

The people as active participants in International Life*

Las personas como participantes activos de la vida internacional

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Resumen: Abordar el problema de las personas como participantes activos en la vida internacional es un desafío atractivo, pero complicado. Se debe aceptar la carencia de una teoría acerca del papel desarrollado por el individuo como sujeto de la sociedad internacional y es notable la capacidad de ocultar nuestra ignorancia respecto del individuo como sujeto de la sociedad virtual mediante clichés especulativos. En este artículo se plantean cinco aspectos para abordar el tema: Una perspectiva histórica de Liderazgo: Líder militar carismático y profetas contra monarcas y papas. Del reconocimiento legal de una persona en el Estado al reconocimiento jurídico internacional de una persona. El proceso de Globalización y la Sociedad Virtual. El individualismo masivo y su impacto en la vida internacional, Las limitadas aportaciones de las Ciencias Sociales al análisis de los individuos como sujetos de la vida internacional.

Palabras claves: Sistema internacional – Liderazgo – Globalización – Individuo – Ciencias Sociales.

Abstract: To face the problem of people as active participants in international life is a challenge intellectually attractive but also quite complicated. We must accept that we lack of a theory about the role developed by the individual as a subject of international society and the ability to hide our ignorance about the individual as a subject of virtual society through speculative clichés is remarkable. This article presents five aspects to address the theme: An historical perspective of Leadership: Charismatic military leader and prophets versus monarchs and popes. From the legal recognition of a person in the State to the international legal recognition of a person. The Globalisation process and the Virtual Society. The massive individualism and its impact over international life. The limited contributions of Social Sciences to the analysis of individuals as subjects of international life.

Key words: International System – Leadership – Globalization – Individual – Social Sciences.

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Introduction

To face the problem of the people as active participants in international life is a challenge intellectually attractive but also quite complicated. For that reason, to achieve final conclusions along this study would be a little bit risky on my part. However, I will not refuse to share some facts and considerations that will allow me to follow new research paths about this subject.

Indeed, this is an attractive intellectual challenge because it forces us to think against the mainstream approaches not only of the traditional International Relations Theory but of Social Sciences in general. In other words, it forces us to be heterodox.

But it is also a complicated challenge by two obvious reasons. In the first place, because the International Society is engulfed in a structural changing process as the result of the influence of the fact that the globalization process is one of its dominant forces, although there's not yet a scientific consensus about the characteristics and extent of this process. Secondly, because there is not a clear theoretical model able to explain the functions of people as active participants of international reality, which leads to a high degree of uncertainty in the analysis of their international actions.

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1. An historical perspective of Leadership: Charismatic military leader and prophets versus monarchs and popes

Over the main part of Human history, the social majorities were dominated and directed by elite minorities, which could exercise power and authority through the control of such different instruments as military forces, religions, economical resources, knowledge or even the arts.

In other words, the social masses were objects of a history imposed by the elites, which legitimated their dominance by ideologies with religious roots, ancestral traditions and clan, tribal or ethnic ties.

Thus, the official historiography was largely the account of the decisions and actions of the leaders who emerged from the elites and directed them to control the historical actions of masses.

These leaders were individuals who reached a dominant position through charisma, succession or both, allowing them to influence the future of their people and their states, tracing the course of History.

Between the different categories of leadership two were prominent: the charismatic military leader and the prophet. The former owed its historical pre-eminence to the exercise of an absolute leadership over military power, specially, during war time which at the end was extended over the exercise of political power. Historical figures as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar or Genghis Khan were among this prototype.

The later were people who achieved and exercised a religious power which was finally transformed into political power. Abraham, Moses or Muhammad, where among them.¹

As societies developed and the political organization of the state was hardened, the leadership based on charismatic military leaders and prophets proved too short to warranty the historical continuity of political or religious power.

It was necessary to institutionalize and legitimize the exercise do such powers over time, generating new structures: the States and the Churches. Over late Middle Ages and Modern Age, emerged the absolute monarchies and the churches hierarchies, trying to unify or at least, establish an institutional control of political and religious powers.² The paradigm was the consolidation of the Papal States, with the figure of the Pope in charge of them, an experienced replicated by Henry VIII in England with the creation of the Anglican Church.

This institutionalization process of both powers contributed enormously to a progressive depersonalisation of historiography as beside the Monarch or religious leader, other groups and institutions which could intervene over both, the decisions and the actions of States and Churches, arisen. By doing so, the transition to a democratization of the exercise of political power was eased as shown by the American and French revolutions. The same did not happen with the main religious institutions whose structures

¹ We intentionally excluded the cases of Jesus Christ and Siddharta Gautama as they were religious leaders whose teachings and biographies do not support the idea of a direct exercise of political power by them.

² One of the main differences between absolute monarchies of the Modern Ages and the autocratic monarchies of Antiquity or Middle Ages was the fact that the former were supported by an original legitimacy over divine right but at the same time denied the Divinity of the monarch while in the later the monarch was a deity, unifying the political and the religious power. This unity between both types of power was found also in the origins of Islam, as in the Muslim religion the *Umma* (congregation of followers of Muhammad) is at the same time the political and religious community, reason why the Caliph (*Jalifa*) exercises both powers in an inseparable unity.

were still dominated by the dogma and the hierarchical elite control over the congregation.³

The 18th Century was not only the time of the Enlightenment, the rationalism and the encyclopaedic diffusion of scientific knowledge but of the outbreak of the masses as main characters of their own history.

It was also the beginning of a period where the masses took advantage of the revolutionary birth of new political regimes based on a new democratic legitimacy; of the decolonization process; of the capitalism built over mass production and consumption, with the inevitable corollary of a broad social extended credit and financial system; of the massive literacy used as a cultural popularization instrument whose most visible expression would be the increasing dissemination of mass press.

Is the time where war, conducted by conscripted armies, will mobilize the total amount of human and material resources of the societies involved, transforming them in the foundation and goal of an unending collective violence whose most visible expression would be the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Is the beginning of the transformation of fragmented societies into unified ones where the concepts of clans, ethnicity, caste or statement would be overtaken by the ideals of nation, people and social class, as pillars of a new sole state category, absolute and unequivocal at the end, that faces the individual who is now simultaneously citizen, worker, consumer, soldier or audience.

In this way emerged the split between the legitimacy foundations of political and religious power. The former, a result of the will of the citizens, mystified in the concept of nation and expressed through elections, while the later still emerging from God's will translated into a natural law of Universal extent.

In Western countries, such disagreement was solved by the legal and political principle of the separation between State and religion. However, such principle was difficult to integrate in those countries where the religious

³ The Roman Catholic Church was the first which institutionalized historically the exercise of the religious power and opened to some groups decisions as important as the Pope's Succession. However, the sole attribution to the Pope of the authority to stablish religious dogmas and legitimate the enthronement or excommunication of Christian Monarchs, granted them an almost absolute doctrinal supremacy over Christendom which implied an effective political power over the Christian monarchs. On the other hand, the Shiite Theocracy which rules Iran and the failed attempt to create an Islamic State over Irak and Levant shows that this idea is still alive in the Muslim world, even in the 21st Century.

and/or cultural foundations bounded both powers. Along with the Muslim countries is worth mentioning the cases of China and Japan at least until the first half of the 20th Century.

2. From the legal recognition of a person in the State to the international legal recognition of a person

As stated above, the American and French revolutions transformed the former subjects of the British and French Monarchies into citizens by granting them some personal rights of political and civic character constitutionally recognized.⁴ Initiating a path followed these last two centuries by a newly political and legal prominence of individuals into the States.

Originally this prominence was only the attribution, in terms of state's sovereignty, of legal subjectivity, with the corresponding capacity of acting legally and politically, to the people who shared certain social, economic and educational conditions and constitute what usually is known as middle classes.

But a long path was followed, not yet concluded at the beginning of the 21st century for the citizen's rights to be extended to the rest of the society. The working and agrarian masses had to be actively mobilised, not without violence, over the 19th Century to achieve a similar recognition.

Even then, half of the society, the part comprised by women, was still excluded of its political rights until the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays, the more basic rights of women are still being ignored or restricted in almost two third parts of Humanity.

This Historical reflexion over the long process of expansion of the recognition of individuals as a decisive subject of state's life was necessary to comprehend the evolution of the two hundred years between the revolutions at the end of the 18th Century and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

⁴ For more information about French Revolution check: the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) and the Constitution of 1791 (Titles I, II y III). http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank_mm/espagnol/es_ddhc.pdf
For the American Revolution check: The first ten amendments to the Constitution of 1787, collectively known as the Bill of Rights ratified on December 15th 1791. <https://www.archives.gov/espanoll/constitucion.html> (checked 04/14/2017).

With it the necessary legal advance to transform the individual in subject of rights and obligations among the context of an international society of global extent.⁵

Under the Universal Declaration and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1967, countless declarations and regional covenants were adopted, something that ended up in consolidating a broad international legal coverage over individuals, granting their unquestioning international prominence.

Not less important was the development of international regulations focused on the protection of individuals during war times. It is the so-called International Humanitarian Law, enforced by the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, followed by the International protections system on refugees as was established by the 1951 Convention and its additional Protocol of 1967.

A third category of international regulations was orientated to the protection of migrants, especially in the cases of economical or labouring migrations. To the wide regulatory activity that the ILO (International Labour Organization) has been generating since its foundation in 1919, we must add the recent International Convention on the protection of labour rights for migrants and their families, signed in 1990. Again, we find an articulated group of legal instruments established to ensure the subjectivity of individuals among international life.

Finally, and without any intention of completeness, the international regulations that attribute criminal responsibility to the illegal actions of some individuals, must be pointed out. We should emphasize the creation of the International Criminal Court, whose statute establish in its first article its jurisdiction over “individuals regarding the more serious crimes with international significance”, crimes contained in its 5th article: a) genocide; b) crimes against Humanity; c) War crimes and d) assault.⁶

⁵ Before the Universal Declaration, some international regulations were adopted in exceptional moments and they assigned certain international rights and obligations to some individuals with certain particular characteristics or with some determined conditions. For example the international Arrangements on refugees of 1922, 1924, 1926 and 1928, along with the Convention of 1933. Also, were of significance the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1906 and 1929 focused on the regulation and protection for the war injured and the war prisoners.

⁶ The definition of those crimes was established in the articles 6 and 8 bis of the The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, approved in 1998 which came into force on 2002 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Esp.pdf> (checked 04/12/2017).

It seems clear that at present, the person enjoys a recognized international legal subjectivity which extends over areas not only of civil rights (Human rights, shelter, asylum, migration rights) but of criminal responsibility, although the full effectiveness of that regulatory subjectivity is still a conditioned and limited one, specially, in its implementation over areas under state's sovereignty.

In this sense, we must emphasize due to its historical exceptionality, the creation of the European Citizenship, firstly regulated by the articles 8 and 8E of Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which attributes the direct exercise of a wide range of political and civil rights concerning supranational institutions apart from state's sovereignty or over it.⁷

3. The Globalisation process and the Virtual Society

Confronted to the World of the beginnings of 21st century, and orphaned from theoretical instruments capable of separate those new events from others deep-rooted in the preceding historical trends although newly manifested, the first question I propose is to know if the Globalisation phenomena constitutes the bases of a new and emerging international society or is just a new stadium in the evolution of 20th century one.

To give an adequate answer to this question it is imperative to define precisely the theoretical concept of globalization.⁸

⁷ Official Journal of the European Communities C191 of July 29th 1992. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:1992:191:FULL&from=EN> (checked 04/15/2017).

⁸ There is a wide theoretical debate along the nature and extent of the globalisation. McGrew pointed to main trends: the hyperglobalist and the skeptical. Other authors focused on the dimension of the phenomena resulting in to main factions, from one side that supports its multidimensional character and the other who defend its unidimensional reality. Finally, there are some authors that distinguish between the public and academic debates, assigning to former an ideological burden called globalism. García Segura, C. "La globalización en la sociedad internacional contemporánea: dimensiones y problemas desde la perspectiva de las Relaciones Internacionales". *Cursos de Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Internacionales de Vitoria-Gasteiz 1998*. Bilbao: Edit. Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 1999; pp. 315-350. www.ehu.es/cursosderechointernacionalvitoria/ponencias/pdf/1998/1998_7.pdf (checked 04/15/2017).

Fernández Santillán, J. "Global Politics". *Mexican Law Review*, vol. V, N° 2, January-June, 2013, pp. 333-371. <https://revistas.juridicas.unam.mx/index.php/mexican-law-review/article/download/7784/9759> (checked 04/15/2017).

McGrew, A. "Globalization and Global Politics". Baylis, J.; S Smith, S.; Owens, P. (ed.). *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: Edit. Oxford University Press. 5ª edición, 2010, pp. 14-31.

A review over scientific literature on globalisation shows that authors like Wallerstein, Giddens, Gilpin or Scholte, which consider globalisation as the successor historical stage of worldwide society forged between the 19th and 20th centuries. These authors focus their analysis on the effects of globalisation not only over world context but over states and societies. However, they don't deepen in the causes of globalisation as a new transnational historic phase, either because they ignore them or because they consider them as a continuum of those which provoked the preceding extent of the international relations to the whole world.⁹

Other authors like Cox; Held, Robertson or Beck, consider the different areas where globalisation acts as a new historical phenomenon. Among the proponents of this thesis, there is a considerably wide coincidence over the existence of a pair of globalisation processes, one focused over economics and the other over cultural areas, but only few of these authors add other dimensions like the political (global governance), ecological or psychological.¹⁰

However, a deep consideration, much more detailed, shows that the main characteristics attributable to globalisation and those dimensions to where this process extends, does not answer to a mere historical inertia, inherited from preceding centuries, not even to a concurrency of certain factors emerged randomly or spontaneously.

Instead I'm able to put forward the idea of the global dynamic as a result of the impact of huge and very determined scientific-technological advances affecting the social substrata which have provoked an innovative advance

Ampuja, M., "The Media and the Academic Globalization Debate. Theoretical Analysis and Critique. Academic Dissertation". *Media and Communication Studies Research Reports*, 2, 2010, 334 pp.

⁹ Among these authors we can mention Wallerstein, Giddens; Gilpin or Harvey.

Wallerstein, I. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Edit. Verso, 1983.

Giddens, A., *The Consequences of Modernity*. Standford: Edit. Standford University Press, 1990.

Gilpin, R., *Global Political Economy*. Princeton: Edit. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Scholte, J.A., *Globalization. A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Edit. Plagrave Macmillan, 2005.

¹⁰ Cox, R.; Sinclair, T., *Approaches to World Order*. Cambridge: Edit. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Held, D., *La democracia y el orden global. Del Estado moderno al gobierno cosmopolita*, Barcelona: Edit. Paidós, 1997.

Robertson, R., *Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Edit. Sage Publications, 1992.

Beck, U., *¿Qué es la globalización?. Falacias del globalismo, respuestas a la globalización*, Barcelona: Edit. Paidós, 1998.

over human communication and whose effects are altering the traditional political, economic and cultural structures at both levels, national and international.¹¹

As there is not yet a scientific consensus over the concept of globalisation, I will define the meaning of this concept and how it matches in my personal analysis as the result of verified facts and not as the result of mere speculation.

I consider globalisation as the process which is defined by the development of an accelerated, complex and decentralized interrelation in a world scale as the result of a new interactive social communication emerged from the combination of World Wide Web and the mobile communication systems, which supports the historical emergence of a virtual society based on massive individualism.

According to this formulation, our theoretical scenario is based on the confirmation that the globalisation emerges as the result of the combination of two facts, a new communication system, the Internet, which operates from new mobile communication technology that have spread over an international society which already had a worldwide range on the areas of strategic, economic, transportation and communication relations, but that is still fragmented in political or cultural terms.

Indeed, the Internet (world wide web) constitutes a new media different from those that already existed which allows human communication to make a qualitative jump forward. That is because over the internet there is a concurrency of five characteristics not present in other medias. These characteristics are: 1) the Internet possesses a web structure of a worldwide extension that decentralizes the communication and that is impossible to control completely by the states; 2) the internet allows the instant transmission of information, cheap and with no limits; 3) it grants simultaneously, the interpersonal communication and the massive one; 4) it admits the simultaneous use of all relevant languages of human communication (written, oral, visual, mathematic, iconographic, etc.) and finally 5) the internet provides the communicative interactivity.

¹¹ A similar process started on the 18th Century as the result of the combination of scientific advances promoted by the enlightened rationalism, the technological revolution carried out by the industrialization and the consolidation of the urban middle classes resulting on the development of the mass communications that has dominated the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The potential to human communication offered by the Internet was at first conditioned by the obstacle that fixed terminals implied. The aerospace technological development applied to telecommunications combined with the advances on computing applications (hardware and software) of mobile equipment's, allow the use of the internet on an individualised basis, with no limits in terms of time or space.

With these circumstances, the process of mass and transnational Internet access and use accelerated to an unprecedented historical level in other media. According with the statistics of the ITU (International Communications Union), between 2000 and 2015 the percentage of internet users over total World's population increased from 6.5% to 43%.¹²

This situation implies that at least half of World's population uses this new communication system although the ratio of social implantation depends on countries, cultures and continents.

The basis for a new form of society, the *virtual society*, have been already settled and relies on a direct, instant, massive, multidimensional and worldwide communicative connection between individuals. A society different from those historically have been built around the settlement on a defined territory, the political articulation in the form of states and the unity provided by using a common religion and language.

This new society is a virtual society, that is to say a society built from some communicative relations which unleashes contradictory transnational dynamics of political, economic and cultural aggregation and integration but also of radicalisation, fragmentation and tension.

Also, this new society already shows some characteristics we are able to prove and study. It's a relocated society, based on constant flows of interactive communication that occur at the same time between the individual and massively, essentially decentralized in its organization and functions, generating an obstacle to its institutionalization and transnational control, it also lacks of shared values and dominant behavioural patterns and is decisively dominated by the immediacy of the communication which disrupt the decision and action processes at both an individual and collective scale.

¹² International Telecommunications Union, *Measuring the Information Society Report 2016*, Ginebra, 2016, pp. 177-214. <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/misr2016/MISR2016-w4.pdf> (checked 04/15/2017).
International Telecommunications Union, *Press release*. www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/press_releases/2015/17.aspx (checked 04/15/2017).

The new virtual society has not yet displaced or substitute the more traditional mass societies, but its existence already provokes important dysfunctions in them as it enhance the complexity of human relations, now forced to develop at two different social levels at the same time: a) the material reality, with time and space limits well defined and b) an alternative reality built around and constantly modified by a narrative created in a new interactive, massive and transnational media.¹³

From this perspective, the academic and media debate over advantages and disadvantages provoked by this new virtual society, although important to the research of the immediate impact and consequences over international life in a mid and long term, still lacks of enough evidences and historical perspective to allow the adoption of final conclusions able to justify the emerging attitudes and ideologies supporting or against globalisation.¹⁴

4. The massive individualism and its impact over international life

The virtual society, as we have already present it, relies on the progressive expansion of a *massive individualism*, understood as a new configuration of the personality of individuals that affects to their perceptions of reality, behaviours and group relations.

To be able to comprehend the innovative nature of this phenomena and its impact over international life, we must do previously a brief observation on the dynamic processes of generation of certain international players from individual behaviours.

In 1979 James N. Rosenau published an article on the Canadian magazine *Etudes Internationales*, titled *Le touriste et le terroriste ou les deux extrêmes*

¹³ One of the main traits of ancient cultures was the featureless integration of the emotional and rational dimensions through the construction of a mythic narrative, cosmogonic and transcendent of the material and social reality. The disruption provoked by the scientific knowledge, openly opposed to the myth and the religion generated a progressive distinction in contemporary cultures between these two dimensions, the emotional and the rational, secluding the science in the rational area and the religion and art in the emotional. In this way, the modernisation processes of the societies implied a growing decoupling in both the individual personality and the cultural collective identity, between cognition and emotion, action and experience, and finally between the immanent reality and the transcendent imagination.

¹⁴ The emergence of an international anti-globalization movement is a clear example of ideological manipulation of the academic debate about the globalization process.

du continuum transnational, where he identifies two different processes of interaction aggregation between what he called micro-units, which have several categories, one of them but not the only one being the individuals. These two processes were named: accidental and intentional aggregation.

“L’agrégation accidentelle survient quand une multiplicité de micro-unités manifestent un comportement identique pour satisfaire leurs finalités personnelles propres. Chaque action est destinée à servir les besoins de chaque micro-unité ou à faire progresser ses objectifs individuels. Mais comme les actions sont similaires même si les besoins et les objectifs sont différents, il est possible de faire la somme des actions individuelles. Si la somme a des conséquences pour le fonctionnement de l’une ou l’autre macro-unité, cette somme finira par être reconnue et soulignée par les porte-parole des macro-unités. Une fois que cela se traduit par l’émergence d’un macro-phénomène, celui-ci appartient au domaine public et ses composantes (les micro-actes sans relation mais similaires) se seront agrégées. (...)”

La publicité conséquente sur les implications d’une agrégation accidentelle se transmet ensuite aux structures et aux processus de l’univers politique mondial”.¹⁵

As examples of accidental aggregation, Rosenau pointed the demographic explosion, the resource depletion or the international financial crises. To which we should add others like climate change or touristic flows.

On its behalf, the intentional aggregation

“consiste en un comportement identifié par des micro-unités, entrepris au même moment et explicitement conçu pour avoir des conséquences sur les macro-structures. Que la conséquence voulue se produise ou non, une agrégation s’ensuit et les liens de causalité sont forgés parce que ceux qui cherchent à organiser les macro-unités se doivent d’attirer l’attention du public sur leurs objectifs et leurs plans s’ils veulent obtenir une certaine concertation du micro-comportement et orienter son impact cumulatif. (...) En effet, de nombreuses tentatives visant à amorcer des

¹⁵ Rosenau, J.N., “Le touriste et le terroriste ou les deux extrêmes du continuum transnational”, *Études Internationales*, vol. 10, N° 2, 1979, p. 225.

processus d'agrégation délibérée émanent d'une volonté de contrecarrer ou d'inverser les conséquences d'une agrégation accidentelle".¹⁶

As examples of intentional aggregation, we could mention the terrorist organizations or the different transnational social movements like the ecologist, the pacifist, or the feminist.

To these two processes of aggregation we should add the integrative process, constituted by the behaviours of the micro-unities intentionally focused on the creation of new macro-units through the union, totally or partially, of structural and functional components of the original micro-units. The several examples of transnational company merges have effectively shown that the integration process is a defined social dynamic.

As I pointed out in 1991 the traditional communication mass media which lacks a communicative interaction have acted decisively to form transnational public opinions by accidental aggregation processes. In turn these public opinions have unleashed several intentional aggregation processes, frequently rallied by the intervention of leaders or elites from the micro-units that at the end generate organizations with a transnational projection.¹⁷

In other words, the mass media have already acted as creative agents of a generalization of communicative behaviours of individual users, whose discovery of shared opinions have let them to undertake collective actions on a national and transnational level.

But along with the generalization of the use of the Internet, it is emerging a new dynamic of socialization between individuals and a new dynamic of mobilization among groups on a transnational scale that we call massive individualism.

What is the massive individualism? It is the new individual dimension emerged from its simultaneous and dialectical participation in a permanent dynamic of interactive communication through the internet, which transform the individual in emitter and receiver of transnational massive messages.

This double dimension of human communication reinforces the transnational power of the individual among political, economic and cultural relations developed into a world context.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

¹⁷ Calduch Cervera, R., *Relaciones Internacionales*, Madrid: Edit. Ediciones de Ciencias Sociales, 1991.

Indeed, the individuals are capable now of articulate, through a direct and interactive communication, transnational massive opinion groups, specially, through the so-called social networks. But also, they can generate movements and non-governmental organizations able to condition the activities and agenda of the rest of international players, starting from the states.

Confronted as we are to a changing environment under the effects of globalisation, the traditional separation between individual and social realities, defined both by a determined spatial and temporary frame, are progressively being integrated in a massive individualism without well-defined spatial and temporary limits.

It is true that this process is yet on an initial stage and that the differenced experiences between individuals and society are still dominant, but massive individualism is not a chimerical interpretation but a reality.¹⁸

Every day hundreds of millions use the internet to aggregate on a transnational basis their acquisitions of goods and services, creating a real virtual market of global extent which rallies thousands of millions of dollars. Similarly, tens of millions of videos are aggregated to the web to show not only the most surprising and exclusive individual behaviours but the great international events like the Syrian war, or the election of the US President. Not to mention the thousands of millions of messages already interchanged all over the World thanks to social networks and that express and condition, the perceptions and behaviours of millions of people.

This global communicative dynamic is starting to change the international society inherited from the 20th century although it is far away yet of completely or decisively transforming it. That is why we disagree from those authors like Castells or Arenal that supports the idea of the substitution of the Worldwide society by the Global Society.¹⁹

¹⁸ One recent and evident example of massive individualism is the massive practice of the selfie and its diffusion by social networks to the point of becoming viral, which means being used and communicated in a massive way over the world and with an undetermined continuity on the web.

¹⁹ The most significant evidence of this affirmation is the coexistence in a world scale of the traditional mass medias and the Internet.

Del Arenal, C., "Mundialización, creciente interdependencia y globalización en las relaciones internacionales".- *Cursos de Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Internacionales de Vitoria-Gasteiz 2008*.- Edit. Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco. Bilbao, 2009; págs. 181 a 268. www.ehu.es/cursosderechointernacionalvitoria/ponencias/pdf/2008/2008_4.pdf (checked 04/30/2017).

Castells, M., *La era de la información. Economía, sociedad y cultura, vol. 1: La sociedad red*, Madrid: Edit. Alianza Editorial, 1997.

If we analyse the effects of the massive individualism over the political international structure, we can see that it is already forcing changes but also it is reinforcing already existing trends in its three fundamental areas: a) governance; b) regulation and c) security.²⁰

International governance, understood as the exercise of power in world society is affected by two ways: 1) by altering the power distribution in a national and international scale and 2) by conditioning the priorities of the foreign agendas of the states. Regarding regulation, the main effect is generated by supporting or questioning the legitimacy and application of the main international regulations, but also generating new transnational relations which lack of a specific international regulation.²¹ Finally the international security has been affected as much as new transnational menaces emerge, like the cyberwar and as much as new players or ways of reacting to the traditional worldwide menaces appear.²²

Regarding the international economic structure, the massive individualism has generated a new economic sector, the digital economy. In it the global market which coordinates producers, distribution channels, financers and consumers is provided exclusively through the internet. But the massive individualism is also affecting more traditional economic sectors by enhancing their productivity, boosting their transnational R&D&I dynamics or supporting changes in the labour market.

Finally, among the cultural structure, the internet communication and massive individualism are generating a stress between the universal trend toward knowledge, values, principles and standards of living and

²⁰ Rosenau, J.N., *The Governance of Fragnegration: Neither a World Republic nor a Global Interstate System*. A paper prepared for presentation at the Congress of the International Political Science Association, Quebec City, August 1-5, 2000.

²¹ The most prominent example is the difficulty to adopt international regulations to grant the exercise of the Human rights in the virtual society and to prosecute the criminal use of the internet.

Segura-Serrano, A., "Internet Regulation and the Role of International Law", von Bogdandy, A.; Wolfrum, R. (eds.), *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*; vol. 10, 2006, pp. 191-272. www.mpil.de/files/pdf3/06_antoniou1.pdf (checked 04/28/2017).

Land, M., "Toward an International Law of the Internet", *Harvard International Law Journal*, vol. 54, N° 2, Summer, 2013; pp. 393-458.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/Communications/MollyLand.pdf> (checked 28/04/2017).

²² Ibáñez, J., "Globalización e Internet: poder y gobernanza en la sociedad de la información", *Revista Académica de Relaciones Internacionales*, N° 4, September, 2006, pp. 1-33. <http://www.relacionesinternacionales.info/ojs/article/download/38/32.pdf> (checked 04/27/2017).

the reinforcement of the diversity of the cultural identities generated and deep-rooted through centuries.²³

Thus, the massive individualism is ascribing to the people a new prominence in international life by transforming them into decisive players of the virtual society, which is already interacting with the traditional worldwide society through new forms of aggregation and social integration to reinforcing the macro-structures, to alter them or to make them disappear.

This new reality, whose effects are already being appreciated in all areas of life, is still scarcely scientifically investigated in its causes, characteristics, evolution and consequences, even though it is one of the key factors, if not the key factor of the globalisation process which international society are facing.

5. The limited contributions of Social Sciences to the analysis of individuals as subjects of international life

Taking into account the former considerations, it is clear that we are facing a transition stage between a world society and a global one characterized by the combination of the traditional organizational forms of human communities, and new forms of virtual transnational association.

This complex international reality forces us to rethink the utility of social sciences to analyse and comprehend it rigorously, by examining its ontological and epistemological traditional foundations under a creative perspective.²⁴

As pointed by Rosenau

“If the deaths of distance, time and sequentiality, can they serve as stimuli to a renewal of creative thought about what are governance may mean

²³ To comprehend the cultural impact of the Internet, check: Valle, S., *Cibercultura y civilización universal. Hacia un Nuevo orden cultural*, Barcelona: Edit. Erasmus Ediciones, 2010.

²⁴ The necessary critical consideration we propose is clearly different of the post-modernist critic theories which refuse the scientific contributions offered by the different social disciplines due to the consideration of being distorted by its rationalist vision, something that has ended in a futile, cognitive and evaluating relativism of society, devoid of scientific or academic validity. Salomón, M., “La teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales en los albores del siglo XXI: diálogo, disidencia, aproximaciones”, *Revista Electrónica de Estudios Internacionales*, N° 4, 2002, 59 pp. <http://www.reei.org/index.php/revista/num4/articulos/teoria-relaciones-internacionales-albores-siglo-xxi-dialogo-disidencia-aproximaciones> (checked 04/29/2017).

in the 21st Century? My response to the last question, however is an unqualified 'yes', unqualified in the sense that the transformations at work in the world are so profound that a thoughtful observer cannot but experience a sense of renewal, an impulse to think afresh about how control might be achieved over the contradictions and changes that mark our emergent epoch".²⁵

If we re-examine the origins of the main social sciences, we can verify the historical prominence of the masses, deeply associated to industrial revolution and enlightened rationalism, which encouraged the emergence of economic science due to the research of Adam Smith;²⁶ later the birth of Sociology and Political Science during the 19th century and finally at the dawn of the 20th century the first chairs in International Relations.

The dominant paradigm of all these sciences²⁷ has been the study of the human groups, from the perspective of societies, states, national economies or relations among nations. In other words, the main social Sciences have been dominated by a collectivist perspective instead of an individualist one.²⁸

The individual as active participant of the internal life of the state, and even as prominent figure of the international life was deeply side-lined from the scientific studies, remaining diluted in the research of collective decision making or actions conducted by the masses as single subjects of History. Pierre Renouvin named them "the deep forces" of the History of the International relations, while Toynbee, Spengler and Braudel, decided to focus their efforts in the study of civilizations.²⁹

Even accepting the important contributions offered by the Social Sciences to the understanding of the different human groups, we have to admit, as

²⁵ Rosenau, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁶ For the economic science, it is assumed that its configuration as scientific discipline starts with the work "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the *Wealth of Nations*" published in 1776. The first Spanish edition was translated by José Antonio Ortiz in Valladolid in 1794 y the publisher Oficina de la viuda e hijos de Santander.

²⁷ The term paradigm is used in the same way it was formulated by Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn, T.S., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: Edit. University of Chicago Press, 1^a ed. 1962.

²⁸ On the contrary the Psychiatry and Psychology emerged as sciences focused on the understanding of the individual psyche although later they have extend their subject of study to the existence of a collective psyche and its conditioning over the universal human behaviours capable of being aggregated.

²⁹ Renouvin, P.; Duroselle; J. B., *Introduction à l'Histoire des Relations Internationales*, Paris, 1964.

pointed by Birnbaum³⁰ that they were also theoretical trends which focused on the combination of social perspective and individual basis prevailing in Western cultures.³¹

These trends are included in the so-called methodological individualism which tends to explain collective macroscopic phenomena through behaviours and individual strategies (microscopic), investigated and interpreted from the perspective of scientific rationalism.

The game theory, the negotiation theory, the law of supply and demand or the utilitarianism are examples of this methodological individualism. All these contributions share two fundamental assumptions: 1º) the one that defends the nature of decisions and collective behaviours as analytic equivalents to those adopted by the individual, which allows to a theoretical isomorphism between them that eases the construction of cognitive models from the analysis of individual behaviour and 2º) the one that defends that these behaviours and decisions follow rational criteria capable of being recognized and theoretically defined like the maximum economic benefit, the *raison d'Etat* (reason of state) in Political Science; the national interest in international politics, etc.

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However, both assumptions are continuously being questioned by the facts, something that has provoked a re-examination and a scientific criticism of the different doctrines and models based on this methodological individualism.³²

In the light of these academic and scientific backgrounds it is obvious that an analysis of the individual as active subject of international life should be necessarily critic with the contributions of Social Sciences but at the same

³⁰ Birnbaum, Pierre; Leca, Jean (edit.), *Sur l'individualisme: théories et méthodes*, París: Edit. Presses de Sciences Po (P.F.N.S.P.), 1991.

³¹ The western cultures and civilizations, influenced by their Greek, Latin and Christian roots support the belief of a self-reason of existence of an individual in itself, that is why the individual is the origin and end of any social group, from family to the State. On the contrary among oriental Cultures and Civilizations, the individual can only achieve the sense of its own existence as a member of a social group. This different cultural conception of the relations between the group and the individual has been widely ignored by social Sciences due to its Western roots.

³² Del Arenal, C., "La nueva sociedad mundial y las nuevas realidades internacionales: un reto para la teoría y la política", *Cursos de Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Internacionales de Vitoria-Gasteiz 2001*, Bilbao: Edit. Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 2002, pp. 17-84. http://www.ehu.es/cursosderechointernacionalvitoria/ponencias/pdf/2001/2001_1.pdf (checked 04/29/2017).

time, not ignoring the main inputs to the understanding of the actual world produced by these Sciences.

As I pointed out at the beginning of my study, the consideration about the individuals in international life is a difficult challenge precisely because the global reality is inherently complex and because the decisions and personal behaviours of people are developed on a twin and dialectical existential dimension: the individual and social ones. Two dimensions that are not easily cognitively dissociated something that implies their necessary inclusion in scientific theories.

The first of both realities, the individual, is dominated by its exclusive singularity (as every person is one and unique), its intimacy and the permanent stress between emotional and rational features of its personality.

On its part, the social reality is constructed around the shared regularity of behaviours and functions the people performs, its public character and the constant dialectical tension between the institutional organization of human groups and the vital pulse which permeate the collective actions of every generation according to the historical circumstances they should live.

The great instrument to connect both realities the individual and the social is precisely the human communication, articulated and developed through the different idioms (iconic, signs, mathematics, etc. ...) and the languages. Thanks to them is how people, every single person, not only builds its own and exclusive interpretation of the world that surrounds them including the other individuals but also succeed in sharing them with others, guaranteeing the inclusion and active participation in human groups through a process of socialization imposed since its birth, a process which let him/her to internalise, as part of his/her personality, the main cultural elements of its society.

Precisely this complex and multidimensional interpretation of the individual is the one that should guide the new researching perspective of the individual as subject of an international life that in the last decades have also being developing in the virtual society.

We live in an historical era where every single person actively participates in two simultaneous processes: 1) as member of the traditional massive processes of collective aggregation and integration and 2) as creators, promoters, leaders or manipulators of interactive communication processes through the internet capable of affect the structures and international relations. From the former we obtain the examples of the prototypes of individuals as tourist or

terrorist, but from the late the symbolic representatives are the blogger and the hacker.

The hacker intervenes manipulating the proper operative of the Internet through the modification or destructions of certain flows of information that affect the infrastructure and programming of the web. Instead the blogger takes part in the generation, reproduction and widespread dissemination of information and opinion on the different aspects of reality, including the international relations and their effects.

Both prototypes symbolize the two sides of the massive individualism allowed by the development of the virtual reality. The first one shows the type of individuals capable of taking advantage of the interactive communication through the internet to attack the same operative that supports the web. The second reflects the cultural influence able to be achieved by the individual when is projected by the internet in a transnational level.

We must accept that we lack of an acceptable theory of the role developed by the individual as subject of international society, but is much more remarkable the easy way we use to hide our ignorance on the individual as subject of virtual society through speculative clichés.

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I hope that these thoughts will help to make us much more conscious of our cognitive limitations on the role the individuals play as subjects of international life in a world subdued by the globalisation. I would like them to be an incentive to conduct new researches and investigations that will allow us to overcome those obstacles via a collective effort in all the areas of the Social Sciences.