ATOMISED VERSUS GLOBALISED WORLD

Technology will enable greater individual empowerment, resulting in amongst other things the questioning of existing orders. In that regard, the atomisation process combines the ‘internet of all things’ with universal digital access -- the transformative consequences of which may well be far more fluid approaches to authority and governance, networks that are far more creative and responsive than conventional organisational systems and ultimately changes in the very nature of identity. Atomisation, in other words, is a process by which social, political and economic dynamics are determined principally by fluid, self-organising entities that exist in parallel and normally independently of conventional structures such as states or the assumptions and procedures that normally guide economic, political and social institutions.

Such transformative changes are due in no small part to processing power, connectivity and the concomitant data revolution that within the foreseeable future will be universally accessible. This rapidly emerging reality is poised to change and grow at an exponential speed beyond the power of human intuition to anticipate. However, it is not technology alone that will be responsible for the atomisation process. The global trading system may well continue to expand as an ever more complex, intricate, sprawling web, making in many instances the traditional institutions of trade and economic control less able to cope with exponentially increasing transactions. The movement of people in various ways crossing borders -- some legitimately, others less so -- reflect another dimension of the fluid atomisation process.

The globalization alternative will be driven in part as an attempt to control the consequences and implications of an ever more atomized world. Traditional bodies -be they state or inter-governmental organizations- will coalesce around agendas that reflect regulatory frameworks to ensure order, consistency and predictability. A global community will be intolerant of deviation. A globalised world is a technocratic construct intended to deal with perceived ‘rogue actors’, be they networks, markets, deviating states or criminal bodies. This alternative sees that such constructs are the best means for reducing the risk of conflict and exploitation.

Discussion Questions

- What are some of the factors driving change in an atomised and in a globalised world?
- Who is a ‘beneficiary’ in an atomised and a globalised world, and what might they need?
- What might the international architecture look like in these worlds?
- What role might BOND INGOs play? How may they need to operate?