

# Consumption as analyser of Globalization in Daily Life

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- **Photo by Annie Cattan**
- **Dominique Desjeux in Hong Kong, 2002**



# What is globalization, from an anthropological point of view?

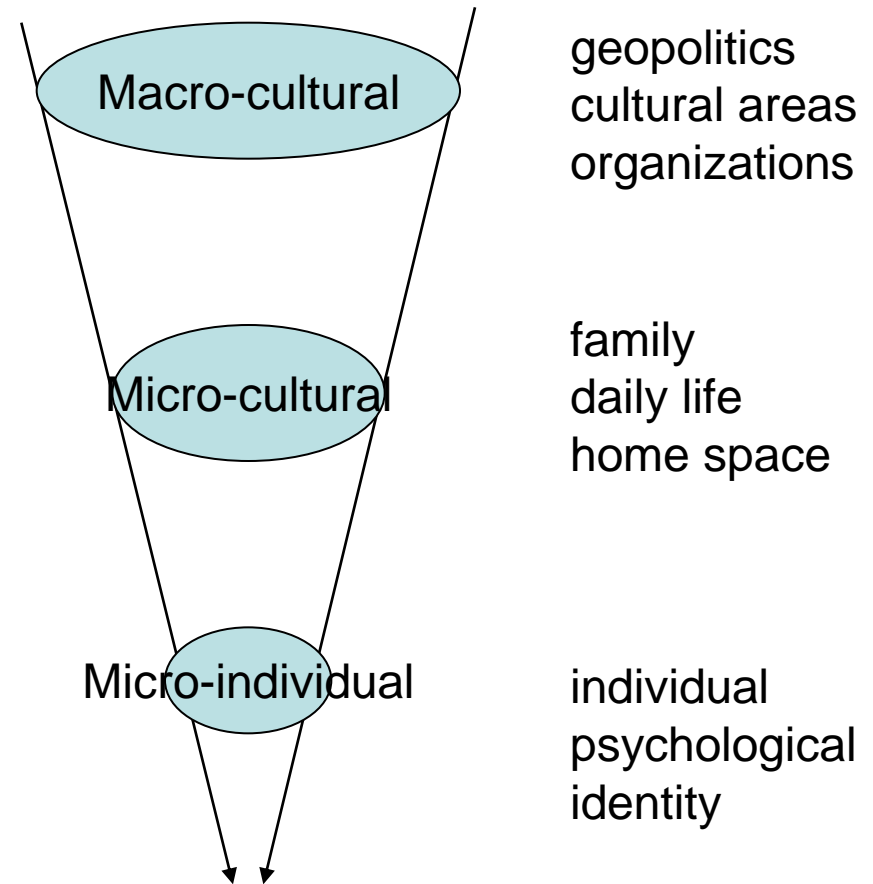
- **Generally speaking, it is about**
  - **Cultural patterns, on a macro-scale of observation**
  - **Meetings between cultures and social actors, on a micro-scale of observation**
  - **Cooperation, conflict, and adaptation among actors, organizations, and countries**

# What is globalization - focusing on consumption on a micro-scale

- understanding how new products, services, and technologies moving from one culture to another are accepted... or not
  - relation to cultural and social codes
  - innovation and decision-making processes
  - daily life in home and family space

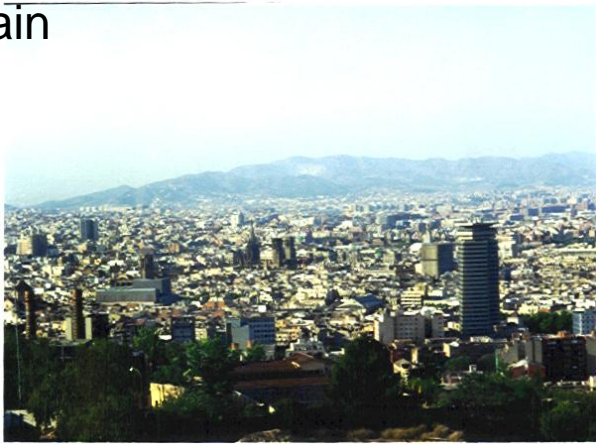
# What is a scale of observation?

- **When observing social reality it is impossible to look at all social and cultural dimensions at once.**
- **So I choose to start from a point of view, that is a scale of observation**
- **I most often work on the micro-scale of observation**



# Imaging scales of observation

macro-scale  
Barcelona  
Spain



meso-scale  
Bordeaux  
France



micro-scale  
Guangzhou  
China

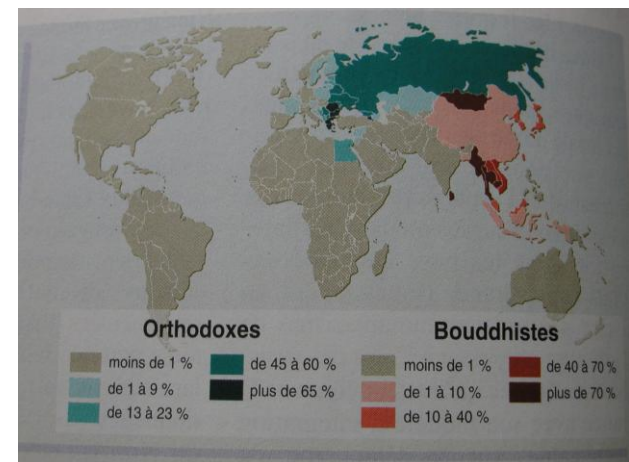
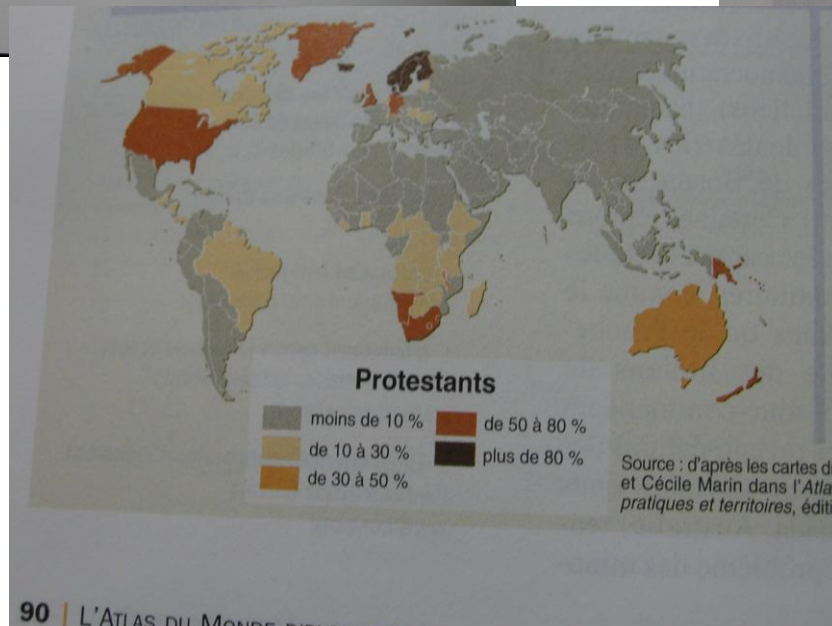
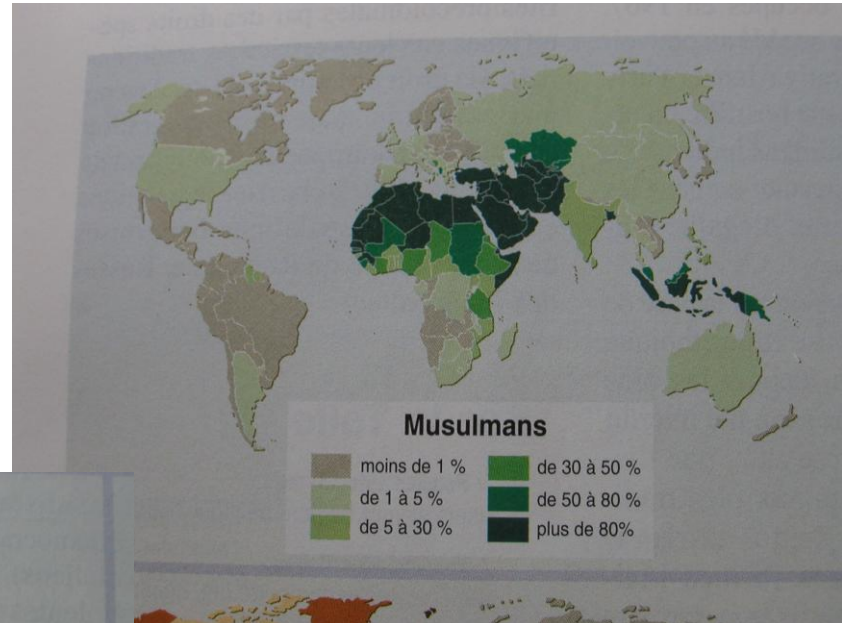
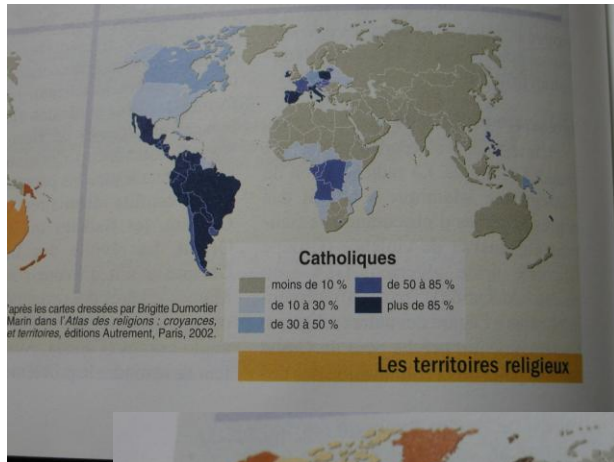
micro-individual  
Paris  
France



# Macro-scale of observation

- At a macro-cultural level, I try to understand what values are. I focus on :
  - **religion (link between values and morality)**
  - **family (link between family and political systems)**
  - **the body (boundaries of privacy, proxemics)**
  - **food (what is perceived as dangerous or safe)**
- These are the most incorporated values in all cultures.
- Individuals and social actors are invisible at this scale of observation.
- This is a method based on documentation.

# The main world religions



According to the sociologist

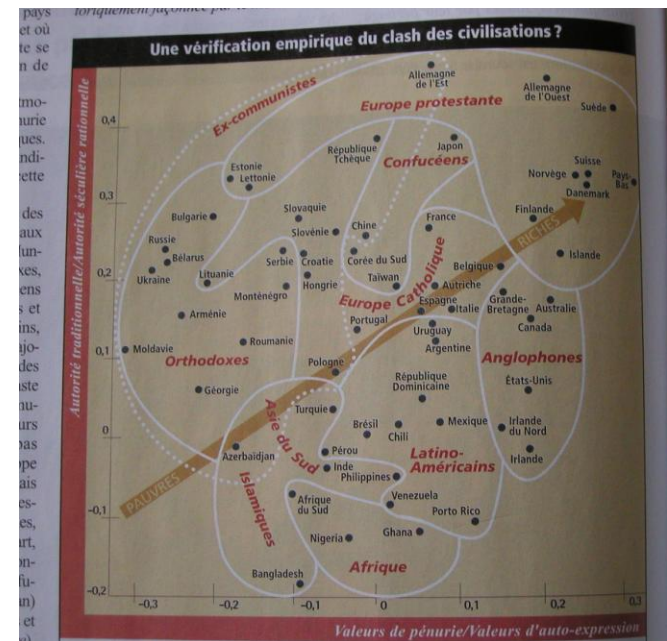
R. Inglehart,

presented by Jean Claude Ruano

*Sciences Humaines* magazine n°103,

March 2000

- Values are organized along three axes
  - traditional sacred vs. rational secular authority
  - degree of wealth
  - ability to express self





- Some Asian and sub-Saharan countries are characterized as being traditional with little self-expression
- Orthodox and former communist countries are viewed as more based on rational values but with little self-expression
- Catholic Europe is less authoritarian, but also with little expression of self
- Protestant Europe is more rational and favorable to self-expression
- Confucian countries are between Catholic and Protestant
- English-speaking countries are in the middle in terms of authority but high for self expression.

What is at stake at this scale: understanding diversity at the national level and conflict on the international scale

- According to Amartya Sen: “To talk about ‘the Islamic world’ or ‘western world’ is to adopt an impoverished vision of humanity as unalterably divided.”
- For example, Indian civilization includes “Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians (since the fourth century), Jews (since the fall of Jerusalem)”
- HT November 11, 24, 2001

# Cultural relations to the body



France  
How important it is  
to have an esthetic  
body



Body as analyser of  
life cycle

American ads concerning far-sightedness,  
around one's 50's, for baby boomers



Spanish ads concerning diabetes,  
for aging people

On the micro-scale, using the itinerary method, new objects are seen to be embedded in social life

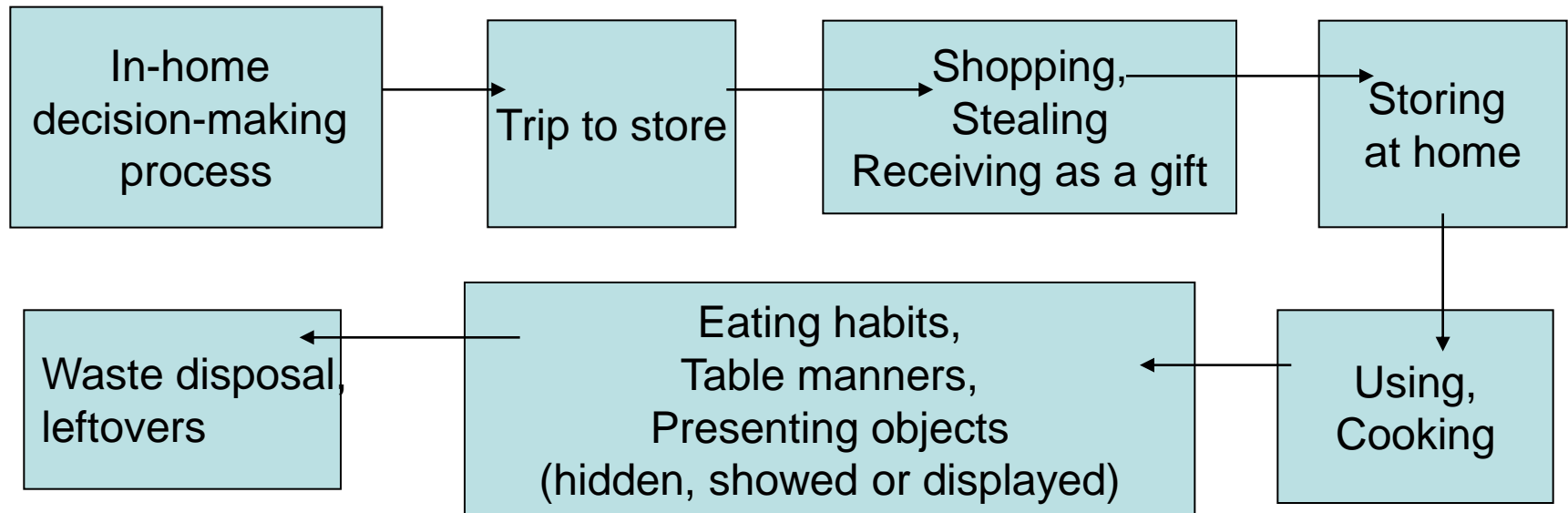
- So, my field work consists of carrying out observations in homes in order to understand the “bed,” the cultural and social framework in which a new product (medicine, wine, a service, food, a new communication technology) is introduced.

# Diffusion and globalization

- To make a long story short I try to understand how a new object diffuses into another culture
- Diffusion is globalization from an anthropological point of view
- I stress on what explains cultural resistances

# On a micro-scale of observation

- The itinerary method: a tool for understanding daily life and cultural differences; A comparative method



# A comparative food itinerary

## Odense, Denmark



In-home decision-making process



Trip to store



Shopping



Back home



# Odense, Denmark



Cooking

Storing at home



Waste disposal



Table manners,





# Objects are treated in three different ways in a home

- displayed
- showing
- hidden

# Presenting objects (hidden, showed or displayed)

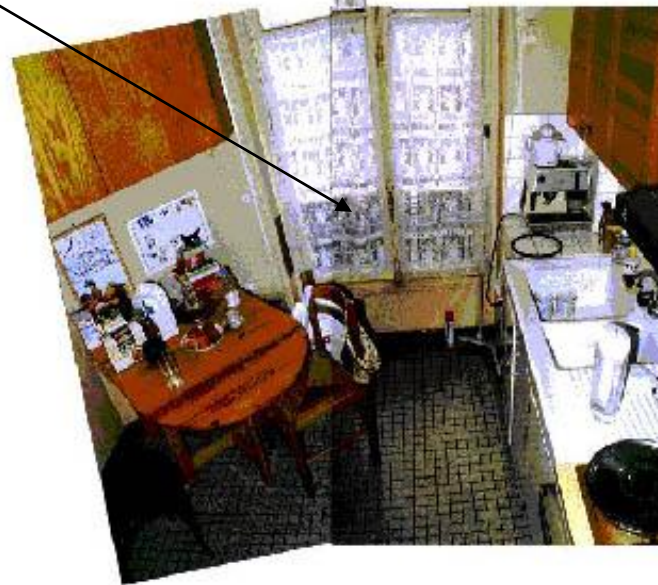


# A home can be divided into 3 different types of space

- public
- private
- intimate



Danish Bedroom



French Kitchen

Danish living

On the micro-cultural level, I focus more on strategies, practices, and social codes than on values

- What is culturally and socially
  - **prescribed**
  - **permitted**
  - **prohibited**

# Cultural differences



# Understanding the spread of an object in another culture means looking at three dimensions

- symbolic
- social
- material



Where to put the new fridge



Chinese Kitchen

New American fridge

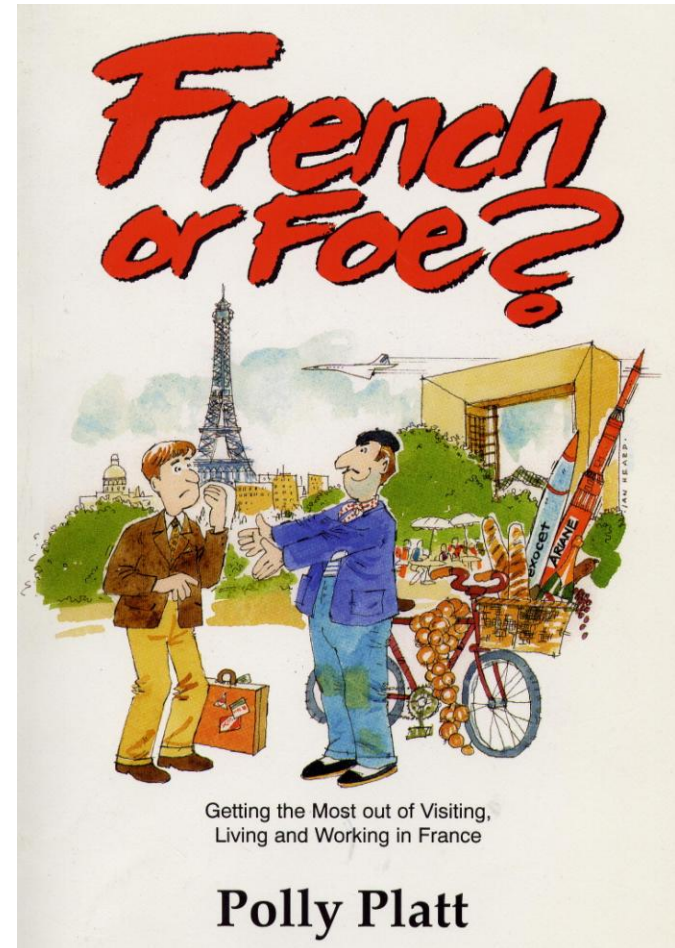
# Objects are used to express social distance or closeness

- Social communication can go through different means:
  - face to face
  - phone
  - letters
  - e-mail
  - fax
  - post-its



# The same form of communication may have different meanings in different cultures

- Smiling in France and in America
- Shaking hands in France and in China

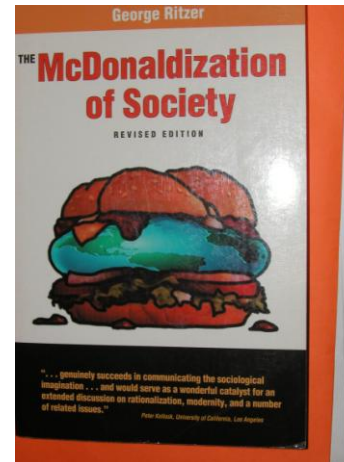




# How do deal with food fears



American issue



Chinese McDonald: no fear



French solution:humour

# Chinese do it yourself



# American do it yourself



# French do it yourself



**THE END...**