

## A DURKHEIMIAN APPROACH TO GLOBALIZATION

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## Introduction

The work of Emile Durkheim, and particularly his theory of the division of labor, occupies a somewhat peculiar place in the pantheon of classical sociologists. On the one hand, Durkheim is rightly recognized as one of the founding fathers of the discipline, and *The Division of Labor in Society* (hereafter referred to as *Division*), first published in 1893, remains not only "...one of the peak contributions of modern sociology" (Merton, 1934: 328), but may even be considered "sociology's *first* classic" (Tiryakian, 1994: 4). Yet, on the other hand, it has been critiqued on a variety of grounds. Later authors have suggested that "...its conclusions are too sweeping, ...its methods at times faulty" (Merton, 1934: 328), and that Durkheim's attempts to distinguish the two major concepts of this book—mechanical and organic solidarity—introduces theoretical problems that are extremely difficult to disentangle (Pope and Johnson, 1983). In fact, Durkheim himself rarely used the mechanical-organic distinction after *Division* and modified it somewhat in his preface to the second edition. In terms of its importance for theory building, mechanical and organic solidarity were arguably overshadowed by Durkheim's later works (cf. Nisbet, 1966: 86; Pope and Johnson, 1983: 690).

Several attempts have been made to rescue *Division* from becoming a merely reverential classic with little relevance to our understanding of current conditions. For instance, a number of authors have aimed to bring greater rigor to Durkheim's thought by trying to organize his arguments into a tighter nomological network, offering a formal restatement with interconnected principles and propositions (e.g. Gibbs, 2003; Turner, 1981). Furthermore, at least one attempt has been made to empirically examine the relationship between the division of labor, the level of technological development, and

the degree of urbanization in societies (Gibbs and Martin, 1962). However, *Division* has clearly not initiated a robust research program aiming to test Durkheim's model of what it is that holds societies together, and how levels of social interaction are connected to differentiation of the production system.

Why, then, is it useful to revisit this old theory and see how it might help our understanding of a current social phenomenon, namely the higher levels of international connectedness usually referred to as “globalization”? We rarely see *Division* invoked in current theorizing, and instead much of the current work drawing on Durkheim focuses on the collective conscience as the more attractive theoretical concept. Yet, there are good reasons, we believe, to apply Durkheim's thinking to the issue of globalization. Others have made the case for the relevance of the classics in an eloquent way (e.g. Alexander, 1989; Collins, 1997), and we will not revisit their arguments here although we do agree with most of them. There is one, however, that we want to point out. In his essay on the functions of the classics in a discipline, Stinchcombe (1982) suggested that they serve as “routine science,” or more specifically, as a quarry of ideas for the sociologists who come after them and develop new research agendas by applying some of their assumptions to other fields. In a kind of half-serious way, Stinchcombe further suggested that to prove especially fruitful for further research, it might be useful to build some small mistake into a grand theory. This could then stimulate generations of other researchers to try to refute the theory, and thereby come across new insights and eventually enlarge our understanding of the whole complex (Stinchcombe, 1982: 3).

It is in this spirit that we believe the application of a work such as *Division* can be most usefully conceived: to see how applying it—with all its faults—can nevertheless

help us better understand what we are currently facing - and what theoretical and empirical tools are needed to develop and push beyond our current appreciation of the phenomena at hand; here, the idea of “globalization.” Durkheim’s legacy centers around his analysis and concerns about the societal transformations of his day, and their impacts on individuals’ psyches. These provide obvious parallels to today’s era of increasing global transformation and concerns over its contributions and consequences (e.g., Guillén, 2001a; Fiss and Hirsch, 2005; Giddens, 1990). In this essay, we extend Durkheim’s analysis of Europe’s transformations in the early 20th century, to suggest how his theoretical apparatus might be used to interpret subsequent developments in the 21st. In particular, we suggest that Durkheim’s concern with solidarity—a key theme of his work—has been largely neglected in the current field of organization studies, which might be reinvigorated by a greater concern for issues of inequality in the global arena.

### **Durkheim’s Theory of Social Change and Solidarity**

Durkheim has been accused of having no theory of social change (Parsons, 1937). Yet, as Harms (1981) and other have argued, a deep concern for the “moral crisis” of Europe in general and France in particular pervades most if not all of his major works, from *Division to Suicide* and the *Elementary Forms of Religion*. Nevertheless, if one considers how the economic and social spheres are connected in the transformation of societies, one might argue that *Division*, despite its title, has rather little to say about how a society might best organize its production system, or about how the separation of tasks might improve productivity and efficiency. Durkheim largely bypasses the concerns a modern economist would focus on and instead examines how the differentiation of

occupational groups affects patterns of social interaction, and in turn, social consciousness. Several features of Durkheim's work in this regard are noteworthy. *Division* was not only written at a time of economic and social upheaval, but it also carried a strong normative component, that is, a clear notion of what a healthy society looks like, what pathologies are, and how to rectify them. Durkheim ascribed a high value to the integrative function of social relations as well as a deep concern about the shortcomings of modernizing society, which he attributed not so much to the division of labor itself but rather to pathologies arising from an 'unnatural' state of affairs. This brings up a second issue; Durkheim's theory is marked by a belief that that a "good" society has some kind of natural order among its members and that regulation is needed to maintain this order (Inglis and Robertson, 2004; Pickering, 1984). Absent this order and its regulation, unhappiness, chaos, and anomie arise. The need for regulation as a tool to increase the overall amount of human happiness thus pervades Durkheim's writing and thinking about how societies should organize.

Concerns about the transformation of society thus very much lie at the center of *Division*, which is likewise true of the new field of study named Sociology. As a discipline, Sociology emerged as a response to, and as an analysis of modernity and the large scale social changes that marked the entrance of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1890s were a time of advanced industrialism which ruthlessly transformed the Western societies. It was a time of "unbridled economic individualism" (Tiryakian, 1994: 7) with relatively little regulation of the dominant economic classes and the establishment of new ventures. It was also a time that witnessed a series of economic scandals in the later 1880s and 1890s "wherein greed brought on financial crises and panics" (Tiryakian, 1994: 7). In both

regards, we see intriguing parallels between Durkheim's time and the current period of neo-liberal market orientation and a series of financial scandals that have shaken up investor confidence in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The goal of our chapter is to suggest that the theoretical tools of *Division* can be usefully applied to globalization and the role that organizations in particular play in it. However, before we can explore this argument in more detail, it is necessary to briefly discuss the concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity that lie at the center of *Division*. For Durkheim, mechanical solidarity, or solidarity through likeness, is marked by uniform beliefs and practices to which the individual must submit. It is commonly found in pre-industrial societies where the collective conscience holds a powerful grip on the individual and where we observe relatively little differentiation of work tasks. Furthermore, because these societies are segmentary, there is little interdependence between the respective segments, since most individuals can still perform almost all tasks necessary for survival. Accordingly, the social bonds between individuals tend to be weak, necessitating powerful shared symbolic orders with repressive sanctions and little individual freedom.

In contrast, organic solidarity is characterized by advanced division of labor and social differentiation. It is characteristic of developed, industrialized societies, which consist of a system of functionally different "organs," each of which has to fulfill a special task. The morphological comparison is somewhat less than fortunate but meant to underscore the importance of interdependence in modern societies where the collective conscience is less strongly developed and no longer by itself holds society together. Instead, it is really the division of labor which integrates the individuals into society:

having to work together day by day, individuals realize their interdependence, and this results in a strengthening of the social bonds between them. Accordingly, organic solidarity is marked by restitutive rather than repressive sanctions and leaves considerably greater freedom for the individual as status tends to be determined by occupation rather than kinship ties.

Durkheim's argument was clearly developmental in nature, with mechanical solidarity being gradually replaced by organic solidarity in modern societies. Naturally, this opens up the question what factors lead to this gradual disappearance of segmentary societies and their eventual replacement with advanced and highly differentiated ones. To explain this transition, Durkheim introduced the twin concepts of moral (sometimes also referred to as dynamic) and material density. Durkheim viewed moral density as a function of the number of social relations within a society, with "individuals sufficiently in contact to be able to act and react upon one another" (Durkheim, 1964: 257). This level of interaction between the individuals and the resulting level of connectivity in a society, however, is dependent on material factors. From Durkheim's discussion, one can collect a list of factors that affect this material density. The one that has been paid most attention to by subsequent research is population size, a function of birth and death rates in combination with immigration. Beyond mere population increases, material density is also driven by what may be called ecological concentration, this being a function of (a) the extent of constrictive geographical boundaries that increase interactions, (b) the degree of political centralization, and (c) the degree of consensus over cultural symbols (Turner, 1981: 383). Increases in material density and thus in each of these factors lead to increases in competition among the members of any given society. Specialization due to

greater division of labor thus offers a way out of this increased struggle to survive and prosper. According to Durkheim, “if society effectively includes more members at the same time as they are more closely in relation to each other, the [competitive] struggle is still more acute and the resulting specialization more rapid and complete”(Durkheim, 1964: 269). The division of labor is thus first and foremost, a result of “struggle for existence” (Durkheim, 1964: 270), and it offers a remedy that allows former rivals to coexist and avoid selection pressures. Durkheim’s argument about the transition from segmented to highly differentiated societies is thus quite functional in nature, as the greater division of labor ameliorates competitive pressures.

In introducing competition between similar competitors as the driver of differentiation, Durkheim follows the lead of Herbert Spencer’s theory of social competition. In competition, both moral and material density are connected. As Durkheim points out regarding the nature of human interaction, “...this moral drawing together cannot produce its effect unless the actual distance among individuals has itself diminished in some way. Moral density cannot grow unless material density grows at the same time, and the latter can be used to measure the former.”(1964: 257). However, it is important to note that the causality that Durkheim implies here runs both ways: moral and material density constitute each other and it would therefore be “useless to try to find out which has determined the other; they are inseparable (1964: 257). It is thus clear that Durkheim’s explanation is not one of material determinism. It is not merely that moral density increases as population density intensifies, but on the contrary, population density itself only becomes possible given moral density. In this sense, “the social relationships among the members of a society are what caused them to concentrate in an area in the

first place” (Schmaus, 1995: 68). Indeed, Durkheim takes pains to point out that “...we do not mean to say that the development of density results from economic changes. The two facts mutually condition each other, and the presence of one proves the other’s” (Durkheim, 1964: 258, n4). His point, then, is the mutual constitution of the material and the social, finding a middle way between Marxist determinism and Hegelian idealism.

### **Durkheim’s Influence on Organization Studies**

Durkheim’s thinking on the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity and the interconnectedness of human life has informed subsequent work in the field of organizations in numerous ways. Despite the fact that the distinction between both forms of solidarity became less central over time, Durkheim’s ideas regarding solidarity laid the groundwork for a number of organizational theorists’ later works. For instance, the human relations school (Mayo, 1945) built on Durkheim in developing their concepts of unity in small groups. Specifically, the human relations school focused on the ways in which a new form of moral order could arise from belonging to a work group, a force that could counter the anomic aspects of industrial organization and the division of labor (Starkey, 1992). While these ideas again disappeared during the functionalist period of organization studies, they reemerged during the early 1980s in the field of organizational culture (Dandridge et al. 1980; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Peters and Waterman 1982; Smirich 1983). From its early stages, organizational culture—and its close relative organizational symbolism—conceived itself as running counter to traditional organization research with its focus on rationality and technology that manifested itself in an almost dogmatic functionalism and pervasive “number crunching.” The proponents of

organizational culture emphasized the “irrational” aspects of organizational life, which included the realm of metaphors, myths, rituals, emotions, and perhaps most importantly, the role of symbols. What resonates in this stream of work is a strong concern with fostering a sense of integration (Barnard, 1938), a theme that has its roots both in Durkheim’s focus on the role of solidarity and in his work on symbols and the collective conscience (Lincoln and Guillot, 2005; Starkey, 1992, 1998). This research stream, though less prominent recently, has produced significant insights into how Durkheimian thinking can enlighten life within organizations, including how micro-situational consciousness is connected to a Marxian concern with macro-societal issues (Brown, 1978).

While Durkheim has been most influential regarding the role of organizational culture and collective memory, his work has also affected organization studies more broadly. Durkheim’s thinking on competition as an engine of differentiation in particular has been reflected in population ecology (e.g. Hannan and Freeman, 1977: 940), which likewise sees competitive mechanisms at the heart of patterns of social organization (e.g. Swaminathan and Delacroix, 1991). Similarly, studies of organizational control mechanism have drawn on Durkheim’s concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity to explain how the sharing of common values and objectives can lead to integration in the modern work organization (Ouchi, 1980; Ouchi and Johnson, 1978). Ironically, even those that criticized Durkheim, such as Parsons (1937) and Merton (1934), formed their own ideas to a considerable extent based on what they felt were errors in Durkheim’s thinking.

However, there are also significant aspects in Durkheim's thinking that have largely been neglected, particularly due to a waning interest in the concept of solidarity within the field of organization studies. We believe that the study of globalization in particular offers an opportunity to revive this interest, a topic to which we now turn.

### **Globalization: A Durkheimian Reading**

There are few concepts in recent years that have affected the social sciences to the same extent than globalization. Since it began its dramatic rise in the early 1980s, the discourse on globalization has steadily grown both in size and intensity. While there can be little denying that globalization is a term whose time had come by the end of the 1990s, there is nevertheless little agreement on the nature of globalization, or even on its proper definition (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton, 1999; Fiss and Hirsch, 2005). As it been mostly used in the media, globalization may be understood as "the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before--in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before"(Friedman 1999: 7). While globalization thus denotes "a process fueled by, and resulting in, increasing cross border flows of goods, services, money, people, information, and culture"(Held et al., 1999: 16), this definition begs the question as to when globalization actually began. Indeed, the start of globalization is a contested issue, with historians (Mazlish 1993) and world-systems theorists (Wallerstein 1974; Waters 1995) generally pointing to an earlier beginning around the 16th century, while economic historians tend to locate globalization as beginning with the sharp increase in international trade and investment that occurred after

the 1880s (Robertson 1992; Williamson 1996). Even more contested are the effects of globalization, which have been variously defined as either positive, negative, or grossly overstated.<sup>1</sup>

What these discussions of globalization share is an attempt to link globalization to specific events or changes in international trade and governance regimes. There is thus a common concern for the “true” nature of globalization or whether the term refers to real or imagined process. However, to limit the discussion on globalization to the changes in the structure of the international economy is to miss the point of globalization as a socially constructed issue. Precisely because globalization involves high levels of uncertainty and is not easily measured, it is subjected to substantial interpretive work. Globalization has to be named, explained, elaborated, placed in context, and generally situated within the larger universe of economic and social relations. This process of giving meaning to globalization more often resembles myth making than scientific enquiry (Spich 1995) and takes place largely within the realm of public discourse (Fiss and Hirsch, 2005).

As we have noted earlier, the 1890s—the time when Durkheim wrote *Division*—were a time of fundamental societal transformation from an agricultural, small-town way of life to a more urban, industrial economies. In a similar manner, the large scale social transformation commonly labeled as globalization that we are currently witnessing likewise offers sociology and organization scholars the opportunity to again interpret the emerging new world society. Table 1 provides a comparison of the transformations

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<sup>1</sup> For overviews of this debate, see e.g. Fiss and Hirsch, 2005; Guillén, 2001; or Sklair, 1999.

experienced in European society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with the more recent changes experienced at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. While each dimension may have expanded at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, advances in technology and social organization greatly increased the scale of cross-border exchanges at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in all of them. Specifically, during the century since *Division*'s publication, organizations have grown enormously in size, scale and assets, both domestically and internationally (Perrow, 2004). On nearly all the social dimensions in Table 1, the activities moved across nations, and the formats in which they appear became increasingly standardized, although this is not necessarily true of the content and underlying social relations.

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As the table illustrates, technological advances enabled the expansion of transportation, travel and communication, across such areas as education (study abroad programs, standardized tests taken internationally), business practice (locations and outsourcing), popular culture and social interaction (international hits in movies and TV programs; internet websites). Across nations, we have also seen the emergence of expanded suffrage and voting rights and greater attention to aiding disaster victims in far-away nations. Much as employees are encouraged to look forward to “boundaryless careers” with multiple employers (Hirsch and Shanley, 1996), organizations are more committed to being located and operating in more than one nation. These transformations indicate that along many dimensions the interconnectedness between industrialized nations in particular is unprecedented in terms of broadness.

In addition to “boundarylessness” in terms of voting and disaster relief, patterns of corporate governance, and investors’ expectations now also exert global pressures (Fiss and Zajac, 2004). For example, managers in multi-national and multi-cultural settings may develop a new form of “corporate” identity and solidarity, more global and less national in its commitment and perspective. At the same time, managers in multinational firms, though geographically dispersed, can communicate increasingly freely as the cost of “long-distance” telephony decreases, and as wireless and internet technologies are more accessible. Thus as Friedman (2005) argues, worldwide communication and solidarities, within and outside the work realm, increase without the need for geographical proximity. New solidarities and social networks emerge as a result of communication technology (Podolny and Baron, 1997; Burt, 1997). This suggests that embeddedness may also become less local.

Collectively, the table shows that the shift in focus from national to global has greatly increased since Durkheim’s era. Nevertheless, we believe his theories pertaining to shifts in solidarity are as relevant today as they were then. As we have seen, Durkheim identified several factors that correlate with greater moral and material density. Leaving aside for the moment factors relating to greater population size, those factors are (a) the extent of constrictive geographical boundaries, (b) the degree of political centralization, and (c) the degree of consensus over cultural symbols. To this list, we can add (d) communication and transportation technology, since their development contributes to “increasing the density of society ... (by) “suppressing or diminishing the gaps separating the social segments, they increase the density of society” (Durkheim 1964: 259-260).

Interestingly, all of these factors have been argued to play a key role in current accounts of globalization

*Geographical boundaries.* Current accounts of globalization frequently argue that geographical borders have lost their relevance in a globalized world (Friedman, 2005). As communication and transportation technologies have rapidly advanced, physical barriers become less of an issue. However, this does not imply that the level of competition decreases, but rather the opposite: a lack of geographical restrictions and thus increased factor mobility puts actors everywhere around the world in competition with everyone else. Naturally, we are nowhere near such a state of affairs yet and local monopolies are likely to remain for indefinite periods of time, but as a general tendency the increased levels of competition due to globalization (or conversely increased globalization due to greater international competition) seem hard to deny.

*Political centralization.* Similarly, the role of the polity has arguably been weakened in a globalized world. A number of authors have argued that the state is becoming increasingly less meaningful as firms and business move fluidly across state boundaries (Cox, 1996; Kobrin, 1997). Indeed, states may compete with each other in providing the most economically attractive climate in order to attract these highly mobile corporations, leading to a world where state actors become less and less important, eventually leading to the establishment of transnational organizations and communities (e.g. Djelic and Quack, 2003; Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). While the weakening of the state would increase less interaction at the national level, it is replaced by interaction beyond the state's jurisdiction, suggesting that levels of interaction will remain at least as high if not higher.

*Consensus over cultural symbols.* This is perhaps the most intriguing aspect of globalization. The question of whether globalization leads to an increase or decrease in the consensus over cultural symbols has been at the focus of a considerable debate. While some authors have argued for globalization leading to increased cultural homogeneity (Hamelink 1994; Latouche 1995), others have pointed to the persistence and even increase in diversity (e.g. Featherstone, Lash, and Robertson 1995). While we do not subscribe to the notion that globalization will eventually lead to a universally shared culture, the global spread of certain cultural forms carries the interesting implications that it again facilitates the levels of interaction due to shared values and vocabularies, indicating again higher levels of competition as facilitated by cultural “compatibility.”

*Communication and transportation technology.* There can be little doubt that advances in communication and transportation technology are among the key drivers of globalization (Castells, 1998). Both factors lie at the heart of a sophisticated division of labor, which in turn is a precondition for what Gibbs and Martin call a “high degree of external dispersion,” or the average distance between the points of origin of raw materials and the points at which these materials are being consumed (Gibbs and Martin 1962: 673). This high degree of dispersion is marked by ever longer interaction chains including chains of exchange.

### **Solidarity in a Globalized World**

The dual nature of globalization parallels Durkheim’s model of social interactions, where structural aspects of human interaction such as the material and moral density are paralleled by symbolic aspects such as collective conscience and consensus

over cultural symbols. However, while in many ways the current move towards globalization echoes Durkheim's thoughts on social transformation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, we are currently witnessing a development that runs counter to the overall movement from segmentary to differentiated societies, notably the return of mechanical solidarity in various forms (cf. Tiryakian, 1994). Rather than interdependence based on a division of labor, a common response to globalization appears to be the reemergence of mobilization based on shared identity, and particularly religious and national identity. Yet, this return of mechanical solidarity may not only be negative. The emergence of collective identities based for instance on ethnic identity can—in an age where the means of communication have been radically democratized and become available to people dispersed around the globe—give voice to those who are being marginalized (Tiryakian, 1994).

While the re-emergence of mechanical solidarity would appear to run counter to a movement from mechanical to organic solidarity as originally suggested in *Division*, it is important to note that such a phenomenon is in fact already foreshadowed in Durkheim's own thinking. In the preface to the second edition, Durkheim to a considerable extent revised his original view of solidarity to argue that both forms—mechanical and organic—are necessary, and that indeed the challenge of the modern age is indeed an insufficiency of mechanical solidarity. He particularly pointed to intermediary occupational groups and associations<sup>2</sup> as the settings, or mechanism helping to fill the gap between the individual and the State. He considered their health

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<sup>2</sup> Durkheim himself used the term 'corporations' or 'occupational group' here to refer to e.g. professional associations that would include both employees and employers.

critical to the formation of the attitudes and actions taken by their members, as they are the primary place in which the members of an occupational group can create a shared moral system of rules (1964: 5).

Beyond this, there is another important condition that needs to be met for the division of labor to be the effective glue that holds society together. Specifically, social groups of (world) society need to be able to participate in a meaningful way in the economic sphere. Durkheim himself noted that a lack of regulation of individuals by norms and a situation where inequalities are considered illegitimate and not corresponding to the distribution of talents (“forced distribution of labor”) is likely to lead to a breakdown of organic solidarity. To achieve solidarity, Durkheim considered the fair treatment of participants as necessary at all levels in economic and other transactions, that excessive disparities need to be avoided, and that preventing them is the proper task of political authorities. A concern for morality and fairness thus becomes a necessary conditions for the division of labor to unfold successfully, to get citizens, workers and managers to willingly work toward and contribute to the success of society as a whole. These deliberations indicate that Durkheim would likely find problematic contemporary employment relationships which are at-will, subject to severance at any time, likely to be temporary, lacking fringe benefits, and are on the verge of being outsourced. In such employment relations, it is difficult for individuals to develop the sense of community and shared interdependence that Durkheim thought essential for solidarity to emerge.

Indeed, there is little doubt that what is currently labeled “globalization” comes along with high levels of economic marginalization. Most increases in trade and

investment flows have been between Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia, but Africa and parts of Asia have been marginalized with little hope of participating in the newly emerging economic world order. Suggestions that such countries should focus on their natural resources or cheap labor ring hollow in the face of increasing economic inequality and the ability of advanced economies to appropriate much of the rents generated in the value chain that stretches for instance from the beans harvested in Colombia to the cup of Starbucks coffee sold to the North American customer. A Durkheimian analysis suggests that for instance the residents of the Brazilian *favelas*, who exist outside the social, legal and economic boundaries of world society, are not likely to share the same values and aspirations. The marginalization and effective exclusion of such populations as well as countries is likely to lead to a breakdown of moral solidarity. Durkheim himself was quite cautious regarding the realization of greater solidarity as part of a world society and viewed the division of labor as a necessary though not sufficient condition in stating that “the ideal of human fraternity can be realized only in proportion to the progress of the division of labor” (1964: 403).

### **Durkheim and Globalization: An Empirical Agenda**

It has become clear from our discussion that a Durkheimian analysis of the effects of globalization on solidarity would note two related yet separate aspects: a) a concern about the breaking of existing moral and communal bonds, with the ensuing possibility of anomic disintegration, and b) a concern for whether and how moral unity could be reconstituted, particularly at the international level – that is, by an international moral order backed by an international legal system. These considerations open up a

considerable amount of research opportunities to organizational researchers. Some of the most promising ones include:

(1) Comparative studies of the effects of global deregulation on organizations, including the impacts of the privatization of public goods, diminishing fringe benefits, and the decline of smaller business firms along the value chain (e.g. Henisz, Zelner, and Guillén, 2005). Deregulation—the institution of market principles for other principles of organization and distribution—carries strong implications for the emergence of anomic conditions marked by a self-interest not reigned in by moral sentiment.

(2) The redefinition of employment and work in nations that shift from socialist to market economies (e.g. Stark, 1996). Such situations are particularly interesting as they are examples of the dissolution of prior moral orders of economic exchange and the creation of new ones with a focus on efficiency and competition. The ensuing redefinitions of interdependencies, particularly in nations where “unemployment” was not normal in the labor force, raise significant “moral density” questions.

(3) The rise of outsourcing and decline in the countervailing power of unions and professional associations. Both developments present challenges to workers’ and managers’ sense of belonging, by revising the power-dependence aspects of the employment relationship. As we noted, Durkheim placed particular importance on the role of occupational groups as intermediate entities between the state and the individual. However, it appears now evident that transnational epistemic communities of experts and

practitioners are among the most powerful agents of dissemination of policy and management models (Adler and Haas, 1992; Fourcade, 2006). Such communities can successfully diffuse policies leading to uniform standards, thus creating a shared cultural and cognitive sphere (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez, 1997). Epistemic communities frame debate and define what issues are “important” in reference to globalization, and their role thus appears central in a Durkheimian account of globalization, with Durkheim himself pointing to the importance of such intermediate actors between the state and society.

(4) The emergence of international institutions that regulate trade. We are already seeing an emerging interest in the study of transnational governance (e.g. Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). In particular, trade agreements that promote economic globalization yet lack provisions for worker protection and human rights issues would run counter to a Durkheimian emphasis on the integrative function of the division of labor. The potential negative implications of such agreements seem clear, as they are likely to negatively affect the fairness of how rents are distributed, leading to higher levels of anomie both at the individual and organizational level. Durkheim himself was quite aware of the need for transnational regimes, noting that “...intersocial conflicts be regulated only by a society which comprises in its scope all others”(1964: 405).

(5) The perception of globalization by occupational groups in organizational settings and its effect on local working orders and solidarity. For instance, there is a greater need for qualitative case studies on the pros and cons of the reshaping of employment by large

companies like Wal-Mart, and professional organizations in the service sector, such as health maintenance organizations (Lincoln and Guillot, 2005). Such studies could directly assess the ways in which globalization affects both mechanical and organic solidarity, and how organic solidarity might further become the core organizing principle of the firm as a collaborative community (Adler and Heckscher, 2006).

All of these research topics share as their underlying theme Durkheim's concern that for the division of labor to progress and his vision of the organic society to unfold, solidarity needs to be fostered and regulations in place to avoid unfettered opportunism. It would follow from these concerns that there is too little attention provided to developing leaders, programs and policies that contribute to solidarity across firms' constituencies. In particular, it seems to us that a Durkheimian analysis of rent distribution would find problematic a greater focus on firms' financial performance and "shareholder value" while neglecting how wealth generated might be more widely shared with other stakeholder groups that likewise have an important part to play for the proper functioning of society. In a related fashion, such an analysis would have to problematize the view that an organization is a bundle of contracts and that "self-interest seeking with guile" is the basic assumption of economic behavior (Williamson, 1985: 47). Where no firm or leader will sacrifice for the common good, then all will suffer when the value and benefits of the commons are exhausted. There are considerable warning signs that globalization may not currently be associated with higher levels of organic solidarity, as evidenced by rising inequality in the workforce of the more "advanced" industrial nations, with some

combination of overwork and anomie suggested by the widespread use of (legal) tranquilizer drugs among their populations.

Our considerations have so far not taking into account how one might actually test the relationship between material and moral density, the division of labor, and levels of solidarity. Durkheim's espoused relationship between such increasing interdependencies and greater social interactions stemming from the expanded division of labor have rarely been examined empirically. An unusual exception here is the work of Gibbs and Martin (1962), who examine the relationship between urbanization, the division of labor, and the dispersion of consumption. Gibbs and Martin defined "urbanization" as the exchange or mass movement of raw materials and other resources outside the boundaries one's own society. While the term "globalization" not yet appeared, for Gibbs and Martin this process was tightly coupled with the division of labor. Their study classified societies via the dispersion of consumable products, both internal and external:

"The degree of 'internal dispersion' in a society refers to the average distance between the points of origin of raw materials and the points at which the materials are consumed, with both points being within the society's boundaries. The degree of 'external dispersion,' on the other hand, is the average distance between the points when the origin is outside the society" (p. 669).

For a society to have a high degree of external dispersion, a highly sophisticated division of labor had to reside within that specific economy. Occupational diversification within and across societies constituted this division of labor. Technology facilitated a nation's division of labor: "Just as it is necessary for the populations of large cities to draw objects

of consumption from great distances so is it equally necessary for them to have a high degree of division of labor and technological development to accomplish the task”(Gibbs and Martin, 1962: 674).

The work of Gibbs and Martin has intriguing implications for empirically examining the relationship between the division of labor and moral density. To measure the division of labor, Gibbs and Martin used data on the diversification of industries. The argument here is that lower levels of industry differentiation will go along with little diversity, while higher levels will indicate greater division of labor on the Herfindahl index, a widely used measure of concentration. The index ranges from  $1/N$  to 1, where  $N$  is the number of industries and is usually reverse-coded for ease of interpretation. For instance, if all individuals were employed in only one industry (such as “Hunting and Gathering”), the index of industry differentiation would be close to zero, whereas if all individuals were equally distributed across many industries, the index would eventually approach 1.

To measure the internationalization of the division of labor across countries, one might similarly employ data on the diversification of inputs and outputs across countries. While some empirical work in this regard has been done in the world systems literatures (e.g. Krempel and Plümper, 1999), much remains to be done to develop our understanding of how organizations in general, and business corporations in particular, enact the creation of a new global division of labor (Schwartzman, 2006). While the weakening of the state would increase less interaction at the national level, it is replaced by interaction beyond the state’s jurisdiction, suggesting that levels of interaction will remain at least as high if not higher. Similarly, one might consider using Durkheim’s own

measure of organic solidarity—the move from punitive to restitutive law—to examine how for instance international law might reflect the emergence of a different order based on increasing division of labor.

With greater globalization we should see considerably higher levels of material and moral density. However, a Durkheimian approach also implies a different reading of the concept of globalization, which becomes not only the result of intensified flows of goods, services, money, people, and so forth, but instead is constituted by a greater social need to be connected. Globalization, in this sense, is not only the effect, but the cause of higher material and moral density. Such an understanding points our attention to issues surrounding the discursive construction of globalization (e.g. Fiss and Hirsch, 2005), and how the need for and effects of greater global connectedness may be translated into policy that then brings about the very changes it means to address.

Until now, we have largely focused on direct interactions between organizations and the globalized world. The view of globalization that underlies these considerations is one of making nation states largely irrelevant in the economic processes as organizations are connected directly with each other around the globe. This vision of globalization is perhaps best expressed by Longworth, who views globalization as “a revolution that enables any entrepreneur to raise money anywhere in the world and, with that money, to use technology, communications, management, and labor located anywhere the entrepreneur finds them to make things anywhere he or she wants and sell them anywhere there are customers” (Longworth 1998: 7). Here, factor markets are accessible across the globe, as are customers, mostly due to decreases in transportation and communication costs.

However, there is a different view of globalization that also connects to Durkheim's arguments of competitive struggles leading to increased levels of differentiation. In particular, a number of authors have argued that in a globalized world, countries can achieve competitive advantages due to their specific capital, such as location, natural resources, nature of the labor force, wage levels and so forth. The argument goes back to the work of economist David Ricardo, who famously argued that "under a system of perfectly free commerce, each country naturally devotes its capital and labour to such employments as are most beneficial to each"(Ricardo, 1937: 80). This, of course, is the division of labor writ large on a global level, where there is growing functional interdependence based on specialization (e.g. Münch, 2005). Much as Durkheim pioneered taking social facts and collective levels of analysis for his frames of reference, the contemporary analogue would be to frame the nation as based on mechanical solidarity and the global system of markets and alliances as based on organic solidarity.

One might believe that this kind of an international division of labor will likewise lead to greater levels of connectedness and eventually solidarity. However, a closer examination reveals that this is not necessarily the case. First, note that differences in nation-specific capital have to be complementary, however, in order for organic solidarity to emerge in the new global division of labor. If, instead, countries begin to compete with each other in the global marketplace—for instance based on low wages and less restrictive labor regulation—then one would expect fierce competition and a "race to the bottom" rather than increased solidarity. Furthermore, for solidarity to emerge, it is necessary for the actors involved to recognize each other and their interdependence.

However, it is unclear whether the majority of individuals within any given country will indeed experience such a common social bond in any meaningful way. If outputs are traded on global markets with prices set according to market mechanisms, the potential for interaction with other actors seems to diminish as homogeneity within countries increases. Furthermore, increasing homogeneity in industrial sectors due to specialization at the country level may lead to higher levels of the division of labor at the international level, but it may do so at the cost of the division of labor at the national level. Finally, note also that globalization introduces a new quality to this social solidarity. Previously, “if the bonds of social solidarity are too weak ... people may simply emigrate instead of specialize”(Schmaus, 1995: 70). At the level of globalization, emigration is of course no longer an option, leading to the need to cooperate or move the struggle to more destructive forms such as conflict or suicide.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The division of labor implies a division of responsibility; an arrangement that can have potentially harmful consequences. Particularly in highly developed and tightly coupled technological systems that are prone to “normal accidents” (Perrow 1984), dividing tasks carries the potential for creating disconnections that result in catastrophic outcomes. Similarly, vested interests as the result of the division of labor can negate any increased solidarity, as will the non-participation in the labor force of considerable segments of society (Catton, 1985).

In contrast to the emphasis that his contemporary Tönnies laid on the cultural and spiritual losses incurred by a shift from traditional to modern society, Durkheim

pioneered the counter (and counterintuitive) arguments that: (1) the resulting division of labor would increase productivity; (2) improve life *chances* for all in this new world of opportunity and excitement; and (3) promote social solidarity and shared values among its participants. This unity would be enhanced *when* crimes were committed, for such deviance would help show the line between right and wrong, and bring the citizens of this expanded world closer together. Yet, Durkheim was also painfully aware of the constant threat of anomie encountered by a minority not benefiting from these societal changes, whose problems would manifest themselves in social disorder, or worse yet, suicide.

Weber noted some of the same apprehensions. Regarding the rise of rational bureaucracies compatible with society, he voiced concern that “the great question is not how can we promote and hasten [rationality and efficiency] but what can we do to oppose this machinery in order to keep a portion of mankind free of this parceling out of the soul, from this supreme mastery of the bureaucratic way of life” (Weber, 1958: 212). For Weber, one can argue the transformation from the ideal type of *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* would signify the occurrence of a change in the master served by subordinates, and to whom they are accountable. He prophesied resistance to the efficiency and increased productivity that such modernity represents: “Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labour by increasing its intensity, it has encountered immensely stubborn resistance (from) pre-capitalistic labour” (Weber, 1930 [1904]). If solidarity is spurred by such resistance, it can work counter to what Durkheim may have anticipated. We suspect Weber would be less shocked, for example, by the solidarity of Islamic radicals, and the success of their administrative apparatus in mobilizing support towards the goal of destroying Western

icons. He and Durkheim shared the concern that a lack of constructive solidarity and unification could hold back a society. Were Durkheim alive today, one would expect him to be gravely concerned by a lack of moral accord at the international level, which leaves the way open to anomic and egoistic distortions of globalization, and one would expect him to argue vehemently for the value of a globally binding morality. Yet, it would appear that currently the scope of moral unity and the scope of economic unity are going in different directions, which in his view must certainly lead to crisis.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are currently witnessing vigorous debates about whether the spread of common symbols and cultures across nations contributes to their unification and solidarity, or to the loss and isolation of particular regions', nations' and ethnicities' distinctive identities. The growing universality of media formats, including TV news and entertainments, restaurant specialties, and clothing styles support the view that people across nations participate in an increasingly global popular culture. Are the artisans and other representatives of local traditions being eclipsed and downgraded by these developments? Or is the common appreciation of the same music, movies, and other global icons uniting people across cultures, promoting solidarity and reducing anomie? In his study of their response to globalization and organizational change, in Argentina, South Korea and Spain, Guillén affirms their coexistence, concluding nations can “use their unique economic, political, and social advantages as leverage in the global marketplace” (2001: 3), so it is to their advantage to increase their value to the local marketplace by putting forward their best idiosyncratic cultural capital.

Another cautionary voice regarding the solidarity of capital, of course, was Marx, whose expectation was for a conflict between the international solidarity of capital lined

up against that of its workers. Durkheim's thinking, however, runs counter to Marx' anticipation of a revolution preceded by increased inequality, as well as a view of globalization as the triumph of the market and withering away of the state. As an educator in France, Durkheim foresaw a definite role for the state, favored government regulation, and the continuation of economic relationships and alliances embedded in social ties and trust. While he advocated a more cosmopolitan than provincial framework for society to move towards, Durkheim also set out concerns over a resulting decline in common values and proposed ways to counter the potential increase in anomie. He saw the division of labor as increasing solidarity, but envisioned a social solidarity between individuals as well as economic solidarity between states. Durkheim believed the state guaranteed individual rights and held society together. He defended the state when he said, "We might say that in the State we have the prime mover. It is the State that has rescued the child from patriarchal domination and from family tyranny; it is the State that has freed the citizen from feudal groups and later from communal groups; it is the State that has liberated the craftsmen and his master from guild tyranny"(Durkheim 1957: 64). Nevertheless, the state worked secondarily to the religion in terms of fostering a unified society.

Durkheim's emphasis on the contribution of religions to the social order stemmed from his great respect for their "grounding" and providing a moral compass for individuals to better relate to their social surroundings. He opposed "egoism" - an excessive focus on the interests of the individual over those of society. Durkheim's focus on a grounding in collective values is very counter to the more economic presumption of commensuration, that prices can be put on anything, hence nothing is sacred (Becker,

1976; Espeland, 1998). Such secularization and economizing of utility functions encourages a different, more individualistic focus, with fewer comfort zones and spiritual safe harbors that individuals may rely on. In America, the spate of recent attacks on strangers or co-workers, colloquially described as “going postal,” may be seen as an indicator of Durkheim’s concern over individuals “losing it,” both literally and figuratively.

It thus appears whereas Durkheim held high hopes for the division of labor and the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity, he specified a series of moral, practical, and analytical concerns that resonate well with contemporary discussions of the promise of globalization, combined with what potential social ills we need to avoid as it unfolds.

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**Table 1: Dimensions of Transformation at the end of the 19th and 20th Centuries**

	late 1800s - early 1900s <b>Local to National Communities</b>	modern day <b>National to Global Communities</b>
<b>Education</b>	small schoolhouses slowly expanding education is exclusive, but opening over time to others	shift to "studying abroad," learning different languages, standardized testing across countries education is for all social classes
<b>Organization</b>	local to national	multiple physical locations, national to multinational
<b>Business practices</b>	social networks based on family-community relations breaking down	increasing use of outsourcing, consulting, emergence of network forms of corporations
<b>Corporate identity</b>	mostly family-owned, rural to city	mobile, flexible boundaries, national to global
<b>Communication</b>	shift from letters to telephone	shift from telephone to email and instant messaging
<b>Religion</b>	increase in secularity as people move toward cities, but life still revolves much around religion, the main socializing source	mega-churches, television evangelist broadcasts worldwide
<b>Mass media</b>	growing number of newspapers; radio stations and papers are locally owned	unifying formats, particularly global news; centralized ownership
<b>Criminal justice</b>	diversified systems begin to converge, but still more methods of punishment and death sentences than today	converging systems with most countries banning or limiting death sentence
<b>Entertainment</b>	shift from reading and storytelling toward radio	blockbuster movies grossing millions, social life on internet
<b>Warfare</b>	fought by troops - with technological advances just entering	fought by troops and increasingly by technology
<b>Politics</b>	fewer voters, efforts required to research candidates	more voters, mass media political endorsements
<b>Charity</b>	affiliated with one's own community/society, broadening to national charity	corporate philanthropy, increasingly cross-national charity efforts