

On The Political and Social Coordinate of Globalization

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Abstract: This study concerns the political and social dimensions which make up the semantic universe of globalization. These coordinates must be “completed” by the other two coordinates: the economic and the cultural ones, presented in the previous study. The political dimension tries to offer us the means for understanding and conceptually relaunching the notion of nation-state. The issue of the sovereignty of the nation-state must be rethought in the context of globalization. Redefining the fundamental presumptions from which we depart in our research may be a very important operation. The nation-state must be rethought starting from the world as a whole for all the nation-states on Earth. Certain economic or social matters need the finding of certain political solutions applicable at an international level. After WWII, certain political institutions, such as the UNO, for example, impose especially in respect to solving conflicts at an international level. In what the social dimension of globalization is concerned, the issue of rethinking a new international basis of what the specialty literature calls “the new world social consciousness” arises. How are state or regional communities influenced by this phenomenon called globalization? Beyond the social differences, which, at their turn, are influenced by tradition, culture, geography, economy, religion, etc., we shall be able to conceive humanity as a whole which deploys in the same world, consumes the same types of resources, has the same needs, and manifests the same types of behavior. All these ingredients are the “building bricks” which we shall use to conceptually reconstruct the new type of consciousness at world level.

Keywords: political coordinate of globalization; social coordinate of globalization; sovereignty of the nation-state; ontological security of the individual; Giddens

1. The Political Coordinate of Globalization

1.1. Introduction

The political and social dimensions make up the entire semantic horizon of the concept of globalization, together with the economic and cultural dimensions. These four main coordinates are interconnected and therefore must be considered dynamically, in a dialectical horizon, so as not to come across insurmountable conceptual difficulties. When we refer to “global politics”, we try to capture the span of the political relations in space and time, as well as the span of power and of the political activity over the boundaries of the modern nation-state. (Holton, 1997, p. 91) During the contemporary period and especially once the Cold War ended, it became ever more obvious that the decisions and actions in one part of the world may soon acquire ramifications at world level. More than that, the places of the political action and decision may be connected by fast communications to the complex decisional or political interaction networks. When the political dimension of the globalization process comes into question, the theorists usually perform an association between the “widening” and the “deepening” of the global political processes, considering that, unlike the cases of the ancient and modern empires, the political action remotely located penetrates more intensely the social and cognitive status of certain political communities. Thus it results that the developments at a global level acquire local consequences almost instantaneously. As such, the idea which refers to a political coordinate of the globalization process has in view the possibility of questioning the traditional distinctions between internal-international, internal-external, territorial politics-non-territorial politics, considering that these ones represent some “conventional” conceptions of the political.

On the contrary, the political theory concerning globalization highlights the wealth and complexity of the interpenetrations which transcend the states and societies in the global order. The basic idea of such an approach is that, although the states and governments stay, of course, powerful actors in the arena of the international relations, they now share the global scene with an entire series of agencies and organizations. The accelerated pace that the globalization process knows imposes the remark that the state is now faced with a huge number of intergovernmental organizations, international agencies, and regimes which operate in various fields, by supranational institutions, such as the European Union. Similar to the multinational corporations, the transnational pressure groups, transnational professional associations, and social movements worldwide, the non-state actors or

transnational bodies intensely participate in the global politics. The same happens in the case of the subnational actors and national pressure groups, the activities of which often impact the international arena as well (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 74).

Such an overview thus shows us that the global arena may be conceived as a mixed system of political actors, being developed in a *polyarchic* manner, a system in which political authority and the sources of political action are spread at a wider level than it used to happen in the modern age, for example. Such an image strongly contrasts with the conventional Westphalian one, based on the state, or with the realistic one of the global political order. The global politics is today anchored not only in the traditional geopolitical preoccupations related to security and the military affairs, but also in a great diversity of economic, social, and ecological issues. Problems such as drugs, pollution, human rights, and terrorism are part of the rising number of the matters dealt with by the transnational politics, which intersects the territorial jurisdictions and the current global political alignments and which needs an international cooperation for an efficient resolution. (Waters, 1995, p. 128)

The defense and security matters no longer dominate the global agenda or the political agendas of the national governments. The concept of “global government” facilitates the formulation of the topic. Global government does not only refer to the formal institutions and organizations through which the rules and norms governing world order are (or are not) elaborated and supported – state institutions, intergovernmental cooperation and so on – but also those organizations and pressure groups – from multinational corporations, transnational social movements, to the plethora of non-governmental organizations – which follow purposes and objectives relevant to the transnational regulation and authority systems.

Clearly, the system of the United Nations Organization, the World Trade Organization, and the multitude of activities of the national governments are part of the important components of the global government, but are not the only ones. If the social movements, non-governmental organizations, regional political associations and so on are excluded from the notion of global government, we will no longer understand its form and dynamics correctly. Global politics implies a wide notion of global government as a necessary element in the changing landscape of the international political life. The increase in the number of new forms of organization and political action reflects the fast expansion of the

transnational connections and the desire of several states concerning the existence of an international government which should deal with the collective political problems. At the same time, it reflects the increasing pressure from the non-governmental bodies for the development of new forms of responsibility in the international political life. In order to capture a few of the changes going on in this field, it is important to understand the concept of “international regime”.

1.2. Paces and Tendencies in International Politics

An international regime may be defined in the terms of the “implied or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decisional procedures around which the actors’ expectations in a certain problems area of the international relations converge”.(Tilly, 1994, p. 251)

The regimes are not only temporary or ad-hoc agreements, they may be considered as variables intervening between the essential power and economic structures of the international system and the actual consequences. For example, the failure of the markets in regulating the offer and distribution of goods and services or in solving the urgent transnational problems may create incentives for the states and political actors in establishing special regimes. The regimes may provide a framework of legal warranties, may improve the available information, may lower the transactional costs of cooperation and may imbue a degree of predictability in otherwise “anarchical” relations. The international regimes are the expression of the necessity to find new ways of cooperation and regulation for the collective problems.

The international regimes mark the increasing institutionalization of the global politics. They constitute forms of the global government, distinct from the traditional notions on government, conceived in the terms of the specific places of the sovereign political power. In the contemporary international system there is not, certainly, any authority above the state. Despite this, the international regulation regimes developed rapidly, reflecting the intensification of the patterns of regional and global involvement. The international regimes cover a wide range from the perspective of the functional sphere, geographical area, and members. From a functional point of view, they vary from the narrow horizon of the agreement concerning the polar bear to the wide preoccupations related to the agreements concerning Antarctica or the extraterrestrial space.

The geographical area comprised may be limited, like the very narrow domain of the regime of the seals in the North Pacific, or wide, as is the case of the regimes for the international air transport (the International Organization of Civil Aviation, the International Association of Air Transport) or for the control of nuclear tests. Concerning the members, the series begins from two or three, similar to the regime for the great depth fishing, established by the International North Pacific Fisheries Convention, and may exceed 100 members, like in the case of the regime of nuclear non-proliferation. Yet, what is amazing is precisely the number of international regimes. Far from being unusual, these are familiar in the international society. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 75)

The international regimes embrace a wide range of actors, including governments, governmental departments, and subnational governmental authorities. Moreover, while a few regimes have at their core an intergovernmental organization, many are much more fluid agreements, being set up following certain treaties, collective political matters or due to an international community of interests.

Thus, the international security regime in Europe is built around the complex relations between certain institutions: North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the EU, the Union of Western Europe (UWE: an organization of collective aspiration of nine Western European states established in 1948), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE: a grouping of 50 states, all of them European, except for the United States and Canada, the main function of which is to favor political stability and military security in Europe). By comparison, the international regime of nuclear nonproliferation is not based on any formal organization, but on an international treaty combined with successive international conferences during which key decisions are made. This regime is similar to the regime of maritime rights, which controls the exploitation of resources on the bottom of the sea. Besides, the international regimes have many basic functions. Some of them do not do anything else than getting involved in surveillance activities: it is the case of the control regimes of weaponry, similar to the regulation concerning the reduction of weaponry in Europe (the *Conventional Forces in Europe* Treaty – CFE), while other regimes set up forums for the collective making of decisions concerning the international property rights, like in the case of assigning radio frequencies or orbits for satellites. Despite the diversity of forms, functions, and establishments, the international regimes express a government system – or, better said, a system of “government without a

government” - in the contemporary world order. (Rosenau, 1990, p. 98) Now an important caution degree must be brought into the discussion on the global politics and government and on the international regimes.

Assessing their impact, especially their relation with the states and world order, it is necessary to think over two issues. First of all, the sovereignty of an individual nation-state is undermined only when it is replaced by “higher” and/or independent, and/or deterritorialized, and/or functional forms of authority, which reduce the justified decisional base in a national framework. As we have shown above, the national sovereignty implies the idea of being entitled to lead a territory delimited by borders and that of political authority within a community, which has the right to determine the set of rules, regulations, and policies and to rule based on these ones. Secondly, thinking about the impact of globalization on the nation-state, it is necessary to make the difference between sovereignty and the autonomy of the state – the capacity that the state holds in formulating and reaching strategic political goals independently.

Therefore, it is essential to ask: has the sovereignty of the nation-state stayed intact, while the autonomy of the state was altered or has the modern state faced a weakening of sovereignty, in the context of the globalization of politics? The question is fundamental. It is important to underline the fact that exploring the globalization of politics does not mean that the modern nation-state vanished, that the sovereignty of the modern state dissolved or that the autonomy of the state has been drastically restricted. These are fundamental issues which require investigation. In analyzing them, in the following we shall study the birth of the global politics, the variable pattern of institutionalization and the development of the infrastructure of political decision at an international, transnational, and global level.

1.3. Political Globalization and the Nation-State

The fundamental transformations described so far synthesize the passing, at first, towards the development of the political communities based on territory, and then to the new era of the global politics and of the multilayered regional and global government. (Risse-Kappen, 1995, p. 47)

The first change is marked by the increasing centralization of the political power in Europe, the sedimentation of the political reports under state structures, the

territorialization of politics, the spreading of the interstate order, the development of the responsibility forms inside certain states and, at the same time, the denial of the responsibility towards others by colonial expansion, conquest, and war.

The second change does not replace the first in all its aspects: governing structures appear both within, and outside the political boundaries, creating a new, multilayered government system. However, the second change is marked by the internationalization and transnationalization of politics, the deterritorialization of some decisional aspects pertaining to the states, the development of the regional and global organizations and institutions, the appearance of the regional and global law system and of a multilayered system of global government, formal and informal. (Risse-Kappen, 1995, p. 48)

This complex order, questioned, intertwined, has profound implications for the nature of the democratic political community. At the end of the second millennium, as we have previously shown, the political communities and civilizations can no longer be characterized as “isolated worlds”; they are involved and rooted in some complex structures of overlaid forces, relations, and movements. Obviously, they are often structured by inequity and hierarchy. But not even the strongest among these - including the most powerful nation-states - remain untouched by the ever changing conditions and processes of regrouping at a regional and global level. Five central points may be retained to facilitate the characterization of the changing relations between the political globalization and the modern nation-states. All these indicate an intensification of the expansion, intensity, velocity, and impact of the political globalization. At the same time, they suggest important notes lining the changing character of the democratic political community.

To start with, the place of the effective political power can no longer be associated with the national governments – the effective power is shared and changed by various forces and agencies at a regional, national, and international level. Secondly, the idea of a political community of destiny – of a self-determining collectivity - can no longer be localized within the boundaries of a single nation-state. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 102)

Some of the most important forces and processes which determine the nature of the life opportunities inside and among the political communities are now beyond the boundary of the individual nation-states. The system of the national political communities, of course, it still present, yet it is formulated and reformulated today with complex processes and economic, organizational, administrative, legal, and

cultural structures which restrict and control its efficiency. Third, it is not stated here that the national sovereignty has been completely undermined, not even in the regions with an extended overlapping and divided political and authoritarian structures. But there are significant areas and regions marked by intertwined loyalties, conflicting interpretations of rights and obligations, interconnected legal and authoritarian structures, etc., which “bite at” the notion of sovereignty as a form of unlimited, indivisible, and exclusive political power.

Functioning in ever more complex regional and global systems affects both their autonomy (by modifying the costs and benefits of policies and by influencing the institutional agenda), as well as their sovereignty (by changing the balance between the juridical frameworks and the national, regional, and international administrative practices).

While the massive concentrations of power stay characteristic of many states, they are most often rooted and formulated in fragmented domains of political authority. Fourth, the last part of the 20th century is marked by a series of new types of “border issues”. We live in a world of the “intertwined destiny communities”, in which the trajectories of each and all states are much more intertwined than they used to be. Given all of the above, new types of issues related to the borders follow. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 103) Of course, in the past, the nation-states used to solve their misunderstandings related to the boundaries by coercive means. But this logic of power is inadequate and unsuited for solving the complex matters, from the economic regulation to the exhaustion of resources and the degradation of the environment, which generate – with an ever higher speed - an intertwining of the nations’ fate.

In a world in which the powerful states make decisions not only for their own peoples, but also for others, and in which the transnational actors and forces cross the borders of the national communities in various ways, the question who, before whom and based on what should answer is not simple at all. (Risse-Kappen, 1995, p. 49) Fifth, the distinctions between the internal and international affairs, the internal and external political matters, the preoccupations of the nation-states concerning sovereignty and the international considerations are no longer that clear. Governments are faced with such problems as drugs, AIDS, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the use of non renewable resources, the administration of nuclear waste, the spreading of mass destruction weaponry and the global warming, which can not longer be treated in these terms.

Moreover, issues such as the localization and the investment strategy of the multinational companies, the regulation of the global financial markets, the threats addressing the fiscal basis of the individual states in the context of a global labor division and of the lack of control over capital question the worth of some of the central instruments of the national economic politics. Actually, in all the major spheres of politics, as the following chapters explain, the involvement of the national political communities in the regional and global flows and processes draws them into an intensive transboundary coordination and regulation. The political space for the development and pursuit of an efficient government and the responsibility of power no longer coincides with a delimited political territory. The contemporary forms of the political globalization involve a deterritorialization of political authority, although it remains to be later specified how far the process goes. (Risse-Kappen, 1995, p. 49)

This study focused on two distinct conceptions on world order and the political organization in the modern world: the one associated with the interstate or geopolitical traditional relations and the one associated with the new framework of politics and global government. It has been argued that the globalization of contemporary politics modifies the basis of the world order by reconstituting the traditional forms of sovereign state and by reordering the international political relations. But these transformative processes are not inevitable from a historical point of view, nor are they completely safe. As a result, the contemporary world order is best perceived as a complex order, questioned and interconnected, in which the interstate system is ever more rooted in the regional and global political networks. The latter represent the fundament by which the political authority and the mechanisms of government are formulated and reformulated.

Referring to the contemporary world order as a complex, questioned, interconnected order means getting aware of the unclear appearances which define the global politics at the end of the millennium. (Tilly, 1994, p. 242) But certain features may be identified, and these ones have been highlighted by exploring the changing form of the international and transnational organizations, by the substantial growth in the number of intergovernmental and international, non-governmental, organizations, the quick development of the various forms of regime, the changing structure of the form, domain, and object of international law, the appearance of regional organizations and institutions, etc. All these developments illustrate a drifting away from the merely etatocentric politics

towards a new, more complex form of the multilayered global government. There are multiple, overlaid political processes, running in the current historic conjecture. This conjecture is not deprived of interesting historic parallels. Particularly the late European middle age resembles the current developments.

The existence, in the medieval period, of a set of authority structures from the local to the transnational and the supranational, coexisting with a system of political units defined territorially, displays resemblances to the contemporary period. This does not mean that fundamental changes did not take place. On the contrary, it suggests that “the new Middle Ages” may be a useful metaphor to the analysis of the present. “The new Middle Ages” represent “a modern and secular equivalent of the type of universal political organization which used to exist in the Western Christianity in the Middle Ages. In this system, no leader or state was sovereign in the sense of being the supreme ruler over a given segment of the Christian population; each had to share authority with the vassals - below - and the Pope and (in Germany and Italy) the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire – above. It may seem ridiculous to imagine a modern and secular homologue of this world with an overlaid authority and multiple loyalties. But there are similarities between it and the type of world order described in the previous pages. It is common for the current sovereign states to share the scene of the world politics with other actors, as, in the medieval times, the state had to share the scene with other associations. (Tilly, 1994, p. 242)

If the modern states got to share the authority over their citizens and the ability to rouse their loyalty, on the one hand, with regional and world authorities, and on the other hand, with the understate and subnational ones, to such an extent that the concept of sovereignty would no longer apply, then it could be said that a neo-medieval form of the universal political order came into being. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 110)

Although the concept of sovereignty (Maftei, 2010, p. 51) did not become redundant, the state sovereignty struggles today for its recognition with new forms of political power and places of authority. A neo-medieval world order may be considered one in which the political space and the continuous political community are shaped by the territorial boundary of state sovereignty, but not exclusively. A first illustration of this is the European Union, which is made of overlaid authorities and questioned loyalties. In this regard, the EU represents a permanent fight or a “search for new political spaces” and, dramatically, it raises the matter of

the suitable place for authority, action, and responsibility: the nation-state or the international body?

2. The Social Coordinate of Globalization

2.1. The Issue of Community Security

Each of the theories on the social-historical process of globalization, previously discussed, identifies the phenomenon by certain trajectories of social change. Each of these describes the process differently, simultaneously offering some predictions concerning an emergent global society. There is, however, a certain common ground between these theoretical models, meaning that each of them, when they propose their own perspective on the globalization of the social architecture of modernity, they do it invoking the causes and effects of the social coordinate of globalization. Certainly, all four fundamental dimensions of the globalization process, analyzed both in the previous study, and in the current one, must be understood from the perspective of an inextricable interconnection. These considerations lead us to the argument – supported, among others, by the American sociologist Howard Perlmutter (Perlmutter, 1991, pp. 898, 902-906) – according to which the social globalization may be seen as the essential aspect of a true global civilization. The explanation given by Perlmutter to the social causes and effects of the globalization process represents an underlining of the fact that the global interconnections taking place at all levels actually represent the new “global society”. Thus, instead of looking at the social organization of humanity along a vertical line, which forms a hierarchical arrangement of the nation-states function to their importance in the international context, we should understand it as a universal community, which practically shares the same “destiny”.

The global interaction models, ever more widely spread today, combined with the dissemination of some universal values (concerning the environment or human rights; for example), prove the actual existence of this global society. At the same time, the complex network of transnational ties, which relates communities to individuals beyond the national boundaries, undermines the image of a humanity “imprisoned” inside the limits of the national societies, suggesting the one of a humanity organized horizontally, socially speaking, in a multitude of communities or social interaction systems which overlap and are mutually pervious. Despite the fact that most social theorists insist upon the “western origin” of the globalization

process, Perlmutter does not equal it to “Westernization”. On the contrary, the author believes that globalization is a complex process, emphasizing the transformation of the practices specific to the Western societies (from kitchen and life style to medicine and ethnical cleavages) under the influence of the global spreading of non-Western social practices and values. The conclusion seems to be that globalization is responsible for creating a world civilization in which there is a dynamic form of “social syncretization”. The latter is defined by Perlmutter as “the reconciliation or union attempt of some different and opposed principles and practices, like in philosophy or religion”. (Perlmutter, 1991, p. 911) In this theorist’s vision, the global society is a much more pluralistic and decentered construction than the traditional models, hierarchized and ordered, of the national societies. Besides, for most post-modern sociologists, not even the latter may be conceived as strongly integrated and structured systems, from a social point of view. (Bauman, 1992, p. 350)

The implication is that, in a post-modern world, of social and cultural crumbling and of an increasing decentralization of the political power, the process of globalization reformulates, at a global scale, the pluralism, syncretism, and diversity of the contemporary society. Against such a perspective, the theorists belonging to the neo-Marxist tradition argued that this one fails, since it does not identify the power structures created by the process of globalization. It is thus claimed, together with the integration of the former command economies in Eastern Europe and the space of the former Soviet Union into the global economy, that the global expansion of capitalism seems more pronounced than ever. Therefore, instead of thinking of the current era as one of the emergence of a “global civilization”, we would be much more entitled to consider that we are talking about the final consolidation of a “global capitalist society”. This happens because there is a single factor of the material welfare of the globe’s population – namely, the dynamics of the capitalist world economy.

Arguing that there is just one economy, capitalist in nature, at world level, means becoming aware – the neo-Marxists claim – that the development of the constitutive parts of economy (states, individuals, communities, and companies), is directly dependent upon the functioning of the whole. Beyond the possible appearance of a fragmentation, the nature of the global markets and the global mobility of capital indicate the fact that only certain states can come out of the logic of the global capitalist economy. As Harvey and Jameson (Harvey, 2002, p.

133); (Jameson, 1991, p. 83) claim, in the last decades, capitalism expanded and, due to the new communication and control technologies, it became much more mobile. Even more, the authors show that this “increase” of capitalism may be associated with the profound transformations concerning the nature of the global capitalist order. A new form of global capitalism (“late capitalism”, “disorganized capitalism” or “transnational capitalism”) expanded worldwide. Together with this expansion, a consolidation of the social capitalist relations at a global level also took place.

The main consequence is that the ones excluded or offering resistance to this process of global transformation will become even more marginalized. Thus, within the global capitalist society, the transnational integration processes coexist simultaneously with the national disintegration ones, as certain communities are incorporated into the world economic system, while others stay out. According to this theory, within the same state, the same community or even on the same street, there will be people whose lives are related to the “transnational capitalism” and others who will be victims or will live on its outskirts. In the vision of the authors mentioned, maybe the most visible “agent” of this new form of global capitalist order is represented by the transnational corporations.

Production, trade, and finances are now organized on a transnational basis, so that they should reach a maximum economic advantage in a world in which competition is ever fiercer. Thinking in territorially-limited terms, talking about the “British economy” or the “American economy” means eluding the complex transnational networks of production, finances, and economic activities which turn national borders into some meaningless “obstacles”; as Anthony King (King, 1990, p. 69) suggested, “Germany's greatest industrial city is Sao Paolo, in Brazil”. Along such networks there is also an extended area consecrated to the interaction of the elites, so that certain theorists claimed that these ones reunite in order to give birth to a transnational capitalist class, which holds a class strategic consciousness.

This social change towards a global capitalist order, more complex and more differentiated spatially, also contributed to the “internationalization” of states, these ones being compelled to cooperate more intensely at a global level. A large series of international, global or regional institutions (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the ones of the European Union) have been set up to manage the problems associated with the new global capitalist order. Beyond the two theoretical perspectives rendered above, from the point of view of the analysis on

the social dimension of globalization, a few questions stay essential: how do these social changes affect the life of the various communities and, in particular, the daily life of individuals? What are the causes of social changes and the consequences thereof? In one of Giddens' expressions, if we "take globalization seriously", what may we expect, from a social point of view, from this process? In political science, just like in the theory of international relations, the world system was usually theorized in dualistic terms. Thus, it was argued that, although the world globalizes at an economic, political, and social-cultural level, the nation-states will continue to represent a "primary location" as to sovereignty and the decision making process.

As the issues appearing in the context of the social coordinate of globalization depend, to a certain extent, on the dissolution of state sovereignty, from the perspective of the social theory on globalization, we consider that a few remarks concerning this matter are necessary. At a certain level of analysis, it may be ascertained that the idea of sovereignty supposes, in the contemporary period, several meanings. (Joffe, 1999, pp. 122-128) Thus, we are talking about the interdependent sovereignty, which, basically, is not more than the sovereignty of the nation-state, yet affected by the process of globalization, since the state structure can no longer control the "leakage" of people, goods, polluters, etc. over its borders. Some authors claim that this type of sovereignty existed since the appearance of the nation-states, since they have always depended on each other concerning resources, mutual support or security.

Another meaning of the term is given by the domestic sovereignty, part of the logic of state control, in the sense that no state can exist in the absence thereof. Therefore, it may be claimed that this type of sovereignty, although also affected by globalization, is present at the level of the nation-state, as, in the absence thereof, it would be doomed to disappearance. A different meaning of the concept is offered by that which, in juridical terms, constitutes the legal international sovereignty, which implies the recognition of the status of a nation-state by the international community and, more than that, its acceptance as an equal entity, from a legal point of view, as well as the recognition of the diplomatic immunity of its representatives. Formally, this meaning of sovereignty is not eroded by the process of globalization either. Finally, the Westphalian model of sovereignty follows, which includes the principle of non interfering, a model already obsolete, in the opinion of some specialists in international relations, in the context of the

actual transformations and global relations. It may be noticed that, among the four meanings of sovereignty, only two maintain in the framework of the globalization process: the domestic sovereignty (the possibility conditions of which appear from within the nation-state) and the legal international sovereignty, which results from outside, according to the provisions of international law. Following this perspective, a theorist like David Held advances the argument that the nation-state is fundamentally affected by globalization and that the political decision activity is ever more concentrated on the social matters representing a product of global interdependence. (Held, 1991, pp. 207-209)

Held's argument develops in several stages. First of all, the author points out, the growth of the economic and social-cultural connections reduces the power and efficiency of the national governments, in the sense that these ones can no longer manage the transfer of the economic ideas and values across their borders, and so the instruments of the internal politics become inefficient. Second, the power of the nation-states is reduced because of the transnational processes, which grew both in number, and by spatial expansion. Third, many of the traditional areas of responsibility of the nation-states (the ones concerning security, communications or the macroeconomic management) are now coordinated from an international or intergovernmental level. It thus results that the nation-states are compelled to "surrender" sovereignty to political units (such as the EU, ASEAN), multilateral treaties (NATO, OPEC) or international organizations (UNO, IMF) located above them. Held's conclusion is that we are at the emergence moment of a "global governing" system, which has its own policy of development and its own administrative mechanisms. On the other side, authors such as Giddens (Giddens, 1987, p.123) or McGrew (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 111) underline that it is not necessary to prove the decline of the nation-state in order to highlight the dimensions of the globalization process. And this because, the authors mentioned claim, the emergence of the nation-states itself is a product of this process.

Returning to the issue of the social globalization, the question which arises is: given that the nation-state is affected by the issue of sovereignty, what happens at a social level and, if there are transformations in this framework as well, how can they be explained? In the social theory of globalization, two main explanatory models took shape.

The first tries to explain the relation between the dissolution of the sovereignty of the nation-state and the social dimension of globalization through the agency of the concept of ontological security of the individuals and social groups, which supposes breaking the traditional ties specific to the national societies, because of the transformations of the social relations with the progress of globalization.

The second model emphasizes the social tendencies opposing the progress of globalization. Theorizing, together with other authors, about the institutional dimensions of the globalization process, Anthony Giddens formulates the characteristics of the global condition of society, highlighting the “connections between the emergence and spreading of capitalism, industrialism, and the nation-state system”. (Giddens, 1987, p. 288) In this context, the social globalization is understood as being a process which means “(...) more than the diffusion of the Western institutions around the world, diffusion within which the other social-cultural values are annihilated. On the contrary, the social globalization supposes a complex process, led by a number of distinct factors, but which intersect; it is a process of unequal development, just as fragmented as its coordinates.” (Giddens, 1995, p. 194) This fragmentation, as well as the deterritorialization, determined by the territorial distancing, lead to the appearance of a new type of social relations. When he refers to the modification of the social relations, which occurs with post-modernity, Giddens keeps into focus what he calls “ontological security”. Thus, he notices that, with the progress of the globalization process of society, a particular phenomenon occurs, which affects the ontological security both at the level of communities, and of individuals; in the spheres of daily life, created by the expansion of capitalism and of the consumption society, the areas of the “significant” existence withdraw ever more, on the one hand, towards the private space, towards the intimacy of personal relations, and on the other hand, towards the arenas of the “mass rituals”, such as the ones exemplified by the grand sports competitions. Under these new terms of social life, the ontological security of the individuals involved in the pulse of society life is more fragile than in those societies still in modernity, still dominated by certain traditions.

As such, the circumscription of a unique social space - sometimes also called “postmodern hyperspace” - may endanger the identitarian security of the various individuals and communities. This supposes transforming the social relations, because of the overlapping of time and space, which makes, as Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2000, pp. 10-30) suggests, “the other” become more and more “absent”.

The modification of the significance of social relations may be conceptualized, in Giddens's opinion, by the formulation of what he calls "the time of the world", a time made of several stages, which finally coincide with the stages marking, with the progress of the social globalization, the gradual disappearance of the ontological security characteristic of modernity.

The first stage, in which signs of the existence of the ontological security may still be noticed, considers the ways of social life, which are "suffocated" by what the author calls "primordial feelings", and the fact that conflicts, disputes, and tensions (such as in the period between the second half of the 19th century and the postwar period) are present, forms a framework within which the ontological security is supported.

The second stage concerns the conditions of daily life, in which routine generally replaced tradition - kept by modern societies, still - and in which what is significant for the community and the individual withdrew towards the limit between the public and the private. This is a moment when the ontological security of the various social groups and individuals starts to be threatened, although feelings such as the ones generated by a common language or the belonging to a national community still contribute to its survival.

The third and last stage identified by Giddens as marking "the time of the world" is one in which radical social changes take place (such as, for instance, the mobilization for a war or the complications that the globalization process implies for the identity of some communities), which affect the population as a whole, not only the specialists who could provide solutions and, precisely because of that, it may result in the annihilation of the ontological security. Moreover, it may be underlined that the postmodern game of the "presence" and "absence" that we mentioned above, noticeable in the context of the relations that are established today not only in the virtual space of the communication networks (an example is the Internet), but also between various social actors, often lacking identity or displaying a partial identity, deepen the feeling of ontological insecurity.

Another personal vision on the "time of the world" is expressed by Malcolm Waters, trying to determine the evolution of the globalization process in all its aspects. (Waters, 1995, p. 159) In this author's vision, the recent stage of acceleration of globalization may be attributed to the "explosion" of economic-social-cultural signs and symbols associated with the overcoming of modernity. In Waters' opinion, the social dimension of globalization, become predominant

towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of our century, is explained by such factors as the international political relations (marked by the crises of the nation-state), at their turn affected by the crises experienced by the capitalist world system. According to this representation, the social globalization, rendered here by the concept of global “idealization”, will lead to the political disetatzation of the nation-state, being corroborated, at the same time, with the appearance, at an economic level, of the consumerist life style, expanded globally.

Such an explanation seems to be advanced by John Holton as well, who underlines, however, that it is an error of understanding to believe that globalization, as a process which erodes the nation-state, takes the same form in the case of all states. (Holton, 1997, p. 91) He shows that, in the international arena, the position of some “powerful players”, such as the United States, Japan or Germany, blatantly contrasts with that of such states as Bangladesh or Mozambique. However, it is certain, Holton shows, that there is an insurmountable reality concerning the crisis of the nation-state, as the latter, at its turn, also affects the social life of the various national communities.

Distinguishing between state and national community (actually, a new term for society), Holton seeks to emphasize two issues involved in the circumscription of the future of the nation-state in an era of globalization. “The first issue [is] that of maintaining the state sovereignty by reference to the economic activities which overpass its boundaries. The second issue, that of the national integrity of a community, brings forth the question of the social-cultural identity.” (Holton, 1997, p. 85)

In the opinion of the author quoted, these are influenced not only by the internal social-cultural composition of a given community, but also by the global tendencies, such as the international migration on the labor market, the globalization of some cultural industries as music and film or the social-cultural impact of some international bodies in those areas which deal with matters of human rights or citizenship. Thus, here, the fundamental question become if nations, as distinct social-cultural entities, will be eroded by the social-cultural globalization (as the political globalization erodes the nation-state) and, in the case this does not happen, if nationalism will constitute the major hindrance before the global social-cultural tendencies. Trying to offer a solution, Holton argues that, in order for the sovereignty of the nation-state to subsist, in any form, it is necessary that the states remain institutions the action capacities of which serve certain

particular sets of interests. These capacities involve various decision areas, from formulating the norms of the economic activity or regulating the industrial relations, and up to the fiscal policy, as well as the capacity to legitimize certain institutional arrangements.

These explanatory models, both the one invoked by Giddens, and the one belonging to Waters or Holton, aim to analyze the aspects of the social dimension of globalization, as well as their impact on the global society system. What they have in common is the fact that both visions relate these aspects to the development of the economic relations specific to the global capitalism (and especially to its crises), but also to the substantial modification, particularly in the last century, of the scene of the international relations.

1.2. Perspectives on Social Identity

The issue of the “social consciousness”, both at the level of the social groups (even of the very large ones, such as the national ones), and at the level of the individual, is related, in the context of the “new sociology of globalization”, to the syntagm of consumerist global culture. How was the emergence of such a culture at global level possible? A short historical detour presents the world system before 1945 as one in which the basic unit was expressed by the nation-state. Beyond this, the idea of the national social-cultural space seemed to be the final purpose of mankind. The postwar period is one in which what is still called cultural imperialism emerges, and which stemmed from two power blocks and in two different ideological fields: the capitalist one, American in nature, and the Soviet one, with a “stone-still” economy. Between these, Europeanism aimed at being “a third path”. In fact, what both types of imperialism obstinately tried to solve was the issue of an alternative to the social-cultural identity of the individuals’ members of the national communities. When we speak of imperialism, we must keep in mind the principled distinction between the one characteristic of the colonial era, which was a national one, and the one specific to the postwar period, which is, by excellence, one with universal valences. (Smith, 1994, p. 175) So, it would seem that a global social-cultural space may be established on the ruins of this imperialism, since almost the same purpose is followed; the idea of such a space, of a global social consciousness, is meant to be an alternative to the one of the national social-cultural identity, which hung on up to post-modernity, despite all influences. At present, the idea of national identity is still present, and the emergence of a global

social consciousness would mean transcending what this one, together with the cultural identity specific to a given community, particularizes. But which would be the basis on which this new social consciousness at a global level could be founded, as an alternative to the national social consciousness? Starting from the existence of the global economic relations, a global social consciousness could be founded on the presence of an interdependent system of communication, which would act like a technical environment (“the symbol of the Cold War was a wall, which separated the world, that of globalization is the World Wide Web, which unites the whole world”, Thomas Friedman (Constantinescu, 1999, p. 29) writes, on top of which other layers would be laid, among which the most important one seems to be what Smith calls the level of “hybridization”, made of the mingling of some customized social-cultural motifs, specific to different communities, motifs which, by this hybridization, become denationalized. (Smith, 1994, p. 176)

It may be noticed that the technical environment which makes the emergence of the global social consciousness possible supposes the risk of it being touched by artificiality. In other words, with an expression utilized by the sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Berger, Luckmann, 1999, p. 112), “the social construction of the” global “reality” is an artificial one. The existence of the technical environment of the global communication system is not the only one entitling this intermediate conclusion, but also the idea transmitted by the level of hybridization, which supposes a combination between the various elements of the various social-cultural identities “participating” in the formation of the global social consciousness. Or, this social-cultural hybridization is, by excellence, an artificial, even ideological, creation. On the other hand, although its coming into being does not necessarily depend on space-time limits, a certain national social-cultural identity becomes, in time, circumscribed to these ones; inside them, the national community also confers upon its members, thus, upon individuals, a certain existential safety, or, in Giddens’ terms, ontological security. When a national community, aware of itself, autonomizes itself within the boundaries of a nation-state, as it happened, for instance, in the Western Europe of the second half of the 19th century, its social-cultural identity becomes bound by space and time. Besides the capacity to manage its own resources and to carry on wars, one of the necessary conditions for the appearance of the modern nation-state was that of a relatively protected position in space and time.

But, as we have shown in the previous section, the process of globalization imposes a new space-time challenge, a challenge which affects the ontological security of the communities and individuals composing them. For, as homogenous as the global social space seems to become, as divided it is in reality, by virtue of the universalizing logic – particularization which characterizes the globalization process. The theorists of this social-historical process suggest that the existence of communities not only national, but also local, rebelling against the decisions of the central “elite” (be it located at the level of the supranational political institutions, as is the EU, or the national one), trying to impose their own normative model and to constitute their own elites and authorities, is possible precisely due to the fact that these communities do not show less will for power than the elite the authority of which they are rejecting. (Armulescu, 2001, p. 214) More than that, the denial of the decisional role of the central authority (the power of which is yet “disseminated” in the territory) is suspected of anarchist tendencies, for, in the absence of some criteria of translocal span, anything can equal anything else. Placed in a different perspective, various theorists pertaining to the post-modernism trend answer such objections invoking the legitimate right of every individual to create a new community or to adhere to one, without taking into account ethnicity, tradition or the existing model, but only function to his or her beliefs, vocabulary, and interests. (Rorty, 1999, p. 134) But could the new global consciousness, beyond the artificiality already noticed, be a possible answer to such challenges of post-modernity? Certainly, the analysis of the dimensions of globalization allows the idea of the resemantization of the issue of the relation between the individual and the authority, between the individual and the community elite, aspects also pictured by an author such as Friedman: “Consequently, we have today not only a super-power, not only super-markets, but also super-empowered individuals now capable of acting at world scene without any of the traditional mediations of the governments, corporations or any other public or private institutions.” (Constantinescu, 1999, p. 37)

Thus, the global social consciousness lies with those individuals who take an identity which overpasses the one of the local-national community. Nevertheless, the new global social consciousness is one diffuse in space, as it lacks a deeply rooted past, given precisely the artificiality by which it is marked. We are actually speaking of a social-cultural construction diffuse in space, quickly transmissible in time, which does nothing more than offering some “technical” solutions to the “technical” problems generated by the social dimension of the globalization

process. The features of this global social consciousness would be the following: eclecticism, universalism, timelessness (meaning the lack of history). Unlike this one, the social-cultural identity of a national community (basically, just another collective identity, but relatively delimited and stable in space and time) is characterized by particularism, temporality, and expressiveness. These ones comprise certain feelings and values concerning the sense of continuity of a certain human community, its shared memories, as well as the common destiny of the individuals composing it. The social-cultural identity cannot be defined structurally or systemically, but only in the terms of some subjective feelings. The community's identity is, certainly, a collective one; but it is one of the multiple identities which, today, a community may take. Because a collective identity (as the global social consciousness seeks to be), analyzed from a general perspective, may exist function to a region, community/society, ethnicity, religion or culture, each of these answering a complex and sometimes ambiguous meaning, depending on certain circumstances. (von Benda-Beckman, Erkuyten, 1995, p. 15) Thus, it is noted that a collective identity, as the one of a national community, is marked by eclecticism, as it also happens in the case of the emergent global social consciousness.

Nevertheless, we can underline that the eclecticism of such an identity operates within some strict social-cultural constraints, which relate to the specific conditions of the development of the national communities. Certainly, a global social consciousness, in tight interconnections with the economic and political globalization processes, can be built. But, precisely because it can be built, due to the mediative and communication techniques, it stays prone to artifice. The same is also valid, we believe, for an emergent individual identity, cosmopolitan, global, as there is not any memory of the world which could unite, from a historical-temporal perspective, all of the "atoms" of humanity (Smith, 1994, p. 180). The attempt to build a global social consciousness and, based on this one, a global identity, rebrings into focus the internal dynamics (dialectics) of the globalization process. The most varied communities, be they nation-states or ethnical groups, promptly react to the tendency of imposing a global identity.

The local, regional, or national community spirit stays active in most parts of the globe, and this tendency of mutual opposition is, as we have already suggested, an integrant part of the globalization process. The various communities react differently to the social-cultural pressure to which they are submitted. Therefore,

the social theory of globalization claims that this process does not necessarily involve homogeneity and integration. However, globalization involves interdependence and deterritorialization. These globalizing tendencies may be “answered” in at least two ways by the communities of various degrees: a) Translation, which represents a syncretic answer by which the social groups which take on more than one social-cultural identity try to develop new forms of expression, entirely separated from their origins; b) Tradition, which supposes the resurgence of nationalism, of ethnical or religious fundamentalism, as well as other forms of local loyalty, essentially attempts to rediscover the forgotten origins of certain given communities. Thus it seems that, indeed, the new global “social consciousness” may find development resources only artificially, so that the core difficulty of any construction project of the global identity is that the collective identity is always specific, from a historical point of view, relying on shared memories and on a sense of continuity among generations.

3. Conclusions

In the context of this study, we understood globalization as a real process, a continuum, together with its local, regional, and national implications. At one end of this continuous line there are the political and social relations and networks, organized locally and/or nationally, and at the other end there are the political and social relations and networks which take shape at the wider scale of the regional and local interactions. We have specified, from the very beginning, that there is a high degree of connexity between the two dimensions of the globalization process, which we then treated separately.

Thus, referring to the political dimension, we tried to demonstrate that the globalization of politics does not mean that the modern nation-state vanished, that the sovereignty of the modern state dissolved or that the autonomy of the state has been drastically restricted. Thus, we have considered several aspects which support our hypotheses. To start with, we noticed that the place of the effective political power can no longer be associated with the national governments – the effective power is shared and changed by various forces and agencies at a regional, national, and international level. Secondly, we showed that the idea of a political community of destiny – of a self-determining collectivity - can no longer be localized within the boundaries of a single nation-state. Some of the most important forces and processes which determine the nature of the life opportunities inside and among the

political communities are now beyond the limit of the individual nation-states. The system of the national political communities, of course, it still present, yet it is formulated and reformulated today with complex processes and economic, organizational, administrative, legal, and cultural structures which restrict and control its efficiency. Third, it is not stated here that the national sovereignty has been completely undermined, not even in the regions with an extended overlapping and divided political and authoritarian structures. But there are significant areas and regions marked by intertwined loyalties, conflicting interpretations of rights and obligations, interconnected legal and authoritarian structures, etc., which “bite at” the notion of sovereignty as a form of unlimited, indivisible, and exclusive political power. Functioning in ever more complex regional and global systems affects both their autonomy (by modifying the costs and benefits of policies and by influencing the institutional agenda), as well as their sovereignty (by changing the balance between the juridical frameworks and the national, regional, and international administrative practices). Concerning the social dimension of this process, we have stated that, at present, the idea of national identity is still present, and the emergence of a global social consciousness would mean transcending what this one, together with the cultural identity specific to a given community, particularizes. The question which we have tried to answer is the following: what is the basis on which this new social consciousness at a global level could be founded, as an alternative to the national social consciousness? Starting from the existence of the global economic relations, a global social consciousness could be founded on the presence of an interdependent system of communication, which would act like a technical environment, on top of which other layers would be laid, among which the most important one seems to be what is called the level of “hybridization”, made of the mingling of some customized social-cultural motifs, specific to different communities, motifs which, by this hybridization, become denationalized.

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