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GLOBALIZATION, INFORMATION CAPITALISM, AND THE SPATIAL CONFIGURATION OF TODAY'S WORLD *

By Alejandro Dabat (CRIM-UNAM)

Introduction

During the past two decades, globalization -together with the ongoing information revolution- has come to represent one of the most important major changes that have radically transformed the world, both in a positive sense (tremendous leap forward in the world's technical progress and potential integration) and well as negatively (deepening social inequalities and insecurities). But it is also the most alluded to and debated socio-economic reference point of the last few years. Indeed, it is the most habitually used and fashionable term to describe the most varied features of the changing world and the idea-symbol par excellence used both to explain unpopular policies and to articulate nationalistic, social, ethnic or religious objections to them. As can be expected from a concept of this nature, it has also spawned an extraordinarily vast amount of written material that spans virtually every sphere of reality, social sciences, and literature.

However, globalization is still one of the most complex and least defined of today's great issues, not only due to the great diversity of problems, fields of knowledge, and national and social interests that it affects, but also given the theoretical difficulties it poses. Depending on the author, globalization is either a present-day trend, a future phenomenon, a hegemonic project, a myth, a historic phase, or all of the above. This leads to a paradoxical situation in which one of the most important phenomenon in current social scientific discourse lacks a precise definition¹. For these reasons, our starting point will be the generally accepted idea that the word "globalization" is much more a notion (i.e., elemental knowledge) than a scientific concept.

The difficulty in defining globalization has much to do with its recent apparition and its complexity. It is also related to globalization not being a simple process but, as García Canclini (1999) affirms, a series of processes that are both introducing elements of uniformity as well as fragmenting the world in new ways. Moreover, the difficulty in defining globalization is also rooted in the current social sciences themselves, in questions such as the nearly total lack of communication between its main disciplinary fields and the inadequacy of the traditional paradigms in dealing effectively with the breadth and complexity of the concept. Due to its importance, this latter point particularly warrants more discussion.

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Due to the effect of the historical vicissitudes of the twentieth century on the social sciences, those studying globalization have had to face at least three main obstacles to an objective comprehension of the phenomena: (a) The state-centrist paradigm that still dominates most academic disciplinary fields (Axford, 1995; Antal, 1999); (b) the anti-systemic intellectual environment promoted by postmodernism, methodological individualism, or technocratic pragmatism; and (c) the legacy of statism and ideologism in twentieth century Marxism². In addition, the great contemporary advances in spatial theory have not evolved sufficiently to include the most general aspects of social development, such as the historical changes in the spatial configuration of capitalism, which we will discuss in the last section. This epistemological and theoretical context promoted a descriptive, pragmatic, metaphoric approach to globalization³ extremely dispersed among diverse disciplinary conventions and not very focused on theoretical generalization and historic-geographic synthesis.

Fortunately, in recent years (the second half of the 1990s) this panorama appears to be improving due to the appearance of several authors and works with a high level of historic-geographic concretion or that seek integral explanations of the phenomenon under study such as Petrella, Gereffi, Castells, Held and McGrew, Dickens or Axford. This paper is based on this same approach, and maintains the idea that globalization is simply the new spatial configuration of the world's economy and society under the conditions of new global information capitalism. With this in mind, its argumentation rests on an open historical-structural methodology⁴ seeking to jointly analyze the main dimensions of the question. Its approach is concretized in an exposition divided into five parts (including this introduction), concerning the historical conditions, social and academic perceptions, the theoretical debate on the nature of globalization, and the argumentation and final conclusion of the central thesis of the paper.

The Historic Preconditions of Globalization

Globalization (or "new globalization" for those who believe it has existed for quite some time) is a phenomenon that originated in the final decades of the twentieth century. As such, it was the result of major world changes that followed the great mid-1970s world capitalist crisis, the downfall of statist socialism, the global environmental emergency, and the tremendous world disorder that emerged as a result of the end of the bipolar order that arose in the post-World War II period (Dabat & Rivera, 1995). Relatively "old" historical processes (such as electronic and communications technology, the ecological crisis, the enormous worldwide expansion of the transnational business enterprise, and the new international division of labor) occurred simultaneously with entirely new processes. Among the latter were the post-Fordist restructuring of industry and the market, the almost complete disappearance of Third World statism and corporatist nationalism, the emergence of a new financial system with original characteristics, the worldwide integration of production, the Internet and information networks, the external opening, neoliberal reforms, and the full incorporation of peripheral nations in the world market, including the vast majority of the former members of the Communist bloc, following the example of China.

This transformation, like all profound historical change, had two different dimensions: one extensive (quantitative) and the other involving structural change (qualitative). The extensive dimension may be synthesized as the worldwide extension of capitalism⁵ to practically every corner of the planet; the global expansion of transportation, telecommunications, and Internet networks, the world market for goods and capital markets; the worldwide scope of the transnational company; the ongoing competition between companies, states, and regions; the tremendous scope of currency exchange operations; unprecedented national and international mobility (corresponding to tourism, business trips, job opportunities, and migration); and international criminal transactions, figures on which are obviously unavailable. The trend toward worldwide techno-economic unification has also coincided with a political unification under the aegis of Western capitalism. Furthermore, the convergence of both phenomena has allowed for a contradictory and unequal process of social and cultural homogenization, resulting from the accelerated world expansion of capitalist relations of production and change and the enormous reach of the Western mass media. And this barely touches the surface.

Even more important would be the qualitative aspect of the changes, which would lead to at least three major processes of radical transformation on a world scale: the information and communications revolution, the post-Fordist and market restructuring of capitalism, and the complete unification of the world market for the first time in the history of capitalism. Due to the tremendous importance of each factor to the study of globalization, we will deal with them separately.

Information Revolution and Communications

The information revolution was the result of the conversion of the microelectronics revolution (which is a specifically technological phenomenon) into a new productive revolution of an enormous economic and social scope.⁶ The point of inflexion of this transformation was the capitalist restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s that followed the collapse of the Fordist-Keynesian model of capital accumulation (see the next section), and gave way to flexible automation of the productive processes, the introduction of computers and computer networks, the communications revolution, and the so-called knowledge economy. In its first phase, the information revolution was centered in the main capitalist countries with Japan having a key participation in this process. But in the second phase characteristic of the 1990s, the process was to be led by the United States, due to the latter's dominant position in the new leading productive sectors, such as software, communications, and the Internet.

The transformation of the productive forces and lifestyles resulting from the information revolution altered the conditions shaping world economic, social, cultural, and geopolitical development. In the economic sphere, it generated new revolutionary industries, such as the semiconductor, computer, or software sectors (Lester, 1998), which, linked to new reprogrammable hardware and computer networks, changed the conditions of production (flexible automation, fragmentation of the productive processes) and turned knowledge into the main productive force of the era. The transformation of the conditions of production, credit, consumption, and trade modified not only the relations between goods and services, but also the structure of companies and the conditions of competition. It also changed the structure of employment, modifying, individualizing, and globalizing consumption patterns. In terms of economic dynamism, it modified the logic of capital accumulation and gave way to a new industrial cycle led by the electronic-computer sector (Dabat, to be published), as well as a global division of labor (Gereffi, 1995) that redefined the relations between countries and regions in the world.

Yet the impact of the computer revolution massively transcended the economy. Through the information, communications, and the so-called cultural industries' revolution, it modified social relations and cultural patterns as a whole, either directly or indirectly (as the outcome of the transformations in the relations of production and exchange, which we will consider in the following section). The transformation of social life reached the structure of employment, consumption, and the family, the organization of education, health and leisure. New general trends, such as the pluralization of social relations, individualization, or the reflexivity of persons or changes in the principles of social organization (abandonment of rigid and vertical organizations in favor of flexible net-type organizations) also favored the development of noncorporatist social movements, such as among women, senior citizens, homosexuals, scientists, as well as facilitated direct communications among remote indigenous communities.

On a world level, the computer revolution sped up the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block, establishing new conditions of competition, economic viability, and the dissemination of information (both governments and censors lost all capacity to manage what could and what could not be made known in their countries). It set new technological and educational standards, requiring countries to reconvert their basic productive infrastructure and their scientific-educational bases. It provided the final push that led to the triumph of capitalism and the United States in the Cold War, in view of the Soviet Union's inability to control the flood of information and respond to the level and the rhythm of technological change that corresponded to its status as a political, military and economic superpower.

Finally, we cannot fail to consider that the information revolution did not occur by itself, that it too was a social and contradictory phenomena subject to the design of individuals, companies, and governments, and that its formidable potential achievements cannot be separated from the political and social forms it assumed in making its appearance on the scene as an instrument for capitalist competition, profit, and power. Among its favorable social consequences are the versatility and de-bureaucratization of work, its priority on knowledge and the continual training of broad sectors of the workforce in leading industries, the formidable improvements in the medical and pharmaceutical fields, and the improved quality and variety of the goods and services produced. On the negative side of the ledger are the weakening of labor and the widening of the technological and cultural abysses between peoples, social sectors, and individuals. At the same time, a very important socio-cultural problem is posed due to the growing monopoly of worldwide mass media by transnational conglomerates and the resulting commercialization of violence and other social ills.

Postfordist and Market Restructuring of Capitalism

In the past two decades, restructuring reached the main spheres of economic activity, such as the techno-economic plane (Pérez, 1986), the organization of the workplace and wages (Coriat, 1992), new production and company organization (CET-UN, 1988; Ernst & O'Connor, 1989), the generalized implementation of new technologies (Castells, 1995), the financial system (Dabat and Toledo, 1999), market and state reform (Petrella, 1995), and the territorial division of labor (Gereffi, 1995), in addition to the industrial cycle (Dabat, to be published) or the worldwide localization of productive activities (Dicken, 1998). As a result, it could be said that we are at the beginning of a new phase in the history of capitalism, the fourth since nineteenth century industrial free trade capitalism (Dabat, 1993), and which has begun to manifest itself in fundamental changes at every level of social life (historical development of mode of production and lifestyle, social structure and institutions, cultural patterns, state and politics) (Castells, 1996).

The most general aspects of such changes involve the substitution of earlier Fordist relations, typified by rigid automation, labor specialization on the assembly line and its bureaucratic controls, by others that are more flexible and dynamic (Piore & Sabel, 1984). Among the most important such changes are: a) flexible (reprogrammable) automation and computerized administration and management; b) the new organization of labor based on self-managed quality circles; c) the fracturing of productive processes that enable the partial relocation of at least some of these processes; d) the acceleration of the continuous flow of information and materials between the stages of the production cycle (and the subsequent heightening of remote control efficiency); and e) the likelihood of replacing large standardized series with small programmable versions having smaller scale economy requirements and greater possibilities of decentralization.

Particularly important will be the changes in the organization and functioning of the capitalist business enterprise under new conditions of global competition, the new financial system and the new international division of labor (Dabat, 2000). The vertically integrated multinational corporation of the post-World War II period will give way to the versatile and omnipresent transnational enterprise (global "network-enterprise") directly focused on productive sectors and segments where it has its principal competitive advantages (Porter 1990), and extended worldwide based on a broad network of subsidiaries, associated enterprises, subcontractors, distributors and franchises, and a series of temporary strategic alliances with some competing companies. This type of change will also deeply affect small and medium-size enterprises, which will be increasingly included in large worldwide or regional inter-company networks.

The changes in the financial system have virtually encompassed the entire world of credit, including its financial instruments (the shift from bank lending to the emission of bonds and stocks), its technical foundation (computerization of operations), the nature of its intermediaries (mutual and protection funds, investment banking and companies, pension funds, insurance companies), risk management (instruments "derived" from futures or swaps), relations with public regulatory agencies (deregulation followed by very loose controls) or the so-called "financial globalization."⁷ This system imposed itself on its predecessor (bank credit strongly regulated by a central bank) due to its low financial cost and operational agility. Yet it gave rise to a highly volatile system relatively disengaged from the productive sphere.⁸

On the level of economic dynamism, structural changes led to the progressive formation of a new pattern of accumulation centered on the production of knowledge-intensive goods and services, headed by the computer-electronic sector (software, semiconductors, computers, telecommunications, support services), and the scientific-educational sector within a productive service economy, and a credit sector deeply transformed by information technology. This brought about a new type of industrial cycle dependent upon the computer-electronic sector, which, together with the relocation of capital in the peripheral countries, generated a new international dynamism that tended to progressively subordinate different productive branches and national economies.

The combination of the above-mentioned changes with the other types of changes that we are considering enabled the reestablishment of business profitability, job creation, and capital accumulation in the United States (Lester, 1998) and in the new dynamic centers of capitalism, particularly in East Asia, excluding Japan (Dabat, 1997). However, the historical experience shows that the generalization and stabilization of economic development requires the presence of still nonexistent institutions capable of mediating and negotiating socio-political factors that could enable the inclusion of the workforce as well as the plurality of active social subjects from civil society, as was the case in the previous Fordist-Keynesian or national-populist pacts.

Each expansive cycle of capitalism has thus far always required regulatory frameworks and social pacts that would provide political-social sustainability to the system. Such was the case with unions, the reduction in the workday, and public education in the second half of the nineteenth century, and social legislation and popular suffrage in the classic epoch of imperialism, or collective

bargaining, social security, and female suffrage in the period following the Second World War. As long as there is no progress in this direction, capitalism will not be able to move beyond recovery to its politically and socially sustainable rapid global growth.

The End of the "Three Worlds" and the Reunification-Restructuring of the World Market

The reunification of the world market, which followed the downfall of the Communist block, was largely determined by the historical exhaustion of corporatist nationalism and statist policies in the Third World (Dabat, 1991; Dabat, 1993). In 1979, China - the world's most populated country and the second politico-military power in the Communist block- voluntarily chose the path leading to its reintegration into the world market and toward a "socialist market economy." The Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union itself would soon after try to follow suit, albeit much more slowly, toward market reform under perestroika. But the slowness and inefficiency of their economic reform would lead to the peaceful downfall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, which would open the territory of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to the capitalist market economy.

The collapse of Third World corporatist nationalism (above all in the least-developed countries of Africa) was related to the destruction of the military, economic, and diplomatic shield of the Communist block, which canceled the possibilities of the pendular game of Third World corporatist nationalism forever keeping their market doors tightly shut or at least barely open to international capital. Yet the main cause of this phenomenon (especially in the Latin American case) was also the inner exhaustion of corporatist nationalism associated with import substitution and its inability to adopt the East Asian export-oriented development model in order to thus face the debt crisis⁹ In any event, this would further cause the so-called "end of the Third World" (Harris, 1996).

Nonetheless, the detonating element of the historic crisis of statist policies and corporatist nationalism would be the global computer-restructuring of capitalism, which would finally indicate both the obsolescence of the Soviet atomic ballistic arsenal as well as put into question the viability of closed precomputerized economies devoid of international competitiveness, or nation-states' capacity to contain transnational information flows. Since the second half of the 1980s, the new relation between companies, technology, competitiveness, and state strategic support (Ernst and O'Connor, 1989; Thurow, 1992; Chesnais, 1994) would bring about fierce oligopolic, highly commercialized, competition between the United States, Japan, and Western Europe, which almost caused (before the end of the GATT's Uruguay Round in 1994) a potential protectionist fracture of the world market.¹⁰

The unification of the world market became a reality in the 1990s, due to the convergence of varied processes, such as the collapse of the Communist block and corporatist nationalism in the Third World, the impact of the technological revolution and the restructuring of capitalism, the processes of deregulation, liberalization, and privatization in developing countries, and the free trade conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the GATT. This unification of the 1990s was to be characterized by a series of factors unprecedented in the history of capitalism, such as the expansion of capitalist production and market relations to the planet as a whole, the formation of an enormous global mass of mobile workers¹¹ in densely populated developing countries, the full incorporation of the vast majority of countries into the world market, the conversion of the main peripheral nations into large-scale exporters of manufactured goods and important private financial markets, the formation of an integrated computerized-communicational infrastructure of a global scope, the worldwide integration of key sectors of the production process around global productive chains, global flexible business networks and a division of labor, the free movement of capital between virtually every country, the relative establishment of international free trade,¹² the creation of multiple competitive regional blocks under the principles of so-called open regionalism, and the conversion of East Asia (excluding Japan) into the single most dynamic area in the world economy.

In the discussion on the reasons for this process, the importance of factors such as the political triumph of neoliberal capitalism, the recovery of the United States, or diplomatic pressure, cannot be disregarded. But we understand that the main reason was the concurrent discipline forced upon the process by "global competition" acting in conjunction with the new conditions of international credit (privatization of financing and the minimal prerequisites for international debt rating), the overbearing needs of new technology, the potentialities opened by the new global division of labor,¹³ or the impossibility of returning to prior patterns of economic growth (Dabat, 1995).

The unification and restructuring of the world market is not devoid of major contradictions. The first such contradiction is that despite the extent of the process, it will tend to have excluding characteristics, because it will heighten the marginalization of pre-industrial countries and those with slight potential for integration into the new world market (the so-called "Fourth World"). The second contradiction is that the lack of correlation between productive integration and exchange-financial volatility will bring about a nearly endless round of regional financial crises whose extensive productive impact, due to its depth and potentially worldwide scope, would severely question the goals already reached. It is precisely this question that raises the discussion on the requirements of supranational financial market regulation.

The Perception of Globalization by Society and the Social Sciences

When the historical origins of the usage of the terms global/globalization are studied, two basic considerations should be taken into account: that these are French words that entered standard English usage forty years ago;¹⁴ and that their current use goes back some fifteen years,¹⁵ when they began to be utilized in response to the appearance of a series of new factors, intuitively perceived as elements in a broader process (García Borges, 1999). This process of social construction of the notion of globalization, in general terms has passed through three major phases: a) prior to the 1980s, of the visualization (in large part prefiguration) of the background of the phenomenon; b) in the second half of the 1980s and during the early 1990s, involving a description and detailed analysis of particular, relatively unconnected factors; and c) since then and up to the present, of seeking broader and more integrated explanations.

The initial assessment of the ulterior notion of globalization may be dated prior to its formulation as a new phenomenon as such. In 1964, McLuhan used the concept of "global village" as a premonitory vision of the potential role high technology and international communications would play, allowing individuals from around the world to simultaneously experience its totality. In the next decade, amid the planet's new environmental crisis, the first major ecological organizations would begin to insist on the idea that humanity shared a "common future" that depended on the earth's environmental conservation (the Rome Club).

Throughout these years economists' main assessments would be related to the study of the international expansion of the multinational or transnational (depending on the author) enterprise and its relation to the nation-state (Dunning, 1971). In this context, from the standpoint of Marxist political economy, new concepts such as the "internationalization of capital" would be introduced (Murray, 1971; Palloix, 1975)¹⁶ in order to express the worldwide expansion of the valorization cycle and capital accumulation and the internationalization of the basic functions of nation-states in supporting each country's multinational corporations,¹⁷ or as the "global corporation" (Adam, 1975) in a similar sense. Another new very important concept of the same origin would be the "new international division of labor" (Frobel, Heinrichs & Kreye, 1978) to express the change that had begun to occur in the traditional division of labor due to the relocation of labor-intensive manufacturing industries as a result of the major improvements in communications and transportation and the creation of a worldwide "industrial reserve army."

The generalized use of the terms "global/globalization" would be a phenomenon dating from the second half of the 1980s, when they began to be widely used to refer to a very broad variety of new phenomena. Political scientists and other specialists in international relations would use them almost synonymously for "multilateralization" or "trilateralization" of relations among the governments of the main capitalist countries, regional blocks, and business elites, within the context of changes in the international correlation of forces between Japan, Western Europe and the United States, the acknowledgment of worldwide economic interdependence, and the reorientation of the U.S. government toward a global policy of seeking shared hegemonic responsibility (Blake & Walters, 1986; Gill & Law, 1988). Globalization will furthermore be utilized in the sense of "multilateralism" in the bureaucratic jargon of international economic organizations to refer to the generalized liberalization of international trade flows.

In the same period, the terms "global/globalization" began to be widely used in the economies in two distinct sectors of activity (financial and business). Bankers, politicians, and economists started to speak of "financial globalization" from different (descriptive, apologetic, or critical) standpoints, as, for instance, the U.S. Congress (1987), Versluysen (1988), Lamfalussy (1989), or Aglietta, Brender, and Coudert (1990). This concept would be utilized to designate an interdependent series of radical changes in the world financial system that began to occur since the beginning of the decade, such as the computerization of foreign exchange, financial, and stock operations; the securitization of credit; the new financial intermediaries and the so-called "banking de-intermediation;" the rise of portfolio investment; the trend toward the unification of national financial markets, or the unknown scope of foreign exchange operations and speculation or its weakening effects on national financial and foreign exchange policies.

Among management school staffs and business consulting firms the term "global competition" would also begin to be used to describe the new conditions of "trilateral" operations (Ohmae, 1985) and the need to develop new competitive responses (Porter, 1986). This was to be followed by the concept of "strategic competition", which would incorporate governmental support to each country's multinational companies (Ernst & O'Connor, 1989). This would, in turn, be linked to the idea of the "globalization of technology" (Council, 1987; Petrella, 1989 & 1990) used by economists, engineers, technological specialists, and researchers, in order to take note of the new agreements and alliances between companies, governments, and universities from different countries, so as to pay for and share the inordinate growth of research and development costs and to cushion the drastic shortening of the useful life of some products. Another line of development of the concept would be that of "competitiveness of nations" (Porter, 1990), encompassing a series of national conditions (nature, demographic, infrastructure, education, technology, domestic consumer market, quality of governments) that provide backing for the activities of companies which compete from within each country's favored sectors and segments. In an orientation completely different from that of Porter's, Ohmae (1990) formulated his well-known nonstatist conception of globalization as a "borderless world", which would become one of the main reference points (if not the most significant) in this debate.

Sociologists have not lagged behind in studying the new phenomenon. As early as 1985, Robertson and Lechner wrote a paper about the cultural fallout of globalization. Furthermore, the British magazine *Theory, Culture and Society* shortly afterward began to publish some articles on "cultural globalization" (Featherstone, 1988; Smith, 1988). In 1990 Giddens would conceive globalization as something intrinsic to modernization, an idea already historically elaborated by Beck (1990), relating it more specifically to what he called "second modernity" or "risk society." Drawing from original formulations advanced by Harvey (1989) and Featherstone (1990), Robertson (1992) would popularize the terms "compression of time and space" and "glocal" space (a concrete synthesis of the words global and local) and developed one of the first definitions of globalization as a growing density and complexity of interaction between social actors and a growing awareness of this same phenomenon.

But the generalized perception of a new phenomenon would begin to slowly emerge in the beginning of the 1990s, closely following the major technological, economic, socio-cultural, and geopolitical changes in the world economy and politics. Among economists and those studying company and production issues, there was an important group of authors and institutions that widely recognize the global shifts in the productive base of the world economy (Dunning, 1993; UNCTAD, 1993 & 1994; Gereffi, 1994 & 1995; Castells, 1996; Dicken, 1998) based on the study and conceptualization of essential changes, such as the emergence of the global "company-network," "worldwide integrated production," the "global productive chains," the "global division of labor," or the new world "geo-economy". To a large extent, they would base their considerations on the contributions of other fields and disciplines in the social sciences.¹⁸ This idea of globalization as multilateralization would give way to that of globalization as internationalization (Oman, 1994; Ferrer, 1997) or as a new structural phenomenon (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994; Petrella, 1996). From "trilateralization", specialists' thinking would later move on toward "open regionalism" (CEPAL, 1994) and to the discussion on the relation between globalization and regionalization (opposition or complementarity). The concept of financial globalization would

considerably expand to incorporate the so-called "emerging markets." Moreover, the developing world's debt issue would be replaced as a central concern by the new global financial-exchange crises and by the debate on the worldwide regulation of financial capital flows.

Virtually every field of social reality and thought was to be connected by a new family of words (global, globalization, globalism, globalizing). Alongside new economic categories, such as "global agriculture," "globalization of consumption," or "global cultural industry," would appear other noneconomic concepts having no lesser impact, such as "global ecology," "global communications," "global information network," "global cities," "global civil society," "globalization of crime," "global pauperization," "global world change," "imperial globalism," "global solidarity," "global governability," or "global citizenship". These were usually accompanied by new theoretical notions and categories constructed to explain or tie in divergent aspects of the phenomenon under study. This would also be the case for previously mentioned concepts such as time-space compression or "glocalization;" but also for others that were no less important, such as "real virtuality," "deterritorialization," and "reterritorialization," social "reflexibility" and "complexity", or cultural "hybridization."

The social sciences seemed to have become more cautious and defensive when dealing with new phenomena, under the influence of the so-called "sovereignty crises" and "governability crises."¹⁹ Yet, despite this, they would broadly recognize (positively or negatively) new issues (Antal, 1999). On an international level as such, a very wide-ranging literature would develop on global civil society and the emergence of new worldwide, national and regional actors as participants in "global governability"; alongside traditional forces (states and international organizations), as would be the case with transnational enterprises and regional blocks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public interest groups and epistemic communities (based on knowledge). On the internal level of the state, the practical interpenetration between domestic and international spheres was acknowledged in government policies and agendas. Legal practices and sciences would soon be shaken by the uneven impact of free trade agreements and policies protecting foreign investment and intellectual property, and by the extraterritorialization of norms protecting human rights. A very generalized expression of the recognition of globalization would be the denunciation and the study of globalization's negative-destructive aspects, such as the dismantling of the welfare state, the weakening of protection for labor rights, the heightening of inequality or the marginalization of countries, regions, and social sectors (Amin, 1988; Chossudovsky, 1997; Ruiz Contardo, 1999), the acute deepening of uncertainty and risk in different facets of social and economic life (Beck, 1992; Guillén Romo, 1997), or the impact of cultural globalization on national and local cultural traditions (Featherstone, 1990). Another expression of critical recognition would be the acknowledgement of the "globalistic" policies of other great powers posed from different analytical standpoints (Saxe Fernández, 1995; García Canclini, 1999).

In terms of responses, the Left would begin attempting to delineate several different alternatives to deal with this new phenomenon. At the level of the orientation of the social movements, responses would range from an antisystemic approach (Amin, Wallerstein) to a new internationalism based on global solidarity (Waterman). National economic policies would also shift between acceptance of the existence of globalization with a new type of socially oriented public policies (Cox, 1992) and its rejection, promoting in its place policies aimed at bolstering domestic development (Panitch, 1994). Finally, in terms of the type of global world response, alternatives would range from Amin's "disconnection" (1988) to the world social pact based on "global cooperative governance" (Petrella, 1996).

Debate on the Nature of Globalization

As we initially pointed out, the recognition of what we call the notion of globalization did not imply anything in the way of converging opinions on the nature, meaning, and consequences or, even the name of this phenomenon. Given that the lack of consensus encompasses a vast range of issues, we will limit ourselves to consider the question of the social nature of globalization, with brief references to other related issues, among them a more exact terminological designation.

From this analytical perspective, several broad areas of converging (and nonexclusive) opinions can be identified (in the sense that many authors may share two or more views).²⁰ Given their common central feature, these positions can be summarized in the following five main approaches: a) globalization as the end of the nation-state; b) globalization as myth; c) globalization as neo-liberalism; d) globalization as internationalization/"mondialization";²¹ and e) globalization as a new phase of historical development.

Globalization as a "Borderless world"

The extreme or "fundamentalist" view of globalization excessively exaggerates the extent of the transnationalization and internationalization of technology and economic and social relations, attributing the main decisions in today's world to transnational agents and predicting the nation-state's timely death (so goes the "borderless world" metaphor). Its main proponent is Kenichi Ohmae, author of such widely circulated books as *The Borderless World* (1990) and *The End of the Nation State* (1996), based on the global operating logic of the new transnational business enterprise (the "thinking globally" of their strategic decision-making centers). But this view is also present in many unsophisticated authors, government officials, and publicists of neo-liberal business thought.

Although this view contains certain limited truths (such as the enormous power of transnational forces or the beginning of a very long-term historical trend toward overcoming the nation-state), it not only over exaggerates them, but as we have seen, also ignores certain elemental aspects of globalization, such as the tremendous importance of the state and the redefinition of its functions.²² Overall, this view can be deemed an apologetic and propagandistic expression of this process, whose extensive worldwide dissemination can be explained both by its ideological functionality for the most extreme versions of neo-liberal globalization, as well as due its becoming possibly the most important reference point for academic and political debate concerning this process, in addition to being a punching ball par excellence for its real or imagined critics²³ at the cost of a more serious and

better-focused discussion. This role as a fake "decoy" of globalization as a "borderless world" has become, in our opinion, another misleading factor in the debate, one of many already considered here.

Globalization as Myth

The key point of agreement that brings together positions under this common denominator that on other questions offer different views, is the refusal to accept that phenomena associated with globalization could imply a very important change in international and transnational relations requiring thoroughgoing modifications of theories, and economic, social, or cultural policies prevailing in specific sectors in the academic community, society, or politics. In theory, certain authors who share this view tend to focus on criticizing extreme (fundamentalist) positions on globalization (Wade, 1996; Hirst & Thompson, 1997; Ferrer, 1997; Veseth, 1998) in order to later deny or minimize the phenomenon as such. In some cases, such as the rejection of "pop internationalism" by Krugman (1996),²⁴ these are frivolous criticisms with a high doses of ignorance or misunderstanding of the most serious writing on topics lightly regarded as fields of knowledge related to the author's specialty (theoretical macroeconomics in its narrowest sense).

Overall, the idea that globalization is a myth is quite embedded in disciplines and currents of thought in the social sciences most linked to national-statist paradigms and to rigid disciplinary specialization (macroeconomics, functionalist sociology, legal and political sciences, realist school in international relations, etc.), and on a political level, in nationalistic sectors tied to the old statist Left or to the new xenophobic Right. Yet it also has a broad social base, which nurtures and reinforces it, representing the spontaneous view of social organizations and sectors harmed by the extreme opening or the new international division of labor.

Globalization as Neo-Liberalism

In terms of the multiple positions concerning this phenomenon, globalization (free trade, international mobility of capital, information, and people, etc.) is inseparable from western capitalism's political and ideological victory in the Cold War and the resulting culmination, on a contemporary international level, of the old historical liberal project. Unlike the earlier view (globalization as myth), the convergence of views around this approach does not involve the denial of globalization as a really existing process, but its ideological-political contingency and the artificiality of its techno-productive and historical bases. As in the previous case, in the same cognitive perspective, there is a convergence of an extremely broad array of very dissimilar conceptions concerning other aspects of globalization, ranging from very important expressions of the new liberalism to quite radically critical positions.

In the liberal field, two basic approaches can be differentiated: that of liberalism-globalization as a natural order, and that of liberalism-globalization as an option without alternatives. The former may be found among orthodox neo-liberals, such as Hayek or Buchanan, who, consistent with the idea that economic liberalism expresses man's natural psychological inclinations, tend to view the current overall changes in the world, including globalization, as a return to the economic rationality and lost individual freedom of the nineteenth century after having overcome the statist and nationalist diversions of the twentieth century. This second approach, presently more disseminated than the former view, is represented by authors such as Fukuyama (1992), who tie globalization to the worldwide victory of global liberal democracy in the context of a lack of plausible options.²⁵ These views, aside from their ideological-apologetic content, constitute a rather shallow approach that, in fact, disregards globalization's deeper historical, technological, economic, and cultural bases.

However, this same type of superficiality is also present in the form of an inverted ethical assessment (globalization as evil not good) in works by many authors strongly critical of this phenomenon. The most radical and sweeping condemnation is based on the idea of "global neo-liberalism" espoused by Esteva and Pakash (1996), which counterposes the business world and transnational powers to more impoverished local communities. From this perspective, globalization and neoliberalism are one and the same, and therefore there is no possibility of anything approaching an "alternative globalization." A more nuanced version of this view reduces the historical meaning of globalization to real or supposed neoliberal policies, projects, or strategies, as is the case of "metropolitan interests" (Alonso, nd), "world corporate elites," (Herman, 2000) or speculative capital. As in the case of liberal thought, here too the same confusion appears between subjective and objective factors, between intentions and reality, between certain aspects of reality and reality as a whole.

Globalization as Internationalization or "mondialization"

This extremely widespread view is held by many authors and currents of thought that agree that today's globalization is but a relatively higher level of the historical processes of internationalization or "mondialization" in economic and social relations, either in reference to capitalism or to social modernization (Giddens) or to the "inclusiveness of the world economic order" (Ferrer). Therefore, globalization is not a recent phenomenon, corresponding to recent decades, but has existed considerably longer (from the fifteenth or nineteenth centuries or the period following World War II), depending on the case. Within this overall perspective, a more widely accepted view can be distinguished, which we will call "plain internationalization," which contrasts with two other approaches that differ in terms of the name of the phenomenon ("mondialization" for globalization) and its explanation (world system theories).

The view identifying globalization with a higher level of internationalization (or other related terms) is mainly based on observing more traditional indicators used in the study of international relations, such as world trade, the trade in goods, or traditional means of capital investment, rather than other much more accurate indicators, which allow the qualitatively new aspect of the process to be duly noted.²⁶ After reducing globalization to mainly quantitative phenomena, the particularly rapid growth of partial indicators, proponents of this view logically conclude that globalization's historical origins can be pinpointed at the onset of the world expansion of modern industrial capitalism during the nineteenth century, which continued after the 1919-1939 period. During the post World War II period, the "many decades' eclipse," this has remained a view widely held by many prestigious authors and publications from

very different theoretical traditions and disciplinary fields, such as Robertson (1992), Oman (1994), McEwan (1994), Waters (1995), Ferrer (1996 & 1997) or The Economist (1997). Its usage has become quite common lately in the staffs of many international institutions, such as the OECD, the World Bank, or the IMF, replacing the more technical concept of "multilateralization" used earlier (see Oman or Chesnais, 1995).

The analytical perspective developed by the center-periphery (or world-economy) world system school flows from the tautological idea that capitalism has always been global,²⁷ that globalization has existed since the fifteenth century, and that the changes the system had experienced since then have been secondary and derived from cyclical processes of expansion and contraction (ascending and descending waves). As a result, the changes in the world identified with globalization are mere cyclical inflexions (for instance, Wallerstein, 1994) and cannot be considered entirely new, except in a purely quantitative as opposed to qualitative sense (Arrighi, 1997: 1).²⁸

The latter view (world spatial change as "mondialization") especially corresponds to French authors critical of the renewed dominance of U.S. capitalism. This view is characterized, above all, by the rejection of the use of the term "globalization" to identify the phenomenon under discussion, for they regard it as an ambiguous Anglicism less precise than the term "mondialization" in French, and moreover imposed by U.S. business circles with apologetic aims (Chesnais, 1994 & 1996).²⁹ Moving beyond the term given to the phenomenon to examine its content, we must differentiate between a majority of authors who tend to substantially share the analytical viewpoint of internationalization as such, albeit with certain nuances (emphasizing the criticism of the new financial system and U.S. capitalism) and the Marxist school of internationalization or "mondialization" of capital (Michalet, Chesnais), which has its own theoretical development.

These authors' idea that globalization has existed for quite some time has no basis in fact. Periods of rapid growth, according to the indicators used by the exponents of this view, may be found not only in the twentieth, nineteenth, or the fifteenth century, but also in the first century A. D, or even considerably earlier.³⁰ But what can practically not be found before globalization are its main indicators, such as the worldwide rapid growth of new flexible inter-company networks, the transnational productive linkages, the international trade and transfer of software or informational services,³¹ crossborder subinvoicing or franchise operations, or the massive creation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to cite only a few such elements. The same can obviously be said about the type of equally new structural indicators, between new and old relations within globalization, or between them and nation-states, regional blocks, and local spaces within national and regional spaces.

Globalization as a New Historical Stage

Unlike linear views that exaggerate, deny, or simplify the historical specificity of globalization, a growing number of authors concur in that, in one way or another, it must be regarded as a new complex historical process.³² At this point it should be mentioned that there are an enormous variety of approximations and different emphasis on the key factor in determining phenomenon such as the functional integration of internationally dispersed economical activities (Gereffi), concentration of time and space (Harvey), the real time articulation of social activities located in different geographical venues (Castells), direct linkage of what is local and what is global based on what is glocal (Featherstone), the overtaking of the nation-state by new transnational or worldwide relations (Petrella, Beck, Dabat), an emerging global mosaic of regional production and exchange systems (Scott), systemacity of new interactions (Axford), or the new geo-economy (Dicken). Such differences, however, do not imply mutually exclusive points of view on the nature of the phenomenon, but rather distinct emphasis on different aspects of the same complex process.

The basic convergence of these positions may be synthesized in various explicit or implicit common points, flowing from such agreements: a) globalization is not just a higher level of internationalization, "mondialization" and especially the transnationalization of the world economy and society, but a historical reality that is qualitatively unlike any other; b) globalization is a historic process inseparable from other equally new and important processes, such as (using a specific terminology not shared by other authors) the information revolution, the postfordist/postkeynesian restructuring of capitalism or world economy and society, or the economic and political reunification of the world under capitalist leadership; c) globalization has nothing to do with a supposed elimination or minimization of the historical existence of the nation-state, but rather with the redefinition of its functions and relations to the economy and society; and d) its different elements when ordered by importance are all or almost all of a spatial-territorial character (integration of dispersed spatial activities, concentration of space, links between the nation-state and transnational or worldwide relations, integration of regional systems, relations between what is global and local [glocal], (new geography).

To proceed from this type of approximation to a consistent theory of globalization, however, involves an array of theoretical difficulties among the most important of which are the recent appearance and insufficiency of the studies on the spatial structure of capitalism³³ and its historical phases. But given the need to analyze these issues, we will attempt, with the elements at hand, to develop and defend the idea that globalization is nothing but the configuration (or structuring) of a new type of capitalism that is emerging in today's world.

Globalization as a New Spatial Configuration of the World

How should concepts such as the "configuration/structuring" or the "spatial dynamic" of capitalism be understood? We must distinguish between their theoretical utilization, quite narrow and recent due to the reasons already stated,³⁴ and their implicit practical use as a guide to research, which has been present in some of the most important nineteenth century studies on world capitalism.³⁵ In other works (Dabat, 1993, 1997 & 1999), we have used these categories without defining them, and therefore we feel it necessary to dedicate the first part of this section to the formulation of an attempt at a theorization that would further the understanding of globalization.

The Spatial Structure of Capitalism and its Major Historical Changes

According to the most important social scientists of the past few centuries (Smith, Marx, Schumpeter, Weber, Polanyi), capitalism is a system of production, social organization, and cultural formation, which is different from others historical forms of society in that has a specific type of structuring and historical dynamism.³⁶ Nevertheless, recently, authors such as Murray (1971) or Harvey (1982) have pointed out that capitalism also reveals a specific pattern of spatial configuration and territorial dynamism. Although this has still not translated into a developed theory, recognizing this seems like a logical consequence of the theoretical rediscovery of the spatial dimension of social phenomena characteristic of recent decades, which an author such as Massey (1985) brilliantly synthesizes in the idea that the spatial dimension of any phenomena has to be incorporated as a central feature of the basic analytical concepts used to define it.

As a conclusion to this point, we base our consideration on the idea that the special dynamism and configuration of capitalism (or simply its spatial pattern) is not separate and distinct from the techno-social structure and historical dynamism of capitalism, but is only one of its particular aspects. Concretely, the spatial pattern of capitalism must be understood as the systematization of the principles and relations that determine the territorial deployment and articulation of its components and basic relations, based on the spatial properties of these components as such as well as those of the geographic spaces in which they operate, as a material condition of their development³⁷

In attempting to systematize the profuse literature on these questions, it is important to identify at least four different levels of spatial determination, selected out and synthesized in order to theoretically construct a general model encompassing the basic components and relations of the territorial dynamic and configuration of capitalism and its different historical manifestations. These different phases include: a) the territorial scope (extension) of the capitalist system in relation to other social regimes; b) the specific levels of spatial articulation in relation to other non-spatial levels (technological, techno-economic, and socio-economic, social, etc.) of social life; c) the levels of direct territorial integration of overall social life (city, region, nation-state, international relations, world order); and d) the linkage of the points indicated in relation to the historical systemic synthesis, which allows for a scientific explanation of the logic of articulation and the spatial unfolding of the world society and the economy in a given era.

A. [The territorial extension of capitalism](#). The potentially global character of capitalism has never coincided with the much more limited scope of real international trade, or, especially, of capitalist production (which during most of its history has only extended to relatively reduced areas of the world).³⁸ From its onset to a very advanced stage of its development, capitalist production has expanded within a world social context that was overwhelmingly noncapitalistic (Luxemburg, 1967) based on a nonlinear and particularly unequal process (historical leaps forward and backward movements) and the destruction, assimilation, or subordination of prior social relations.

B. [Non-territorial levels of spatial articulation](#). The second level of spatial determination corresponds to the development of diverse horizontal (non-territorial) levels of interrelation in social life (technological, techno-economic, socio-economic, social, cultural, etc.), which contain specific levels of spatial articulation.

B 1) [Technological level](#): A basic level of spatial configuration based on the articulation of the basic productive forces of the capitalist system,³⁹ which authors such as Dosi (1984) have translated into successive technological systems and paradigms. Such systems determine the modalities of the unfolding and spatial organization of the different productive forces, like, for example, the technologies of territorially fixed production and employment (factory, cluster, mineral deposits, cropland) or those linking production and population (transportation, communications, energy networks, etc.) with different degrees of rigidity and flexibility.

B2) [Techno-economic level](#): This is a material sphere of social life interrelated with productive sectors and branches, forged by industrialization and uneven economic development in the territorial space. The relations between productive branches and sectors have been historically articulated on the basis of given productive patterns or systems (Fanjzylber, 1983) associated with certain phases of capitalism, according to specific types of groupings and the hierarchal ordering among their components. Productive patterns are linked to the social organization based on the social division of labor, whose spatial expression is the territorial division of labor.

B3) [Socio-economic level](#): An interconnected array of basic agents, social relations and institutions of production, exchange, and consumption within capitalist society, which articulate technical, social, and spatial changes at different stages. Comprised of different specific levels of social organization and spatial articulation, such as the market (scope, structure), business enterprises, capital (structure, dynamism, mobility), work (location, quality, relative cost, mobility), credit (historical forms and scope) or the economic agency of the state, which determines the actual logic of spatial deployment and articulation as well as different historical and geographic combinations.⁴⁰

B4) [Demographic level](#): This is the population structure basically generated by market development, industrialization, and capital accumulation and their consequences on the separation of the earth's population, urban concentration, and the differentiation between active and surplus population (unemployed and underemployed). The magnitude and characteristics of surplus population (culture, gender, etc.) represent the main basis of the population's territorial mobility (migration).

B5) [Societal level](#): A series of social relations and institutions formed around the development of capitalist society ("social modernization" for functionalist sociology). It comprises different levels of spatial structuring, such as the social structure (class, gender, employment, power), family structure, or the rise of civil society (including socio-political movements as a phenomenon different from that of state institutionality). Each level presupposes different mechanisms of spatial determination.

B6) Cultural level: Structured around the relations of the different expressions of so-called modern culture with traditional cultures and their different ways of connecting to space. The cultural level is linked to territory based on the spatial scope of the relations of identity and the meaning that characterizes it (either linguistic, life styles, beliefs, knowledge, artistic expressions) as well as its given conditions of location (centers of irradiation, resistance, or convergence).

B7) Environmental level: This involves the relation between society and the natural environment, determined by the spatial consequences of the uncontrolled destructive aspects of industrialization, urbanization, population growth, or modern culture, on the spatial conditions of human life (atmosphere, air, water, flora, biodiversity, etc.). This involves, as on all other levels previously considered, specific historical factors, resulting from given combinations of techno-economic, demographic, and cultural levels and structures.

C) Territorial levels of socio-economic integration: This corresponds to the spatial institutions of capitalism as such (city,⁴¹ region, nation-state, systems of states, world order) characterized by vertically integrated different levels of a given population's social life (economic, social, cultural, political) within a given territorial space. Within this level, however, a differentiation should be drawn between the series of relations based in the city, nation-state, international organization or in terms of international organization.

C1) The city: Cities result from the concentration of commerce, services, production, socio-cultural activities, and population in points located in the territorial space, based on the historical development of the process of urbanization. They constitute the basis of systems of cities, joined together along with scattered population centers, through transportation, communication, and supply networks. The relations of cities and systems of cities with their rural hinterlands, scattered production centers, or unpopulated and natural reserve areas, lead to the conformation of the region with its very different peculiarities involved in its formation and integration.

C2) The nation-state: The nation state is the broadest and most decisive social institution for the spatial concentration of economic and socio-cultural life, based on political-military nuclei of sovereign power and the homogenization (nationalization) of social life (national economies, national societies, and national cultures) within limited territorial spaces. But it is also the starting point for national capitalisms (Dabat, 1992 & 1994: Introduction) based on a specific type of relation between capitalist development and territory,⁴² and between the private sphere of internal development and the public sphere of state promotion and regulation (represented by the protection of the domestic market, construction of physical and social infrastructures, monetary policies, support in international competition).

The existence of multiple nation-states and national capitalisms gives rise to many types of international competitive relations, the most important of which are those established around the world market as a universal sphere of international trade and the transfer of goods, capital, labor, and knowledge. The spatial scope and structure of the world market is based on the extension and nature of the international division of labor, operating in conjunction with other factors previously contemplated, such as the global scope and uneven development of capitalism, techno-industrial development, enterprise structure, national markets and forms of competition, levels and modalities of trade, international investment and migrations, the scope and modalities of state intervention, or the modalities of international organization. The combination of all these factors will determine the specific forms of competition between companies, countries, and regions that will operate as the chief motor forces of the world economy and the process of internationalization.

International political organization is comprised of three categories of such groupings: a) the international systems of states (Anderson, 1983), as institutional bodies for establishing a level playing field and resolving common problems between sovereign states through diplomatic relations, international treaties, and world and regional organizations; b) the state hegemonic systems (Gramsci, 1975) as an integral relation of forces between states (economic, geopolitical and military, socio-cultural) that condition the institutional system; and c) the international (non-governmental) relations between societies that influences the course of world affairs, through international politico-ideological, religious and at present, NGO networks.) The usefulness of these organizational structures gives rise to what is known as world orders, as systems of worldwide governability and institutionalized relations of forces between states and societies.

D) Stages of capitalism and configurations of world space: Based on the above-mentioned spatial determinations, the different stages in the historical development of capitalism have tended to form distinct spatial configurations in world economy and society. Between the mid-nineteenth century and today, capitalism has experienced four major stages, corresponding respectively to liberal industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, to classical monopolistic-financial capitalism during the final decades of that century until World War I (or, rather, until the 1930s according to some authors), to Fordist (or Keynesian) mixed capitalism linked to a war economy since the latter period until the end of the 1970s, and to the global information capitalism that is still in the process of being shaped. In every case, the passage from to another historical form of structuring and socio-economic dynamic has brought about quite different modalities of world space.

The spatial configuration of nineteenth-century liberal industrial capitalism was the result of the productive combination between small and medium-scale factory production in a handful of European countries and the opening of huge "empty" plains in the Americas, Oceania, and Eastern Europe to modern agriculture, with relatively few repercussions in other parts of the world, except India. Such a relation was the basis for the formation of the modern world capitalism market and the "classical" international division of labor (in which final manufactured goods were exchanged for agricultural produce). This was backed by the first modern international transportation and communications network (railways and steamships, telegraphs and underwater cables), the onset of free trade following the British 1848 Grain Law, the great leap forward in international trade at the time, which radically modified the relation between international commerce and national production in the countries experiencing strongest growth,⁴³ the beginnings of European emigration and portfolio investment to agricultural exporting colonies with established immigrant populations⁴⁴, and the dawn of the internationalization of social relations (labor and socialist Internationals, feminist groups, geographical studies, etc.). Internationalization in this period coincided with the beginning of generalized nation building and was dominated by the great industrial, maritime, and financial power of the century, Great Britain. But the processes of industrialization, internationalization, and

modern nation-building had very little effect on the great majority of the world's countries, still dominated by pre-capitalist social relations (Hobsbawm, 1998).

The phase of monopolistic-financial capitalism and of classical imperialism⁴⁵ was based upon the so-called Second Industrial Revolution (characterized by heavy industry with continuous production flows, large-scale monopolistic vertically-integrated companies, electric, radio-electric and telephone networks) and the continuation of the international expansion of capitalism through imperialistic-militaristic means. Drastic shifts in the structure and dynamic of companies, the market, competition, and nation-states would, in the industrial countries, lead to the growth of monopolistic enterprises, the merging of banks and industry, the move from free trade to protectionism, militaristic expansion, the rise of new imperialisms defying British supremacy, the break up of the world market and the international division of labor into closed colonial empires, and the advent of new states (either social-imperialist,⁴⁶ colonial and semi-colonial, or financially dependent national-oligarchic). From cosmopolitan liberal internationalism, a new extremely conflictive imperial world would emerge, which in the twentieth century would lead to two world wars fought to territorially redistribute the planet, and to the democratic, agrarian, and national revolutions culminating in the establishment of the Soviet Union and the social-statist (Communist) block of countries,⁴⁷ which would wind up encompassing a third of the earth's population.

The Fordist-Keynesian configuration of territorial space is more difficult to define, because it was developed in the context of the social, economic, and political-military fragmentation of the world and of chronic world or civil wars, with its corollaries of a contraction in trade and international relations, the disarticulation of the international division of labor, political-military competition with the Communist block, and the generalized national-authoritarian integration of social life imposed by the logic of the worldwide conflict⁴⁸. The fractures provoked by the break-up of the Communist block and the autarchic tendencies of the major national economies were coupled with the formation of a semi-autarchic "Third World" resulting from decolonization, the new national-corporatist capitalism, the possibilities of maneuvering room in the East-West conflict, and efforts to domestically orient industrialization in the peripheral countries. These new spatial relations would strongly limit the spatial scope of international capitalism. But it would also lead to a new institutionalized world order (the bipolar three-world order) based on the absolute hegemony of the United States and the Soviet Union at the head of the polar system blocks, nuclear parity, bilateral administration of the Cold War, and the worldwide organization of states in the form of the United Nations, whose functioning was more formal and symbolic than real.

"Mixed" Fordist-Keynesian capitalism will result from the radical reorganization of capitalism centered in the United States, based on the automobile, aerospace, machine tool, oil, and arms industry; the Fordist-Sloanist restructuring of work processes and large companies; and the Keynesian principles of national and social economic administration. In addition to establishing the basis for a new type of domestic social pact, such changes would enable the relaunching of world capitalism in the post-World War II period, based on the huge weight of the economy and the world hegemony of the United States, the limited liberalization of international trade centered on the industrialized countries, and the international expansion of the multinational corporation and its later European-Japanese emulation. This would lead to the process of the internationalization of production and capital based on the giant vertically integrated multinational corporation and its system of subsidiaries dedicated to supplying national semi-closed markets, and the belated formation of the Eurodollar financial market directed to a large extent at financing government institutions in the Second and Third worlds. This process will erode the bases of the three-worlds system, but it will not in and of itself destroy it, because that would be incompatible with the national-Keynesian framework of relations between capital, labor, and the market.⁴⁹

The Spatial Restructuring of Global Information Capitalism

Like its earlier historical variants, the new capitalism has also modified the composition of world space and it has generated a new territorial dynamic. By systematizing the information provided in previous sections to favor a comparison with the previous configurations, it is possible to offer a quite precise analysis of the main lines of the present configuration.

The territorial scope of the new capitalism would be incomparably greater than that of the system's previous stages. Supported by the unification of the world market, the massive processes of privatization, and the trade opening in the second and third worlds and the preceding advances in industrialization and urbanization in these regions (by noncapitalist or national capitalist means), capitalist production and exchange would become the dominant economic force in Russia and Eastern Europe, Asia, the greater part of the Islamic world, the Pacific islands, and most of Latin America and Africa, reducing noncapitalist and precapitalist production to marginal enclaves. As a result, capitalism would spread across practically the entire world, imposing its territorial dynamic of uneven development and inclusion-exclusion. An important aspect of this achievement is the accompanying emergence of a global environmental crisis, which would coincide with the decline of Fordist "mixed" capitalism and social-statism, leading to global information capitalism.

In the different non-territorial spheres of social life, profound spatial changes would also occur, reaching virtually all key institutions of society. As a result of the territorial potential of new technology, the world would become materially linked to two completely new types of technical-economic relations: a) the transnational real-time electronic communication infrastructure, increasingly structured around the Internet's virtual space; and b) the direct world integration of production based on material and "immaterial" productive chains previously fractured by electronic technology.

The changes in the social organization of production and exchange would radically reform the previous forms of company organization, the market, capitalist property, credit, economic intervention by the state, and the exploitation of population groups. Among the new factors to emerge would be the flexible, global transnational company-network, open oligopolic markets,⁵⁰ the primacy of intellectual property and mobile stock portfolios, the securitization and globalization of credit, and the global exploitation of underemployed and underpaid labor (surplus population) in the peripheral countries. Hence, a global world market would emerge subsuming national markets and giving rise to three specific yet quite different markets: a) the global market in goods and services structured around competition administered between company-networks and occurring between countries, regional blocks of

countries, and cities and regions; b) the global market in securities and money (financial) markets, characterized by its exceptional fluidity, the absence of regulatory obstacles, volatility, and relative autonomy in relation to production, the exchange of commodities, and productive investment;⁵¹ and c) the worldwide labor market, based on the chronic imbalance between an enormous global mobile supply of workers corresponding to the surplus population in developing countries and the varied conditions of global demand (the closing of borders to international migration and the increase in direct investment by transnational companies to exploit the vast differences in international labor costs).

On a social and cultural level, the tremendous advance in the spatial scope of capitalism and the processes of internationalization and transnationalization would lead to a particular type of modernization of cultural and social relations, linked to new conditions of work and daily life and its multiple "glocal" manifestations. The multiplication of international and transnational relations has considerably strengthened the bonds between migrant communities and their national communities of origin (García Canclini, 1999: 79), transferring multiculturalism to families, companies, schools, churches, social organizations, and virtual communities, and deeply shaking the traditional organizations and identities of many societies as a result of complex processes of hybridization and conflict. A central aspect of this transformation was the formation of an "international civil society" (Petrella, 1996) based on a very wide array of social, social-political, and cultural movements (human rights, ecological, feminist, protests against the excesses of globalization, labor, solidarity with the indigenous peoples, etc.).

On the level of structures of spatial territorial organization, the changes would be even more remarkable. The nation-state is overtaken by multiple transnationalization processes, "since these states will not be able to control more than an increasingly smaller portion of their affairs" (Hobsbawm, 1995). For the first time in its history, capitalist internationalization will develop separately from the construction and integration of nations.⁵² The weakening of the nation will disarticulate the classical historical institutions and principles of the spatial structuring of capitalism, giving rise to new types of patterns considerably different that point to a distinct form of state-territory relations.

Cities and regions will tend to link up with international relations and trade without the intermediation of the nation-state, giving rise to a new competitive organization of the system of cities and regions (Vázquez Barquero, 1999), urban and regional cross-border complexes, and micro-national separatism directly linked to globalization. Competition in the global market would lead neighboring nations to form export trade blocks⁵³ built around regional economic powers. Finally, trends much broader than mere commercial tendencies toward the geographical integration of large territorial spaces would force regions such as the European Union to take the road of supranational integration, not just around a common currency but also involving the free movement of people and a common citizenship.

On a world level as such, the most important changes will be economic and geopolitical, with few immediate consequences on the international organization of states. The most important changes will involve the relative reconstitution of U.S. hegemony in conditions different from that of the period following the Second World War (with a broader global scope and less economic superiority in relation to other powers), the impressive rise of East Asia and China, the integration of North America, the eastward thrust of European integration, the organization of South American countries in the Mercosur, the rise of the Indian economy, and the deepening social and economic marginalization of Africa and numerous other nations in other continents. Yet none of these changes will lead directly to resolving the worldwide crisis of governability, worsened by the new uneven conditions of supra-state integration, from which some countries are excluded. Progress on this level will not correspond so much to initiatives by individual nation-states, but rather will depend on much broader political, social, and intellectual processes, such as generalized proposals for political reform and reorientation advanced by international organizations,⁵⁴ the political exhaustion of neo-liberalism, the extensive growth of civil society, and achievements in the field of regional integration, which as a whole point to the possibility of a new type of reform of the world order.

The territorial characteristics of current day capitalism that have already been pointed out, are nothing but the features that different authors have ascribed to globalization, either as specific aspects, as partial combinations, or as a comprehensive process. For this reason, it is valid to together define globalization and the spatial structure of new capitalism as the same phenomenon. Elsewhere (Dabat, 1999) we defined globalization as the new spatial configuration of the world economy and society resulting from the relative overflowing of the normative capacity of the nation-states by the new transnational relations, due to the interdependence of the new communication, economic, social, environmental, and cultural relations imposed by the computer revolution, the geopolitical unification of the world, and the transnational restructuring of capitalism. The outcome of this one, is the redefinition of spatial relations between the world, nation-states, micro and macro regions, and local spaces, and the generation of a new type of contradictions, imbalances, and systemic risks, requiring a new class of macro-regional and worldwide solutions that consider the new complexity and diversity of the world's societies and cultures.

Endnotes

1 The words "global/globalization" lack an unambiguous acceptance and, in fact, refer to an interlinked totality. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, the adjective "global" means both 1) something spherical (not commonly used according to the dictionary), and 2) (derived from the French) "belonging to or encompassing the totality of a determined number of aspects, categories, etc., general, all-inclusive, unified, overall; especially belonging to or encompassing the entire world, world-wide scope, universal. "

2 What has come to be known as Marxist economic theory on the State, foreign trade and world markets was not a construction of classical nineteenth-century Marxism, but corresponds to Stalinist, nationalist, and dependence-theory Marxism of the twentieth century, with both few and very distant exceptions such as Hilferding Lenin or Bukharin (Dabat, 1993). Although central themes for study of globalization were, as noted, included in original working plan of [The Capital](#), they never were dealt with, either in Marx's writing (Rosdolsky, 1979, essay 2), or in his principal coworkers and disciples, such as Engels and Kautsky.

3 García Canclini (1999: 49) feels that the difficulty in including the varied dimensions of globalization in a single explanatory system

has led to the recurrent use of metaphorical language ("global village", "amebic society", "third wave", "new Babel", "global shopping center", etc.) At best, this is a substitute for conceptually precise terms.

4 This historical perspective is based on the synthesis of the original basic suppositions of historic materialism and the Gramscian tradition, as well as the most significant contributions from other schools of analysis, such as critical institutionalism, evolutionism, regulationism, ecology, or feminism.

5 It should be taken into consideration, however, that the simple extension of capitalism to the former "Second World" (the Communist bloc) and the latter's thorough incorporation into the world market alongside the Third World, in and of itself led to a qualitative transformation of the social, political and economic world space.

6 We use the concept of "productive revolution" in the sense of "industrial revolution" as employed by Marx, Mantoux or Landes, as the radical transformation of the structures of production as a whole, which implies not only the emergence and use of new revolutionary technologies, but also the social generalization of their use. The concept of productive (or industrial) revolution centers more specifically on the radical transformation of production and social life resulting from the generalized use of the new technologies. The earlier spread of microelectronic technology in the period following World War II had a very limited scope in economic and social terms, and was utterly subordinated to both the machine tool technologies characteristic of Fordism as well as to the manipulation of the atom and the space race with politico-military and world power aims (the so-called scientific-technical revolution of Soviet authors).

7 In another paper we defined financial globalization in its current form based on the following characteristics: (a) close interrelation between national and worldwide financial markets based on the subordination of the former to the latter as a result of the free movement of capital-money and the unification of world trends in interest rates; (b) a substantial decrease in the field of action of the central banks in the creation of money and credit, in setting interests rates, and in determining exchange rates; (c) the formation of a pattern of random alignment of the main international financial variables resulting from the uncontrolled flow of capital and speculative pressures which will, in the short or medium term, tend to take precedence over broader considerations of commercial competition and the unequal development of world productivity (Dabat & Toledo, 1999).

8 The new world financial system is much less directly linked to the productive sphere than those in the earlier phases of capitalism. In classical monopolistic-financial capitalism there existed a very narrow linkage derived from the merger between banking and industry (Hilferding, 1971). In Fordist-Keynesian capitalism, public regulation was dominant. In some countries (Germany or Japan) this was reinforced by stock control or cross-ownership (Albert, 1992), which in the case of the former represented a historical legacy of the earlier system.

9 As a very broad range of authors explain (Rivera, 1992; Esser, 1993; Pérez, 1996) Latin America's over indebtedness was due to region's economic inability to integrate into the world market through the reconversion and modernization of its industrial plant and an increase in exports of manufactured goods.

10 The Uruguay Round of the GATT, which agreed to the establishment of the World Trade Organization at the beginning of 1994, remained stagnant since 1986 until a few months before its was slated to conclude.

11 The formation of a huge floating mass of unemployed or underemployed workers seeking jobs (Marx's industrial reserve army) would be at the root of both the growing international migratory flows of workers as well as the relocation of international production to peripheral countries with low unitary labor costs (ratio of wage levels to relative productivity). Inasmuch as international migratory flows of workers are rigidly controlled through restrictive policies implemented by countries that import labor, the scope of such international migration would be necessarily much less than its potential magnitude (Harris, 1996).

12 International trade has never been entirely free, because it has always been limited by some sort of national barriers. What have existed are historical trends toward trade liberalization or protectionism with a single historical period (prior to the current period) in which free trade predominated (approximately 1848-1873). Nevertheless, trade liberalization in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was much more limited than what has currently developed since it did not encompass very important countries such as the United States and because international commercial capitalist relations everywhere, even in Europe, were on a much less globalized scale.

13 Our understanding of the new international or global division of labor is based on the structural relations between countries having different levels of social development that determine international trade patterns (a tendency toward displacement of manufacturing sectors and industries toward developing countries with relatively low wage levels, with the aim of lowering unitary costs of production for export) (Dabat & Rivera Ríos, 1988). The new computer-electronic technology not only favors the fracturing and partial relocation of productive processes but, as a result of the large number of productive linkages and subsectors with very different degrees of labor intensive activities, broadens and deepens the scope of the phenomenon (Dabat, 1998).

14 According to the *Oxford Dictionary* the first usage in English of the word "globalization" (with a z) stemming from the French *globalisation*, in a sense quite similar to the current sense of the term, occurred in 1959 in an article written by Belgian politician Paul Henri Spaak (Spaak, "Why NATO?") in referring to the global challenge posed by the Soviet Union. The second usage noted was eleven years later (*Scientific Journal* "The Meteorological Global Telecommunications System", 1970, April, 52/3) in reference to the development of an effective system of global numerical weather forecasting.

15 The number of titles of works that include the word "global" listed in the past fifteen years in the Social Science Citation Index

showed the following progression: 1986: 2; 1987: 9; 1988: 8; 1989: 23; 1990: 17; 1991: 30; 1992: 44; 1993: 55; 1996: 106; 1997: 196 (research by J. Quigley, included in F. W. Riggs 1998 anthology of papers from the World Congress of the International Sociology Association).

16 In the following decades, French Marxists began to use words such as "worldwide" or *mondialisation* in the same sense as the internationalization of capital posited by Palloix (Michalet, 1985; Chesnais, 1994).

17 Murray's work, published almost simultaneously in the magazine *New Left Review* and the previously mentioned widely circulated anthology cited by Duning would be the starting point of a very differentiated line of conceptualization (the internationalization of state activity) referring to the probable functions the nation-state (or other diverse forms of associations of states) would have to continue fulfilling in the era of international capital.

18 Gereffi develops the idea of "global productive chains", which is very much related to Porter's formulation. Such concepts are related to those pertaining to the global division of labor and productive upgrading in developing countries, stemming from technological learning processes, an aspect that directly links Gereffi's analysis to the evolutionary school. In the development of the new concept of enterprise, the concept of "network" provided by the organizational and economic sociology would be important (Alter & Hage, 1993; Grandori & Soda, 1995, etc.).

19 The difficulties of the social sciences and the theory of international relations in considering globalization objectively, seem to spring from the very character of state sciences and the central role played by the rigid concept of sovereignty, as a supreme power subordinated to none other (Toledo Patiño, 1998).

20 This is somewhat different from what we dealt with elsewhere (Dabat, 1999), whereby we separated and highlighted the "borderless world" view to better present and understand this debate.

21 Internationalization, transnationalization, globalization, and supranationalization are understood as follows: *Internationalization* means the relative and absolute extension of relations between states, entities, and individuals from different nations (binational, trinational, or multinational), measured as the E/I ratio, in which E stands for external relations, and I signifies internal relations. *Transnationalization*, meanwhile, signifies the extension of functionally integrated activities through nations, not necessarily dependent on any nation in particular (communication networks, new transnational enterprises, etc.). *Globalization* involves the worldwide scope of international, transnational, or supranational relations. Finally, *supranational* encompasses the creation and extension of multinational or worldwide institutions, which implies the formal concession of sovereignty of constituent nation-states to a higher entity (as in the case of the European Union).

22 This position ignores, for example, the rather important current functions of nation-states and regional blocks of states, not only in the sense defined by Murray in the 1970s, but more specifically in countries' current competitiveness (Porter, 1990) and in the state-company alliances, which are necessarily behind global competition (Ernst & O'Connor, 1989; Cohen, 1993; Castells, 1996).

23 The difference between real and imaginary critics of globalization emerges precisely from the distinction between rejection of the process's real formative elements and trends, and the criticism not of these factors and trends but of Ohmae's imagined explanation of them. This leads many authors to argue (based on Ohmae's view) that globalization is not taking place today, but will occur in the indefinite future.

24 Krugman completely underestimates the scope and depth of the changes in the world and dismisses the importance of questions such as international competitiveness, the worldwide division of labor, trade blocks, or the Asian "miracle", without even beginning to consider the work of some key authors such as Porter, Ernst, Cohen, or Gereffi. In statements to specialized publications, he said that globalization, if it existed, is limited to the mere exchange of goods and services, the movement of capital, and international migratory flows, and today's world economy is not more integrated than that of the nineteenth century (Farham, 1994).

25 As Axford (1995: 45) recalls, Fukuyama's idea is not based on teleological or naturalist hypotheses but in supposing a lack of current alternatives to Western liberal democracy. This therefore implies the theoretical possibility of a reversal.

26 Ferrer (1997), for example, recognizes four main manifestations of the phenomenon (trade flows, foreign direct investment and intra-company trade, financial flows, and market liberalization and deregulation) and practically does not consider any of the qualitative underlying changes that determine the new reality. In the case of the computer revolution, Ferrer, in fact, includes it along with previous technological changes, such as microelectronics or space exploration, without mentioning others such as flexible automation, the personal computer, or the Internet. The reference to intra-company trade does not take into consideration that it is tending to lose importance *vis a vis* intra-network trade.

27 This view was developed based on the world system theory formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein during the 1970s and 1980s. This theory should not be confused with other more flexible and objective views of the systemic character of the world economy and society such as, for example, those espoused by Axford.

28 As far as we know, the non-cyclical changes this current acknowledges are minimal. One of them, for instance, would be Amin's (1993) recognition of the current interpenetration of capital among the most important capitalist countries.

29 This critique seems exaggerated. Although it is true that the word "mondialization" is more precise to denote an aspect of this process (the world extension of social and economic relations) than the second meaning of the term globalization (see note 1), it is

also the case that the main meaning of this word has a much broader sense, allowing for a closer approximation to the complex and qualitative nature of this phenomenon (new type of spatial interactions between different aspects of world, national, regional, and local reality). In relation to the supposed invention of this term by U.S. business circles, it is not taken into account that this word was previously or simultaneously introduced by other actors and in other social fields, and that its appearance in management schools occurred both as part of Ohmae's apologetic formulation as well as Porter's scientific approach.

30 Third and fourth centuries B. C Hellenism (characterized by the expansion of Greek politics, economy, and culture to the Mediterranean world, the Middle East, Persia, western India, and Egypt) was economically based on a very broad development of commercial capital and the monetary system. The Hellenic world was furthermore commercially linked to the whole of the Mediterranean region, to the emerging Chinese empire, and other parts of Central Asia through the silk trade.

31 Even though software production and marketing is the most dynamic component of today's world economy, no official statistics are available. These figures (along with those concerning most computer-and informational services) are therefore not even included among the data supplied by the WTO on international trade in services. The preparation of such data has remained in the hands of private corporations, such as the International Data Corporation (IDC) or the Gartner Group.

32 We must include within this perspective, at least, the following authors and works: Axford (1996), Beck (1992 & 1998), Castells (1996, 1997 & 1998), Cerny (1995), Cox (1992), Dabat (1993, 1994, 1999 & 2000), Dabat & Rivera (1995), Dabat & Toledo (1999), Dicken (1998), Dunning (1997), Estay (1995), García Canclini (1999), Gereffi (1994 & 1995), Gereffi & Hampel (1996), González Casanova (1995), Guerra Borges (1999); Harvey (1989 & 1995), Hirsch (1997), McGrew, Lewis & others (1992), Petrella (1989, 1990 & 1992), Petrella & Grupo Lisboa (1996), Scott (1998), Vázquez Barquero (1999); Waterman (1998), Zamagni (1995).

33 According to Gregory and Urry's (1985) very accepted opinion, interest in spatial questions in contemporary social sciences was a very belated phenomenon dating from the 1970s, as a response to the internationalization of capitalist production and its contradictory regional expressions. Previously, under the impact of positivism and ideologically oriented approaches, during the entire twentieth century the predominant view was represented by the radical opposition between causal-relational knowledge of the disciplinary fields deemed scientific, and the descriptive-contingent knowledge attributed to human geography (Sayer, 1985), which tended to extend to spatial phenomena as a whole.

34 Among the most important precedents are Murray's classic work (1971) on the state and the internationalization of capital, in the context of what he would call the "territorial dialectic" of capitalism, or Harvey's chapter (1982) on the production of "capitalism's spatial configurations" due to the de-spatial mobility of capital and labor. In addition, there are also the contributions of Ruggie (1993) and Walker (1993) on the historical specificity of the nation-state based on the "spatial configuration" of modernity

35 Bukharin's, Lenin's and to a certain extent Hilderfing's works on the world economy and imperialism at the onset of the twentieth century mainly referred to the spatial configuration of capitalism and the world economy, in the historic period between the 1873 world crisis and World War I.

36 In Harvey's opinion (1989), those authors tended to assume space as something granted (instead of being socially constructed and reconstructed throughout historical development) and to have a unilateral focus on the role of time in explaining the temporary character of the dynamic of historical development.

37 We feel that a distinction should be made between (A) the spatial properties of social phenomena resulting from their specific nature, potential mobility, and special relation to other social phenomena (which is what Harvey (1982) studies in terms of capital and labor); (B) the properties of the geographic space itself (both physical and social) where social processes are localized and where they develop (which is the specific theme of geography); and (C) the concrete territorial location of social processes. On this latter level (referring to the economy) authors such as Storper (1997: 170) raise an essential distinction between what they call "mere contingent localization" from what they term "territorialization" as such, which is a particular type of localization that is necessarily linked to specific conditions of a territory not available in many other places. These spatial determinations as a whole are key, because all social phenomena develop in some territorial space that to some degree conditions their specific evolution based on the properties of the two factors (both social and territorial phenomena).

38 The worldwide character of capitalism emerges from: (a) the essentially mobile character of capital, which transcends all territorial or political borders, without any limits other than those imposed by transportation systems; (b) the integrating role of the world capitalist market in the most advanced segments of production in different countries, as a condition for the worldwide reproduction of the material living conditions of modern societies; (c) the regulatory role that this market plays in international transactions, resulting in its ideal existence as a necessary reference point for the real decisions made by capitalists throughout the world.

39 According to Marx, the automated machine systems, the factory and social organization of labor, motor power and energy sources, modern transportation and communication systems, technological systems, the incorporation of science into production.

40 A distinction should be made here between the functional role of the state in the reproduction of capitalism, which corresponds to this non-territorial level of analysis, and the role of the nation-state as a territorial institution as such, corresponding to another level of analysis.

41 At the dawn of commercial capitalism (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the city was the political and economic center of the articulation of territorial space in Europe's most advanced regions, before being absorbed by the absolutist state within a much

broader territorial space that served as the basis for the subsequent development of capitalism.

42 A nation's territory "constitutes the most general basis of production containing and serving as a basis for all internal conditions" (Borochoy, 1979). Capital initially is attracted to a territory based on private property and financing for rural landholdings, urban farmland, mining deposits (Murray, 1971) and the use of public natural resources (water, land, subsoil, forests, fisheries) that determine types of agriculture, mining, or industry. In its beginnings, capital is attracted to a territory based on the development of fixed capital, the use of the physical infrastructure of transportation, communications, or energy, and the exploitation of the population nuclei and industrial clusters as well as technological knowledge accumulated in companies and workers (Dosi, 1991). Finally, the relation of capital to territorial space allows a country's capital to take advantage of the benefits of territorial expansion (Hilferding, 1971), of the "natural productivity" of its soil, and the advantages derived from a given country's cultural peculiarities.

43 The commercial boom of the nineteenth century radically changed relations between international trade and the gross domestic product of the countries involved. According to Maddison (1995: 48), in countries having reliable statistics, the ratio of exports to GDP rose from 1% in 1820 to 5% in 1870 and to 8.7% in 1913. Yet the great sustained leap really began in 1850 and not in 1820, which makes the 1850-1873 period the years of the fastest growth in international trade in the history of capitalism.

44 The major nineteenth century migrations and capital flows had a totally different character from their present-day counterparts. The main mechanism for international investment corresponded to public debt instruments of states in the process of national formation. Migrations of workers went to the great "empty" spaces, cleared by the slaughter of nomadic indigenous peoples, as was the case in the United States, Argentina, Australia, and Canada. Another big difference was the European origin of the migrant workers, particularly English, Irish, German, Italian, and Spanish, which followed the growth in surplus populations that accompanied the territorial expansion of industrial capitalism in Europe.

45 We use the term "classical" imperialism to refer to a particular type of capitalist expansionism studied by authors such as Hobson, Hilferding, Bukharin, and Lenin within a specific historical, economic, and political context. At the same time, we use this term in order to differentiate this form of economic and political-military expansionism from other historical forms, such as the so-called "free trade" imperialism that preceded it (Gallagher & Robinson, 1953), which was a phenomenon quite unlike classical imperialism (Platt, 1980).

46 The "welfare state" (social interventionism aiming at bolstering social stability and political governability) began to develop in Europe during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (laws reducing the workday and other workplace regulations, social security, legalization of unions, elementary school education, health systems) together with the growth of militarism, nationalism, and authoritarianism.

47 The idea of a block refers here to the unity of state-territorial and socio-political and ideological (non-territorial) factors, as the organic unity of states, political parties, social movements, and individual adherence to the block's organic ideologies.

48 Since the 1930s processes of corporatist and patriarchal integration of social life prevailed among the most ideological dissimilar nation-states, based on nationalist social reforms controlled from above, which suppressed or restricted the autonomy of social organizations, strengthened the patriarchal family, and eliminated or limited democracy.

49 Both direct investment to supply captive internal markets as well as syndicated bank loans to state institutions in the Second and Third worlds for the subsequent domestic redistribution of such resources, were not incompatible with national-Keynesian fundamentals based on the supremacy of the domestic market, state protectionism, and public internal financing. What would become detrimental would be the indirect disintegrating effect of the internationalization of capital in a historical era in which closed or semi-closed economies had exhausted their possibilities of development.

50 Studied by authors such as Bain or Lavini, the traditional oligopolic market was a national market basically closed by entry barriers and oligopolic control by a very few companies with market power. This type of oligopoly did not survive the opening and deregulation of national markets and the new possibilities for new multinational company-networks to enter the fray (direct investment, joint ventures, strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions, franchises, etc). But it was replaced by another market based on a new type of transnational commerce administered within large multinational networks, which couples the previously existing intra-company commerce with the new forms of intra-net trade and strategic intra-partners. However, this new type of privately administered commerce develops, unlike the previously mentioned example, in the context of a ferocious competition between global giants.

51 The high degree of relative autonomy of credit in relation to production is an important characteristic of today's capitalism compared to its predecessors. In classic financial-monopolistic capitalism, credit was linked to production based on the relations between the banking system and industry. In Keynesian capitalism, this relation was maintained under control by the national central bank within the context of the organized domestic economy. Today there is no alternative force that plays this role.

52 With the single exception of the 1919-1939 period (an era marked by the collapse of the world market), the different processes of capitalist internationalization (liberal, classical imperialist, Fordist) were characterized by nation building and integration (state, territory, domestic markets, language, identity, social organization) throughout the world. In the age of classical imperialism, colonial efforts as such were basically centered on countries in a stage of pre-national development, while in Latin America they coincided with the great leap forward in the construction of national oligarchic states. The internationalization of the period following the end of World War II (growth of international trade and investment) favored the modernization and deepening social differentiation of national development in the peripheral countries.

53 Unlike prior free trade agreements in the previous historical period (aimed at expanding the domestic market of the member countries), the new treaties are mainly oriented to exports. They are associated with more general trade liberalization policies aimed at cheapening the cost of inputs for export industries.

54 Debates on the regulation of international financial flows and foreign exchange operations, on the environmental sustainability of economic development, on the protection of biodiversity, on human, women, and labor rights, on the promotion of marginalized areas or countries, etc.

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