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While the specific rationales for the diverse forms of sorting, classifying, dividing, and hierarchizing humanity—or human differentiation—vary across different contexts, a number of universal commonalities emerge when these rationales are examined collectively. These commonalities coalesce around a central theme that emerges from the interconnected nature of human differentiation across multiple dimensions. This pattern characterizes human differentiation as culturally coded forms of domination, which can be categorized into five distinct yet interrelated domains. These are: *domination as a macro-social anthropological constant; affective-cognitive-bodily schemata; cultural coding; the regimes of orders of difference, which are characterized by primordial and neoliberal coding; and indifference as a mode of system justification.*

Domination as a macro-social anthropological constant The phenomenon of domination can be identified as a macro-social anthropological constant, one that is deeply embedded in human societies and serves as a crucial thread woven throughout the tapestry of human history. The characterization of political domination as either inherently good or bad is an oversimplification that fails to acknowledge its multifaceted nature. It is an integral aspect of human civilization, playing a crucial role in the organization, coordination, and survival of social structures. The manifestations of domination and the associated differentiation within humanity exhibit considerable cultural and historical variation. However, the pervasiveness of domination reflects an inherent aspect of human nature and the necessity of social order through hegemonies. In the context of contemporary global hegemonies, the neoliberal agenda—characterized by its persistent crises, corruption, lobbying, and a state of continuous warfare—has developed a sophisticated system for ordering difference that surpasses traditional colonial domination. This form of dominance is predominantly a feature of the power struggles among major global players, with Russia initially losing the Cold War and China emerging as a formidable rival to the USA since the 2000s. Notwithstanding substantial criticism of US hegemony and its selectively anti-democratic, inhumane policies, the “Great Power Competition” must be situated within the context of the rivalry among these major powers. Dominance is a fundamental constant that manifests in various forms

and is shaped by the schemata that influence individual subjectivity. In light of the inevitability and contingency of power struggles, this neuroculturally co-evolved process is of central importance to our understanding of human differentiation. To fully comprehend these dynamics, one must have a profound understanding of the mechanisms that sustain and reshape power structures, as well as a critical examination and analysis of their foundational principles. The examination of domination as a macro-social anthropological constant, particularly since the post-1945 era, indicates that power structures and forms of domination are dynamic elements within human societies, shaped by the post-war order and evolving global political contexts. The ascendance of US hegemony, the proliferation of neoliberal policies, and the increased financialization of the global economy are inextricably linked with the ways in which mechanisms of domination adapt and evolve in response to new geopolitical and economic challenges. Notwithstanding these adaptations, domination remains, in essence, a mechanism for organizing and sustaining specific normative orders. Deeply embedded within the global power structures and economic interests, domination functions as a survival mechanism, influencing affective, cognitive, and behavioral patterns. As previously discussed in the context of orders of difference, these patterns are deeply entrenched in society and upheld by long-standing traditions. Therefore, while systems of domination undergo modifications in response to shifting geopolitical and economic circumstances, their fundamental purpose—the establishment and preservation of particular normative orders—remains constant. This analysis demonstrates that domination functions not only through direct control or oppression but also through the shaping of deeply embedded schemata within social structures and cultural practices in “network hierarchies,” characterized by the principle of *guided self-organization* within complex hegemonies. *Complex hegemony* is seen as an emergent and autopoietic phenomenon within network-like hierarchies, according to the systems and complexity theory understanding of schemata and practices of human differentiation. Hegemonies are emergent because they evolve from the interaction of human and non-human components, developing properties that are greater than the sum of their parts. The forms of American hegemony that shape the present cannot be explained by the direct control or conscious actions of individual actors alone; rather, they result from complex, dynamic interactions within sociopolitical systems. These interactions create an overarching order that can be traced in part to individual actions but also has autonomous properties that transcend the individual. The principle of network hierarchies emphasizes two central properties of complex hegemony: first, its adaptive capacity to simultaneously promote certain processes and limit others; and second, its quasi-intentional nature, which allows it to respond flexibly to social contingencies despite stabilizing factors. Complex hegemony is thus to be understood as a “network hierarchy”, since it is characterized on the one hand by decentralized, network-like power relations (such as neoliberal governance

through money as a value-coding medium), but on the other hand is supported by centralized, hierarchical structures such as governments and state authorities. Self-reinforcing feedback processes stabilize hegemonies by promoting certain forms of social organization and blocking alternative developments. Networks within hegemonies are not static; they are reinforced by interaction with hierarchical structures, leading to a continuous consolidation of power relations in the networks. These feedback processes support selective self-organization: certain behaviors and structures are consolidated, while other potential developments are blocked or not supported by the system. Complex systems of domination in the present are realized in different systems because they represent a relational form of power that is not tied to specific institutions or material structures. However, this study unequivocally refutes the notion of rigid determinism, particularly with regard to the conceptualization of power and domination as macro-social anthropological constants. The argument is not for acquiescence to the status quo as a natural condition. It is therefore essential to develop a deep understanding and recognition of the social structures embedded within the interwoven orders of difference discussed in this book, in order to enable meaningful and lasting transformations. This approach necessitates a critical examination of the prevailing power structures and forms of domination. Rather than perceiving these structures as unchanging, the argument urges us to recognize their contextual nature and malleability within the complex fabric of human society. The objective is to identify potential points of departure for transformative action through a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms and dynamics that underpin power and domination across various dimensions. Such an analysis requires an intersectional examination of the historical, cultural, biological, and social contexts in which these structures are embedded, as well as an exploration of the interactions between different power relations and their societal impacts. The study prompts a re-evaluation of alternative forms of social organization and coexistence, urging recognition of inherent limitations as well as the possibilities—and indeed the necessity—of transformative change. This perspective suggests that through the implementation of educational initiatives, facilitated dialogue, and the promotion of participatory democracy, pathways can be identified toward establishing a more just and inclusive social order. However, such efforts remain bounded by the complex, interwoven fabric of social, cultural, biological, and geopolitical dynamics that shape patterns of inclusion and exclusion, alongside our conditioning to these entrenched patterns. As these dimensions never act in isolation, they should be taught and understood as an interconnected system of power relations. It is imperative that structures of power and domination be subjected to not only critical examination but also active reformulation in order to foster innovation, equality, and social justice. This view calls for a proactive engagement with social change, based on a nuanced understanding of power and domination. It calls for their reconfiguration on a democratic basis, with the objec-

tive of enhancing collective and sustainable well-being. This vision is aligned with the necessity of transforming entrenched systems of dominance into platforms that support equitable and progressive societal growth.

Affective-cognitive-bodily schemata The concept of schemata assumes a pivotal role in the context of complex hegemonies and their characterization as a macro-social anthropological constant. Schemata integrate a range of approaches, including evolutionary-anthropological, socio-psychological, perceptual-physiological, system-theoretical, and cultural and social scientific, forming a consistent basis for understanding differentiation practices. These are regarded as inherent and inescapable conditions of human sociality, yet they are not perceived as fixed or wholly predetermined. Schemata facilitate a comprehensive examination of the processes that shape social order and differentiation by integrating individual, social, and cultural dynamics within an integrative framework. In this way, they transcend the constraints of a singular focus on individual determinants and instead direct attention toward the emergent interconnections between micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. In this way, they make a significant contribution to our understanding of the complex relationships between individuals, social structures, and cultural contexts. By synthesizing findings from the fields of social cognition and psychological anthropology, the concept of schemata has been reformulated as affective-cognitive-bodily constructs. In particular, the approaches of 4E research (embodied, embedded, enactive, extended) from social cognition were referenced. In this approach, schemata are not regarded as isolated mental structures; rather, they are conceived of as dynamic constructs that are shaped by a number of factors, including embodiment, social and material embeddedness, active interaction with the environment (enactment), and the extension of cognitive processes through external resources. From the perspective of systems theory, schemata function as self-organizing, meaning-generating interfaces between individual and collective processes. They transcend the mere sum of individual perceptions or social influences, emerging from the dynamic interactions within complex social systems. In this capacity, they facilitate the stabilization of these systems' emergent properties while also enabling change and adaptation. This redefinition of schemata as affective-cognitive-bodily is achieved through an interdisciplinary synthesis of systems theory, social cognition, and evolutionary- as well as psychological anthropology. The reconceptualization has been integrated into various discursive fields, particularly in analyses concerning the *schemata of indifference* (Chapter 10.4). The comprehensive theoretical and empirical foundation established here facilitates a nuanced comprehension of the perpetuation of particular cognitive biases and injustices within human differentiation practices. Schemata, as comprehensive frameworks, direct individuals' perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and actions, firmly embedded in their affective, cognitive, and somatic processes. These

schemata not only influence individual interpretations and reactions to their environment but also form the basis for the internalization and reproduction of social norms and values. In the context of human differentiation, schemata uphold the boundaries between “us” and “them,” justify social hierarchies, and strengthen existing power dynamics. The application of the concept of schemata to indifference demonstrates how these deeply entrenched cognitive frameworks foster apathy towards specific social groups or issues. This application elucidates the reasons why certain social injustices and forms of discrimination persist despite increased awareness and interventions. The challenge, therefore, is not merely to alter individual attitudes or behaviors, but to address and reshape the underlying schemata that mold these attitudes and actions. These deeply entrenched schemata, which operate on a preconscious level, operate as conduits through which hegemonic structures exert influence on individual experiences and shape social realities. They facilitate the internalization of values and practices, whether they are rooted in neoliberal or primordial codes, as if they were given and inevitable, thereby minimizing critical reflection or resistance. As filters through which information and stimuli are evaluated and interpreted, schemata establish the foundation for the reproduction of social orders. In this context, domination is not merely a matter of direct control; rather, it is a dynamic process of influence that manifests through the embedding of particular narratives and values in everyday life. The continuous interplay between these affective-cognitive-bodily schemata and the surrounding cultural codes sets off a self-reinforcing cycle that not only sustains hegemonic relationships but also enhances their adaptability and resilience to change. The schemata discussed function within a system that contributes significantly to the perception of power relations as natural, inevitable, or even desirable. As a result, resistance to these relations is curtailed. To address the role of schemata in human differentiation, a comprehensive and systematic approach is required to tackle the underlying mechanisms of inequities and misperceptions. This effort calls for a multidisciplinary approach that melds insights from social cognition, psychology, the social sciences, and beyond.

Cultural coding Cultural coding operates as a foundational mechanism in the construction and maintenance of social realities, playing a seminal role in the dynamics of human differentiation. It transfers meanings and delineates distinct boundaries that distinguish social systems from their environments. By selectively encoding specific semantics, cultural coding provides the means for cultural identification and shapes corresponding social realities. These practices are instrumental in shaping affiliations and embedding community values, norms, and beliefs, thereby laying the groundwork for social cohesion and enabling clear demarcations. Cultural codes are fundamental to the formation of both individual and collective identity, and they structure social interactions and relationships. Cultural codes are mani-

fested in a number of ways, including languages, modes of speech, memes, symbols, rituals, and norms. They exert a significant influence on how reality is perceived and on interpersonal behaviors. As components of autopoietic networks, cultural codes are essential for the self-sustainability and perpetuation of social systems, reducing entropy and functioning as vital interfaces for structural coupling with the environment. In this context, schemata—preconscious, affective-cognitive-bodily structures—act as the primary guides for how individuals process information and respond to their surroundings, playing a central role in the interpretation and understanding of their environment. The dynamic interaction between individual consciousness and social systems is enabled by the transmission of meanings, which is facilitated by cultural coding. This dynamic interplay between individual consciousness and prevailing cultural codes is shaped by schemas, which are themselves influenced by cultural codes and play a crucial role in internalizing, reinforcing, or contesting these codes. A critical examination of these processes reveals the construction and perpetuation of power relations and social hierarchies, thereby providing insight into potential pathways for social transformation and the dismantling of inequalities. This dynamic enables the system to adapt flexibly to external changes while maintaining its identity. The interpretation and assimilation of new information facilitate the continuous evolution and stabilization of social orders, as shaped by prevailing cultural codes. These processes underpin the exchange and processing of meaning, which are essential for the system's adaptability and coherence. This ensures the system's operational continuity and relevance in a changing environment.

Regimes of orders of difference The conceptualization of regimes of orders of difference, characterized as primordial and/or neoliberal, provides a sophisticated lens through which to examine the formation of social hierarchies and identities. This framework builds upon the intersectional approach by integrating differentiation schemas and sociocybernetics, paving the way for a comprehensive examination of the dynamic interactions between social systems and their surrounding environments. By focusing on the function of differentiation schemes and systemic operations, this approach facilitates a more nuanced comprehension of the formation and maintenance of social orders. It permits a detailed examination of the processes of inclusion and exclusion and provides insight into the ways in which various codings and logics of difference intersect, interact, and influence social structures. The two regimes, which are identified as central to this analysis, are distinct in terms of their historical origins and underlying logics. They are also deeply embedded within the cultural codes of democratic societies that emerged in the period following the Second World War. Their contemporary manifestations reflect historical developments since the late 20th century, marked by a shift towards globalized markets and a heightened focus on individualism and personal accountability. The

conceptualization of regimes of difference, which are characterized as both primordial and neoliberal, emphasizes the inherently intersectional nature of social differentiation. This perspective is based on the understanding that axes of inequality are not isolated phenomena but rather interact and overlap in multifaceted ways. The processes of individual and collective identification, as well as social positioning, are shaped by the interplay of multiple interlinked factors that are rooted in the specific historical contexts and logics of these regimes. An intersectional analysis of these regimes of orders of difference reveals how cultural codings, driven by diverse yet interconnected logics, shape human differentiation and influence the stability or transformation of social orders through the use of socio-technologies. These interfaces either reinforce or alter the operation of the codes, shedding light on the fact that social identities and positioning are not the product of a single axis of differentiation. Rather, they are the result of the dynamic interactions among multiple factors.

Indifference as a mode of system justification The concept of the “schemata of indifference,” as introduced in this book, refers to a psychosocial and psychopolitical mechanism in Western societies that cultivates a disengaged or apathetic attitude toward the global impacts of one’s lifestyle, particularly in relation to consumption, inequality, and environmental degradation. This indifference is not merely a lack of awareness; rather, it is often systematically reinforced by societal structures and media narratives that normalize a certain level of detachment from the consequences of Western affluence.

This indifference allows individuals to disregard the complex consequences of Western geopolitical and economic actions on marginalized regions by circumventing discussions on the ethical implications of their own prosperity. This schema is embedded within cultural codes shaped by regimes of difference, both primordial and neoliberal. It represents a worldview that exalts individual achievement over collective accountability. This fosters selective perceptions and appraisals (selective empathy), thereby legitimizing and perpetuating existing power dynamics by disregarding the adverse impacts of Western lifestyles on other societies and the environment. This stance impedes global solidarity and mutual responsibility, thereby impeding progress toward a just and sustainable global order. A critical evaluation of the “scheme of indifference” is essential for understanding the foundational mechanisms that rationalize human differentiation and is a crucial component in the theoretical exploration of various practices and contexts involved in differentiating and categorizing people. The approach put forth here elucidates the pivotal role of communication and interaction in the formation and perpetuation of dominant structures. The elements of control and systems theories provide a framework that enables the dynamics and structures of human differentiation to be understood not as static, but as processual and emergent. The defining charac-

teristics of systems are not limited to their boundaries, which are simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. Rather, systems are comprised of multidimensional constellations of schemata, cultural codes, and regime-like power structures that form the foundation for the continuous reproduction and transformation of contemporary social orders. In this context, the five areas outlined in this concluding chapter function as mechanisms through which social systems organize, reproduce, and transform themselves. These factors influence the circulation of information, power, and resources within the system, as well as the system's response to internal and external disturbances. In particular, the roles of cultural coding and affective-cognitive-bodily schemata demonstrate the profound impact of human perception, evaluation, and action on the shaping of systems. The systemic anthropological approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the intricate and profound foundations of intersectional structures of power and domination. By analyzing and integrating the aforementioned elements from a variety of disciplines, this approach illuminates the interconnectedness of these structures. The affective-cognitive-bodily schemata act not only as transmitters of hegemonic culture but also as reinforcers of the mechanisms that inhibit critical reflection and active engagement with the pressing issues discussed here. The continuation of cultural narratives that espouse ideals of freedom and progress, while simultaneously being intricately interwoven with the exploitation of natural resources, strengthens a culture of indifference and profligacy that is deeply entrenched within the social, economic, and political systems. The identified pattern across five primary domains of human differentiation demonstrates that examining these practices within the context of social inequalities, by integrating diverse perspectives and approaches within a systemic-anthropological framework, enhances the depth and nuance of the analysis of cultural and social dynamics. These reflections make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on the potential of social integration and recognition. They do so by understanding the boundaries, practices, affects, and the generation of narratives inherent to and supporting these practices. This is not done in order to determine whether these practices are morally good or bad. Rather, it is done as part of a comprehensive anthropological framework. This perspective facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the structural foundations of social inequalities by considering the historical, geopolitical, anthropological, neurobiological, and psychological dimensions of social differentiation, which operate concurrently in a systemic mode of autopoiesis. Furthermore, the systemic-anthropological approach provides novel perspectives for the analysis and shaping of cultural and social dynamics, with a particular emphasis on the complexity and multifaceted nature of human differentiation. This contributes to the development of more nuanced and effective recognition policies and raises awareness of the intricate mechanisms that reproduce social inequalities. It is important to avoid two common mistakes. The first is to succumb to the temptation of labeling so-

cial inequalities as immutable and “normal,” thereby naturalizing practices and regimes of injustice. The second is to culturalize these inequalities by attributing them causally and linearly to a single dimension of difference.

In essence, practices such as the slave trade and the devaluation of certain genders were historically regarded as “normal” and were seldom subjected to critical scrutiny. As will be demonstrated throughout this book, exploitation, particularly within the context of power and hegemonic structures, has consistently been a defining feature of human history. However, the context and perception of these practices have evolved over time. In the present era, it is of paramount importance to acknowledge and critically examine these historically entrenched injustices to gain insight and effect a gradual transformation. However, change occurs gradually, through a series of incremental steps, and with considerable effort, suffering, and hardship. The challenge lies in identifying and critically questioning these deeply rooted schemas and the associated cultural codifications in order to gain a deeper understanding of them and to ultimately transform them. Nevertheless, insight alone does not result in change. The efficacy of the numerous discourses is contingent upon their ability to reach a critical mass within our social systems, thereby enabling transformative processes. It is imperative to recognize that the practices and manifestations of domination within the differentiated subsystems of contemporary society persist in categorizing and differentiating people, despite the idealized narratives and symbols they may espouse. The disparities within society, manifesting as social inequality, economic exploitation, and ecological destruction, can be viewed as side effects of our prevailing lifestyle. This lifestyle has been shaped by the pursuit of prosperity and a concurrent disregard for its costs. The frequent calls for greater justice demand a self-reflective revolution, subtly yet profoundly encapsulated in the term “change,” understood as a reformation of differentiation schemes. As has been shown, this cannot be achieved through ideologizing or moralizing approaches that systematically overlook certain dimensions of human differentiation and disproportionately emphasize others. Furthermore, the governance capabilities and opportunities within neoliberal regimes have also been demonstrated to be, at best, inadequate. In a world comprising functionally differentiated subsystems, the common good is not a prevailing priority. The notion of a global entity that would be willing and able to champion justice issues also appears to be quite unrealistic. The remaining step is the courageous, albeit seemingly banal, one of moving toward a potentially more equitable future.