

**Lecture Notes:**

- ① misery, rage, ennui, and anomie... what is it about living in the information age?
- **modernization:** the overall social process by which agrarian and traditional societies become developed
  - most important institutions of modern societies:
    - 1 **nation state:** defined in **Lesson 13b**
    - 2 **multinational corporations:** companies that distribute their production and trade facilities in nations other than that of their origin
      - funnel money and resources from other countries to their “home” nations (which are always developed)
      - shape the taxation, economic, and industrial policies of developing nations who wish to attract some capital investment and increase job base
      - gives them access to crucial raw materials that are expensive or inaccessible in developed nations
    - 3 **military industrial complex:** a set of interconnected institutions composed of the uniformed military, aerospace-defense industry, civilian national security managers, and the US Congress that works to advance mutual interests
      - military needs to maintain, and preferably expand, capability to wage war and fear of the possibility of war
      - aerospace-defense industry gets billions in government contracts to maintain profits
      - national security managers develop foreign policy to promote American access to global resources and maintain world power structures
      - congress people grant large contracts to maintain many jobs for constituents
- ③ we have passed through this historical era (**modernity**) into a **postmodern** (or, probably more accurately, **late modern**) society in which two additional institutions have become central:
  - 4 **service** industries: institutions concerned with providing unskilled labor, semi-skilled and skilled support; this has become the largest single sector of the economy
  - 5 **media and information** industries: institutions concerned with the development and dissemination of knowledge, information, entertainment, and other cultural capital (mass media, sciences, arts, etc.)
- ④ comparing the dominant worldviews in modern and late modern eras:
 

<u>Early Modern</u>	<u>Late Modern</u>
rational	non/ir-rational
self as producer	self as consumer
unitary identity	fragmented identity
self is product of nature and nurture	self is constructed and artificial
humans are related through equality	humans are related through systems of power
humans are central to the world	humans are peripheral to a large world system
the world is comprehensible and moderately paced	world is increasingly rapid and incomprehensible
- ⑤ curiously, the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked the first extended period in history when humanity took a more generally negative (dystopic) view of the future and we have become more focused on human misery and risk:
  - causes of misery in late modernity (expanded from Charon, 2001):
    - 1 **inequality**
      - **lack of resources** or access thereto
      - consequences include: poverty, motivation for crime, forces employment in substandard conditions, facilitates exploitation, creates low self-esteem and loss of hope, contributes to high stress levels, forms institutions that produce and maintain misery
    - 2 **destructive** (vs. constructive) **conflict**
    - 3 negative application of **social control** techniques include: (inadequate and negative) socialization, application of sanctions, power of inaction or non-decision, power to define the area or language of debate
    - 4 conditions of **alienation**
      - separation from: other people, meaningful work or activity, ourselves as active, constructive beings
      - increasing speed, complexity, technological pervasiveness, and artificial sterility generate apathy

## ⑥ “Risk Society” (Beck, 1992)

- because of technological advances and increasingly larger and more integrated states and multinational corporations, some social theorists say that we are facing higher stakes at the end of the twentieth century and that our mistakes will be much more costly for the entire world and the whole population
- this has been called a “risk society”

⑦ globalization vs. balkanization as the major challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

1 **globalization**: the integration of all aspects of societies, politics, economies, and cultures on a world-wide scale, as well as the diffusion of dominant cultures and ideologies

- institutions of globalization:
  - 1 economies and production
  - 2 politics and democracy
  - 3 culture and media
  - 4 technology and the internet
- theories of globalization (these theories are controversial and by no means proven):
  - development of a ‘**world system**’ (Wallerstein): local regions are increasingly interdependent on one another and changes in one part of the world increasingly affect other societies and cultures
  - **dependency theory**:
    - developing nations cannot achieve same standard of living by following the same path of the developed
    - LDNs development has largely been shaped by the economic and political needs of the developed
    - LDNs have lost their self-sufficiency and cannot become self-sufficient at the modern level
    - LDNs lack the social, cultural, & economic capital to prosper at the level of the developed
    - multinational corporations become increasingly powerful and LDNs governments make decisions to court their favor and patronage
  - **convergence thesis**:
    - market systems, industrialization, the division of labor, and high technologies have come to dominate
    - the advent of these innovations carry their own logic; that is, they only work in a limited number of ways
    - as societies adopt these innovations, they come to look more and more like one another
    - there will be a loss of local identities, cultures, and traditions
- economic markets are geared for Western needs, Western culture often comes to dominate, leading us to...

2 **colonialism** (imperialism)

- ‘**administrative colonialism**’ is direct control of a territory & its peoples by officials from a foreign government
- ‘**settler colonialism**’ is the planting of settlers from the foreign state on the land of existing native populations (this system has been defunct since the 1950s, when Western powers granted autonomy to client states)
- ‘**neocolonialism**’ is the perpetuation of similar dependent relationships between developed (US, Western European states, Japan) and developing nations through the formers superior economic, technological, and military positions

## 3 consequences of globalization and colonialism

- while 20<sup>th</sup> century tensions were West-East, those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be (and already are) North-South
- every area of the world has significant movements toward regionalism and balkanization

4 **balkanization**: backlash of local societies and cultures to attempt to reclaim local or regional cultures, traditions, or political autonomy in the face of increasing trends toward centralization and homogenization

- ⑧ “**McDonaldization**” (Ritzer, 1996): the logical late-modern continuation of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century process toward formalism and institutionalization, such as bureaucratization, industrialization, and Taylorism; it emphasizes providing a smoothly standardized consumer experience, no matter where the location
- 1 Principles of McDonaldization:
    - **efficiency**: emphasis on achieving the optimum method of completing a task by rationally determining the best mode of production; complete standardization with no individuality allowed
    - **calculability**: assign processes and outcomes based on quantitative, rather than qualitative, criteria; quantity is more important than quality
    - **predictability**: processes are devised and organized to insure uniformity and standardization of result (product, service, or experience); sameness is valued over uniqueness
    - **control**: labor is deskilled, technology is substituted, and automation is instituted, wherever possible, so as to insure that the intended process or outcome consistently occurs
  - 2 Consequences of McDonaldization:
    - **irrationality**: over-rationalization leads to inflexible and non-optimal procedures hidden under the guise of formal rules; systems fail to adapt to environmental or internal changes
    - **deskilling**: workforce only receives the minimum amount of training to complete simple, focused tasks; no one has deep understanding or complete knowledge; thus workers can be quickly and cheaply trained and are easy to replace
    - **consumer workers**: consumers are tricked into becoming unpaid employees, expending their own labor and saving company resources (e.g., trash receptacles at fast food restaurants, drive-thru windows, ATMs, salad bars, self-serve gas, automated telephone menus)
    - loss of local production capacity, human capital, industry, and local resources are sucked from the community
    - loss of local character and culture

### Key Ideas:

**Modernization, modernity, postmodernity, nation state, multinational corporation, military industrial complex, service industry, media, information, anomie, McDonaldization, globalization, balkanization**

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