism in the Jimmy Durante Show in the 1950s, when Nikita Kruschev also sold the agricultural and industrial improvements of Soviet politics on Face the Nation (CBS).

Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1996, 124–125) called this process the basis of 'capitalist civilization'. The global expansion of markets was accompanied by an expanding cultural logic where people treated new technologies as if they carried with them the keys to the good life. The enchantment of the new and the promises of unlimited abundance went hand in hand with the touting of well-being and quality of life as major boons of capitalist civilization. If the consumer society of the twentieth century 'is to be sure a function of science and gadgetry', as Wallerstein states, the rapid expansion of radios and televisions across the globe played an important role in spreading consumerism and reverence for new technologies.

In consumer-oriented capitalism, desires are stoked and through taking part, people in all parts of the world become entranced, and buy in. In leisure, consumption, entertainment and the dictates of advertising and self-exhibition, the compulsion to buy hooks people in a variety of forms. New 'must-have' objects arise and turn obsolete, arise and turn obsolete, in a perpetual cycle with

increasing speed. The consumerist geoculture has no boundaries: it is pervasive and tireless, spouting new branches and bringing new territories under its spell. It finds a way into everywhere and everything. The world becomes united in a global industrial order, and intrinsic to this order is the culture and logic of the commodity. It is facilitated by new powers of media – first print media, then radio, then TV. The uneven integration of different regions – Wallerstein's 'capitalist world-system' – would not have been possible just because of physical connections (transoceanic cables, telegraphic lines, etc.). The critical factor was the hypnotic spell of images and their commodities, a spell that was already thriving but that really colonized the globe when TVs colonized the household.

It is not that the images people become so enthralled by misrepresent the reality of the products they consume. It is also not the case that the images accurately represent the value. The images *become* a big part of the value of the products, both in terms of production and consumption. Images must be produced, but it is in the name of the product, not of the image itself, that they are produced. The value invested in the production of the image has its use-value in the spectacular value it adds to the product, in the way it builds connotations for the product in the cultural lexicon, thereby calculated to increase consumer demand. People learn to desire the product not only because of the longed-for visceral, embodied experience of consuming the image, but also because of the spectacular value delivered from the commodity to the consumer through osmosis. The self that consumes items of social value becomes a more socially valuable self. Affected by the spread of mechanical images and communication devices, people buy and assimilate impressions and appearances by buying commodities. In other words, people deal with a reality mediated and transformed by the spectacle.

2.5 Spectacle and Commodity Fetishism

Debord never says communication technologies *caused* the spectacle, but clearly, they were indispensable in facilitating it. The spectacle, thus, is a social relation derived from the sociotechnical development of capitalism: a social structure and a historical moment in which social relations became mediated by images (Debord 1992, 16). The TV is only one aspect of a deep historical movement well underway since the nineteenth century, where vastly different groups of people were united by their growing exposure to images and their exhibition *en masse* – be it via the printing press, the radio, the cinema or the TV – that often carried with them flashy advertisements and encouragement to acquire and consume this or that commodity. Society was subsumed and unified under the domain of the spectacle.

By 'spectacle' he means not only something in public that people gawk at. It is not just about whether a media image excites people. The spectacle has a central place in the structure of society, and it dehumanizes. The most obvious reason

for this dehumanization is that when people's minds are saturated with media images, their perspectives on themselves and one another are at least partly coloured by media images, along with the internal labyrinth of desire and aversion that goes with them. Another reason for the dehumanization is that people encounter the commodities they buy separately from the people who produced them. This occlusion of social relations is connected to Debord's account of alienation (Bunyard 2018), since commodities appear as autonomous forces based on the growing divorce between human power and the direct control on the production. According to Debord (1992), the sublimation of this process in images is completed (*achevé*) when the individual deals with an alien world in which reified social relations represents the complete separation of the subject from the activities society takes (*dérober*) from him. This tension between subject and an alien objectivity is a concrete production (*fabrication concrète*) of alienation of life as a whole: the externality (*extériorité*) of the spectacle puts sociocultural pressures on human relatedness to produce needs for an alienated consumption according to an alienated production.

This is where the spectacle *mediates* between producer and consumer. The spectacle promises cultural unification – since different people can have standardized experiences, using the same imagistic references and surfaces – but it delivers social separation (Faucher 2018). One can think about this in two ways. First, socialization is largely dependent on the dynamics of images (embedded in information, advertisements, etc.), which are the very sign of separation (*détachement*) between life itself (*vécu*) and its representation (Debord 1992, 15). Second, if the spectacle crystalizes the structural separation between producers and products (28), commodities do not belong to workers, but become foreign (*étrangers*) to them and multiplicate needs in a loop, that is, they appear (*image*) and circulate as premises of the modern abundance of dispossession (31). The structural separation implicit behind the images feeds consumption *à distance*, which is to say, the new desire economy is necessarily sublimated in the medium and its potency of multiplication of exhibitions *ad infinitum*.

Most of the time, people do not meet the others who produce the items they consume. And most of the time, people do not think about the producers of their purchased commodities. In everyday life, on supermarket shelves and in department stores, shoppers find commodities packaged and presented, beckoning to them. There may be a person operating a cash register, but that person bears no personal relationship to the various items the shopper selects for purchasing. This is the waking life of consumer society: production is invisible. The individual encounters media images and commodities – not the workers, the people who built the commodities and images. The consumer experiences the finished product, not the process or people behind it.

When a person consumes images (watching Coke commercials), just like when they consume commodities (drinking Coke in real life), they are not just relating to objects (commercials and Cokes). They are also relating to all of the work and all of the people involved in the work that went into making them. Yet

the typical consumer tends to just think about the object itself. Anselm Jappe (1998, 51) calls it the disappearance of the subject – people act as if the social world were ruled by objects and images, as if objects and images had an autonomous life. This is the problem of *commodity fetishism*, an important concept for Debord and in Marxist social theory in general, first introduced in volume 1 of Marx's *Capital* (1962 [1867], 85). In Debord's words,

> It is the principle of the fetishism of the commodity – the domination of society by 'supersensible [*suprasensibles*] as well as sensuous [*sensible*] things' – that attains its ultimate fulfillment [*s'accomplit*] in the spectacle, in which the real world is replaced by a selection of images that exist above it and at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the sensible *par excellence*. (Debord 1992, 36)

As mediation between labour and consumers, embedded in the apparent autonomy of commodities, the spectacle is an 'abstract general equivalent' that 'is money one can only look at, because in it all use has already been exchanged for the totality of abstract representation'. The aesthetic features of exhibition and the quantitative jump of production of images lead to a new sensory discipline grounded in value production, since 'the commodity is this effective [*effectivement réelle*] illusion, and the spectacle is its general expression' (44). Images and surfaces, like commodities, are the primeval nuclei of contemporary capitalist socialization dependent on the ways people see and are seen by the diffuse audience. The visibility implies the need for self-valorization and inter-subjective recognition grounded in esteem, solidarity or moral complaisance (Honneth 2003), but it also deals with the imagistic power of surfaces and the inhuman amount of information in communication technologies. The connection of moral components with the new sociotechnical milieu produces a peculiar kind of spectacle that renders the individual prone to watch and to sell their own self according to the new visibility of media devices.

2.6 The New Visibility

In a famous study, Marshall McLuhan (1994) pointed out that TV opened up a new universe of perception. Through TV, a rhapsody of shows and ads started making the world accessible and knowable via unprecedented barrages of images, sounds, colours, and so on. The myth about the 'global village', with spaces increasingly more interconnected via the spectacle, is the cultural icon of the promises of the modern geoculture. It made the world more accessible and knowable, but only through surface appearances – the particular sequences of image and sound presented on TV. And of course, it was a pleasurable experience. The TV image became a key item for consumption; be it the success of John F. Kennedy's self-presentation in the 1960 presidential campaign in the

United States, the general appeal of the troubles of the American marines in Vietnam in the late 1960s, Castro's nationalization of Cuban television in order to project images of radical political transformation (Rivero 2015) or the mass celebration (in coloured images) of the 1970 soccer championship in Brazil and the nationalist propaganda of the military dictatorship (then in its apex). Instead of being there inside the events of our lives, people became spectators of events, onlookers of images of a world on display for private enjoyment. But enjoyment was only the tip of the iceberg.

The world of the spectacle is the constant stimulation of the senses. Debord speaks of *objets sensibles*, in French: literally, objects whose first appeal lies in our sensory experience. Consider how hedonism and consumerism facilitate one another so well. All of the senses are enlisted in this spectacular way of life, but one stands out even more than the others, and that is sight. How things look matters a great deal to us, and often sight is the first sense involved in noticing – never mind evaluating – an object. In the society of the spectacle, the pleasure of seeing is exploited most out of all of the senses. This is true first of all by advertisers, shop owners, and really anyone with commodities to sell. Consider the phenomenon of 'window-shopping', for example – people walk past the windows of shops, stoking their desires for the items that are placed in the shop windows in order to grab the attention of people walking by, or the advertisements on billboards towering over highways. It is also true in human relationships, where physical appearance has risen to a paramount consideration for social and self-esteem for so many people.

People are bombarded with messages about this or that item that they should buy, and about how to think about goods and people that appear in surfaces. This 'how to think' aspect is almost always with social connotations attached such as being sexy, attractive, powerful, fun, popular, in fashion, and so on. The individual is surrounded by stores and advertisements prodding them to buy things, suggestions abounding that the commodities will not only be satisfying but that they will also make the consumer give off good impressions to other people. In this sense, people want one another to know about the things they buy, because what people consume defines them to such a great extent. It gives voice to common people and makes demands (political issues, lifestyles, etc.) visible. At the same time, while the world of buying and selling and the commodities involved are thrust into human awareness constantly, individuals become more concerned with how they are coming across to others in the most basic of ways, and in how they can use the things they buy to manage others' impressions of them.

The new visibility of the spectacle carries an important feature, especially with media coverage of the big stories: ritualized emotional intensity (Compton 2004, 83–84). Be it with the Gulf War in the United States or the daily news on the criminal investigations led by the Federal Police of Brazil that targeted mainly (between 2014 and 2017) the former leftist government of the Worker's Party, attention-grabbing footage is featured and repeated, diffusing dichotomies

(e.g., good/evil) with sensationalist appeal. In both cases, the novelty is not destruction nor political corruption, but rather the visibility gained by these issues due to the spectacle.

The world of experience is fixated on the 'visible' by a flood of advertising and exhibition, surface appearances and countless icons. The tease of these images is both ecstatic and alienating. People are steeped in them to the point of over-stimulation, stoking an insatiable coveting: the desire to acquire, to experience the full thing, 'the real thing', and to participate in all of the glory portrayed in the image. As the old Faith No More song goes: 'You want it all but you can't have it. It's in your face but you can't grab it'. The coveting of images and their objects carries a yearning – an attempted command, even – for the object to disclose itself, to become fully 'visible', no longer alien. And as a *modus oper-andi* of the society of the spectacle, this extends beyond commodities; it invades how people relate to one another as well as to themselves. With the rise of social media in the 1990s, this would only deepen.

With the home computer, the internet and social media, the spectacle took on new dimensions. Instead of a top-down 'culture industry' like Adorno and Horkheimer (2009) once described, the online spectacle was much more decen-tralized, and even participatory and democratic in some ways. In Debord's (1990) terms, it became 'diffuse' and integrated through the forces of capital-ist globalization. In this diffusion and democratization, many people began to take part in generating the images that they then collectively took for reality, or at least wanted reality to be. But now it was no longer just images and movie stars and cans of Coke. Now everyone could take part in the spectacle, not just as spectator, *but as producer and as image*. The alienation of a reality mediated by images now went beyond the realm of consumption, and into the realm of social life in a more thorough way than even before.

2.7 Rise of the Digital

In the 1980s and 1990s, a deep economic and cultural shift took place. The world witnessed the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, collapse of socialist countries in Eastern Europe, the political reori-entation of China ('one country, two systems', according to the *motto* of Deng Xiaoping), democratization in Latin America, pioneering neoliberal experi-ments of the 'Chicago boys' in the Chilean military dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet, and neoliberalism spreading from the USA and the UK. With the alleged end of communism, many people sensed that capitalist liberal democ-racy was the only workable kind of modern society, and that the whole world was destined to join this reality. In these terms, Francis Fukuyama (1992) famously proclaimed civilization was reaching 'the end of history' in light of the alleged stability of liberal democracy over the political conflicts of the twentieth

century. The widespread assumption was that, according to the Thatcherian *motto*, 'there is no alternative'.

Just as the first computers were built for military purposes during World War II, the first computer networks were invented for military purposes during the Cold War. The Advanced Research Projects Agency of the United States Department of Defense forged the beginnings of the internet in a network of computer systems between four universities. They set up the network in 1969 and gave it the apt but unmemorable name 'ARPANET'. In 1972, email was invented.

Basically, there were networked computer systems in several different countries, and while everyone wanted to be able to link them, they were all different, and so it was hard to do that. In 1973, a computer scientist at Stanford named Vincent Cerf and a program manager at ARPA named Robert Kahn came up with something called 'packet switching', which basically solved the problem. Cerf and Kahn's invention of the transmission control protocol (TCP) and the Internal Protocol (IP) address became a mainstay of internet infrastructure and remains so to this day. Building from Cerf and Kahn's TCP/IP, Bob Metcalf, one of the computer scientists involved in the implementation of ARPANET, also invented Ethernet in 1973, patented in 1975. This allowed the integration of personal computers – at this point the only viable personal computer model was the Xerox Alto – into the developing network of networks (Misa 2004; Kovarik 2015).

During the 1980s, first with the IBM PC and then with the Apple IIe, the personal computer took off, and at the same time, the National Science Foundation (NSF) was working on the 'civilianization' of the internet – its increased accessibility and use, in order to better coordinate and propel forward scientific research. In 1981, the NSF funded the establishment of the Computer Science Network (CSNET). By 1986, the NSF had set up several supercomputer centres along with NSFNET, which connected the supercomputers between centres. In 1990, ARPANET closed down, leaving NSFNET to run the internet. This means that starting in 1990 the internet was entirely a noncommercial, government enterprise (Misa 2011; National Science Foundation 2003).

Also, in 1990, the World Wide Web was invented, and it was through this that digital communications really exploded into everyday life. Communication technologies played an important role in exposing people to events happening all over the world, even more than TV already did. Although the manipulation of information extends back to the early modern period, with the collection and arrangement of textual excerpts in human memory, manuscripts, print and libraries (Yates 1966; Blair 2010), today humans deal with active non-human devices like data mining, wikis, search functions, downloads and PDFs. Information management has become much faster and diversified and the practices of sorting, selecting, searching, storing and summarizing were dematerialized from physical presence. They also contributed to a growing overload of

information, which some suggest could inhibit people's capacity for critical reflection (Carr 2020). Lived historical experiences became derealized by media into 'happenings' and the amount of data surrounding the ubiquitous interactions favoured by the digital and the immanent codes and media languages veered towards cultural fragmentation (Hassan 1987). At times it was thickets of conflicting information that were easy to get lost in. People became accustomed to frequent, rapid, fleeting and provocative images (Wajcman 2015). But the onslaught of information also contributed to a sort of historical short-sightedness. On the one hand, the past continued to lose its authority with the decline of traditional values. On the other hand, the future lost its authority, as progressive hopes for a future utopian society lost credibility with the apparent 'end of communism'. No longer looking to the past or the future, a kind of cultural presentism (in other words, a fixation on and to present conditions and values) developed and flourished (Hartog 2003, 156–157).

The growing presentification of contemporary society, with ephemeral exhibitions and glances syncopated under sequences of images, turns every fact into an event susceptible to the spectatorship of a generalized, global audience. The disclosure of the world fragments imagistic appearances according to the publicity of time and the expropriation of life following the rhythm of commodities. Individual behaviour itself becomes prone to production even in moments of leisure, especially after the massification of the TV and the popularization of the internet, when the audience only exists to the extent that it is a corollary of the productive activity of images. The historical time of the spectacle is the time of the 'estranged present' (Debord 1992, 154–158) since the pervasive effect of technical images and surfaces delivers the internal separation of commodity producers' societies. The 'becoming-commodity [*devenir-marchandise*] of the world' (61), with the rise of digital images and digital surfaces, makes much of the digitally mediated social relations prone to forms of economic transaction and self-marketing, for example, by trading in representative images of life (Faucher 2018).

Debord says that the spectacle makes the world of commodities 'visible' (*fait voir*). Images carry not only their immediate, objective features for their representation into consciousness, but also a logic of exhibition grounded in a model of social satisfaction according to the needs of the society of consumption. Russell (2019) describes the spectacle as a 'phenomenological terrain of value'. With mechanical images, the self-movement of appearance-forms (advertisements, displays, etc.) in surfaces makes visible the commodification of society. If the mass diffusion of television between the 1950s and the 1970s was a turning point in the constitution of the spectacle, the pervasive effects of the digital and its personal uses in computers and smartphones provided the annexation of the entire individual life. For instance, apps (like corporate groups in WhatsApp) and social media like WorkPlace, an enterprise connectivity platform, subject individual productivity to the discipline of being always available and logged-in (Huws 2016). It is a 24/7 society with full availability of the individual

for production since no moment or place can exist in which one cannot shop or consume via digital surfaces and images (Crary 2013).

By the late 1990s, the internet was abundantly feeding two different, incongruous social trends. On the one hand, the web was becoming something of a new, bottom-up public sphere, harbouring new spaces for collaboration and instantaneous communication not only for research as the NSF had envisioned, but in all kinds of public matters as well, including social protests and political debates, via mailing lists, online news, video streaming media, social protests, online discussion, and so on (Lovink 2009). On the other hand, the web had gone for-profit, and online culture favoured alienated communication, exhibitionism, competition, quantification of social relations, and the erosion of both historical awareness and reasoned critical reflection. These two faces of informatization are the basis of what Hardt and Negri (2000) refer to as 'Empire', that is, the political form of global capitalism connected to the rise of digital networks. The spectacle was grounded in a new transnational social formation with no single centre of control. All these broad trends have profound political ramifications, and the way they continue to play out just might be a – if not the – deciding factor in whether democracy has a future on the world stage.

The online world brought the modern geoculture to a new level, with the creation of a *virtual* global space grounded in instantaneous interactions and the absolute dematerialization of goods and cultural consumption, that is, processes that were not dependent on physical supports and platforms anymore. Basically, we are dealing with the concretization of digital objects (Hui 2016). Data objects formalized by metadata and structured according to logical statements and codes embedded in computer programming and codes for web-platform development like HTML, XML, etc. Especially in the World Wide Web, the semantic web has constructed interobjective relations based on personal parameters and algorithms that capture sociality in selfies, individual consumption, likes and shares. Life itself was objectified in data and its new visibility marks the era of surfaces.

2.8 Surfaces: Without Depth and Without Trajectory

With the rise of the digital era, communication technologies played a major role in defining how people experienced and thought about the present. Spurred on by internet advertisers' attention-grabbing marketing techniques, the online spectacle comprised an inhuman amount of information demanding the constant availability and attention of users (Garcia Canclini 2018). The expansion of the domestic use of TV and of multichannel television providers among middle classes accelerated the diffusion of information and colonized most homes – especially in urban areas – with an endless cascade of cartoons, films, news and ads. With cell phone notifications of emails and social media happenings, when it is easier to take care of bills and other such necessities by

going online, and with the compulsive desire to check email again or to see if people have liked one's latest post of a cat meme, the internet is practically a vortex that has made the spectacle much more ubiquitous than in Debord's time (Frayssé 2017).

In the empire of the TV and the boom of personal use of computers, humanity entered an era of surfaces. Cultural theorist Vilém Flusser (2002) was concerned with how being exposed to lots of 'surfaces' (lots of images in film, television, and so on) changes the way people think. This transformation means people are disciplined not to deal with things, but with images instead. There is a much more fundamental separation between viewer and the object represented by the image. John Wayne's gun cannot be touched. The can of Coke in the advertisement cannot be drank. General levels might be adjusted, such as of lighting, colouring and sound; and the viewer has the option to change the channel and watch something else or just get up and take a walk instead. But viewers cannot physically interact with the images, or in Flusser's language, 'surfaces'. They can only witness them. And to Flusser, this witnessing of surfaces – in the terms we used earlier this means consuming images – is itself a very real, full activity, just nothing more than what it is: observing surfaces.

An important part of Debord's theory of the spectacle is the alienation that media saturation brings. Fixated on images, and understanding and experiencing the world through them, people are split off from any reality beyond images. Flusser's ideas make an integral compliment to Debord's for our account of how the spectacle impacts sociality due to a narrowing effect on deliberative discourse and moral sensibility, which we will discuss at length in Chapter 4. Flusser is not concerned with the world beyond the surface in Debord's sense of alienation, although he does not explicitly argue against theories of alienation either. Instead, he concerns himself with how contemporary society immerses us in a kaleidoscope of images. And these 'surfaces' are not only shallow – in the sense that they are only images, only surfaces with no depths – rather they are also out of sequence. This does not mean they are in the wrong order; they have no intrinsic order. As opposed to a 'line' of text on a page such as this one, which the reader follows as it starts in one place and ends somewhere else, a 'surface' is instantaneous. It is the cultural sign that inflates the presentist condition of the digital era. Linear time drops out of the picture. For Flusser, surfaces are without depth, and without trajectory.

Wim Wenders' *Notebook on Cities and Clothes* (1989) marks the early days of the attraction of the digital spectacle with a useful reflection on the new status of images and surfaces: we are creating an image of ourselves and attempt to resemble the image despite the dissonance between the image we have projected and ourselves. With painting, the original was unique and each copy was a copy. Photography and film are more complicated: the original was a negative and each copy was the original. Now, with digital images, there is no more negative, because the very notion of original is obsolete. Everything is copy and, without the need of physical support, can be diffused without trajectory.

2.9 The Spectacular Self

The audiovisual revolution was grounded in the one-way dispersion of information: from the production company and transmission centre to the masses. The computer, on the other hand, allowed for much more individual autonomy. Users could copy, edit and rearrange information according to their own wants and needs. This laid the groundwork for the individual – as opposed to the company – to become a significant new productive unit in society. When the World Wide Web spread in the early 1990s, the individual started to become a new productive unit of media culture. In other words, the spectacle began a process of decentralization and democratization. Now the production of culture became a participatory affair (at least in principle) mediated by surfaces.

Social media extended this in a very specific way: a good part of social life went digital. Social media is used so much today that it is no longer reasonable to claim that it is only a digital representation of our own persons and our relationships. It is more accurate to say that most of our relationships are partly online, some of them entirely. People keep in regular contact by liking and commenting on one another's status updates, tweets and posts. Instead of meeting face-to-face, they simply open a chat window.

In these digitally mediated, alienated forms of interaction, people sacrifice some things and gain some others. Obviously, they do it because they want to, at least on some level. Users gain the capacity to make new friends they would probably have never met before and keep in touch regularly with people all over the world, without waiting for the international postal service or paying long-distance phone charges. At the same time, some communication with friends and family is now relegated to these online forums – one does not have to call or meet someone in order to talk with them. Clearly, the impact is both connecting *and* alienating. Users gain frequency of interaction and wideness of social networks, and yet the gained interactions come with a loss of the particular sort of spontaneity and intimacy that face-to-face social interactions involve.

The loss of spontaneity and intimacy also means a loss of real-time pressure and risk. This was particularly true in the early 1990s, before the days of social media platforms Friendster and Myspace. Socializing online originally took place through chat rooms and private messages, with no associated avatar other than the 'screen name' one gave oneself. On the one hand, this made it possible for a person to easily project an entirely bogus identity, and this reality raised public concerns about sexual predators lurking in chat rooms and adopting fake personas. On the other hand, this meant that people could explore various genuine aspects of themselves through expressing themselves in a multiplicity of screen names and identities (Turkle 1995). With the invention of Windows, it became possible to participate in multiple identities simultaneously in real time (Turkle 1999). Yet over the past two decades, this opportunity for freedom and multiplicity in online identity has narrowed, and at the same time the internet has garnered a dramatically expanded user base as well as an increasing

presence in the lives of users. Avatars on Friendster, Myspace, Twitter, Facebook, and so on ask for profile descriptions and photos, and in such a situation, the social media profile explicitly ties the user account to a unified, embodied, *organic self* with a 'real' face and a 'real' name. It is still possible to completely fabricate identities in user accounts for purposes of trickery or predation. It is more complicated, however, to casually express oneself through a multiplicity of online identities. The trend moved more towards curating one's general online presence to project a coherent, desired online identity (Van Dijck 2013; Marwick 2013a, 2013b) that was still anchored, more or less authentically, in the attributes and identity of the flesh and blood user (Wee and Brooks 2010; Banet-Weiser 2012). This marriage of curation and authenticity is contradictory, and it reflects the one/many characteristics of the self that is split between the spectacular and the organic on the one hand, and on the other hand is at least ostensibly a coherent reconciliation of the spectacular and the organic.

If someone's avatar on Twitter shows them at their most fit, in their best clothes, at the best camera angle and with perfect hair, then whenever they tweet, it is as if that image of them generates the tweet. Their online social identity is wed to that ideal image. And yet just as the spectacle is in one sense alienated and, in another sense, real (unto itself and in its establishment of representation as reality), the spectacular self and the organic self are in a dialectical relationship, each one informing and partially inhabiting the other. Along with the injunction to be 'authentic', i.e., to fashion one's online identity in good faith as a reflection of the organic self, comes the injunction to measure up, i.e., to fashion one's organic self in good faith as a reflection of one's online identity. Turkle (2017, 185) describes it well: 'Social media ask us to represent ourselves in simplified ways. And then, faced with an audience, we feel pressure to conform to these simplifications'.

The spectacular self is both an alienated, digital rendition of the organic self, and a logical extension of neoliberal rationality. As we will see in Chapter 3, neoliberalism is much more than a set of economic policies, promoting privatization, deregulation, and so on. It involves a kind of broad colonization of governments, cultures and personalities by the ways of the market. Despite all the talk about being 'free to choose' (Friedman and Friedman 1980), neoliberalism involves a transformation of state power rather than its dissolution: increasingly, the government is run by and for the market, as well as according to its rationality of calculation, self-interest and maximization. And people increasingly run their own lives this way too, holding individual responsibility, productivity and self-valorization as central values. *People act like they are their own enterprises, as if they are entrepreneurs of themselves*. As Tom Peters (1997) put it,

> Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business

today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. It's that simple – and that hard. And that inescapable.

Neoliberalism and the digital era emerged together within a broad process of social, cultural and economic transformation. The network infrastructure was the condition and the product of the spread of global capitalism. Neoliberalism and the digital shaped one another in integral ways. The neoliberal dream was more or less the marketization of the world, and information technologies provided the communications infrastructure to make the dream easier to approach. Digital communications constituted a new lucrative frontier for Wall Street traders, while the stock market became exponentially more fast-paced and completely dependent on the transfer of data within digital networks. The financial sector exploded when it went digital. Multinational corporations were given a tremendous boost in efficiency as well, feeding a deterritorialization of the market wherein very powerful businesses were able to constitute themselves above and beyond national borders and laws.

The intertwined issues of alienation – estrangement from self and other on the one hand and sociality mediated by images and surfaces on the other hand – were already well underway decades before the personal computer became commonplace. The spectacle was already in full force during the middle of the twentieth century. The digital era just helped it spread in new directions, namely into the self.

2.10 Prosumers, Exhibition and Surveillance

The combination of individual use of digital technologies and network infrastructures made exhibition the *motto* of the society of the spectacle. This encounter produced the cultural contours of our times. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1999) call it 'interactive spectacle'. The passive spectator of the TV era became passive and active at the same time: as spectator of surfaces *and* producer of digital content (photos, texts, files, data, etc.). The wide availability of digital devices exposed every nook, cranny and crevice of social life into a potential object of exhibition – even ordinary everyday activities like cooking and cleaning. The audience became active producers of content while still remaining consumers (Faucher 2018) of images, commodities, affects and life itself.

The online spectacle runs on the activity of 'prosumers'. Users produce and consume via chat rooms, instant messages, blogs, vlogs, flogs, sex on webcams and violence (such as police brutality and even mass shootings) caught on smartphones. Producing the spectacle from each ordinary activity, life itself becomes a potential object of online exhibition (Vattimo 1992) and consumption. The flipside of this intensive exhibitionism and spectatorship is that more of life is under surveillance (Andrejevic 2004). Private life is made public in a

vast process extending from the economy of big data (consider the scandals of Cambridge Analytic and Facebook) and the capture of our faces wherever they appear – e.g., city streets, airports, soccer stadiums, Facebook profiles, etc. (Zuboff 2018) – to the disclosure of intimate areas of life with the spectacular spread of new ethics of the personal, reaching sexual orientation, gender identity and family.

Popular reality TV shows of the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as Big Brother, unveil this development towards a new form of the spectacle. The social dynamics in the houses are not labour in the traditional sense, but they clearly generate value, since people watch them eagerly and advertisers pay exorbitant amounts to have their commercials interjected at regular intervals into the stream of video. It is a kind of mass representation of people working on themselves: when some people are confined in a house where they are subjected to constant surveillance through many cameras and microphones, their experiences that are usually private are now revealed to a public audience. Intimate details of life that a person normally only witnesses with family or hear about from their closest friends are revealed to complete strangers and flow through an anonymous mass; all of the affections and experiences of life itself: love, friendship, cooperation, hatred, envy, authenticity, desire and so on. Back in 'real life', people participate in comparable dynamics. With the reputation-building productivity of online performance (Hearn 2010), individuals market themselves not only to sell traditional commodities, but also to participate in an economy of strategic exhibition that has powerful 'real world' ramifications in terms of career goals, social esteem and life chances.

Reality TV is a fascinating artifact of the first days of the society of the selfie. The participants are subjected to virtual interaction with an invisible audience (e.g., 'we', the viewers). This is a new valuation of unexceptional human experience. A kind of 'vicarious experience' (Brooks 2005), it exhibits how we perform different roles and the invisible audience can react as if they were living the lives of others. Often the drama surrounds the contrast between individual conduct and collective interest, and the 'schizoid tensions' (Terranova 2004) participants undergo in an economy of social punishments and rewards, revolving around how well they can sell their personalities and flaunt their personal skills. Moral lines are drawn, dividing winners from losers, hard workers from slackers, and so on. The reality TV phenomenon speaks to the schizophrenic longings and fears of an alienated society longing for intimacy but afraid of other people, turning to voyeurism in lieu of satisfying social connections. There is a lot to be said about this twisted dynamic, and reality TV is just the tip of the iceberg. But before we get to this, we need to dig deep into the texture of alienation in social media culture. It almost goes without saying that the promotion of individualism goes hand in hand with the suffering of estrangement from others. The world of social media that emerged in the early 2000s helped this partnership – neoliberalism and estrangement – stretch to new extremes.

2.11 Conclusion

The construction of the spectacle from the 1850s onwards was the focus of this chapter. Modern culture is inconceivable without sociotechnical relations that, via communication structures, have constituted a dense transnational flux of information. It has unified social experiences according to the diffusion of cultural practices in a geoculture structured by the expansion of the world market. From the popularization of the printing press to the age of cinema, television and the internet, the spectacle has sublimated human relatedness into images and favoured new ways of production and reproduction of culture, as well as new forms of consumption and alienation. The popularization of digital devices and digital networks was intertwined with personalization of contents and personal visibility on surfaces, turning every individual into a productive unit of the spectacle. The society of the selfie, thus, emerged from the articulation of two processes: the strong emphasis on individuation within the sociotechnical complex built upon digital networks and a new cultural momentum driven by market economy of the neoliberal order.

As we noted in the introduction, the 'society of the selfie' should be understood as the coming together of the culture of spectacular consumer capitalism with amplifications and dovetails of information technologies in general and social media platforms in particular. It comprises a constellation of tendencies that are unbounded by geography. There is no fixed entity such that one could point to the 'society of the selfie' existing 'here' and ending 'there'. It extends, at least potentially, to all locations globally, and to all persons capable of socialization into cultural norms and practices, especially those who have access and ability to use information technologies. The society of the selfie is broadly open to all, and does not distinguish based on race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, age, neurotypicality, etc. This being said, the society of the selfie is not a hegemon of sameness either. Internet access, ability and interest does vary by location and population demographic, as do the cultures with which the society of the selfie must somehow integrate in order to spread. And yet it does spread its influence wherever it extends, which is quite extensive and the process has been very rapid. Internet use has skyrocketed in the early twenty-first century across the globe, and for people across differences in race, gender and class.

To express the spreading ubiquity of the society of the selfie, we offer the following statistics to testify to the global reach of information technologies and to the increasing prominence of their use across demographic categories. In 2008, 11.2% of white and 5.8% of nonwhite Latin Americans reported using the internet daily. By 2019, these proportions had risen to 55.3% of white and 45.3% of nonwhites using Facebook daily. For Latin American men, the rise from daily internet use in 2008 to daily Facebook use in 2019 rose from 11.4% to 53.5%; for women: 8.3% to 50%. For people making more than the mode income bracket, the change was from 14.7% to 56.4%, while for those under or

equal to the mode, the change was from 3.5% to 40.3%. In the United States, dramatic increases also occurred between 2000 and 2018. Hours of use per week among whites rose from 9 to 20.5, and for nonwhites the change was from 10.1 to 23.8. For men, hours per week rose from 9.9 to 21.6, and for women it rose from 8.6 to 21.2. Across all subjective class categories, average hours per week rose; from 7.6 to 19.6 for the lower class, 8.5 to 20 for the working class, 9.6 to 22.6 for the middle class and 10.3 to 28.6 for the upper class. And again, similar shifts happened in Europe between 2002 and 2018. Those of the ethnic majority who reported using the internet daily rose from 14% to 65.1%, and for those in ethnic minorities, daily use rose from 18.2% to 72.3%. Those in the ethnic majority reported spending an average of 233 minutes online daily, while those in ethnic minorities reported being online an average of 203 minutes. For European men, the change was from 18% using the internet daily to 67.5%, while for women the change was from 10.6% to 63.6%. Across Latin America, the United States and Europe, there are inequalities of use between various demographic divisions, and many of these inequalities are statistically significant, especially those pertaining to income and class. At the same time, people in all of the surveyed race, gender and class categories exhibit dramatic increases such that by now, very substantial proportions of all of these groups are using the internet daily.[1]

Today, with the popularization of laptops and smartphones, the spectacle becomes exponentially more diffuse, since anyone can broadcast themselves at any time and place – and the visibility and attention constitute new forms of social capital and competition (Fuchs 2016). The quantity and quality of images have changed (Peraica 2017): be it for intimate souvenirs, help requests, self-assertion or advertising personal skills and achievements, the selfie is more than a way of representing ourselves on the internet. It is also a fascinating distillation of social reality in the age of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. The rampant phenomenon of the selfie is symptomatic and symbolic of a cultural emphasis on self-affirmation, in an era where public display is a key to success. And this is where we now turn – to a trend we call 'neoliberal impression management'.

Notes

[1] All statistics on Latin America, the United States and Europe are analyzed using data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), the General Social Survey (GSS) and the European Social Survey (ESS), respectively. Weights were applied to the LAPOP and ESS datasets to facilitate samples representing more evenly the populations from the various countries of the two continents. The data points presented here are taken from the results of a series of t-tests, one-way ANOVAs and crosstabulations.