Lecture 5

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Understanding Globalization[1] Through Cultural Theory - effects on community, work and household.

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Introduction: what is globalization?

In this lecture I explore the effects of globalization through the use of Cultural Theory. The aim is to understand its effects on relatonships with especial reference to the developing world –with all the risks of over generalisation this involves[2]. I briefly examine its influences on three main areas of social life: Communities, Work, and Family. In doing so I will hopefully demonstrate the richness of analysis inspired by Cultural Theory as outlined in the first two lectures by Mary Douglas.

Globalization involves the movement of people, goods, ideas and information across national boundaries. It has been defined as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'. (Giddens ,1990: 64). Globalization is not new. The Roman empire, based on militarism, political refinement and technology was in its day, global in its influence. So was the Arab Empire that followed and that brought together the latest in scientific thought. The social, artistic and commercial effects that spread – originally from Italy - during the Rennaisance beginning what historians call 'the early modern period' was also an example of globalization. Today it is the globalization of production that is most influential in influencing and moulding relationships. This is based on the integration of economic activities – and economies - on a world scale which is being spearheaded by multinational companies. They do so by integrating production in their

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[1] Giddens (1994) has noted that 'globalization' cannot today simply be understood as Westernization'. It is a process which can also increase exposure to cultural pluralism - as evidenced by for example the spread and fusion of musical forms (Giddens, 1994).

[2] I am aware that the world is far more complex than a simple division into countries that are 'developed' and 'developing' would suggest. And as I discuss 'Individualism' as more appropriately present in the former and 'Hierarchy' as characterising the latter, then this generalisation too, may well attract disparagement. Nonethelss I remaiin unrepentant and insist that these broad divisions are more appropriate to this didactic exercise than would a more sophisticated treatment.

different factories around the world into a single manufacturing system. Their *modus operandi* is to use developments in IT and robotics alongside facilities afforded by the ready movement of financial resources across national boundaries.

In many respects globalization and industrialiization overlap, the one projecting on to the increasingly fast development of the other. What is new and important about contemporary globalization is the speed, extent and the impact of the changes that flow from it.

The effects of globalization currently emanate most strongly from two main centers – Europe and the United States   and - increasingly, as their industrialisation proceeds - also from India and China. Ripples of change from these centers are beginning to affect even the smallest and most remote communities worldwide. There have recently been riots in Mexico because the cost of tortilla, that nation's staple food, has risen by over 25%, This has been caused in part by changes originating in the Middle East so that many farmers in the US, Brazil, Europe and China –the leading exporters of cereals – have now switched from producing cereals for food to make 'biofuel' for a world intent on reducing dependence on Middle Eastern oil. The resultant reduction in the world supply of cereals for food, added to the developing worlds shift of diet to extra protein has significantly raised world food prices – now inflating at six percent a year, (UN. Farming Trends, 2006). In another example, industrialisation in China has resulted in massively increased exportation of a whole range of commodities that have strongly affected established producers in other countries of the world: as we shall see, economic changes invariably underpin changes in relationships.

A broad brush assessment of the social effects of globalization.
To appreciate the impact of globalization on social relationships, we adopt as a framework of analysis, Cultural Theory, as outlined in the first two lectures by Mary Douglas. Using a Douglasian vocabulary, one can say that contemporary globalization - and its handmaiden industrialization - fosters competition and with it an increase in individualism both locally and globally. With individualism there is a weakening of pre-existing forms of hierarchical relations: grid constraints weaken for the competitively successful who benefit, while they increase for many others. On the whole there is a general shaking free of group affiliations and group controls.

It is not just Individualism that strengthens as established Hierarchy weakens. Enclaves and Fatalism too increase in numbers and significance. Enclaves, 'the consciences of social systems', become more prominent with their often active projection of greavances, rejection of 'outside' values, the liability of some to fundamentalist ways of viewing the world and their tendency sometimes to instability and fission. Fatalists, those who are more acted upon than active, also increase. This is the constituency who lack effective group affiliations and who are strongly constrained - often through poverty and adverse work conditions.

As noted in the first lecture, all social systems contain different levels and strengths of these constituencies who interact, compete and allie with each other in changing combinations. But with industrialisation and the changes induced by globalised production and the increased opportunities offered to some, it is particularly the cultural bias to Individualism that is most evident and that increasingly sets the tone for societies as a whole.

When social roles become less strongly ascribed, with social positions being 'up for grabs', there is an emphasis on entrepreneuriality and its running mate, competition. This emerges in a societal focus on the individualist's dominant values – there is increased emphasis on the importance of social mobility, on fad, fashion and conspicuous consumption and on time considered as a scarce resource. As a result, with a growth in individualism there is a greater incidence and acceptance of rule bending, short-termism, calculated risk-taking and the cultivation of ever shifting and ever more useful networks. These are society's 'movers and shakers', the innovators who are also the corner cutters, who constantly devise new ways of doing things but whose personal loyalties may well be 'adapted' to benefit from short term expediency. It is particularly with Individualism as a product of industrialisation and fostered by globalism, with which we deal here.

As Individualism –and its bye-products, entrepreneuriality and competition – strengthen, they do so at the expense of affiliation and obligations to more traditional groupings such as the extended family and to political communal and religious authorities. Since with individualism, all boundaries are provisional and subject to negotiation – Individualism not only means more freedom - to achieve, to transact, to be personally responsible for one's own social positioning – but it is also the constituency that suffers the greatest insecurity and uncertainty. Whereas hierarchic institutions and groups offer the security of mutual support, continuity and the stability of tradition, Individualism lacks these benefits. Not surprisingly, Individualism is most characteristic of that most technologically complex country, the United States. Insofar as The States exports its technology, organisation and ideology, so it exports individualism.

 By its very nature, the increased freedoms of Individualists are frequently gained at the expence of others whose freedoms are curtailed, who are pressed up-grid. We have only to think of the the high-flying boss who is able to be so only because he constrains his Personal Assistant. It is the strengthening of Individualism and Enclavism, together with increasing numbers of Fatalists and the shifting alliances between them that that make for dynamic political flux.

Individualism's principal social manifestations are then, a gradual shaking off of constraints from, and the respect afforded to traditional hierarchies and therefore to employers and indeed to all sources of institutionalised authority such as kinship groupings and political and religious leaderships. At the same time, Individualism, while freeing some, necessarily constrains others and in creating what are often divergent interests ,thus creates the bases for an increase in political dynamism.

The UK as the first example of modern industrialism

Until the early seventeen hundreds most of Britain's population, as in most of the present developing world, resided in country villages and earned their livings from agriculture. There was relatively little division of labour. By the middle of the eighteen hundreds, however, Britian had emerged as a fully developed industrialised society with a skilled labour force that exploited and innovated the newest technologies. Its population had dramatically increased[3], the proportion engaged in agriculture markedly declined while the numbers working in manufacturing soared. Towns grew enormously[4] and were marked by large discrepancies of wealth with the industrial poor living in squalid and unhealthy slums. The combination of these changes, known together as 'the industrial revolution' - the first such revolution the world had seen - was to lead – and is leading at an ever faster pace, to similar changes and to similar effects throughout the developing world.

Relationships in cities – both in the developed and in the developing worlds - are essentially different from those in smaller scale traditional communities. The latter [5]are characterised by relationships that are homogeneous, largely based on kinship, residemce and with ties based on simple divisions of labour. Their moral cohesion is often founded on shared religious sentiment. Group is strong and grid constraints similarly strong. These are usually marked by hierarchical relationships with a small differentiated elite and a broadly homogeneous mass.

The massive move to cities which is such a feature of globalization/industrialism, reduces the impact of these features: group and grid are weaker, relationships more heterogenous and largely based on occupation and a more complex division of labour, while moral cohesion as we shall see, is more fragmented. Social mobility increases, new middle classes emerge with new values of aspiration and ideas of personal responsibility while an industrial working class expands in the cities. We need therefore, to understand these developments if we are to grasp contemporary changes in the developing world

The changes that ocurred in Britain can provide a foretaste of many of the immense effects on social relationships that economic developent is now bringing elsewhere. But one important question has now to be explored: just why should industrial development

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[3] In 1760 the population of England and Wales had been estimated at 6.5 millions (Stern, p.8) Censuses show that by 1801 it was 8.9 million and tby 1851 it had doubled to 17.9 million.
[4] In 1717 for instance Manchester, at the centre of the cotton industry (which was the forerunner of the UK's industrial revolution) had a population of 10,000 which increased by 1770 to 30,000 (Hall, p..320).
[5] 'Community' and 'Association' are translations rom The German – 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft'. Tonnnies (1887)

lead to a strengthening of individualism? (as well as to a corresponding but lesser strengthening of Enclavism and Fatalism) with all the distinct characteristics these reveal?

Science technology and the division of labour.

This widespread and growing move to Individualism has been progressively driven by exponential growth in those twin pillars of industrial development - technology and knowledge. The resultant specialisation that increases the overall division of labour ensures that access to jobs and social position come to depend less on ascription – family and class backgrounds for instance - and more on degrees of objectively defined merit and competition. This is not to deny the obvious benefits of ascription but to emphasise a *relative* (and increasing) shift in favour of merit and competition. Increasingly sophisticated technology and knowledge present new ways of doing things and require new ways of organising. The new order that emerges, values individuals for what they know and the specialised skills they posess[6] rather than the social backgrounds from which they originate. As specialisation increases – so too does the value accorded to specialised individuals – and lesser value is accorded the less qualified and the less specialised some of whom form the basis of the Fatalist constituency. The key lies in understanding that the development of industrialising societies and the nature of their relationships are based on the specialisation of roles, on the resultant emergence of an ever more complex division of labour from which emerges the development of specialised people who together contribute to a society whose parts become increasingly organically interconnected[7].

The emergence of individualism is accompanied by a shift in time perceptions. Hierarchies last longer than people – they continue beyond the life-span of individuals and in some respects exist out of time. Cultures strongly biased to Hierarchy therefore view the future in similar terms to the past and as a continuation of the present. During the European Middle Ages this meant for instance, that Cathedrals often took over three hundred years to complete. With the growth of individualism, people not institutions become the focal unit of social life - which is why modern buildings in the industrial west – and increasingly elsewhere – now have a much shorter amortisation, more directly relatable to the life spans of individuals.

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[6] The emergent order of course, also values individuals by their posessions. This too however, can be interpreted as a means of assessing achievement. For a fuller discussion of consumerism and its role in self definition see D. Miller.1994.

[7] This is a well recognised theme, originally developed by one of the founding fathers of the social sciences, Emile Durkheim, (1893).

For the individualist time is the most precious of resources. 'Time is money' is a phrase that would not have been generally understood in societies that have not experienced industrialism. One of the problems of factory owners in industrialising societies is the need to instill a sense of linear time into their workers,[8] many of whom are first generation migrants from the countryside where ideas of time are derived from repetitive natural cycles. It is significant that in many developing societies, ostentatious, often gold or (gold coloured) wristwatches are now worn as icons both of conspicuous consumption and as important symbols of affiliation to the new time-based order.

I now look briefly at the effects of globalization in three key areas of social life to discuss changes in authority, control, deference and attitudes to time.

Changes in community, work and households..

As we saw Globalization frequently flows from industrialisation –it being a later stage in the 'free' market mode of production'. But globalization can also critically influence relationships in the absence of industrialisation. This is so where extractive processes are involved. As an example, the denuding of South American rainforests by multinational companies has adveresely affected the indigenous peoples of these regions resulting in disruption to the economic base of their habitats. In mining where there is often no associated industrialisation, disruption can be extensive. Here, where much labour is recruited from the countryside it denudes the villages of men, especially young men - as in Zambia, as a result of coppermining or in South Aftrica, of gold mining.

A thought provoking film based on work of the anthropolologist Scarlett Epstein (in press) who'se field experience in South Indian villages extends over fifty years, neatly captures some of the adverse effects of Globalized Industrialisation. It focuses on the causes and results of rural-urban migration – a common phenomenon with implications for much of the developing world. The film shows how migration to industrialising centres - predominantly of young men - [in this case to Bangladore] -'is strangling capitals in filth and its dwellers in misery...... as governments, pushed on by investment, in India and elsewhere, rush to build industrial centres, draining much needed funding [and inevitably labour] from the rural sector'. The film suggests that – certainly in the early stages of globization - the process of development tends to be essentially unbalanced between city and countryside while in the cities large disparitities in wealth are also evident. Bangalore, one of the

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[8] Weber, Max,(1930).

sophisticated IT capitals of India with a booming and comfortable middle class, has two million of its inhabitants who lack running water.

As earlier stated, a universal feature of industrialisation is the fast growth of large cities – Bangalore's population, presently six million, is increasing by a thousand a day and its conurbations, like many in the developing world are emerging as squalid and unhealthy sources of sickness and crime - as was the case during Britain's original industrial revolution.

Epstein shows how the effects of globaization are mixed. For some – those who are successful among the innovative and dynamic Individualists - there is considerable benefit. But for the majority, the 75% who still live in villages, the effects are disastrous. Half of the young men from her villages had migrated to the city creating massive problems for the women and children who remained behind. Industrialisation is draining 60 percent of the villages water supply which is vital to their agriculture. Since political and economic power has shifted strongly to elites in the cities, rural concerns have little airing. 'The film presents the dilemma of remaining in an impoverished village or staking out for the capital, win or lose . Some villagers have fared well, opthers are barely hanging on' (Epstein, op cit)

As we see in this example, the effects of globalization can be mixed. There is considerable (and passionate) debate between those who see its effects as outweighing its advantages while others emphasise the reverse. Certainly, in areas affected by globalization from 1981-2002, the percentage of people living on less than $2 a day has decreased markedly. In China and SE Asia the figure has declined by over fifty percent whereas the decline is just over two percent in sub Saharan Africa where globalization has been minimal. (World Bank Poverty Estimates). Pro globalists also note that since WW II Life expectancy has almost doubled and infant mortality reduced in areas affected by globalisation.(Pfeffermann. G, 2002))

Nonethess , the social disruption attributable to globalization can be both dramatic and disturbing. On the whole we can say that traditional communities, like Epstein's two villages, endowed` their older generations with authority and power which was buttressed by their control of locally derived resoues that underpinned the basis of their local hierarchies But when young people obtain resources away from the villages, there is a shift in the communities economic base. This leads to a reduction in the authority of the

old, a lessening in deference and respect paid to them and the creation of political and organisational vacuums that are evident in a lack of responsibility for communal involvement. Part of these 'vacuums' are evident too in that economic activities – even at local village levels - are increasingly in the hands of multinational companies that are not locally accountable. The products of village based craftsmen and women for instance, are increasingly being superseded by imported manufactures and respect for their skills is negated

Globalization then, also affects households as their members become more privatized and less incorporated into the wider community. As competition and consumerism become more widespread, the traditional household, especially in its extended forms as institutions of micro-hierarchy, become eroded. Individuals tend to become more autonomous, to exhibit conflicting demands and needs and be less able to depend on each other. Internal competition which echoes the spread of individualism at wider levels of society, then has the effect of reducing social bonds and obligations between different generations within the same household. It loosens the ties and dependencies that link extended families. Insofar as these typically provide the bases of mutual support in cases of hardship, this function too is weakened.

The ability of multinational organizations to move capital and production aound the world is a frequent source of instability. Whether a plant remains in one country as against another as well as changes in the human relations policies within them can be decided by Individualists at long distance, at short notice, and in ignorance of the concerns of the local communities and cultures in which they are set.

The resultant lack of security creates distance between management and labour. In an effort to overcome it many multinationals now work through locally recruited managers. This however, goes only some way to reduce the cultural gap between managers and the managed. This is because of a growing cultural homogeneity among managers whose education and training, lifestyles, residence, aspirations and ideologies are increasingly converging as they simultaneously diverge from the cultural understandings of those they manage.

Given that many multinational manpower policies and strategic management decisions are based on Stateside orientations and training, they tend to an ethnocentric, Individualist and

short termist ideology likely to be at odds with the usually more hierarchic, traditional and longer term *Gemeinschaft* orientations of their workers.

This divergence in cultural values often provides the basis of conflict. It is not helped by the teaching in many of the worlds business schools which is invariably modelled on US practice and which tend to use US, or US influenced, textbooks. These on the whole treat business organisations as entities largely divorced from the cultures in which they are set .

I have elsewhere (Mars, in press) given examples of such culturally opposed conflict in a number of different contexts. In Anatrolia, Turkey (following Quaartaert, 1986), German entrepreneurs attempted to mass produce indigenous Turkish carpets by moving household domestic producers into factories. This led to massive rioting and the physical destruction of the factories. In Malaysia and in Thailand, factories assembling electronic products from components, subjected their workers to tight controls via computerised control systems. The factory managements however, were subject to disruption and stoppages that reflected the cultural orientations and experience of their workers. In Malaysia young village women who were recruited, largely because they were thought compliant, were able to unify on the basis of a belief that their factory was haunted. It required extensive 'cleaning' ceremonies over several days before the women would return to work. In Thailand where the employees were male their way of settling conflict was through direct personal confrontation. Managements were unprepared for either response.

As organizations become more complex and multinational and control is applied from afar , the level of sabotage and deviance is likely to be high. This evolution echoes Weir's suggestion that " all complex sociotechnical systems tend to operate in degraded mode" (Weir 1996: 116) which means that complex organisations, especially if controlled at a distance, rarely run to plan As complexity and specialization increase, occupational deviance by managers and professionals within it become ever more necessary to make the organization effective and for targets to be reached (Bensman and Gerver, 1963; Mars and Altman, 2008). Lower down, at levels where grid constraints are high and jobs involve groups of workers, collective sabotage is likely. Where grid is particularly onerous and group support absent we tend to find individual sabotage by Fatalists which serves to overcome frustration and to make make their jobs tolerable. (Mars,G, 2001; particularly the Introduction)

The spread of deviance and sabotage is important in another respect. It suggests that globalization creates not simply new forms of control, but it also gives individuals some room for manouvre. With its long-distance management, globalization can offer opportunities for occupational deviations and scams, especially for those individualists within it who have the ability to insulate their work from centralized control (Mars, in press). Due to the very complexity of the organization workers can resort more frequently to deviance. Thus, a sub-effect of the globalizing process is the possibility of some specialists being able to shift free from control via deviance.

In Conclusion.

Contemporary processes of globalization have determined a general erosion of hierarchy and a growth of the other three social forms (Individualism, Enclavism and Fatalism). The emergence of individualism is the most evident. In this sense, if we adopt Tönnies' sociological definitions there is a shift from *Gemeineshaft* to *Gesellschaft*, namely between a social organization based on a communal sense of belonging and shared feelings to one characterized by self-interest and instrumental behaviour. As a result, hierarchical social relations, based on regularised face-to face interactions, are progressively weakened. This process has important effects at the levels of community, work and household. Control of work tends to escape from the community, while being placed in the hands of delocalized multinational organizations. The rise in complexity within organizations favours also an increasing occurrence of deviant behaviours in the workplace. Finally, there is privatization of and individualization within the household structure, whereby members of families are drawn into competition and competitive consumerism at the expense of wider family bonds.

This weakening of hierarchy not only strenghtens the ranks of individualists, but also those of Fatalists and Enclavists. Whereas individualists can benefit from the new freedoms created by globalization, Fatalists cannot and are deprived of previous forms of communal bonds while often being subject to tighter control and stricter rules. Their state of powerlessness and isolation makes them a fertile audience for antisystemic discourses and ideologies spread by anti globalist Enclavists who actively denounce the effects of globalization. Pro globalists on the other hand, point to the social and especially the occupational and material opportunities that globalization offers for self development and for overcoming the narrowing constraints of limited opportunity.

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