Globalization and New International Order 1991-2008

A NEW MAP of the SUBMARINE CABLES connecting the World, according to the best Authorities with all the latest Discoveries to the present period, 2015.

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1. The World Economy: Globalization and its Consequences

We can define globalization as an economic, technological, social, and cultural large-scale process that consists of increased communications and interdependency between different countries throughout the world that are unified through shared markets, societies, and cultures.

Although we initially consider globalization as an economic term, it should also be understood as a concept that encompasses all aspects of social life. Our ideologies, likes and dislikes, ways of dressing, and any other aspects of contemporary human life need to be looked at from a global perspective.

After a first important wave of globalization during the period preceding the First World War, the world would experience the “Second Globalization,” one that would be much more intense, following the Second World War and, more specifically, during the 1980s.

Although extreme poverty is still present—sometimes all too present—in the current state of the world, we cannot forget the improvements that have been made through globalization. The 20th century was a century full of catastrophes unlike others previously experienced in the history of humankind, but it was also a century with some of the most notable demographic and economic development in history.

The following is some statistical information from the period: Between the years 1913 and 2000, the population multiplied by 2.5, the GDP (Gross Domestic Product—the most useful measurement utilized to put a value on the state of wealth of a community), multiplied by 20 and the GDP per capita (which consists of the global GDP divided by the number of world inhabitants) multiplied by 5.

The biggest challenge of the 20th century was figuring out how to maintain the improved living conditions without exhausting the available natural resources or destroying the environment even more.
Globalization and its Consequences: The Winners and the Losers

What was the world like at the beginning of the third millennium? How did it change in the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century?

The UNDP (The United Nations Development Programme) created the HDI (Human Development Index), which is a statistical social indicator. It is comprised of three parameters:

- **A long and healthy life** (measured by life expectancy upon birth)
- **Education** (including adult literacy rate, enrolment in primary, secondary, and higher education programs, and the duration of compulsory education)
- **Adequate life quality levels** (measured by the GDP per capita)

We are going to use this index to create a sketch of the world’s development status that is more or less true to today’s global reality.

In 2004, 63 countries—totalling 1,275 million people (equivalent to 20\% of the total world population)—were classified by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as possessing a “high human development” level according to their HDI (0.8 or higher).

This privileged fifth of the total human population consists of those who, fortunately for them, live in the developed world. Of course, within this “rich” developed world there are still poor people, but even these poor people are considered wealthy if we compare them with people living in other geographic areas.

The average human development index (0.5-0.799) is made up of the indices of 83 countries and almost 4,500 million inhabitants (which consists of approximately 70\% of the world population).
The biggest change in the levels of human development since 1975 is that at the turn of the century the greater part (around 73%) of the 2,300 new world inhabitants belong to the countries that possess this average HDI.

There have always been big wealth and development gaps, between both populations from different countries and populations within the same country. However, we must take into account the fact that the world is becoming more and more divided along wealth lines and the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming more and more pronounced. This remains true even though several heavily-populated countries have made important improvements in their inhabitants’ life quality in recent decades. China, the world’s most populated nation, is the best example of this.

If we compare the current HDI statistics with those of 1975, we are able to appreciate that the greater part (around 73%) of the “new human beings” in the world live in countries where the HDI is merely average.

Lastly, 570 millions of people (less than 10% of the world population) living in a total of 31 nations, live in countries with a HDI that is below average (below 0.5). All of these nations are African except for Yemen and Haiti.

If we compare this information with the statistics that we have for the beginning of the 20th century, the result is encouraging. No country reached an above-average HDI and only a small minority of European and American countries enjoyed an average HDI; the majority of humanity did not manage, to surpass the low level of human development. The greater part of human beings throughout the world lived in conditions similar to the current conditions of the
world’s poorest countries today such as the most poverty-stricken nations in Africa or even those of the ill-fated Haiti, which suffered a devastating earthquake in the year 2010.

This sketch of the current state of humanity does not reflect the disastrous image that is projected in the media of the misfortune and devastation that is supposedly gripping humanity. Nevertheless, these advances should make us even less tolerant of the persistence of hunger and lack of basic needs in many corners of our world. The world of the 21st century, for the first time in human history, has the ability to abolish the poverty and misery that has always kept humankind unwanted company. It is the duty of all of us to take advantage of this opportunity.
2. World population: growth and distribution

Since the mid-twentieth century, the world’s population has experienced drastic changes: it has grown very rapidly; people have enjoyed more longevity; the population has become urbanized; and emigration has led to demographic heterogeneity around the globe. The changes essentially involve the globalization of changes experienced by the developed world beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.

The statistics are telling: from 1900 to 2008 the world population has increased five-fold, growing from 1.262 billion to 6.706 billion, with most of the growth coming since the mid-twentieth century. It is estimated that the world population will be around 9 or 10 billion.

The world’s population has followed a similar demographic model to that which the developed world followed in earlier decades. Firstly, the mortality rate has declined, followed by the beginning of a decline in the birth rate. This fact has slowed demographic growth. In fact, it is believed that the world’s population will get close to stagnation by the middle of this century.

The Earth’s population also is following the same process of aging that the richest countries already experienced. In 1950, only 8% of human beings were older than 60; in 2000, 11%; by 2050, it is estimated that 22% of human beings will be over the age of 60.
Since 1950, a few important changes have emerged in the spatial distribution of the world’s population. North America and Europe have lost demographic weight relative to the rest of the world’s population. During this time, Asia has emerged as the world’s true demographic heavyweight; in 2000, Asians made up 60% of the world’s population. Africa also has grown relatively quickly during this time and it is estimated that in the coming years the continent will increase its demographic weight. It is estimated that by 2050 one in every four human beings will be African.

Large international migrations

Globalization, by lowering the cost of transport and information dissemination on a global scale, has encouraged migration.

The vast economic inequality between different parts of the world has pushed millions of human beings who live in the poorest countries to seek a better destination far from home.

From Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern European countries, migrants have been mainly directed mainly to Europe and North America.

In the U.S. and Canada, the immigrant population is closer to 15%, in Western Europe it is amounted to be just over 10% and, in front of all immigration destinations is Australia, in which around 22% of the population comes from outside.

Mediterranean Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece), a traditional land of emigration, has become in recent years one of the major centers of immigration.

Immigration in Spain

The case of Spain is particularly spectacular:

In 1990, the immigrant population was around 3% of the total population. In 2010, it was close to 14%, a percentage similar to the U.S., the major recipient of migrants. After that date, because of the economic crisis this percentage has been reduced.

Economic results of migration are basically positive for the societies involved in it.
However, especially in times of crisis, immigration generates new conflicts (cultural clashes, competition for low-skilled jobs, and access to social services, racism, etc.), which pose a challenge to democratic societies.

3. Political Changes and the New International Order

The collapse of the “Soviet Empire” left the United States as the only world superpower and brought about a series of changes that would affect the whole world. Perhaps the most impressive example is that of Europe. With stunning speed, Germany reunified, the former “popular democracies” reestablished themselves, and the European Union expanded towards the east, managing to comprise 27 European nations in 2006. At the same time NATO expanded towards the east as well, including the former republics of the USSR. These transformations took place in a fairly peaceful context. The civil war that eventually brought about the division of Yugoslavia was the only violent exception to this peaceful environment.

![NATO's Eastward Expansion](image)

The terrorist attack on New York and Washington on September 11th, 2001 was the second key moment in the political transition into the new millennium. The jihad movement and Islamic terrorism directed a hard blow against the United States. The United States’ reaction was immediate: they invaded Afghanistan and ran the Taliban regime, who had previously housed Al Qaeda terrorists, out of power. The following step taken by the United States, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, was much more controversial. It further complicated the uncertain prospects of the Middle East, a region already threatened by the possibility of Iran becoming a nuclear power.
Further to the east, China was experiencing a period of spectacular economic growth, managing to combine an aggressive form of capitalism while still maintaining a communist dictatorship. Asia is currently setting itself up to play a predominant role in the international affairs of the 21st century. Meanwhile, Latin America is witnessing the emergence of Brazil as a great regional power and Africa, despite a handful of improvements in the last decade, is still struggling to find a way out of its downward spiral into political instability, internal wars, and poverty.
a. The Political Evolution of the West and Russia

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States of America, under the presidency of George W. Bush, plunged itself into what they called “the war against terror,” invading Afghanistan and Iraq and instituting an anti-terrorist policy that often strayed too far from the defense of basic human rights. The best example of how this occurred is that of the Guantanamo Bay prison, where the United States army keeps hundreds of prisoners without putting them on trial.

Europe witnessed the expansion of the European Union towards the east, with the number of member nations reaching 27. The fall of communism in Yugoslavia brought with it another war on our continent. From 1991 to 1999, the war and the “ethnic cleansing” (the violent elimination of an ethnic group from a given territory) bloodied former Yugoslavia. The conflict in Kosovo ended with the intervention of NATO and the enforcement of the independence of the territory.

Madrid, on the 11th of March 2004, and London in 2005, suffered brutal attacks carried out by the terrorist jihad movement.

Russia revamped its economy, emphasizing its exportation of oil, all the while drifting towards an authoritarian system under Putin based on the restriction of political liberties on the domestic level and the search
for affirmation of power on the international level.

In 2008, Medvedev was supposedly voted into presidency in a questionable election that was claimed to be completely democratic. He immediately named Putin as his prime minister. In practice, therefore, Putin remains the main figure of power in the Russian government. In 2012, Putin was “elected” again for a new presidency of Russia.

b. Political evolution in Asia, Latin America, and Africa

In Asia, a few developments have taken place that will likely shape the next century: the rapid expansion of China, increasingly becoming the “factory of the world”; the economic takeoff of India, in which their contributions to information technology stand out; and the recovery of Japan, after a long recession during the 1990s.
**Latin America** has experienced a wave of democratization that has done away with the old dictatorships that long dominated the continent. The best example is Mexico. In 2000, for the first time since the revolution of 1917, the Mexican government changed democratically with the defeat of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).

In general, there has been a turn towards the left on the continent, even though some of the new populist regimes, such that of Hugo Chavez and, later Maduro, in Venezuela, constitute the principal threat to democracy in the region. Meanwhile, the communist dictatorship of Fidel Castro remains as a relic of the Cold War.

Africa has begun the new century with faint signs of improvement. Although in recent years there have been certain improvements, economic underdevelopment and political instability still force many Africans to seek survival outside of the continent. Africa is still plagued by conflicts and wars that oppress an already impoverished populace. The conflict in Darfur in the Sudan and the civil war in the Congo are good examples of this.
Second Congo War

The Second Congo War was an armed conflict that took place in most of the territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), after the First Congo War. This conflict began in 1998 and formally ended in 2003, when he took office a transitional government under the terms of the Pretoria Agreement. The fighters came from nine nations (besides existing within the country twenty different armed factions), making it the largest African continental conflict that one is aware of.

Also known as the African World War, Great African War or the War of the Coltan, it provoked the death of about 3.8 million people, the majority of them from hunger and preventable and curable diseases. Within these serious events, this episode is considered the peak and is called "genocide Congolese". This tragic figure in this war became the deadliest conflict since World War II, and that's not counting the millions of displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries."

Darfur conflict

The Darfur conflict is an ongoing military conflict in the Darfur region in western Sudan, mainly between the Janjaweed, a militia group formed by members of the tribes of the Abbala (camel herders of Arab ethnicity) and not the towns of Baggara, mainly farmers. The Sudanese government, while it has publicly denied its support for the Janjaweed, has provided arms and assistance and has participated with them in several attacks against the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit. The beginning of the conflict is often placed in February 2003.

Unlike what happened in the Second Sudanese Civil War, it is not a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. Most of the inhabitants of Darfur are Muslims.

There is no agreement on the number of deaths caused by the conflict. It is generally considered credible is a figure of 400,000 victims given by the NGO Coalition for International Justice, which was also implicitly given for validation by the UN. It is believed that more than two million people have been displaced from their homes because of the conflict. The conflict has been described as genocide by the international media and the U.S. government, though not by the UN. On 31 July 2007 the United Nations decided to send 26,000 troops to Darfur. "

c. International Conflicts at the Turn of the 21st Century

The state of international affairs in the new world that emerged from the Cold War was marked by a series of conflicts that threatened the state of world peace.

The violence of the jihad movement or Islamic terrorism put a fanatic and extremist face on Islam for the rest of the world. The biggest Islamic terrorist organization is Al Qaeda, which, led by Osama bin Laden, named its 1998 constitution “The Islamic Front against Jews and Crusaders (Christians).”
The jihad movement hit hard in the United States and Europe but, above all, it has brought with it much bloodshed for the populations of Muslim countries where its reign is both cruel and systematic.

Three of the biggest geographic centers of the jihad movement are in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Middle East (especially in Iraq and Saudia Arabia), and North Africa. In 2007, a new organization—“Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb”—was born. This organization poses a big threat to southern Europe.

The Middle East, partially due to the fact that it harbors the biggest oil reserves in the world, has continued to be the geographic area with the most international tension. It is in the Middle East that the world’s main post-Cold War conflicts have unfolded.

The United States’ invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and of Iraq in 2003 opened up two armed conflicts in which the greater part of the international community quickly became involved. President Obama has demonstrated his desire to withdraw troops from Iraq and to intensify United States efforts to do the same in Afghanistan.

Linked to the situation in Iraq, the Iranian leader Ahmadinejad has re-launched an Iranian civil nuclear program. The possibility of the Islamic government of Tehran obtaining nuclear arms is one of the great international concerns of 2010.