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The Analytical Framework of the
Conceptualization of Globalization

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Abstract: The globalization phenomenon represents a timely experience of our world. Due to the technological, cultural, economic, social, political, military, and other, progress, there is the perception that some phenomena in one part of the world have a global impact, not only a strictly local or regional one. Theoretical models both in the Anglo-Saxon space and in the French one consider that four main coordinates may be described in the framework of globalization: economic, political, social, and cultural. The nation-state becomes a concept which has to be reevaluated in the present context of globalization. We refrained from considering the process of globalization in a strictly determinist manner. According to Giddens, we shall be able to consider globalization much more lucratively for our theoretical endeavor in a multicausal, dialectic logic, as we shall include contradictory concepts in the first instance, in a more general framework. We shall consider that the difference among the theorists of globalization may be understood if we permanently keep in sight the difference between a monocausal logic and a multicausal one. The most lucrative, for our endeavor, is to place ourselves in a multicausal intelligibilization horizon and this because we shall consider that the four main coordinates: economic, political, social, and cultural make a differentiated conceptual universe in the first instance, yet perfectly harmonized in the semantic universe of the concept of globalization.

Keywords: globalization; analysis of globalization; Giddens; world dynamics; multicausal logic of globalization

The phenomenon called globalization is of primary importance for the actual context of the international relations. It also bears a complexity which must not be overlooked or simplistically treated. I propound an analysis of this phenomenon, analysis which shall cover three sections. In the first section represented by this article, we shall refer to the theoretical intelligibilization framework of globalization. In the second section, which will constitute the object of a future article, I shall be referring to the political and social dimensions of globalization. The third section, which will complete this concept, shall be dedicated to the economic and cultural dimensions of globalization. Globalization is an experience of the contemporary world, and the concept refers, in its whole, to the fact that our world transforms into a common social space, under the influence of the economic and technological forces. At the same time, there is a perception on the fact that the progress in one region of the world may deeply impact the individuals or communities in other parts of the world. The contemporary analyses insist upon four main coordinates of this phenomenon, namely: economical, political, social, and cultural, some theorists examining them as a whole, with others opting for a differentiated research thereof. In the academic world, there is a dispute on the manner in which the process of globalization should be conceptualized, as well as on the manner to consider its causal dynamics. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 39) Thus, in the specialty literature on the

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matter it may be ascertained that there are disagreements, on the one hand, between the British and the French theorists, and on the other, between the economists and the researchers in the other social-humanities fields, concerning the notion which should be used to most adequately describe the tendencies of the evolutionary process of the modern world (globalization versus mundialization) and the meaning to be conferred upon these ones. In this context, the following question arises: are we talking about the same semantics or are we merely assisting to a false Anglo-French debate, and a misunderstanding among the researchers in the various social-humanities fields, respectively? (Turliuc, 2002, pp. 21-36) If, in the works of the Anglo-Saxon authors, the term of "globalization" is mainly used, the European authors, especially the francophone ones, prefer the term of "mundialization". However, it is obvious that the terms present the same suffix, which rather refers to a process, a set of active phenomena which can be analyzed in time (and in the terms of the dynamics of evolution, ruptures, strategies, actions, reactions, and actors) and not to the state of being of an object, which displays certain characteristics (aspect which can be interpreted in the statistical terms of structure, system, etc.).

In this context, the use of the term of "globalization" does not necessarily refer to a strictly economic understanding thereof, but it is given by the use, most of the time during our review, of the specialty Anglo-Saxon literature. Therefore, we prefer to use globalization, as a real process, a continuum, together with the terms of local, regional, and national. At one end of this continuous line there are the political, social, economic, and cultural relations and networks, organized locally and/or nationally, and at the other end there are the political, social, economic, and cultural relations and networks which take shape at the wider scale of the regional and local interactions. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 39)

Starting from this initial remark, we shall try to delimitate the analytical framework of the globalization process, a process which holds several different stages as regards temporality, and which involves certain structural modifications at a political, social, economic, and cultural level. It is why we are again interested in a conceptual delimitation of the dimensions of globalization. This understanding of the phenomena taking place at a global level does not however invalidate the interpretation of globalization as a set of interconnections, of interactions which take place between different agents, because they are represented by nation-states or by multi and transnational companies. And this because we believe that the process of globalization involves the existence of certain interconnections, on the one hand, among its different dimensions (political, social, economic, and cultural), and on the other hand, among the actors taking part in redefining relations at an international level. (Golopenţia, 2001, pp. 218-221) To this effect, the analysis of globalization as a social-historical process proposes a critical research of the main explanatory patterns in literature, starting from the so-called "classical" ones belonging to authors such as Immanuel Wallerstein, James Rosenau or Robert Gilpin, and reaching to the ones specific to the postmodern theorists, such as Roland Robertson, Anthony Giddens or David Harvey. As such, the research on the dimensions of globalization is related to the social postmodern situation, in which the territorial boundaries of the nation-states can no longer prevent the "leakage" of economic, social, political, and cultural values and symbols, so the concepts of the social theory of modernity, such as "state" and "society", must be reevaluated. Certainly, we do not think of globalization in deterministic terms, as a process led by historical forces. On the contrary, the main assumption of our research is that the social-historical process of globalization is a contingent and dialectical one, subsidiarily involving a dynamic, multicausal, often contradictory, logic, based on a series of binary dualities or oppositions, such as universalism versus particularism, homogeneity versus differentiation, integration versus fragmentation, centralization versus decentralization, and juxtaposition versus syncretization. All of

these involve, as we try to demonstrate during the first section, a logic marked by a condition unequally experienced in time and discontinuously developed in space. Besides, the postmodern analyses on the process of globalization emphasize the importance of space-and-time in the reconfiguration of the modern world.

The first one among these is the political coordinate and, as such, we considered it necessary to mainly focus on the paces and tendencies present in the international politics of contemporaneousness, as well as on the manner in which political globalization influenced the evolution of the nation-state, the norm and primary unit of analysis in the context of the international political relations from modern age up to today. The social coordinate of globalization starts from the analysis of the "ontological security" specific to the communities in the contemporary world. Theorized by Giddens, this issue represents an important aspect in the framework of the globalization process, mainly referring to the social consequences this process has upon the collectivities in the new world order. At the same time, we are also considering the matter of social identity, both of the individuals in the globalization era, and of the communities that they compose, be these ones at a local, regional, national or supranational level.

We relate the economic coordinate of globalization to all the other dimensions, considering that the process of globalization is practically made of an interrelation of all the aspects involved by the new developmental conditions of social life. Thus, we consider the relation between the global capitalism and the national economies and we also take into consideration the consequences involved by the new global economy at the social level. The cultural coordinate of globalization is the last piece of this conceptual puzzle. Although, basically, globalization refers to an empirical condition concerning the complex connexity ubiquitous in today's world, we are interested in the way by which the new global technologies determine the creation of a global cultural space, as well as the part played by culture in the context of the globalization process. We do not claim that we shall approach all the important aspects that this process involves. Our purpose has been a "narrower one": that of outlining the main elements which "compose" the process of globalization, a process which equally influences both the life of communities, and of individuals.

An empirical approach of globalization presents this process as a widening, deepening, and acceleration of the interconnection at world level in all the aspects of the contemporary social life, from culture to criminality, from finances to spirituality. Contemporary research shows that globalization can best be perceived as a process or set of processes rather than a singular state. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 51) It does not reflect a simple linear logic of development, nor does it prefigure a global society or community. In exchange, it reflects the appearance of the interregional interaction and exchange networks and systems. The spatial span and the density of the global and transnational interconnection weave the relation networks among communities, states, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations, which make up the global order. These interweaving and interacting networks define an evolutionary structure which imposes constrains and, at the same time, confers power upon communities. In this regard, globalization is similar to a process of "structuring", by that that it is a product of both individual actions, and cumulative interactions among the numerous agencies and institutions on the globe. Few are those areas of social life to escape the influence of the globalization process. From this perspective, globalization is best perceived as a differentiated social phenomenon, with multiple facets.

Yet, in order to circumscribe the analytical framework from the perspective of which we proposed to study the dimensions of globalization, it is necessary to keep in mind that, even though there are important continuities with the previous historical stages, the contemporary aspects of globalization

constitute a distinct historical form, in itself a product of a unique conjecture of political, economic, social, and cultural forces. Thus, it may be considered that the fundamental aspects of the globalization process may be described in the following terms (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 477):

1) Spatial-temporal aspect: The historically unprecedented extension, intensity, rapidity, and impact propensity of the global flows, interactions, and networks, comprising all social areas;

2) Organizational aspect: The unprecedented institutionalization and organization of the political, economic, social, and cultural power relations across the world by new control and communication infrastructures. Globalization is far from being a "chaotic" process and constitutes, on the contrary, the object of some new forms of multilateral regulation and stratified government;

3) Conjectural aspect: There is a unique confluence of the globalizing influences in all the areas of social life, from the political one to the ecological one;

4) Reflexivity aspect: There is a world elite in development, as well as a popular consciousness of global interconnection emphasized by the globalization of the communication infrastructures and the mass-media industries (such as satellite television or the Internet). In comparison with the end of the 19th century, when it was defined as a coercive project of forming global empires or of geopolitics, globalization currently reflects the varied and conscious political or economic projects of the national elites and transnational social forces, which often promote contradictory visions on the world order;

5) Objectionable aspect: The ever more acute awareness of the presence of a globalization process encouraged its questioning in all fields, from the cultural one to the military one, while the states, citizens, and social movements try to oppose or to control the effects thereof. Moreover, the institutionalization of modern politics transformed the objection and control politics on globalization, which used to be, at the beginning of the century, only an internal affair of empires, into a global politics of establishing the agenda, formation of coalitions, and multilateral regulation;

6) Regionalization aspect: While the beginning of the 20th century testified to the expansion of the global empires, its end saw the crumbling thereof and the significant regionalization of the political, economic, social, and cultural relations worldwide. Yet, unlike the previous periods, when the empires and ideological blocks had as purpose the autonomous development, the contemporary regionalization and globalization processes mostly became tendencies which emphasize each other mutually in the context of the global political economy;

7) Westernization aspect: The greatest part in the history of globalization was represented by the evolution of Westernization and its questioning all around the globe. Albeit still greatly asymmetrical, the contemporary features of globalization, in the political, economic, social, and cultural areas became less Eurocentric or Atlantocentric as compared to the ones at the beginning of the 20th century;

8) Territoriality aspect: Globalization consistently contributed, along centuries, to the tracing and retracing of boundaries and political jurisdictions. But the reorganization of the economic, social, and cultural space suggested by the contemporary forms of globalization, in the context of the territorially stable communities, brings forth the territorial principle as the one and only base for organizing political government and exercising political authority. Thus, territory and territoriality stay just as politicized as they used to be in the age of the global empires, although, at present, the threats against the territorial integrity of the nation-state are no longer just external or military;

9) The aspect of state forms: In time, various forms of globalization have been associated with various state forms. Compared with the beginning of the 20th century, the contemporary government is a "large government", to the extent in which the states are spending a considerable percentage of the

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national income, hire an important number of people and have highly varied responsibilities, not only for the management of economy, but also for the security and welfare of their citizens:

10) Aspect of the democratic government: In comparison with the previous eras, contemporary globalization develops against the background of a global system of states, in which most of them claim to be democratic, but in which the principles of democracy only rarely extend to cover aspects of the multilateral regulation and global government. Taking into consideration all of these aspects of globalization allows for the circumscription of an analytical framework of the globalization process, meant to provide answers to such questions as: What is globalization and how must it be conceptualized? Does contemporary globalization represent a new condition? May globalization be associated with the disappearance, resurgence or transformation of the power of the nation-state? Does the current stage of the globalization process impose new limits on politics? These are questions which we shall try to answer during the present paper.

The conceptual delimitation of globalization owes a great deal to Roland Robertson, who defines the process from the social theory's perspective, thus: "Globalization, conceptually, refers both to the compression of the world, and to the intensification of the awareness of the world as a whole, both to the actual global interdependencies, and to the awareness of the global whole". (Robertson, 1990, pp. 15-30) By this definition, the globalization process thus assumes a genuine ambivalence, which targets both the expansion of society at a global level, the economic, political, and cultural interdependencies which result out of this expansion, the revulsion of the ethno-nationalist tendencies, as well as the transfer of these phenomena from the empirical plane to the one of awareness. Globalization involves a fragmentary, pluralistic logic, contradictory in essence, the passage of humanity to a complex condition, in which the world itself is remade as a social space at the same time unique and diversified. We can no longer talk about *society* in that sense that the social theorists of modernity used to make out of this term, in the context in which the world becomes pluralistic, separated into a whole lot of autonomous units, but engaged into economic, political, and cultural interrelations. Considered to be at least contemporary with modernity and that its starting point (or the "germinal stage", in Robertson's terms) may be found in the 16th century, the social-historical process of globalization involves, in the first place, an economic systematization, then the modification of the international relations, politically, and last, but not least, the emergence of a "global culture". In an ever more restricted world, in which transnational relations, communication networks, activities and interconnections of various natures transcend national boundaries, it becomes ever more difficult to understand the local or national destinies, without referring to the global forces.

The dynamics of the global financial system, the extraordinary expansion of the transnational corporations' activity, the existence of the global ideatic and communication networks, the global production and spreading of knowledge, combined with the important significance of the transnational ethnic and religious ties, with the unprecedented social migration and the emergent authority of institutions and communities which overpass the nation-states, all of these factors prove the necessity to redefine the traditional concept of *society* (in association with the one of *nation-state*), in the sense of a coherent universal totality. But is this possible? In order to answer this question, we shall start by rendering the meanings carried by globalization, we shall review the main explanatory models developed in the context of the social theory, and we shall attempt an analysis of the specific coordinates of this process.

Towards the end of the 20th century, admitting the fact that the planet actually represents a "single place" has again raised the intellectual interest in the notion of universal community of mankind. (McGrew, 1992, p. 62) Even more, events such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of

communism and of the Soviet Union, the transition from industrialism to post-industrialism, the global diffusion of the institutional arrangements and democratic practices, together with the intensification of the world interdependencies at an economic, technological, and ecological level, have signaled to several observers the beginning of the end of the old world order and the onset of a new one, continuing the emergent promise of an evolved world society.

As such, the social theories in the last decade of the 20th century are interested in discovering the forces which lead the social-historical process of globalization. Not by chance, it is considered that one of the main points in the intellectual dispute lining the globalization process targets the issue of causality: what is the process led by? In answering this question, the current demarches tend to crystallize around two distinct sets of explanations: the ones which identify a unique or main imperative, similar to capitalism or the technological change, and the ones which explain globalization as being the process of a combination of factors, including the technological change, market forces, ideology, and political decisions. More simply, the distinction is made between the monocausal and multicausal demarches on globalization. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 36) The starting point of such research may be found in the studies of such authors as Immanuel Wallerstein, James Rosenau, and Robert Gilpin, already become "classics". Thus, for Wallerstein, the main force which determines the historical "advancement" of the globalization process is represented by the "world capitalist economy" (Rosenau, 1990, p. 5). On the other side, from James Rosenau's perspective, globalization involves the appearance of an era of "post-international politics", in which the nation-state is no longer the core element in analyzing the problems which occur at a global level. History has now come to a point of *change*, so that the "current premises and the understanding of the historic dynamics actually represent conceptual boundaries".

For this author, the historical force which triggered the recent transformations of our world is a technological one. Just like Rosenau, Robert Gilpin is interested in the international politics and the issues which arise in this context, yet arguing that the process of globalization is the result of certain political factors specific to the postindustrial era. His idea is that the enlarged interdependency, interactions, cooperation, and opening of the boundaries of the nation-states towards the global politics follow a normal logic of history. Thus, it is about a linear logic, in the context of which the effect follows the cause with necessity. In a different manner, other social theorists, such as Anthony Giddens, David Harvey or Roland Robertson emphasize other factors which determine the evolution of the globalization process. In their vision, as a social-historical process, globalization follows a multicausal logic.

For Giddens, the globalization process of society represents one of the most visible challenges of post-modernity, as it involves a profound reordering of space and time in social life - which the author calls "space-time distance", which supposes the formation of a new type of social relations. (Giddens, 2000, p. 14). He stresses the manner in which the development of the global communication networks and the complex global systems of production and exchange diminished the influence of the local circumstances on people's lives. Thus, the author will say, it becomes possible for the work places of the miners in Scotland, for example, to be more dependent on the decisions that the Australian or South-African companies make on the global market of coal, than on the immediate decisions of the local managers. This example highlights the existence of an uprooting of social relations. An effect of globalization, the uprooting of social relations is also determined by the "deterritorialization" of the global space – "moving" the social relations from the local interaction contexts and recombining them in time and space. What Giddens ascertains is that globalization extends the sphere of the social uprooting process, having as consequence the fact that "more and more individuals live under

circumstances under which uprooted institutions, combing local practices with the globalized social relations, organize the major aspects of daily life." (Giddens, 2000, p. 79)

The idea which may be retained is that, in a globalized world, the social relations and interactions are no longer dependent on a simultaneous physical presence, placed in a specific location, since the structures and institutions of contemporary society, the relation of which is eased by communication, give rise to certain "intense relations between 'missing' social actors located distantly as to every situation of face-to-face interaction" (Giddens, 2000, p. 18). The process of globalization thus utters this overlapping of the "presence" and "absence", through a permanent interrelation of the "local" circumstances with the "global" ones. Thus, in Giddens' vision, the social-historical process of globalization supposes more than a notion of the mere interconnection: "The globalization concept is best understood as one expressing the fundamental aspects of the space-time drifting. Globalization supposes the crossing of presence and absence, the blending of distant events and relations with local circumstances." (Giddens, 1991, p. 21)

The multicausal logic of globalization is highlighted by Giddens by resorting to what he deems to be the fundamental dimensions of this process. We are talking about capitalism, the interstate system, militarism, and industrialism. Theorizing these four institutional dimensions, Giddens utters the characteristics of the global condition of society, in which the "connections between the emergence and spreading of capitalism, industrialism, and the nation-state system" are highlighted (Giddens, 1987, p. 288.). David Harvey also understands globalization as an expression of the modified experience that we have today in what time and space are concerned. But, unlike Giddens, he speaks about a "space-time compression" (Harvey, 2002, pp. 205-331). Using this syntagm, Harvey attempts to underline the almost dramatic direction in which, under the pressure of the technological and economic changes, space and time almost collapsed, so that "today, we must stand up to an increased meaning of the spatial and temporal compression of our world" (Harvey, 2002, p. 240). If, with Giddens, time was differentiated as to space, Harvey argues that objectifying and universalizing the concepts of space and time allow time to annihilate space. This is exactly the process of the space-time compression, a development within which time may be reorganized, so that the constraints related to space may be reduced and vice versa.

The space-time compression involves a "shortening" of time and a "narrowing" of space - progressively, the social time allotted to the performance of certain actions is reduced, and this in turn leads to a reduction of the distance between the social experiences taking place in different points of the global space. In this manner, it can be argued that, if people in Tokyo may experience the same thing as the ones in Helsinki - a financial transaction or a media event - it means that they are actually living in the same place, as space has been annihilated by the compression of time. But David Harvey underlines that the process of the space-time compression, characteristic of globalization, is not gradual and continuous, but it is experienced, at a societal level, following certain sudden changes, during which the social relations are modified and dominated by an increased uncertainty. What is distinctive in the analysis that Harvey makes of globalization is the underlining of the importance of the intensity of the space-time compression. It must be reminded, in this context, that for a theorist like Harvey, what other authors called "the postmodern global state" is not the product of a silent process, be it linear or exponential, of the space-time compression, on the contrary, it appeared following a discontinuous social-historical process, a process marked by explosive phases of space-time compression. These phases, Harvey argues, are associated with periodical crises, followed by restructurations of capitalism, fact which assumes an increase in the "swiftness" of the economic, social-political, and cultural processes. In other words, the social theorists of globalization aim to

establish the awareness of our own experiences of the way in which the increased rhythm of change seems to have become a normal feature of social life. Just as virtual as the release of new fashion styles, new products, even the major political events seem to instantly turn into "redundant history".

Therefore, it may be considered that, as long as the social "images" have no past or future, the human experience becomes compressed into an oversized present (Waters, 1995, p. 125). In this sense precisely, one of the important consequences of increasing the pace of the social-political, cultural, and economic changes is the intensification of the space-time compression, which leads to an acceleration of the globalization pace itself. For, according to Harvey, "we have experienced, in these last two decades, an intense stage of the space-time compression, which has a confusing impact on the political-economic practices, as well as on the cultural and social life" (Harvey, 2002, p. 284). As it can be noticed, the dynamics of the social-historical process of globalization is one which alters the semantics of unity and coherence, favoring the one of discontinuity and contradiction. Even more, a theorist such as Roland Robertson refers to the process of globalization as one of "universalization of particularism" and "particularization of universalism" (Robertson, 1990, p. 17). Taking these explanatory models into consideration, we shall try, in the second section of this chapter, to conceptually demarcate the dimensions of the globalization process.

In order to understand the form that globalization takes in the contemporary period, the dynamics and consequences of this process, we must take into account its main dimensions. In this context, three main ideas become fundamental, as the theorists of globalization claim: liberalization in economy, democratization in politics and universalization in the social-cultural space (McGrew, 1992, p. 63). In order to "take globalization seriously", we must emphasize the economic aspect of this process. The economic dimension of globalization contains at its core the idea of a global market. Beyond this, the economic globalization no longer represents a simple abstraction; on the contrary, it has become a reality affecting the daily life of individuals. But the theorists of globalization claim that the globalization of economy implies three other dimensions: the political one, centered on the idea of global politics, the social one, which concentrates on the concept of a global society, and the cultural one, the central element of which is given by the notion of global culture.

The interrelations existing between these dimensions of the phenomenon, the fact that these ones involve each other reiterates the idea that the process of globalization may be understood in the terms of a multicausal logic. In order to decipher the main coordinates of this logic, we propose, in our future articles, a differentiated analysis of the four coordinates characterizing the social-historical process of globalization. The economic dimension of globalization refers to a process which constitutes itself as a result of human innovation and technological progress and which is mainly targeted at the increasing integration of national economies, especially via the commercial and financial exchanges. Although it sometimes considers the issue of people's migration (as labor force) and the migration of knowledge (technology) beyond the national boundaries, the term particularly refers to an expansion at international level of the same market forces having operated for centuries at all levels of the economic activity, be it village markets, urban industries or financial centers.

The markets promote efficiency by competition and labor division, specialization which allows people to focus on the things they do best. At the same time, the global markets offer greater opportunities for people to get involved into transactions worldwide, this meaning that there is a greater access to capital, technology, cheaper imports and larger markets for export. However, the critics show that the markets do not necessarily insure benefits of an increased efficiency for all of the agents involved. On the contrary, the states or multinational companies must be prepared to adopt the necessary economic policies, and in the case of the poorer countries, which cannot "keep up" with the economic

globalization, the intervention of the international community is needed. Certainly, as numerous theorists claim, the global economic integration is not a new reason. It is considered that three factors have impacted the process of the economic globalization and it is likely that these remain just as influent in the future (Appadurai, 1990, pp. 295-310).

First of all, the improvements in the field of the transportation and communication technology lowered the costs for the freight of goods, services, and the production and communication factors of know-how and technologies useful in economy. Secondly, the tastes of individuals and companies generally - but not universally, favored the capitalization of the opportunities provided by the low costs of transport and communication by increasing the economic integration. And finally, the economic policies greatly influenced the nature of the economic integration, although they have not always followed its increase. These three factors, the quoted author shows, have influenced the "pattern" and dimension of the economic integration in all its important aspects. In this context, the following question becomes essential: does the reality of existence of a global market and of the multi- and transnational economic relations necessarily involve transcending the political identity specific to the nation-state, and, even more, the emergence of a global society and culture? It is a question that we shall try to answer in the following, analyzing the other three fundamental dimensions of the social-historical process of globalization. In what the political dimension of globalization is concerned, it must be specified that, for the theorists of the international relations, the world of modernity used to constitute an etatocentric world system, dominated by the principles of realism. Modernity implies, together with the explanations of the globalization process, the political vision of a multicentric world, which, however, retains certain aspects specific to the modern era.

The assumption that we make is that it is possible to speak, following in James Rosenau's steps (Rosenau, 1990, pp. 102-104), of the two worlds of global politics, aspects which pertain to the framework delineated by the political dimension of globalization. Meaning two interactive worlds, in which the political and social change knows an alert pace. The question which arises is the following: is political globalization, which refers to the abandonment of the idea that the nation-state is the primary unit within the international relations, a necessary consequence of the economic globalization? A first step towards a possible answer is the idea that the interconnection among the various phenomena specific to globalization, particularly the one between the economic and political dimensions, proves an erosion of the status of primary political unit of the nation-state. The challenges of globalization force the modern nation-state to develop mechanisms specific to maintaining, if not sovereignty, then at least the national identity and culture, especially as "it is unlikely that a global culture would appear or that the national identities would suffer modifications following their inclusion into some wider communication structures" (Held, 2000, p. 155).

For now, we remain within the terms of the two worlds of the world political system: an etatocentric world, within which the national actors play the primary part, and a multicentric world, made of various and relatively equal, actors (Rosenau, 1990, pp. 97-100). The interdependencies between these two worlds generate each other within the political globalization process. In the political dimension, globalization finds an "obstacle" in the creations of modernity; such a creation is the nation-state. In this context, it may be claimed that the interconnection between the etatocentric world and the multicentric one structures an international system essentially noncentric. The new global politics truly indicates that the sovereignty of the nation-state (a fundamental principle of the new world order) is today in a precarious situation. And this because the political globalization questions the political identity of the nation-state, seen as an entity capable of answering the challenges specific to the contemporary era. On the other hand, we have to accept that there has never been an absolute

sovereignty at the level of the nation-states (Holton, 1997, p. 84). Thus, the principle of sovereignty, as it has been understood in the political theory of the last three centuries, is affected, because the world economy, international organizations, regional or global institutions, international laws and the military alliances are now operating, more and more clearly, towards reducing the part played by the nation-state in the international arena. All of these represent realities which undermine the autonomy of the political and administrative apparatus located at the level of the nation-state (Held, 1991, pp. 127-135). The explanations concerning the social dimension of the globalization process start from the concept which constitutes the fundamental presumption of the understanding of the new trajectories of social change: i.e., the concept of society.

Thus, what may be ascertained is that most traditional sociology papers focus their attention on what it was called "modern society" and which basically supposed three main characteristics. Society, in the modern sense of the term, was considered to be cohesive, according to the idea of cohesion intrinsic to any social group, postulated and then developed by psycho-sociology at the beginning of the 20th century. Secondly, the notion of society suggested the sense of a totality, a unity, and, at the same time, the uniqueness of a social group. And not least, for the social theorists of modernity, society represents an integrated and, at the same time, integrating social system. Under these terms, society became practically undistinguished from the nation-state, concept which had animated the nationalist movements at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the following one.

The necessity to reconfigure the notion of "society" occurred at a moment when it was ascertained that, in a world where the transnational relations, the economic, social, political, and cultural networks, activities and interconnections transcend the national boundaries, it becomes ever more difficult to understand the "local or national destinies", without referring to the global forces. Under these terms, the centrality of such notions as society, social group, ethnicity, nation-state, territorial boundaries, sovereignty, which entire generations of social and political theorists conceptualized and supported, now becomes marginal. Therefore, but also because of the ever present "fear" of change, the opponents of the globalization process accuse that its fundamental presumptions would lead to institutional destabilization and social chaos. It is true, the phenomena specific to the social-historical process of globalization succeed rapidly, sometimes even alarmingly, but this does not mean they cannot be explained and understood.

Under completely different terms than those of modernity, the present social globalization tries to rebuild the world as "a single place" (McGrew, 1992, p. 63), which also supposes a reorientation of the sociological project towards a new concept, the one of "global society". Taking into account the social dimension of globalization from a postmodern perspective, Zygmunt Bauman notes that "together with the restriction of the idea of sovereignty of the nation-state, the traditional model of society loses its significance as a relevant reference framework" (Bauman, 1992, p. 57). Returning to the fundamental notion that such discourses stem from, the one of "society", it must be noted that this one is understood by the contemporary authors as a fragmented and pervious social space, precisely because of the globalization process. Among the authors who took into consideration the implications specific to the cultural dimension of globalization, from the perspective of postmodernism, the most known one is Roland Robertson. The cultural paradigm of postmodernism inseparably relates to the idea of fragmentation, meaning a "dissemination of the whole into a sum of fragments which fiercely oppose the establishment of a coherent significance" (Constantinescu, 1999, p. 32). It is true, globalization advances more rapidly in those contexts in which social relations are mediated by symbols: the economic, social, or political field. If we accept such an argument, then the process of globalization may be conceived as a fundamental aspect of the progressive "culturalization" of social

life. Although it is obvious that the cultural space, as an arena separated from the one of the economic, social, or political, has not yet become a completely globalized one, it may be stated that it has manifested a greater globalization tendency than the others, and this is easily noticeable in the case of religion. This because the great universal religions have generally been threatened to be overshadowed by the modernization of society and the appearance of capitalism. Indeed, the development of the liberal democracy and of the capitalist economic system supposes replacing the religious values by other values, holding the same universality.

But the recent phases of acceleration of the globalization process do not refer to the triumph or sovereign dominance of any of these, on the contrary, to their dissipation. And this because a global culture is rather chaotic than orderly. However, we must underline the fact that the absolute globalization of the cultural sphere implies the appearance of a circle of common values, tastes and opportunities, but hyper-differentiated, accessible to each individual, in the absence of any constraint. Moreover, a globalized culture must allow a permanent flow of ideas, information, and values mediated by the mobile individuals, symbols, or electronic simulation. From this point of view, Appadurai Arjun's argument (Appadurai, 1990, p. 298), relating to the global cultural economy, identifies certain fields in which such developments take place.

These are recognized and considered "images", as they are global representations of the social world, performed at a mental level, from the perspective of the transfer of the cultural objects from one community to the other. This "flow" involves: ethnical images (the distribution of the mobile individuals, belonging to the various communities and ethnicities); technical images (the technological distribution); financial images (the distribution of capital); mediatic images (the distribution of information); ideatic images (the distribution of political ideas and values, such as liberty, democracy, human rights, etc.); sacred images (the distribution of religious ideas and values). Precisely for this reason, of the transfer of ideas and knowledge, values, worldwide, it may be stated that the phenomena associated with post-modernity are characterized by ambivalence, holding both progressive, and repressive features. In this context, cultural identity continues to represent a problem, because of the appearance of the social, political, and cultural "co-modification", fragmentation, and transformation, results of the progress of the consumption society. All these dimensions described above may articulate, in general terms, the path followed by the new social changes, which occurred together with the social-historical process of globalization. It may be noticed that, intersecting the economic, political, social, and cultural boundaries, the process of globalization is associated both with deterritorialization, and with the reterritorialization of space on each coordinate. Since the economic, political, social, and cultural activities are spreading farther and farther worldwide, they do not stay, to a significant extent, organized strictly in conformity with a territorial principle (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 52).

On the contrary, they may be rooted in various places, but may also be segregated, at the same time, from the territorial element. Under the conditions of globalization, the economic, political, social or cultural space, local, national, or even continental, may be reconfigured so as to no longer necessarily coincide with the legal and territorial boundaries set. For a better explanation of the mechanisms of this process, we shall analyze the main issues brought forth by the phenomenon of globalization, on each of the four fundamental coordinates that we have conceptualized above.

The analytical conceptualization framework concerning globalization is drafted in its main constitutive elements. This analytical framework is to be completed by an analysis concerning the four coordinates mentioned: economic, political, social, and cultural. A phenomenon of utmost complexity, such as globalization, cannot be, theoretically, completely exhausted, remaining opened to further research.

The multicausal logic described by Anthony Giddens represents an excellent intellectual instrument in the analysis of globalization. This multicausal logic may at its turn be thought in another philosophical horizon concerning dialectics. The consideration of the opposing concepts, contradictory in a first instance, gives us a perspective as close as possible on the entire phenomenon called globalization.

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