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Fordism, Post-Fordism and Economic Geography

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolution, concepts, and transformations within the field of Economic Geography, beginning with an overview of its origins, nature, and scope. It establishes the discipline's foundational ties to economics and introduces the classification of economic activities into primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors. Emphasis is placed on the growth of the secondary or industrial sector, particularly during the Industrial Revolution in the United States, which marked a turning point in global production and economic structures.

The study then examines Fordism, tracing its origin to Henry Ford, whose innovative philosophy of mass production through the assembly line revolutionized industrial labour. The principles and levels of Fordism are analysed, highlighting its focus on standardization, productivity, and labour segmentation. In contrast, the paper investigates Taylorism, or scientific management, identifying its core principles and delineating its differences from Fordism, especially in terms of managerial control and work organization. The discussion transitions to the challenges and limitations of Fordism, including worker dissatisfaction and reduced adaptability, which catalysed the emergence of Post-Fordism. The study examines the transition process, key characteristics of Post-Fordism such as flexibility, decentralization, and technological integration, and its spatial dimension, notably through the example of the Third Italy, where regional production systems flourished under new economic paradigms.

Finally, the paper questions the contemporary relevance of Fordism, considering whether its legacy still persists in modern production models. Through this comprehensive exploration, the paper underscores the dynamic relationship between economic systems, labour organization, technological innovation, and geographic space.

Literature Review

The discipline of economic geography has evolved through complex interactions between space, economic activity, and societal transformation. Gautam (2015) provides a foundational overview, tracing the subject's development through classical to modern approaches, highlighting how spatial economics has grown beyond mere location theory into broader socio-economic analyses. Complementing this, Smith (n.d.) underscores conceptual transitions in the discipline, especially with recent trends that emphasize globalization, environmental sustainability, and regional inequalities. Tichy (1998) critiques the marginalization of geography in economic theories and urges for a reengagement, arguing that spatial dimensions are crucial for understanding economic phenomena—a view echoed by Boschma (1998) in his study of regional innovation systems, specifically the "Third Italy", where geographic proximity fostered industrial dynamism.

The categorization of economic activities into primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors is essential to understanding economic structures. Kenessey (1987) outlines the historical evolution and analytical significance of these sectors. Eurostat (2023) builds on this by providing updated statistical interpretations of sectoral contributions to the European economy, reflecting ongoing structural transformations in post-industrial societies. More & More (2002) and Gupta (n.d.) delve into the Industrial Revolution, highlighting technological advancements and institutional changes that redefined global economic hierarchies. Gupta particularly contrasts British and Indian textile industries, exploring the "Great Divergence" through shifting competitive advantages.

ushistory.org (2024a; 2024b) offers a historical narrative of the U.S. industrial rise, tracing the growth of early factories and the broader economic implications of industrialization. These developments laid the foundation for mass production and labor specialization. Central to industrial modernization is Fordism, characterized by mass production, standardization, and assembly line techniques pioneered by Henry Ford. The Ford Motor Company (n.d.) biography and Nye (2013) document this transformation in production dynamics. Clarke (1992) critiques Fordism's socio-political implications, suggesting it institutionalized labor control and managerial authority.

Dormois (2013) further distinguishes between Fordist and post-Fordist models, the latter marked by decentralization, technological integration, and labor flexibility. This shift represents not just a change in production, but a broader industrial paradigm, as discussed by Ali (2019). Taylorism, developed by Frederick Taylor, emphasized scientific management through time-motion studies and labor standardization. Wheeler (2019), MindTools (n.d.), and GeoDZ (n.d.) outline Taylorism's methodology, while IvyPanda (2022) contrasts it with Fordism, illustrating how the two-influenced organizational structure and efficiency. While Taylorism aimed at maximizing productivity, it often led to worker alienation, sparking debates about the balance between efficiency and labor welfare.

Post-Fordism represents a major shift in industrial organization and socio-economic structures. Amin (2008) frames it as a multifaceted transition, marked by flexible specialization, global value chains, and knowledge economies. Sidaway (1990) explores how these transformations impacted the Third World, often exacerbating inequalities through uneven development.

Kumar (2009) contextualizes these changes within the broader shift from post-industrial to post-modern society, arguing that economic systems are now shaped by symbolic production, digital technologies, and cultural capital.

Introduction to Economic Geography

Human activities on the surface of the Earth can be divided into two parts:

- Activities performed for subsistence such as obtaining clothing, shelter, transportation etc. (Gautam, 2015, 1)
- Activities performed for monetary gain such as farming, manufacturing, trade, commerce, transport etc.

The second category of activities come under the purview of Economic Geography.

As said by T.A Hartstone and S.W Alexander, “Economic Geography is the study of the spatial variation on the Earth’s surface of the activities related to producing, exchanging and consuming goods and services.” Being a branch of Human Geography, it studies the economic processes, level of development, trade, commerce, distribution and sale of goods and services with a spatial perspective.

Historical Evolution of Economic Geography

Economic Geography emerged as an independent subject of Human Geography in the 19th century. It was originally a part of Commercial Geography. Economic Geography has assumed its present form encompassing concepts like Information Revolution and Globalisation in the late 20th century.

Early Period: The foundation stone of Economic Geography is believed to be Andree's book called *Geographic des Welthandels*. Later, the subject got separated from Commercial Geography by a scholar known as Gotz. The concepts of determinism were given supreme importance in those days and thus Economic Geography mostly studied the geographic environment as a cause of economic activities. It was different from Commercial Geography in the sense that it included the study of goods and services which were commercially insignificant. However, this description and scope of Economic Geography remained confined to Germany and Gotz for a long time. Other European nations and North America continued with the usage of Commercial Geography to study the spatial distribution of economic activities. (relevant to commerce)

Inter-War Period: The inter-war period saw the complete departure of Economic Geography from Commercial Geography in all regions. The subject scope of studying space relations of economic activities gained importance during the First World War when production and trade bled over domestic boundaries. A qualitative change also occurred within the subject where proponents of Possibilism (Blache and Le Febvre) introduced the increasing role of humans in decision making processes. Thus, Economic Geography became a people-oriented subject.

Post War-Period: The Post-War Period saw an influx in economic progress around the world. The Quantitative Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s introduced mathematical models, statistical methods and reason into the field of Economic Geography. Development models of Von Thunen, Weber, Christaller etc were analysed and criticised. 'Factor analysis and 'Principal Component Analysis' were widely used. A result of these technological advancements and developments was increased industrialisation, urbanisation and population explosion. This period also first saw the introduction of environmental problems being recognised. As a result, all disciplines started to be studied together.

Modern Period: The various developments of the modern period in Economic Geography can be summarised as follows:

- An attempt to use scientific methods and natural science by adapting Location theory and neo-classical approach.
- The experimentation with a behavioural approach in Economic Geography during the late 1960s and early 1980s.
- The emergence of Marxist Political Economy in the early 1970s as a result of failure of locational analysis to understand growing differences in economic development and wealth between social groups.
- Internalisation of social, cultural and political contexts inside Economic Geography when studying it. (Gautam, 2015, 3-6)

Nature and Scope of Economic Geography

Economic Geography deals with the distribution of all sorts of material, resources, activities, institutions, customs, capacities and types of ability that play a part in the work of getting a living. Economic Geography studies the three main sectors of economy. Its main problem is to discover ways in which the distribution of physical conditions influence the distribution of the methods by which people satisfy their

needs for food, clothing, shelter, tools etc. Economic Geography investigates the diversity in basic resources of the different parts of the world. It tries to evaluate the effects of the physical environment upon the utilisation of these resources. It studies differences in economic development in different regions of the world and transportation-trade resulting from this development. (Smith, n.d.)

Economic Geography's relation to Economics

Renner has said that, "Economics has tended to develop itself into an abstract science. It has concentrated its attention chiefly upon utility, value, money, credit, finance, interest rate, securities, banking, taxation and exchange rather than upon specific peoples and their needs in relation to the world in which they live in."

On the other hand, Economic Geography adds a spatial aspect to the study of economics or economic activities. Economics is studied with a narrower viewpoint while Economic Geography is studied with a broader viewpoint. Economics does not attempt to understand the effect of nature, man and culture on economic activities which Economic Geography tries to do. The locational aspect in Economics is completely neglected. Economic Geography thus offers a platform for Economic principles of consumption, production, investment, banking, public policy etc to be viewed spatially. (Gautam, 2015, 10-11)

Originally, neo-classical economic theory concentrated on the one-good/two-factor economy, modelled not as an area but as a point in space, and foreign trade theory modelled two such point economies trading with each other, the famous 2-by-2-by-2-case - two countries (points), two factors of production and two goods. The highly abstract neo-classical approach yielded important results and viewed economics as a science but geography was lost en route, for almost a century. Integration in the Post-World War II world enforced a new interest in geography: The slowly increasing integration of the world economy in the last two decades demonstrated the unrealistic nature of the neoclassical convergence assumptions; why some countries or regions develop better than others again gained the honour to be considered as a problem of economic theory. After World War II, owing to Europe's rapid integration with the world economy, countries effectively lost their national demand-side policy instruments and a competitive race of regions started. (Tichy, 1998, 1-2).

Economic Activities and their types

Von Royen and Bengston (1967) said, "economic activities may be defined broadly as the various pursuits whereby man earns the means to satisfy his economic, social and intellectual needs."

An economic activity takes place when resources such as capital goods, labour, manufacturing techniques or intermediary products are combined to produce specific goods or services. (*Economic Activity*, 2023)

Economic activities are of 5 types:

Primary Activities: Activities that harvest or extract something from the Earth. These involve foodstuff and raw material production, hunting and gathering, grazing, agriculture, fishing, forestry etc.

Secondary Activities: Also known as industrial activities, they add value to raw material extracted from the Earth by changing their form or combining them into finished and semi-finished goods. The full array of manufacturing and processing industries are included in this phase of the production process.

Tertiary Activities: It consists of business and labour specialisations that provide services to the primary and secondary sectors. Thus, it is also known as the service sector. The services included under this section are financial, business, transport, communication, trade, educational, research, personal, clerical etc.

Tertiary sector in recent times has been further sub-divided into quaternary and quinary activities based on types of services provided.

Quaternary Activities: Quaternary activities include knowledge-based services which differentiates it from the trade, transport and communication services of tertiary sector. Quaternary sector activities are not spatially tied to resources and are affected by the environment or localised by markets. They serve professional services such as education, information processing, banking, finance etc. These services have no physical restrictions and can be easily outsourced or done remotely.

Quinary Activities: Also regarded as "gold collar professions", quinary activities include top business executives, decision makers, politicians, research scientists, financial and legal consultants etc. These activities represent high-level decision-making roles in all types of large public and private organisations. An extract from an article "THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY" written in a journal called "The Review of Income and Wealth" mentions the division of tertiary economic sector by Nelson N. Foote and Paul K. Hatt.

"Professor Bell called the attention of the author to a neglected earlier article by Nelson N. Foote and Paul K. Hatt, 'Social Mobility and Economic Advancement', American Economic Review, May 1953, pp. 364-377. In it the term quaternary and quinary are utilised for economic mega sectors. However, in their classification the tertiary sector covers personal and related services; the quaternary includes transport, commerce, communication, finance and administration; and the quinary sector extends to medical care, education, research, recreation (including the arts)." (Kenessey, 2005, 364)

Growth of the Secondary/Industrial Sector

The industrial sector has historically always existed at some scale when ores and fuel minerals were first discovered. However, in this section we talk about the large-scale growth of the sector which shifted the world dynamic from agricultural domination to industrial domination. This shift in the dominant economic activity was the result of many factors. Together, these factors are known as the Industrial Revolution. The first Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain with mechanised textile spinning which bled into America, Japan, Italy and other nations.

Although the revolution can't be dated to a single point in time, a series of inventions between 1750-1850 can be called the beginning of said revolution. Industrialisation refers to the absolute increase in industries, manufacturing, processing of raw material along with growth in agriculture and services. The industrial revolution also led to an increase in per person income across countries, urbanisation and migration of labour into newly built cities.

Many changes in Britain and other nations were not new but were unprecedented in scale. One could say the only difference between pre-industrialisation and post-industrialisation were the economies of scale of production that took place. (More & More, 2002, 1-12)

The advent of the revolution in the United States

The Industrial revolution took place between the 1790s and 1830s in the United States. The American colonies lagged far behind Britain because of abundant land paired with scarce labour. The interest in investing into machinery, land and infrastructure was diminished. However, as time passed by the pre-industrial practices of manual farming, handicraft were replaced with Outwork and Factory systems introduced by Industrialists. The first factory set up in America was said to be done by Samuel Slater in

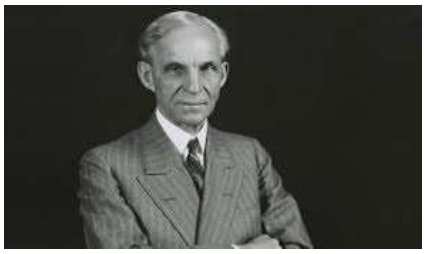
1870. He was a cotton spinner's apprentice who left England to produce yarn spindles in the New World. (ushistory.org, 2024.)

Source: (Kasbekar, 2023)

At first, these new factories were financed by business partnerships, where several individuals invested in the factory and paid for business expenses like advertising and product distribution. Shortly after the War of 1812, a new form of business enterprise became prominent — the corporation. In a corporation, individuals are financially responsible for business debts only to the extent of their investment, rather than extending to their full net worth, which includes his house and property.

Another important development during this period was the improved transportation system, crucial to haul raw materials from place to place. State governments played a large role in creating such infrastructure and encouraging banking institutions to invest in transport. The vastly increased transport network led to the Market Revolution giving central importance to transporting goods, people and raw material. (ushistory.org, 2024)

Fordism: Who was Henry Ford?



Source: Henry Ford - Visionaries on Innovation - The Henry Ford

Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company was born in Michigan, USA on July 30, 1863. His father was a native of County Cork, Ireland, who came to America in 1847 and settled on a farm in Wayne County in Michigan. Henry Ford showed an early interest in mechanics. By the time he was 12, he was spending most of his spare time in a small machine shop he had equipped himself. There, at 15, he constructed his first steam engine. The first Ford engine sputtered its way to life on a wooden table in the kitchen of the Ford home. A later version of that engine powered his first automobile, which was essentially a frame fitted with four bicycle wheels. This first Ford car, the Quadricycle, was completed in June 1896. (Ford Motor Company, n.d.)

One of the biggest contributions to the automobile industry, industrialisation and the philosophy of Fordism by Henry Ford was the assembly line. In 1910, the Highland Park plant of Ford Motor Company saw the development of the first conveyor belt used in Automobile manufacturing. However, contrary to popular belief it is wrong to say that Ford himself invented the concept of the assembly line. A collaboration of people drew knowledge from different industries to arrive at the phenomena. As Anthony F. C Wallace said, "We shall view technology as a social product and shall not be over much interested in the priority claims of individual inventors, for the actual course of work that leads to the conception and

use of new technology always involves a group that has worked for a considerable period of time on the basic idea for success is achieved." (Nye, 2013, 12-14)

Or as said by British Sociologist Simon Clarke, "There was nothing original in either the detail or the general principles which Our Ford applied to the production of motor vehicles. The decomposition of tasks, the specialisation of tools, the assembly of tools into the machine, and even of machines into the machine system, were all typical of the transformation of craft production into large-scale industrial production, a process which had already proceeded further in the US than anywhere else, spurred on particularly by the scarcity and organised strength of skilled workers.3 The originality of Our Ford"s project was that he applied these principles to a new branch of production, and he applied them with such a single-minded ruthlessness that he transformed the conditions of production of motor vehicles almost overnight." (Clarke, 1992, 13-30)

The Philosophy and concept of Fordism

Fordism refers to a technological, sociological, economic philosophy and way of life created by Henry Ford. Fordism was not simply the introduction of the assembly line in the industrial sector but was the fragmentation of tasks, standardisation of components, division of labour according to skill, dehumanisation and deindividuation of humans. Fordism sought to fuse the labour force into an organic whole, a genuinely collective labourer, in which the productive contribution of each individual and group was dependent on the contribution of every other. The flexibility and autonomy of manual labour were the characteristics that inhibited the Ford socialisation or collectivisation of production. To realise Fordist principles, the individuality of a worker had to be destroyed. In the United States employers had been able to exploit the mass influx of immigrant workers, and the very sharp sectional and racist divisions within the trades union movement, to destroy craft unions and, temporarily, to establish almost unchallenged capitalist control of production.

Principles of Fordism

- The owners of capital accepted an increase in wages because the productivity gains linked to the mechanisation of production tools and the sustained nature of demand guaranteed them increased returns and financial margins. (Dormois, 2013) The increase in wages through the skill-wages ladder and "Five Dollar Day" programme was created to combat problems of labour control. Interruptions in production, deterioration in quality, absenteeism, sickness, labour turnover and the growth of trades union activity. All these problems threatened to undermine Ford's technical achievements. (Clarke, 2013, 13-30)
- The firm takes charge of the production of goods and services and pays wages, while the state or public institutions take charge of the reproduction of labour power. The Fordist period is the period of the implementation of equipment policies but also of solidarity policies. The State financed ambitious programs for the construction of social housing, schools, colleges, high schools, universities, socio-cultural facilities, hospitals, roads and highways, ports and airports, etc. In addition to this equipment component, the European States set up social protection systems that shared common principles. Social security was one of the symbolic institutions of the Fordist regime in France. (Dormois, 2013)
- The development of large-scale integrated industry characterises the Fordist period. The scientific organisation of production and the vertical integration of all the tasks of the production process within a single group were the organisational methods chosen to increase productivity. (Dormois, 2013)

Levels of Fordism

An important feature of Fordism was its close association with empiricism and scientific management. Adherence to this principle involves separation of planning, organising, and controlling organisational processes from the processes of execution and manufacturing on a fundamental level. Thus, Fordism can be segregated into four major levels:

- **Fordism as an industrial paradigm:** Industrial paradigm suggesting a school of thought dominated by sciences and economics which is mechanistic and dehumanised (Ali, 2019). Fordism in this view is seen as a labour process involving mass production with the help of technology and people of distinguished skill sets.
- **Fordism as an regime of accumulation:** Here, Fordism is seen as an economic principle which led to high macroeconomic gains, economies of scale, higher wages and greater real production.
- **Fordism as a mode of regulation and socialisation:** Fordism emphasises centralised control of people and their division into categories. Fordism apart from being a business and economic principle also works as a mode of social regulation. Fordism aimed to create a 'New Man'. The regulation of morality, and particularly sexuality and family life, is an essential part of the formation of the new man. The history of industrialism has always been a continuing struggle …against the element of "animality" in man. It has been an uninterrupted, often painful and bloody process of subjugating natural instincts to new, more complex, rigid norms and habits of order, exactitude and precision which can make possible the increasingly complex forms of collective life which are the necessary consequence of industrial development.

Taylorism, what is it?

Taylorism is a set of workplace practices developed by Frederick W. Taylor in 1911 in his book called 'The Principles of Scientific Management'. The fundamentals behind Taylorism included fragmentation of tasks and division of labour based on skill with close supervision. Surveillance techniques like Taylorism are used in large corporations to observe workers and make sure employees are not wasting company time by slacking in their tasks. By viewing the efficiency levels of each employee, companies can achieve the optimal success rate.

The concept of Taylorism bases itself on surveillance and surveillance culture to ensure workers aren't slacking off. This can be seen even in modern day corporate culture where hours worked are logged and if an employee is seen idle, he/she is criticised or penalised for the same. Another example of Taylorism in the modern-day workplace is the practice of timing emergency departments in hospitals and determining the shortest possible amount of time to attend to a patient. Taylorism aims to strip workers of their humanity, reducing them to a cog in the industrial machine just as Fordism did. (Wheeler, 2019, 66-68)

Principles of Taylorism

- Use of empiricism to determine the most efficient way of management and completing tasks.
- Matching workers with jobs of their potential and training them to be as efficient as possible.
- Extreme monitoring and surveillance of workers to ensure maximum efficiency.
- Dividing workload between managers and workers so that managers plan and train while workers execute the plans.

How is Taylorism different from Fordism?

As said by Christian Palloix in 'Le procès de travail. Du fordisme au néofordisme', "Taylorism decomposes tasks and assigns those tasks to individual workers while Fordism recomposes the tasks by welding the individual labours into a human machine." (Clarke, 1992, 13-30) Taylor's theory included management paying employees higher salaries for more goods produced and lower salaries for less goods produced. It followed a differential piece rate system (IvyPanda, 2022). Taylorism involved the rigorous individualisation of the piece-rate as the means of monitoring and regulating the effort of every worker. The concept of individual surveillance was very important to the management system and contrasted it from Fordism. Also, Fordism went beyond being a simple scientific management system. Fordism was a way of life and culture to be adopted by the people of the twentieth century.

Problems with Fordism

Ford's project was associated with a number of further characteristics which probably were essential to his own achievement, but which introduced elements of rigidity which soon proved to be a barrier to the further development of Fordism. Ford saw vertical integration of production and standardisation of product as key features in the Fordist revolution (Clarke, 1992, 13-30). However, vertical integration opposed to subcontracting came with legal, financial and technological constraints. Similarly, after standardisation of the product it became a barrier to further development. The car market saturated after the massive growth in Model T leaving space only for the premium car market. Fordism however, was not able to adapt to this need which was fulfilled by General Motors who diversified their model range. Ford's failure was to fully appreciate that the key to his revolution lay in the standardisation of components, not the standardisation of the product. The five dollar day wage programme also could not be sustained. Inflation eroded wages, growing competition led to fall in sales and the growing expenditure could not be reduced by cutting costs. The rigidity employed by Ford was starting to fail as early as the 1930s. Ford's attempt to create a 'New Man' was met with hostility and resentment, with rising surveillance costs. The strength of labour unions also rose, further preventing Fordism to achieve its sociological goals. Ford's dream was very real in its day, his utopia of human perfectibility capturing the imagination of millions, while for others it depicted the nightmare of totalitarianism gone mad.

After the breaking down of Fordist principles starting in the 1930s, a new generation of neo-liberal experts reached decision-making positions in banks, universities, companies and also in the administrations set up in the United States and Great Britain after the victory of Republicans (R. Reagan elected in 1981) and Conservative (M. Thatcher appointed Prime Minister in 1979) candidates. The neo-liberal decision makers spread among the economic and political elites, leading to major changes in the content of public policies in the Anglo-Saxon countries from the beginning of the 1980s, and then, as the 1980s progressed, in most OECD countries. This led to the development of the phenomena known as Post-Fordism or Neo Fordism.

Post-Fordism

Post Fordism at its heart, is a debate about the changing structure of production, management and governance of people in industries. It takes up after the disintegration of Fordist principles of the early twentieth century. Flexible specialisation is a key term we come across when referring to Post-Fordism. Three theories of transition models exist for Post-Fordism:

- **The regulation approach:** Pioneered in France in the 70s and refined in the 80s. The aim of the early French regulationists was to develop a theoretical framework which could encapsulate and explain the

paradox within capitalism between its inherent tendency towards instability, crisis and change, and its ability to coalesce and stabilise around a set of institutions, rules and norms which serve to secure a relatively long period of economic stability. The theory had a major impact internationally and led to theorisation of patterns of post-war economic growth.

- **The neo-Schumpeterian approach:** This approach has similarities with the regulation approach in terms of the systemic and cyclical nature of capitalist development; the periodization and general dynamic of Fordism etc. One major difference, however, is the salience attributed in the neo-Schumpeterian approach to technology and technical standards.
- **The flexible specialisation approach:** At the heart of the approach lies the claim that the two industrial paradigms of flexible specialisation and mass production which have coexisted since the nineteenth century, with neither exhibiting technological superiority or inevitable dominance over the other on grounds of economic efficiency. But, it is argued that at rare moments in history, when a stark choice between competing technologies and markets becomes available, one of the two paradigms may limit the other, to emerge as a prevailing international standard. Thus, the adoption and diffusion of a paradigm is claimed to be a matter of historical circumstances and political choice rather than logical necessity (Amin, 2008, 1-16)

Transition to Post-Fordism

Clearly the crisis of Fordism does not in itself guarantee such a transition and it is therefore worth noting three general driving forces behind the emergence of post-Fordism in the labour process, accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. These three forces are:

- the rise of new technologies
- internationalisation
- the paradigm shifts

from Fordism to post-Fordism. Each of them is partly rooted in the crisis tendencies of Fordism, but each also has other roots in other economic and political processes with only tangential links to Fordism.

Changes seen in Post-Fordism

In the Economy: The rise of a global market and of global corporations, and the decline of national enterprises and the nation state as the effective units of production and regulation; flexible specialisation and the dispersal and decentralisation of production, replacing mass marketing and mass production. An emphasis on communication rather than authoritarianism, vertical and horizontal disintegration, subcontracting, franchising, rise in number of temporary, part-time, flexible, self-employed and home workers. The rise of an information society and globalisation.

In politics and industrial relations: The fragmentation of social classes, the decline of national class-based political parties and class voting, and the rise of social movements and ‘networks’ based on region, race or gender or on single-issue politics. The decline of mass unions and centralised wage bargaining and the rise of localised, plant-based bargaining; a labour force divided into core and periphery; the end of the class compromise of corporatism; the break-up of standardised, collectivist welfare provision, and the rise of consumer choice and private provision in welfare.

In culture and ideology: The rise and promotion of individualist modes of thought and behaviour; a culture of entrepreneurialism; the end of universalism and standardisation in education, and the rise

of modularity and pupil- and parent-choice; fragmentation and pluralism in values and life-styles; privatisation in domestic life and leisure pursuits.

Spatial aspect of Post-Fordism, the example of Third Italy

During the 1970s and 1980s, Italian and other observers began to document and discuss a phenomenon that they came to call la Terza Italia, the Third Italy. The Third Italy was distinguished from, on the one hand, the First Italy of large-scale mass production, concentrated in the industrial triangle of Turin, Milan and Genoa; and on the other hand, the Second Italy of the mezzogiorno, the economically undeveloped South. The Third Italy was, by contrast, a dynamic area of small firms and workshops in the central and north-eastern regions of the country. In these regions, small workshops and factories employing usually no more than 5–50 workers, and often less than 10, had come to constitute the core of thriving 'industrial districts'.

The main features of production in the Third Italy were what one of its leading students has called 'productive decentralisation and social integration' (Brusco 1982). This was a sharp contrast to Fordist principles of centralisation and social regulation. These districts were not old fashioned at all. They were high-tech cottage industries with social infrastructure to complement the higher incomes and lower unemployment rates. The firms collaborated with each other heavily, embracing subcontracting and removing vertical integration processes. The Third Italy is considered an anomaly within industrialisation however, it too had sound principles behind it. The greater importance of unions and organised labour led to the creation of these cottage industries to decentralise production, exempt themselves from labour laws of big factories, get fiscal concessions, exemptions from VAT etc.

The Third Italy is not simply an economic phenomenon. It is also a social, cultural and political phenomenon of the first importance. It points towards the possibility, for almost the first time in the history of industrialism, of the reunification of mental and manual labour, and of work and the community. It is a clear example of the rise of an information society and Post-Fordism.

Fordism, does it still exist?

David Slater amongst others believe that a Euro-Americanism or universalism exists in the discussions of theories. The importance of nations other than those of Europe and North America still manages to get overshadowed, especially when talking about Fordism. Does Fordism still exist in any capacity? Or has it been completely abandoned?

A paper by James Derrick Sidaway titled 'Post-Fordism, post-modernity and the Third World' talks about how the West has a tendency to think that changes taking place in the modern world or the bleeding edge of civilisation get replicated throughout the world at the same time. He talks about whether an age of hyperspace where money flows at instant speeds affects rural Mozambique, an underdeveloped country in Africa. There is evidence that Fordist principles of industrialisation are still applied in developing or industrialising countries like Brazil. The main point is at a time when the international debate favours the end of Fordism, we must not lose sight of the fact that Fordist work organisation is being reinforced in some new centres of world industry. Like 'gender-blindness' in Economics, modern Human Geography fails to recognise Third-World social science literature. Peripheral societies are still coming to terms, through all kinds of experiments, some progressive and others largely retrogressive, to the impact of capitalist modernisation. Now, we must be careful when using terms like Post-Modernity and Post-Fordism for they are not universal phenomena. (Sidaway, 1990, 300-303)

Conclusion:

This paper talked about the development of Economic Geography, its historical evolution and links to Economics. The division of economic activities was discussed with a special emphasis on the Industrial sector. The Industrial revolution, concepts of Fordism and Post-Fordism which impacted the global economy, culture, society and the way we look at production were discussed in depth. We came to learn about the spatial aspects of Fordism, Post-Fordism and how geography plays a role in influencing it.

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