

PRODUCTIONS OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND OF SOCIAL COMPULSION

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ABSTRACT I begin from the assumption that the social groups within which people acquire subjective attributes belong to two different orders. Those of the first order follow the model of organized, closed structures that define fixed places. Examples are social institutions, the state, and the oedipal structure. The groups of the second order are ad hoc groups whose life and consistency depend on the emergence of a problem that must be solved and, therefore, on a doing together. I call these groups communities. This approach to the matter of globalization responds to a way of thinking linkage organization that privileges different ontologies and a characteristic topology for each of them.

We should ask ourselves whether solidarity requires an ontological definition; whether it constitutes an ethical problem (commitment), a moral problem (behaviour or obligation), an action/doing based on a previous knowledge of one of the parties, a practice created in connection with an emerging problem, a psychic mechanism, and so on. To answer these manifold questions, I travel a path – one among many possible paths – that involves understanding solidarity as a resource and a practice referred to psychic suffering, especially in present-day Argentina. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons. Ltd.

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I first encountered the term ‘globalization’ as a newspaper reader. Recently, however, I became interested in learning and thinking about it when I was invited to participate in a conference panel, even though it was clear to me that I would only be able to look at what role this way of thinking about political-economic relations plays within my own field. My colleague Ignacio Lewkowicz (2004) believes that globalization has imposed specific conditions within which the

political, the economic, and the social are thought. Since we live in a globalized society, we may presume that a signifying context has gradually permeated this society, which imposes a certain type of mark affecting each individual’s social subjectivation. This process will therefore influence how we reflect on psychoanalytic theory, practice, and technique.

The organizers of the meeting brought together two terms, ‘solidarity’ and ‘globali-

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zation', which did not at first seem to be connected. That is why I think it necessary to explain how I situated myself regarding the concept of globalization, and how I then thought of solidarity.

The term 'globalization' established a *way of thinking* and of solving the problem of the loss of power of the nation-state by creating a new power, Empire, which would account for the diversity of interests and capitals. In Noam Chomsky's view, for instance, globalization *inaugurates* a 'new imperial era in which world bankers transfer their capitals from one place to the other for their own benefit.' According to Aldo Ferrer (1999), an Argentine economist, globalization constitutes a *challenge* and the author suggests various types of responses to such a challenge.

Globalization has certainly instituted a new dimension that entails the abolition of formerly existing borders between countries. The new space has no outside-inside division for, as its name indicates, it is global. Those old frontiers promoted territorial struggles, as well as a certain way of dealing with cultural differences. Traversing such borders required work. Now, in the era of globalization, diversity is articulated on the basis of a common denominator, namely, *effectiveness and the management of competitiveness* in order to reach a certain *economic performance*. This seems to be a possible way to solve the disadvantages of cultural diversity, of singularity, of the particular, by producing novel modes of exchange ruled by the idea of integration, gathering, and harmonization supported by competitiveness.

Is this just another version of the same thing, where the only change is the passage from nation-state organization to that of *Empire*, as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2001) would suggest? Is it a new way to organize relations among countries and,

therefore, among conflicting interests? Is this an acknowledgement of the loss of part of the power the nation-state used to wield, as well as of some of its functions, and its replacement by a new form of power, the Empire, which entails a particular style of communication and exchange in accordance with present-day media? Does it originate in a chaotic situation, as many believe, a sort of explosion of the nation-state model, or is it the product of a natural progression? What seems clear at least is that globalization creates *a monopoly of riches in the hands of some, and more poverty for others*.

Given that this concept brings together differing political and ideological stances, it may be seen both as a new form of exploitation and as a system that favours useful competitiveness, production, exchange, and so-called progress.

TWO SUPERIMPOSED DIMENSIONS, OR A SINGLE ONE?

In any case, even though the notion of 'the global' encompasses a totality without an outside, we may wonder if we might not think of it differently, namely as the establishment of a division between what is globalized and a different dimension. Thus there would actually exist an 'outside' in relation to the space of the global. In a literal sense, it would seem that 'global' does not allow for two dimensions but for two groups of people – groups that are dissimilarly affected by the economic flux – some acquiring more riches, some becoming poorer. Yet if we think in terms of two different dimensions we may conceive of part of the world as ruled by the conditions for thought production imposed by globalization and the other part as ruled by other values that are somewhat uncoupled from those conditions – values that attribute no significance to economic effectiveness.

In that case, we may think that these dimensions only come into contact at an interface whose effects would be hard to specify today. I could just mention that the globalized part of the world is equipped with a strong disavowal, able to strip the horror of poverty of its attributes and meaning. The text is well known, the existence of an extreme situation is clear, but this knowledge has stripped horror, poverty, and inequality of their attributes and meaning, thus impeding an active response. This issue, the production of *a certain form of knowledge that does not promote action*, is also a phenomenon characteristic of our times.

I will attempt to situate different subjective modalities within this two-dimensional system:

- In the case of those who are situated within the flux of capital and clustered in new groups – the Multitude, in Negri's terms – a *dissolution of known social ties* occurs, and new ties are established based on pure *competitiveness and economic effectiveness*. We should ask, however, if other groups could not coexist among these groups in which social ties would be restored, albeit ties of a somewhat compulsory nature. A possible consequence would be that individual subjects or groups such as those that constitute family life would be affected, with the consequent appearance of feelings of loneliness that require description. These feelings are often denounced in complaints about everyday habits that are negatively portrayed, such as having a television set per person in a home, eating in front of it, the type of relationship people develop with their computers, and so on.
- Those who are left uncoupled or not hooked in by the economic flux constitute groups or peoples that have not been *absorbed* by it. These groups maintain

some form of traditional relationship, which originates in each group or country's culture. It is likely that, if problems arise that need to be solved, the form productive relations take will correspond to a spontaneous formation where the concept of solidarity bears a basic meaning. These are the groups constituted upon a 'doing-together-with-others' that progressively creates forms of belonging that are not necessarily final.

In sum, there would exist two different dimensions of subjective production. In the first case, subjective production would be strengthened by economic relations in a process that some see as subjective dissolution or, at least, as the dissolution of the known forms of subjectivization. A subject's worth is based on what s/he produces, rather like an object of consumption. In the second case, subjective production would be strengthened by the possibility of acting together with others to tackle a problem, giving rise to the constitution of a community at a particular time.

Thus understood, globalization does not involve solidarity, even though the latter may be one of the factors that affect the production of any human group. We may then think of two ways in which *solidarity* operates

- compulsorily; and
- through acting with others to tackle a problem.

GLOBALIZATION AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE CONCEPT OF EFFECTIVENESS

Now, how should we situate psychoanalysis in the context of the conditions for thought production imposed or created by globalization? I believe that we should start by questioning or situating the notion of *effectiveness*,

so as to discern what it is that globalization contributes as value to some ways of thinking about psychoanalysis.

In order to do so, we must think of effectiveness at three different levels. We must start with

1. *economic performance*; in order to move on to
2. *performance in our own frame of work* in terms of our analytic work; and, finally, we must deal with
3. *the effectiveness of representation and the effectiveness of presentation*.

In this way, the economic retains its polysemy, whose scope ranges from the most concrete aspect (that which refers to the product of work) to the purely symbolic and imaginary, which depends on whether the *analytic work on representation* and the *analytic work on presentation* – that is, on the link – each plays its due role. I will introduce here the notions of intrasubjective psychic production and intersubjective or linkage psychic production.

1. Given that most psychoanalysts belong to the population that comprises this new Empire or Multitude (Negri and Hardt, 2000), they should incorporate, either consciously or unconsciously, the values entailed by globalization as a way of thinking. It is likely that our way of dealing with our patients' financial difficulties will be partly tied to the criterion of effectiveness. We will have to ask ourselves once again how to tackle the value of work in the present. We can answer this question by examining the role economic performance and effectiveness play during interviews, or in the material patients bring to the sessions. Of course, one way is to associate work with performance and pleasure, and a different way is to estab-

lish effectiveness as the sole value to be achieved. These differing options pose a dilemma for us. Another consequence of present-day conditions is the need to deal with unemployment, or with the experience of dis-existence due to the expulsion from the labour network.

2. Some theories focus their *cure criteria* on their patients' capacity for economic performance and their ability to adjust to the social milieu where they live. This perspective is worthy of analysis, for it might be connected to the interference of globalization in our way to assess the cure. The notion of *effectiveness* has changed its meaning and value throughout time and today psychoanalysts feel forced to produce more effectiveness. There exists a socio-economic pressure to abide by the prevailing values. Society exerts an unconscious pressure to impose money as the main value. (Lewkowicz, 2004, suggests that the status of consumer has replaced the status of citizen.) What does this urge to achieve effectiveness entail? Generally, it means that analysts should be faster in their achievement of symptom resolution, problem solving, the adjustment of schedules and fees, and so on. Analysts often experience such a demand as conflict, or as if it stood in opposition to traditionally acquired ways of thinking. A slow working-through, for instance, seems to be opposed to effectiveness. The latter is also customarily associated with the duration of a treatment, and it is often hard for us to accept, or to make use of, the new conditions imposed by globalization. Effectiveness is also the possibility to relieve suffering, to bring about an improvement of relations among people, to increase linkage potential. In this case, we should tackle the issue from the perspective of intrapsychic and intersubjective production.

3. These forms of production are related to the difference between the concepts of representation and presentation. In order to give a quick sense of how I understand each of these concepts, I would say that *representation* is what takes the place of other moments, other experiences of something that cannot be known. It appears in treatments as the representative of something past that tends to recur. It is what we classically know as that which populates the inner world. *Presentation*, in turn, is a term Isidoro Berenstein and I have introduced (Berenstein and Puget, 1997; Puget, 2004), which relates to linkage conceived of as the encounter of two or more others who present themselves to each other from their alterity, producing an unbalance, an interference in what would be a single subject. The effectiveness of representation enables analytic work, and allows both patient and analyst to uncover for each other scenes that tend to repeat and that confer a previously existing meaning to the present. There are certainly representations that block subjectivity, and others that produce transformations and new representations. The effectiveness of presentation, on the other hand, may be recognized when verifying the effects of alterity, which must necessarily produce permanent transformations in the components of the link. Such changes increase the capacity to think about the other's input; they allow for a greater knowledge of what the situation may contribute and enable the arousal of the subject's interest and curiosity regarding both the other and him/herself. A disturbing sign of the difficulty to tolerate the other's presence is, for instance, the utterance of phrases such as 'don't interrupt me', 'let me finish', 'that is not what I wanted to say', and so on.

GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE

These reflections should lead us to think about what we mean by 'globalization of culture.' What is it about? It refers to the elimination of differences, or to the outcome of new technologies, which doubtlessly produce new forms of subjectivization.

I believe that one of our present-day dilemmas is how to situate ourselves in the face of this question *from the perspective of what happens and not from what this system lacks* in relation to previous ones. At the same time we must be very careful in our detection of what constitutes difference, or of the irreducible 'Difference' with a capital 'D', which pertains to subjectivization.

Some consequences of the globalization of culture are tied not just to the speed of communication but also to the breach between generations, the emergence of new languages, and the production of a knowledge that progressively swallows the meaning of some concepts. Just as we are in the era of the disposable, I have noticed that, in our science, new concepts rapidly lose their signifying force. On the other hand, I have also noticed that the scientific psychoanalytic world is divided into large areas that are defined according to their use of concepts that, being based in utterly different philosophies, are not transferable from one area to the other.

GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIALIZATION

As I have been considering the issue of social subjectivity for some time now and have developed a series of hypotheses concerning its modes of constitution, I have had to revise and question the traditional psychoanalytic notion of social subjectivity. For a long time, we have conceived of social subjectivity according to the model Sigmund Freud developed since *Group Psychology*

and the *Analysis of the Ego*. Briefly, such a model entails the conception of social groups and of the socialization of a subject as a transformation of the first familial models.

In my own analysis, however, I start from a different assumption, namely, that the social groups within which people acquire or construe their subjective attributes belong to two different orders. Some follow the model of organized structures, where social institutions, the state, and the oedipal structure occupy an established place. I add here globalization, or the globalized world. Negri et al. (2003) sees 'the multitude' as the content of globalization, as the power of the common being. It may be the most we can make of globalization.

The second order comprises *ad hoc* groups that are born and subsist thanks to the emergence of a problem and their effort to solve it and, therefore, thanks to a 'doing together'. It is this doing that creates the group and grants consistency to a space where links flow. I will designate such groups as *communities*, a term that relates to my way of understanding the production of subjectivity. This way of thinking leads me to privilege different ontologies and a singular topology for each of the spaces of subjective constitution. Perhaps it is possible for communities to emerge within the context of globalization, but I do not think that globalization originates them.

CLOSED STRUCTURES AND FLOWING SPACE

1. Closed, pre-established structures such as the state, social institutions, and the family are organized according to a binary logic. They bear clear-cut limits, so that there is an interior-exterior border that gives rise to the introduction of categories such as inclusion-exclusion and all those derived from them. These categories have their own constitutive laws according to a variety of factors such as ideology, the nature of the group, irreducible differences, racism, and religion. In the case of the oedipal structure, exclusion is personified in the excluded third and promotes the constitution of a triangle, the oedipal triangle. The latter will determine its members' definition of their sexual identity, their way of being father-mother-child, and so on. The exchanges within this structure bear an obligatory quality that, albeit not complementary to the quality of solidarity, does not necessarily oppose it. Such an obligatory quality corresponds to a constitutive feeling of debt, of duty, and sometimes of guilt. There is the feeling of duty to give continuity to the group, to take the place of the dead, and so on. This feeling entails the idea that if one keeps doing, if one occupies those places, one will effect a reparation, will keep the past alive and active in one's mind, a past that becomes the motor of production. Such productions only function within the context of globalization *but since I have posited that globalization has no outside-inside border it will be necessary to think whether part of the crisis of closed structures is not related to the conditions for thought production imposed by globalization*. Could it be that this concept of closed structure must be superimposed on that of globalization, or, conversely, that globalization allots new attributes to closed structures? This would remain a question to be discussed.
2. At the same time, I have also suggested that subjects form groups that I have called 'communities', spontaneously constituted and of fleeting existence, whose logic is that of complexity, and which possess a specific way of solving the conflicts and problems stemming from such

a complexity. Social productions inherent to the community are tied mainly to the present, are based on a feeling of solidarity, and grant the community only a fleeting continuity; they rest solely on the act of doing-together-with-others. What is at stake here is not the disavowal, the exclusion of the other's unbearable alienness; it is the problem, the *alter*, which imposes and proposes the quality the situation will acquire. Given that the community is constituted solely through a fleeting, present-time doing, it does not have clear borders, and hence the exclusion-inclusion pair does not pertain. Belonging is determined by the doing-together-with-others. The prevailing logic is not the binary logic anymore but the logic of complexity. The unpredictable plays a key role, for it is relevant for the very constitution of the community. The latter is not formed according to a previous history, to each member's way of inhabiting a given group, but depends on chance encounters. Belonging to the community grants a specific mark – for instance, the community's name – but the community contains, from its inception, the possibility of its dissolution. This conceptualization has led me to differentiate two modalities of social production.

SOLIDARITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Actions that generate solidarity belong in the public space. They bear several dimensions, and that is how I discriminate, among others, the *political dimension* and the *ethical dimension*. Hannah Arendt (1968, 69), for instance, speaks about positive solidarity when it is accompanied by a political dimension, and negative solidarity when it is based on the fear of global destruction. The *ethical dimension*, in turn, defines a

problem based on a particular set of values in a certain context.

There is no room for the concept of solidarity in totalitarian states, where a mode of grouping develops that relies on imposed values and ideals. In democratic regimes, on the other hand, emerging problems may originate new groupings with a certain degree of stability, without thereby suspending the linking fluidity. At this point, let us play with the opposition totalitarianism/solidarity, given that, as Enzo Traverso posits (2001, quoting Miguel Abensour), totalitarianism flattens and dissolves singularity in order to create a mass. In that sense, solidarity is located between the dissolution and flattening of singularity, and extreme individualism.

I would also like to differentiate between groups that are constituted on the basis of charity, and groups constituted thanks to the solidarity that stems from tackling a problem. In those groups that are traversed by a relation of charity an asymmetry always exists – one or several subjects who help others, who are suffering. Some are endowed with a power-knowledge, while the others are in a position of helplessness or dispossession.

In Rorty's (1989) words, solidarity transforms. He considers that the solidarity condition is essential for the constitution of humanity, the transformation of a 'them' into an 'us.' He thus includes in the 'us' category people who are very different. Those who, like Negri and Dardo Scavino, associate cooperation with solidarity, transform 'one's own' into 'the shared', and differentiate the links based on identification mechanisms from those that stem from participation.

Why is it that solidarity never became a psychoanalytic concept, and how could it become one? An easy answer would lead us to think that psychoanalysis has been concerned mainly with the constitution of a psychic apparatus and not with the relation-

ship between two irremediably different subjects.

Solidarity entered our field through the door of applied psychoanalysis, of phenomenology, and in the wake of theories dealing with matters related to group psychotherapy or social psychology. Freud mentions the concept of solidarity in several texts, such as *Totem and Taboo*, 'Why war,' 'Sandor Ferenczi', *On Dreams*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, and 'Psychoanalysis and telepathy'. In these texts, he conceived of solidarity in terms of a defence mechanism tied to a reactive formation (and, therefore, to guilt) or as a gregarious feeling. In this context, solidarity would relieve discomfort and provide protection and a feeling of belonging to a group.

Other authors mention solidarity when speaking about necessary relations between two elements. Lacan, for example, speaks about solidarity between signifiers, or as a play of tensions among different elements. In the North American literature, on the other hand, the concept of solidarity plays a role as a mechanism tied to group dynamics. For other authors, such as Esther Czernikovsky and Sara Moscona in South America, solidarity is a transformation that bestows a new quality on the concept of fraternity – or *fratria* – from which it would derive. In this case, solidarity is connected to a feeling or emotion that tends to bind subjects through identification in a horizontal mode, differentiating these groups from those organized vertically.

In sum, we have presented several meanings of solidarity that are relevant and are generally tied either to an ethical or moral concept, or to emotions and feelings of a particular kind. In this case, the significance of the relationship with others is acknowledged, and the origin of the concept is located within the Oedipal structure through a mechanism where identification-empathy comes into play. Solidarity as:

- duty-obligation;
- reciprocal dependence; or
- solidarity as unilateral dependence;
- a mechanism that pertains to the dynamics of links;
- a horizontal mode of relation

We should add here that the solidarity that acts as support for community groups – fleeting groups – keeps the group components bound by means of the articulation of various efforts.

Then, if we still see solidarity as fitting into both the globalized and the community dimension, it might be interesting to think that both dimensions overlap in any group. Such an overlap would give rise, for instance, to two possible situations within a family. In the first case, the parental generation may *demand* solidarity from the children's generation. In the second case, an organization of family relations and tasks may emerge in dealing with everyday life situations that constitutes an *ad hoc*, symmetrical formation, based on spontaneous solidarity. Finally, we should wonder whether solidarity calls for an ontological definition; whether it constitutes an ethical problem (commitment), a moral problem (behaviour or obligation), an action/doing based on a previous knowledge of one of the parties, a practice created with the emergence of, and as a response to, a problem, a psychic mechanism, and so forth. Today, I believe that solidarity is both a resource and a practice that refers to a given type of social and psychic suffering.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, I believe that we must ponder some of the consequences of the way of thinking imposed by globalization in terms both of our everyday practices and of the vicissitudes of psychoanalytic theory. In this

way, we will be able to identify the marks imposed by globalization, that is, human relations thought from the perspective of economic effectiveness and competitiveness. Starting from the notion of effectiveness, we should search for concepts that account for the interference of globalization in our practice. We need to accept the establishment of two dimensions that will not vanish with globalization. As a consequence, in its efforts to preserve itself from the transformations imposed by globalization, the community dimension must bear the mark of globalization.

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