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For several reasons, it is a pleasure and an honor to write the preface for this book. First of all, for my long friendship with the author and my acknowledgement for his intellectual and academic work. This book approaches a subject of outmost importance for our sustainability and provides knowledge about a dimension of the social that has been rarely developed and even hidden in the reflection and research in social sciences. Since many years, I have arrived to the conclusion that the only space that is irreducible before the great homogenizing forces of today’s society is the local space. And the last reason is because thanks to his generous friendship, I had the privilege of knowing the author’s hometown a few years ago: La Quebrada Grande, a small town cuddled on the foothills of the mound Teta de Niquitao. There, I was able to share with Francisco and understand about the origin of his concept of “localization” (lugarización). This place, this mountain spot, this region filled with his first memories and friends, is a territory surrounded by the mountains of the State of Trujillo in Venezuela, where Francisco lived part of his life, where his affection towards
mother Earth is grounded, and where his calling to become a geographer may have originated.

There are those who state that time and space have lost their traditional meaning. Manuel Castells talks about a new age, and Alain Touraine about a rupture. The North is increasingly dispersed and fragmented, and so is the South. It could be said that there are now many North and South, which is why there are so many different visions of the intense and unpredictable process that began only three or four decades ago. No one knows where the process of change in this new age of information and communication will take us. There is a basic consensus about the end of an “old” world order, but how should the new context be defined? References are as many as distant: new order, new disorder, new Middle Age, geopolitics of complexity, geopolitics of fractures, geopolitics of chaos, second modernity, radical modernity, liquid modernity, postmodernity. Even social sciences experience this outstanding degree of confusion.

Since the early 1980’s, economists began using the word globalization and it became the center in all social sciences after the fall of the Berlin wall and the disappearance of the Soviet Union. Proposals began to appear, such as “the end of territories” (Bertrand Badie), “global cities” (Saskia Sassen), “network-society” (Manuel Castells), “archipelago economy” (Pierre Veltz), and the “non-places” (Marc Augé), among others.

Globalization appears as the end of a social-historical unification process of the world’s space, by means of the formation of a single great market where productive factors can develop freely. It is the globalization of the world, carried out by western civilization and its current hegemonic production mode that has been called massive consumption globalized capitalism, the society of hyperconsumism and turboconsumers, as Lipovetsky calls it, that have managed to transform the physical and social reality of the planet to turn it into an object of profit and accumulation. This transformation seeks to dilute any specific aspects that characterize reality in order to manage it in a more efficient way. What it is done is to produce a constant homogenization by means of abstraction processes that standardize and take anything that is unique and typical from every specific element that constitutes it. Its identity and autonomy is taken thus turning it into an abstract entity that is easy to process and handle in the chains and production scales that are deemed more appropriate for the great capital.

From this perspective, globalization appears by all means to be a process that is impossible to stop: the world is increasingly globalized. We live in a world that has become globalized, it has become one single territory or space that is unified by the infrastructure that communicates it. It is also unified by the physical flows of material and people, as well as by the virtual flows of communication, information, and capitals that run through it.

At the same time, this same process corrodes previously existing identities, thus destroying the cultural diversity that has characterized us: the many languages and dialects, cosmovisions and the social imaginary, knowledge systems, use and traditions, holidays and folklore, life strategies, values, among many other elements that make up the identity of the people and that of human collectives. Also, this process has been unable to provide a greater equity between nations and within nations themselves, and
has also produced a serious and increasingly worrying degradation of the environment where we live.

In today’s context, the governments of the nations are tangled in the discourse of a “necessary economical growth” as the panacea that magically solves all the problems of a good government (employment, fiscal surplus, favorable balance of payments, governance, low taxes, etc.). At the same time, these governments are confused by the developmentalist lectures of international financial institutions.

This incontinence and irrationality (from a systemic point of view) of the great driving force of the aforementioned process, which is the globalized capitalism, has made many intellectuals wonder, who is the opposing subject of capital? Who could stop its unrestraint? This capitalism is absolutely unable of distinguishing the physical and biological boundaries that the planet sets to its uncontrolled desire of accumulating wealth and profit that characterizes it. It has also had an absolute deregulation in its favor that has allowed it to operate for some decades, and it has lead to today’s huge financial crisis.

From this question, the problem of antagonism before the expansion of capital assumes a different perspective. Now, it is not from the perspective of historical subjects anymore, which is the one most of the research in social sciences has focused its intellectual energy. It is more about analyzing the boundaries that the nature of reality itself imposes us. Among these boundaries are the spaces, territories, places, and the various ways of inhabiting the human condition established, conditioned, or influenced by the possession of space/time. Since decades, several authors have outlined the boundaries of economic growth, which for unrestrained globalization means setting up scales, socio-rhythms, the dimension of the local, the human scale. Recently, other authors have placed even more emphasis on cultural, political, and even psycho-social dimensions of the local dimension.

Since a few decades now, proposals have been made in Europe about local development in which the creation of new jobs is the goal in a time determined by harsh financial adjustments and industrial reconversions, when the local space is exposed with efficiency criteria in order to promote active employment policies. Since then, there has been considerable accumulation of knowledge and policies regarding the local systems of companies and territorial development.

The concepts of local and local development are now subjects of reflection, debates, proposals, and policies for a public administration that is more decentralized and participative locally, for a good local government that facilitates the development by creating the proper environment for releasing the energies of social agents with the main concern of eradicating poverty. The former while there is a growth in the approaches that human development goes along culture as a base of local identity because it allows us to be ourselves in a world that becomes globalized and disguised.

It is in this perspective in which the work presented by the author of this book becomes very relevant since it does not suggest that we should entrench ourselves and resist within the local as a way of facing the inevitable globalization. On the contrary, we are invited to have a proactive attitude in which the place is valued as the space from where can integrate in the dynamics of globalization. It is an approach
that matches the proposal made by Milton Santos to confront and transform what he called “wicked globalization”. Francisco González invites us to understand localization as a self-poietic process that a specific place undergoes in order to maintain its identity and incorporate efficiently into the global. That is, a constant self-reinvention while maintaining its basic coherence and adapting to the society of knowledge without any important break ups. Basically, what this mechanism seeks is the local human inner development towards the development of its identity while improving its territorial competitiveness level, and joining globalization wisely.

The place is the subjective, social, and cultural appropriation of space/time. It is that intimate and close territory where the inhabitant feels comfortable, at ease, safe, and where he develops most of his daily activities. This place can be where this person was born and raised, where he went to school or worked, where he raised a family. It is that place, spot, or corner where the person feels he belongs. Living in a place means a social action shown specifically in the construction and destruction of life forms, specific ways of owning nature, and the use of both intellectual and institutional resources created by humanity. Hence the actions and concepts that define frontiers arise, and the functional organization of delimited territorial units based on the interests of social groups and economic, environmental, and social realities are built. Therefore, the place is like that, like an existential enunciation of living, dwelling, residing, in that particular relation that humans establish with space. As the author has indicated: The place is that intimate and close territorial space where most of the human being’s activities take place. It is usually the place the phases of being born and growing up are written in that book called life, where education and the configuration of the personal morphology are clearly seen. Family and friends that have been made with a special emotional bond are found in this place. In short, the place is a community defined in terms of territory and human relationships people feel ownership bonds with. The first characteristic: the place circumscribes all vital extents of human beings. The place is the territory of a person in ecologic terms. It is the place where people establish their community, where their history can be found, as well as their topographic references, cultural definitions, affections, where they earn their living and spend most of their time.

However, as it is shown in this book, places are being replaced by non-places. We are filling up of non-places, anonymous confluence spaces where people in transit must live for some time, whether it is the plane, train or subway’s waiting area, and turn citizens in simple elements (consumers and workers) of groups that form and break up randomly and are symbols of the human condition of today and the future. The user maintains a contractual relationship with these non-places established by the ticket, and his personality is only documented by his identity card.

Francisco González affirms that: Places face great challenges, the most important being keeping their identity while incorporating wisely into the global. Another challenge will be reaffirming those singular things that make them unique while adapting so their people will be globally competitive. Also, translating the forces coming from the global into the local reality. And finally, contributing to the diversity of a plural world from the contributions of its local identity, what I call localization.
In order to achieve successful localization processes, the author of this book proposes to be aware of the current place, its potential, its weaknesses and the opportunities that can be seized, and the role that specific place could play. Also, the author proposes to be aware of the roots of the place’s identity, history, geography, culture, of what makes it unique, plus the adoption of shared definitions about the future place and the desired collective project.

We agree with Haasan Zaoual’s affirmation: “the culture of the place is in the horizon of the paradigms of the future. It is the culture that makes up the melting pot of the organization and stimulation tendencies of local actors around the necessary changes. Thus, the place acts as a collective cognitive expert. The place yields cooperation mechanisms that stabilize the turmoil that is inherent to social organisms. Shared beliefs become symbolic engines for the action”.

Hence, the importance of the book we are presenting. Human beings are still rooted to their origin and their vocation might be cosmopolitan and universal. Just like any traveler, we are going somewhere, but at the same time we need a place to lay our heads on so we can dream again about our origins.

Santiago de Chile, October 29, 2012

The nature of places changes with globalization processes. The several influences from the global affect places in different ways, and the results depend on many circumstances. These processes are complex and dynamic, and will be approached from a local point of view, as a product of the analysis and the experience that result from a lifetime of work for local development.

Globalization is maybe the most visible of the changes happening in these turbulent and fast times. It is part of the various processes that are deeply transforming reality from all points of view. Many think that its extension and magnitude are similar to what happened in the past; the change from nomadic to sedentary life during the Agricultural Revolution, or the times of the transformation from artisanal life to a life around machines during the Industrial Revolution. It is a change in times, paradigms, a systemic change, a total change. It is a time born radically different from those of the past, but faster, more extensive at a greater extent.

This mutation affects everything and everyone. In these pages, an effort will be made to go deeper into how all this
is affecting local territories. How the referred processes modify the nature of places. How these new realities that are being created fast and intensively affect this intimate and personal space we call "place", while elucidating reflections and approaches about the new and unusual paths that places travel through while experiencing the turbulence of new realities.

Villager, provincial, or countryman used to be synonyms of backward, uncultured, narrow-minded, and old-fashioned people. Not all meanings were pejorative, and also meant simplicity, humbleness, and integrity. Now that technological connections carry information everywhere, and also obtain information from places, that these people are connected with the world and are part of the global system not like a marginal and remote area, but as close as its possibilities to digital access, what impact do they get? How do they react? What are the processes they experience? What cultural, organizational, territorial technological, economic and other kinds of changes do they experience?

Places are not what they used to be until the late 20th century. Their nature is different due to globalization and other changes that emerge in the new realities. Their demands are different, and so are their options and challenges. Can places take advantage of this historical moment the world is experiencing in order to secure their strengths and attenuate their weaknesses? Will they manage to be inserted properly into the global from their local identity? Will places contribute to the global processes that influence them? Will local identities be lost in the homogenizing or standardizing tendencies of globalization? Is it true that the world will be flat and monotonous? Or will it be uneven and diverse?

In order to understand the new nature of places, it is necessary, on one hand, to become interested in the important transformations that are happening in the planet. On the other hand, we must become interested in the correct characterization of the epistemological concept of place, at least the concept presented in this book.

Approaching the subject of the current changes experienced by the planet is not easy because they are very diverse and profound. Trying to make a synthesis or a superficial approach can omit elements, processes that could be important. Also, the systemic character of changes determines the consideration that there are no palpable, small or insignificant processes. Any process, no matter how reduced or limited it may seem, it can yield long-range effects.

What is more, this third planetary revolution is being called the Revolution of Knowledge, among other names. However, paradoxically, the knowledge about its true character, particularly about its impact in people, the relationships between them, with others, and with the territory are limited. Before the sudden advance of technological and scientific knowledge, the reflection on the consequences or traces in the human spirit, in the ways of social organization, human relations, new ways of political expression, the organization of territory, among other fields of human sciences, is slow. The deficit even stretches to spiritual subjects. Even the scientific rationality still moves under the domain of the classic paradigm, but an emerging paradigm that looks more completely for the causes is making progress.

An effort is being imposed to understand the core
aspects of these new realities better, particularly the situation of men and his environment, relationships, culture, concerns, and challenges. Also, to know the place it has in the new ecology that results from the arrangements that are consequence of the structural changes that are produced rapidly.

Maybe one of the subjects that have been approached the least in the middle of this lack of knowledge related to human nature in the new global, techno-scientific society of knowledge refers to the new ways of structuring territory. That is, the new geography that results from the processes of the structural reorganization experienced by the entire humanity, even the so-called “New Geography” represented by Paul Krugman and other modern authors seems to be “old wine in new wineskins.” (Rojas López, 2009)

There are some breakthroughs regarding the worldwide organization of territory. In fact, the subject of globalization has a bibliography that grows as time goes by, but in view of the globalization frenzy, the place has been put to a side, it has been forgotten. This issue has many consequences to understand the true nature of new realities completely. A large asymmetry prevails in the treatment of the subjects of global structures compared to the studies that deal with the subject of the local.

Many studies about places are done from the critical perspective of the local, the devaluation of diversity and heterogeneity, thus favoring the development of homogenizing and “deterritorializing” exchange networks. However, the local and all its identity resists and in some cases, becomes stronger, as it can be see in the new dynamic that some local languages acquire, to give an example of just one and maybe the most important element of the local identity. The place lives and becomes stronger, a phenomenon that spreads specially to all those countries where the globalization and the society of knowledge progress deeper and stronger.

People need the safety and confidence of their intimate and familiar place. Philosopher José Antonio Marina says: “Globalization is causing an obsession with identity which will cause conflict. Our minds globalize, but our hearts localize” (jose-antonio-marina.blogspot.com). Also, British professor of culture Mike Featherstone (1995) wrote:

*The difficulty of handling the increasing levels of cultural complexity, together with the implied doubts and anxieties, are precisely the reasons why “localism” or the desire of staying in a clearly delimited place, or going back to a notion of “home”, becomes an important subject.*

Definitively, the processes that completely shake the world and rapidly will not be able to be interpreted without a meticulous and diligent look to local territories, their new identities, their challenges in the face of the global, and their new and varied ways of adapting.

The new territorial structures that appear today are varied, but most authors talk about the new planetary reality that tends to have a single network of relations that includes all Earth: globalization. The large impact of this reality is evident. However, this universal and totalizing force does not manifest in the same way everywhere because each specific territory responds differently due to its own historic processes.
What it really is evident (the main subject of this book) is that new realities change the nature of places. The traditional place is no longer the same, independent of its situation, the strength of its identity, and the degree of openness or isolation. Globalization changed the character and essence of these places.

The knowledge of new realities demands the understanding of this new condition of the local, that is, the place. The perception of the new world that is born rapidly will not be complete or accurate without the study of the changes happening in local communities, their new ways of organization, their internal and external relations, politics, society, culture, the challenges they face to satisfy new needs, challenges, managing their issues that are no longer peculiar in local living, and other emerging subjects.

The idea that globalization will end with diversity and that it will set a single model of society, as well as a single system of values and way of thinking is generalized. This might happen, no one knows for sure what will happen in the future. However, the main purpose of this work is to show that among the important trends of new realities, despite the strong homogenizing pressure, there is one trend aiming towards strengthening freedom, diversity, and pluralism like it has never been seen in the history of humanity, through local human development. It is an unprecedented social phenomenon that changes the nature of places by strengthening their own reality, their identity, but it is efficiently inserted into the global.

The word localization tries to define this recent phenomenon with large vitality as a force for a new organization of society and the territory. Localization, as a complementary trend of globalization, is the development of places with the features of their identity but with a strong bond to the world. It is a unique place linked to the world within it.

This phenomenon of the qualitative development of the local is intimately linked with the extension and revalorization of freedom, pluralism, and diversity. Therefore, an important trend towards the future is that we can count on a much more diverse planet, with many local cultures that are known, respectable and that respect one another, free but connected by means of the many institutional, economic, cultural, and other networks.

When Ulrich Beck (1999) explains the principles of the new cosmopolitan republicanism that is arising in Europe, he points out individualism in first place; the role of cosmopolitan actors, identities and plots; then, “in apparent contradiction to the latter”, the new importance of the local – of the magic of the native land – in cosmopolitan society in third place; and the key meaning of political freedom in fourth place.

One of the scientists that has best attempted a more current interpretation of the territorial phenomena of globalization is Manuel Castells. In the first volume of his book The Information Age (2000), a brilliant book that is essential in many senses for the understanding of today’s economics and society, he affirms that:

The arising of the new technological paradigm based on information, on biological and electronic technologies, is yielding a society of networks where the “space of flows” is imposed on the “space of the place”, and where “there is not a place for itself, since positions are defined by
flows... places do not disappear but their logic and meaning are absorbed by the network... the structural meaning disappears, subsumed in the logic of the metanetwork.

Arturo Escobar (2000) of the Department of Anthropology of the University of North Carolina asks himself: To what extent can we reinvent thought as well as the world, according to the logic of cultures based on the place? Is it possible to defend the place with the place as a construction point of the theory and political action? Who speaks on behalf of the place? Who defends it? Is it possible to find within the practices based on the place a critic of power and hegemony without ignoring their rooting in the circuits of capital and modernity?

It is important to overcome some of the epistemological traps that limit the theories of globalization that do not consider the place as a subject that is just there, that has an existence that is nothing but “virtual”, but it is concrete, palpable, and has a new dynamic. The place, just as local culture, can be considered not only as “the other aspect” of globalization, something like the resistance to standardizing tendencies alternative to modernity, but as a dynamic that belongs to the globalizing process with opposite effects to those that are traditionally awarded to it. It is a different look to the same phenomenon.

As Escobar (2000) affirms, it is evident that the place and conscience based on the place have been excluded in the debates of the local and the global. This is twice as deplorable because, on one hand, that place is the key of development, culture, and the environment. On the other hand, it is just as important in order to imagine other contexts, to think about the construction of politics, knowledge, and identity.

The disappearance of the place in most of the contemporary literature on globalization is a reflection of the existing asymmetry between the global and the local, where the local is associated to economy, technology, capital, networks, and politics among other subjects. On the other hand, the local is linked to daily life, human work, traditions, common life; just as it happens with women, minorities, the poor, as well as local cultures and diversity.

When the neologism “glocal” was coined by Borja (1997), what it is suggested is an even attention to the localization of the global and the globalization of the local, for the consideration of specific ways this traffic occurs in both ways. However, the challenge is not complete if a research regarding the place is not performed considering broader aspects such as the impact of digital technology (Internet, particularly) in the place, the identity, and the new ways of decentralized management. The relations of the place with regional, national, and multinational economies, with social relations, with new scientific paradigms, new challenges in democracy, freedom and pluralism, the place and human sustainable development. What are the changes given in specific places as the result of globalization? On the contrary, what new ways of thinking the world arise from places as a result of such encounter? How can we understand the relations between the cultural and economic dimensions of places?

Milton Santos (2000), one of the most important scholars of human geography, dealt with the nature of space, together
with places and the implications that globalization has in these everyday places. He affirms, among other things that “the global order seeks to impose a single rationality everywhere. Places respond to the world according to the different ways of their own rationality” (p. 289). Professor Santos did not have enough time to see the most recent territorial changes, but he anticipated them admirably: “Each place is at the same time the object of a global and a local reason that cohabit dialectically."

Localization as it is presented in this book, has a broad sense because it attempts to locate the place in a new dimension that corresponds with a vision within the structural changes that affect the organization of the world in its many aspects including, of course, the epistemological world on the subject. For this, just as Edgar Morín (2002) suggests in one of his last books, the method I propose is a path that arises after 30 years of experience in the regional and local development and decentralization, focused mainly in Trujillo State, Venezuela, of the theoretical bases that arise from the studies that deal with the subject, and the observations made of reality, particularly the successful experiences that combine the reaffirmation of the local identity with the ability of an efficient insertion into the global.

But beyond these theoretical considerations, the interest is also focused in the practical consequences of the approach that emphasizes in the new nature of places in the age of globalization, in humans, their substantial relationships, the local quality of life, the new challenges of public management, and social groups. Also in admitting that a new human ecosystem that arises or begins to become noticeable in new realities exists. It is a world in

a state of emergency that could be freer, more plural, and diverse, by means of a good combination of globalization and localization.

In order to achieve the full range of potential produced as a consequence of these new realities, places demand a new management, a more creative and enterprising way of managing “local affairs”. Now, it is not just traditional services such as water, electricity, urbanism, or transportation that require being more efficient, but also connectivity, competitiveness, external relations, together with other arising issues.
Globalization:
A brief conceptual approach

An unsuspected prophecy from 1848, paradoxically made by an emblematic philosopher of suspicion explained: Ancient industries have been destroyed and are continuously being destroyed. They are replaced by new industries whose introduction becomes vital for all civilized nations. These industries no longer use native raw materials, but raw materials from the furthest regions of the world, and whose products are not only consumed in the country where they are located, but all over the world. Instead of old needs that were satisfied with national products, newer needs that demand products from the furthest countries and varied climates arise. Instead of the former isolation of areas and nations that were self-sufficient, a universal exchange is established, a universal interdependence of nations. This applies both to material and intellectual production. The intellectual production of a nation becomes a common patrimony of all. The national narrow-mindedness and exclusivism become increasingly
impossible. From several national and local literatures, a universal literature arises... (Marx & Engels, 1848)

This epistemological discovery has forced the reconsideration of strategies in order to face and understand each one of these phenomena. However, the vertiginous speeds at which they develop make thorough theorizations harder, it creates obstacles paradigms and interpretations collide with, thus exceeding our ability to respond and assimilate them. In short, as some authors have illustrated it, we live in a new revolution that outshines the two previous ones (industrial and agricultural revolutions). What we find more heartbreaking yet potentially enriching, is that this revolution acts in a silent, capricious, multipolar, and paradoxical manner, and under the logics of unreason. Postmodernists would call it chaotic. No wonder philosopher Julián Marías (1998) blames the clouding of ideas for being the key to the fragility of our times.

Of all subjects that deal with the globalization phenomenon, there is one that is dealt more intensively than others, not to say insufficiently. This refers to the ways realities inherent to each territory are structured with medullar matters on the relation man has with the local environment, the concerns, and the challenges this supposes. It is the new geography resulting from structural reorganization processes experienced by humanity that affects the planet so instructively.

The scientific community has already given some steps to understand this subject, of course; but just as we stated, it is still insufficient or partial. Insufficiency has materialized with abundant literature about globalization compared to the few about the local. Globalization frenzy has become an asymmetry when it comes to dealing with the other side of the globalization phenomenon: the subject of the local or the place.

In some academic circles, this insufficiency has resulted in some studies in which a new critical perspective of the local crystallizes, broadening the devaluation of diversity and heterogeneity to privilege the development of homogenizing deterritorializing exchange networks. Despite the importance of this trend, the local does exist; it is there for better or worse, and it often has decisive influence in phenomena that affect the global. Even Manuel Castell (2000, 2006) affirms that the network society is the new way of social organization born in the age of information. However, he recently admits that:

If people lose control of their lives, which depends on the global financial flows, whose origin and destination are not known, and symbol-based communication systems that give priority to the global culture over the local one, then they shelter in what they know and where they feel identified: their home, family, place, religion, language... in what sociologists call historically built primary identities.” (Castell, 2009)

The thesis of the end of the place, of its stigmatization without considerations, of the globalizing panacea that will absorb the local, found in a comment made by Bauman (1999), that attempted homicide of the place:
Being local in a globalized world is a sign of dearth and social degradation. The disadvantages of localized existence are stressed by the fact that public spaces are found out of their reach, which causes locations to lose their ability of producing and negotiating value. This way, they depend increasingly in actions that give and interpret value, actions they have no control over... whatever the globalized intellectuals with their dreams or community consolations may say.

This position of disdain towards the local and local identities has dominated the discourse around globalization since the first documents containing the reflection on the phenomenon appeared. This material is illustrated with metaphors of shocking expressions such as “global village”, “global factory”, “homeland earth”, “spaceship”, “new Babel”, etc. Besides these terms, there are other fractioned visions with totalizing ambitions such as “global shopping center”, “global city”, “global capitalism”, “world without borders”, “technocosmos”, “mall society”, “the end of geography”, “the end of history” (Ianni, 1999).

From the aforementioned metaphors, the one that caused the most impact was the repeated Global Village. This term was coined 3 decades ago by Marshall McLuhan (1995), and it is the most complete symbol of totalizing interpretations. The metaphor is universalist and determinist because it emits a halo with large doses of optimism on the new men. It homogenizes everything and defines globalization as a great worldwide community. This worldwide community explained in the realizations and possibilities of communication, information, and invention created by electronics, harmonizes and homogenizes the entire planet progressively. It explains us an irreversible fate in which all places end up cloning themselves. Local features are forgotten and shown as archaic pieces that carry a terrible death sentence. The structure of the world’s preferences is pushed to a homogenized common point (Ianni, 1999).

McLuhan (1995) wrote:
In the next century, Earth will have its collective consciousness suspended over the face of the planet in a dense electronic symphony in which all nations (if they still exist as separate entities) will live in a plot of spontaneous synesthesia and will unfortunately acquire the consciousness of the success and failure of each other.

McLuhan’s optimism, in which he dreams with a global and happy world, has seized the perception of a specific sector of the globalization doctrine. He compares the phenomenon of globalization to a world State, a cosmopolitan government that has eliminated any traces of the State-Nation. “Provinces, nations, and regions, as well as cultures and civilizations are permeated and articulated by information systems” (Ianni, 1999). Once the reference to the place, to the geographically heterogeneous is exterminated, these versions end up opposing the local as an antagonistic concept of globalization, as two hostile trends that fight to crush each other but there is no communication among them. It is some sort of dialectics between progress and backwardness, what it is current and what it is old fashioned, the modern and the traditional.
Recently, Thomas L. Friedman explains in his book The World Is Flat (2006) how from year 2000, the confluence of ten “flattening forces” turned a reality that was once dominated by vertical and rigid forces into a different one ruled by flexible and horizontal forces. He explains how newer realities bring new possibilities to anyone anywhere, as long as people are prepared to take advantage of them.

However, the hegemony of the globalizing thinking has not led to a clear conceptualization of the phenomenon. It seems as if everyone knew what globalization is, but when it comes to defining it, there are various interpretations. Globalization will cover many ways of interpretation. Some will be too optimistic, even naïve. Others, will be completely pessimistic, even tragic, because casualties occurred due to them which shows their ruthless and conflictive side as it was seen at the protests in Seattle (1999), Davos (2000), Quebec (2001), Porto Alegre (2001), and the symbolization of Lucca Casarini1 in Genoa, show that we are on the edge of a social device that resists to be defined within the referential planes known until now.

Jagdish Bhagwati (2005), professor in economics at Columbia University and expert of the United Nations on globalization, wrote an extensive and reasoned defense of globalization with solid arguments and numbers. Meanwhile, another known economist with a Nobel Prize on the subject, former vice-president of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz (2000) wrote a book whose title “Globalization and Its Discontents” reveals his position on the matter. He later wrote “Making Globalization Work” in 2006. However, everyone is talking about globalization, says Bauman (1999), as a fashion word that becomes a fetish, a magic spell, and a key that is destined to open the doors to all present and future mysteries.

Beyond this reality, is it possible to find common features in the authors that have dealt with the subject of globalization? A thorough inspection of the most important works about globalization published until today to find a positive answer could initially discourage us. Furthermore, we can confirm that every time some issues about globalization are being clarified, the discussion becomes muddled because there is not a reply that opposes the thesis. On the contrary, the perception given by the structural analysis of the consulted texts indicate that all authors, instead of refuting the statement of another author, writes a new definition thus contributing with another interpretation.

After skipping the preliminary and any acceptance with “the first answers”, going in depth into understanding, analysis, and textual criticism, it is possible to find common aspects in shared purposes. We differ in the fact that the multiplicity of possibilities opened to the scientific, philosophical and artistic imaginary, once the horizons of the world’s globalization are unveiled, they involve things, people and ideas, questions, answers, nostalgia and utopias (Ianni, 1999), they will wear the search for key aspects and versions of globalization.

The word globalization is one of the most popular neologisms coined in the last decade of the 20th century. Its semantic roots come from the English word “globalization” that highlights in first place a process of worldwide

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1 In its edition of September 9, 2001, the journal Corriere della Sera dedicated a long commentary to anti-globalization stars Casarini as well as Canadian Naomi Klein and French José Bové (as in the original).
dimensions. Parallel to the word *globalization*, there are other terms that are frequently mentioned. Such is the case of *mundialización*, whose idiomatic youth transfers from the French “mondelization”, causing an impact among the Spanish-speaking writers who respond more to anti-Anglo-Saxon squeamishness rather than substantial differentiating criteria. What is more, the official Spanish dictionary, commonly known as DRAE, shows *mundialización* and *globalización* as synonyms.

The linguistic criterion is completely limited. It does not illustrate us enough to identify a cross-reading key that gives an accepted explanation to everything that happens in the dimension of globalization. Urrich Beck (1998), without excluding the idiomatic component globalization is made up with, presents us a word play comparing three of them: *globalization*, *globality*, and *globalism*. For him, *globalization* and *globality* are synonyms that cover economic and commercial, as well as cultural, political, and religious connections. On the other hand, *globalism* refers to a vision of market growth, that is, the economic dimension of the phenomenon.

The narrative reason has allowed establishing the series of texts about globalization. Thanks to it, we have understood the common points between authors. These points are referential rather than structural and respond mostly to the suffering of whoever formulates them before the unruly welter of globalization. It can be confirmed that everyone refers to the word: process. **Globalization is a process.** Authors begin by saying that globalization is a process, hardly controlled by a center, with a philosophy and imposition style, although a sector is betrayed by ancient myths, inserting the Washington Consensus (1993) as their Book of Deutoronomy and Leviticus, the IMF as their church, and the neoliberals as their moralizing clergy.

Then comes the **novelty** of the phenomenon. This novelty does not lie in the fact that the features of globalization have been presented as a recent invention. We know for certain that globalization did not originate in the 20th century, but in previous processes that made things smoother such as the European expansion from the 16th to 18th century, the settling of capitalism as an economic model and the implantation of western modernity (Wills, 2002).

Some inventions speed up the process. The increasingly powerful and autonomous ships now saw the ancient sea border as a new adventure that could be done in a matter of months. Cartography made it easier to print any place of the world that could be “conquered”. Steam engines, together with other energy sources, made the process even faster. Nanotechnology and new materials allowed computers and digital technology to develop at low costs in small sizes. The Internet, together with network technologies, takes information wherever it is missing. Hundreds of scientist and technological developers are its main actors, and large expanding markets are what stimulate creativity and projects. Universities, companies, groups, ingenious personalities gave and will give birth to the thousands of processes and innovations that unfold globalization.

A review to specialized literature that refer to the subject, including the most bitter and stigmatizing that respond to ideological interests are perfectly summarized in the statement given by Dr. Otis Rodner (2001) who circumscribes them to 7 large characteristic blocks.
First of all, globalization is a process. As we mentioned before, the image of the process is the common aspect par excellence. A process is identified in the fact that it is immune to any temptation of conceptual petrification. This means that any intellectual pride for sustaining a globalizing dogma would be subjected to the rejection of those who see beyond a contemporary nominalism. The global interconnection changes frequently. It is varied and dynamic because:

Globalization of today will be different from that of tomorrow. Even within its reach, globalization is dynamic: the scope can be more complex and increasingly comprise different human activities.

The dynamic character of the process makes it difficult to predict its scope (Roncer, 2001).

At the same time, this process is disputed and irregular (Held & McGraw, 2003) because it does not depend on a well-established plan, but the innovation and creativity of many, great economic and political interests, the regulations that arise from political structures, together with other factors.

Sarasqueta (2003) defines it as also being a complex and atomized process. Its most perfect image is traced on an irregular network map where the intersection is the shape that is reproduced as the core of it. It is complex because it coexists with tradition and innovation at the same time, producing vertigo of a tense, conflictive, and powerful reality, and yielding the worst of crisis: a perception crisis. It is atomized because information is democratized with more of it available than ever. This democratization introduces us to a new system of thought, but not a new way of thinking because we still understand thinking as an instrument. The author states it well: “what changes with globalization is not the way of thinking, but the system used in order to do so.” (Sarasqueta, 2003)

It’s a global phenomenon that differentiates from the international. It includes us all, but not in the same manner or moment. The connection by means of information technology has allowed this effect without national flags being raised or without hiding behind some sort of Esperanto of the new millennium. It is a new version that does not impose a way of being but all the ways are in the world without stopping to being themselves. Anyway, it is a more interdependent world that does not include homogeneous international causes. “Foreign events had an impact at home, while domestic issues affected the world” (Held & McGraw, 2003).

It can also be seen as a planetary nationalism. The world belongs to all of us, but all the parts of this whole preserves its features. It is the global locality. Europe might be the most emblematic showcase of the analyzed characteristic. In the nations that make up the European Union, with a center in Brussels that standardizes parameters for all its members, there is an increasing fervor towards domestic and unique manifestations to each member.

It is a process encouraged by private initiative. It is an undeniable truth, no matter how successful policies, governmental media displays, and multinational organisms that group nations together. The expansion of economic activities of companies without nationality, together with the increasing and surrounding deregulation of the capital account has facilitated the moving of economic resources, as well as the expansion of the places where this capital can yield more and better. The latter leads us to affirm that the
precision of globalization responds nowadays to individuals rather than governmental bureaucracy.

Tarchov (1999) indicates that globalization is *inevitable and irreversible*. Going back would be ridiculous. No one would be crazy enough to do it, as the price to pay would be isolation, whose hard image is similar to Cuba or the gray North Korea where globalization is present and stays there. Since the atomization process introduces a new system of thought, the population that has suffered the effects of globalization starts enjoying some benefits, although deep down they wish to return to the easy life when everything was limited: a country with borders and customs, a reality without television or video games, a life in which people depend on the government in terms of education, work, and health care. As a result: traceable and visible enemies. (Sarasqueta, 2003)

In globalization, *national sovereignty* is lost. Bodino (1961) defined it as the absolute and perpetual power of a Nation where the establishment of a legal power to pass and abrogate, as well as to enforce laws without the consent of other corporate organisms was relevant. The Nation sees an environment in globalization in which it can blur the ancient principle of sovereignty without destroying it. In 1998, when Pinochet was detained in London for his crimes in Chile, and upon a warrant issued by a Spanish judge, it was a clear reference of how globalization breaks with the logics of sovereignty.

Last but not least, it is not an *ideology*, although there are discourses that attempt to turn it into one. We can only anticipate that globalization is not neoliberalism in the sense defined by Von Hayek or Friedman, as well as any of the mutated versions of globalized capitalism. Globalization is not an expression of liberal philosophy or its variants. Globalization does not profess an ideology in itself, although it facilitates the ideological multiplication better than ever due to its many-sided ability of dealing with truth.

Anti-globalization movements, although they call globalization the preferred weapon of the market’s economy, have increased due to the possibility of assuming positions battled during the cold war. Many of these Luddite movements have emerged based on praiseworthy arguments, while others are the result of old trends that have been adapted and disguised under Marxism and can now act more freely. The popularity of these groups is mostly due to the use of global technological resources.

It is important to add other features referred to *global connections* and linked to the development of information technologies and communications, specifically, the possibilities given by the Internet, satellite communications, media networks, among other ways of transmitting information with its infinite possibilities.

Another interesting feature of globalization might be the fact that it is marked by innovation and undertaking in all fields. The *democratization of knowledge* extends creativity, the appearance of new procedures, of state-of-the-art goods and services, of the transformation of old practices that were considered renowned, of an invention climate that has been never seen before by mankind.

Once globalization was understood as a multiple and complex process with worldwide effect, that emphasizes in new information technologies and communications, we can affirm that the local is a reality from yesterday, today, and
tomorrow despite or due to globalization. We could say in globalization. Each locality will respond to global processes according to various circumstances that will depend on their own realities and where they come from.

After verifying the metamorphosis that act on globalization, the latter will break the shield that previously censored the local as the enemy of modern thinking. The modern aspects of the new concept open the possibility that everything that has been meditated and built from a place is as authorized as the universalizing panacea to accomplished the so-called ideal beyond modernity, post-modernity, which is not more that the production of autonomous citizens capable of conceiving and performing their life projects by themselves. This way, the modernity of the 21st century strengthens and uses for itself the local as one of its several new features. This might be one of the features that will become stronger in the future due to the existential needs for an identity inherent to all men and the communities.

Localization: Conceptual approach

Despite the complementarity between globalization and localization that has been previously explained, it is possible to establish several differentiating backgrounds between both processes. Just as there are several ways of illustrating globalization, localization also has several sides. On one hand, when we refer to the individual, globalization tends to blur the uniqueness of people, while localization tends to meet the need for personal and communitarian identity of the place. Also, localization has been present in the people’s search for finding their own uniqueness and that of those they live with. It is some sort of return to the individual or rather, to the person. The "awakening of the individual" (Mangabeira, 2009) finds in the place his true "ecological niche", a comfortable space of his own where he feels well, and safe, but that must offer the conditions to be also a connected and informed global citizen.

Another aspect localization deals with from up close is related to some sort of “return to manual” that represents the raising interest for identity cultural demonstrations such as handicrafts, typical food, tourism (bed and breakfasts,
ecotourism, rural tourism, etc.), and the peculiarities of nature. A quick look at the large cities of the world shows with collage. Localization seems to be the result of modern men’s exhaustion to pursuing the universal. However, it is not completely true. New modernity rediscovers the greatness of small things, manual things, the intimate, the natural... something lost due to the determination to standardize lifestyles.

Localization also seems to be concerned about looking for a more realistic personal identity related to the main problem that concerns us: the economic order. The economic approach in localization tends to a “human scale” economy (Max Neef & Elizalde, 1990) or to the value of the reduced size of organisms and companies, as stated by Schumacher (1984) in the well-known book “Small Is Beautiful” that finds small companies (even if connected with big markets) a less alienating form of realization. Local corporate networks are created in order to translate global conditions into the territory and then approaching the global market successfully without losing its identity.

Also, people discover in singularity the value of everything that identifies it and separates them from the rest. In residential areas of any social class, the typical architecture becomes a shelter, and its restoration is set as honorable point. The memories that set a landmark in the development of the place are rescued. The quality of life of the community is protected by showing the result of this process proudly.

Even the typical things like folklore and language are again in force as a way of strengthening local identity before the homogenizing trends of globalization.

As it can be seen, localization appears too blurry due to its location features. It is too particular to define it under a solid concept. It is hard to settle on a noun for localization, that is, a material one. This is the case when a community rescued its own language or when there is a concern in the community about changes in its language. Also, when communities plan and manage their educational systems in order to improve the quality and introduce these local or regional elements within the national and international context. When they create their own security systems by becoming organized in order to face their goals successfully, all efforts made to reach the unitary conceptual El Dorado of localization must deal with the lack of needing to explain the wonders of what it means to be a local.

This way, and going deeper into what localization means, we find that one of its most important features is its blurry nature. Within the process, there are other methods and concepts where boundaries are not so clarifying sometimes. It is necessary to look for a conceptual approach that will manage to break the aforementioned feature so we can go deeper into the phenomenon and meet expectations. However, we must add that this defining essay is for exploration purposes.

The Search of a Concept for Localization

Any approximate definition begins, just as science sets it, with understanding what the object we are trying to describe is. It is the intellectual synthesis of the essence of one thing (Maritain, 1967). In some areas, concepts can be clear and consistent. In others, however, when novelty and uncertainty assist the researcher, conceptual maps transform into the most appropriate solution, as it was developed in the
first chapter of this book when we approached globalization.

However, when a new concept appears in a reduced time frame, the answers that attempt to include it are scarce. In the face of this reality, modern thinking provides 3 options. The first option consists in forbidding making any definitions until all features are defined. The second option is assuming a renewed commitment of metaphorical exercise in which the doubt of what we’ve done strikes us and the concept ends up lacking greatly. The third option is to create main categories from the complex reality and solving a definition by means of the same complexity.

Localization, as we have shown, is one of those really new concepts that are under development. Specialized literature has produced very little reading material. However, the effects of localization are “seen” every time the globalization acts. On the other hand, the degree of localization can be paradoxically measured by means of quantitative items. In other words, localization is shown until now as a spectrum that leaves traces that can be easily analyzed, as well as the dimensions of the impact left after their actions.

Localization, as an introduction, is all the processes that revalue the local in the concept of globalization. It is the global trend towards the valuation of the local. It is the change in the nature of places as a consequence of processes with complex connections and transformations in identity that are typical of globalization. The term violates the strict traditional demonstrations of administrative and legal behavior of the local range. Localization involves a more comprehensive dimension of what it is local but acts as a compensatory force of its homogenizing processes that favor differentiation, uniqueness, and identity.

The Place

At first glance, this means a specification in the concepts of the place. The place is the intimate territorial and close space where most of the activities of the human being develop. It is usually the place where the phases of being born and growing up are printed in that canvas called life. It is where education and the configuration of the personal morphology are crystallized more clearly. Family and friends with a special affective bond are found in the place. Anyway, it is a community defined in territorial terms and human relations the person feels belonging bonds with. The first characteristic is that the place circumscribes all life aspects of the human being.

The word “place” comes from the from Latin platea meaning courtyard, open space; broad way, avenue, and from Greek plateia (hodos) meaning broad way. It is the known territory that gives us the identity that we own and that owns us. It is the motherland, the homesickness we identify with, we love, and we commit to with love. It is the geographic, historic, and cultural place that gives almost everything that identifies us: language, habits, customs, culture in general, and our “way of life”. It gives us the spiritual components that make us unique as people and part of a community at the same time.

Places are “spaces delimited by common values, not by the law but by the repetition of habits and customs that, by excluding what opposes to its preservation and transmission and by corroborating what it is convenient, encourage the continuity of a human group through time.” (Duque, 2006)
known and intimate environment, cause the most noble of feelings according to poet Milan Kundera (2000) when one goes to a distant place or migrates: nostalgia.

The place could be a village, a town, a neighborhood, or a condo. It could be an area of a large city or a traditional street in a district. It will always be a geographic place limited in size, so that people can establish interpersonal relationships. This way, we have our second feature: the place is limited to the small.

In geographic sciences, the word place comprises a very special concept. It is not only a place, neighborhood, town, or region, but its own landscape that makes it unique. It is a combination of its physical and human components; it is the result of its history within this specific natural scenario. The place is a geographic and historic synthesis. This way, the third feature of the place would be the perfect dialectic conjunction between the subject and the vital space.

The word “native” is used for what it is unique to places, small towns, or for the people from those places. Therefore, the place under this definition is a specific geographic place delimited by a relatively small place, where people live as a community, with a particular weather, topography, and challenges. It could be said that each place has its own environment, its own culture.

However, the word native still holds some antagonism. A legacy of 200 years of universal enlightenment, national identities, and the defense of standardization as model of westernization, still recalls it as a backward area. This is a danger we must vanish because there is a trend that considers localization, or the localized, as the continuity of territorial spaces and human groups that have not evolved thus maintaining a lifestyle that is close to being natural and primitive.

Localization is exactly the opposite. It is the change in nature of the local as a consequence of globalization. It is the transformation of the vertical forces of globalization undergone by places as conversion processes that are innovative, creative, inherent to them, and especially, politically considered.

It is then convenient to specify the concept of the place in order to go deeper into the concept of localization. Also, it is worth setting it apart from other similar concepts that are usually used as synonyms. Let us begin with the following.

The concept of place is different from the concept of the local, even from the concept of localization. The local has more of a political/administrative meaning, rather than geographical. It is a jurisdictional sphere that matches a small territorial circumscription that is close to the citizen. If it matches the place, it is even better, because the local identity is splendidly surrounded by its own political abilities. From there, the interest for subsidiarity (which will be defined later), decentralization, and local development arise.

From this point of view, the local could be a municipality, a parish, a commune, a county, or any other administrative name. The place transcends this delimitation due to its own nature, and the territory of the place could agree or not with the local territory.

This is why the word localization cannot be taken as a synonym of the local place, because the latter has a
connotation related to the location of a competence of some sort, a service at a location or place, but does not recall the birth or the unfurling of that circumstance or event from that place.

There are other widely used concepts in geography that are worth specifying: space and landscape. Milton Santos (2000) defines them clearly:

Landscape and space are not synonyms. Landscape is a set of shapes that at a given moment express the legacy represented by the continuous localized relations between men and nature. Space is the combination of these things plus the life that makes them alive” … “Landscape is the group of natural and artificial elements that are physical characteristics of an area.” (p.86)

Later, the concept of landscape is further explained and referred to as “frozen history”. On the other hand, space is referred to the relations between the existing elements in that area (or landscape) in order to provide answers to the needs of society. “The individualized natural space is contemplated from its appearance, as a visual object, that is, as a landscape” states Varcarcel (2000).

It is worth mentioning that when we talk about space it is always within the scenario of geography, with territorial connotations, as there is a different concept of space that is also very interesting with new and unusual consequences in this globalization era, conceived in terms of relations, flows, exchanges, including today’s increasing electronic connections. It is, for example, about the space of a company that has close bonds with providers, accounting services, banks, etc. no matter where they are located, whether they are nearby or far, in other parts of the world but with whom the company is connected 24/7 at times. It is the virtual space.

Defining the concept of territory is easier because it clearly the demarcation of a continuous and specific space, with a definite area and boundaries. It does not have an additional meaning to its physical, material, trivial, and topological specificity.

In geography, there are two interesting concepts that are worth remembering: place or site and location or position. The former refer to a topographically defined place, a geomorphological delimitation where a specific activity is located. The latter, on the other hand, take the location of such activity into account in relation with nearby territories and their connections.

For example, a city is placed in a plain or hillside, but it is located in a specific valley or crossroad. The place is the topographic whereabouts and the location is the position regarding other spaces or territories beyond simple topography.

Another interesting concept in geographic sciences is region, that has a broad meaning in common speech, but it always refers to the specific delimitation of a territory. The term Andean region is used to refer to the Andes, from Chile to Venezuela, but it is also used to refer to the countries that make up the Andean Pact. In Venezuela, Andean region refers to the area of the country located in the Andes.

In geography, this word is very rich and refers to a land with a series of previously defined common characteristics. There are other descriptions that arise: natural region whose
tendency has similar physical features; historic region with a common historic process; polarized region influenced by a city, political region under the jurisdiction of a specific government; economic region with the same productive processes, etc.

Matters become complicated when we talk about the geographic region. It is generally being referred to a territory that gathers a very identifiable synthesis of its natural, historic, economic, and cultural elements, among others. It is the ultimate synthesis of all these circumstances that give a specific territory a personality of its own. However, a region will always be larger than a place, strictly speaking. A region does not have that deep connotation the place has, as it is wider, more extensive, and generates belonging bonds, however more vague than that confidence given by the place.

Today, the word *glocalization* is being used. It is a neologism that attempts to enter language and tries to express the link between the global and the local unsuccessfully and forcibly. This word refers to the globalization of the local and the localization of the global. It has a very mechanic inspiration because it expresses that the global is inseparable from the local and vice versa. *Glocal* would then be something global that it is local or something local that is globalized. However, it is important to point out that the forces of globalization can be expressed in several ways in the local, depending on the dynamism of the localities and even in the kind of forces that they receive from globalization and their ways of translating them.

Something global that is localized in a place could be just its position in a place, with no further local connections. This is the case of most multinational companies, called an enclave. These companies are located in thousands of places all over the world but they are not connected with local production issues that add value to the place. They are interested in the market, in a local resource, cheap workforce, or other incentives in that place, but the companies did not necessarily came from that locality nor they are interested in local processes.

There are also hundreds of local initiatives that originated from display processes of the place’s potential that are globalized and conquer markets worldwide. It is possible that these initiatives developed very interesting potentiation processes in the places where these companies originated, thus making raising the quality standards of the place. However, what happens to these companies in places where they localize remains to be seen, for sure, they behave just as another multinational.

**The Non-Places**

An interesting recent concept for characterizing localization is that of *non-places*. Marc Augé (1996) created this concept to refer to anonymous temporary places of confluence, where people in transit must remain for a while, whether it is the exit of an airplane, train, or waiting for the subway. The concept extends to those places where people go as simple consumers, without any other relation than just being consumers or an anonymous and temporary encounter.

As consumerism, standardized commerce, and global franchise models gain space, the “non-places” also spread. Non-places are the best expression of this new religion
that has consumerism as its main rite, and the mall as its temple. In this age that goes beyond modernity, many of the prevailing forces strip each place of its identity instead of molding new translations of the identity to the personality of each place. In the end, it is merchandise, consumerism, the market, or the economy the only power capable of organizing the new identity in such way that each person and each place ceases to be, it is suicidally stripped of what characterizes it, and gives up, almost without noticing, to the only way that seems to be an alternative. It is the same consumer of almost the same things, wearing the same clothes, eating the same food, singing the same songs, and saying the same words without knowing where it is from.

A single human being and a single place seem to be the common denominator of the new times and new realities. Just one planetary village, boring for being the same everywhere. This is the fate we face if we do not rescue the unique, the diverse. If we do not rectify this path that is taking us to that single place: the non-place.

The non-place is the future this materialistic–consumerist–global model has in for us. The mall is a pale sign of what awaits us. Everything is the same everywhere. The same hallways, the same stores, the same food courts with the same flavors, the same signs, the same colors. All these things were well planned so we consume the same, wherever we are. The non-places are the result of this commercial trend that no only ends local identity, but also biodiversity, natural resources, water, the atmosphere, weather, with the balance of this great home we call earth.

The non-places such as the mall, airports, bus terminals, all-inclusive hotel chains, as well as residential buildings without personality, reference to the weather, topography, or culture are an expression of the global trend towards the standardization of the planet, the uniformity, the lack of personality of the place where the human being develops and it is reduced to a mere consumer.

Referring to all-inclusive hotel chains is a characteristic of the non-place and opposite to localization. However, there might be exceptions to the rule. What it is usual is for these kinds of hotels to take advantage of the place's attractions without setting real connections to it, even productive chains operate this way, becoming enclaves, or an entity that is foreign to the place.

When citizens do not find quality public spaces, attractive tourism and recreation choices, or buildings that are adapted to local conditions, they find their only choice in these non-places. Perhaps, an intelligent path to explore towards the “localization of non-places”, that is, to take advantage of some economies of scale, effective management, and marketing, among others, but to adapt these initiatives to the diversity of each place. This way, they would cease to be “non-places”.

**The Place As a Superior Synthesis of Geohistoric Processes**

The place is a superior synthesis of geohistoric processes that happen in an area as a result of the interaction among human beings, nature, and during a long time which grant it a unique and specific character: an identity.

This synthesis does not happen autarchically as it receives great external influence as a consequence of migrations, cultural influence, the presence of innovative and creative
people, the incorporation of new elements by political, corporate, religious and other sorts of organizations. Also, as influence of plans, and private or government projects.

Nature changes as well, whether it is due to local, regional, or planetary processes that modify the relief, weather, vegetation, and the prevailing environment in general.

It is important to point out some typologies of the places due to the complex differences. A place is necessarily a system, that is, a group of related elements with a specific territorial base and a population identified with itself and the territory. Now then, there are places whose system is complex, varied, and diverse, such as a residential neighborhood in a large city, or a building complex. On the other hand, a small, rural, and non-dynamic place will have a much simpler system.

What is more, in a large city, very complex places such as a residential building can coexist with simpler places like a closed neighborhood. These kinds of cozy places in the middle of a large city are expanding because they offer advantages such as having a more intimate daily life that everyone knows, where everyone knows each other, and where people are able to have a life in a community.

Until now, places had never been influenced by external, profound, and extensive factors. Globalization introduces processes with an unusual strength that seriously affect the personality of the place that has been acquired after a long evolution. We are talking about traditions, ways, technology, constructions, and many other circumstances that blur the local identity and extend the no-identity of non-places or introducing new values that help to change the values of the place.

When the newer values are negative, it is a destructive globalization of much of what took ages to mature between man and its territorial space, made up by a unique reality and introduce general elements that are common to all the planet thus making the place uniform, without personality, and without what makes it unique.

Usually, places do not rebel and absorb new things in an uncritical way, without major reactions and accept things that they think as normal, comfortable, and natural. Places then disappear, and instead of those different places full of unique things, the same houses, buildings, grocery stores, food, and traditions begin to emerge... everything in a monotonous and boring world.

However, other places become aware of these dangers, and react, and implement programs to preserve these places, rescue symbolic areas, unique food, cultural expressions, monuments, etc. Opposed to globalization forces are those of localization whose aim is to prevent the destruction of what makes places unique but profit from the undeniable advantages of the information and knowledge society. Advantages like technology, but without losing the bonds of fondness for the land, the vital place.

The geohistoric processes that shape places up find great challenges in globalization that can be translated in a loss of identity and become some sort of non-places. Places can also find in globalization the opportunity of strengthening their special features but introducing the elements of modernity that improve the quality of life and even improve and make the environment richer. It all depends on the place’s dynamism and the quality of its leadership.

As José Antonio Marina (2004) would say, there could be
stupid or smart places. As a matter of fact, modern theories in local development are based on the nature of the place, the land, and its people. These theories understand that the spreading of planetary homogenization is not convenient for the purpose of what motivates the human spirit. The identity is an axiological need, just as subsistence, safety or understanding.

The development of the place

The new nature of places has a logical consequence a new nature of the local development processes. The traditional planning that is limited to the promotion of economy, territorial organization, and the consideration of other aspects is no longer enough. There are now new and unusual challenges.

Just as the word globalization defines a complex process of planetary changes that affect the world in many ways, the word localization defines the set of complex changes that affect a specific place, as a consequence of these planetary transformations.

In the past, this intimate space, the place, had to be abandoned by those who wanted to prosper if this place did not match others that concentrated the access to opportunities. Also, people had to live in a new place and develop new bonds and relations, but that attachment to the origins was not entirely abandoned. The choice was to either go back home or to reproduce memories in new places, seen in the style of building, the name of stores, or the urban terminology, in clubs of a specific citizenship, in the various expressions of homesickness.

But things are changing now. The tools provided by
technology for mankind in order to relate worldwide are changing the human geography, particularly that of human settlements and possibilities of human development in their own place. The supremacy of some places that concentrate information and opportunities is ending and the society of knowledge is spreading.

Now that people have access from their place, it acquires a new value. People are no longer blocked if they do not live in one of those few privileged places by concentration processes before the technological revolution. Now, they can be in contact anywhere they are. The quality of local life has a new and unusual dimension. People have the right not only to a decent quality of local life, but that this life provides access to the global. They count on the town to provide not just decent public services or some other advantages, but that it also guarantees real possibilities of being competitive worldwide.

The global competitiveness of a place means more than good chances of having access to information, telecommunications, and connectivity, but also, excellent education, efficient health services, personal and institutional safety, quality public spaces, good roads, efficient domestic services, and high quality of life in general.

Global competitiveness has a lot to do with the quality of public management, both state and county-wide. It is also related to the organizational networks of the civic community or civil society. This is why decentralization and federalism now have a new and important meaning.

Considerations related to “localization” have several consequences in the social, political-administrative, economic, and other areas. People are convinced that their quality of life and prosperity depend mainly on their own effort and they become organized to do what they deem necessary. They do not wait for authorities to solve their problems; they become aware, organized, and they act. It is a return to the community, to the pluralist society. Nelson Mandela (1996), South African leader, already stated: “communities are trying to find new ways of running politics.”

The government, in turn, is also aware of this fact and it is convinced that nothing can be done from highly bureaucratized, centralized, slow, and costly structures in a world that demands fast and localized solutions. Large public systems begin to decentralize, unfortunately for them, and to introduce more agile and creative management criteria that take people’s real demands into account.

Smaller territorial entities are then suitable for these new demands asked to the public administration. The central government is no longer the place where the proper answers can be found, but the local governments and the organized communities themselves.

For Borja (2003), the most important political consequences of this process are:

a) Strengthening of the government's role as advisor of the process of human development.
b) A return to civil society and participation.
c) An evolution from central structures to the decentralization of service management according to the principle of subsidiarity.
d) The political revaluation of the workplace.
e) Strengthening of the democratic coexistence.
f) The renewal of urban life and a reconceptualization of cities.
Under this new perspective, the new place could be a space, together with its global connections, as defined by Margaret J. Wheatley: places to think and reflect, places for relationships, places to develop trust and commitment (2001).

In economics, localization results in an increase in the local competitiveness as a consequence of the revitalization of local productive processes that knowledge, science, and technology provide powerful tools to.

Local productive systems seen from the localization point of view represent a powerful alternative against the multinational model. Perhaps, an accurate term would be “endogenous development”. Just as Roberto Guimaraes (2004) proposes: “regions and local communities can endogenously complete this trend without opposing the exogenous nature of growth.” In fact, the proposals around endogenous development originate mostly from the acknowledgement of these new local realities, from this new nature of the place, of the new and unusual possibilities that towns have as a consequence of the revolution of knowledge, and particularly, of new information technology and communications.

The subject of international relations does not elude the new reality of localization. A new nature of the international alliances that make the global connections in local communities possible is now feasible. These are international networks used to link wishes, dreams, knowledge, experience that allow a greater and better learning, as well as the establishment of supplementary economic relations.

Other approaches related to the thesis by Humberto Marturana (1997) on cohabitation and democracy; the subjects developed by Frijof Capra (2003) about new scientific paradigms and their consequences in life, in the establishment of connections for a more respectful development model on humans and nature; Kliksberg’s (2004) and Putnam’s (1994) considerations on social capital, among many other contributions, cannot be excluded from localization.

The idea of reconciling the advantages of new technologies and their globalizing consequences to the existence of unique places full of personality does not necessarily seem contradictory. A planetary culture living aside many and various local cultures. In fact, the most developed countries are the best examples of this coexistence. There, local traditions are carefully cultivated and their societies are at the vanguard of the use of modern technologies.

Any place in the world can develop a successful localization process, but those with the following features will have an advantage:

a) Awareness of the current place, its potential, weaknesses, the opportunities that can be made the best of, the role that can be played.

b) Awareness of the roots of its identity, its history, geographic setting, its culture.

c) Definitions about the place in the future, the collective project to be built.

These conditions had a lot to do with what Robert Putnam defined as “social capital”, or communities with a great civic culture, dense social networks, efficient local governments capable of planning and evaluating, a thriving
and diversified economy, stability and others related to the quality of social and productive life.

The new conditions imposed by globalization, regarding connectivity, technological density, global competitiveness, innovation ability, enterprising spirit, among others must also be added to these considerations.

**A. Four Dimensions of Sustainable Human Development**

It is worth mentioning 4 dimensions of sustainable human development related or linked to the local: 1) sustainability strictly speaking, 2) social or solidarity economy, 3) social capital, and 4) technological innovation.

1. **Sustainability**: A concept that has become a classic is that of UN (1984) that presents sustainability as “The ability of meeting the present’s need without compromising the ability of future generations of meeting their needs”. It is defined as a development process that seeks the wellbeing of men without damaging the balance of the environment, compromising the potential of natural resources, but also includes the cultural dimension to preserve the identity of communities.

Deep down, the subject of sustainability is based on the new ethic that arises from new scientific paradigms that find in complexity and complex systems a new plot of relations of multiple causes and consequences. From there arises the need of new and unusual cultural relations between men and nature, between social organisms with natural ones, that enable the appearance of new values, the recovering of ancient values, new wisdoms, and old knowledge that were thought to be forgotten or old-fashioned. Anyhow, a new culture that creates new habits for men and society before nature and society itself.

In the place is where this man-nature relation is expressed more directly, and where the behavior of people is shown entirely. All direct actions of sustainability practices are localized, that is, their existence is established in a well-delimited territory, in a specific time, and by known and identified agents. Generic actions or pure statements are almost not current in the local field because that is the place of action, without being reflexive.

2. **Social economy** or **solidarity economy** is a practical and theoretical search for alternate ways of making economics, based on solidarity and work. Its basis are in verifying that greater cooperation levels in economic activities, organizations, and institutions in companies, markets, and public policies increase both micro and macroeconomic efficiency. The aim of solidarity economy is to incorporate management styles based on the respect towards people, where the main value is not capital but cooperation, thus solidarity.

The ethics of social-oriented economy towards the respect for human beings include the respect for the environment, community values, identity of places, and other affairs related to this style of
development immersed in complex relations and their connotations. This kind of ethics favors the concept of associative property systems such as cooperative, employee-owned company, savings bank, mutual societies, family-owned companies, small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises, as well as large socially responsible capitalist companies.

Social economy has a way in local spaces. Large corporations usually act as “enclaves” in places, that is, as agents that are locally foreign and unrecognizable. On the other hand, the other forms of entrepreneurial property make up a network of relations with local agents because they are part of them, they are them, so they make up a whole with the place.

3. **Social capital** is a broad concept that states that in order for a community to become highly human developed, it is important that its members trust each other, as well as having the specific ability or leadership of a social group or conglomerate to favorably use values and resources for development. The social capital includes organizations and institutions, ethics, freedom, democracy, quality of education, rule of law, associativity, solidarity, civic consciousness, and many other quality dimensions. A place with a dense social capital, where there is trust among its citizens, with rich and several associativity networks, where solidarity is expressed in many ways, where rulers and entities of the local government are transparent; it will be a place that is heading towards the path of human development.

A place that has few networks, no solidarity among its citizens, with corrupt rulers, without trust, with crime, and other aspects that indicate a lack in social capital will then be a place where the vicious circle of poverty leads to failure, to despair.

4. **Localized innovation.** Technological and scientific density, innovative potential, and the entrepreneurial spirit of a place boost sustainable human development. A place that studies its reality, that is aware of its potential as well as its weaknesses, that innovates its productive processes, that displays the entrepreneurial potential to give an additional value to the goods and services it produces, is a place that is moving towards a better quality of life. Newer information and communication technologies are also very efficient means of promoting local development. Valuable information from a place could be published on the Internet for potential investors, whether they are local or foreign. Places could have very interactive websites about local governments, companies, trade and non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate the process of creating new companies or improving the existing; to offer and sell their products, to exchange information, find out about successful experiences, and share their own. Anyway, all the potential of information technologies can be applied with a clear strategy for local development.
The proposal is the creation and promotion of a local innovation system that produces a highly collaborative environment for creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It is a network where government, universities, companies, cooperative, financial institutions, professionals and unions, non-governmental organizations participate together with all those institutions that can contribute to the development of local competitiveness and the creation of that particular atmosphere that helps a sustainable human development.

B.- The Size of The Place and Its Political and Administrative System

If the place is a geo-historic unit with identity and sense of belonging of the “locals”, it is a splendid territory that is appropriate for local power. The Catholic Church saw it this way when it created parishes since the beginning. The term parish comes from Latin *parochial*, or Greek *paroikia* meaning “settlement”. *Paroikos* is the equivalent of “neighbor” and *paroikein* means “to reside”. Therefore, those who make up the parish are those “living with” or “living in a neighborhood”. The ecclesiastic parish is under the rule of a parish priest who depends on a bishop who rules the diocese or group of nearby parishes. (San Luis Potosí Archdiocese website).

So, the territorial scope of a place is defined basically by the close relations between its inhabitants, by the sense of identity that makes them unique, and the close bonds that give meaning to its settlers. As consequence, it is a relatively small, close, and adjoining territory. There is usually a town “center” around which local life orbits. This center can be a town or a small city, public place, or a square with public powers, a religious temple, a market, and some entertainment places around it.

In political-territorial terms, the suitable body to rule a place is the municipality, defined from the sociological point of view as a group of families located in the same territory to meet the needs that have risen from neighborhood relations. The book, “Un nuevo municipio para Venezuela” (A New Municipality for Venezuela) by Fortunato González Cruz (1999) has a valuable content regarding political-territorial bodies of the local government since ancient as well as pre-Hispanic times showing how the municipality or its equivalent is the natural way of government for local organizations or for places.

The author affirms: “it is the local government the one that must first take care of the affairs that affect and interest directly and personally people’s everyday aspects because it is closer to them. The local government is closer and is able to know its actors personally, without intermediaries, and relate with them. This closeness with the municipal government defines many of its characteristics: its heterogeneity because it must adapt to the social reality of its location; its relatively small size as a territory, city, or inter-city area; that groups a fairly small amount of people. It also defines the nature of the affairs that must be taken care of and the services it should provide.”

It is this “sociological” municipality that is given a legal status, creating the municipality as a political-administrative body with three traditional branches: executive branch with the mayor’s office, the legislative branch with the city council,
and the judicial with local courts and magistrate’s courts.

Professor Jose Luis Villegas (2010), a municipalist with an extensive work affirms: “Municipalities are a natural society made up by living bodies prior to the government’s will whose existence can be seen today as a political institution where people participate democratically and autonomously.”

The outstanding constitutionalist Dr. Allan Brewer-Carias (2004) presents the need of “municipalizing the territories of our countries so all rural communities, small villages, and urban neighborhoods have their local authority as a political community.” He bases this statement in the fact that “political participation as an inclusive democracy in which citizens can personally be part of a decision-making process by participating in governmental activities and for general interest, can only happen effectively in the smallest territorial classes, in the local, community or municipal level.”

This is how several countries understood it and have a rich municipal network with small territories, with a modest-sized population, and can take care of local affairs. Just as Brewer-Carias sums it up in the aforementioned work, “in most of the so-called democratic developed countries there are several municipalities, some being small. In Germany, for example, 76% of its 16,098 municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants; and in Spain, about 86% of its over 8,066 municipalities have less than 5,000, hence grouping only 16% of the population, and 61% has less than 1,000 inhabitants. It is worth mentioning the case of the community of Castilla y Leon that comprises over a fourth of all municipalities in Spain with 2,248 municipalities of 2,484,603 people, 68.5% of which (1,540 municipalities) have less than 500 inhabitants” (p.12). He adds, “On the other hand, the contemporary Latin American municipality is in the other extreme and it has generally acquired such a territorial range that is so unreachable and foreign to citizens, that it has become useless to handle local interests properly or to be set as an instance of political participation of citizens in the decision making or in the management of the affairs of their community.” That is why Brewer-Carias insists in the creation of several municipalities, as many natural communities as the country may have.

C.- The Government of The Place

The localized municipal government must be in accordance to the features of each place, thus it must have a clear identity with the culture it serves. The culture might be urban, rural, commercial, industrial, offering agricultural or livestock services, with a specific tourist vocation (beach, mountain, religious, gastronomic, health tourism, etc.). It could also be a university, port, or sporting locality; where roads or technological parks cross, and all the endless possibilities. The uniformity of municipal systems does not help local human development.

Municipal administration must be like the territory and the people it rules, it must value and promote identity. It must encourage sustainability, stimulate its own productive sectors, generate local jobs, favor the quality of citizens and their organizations, encourage local culture, radiate the values of the place, and it is committed to the welfare of all.

The subject of municipal competence is fundamental, and the principle that must lead it is that of subsidiarity, as Pope Pius XI (1931) clearly expressed it in the Quadragesimo
Anno encyclical: “It is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.”

According to this principle, the municipality must carry out all the duties pertaining to local life, including the promotion of the complete human development. This must be done in accordance to a higher level of authority whether it is a province, state or department, and the national authority. The municipality must inform whenever decisions affect other instances.

The adaptation to the place includes the size of the municipal body and the volume of its bureaucracy, which should be basically financed by the municipality’s resources and some other resources from the national government. It is mostly about a modest, sustainable, straight, and accessible structure for people.

The local executive branch is carried out by the mayor who must have an appropriate structure with a professional and well-paid official, because it is an administration that deals with local affairs regarding urbanism, public services, and taxes.

On the other hand, the council is the legislative branch and it should be made up by a group of citizens acting pro bono, that meet to discuss and pass ordinances, control the mayor’s office, and devise policies and strategies.

The functions of the local judicial branch is performed by the magistrates, police and transit local course, various mechanisms to improve the access to justice such as “law clinics”, human rights NGO’s, civic education, and other ways of bringing the administration of justice to citizens.

In short, the place is the space where the best initiatives for sustainable human development can happen, and localization is the process in which the place affirms its identity but integrates into the global. The local management for human development must be done from the municipality, which is the autonomous political and territorial entity par excellence for the public management of the place.
Localization, decentralization, and federalism

Globalization and localization processes have great consequences in the way public and private affairs are carried out. Centralized, vertical, authoritarian, large, and heavy organizations no longer respond efficiently to the challenges of new realities.

In order to be successful, organizations are rapidly changing in different directions. For example, training, the participation of people, the breaking-up of functions and duties have become very important. Many organizations tend to be decentralized, horizontal, democratic, and agile.

Regarding political and territorial affairs, local and regional governments as well as communities also become more important because they are fundamental for localization processes. It is the duty of these organizations to lead the growth of the quality of local life and the correct insertion into the global.

The presence of national government is no longer important for this purpose as they are usually heavy, slow, distant, and are not aware of multiple local realities. Large policies that guide the life of the entire nation and the administration of the duties of central governments
correspond to those structures. Most public affairs pertaining to citizens, families, civil organizations, and enterprises are taken care of from regional and local governments.

The speed and depth of changes, people’s expectations, the need of a worldwide higher interconnection require fast and efficient answers from organizations that centralized bodies are not capable of offering. The efficiency in decision-making demand that they are located close to where they are happening, and this is why decentralization and federalism rapidly gain space.

Centralization is a way of management used when lower levels are not trusted, to discourage participation, to impose an “order” set by a higher rank, to homogenize a group, or as Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) stated in his famous book *Democracy in America*: “to stop, not to do”. Centralization limits creativity, agility, transparency, pluralism, diversity, and democracy. Centralism disregards the ability of communities to rule themselves. Centralism tends towards authoritarianism and homogeneity.

Also, the concentration in the higher rank of processes that can be performed in lower levels congests the higher department with affairs that are not theirs to deal with, and distracts it from strategic and political affairs that are their responsibility.

Decentralization is the administration of most affairs from local and regional autonomous territorial bodies. It is about turning these political levels into powerful, efficient, and effective autonomous bodies so they can provide most of the services required by people to live well and prosper. It is about turning these subnational territories into effective tools to promote sustainable human development.

Decentralization is not just about transferring specific decision levels to the bottom of the authority structure. Decentralization is about transferring power, it is the reduction of specific important affairs from higher or national levels and transferring them to local or lower levels, with all the conditions so they can efficiently take care of these affairs.

Decentralization is moving duties from the national to the local governments with all the necessary attributes for local levels to be efficient in the performance of these affairs, that is, with authority, good legal grounds, training, financing, and trust.

Decentralization is to provide small and intermediate political-territorial bodies with an actual ability to take care of their own affairs within these new realities. It is also about provinces and municipalities having trained people, enough financial resources, appropriate and flexible organizational structures, agile setting to negotiate between governments, and enough power to act freely in an autonomous environment within the national laws.

Before today’s revolution of knowledge, a centralized or decentralized administration was optional, although it is worth mentioning that those nations that experimented with decentralization from the beginning also achieved better levels of development. However, decentralization today is mandatory. Companies and governments are decentralizing. They are adopting administration federal mechanisms, delegating power to the strata at the base of the organization, and even transferring various affairs that are not important to other bodies, otherwise they will lose competitiveness and efficiency.
**Principle of Subsidiarity**

The principle of subsidiarity comes from the Catholic Church social teaching that recommends that all affairs should be solved through the closest entity to the interested parties, whether they are people, organizations, or territories. It acknowledges the autonomy and freedom from the base of society.

Localization has a fundamental philosophy base for action in this principle. In a governance system that promotes an authentic local development, central power should not deal with affairs that could be solved by states, municipalities, or by communities. The *principle of subsidiarity* states that anything that could be solved by a lower body, should not be done by a higher one; and in case of difficulties, the higher body can cooperate provided that the lower body develops its natural competences.

This principle also includes that the State has some limitations, and if society or individuals can take care of an affair, the public sector should not. National, regional, and local governments must encourage the strengthening of the entire social structure, intermediate organizations, companies, organized communities, all sorts of associations and networks that develop a community.

The term *federal* refers to the existence of autonomous intermediate territorial political bodies such as provinces, states, or departments, and municipalities with a high degree of autonomy. In companies, it means that a company organizes its activities in autonomous businesses, with their own market, and their own product, as well as their own responsibility for profits and losses. (Drucker, 1999)

This way, modern organizations and countries adapt to newer realities, trust even more competences to state and local communities, thus taking a load off central authorities so they can focus in overseeing great strategies and evaluating results.

Also, governments transfer increasingly more affairs to non-governmental bodies, companies, or civil organizations, and trust communities with the execution of works and the provision of services that were exclusive of the public sector. Companies transfer others the execution of many tasks that are not important to them and focus in their affairs.

This revolution in the way of managing affairs has a purpose: to strengthen the local and local organizations. It also seeks to make the best of the advantages of smaller, agile, and efficient organizations that are effectively connected to the global.

This is an expanding reality that is new. Places, organizations, and their citizens will have increasingly more things to take care, and the chances in influencing their own affairs, those of the nation and the planet's will grow as they are competitive, efficient, and well prepared. Therefore, the place becomes important.

In the revolution of knowledge and new communication technologies, man becomes planetary from his place. Places have a new an important responsibility, then: to offer its inhabitants a pleasant and efficient space to live.

Globalization is mostly expressed in flows of information, goods, and services. In exchange, localization is expressed in the quality of local life and its global competitiveness. The local is the management environment of the global, thus the new strategic importance of the place, of the city.
In this context, the most complete expression of the place is the city or specific spaces in it, which is why the urban management takes a unique category. A city where the traditional functions are duly performed and “the affairs of local life” are offered is no longer enough. Now, everything that was previously offered must be done better, with worldwide quality.

In these newer realities, if cities want to become efficiently inserted in the emerging order, they must think of new and unusual challenges that combine the recovering of their traditions and other elements of their culture with providing quality urban services together with an efficient management of emerging services such as connectivity, innovation, undertaking and other arising duties and services. Therefore, localization is one of the most important affairs the municipality must take care of.

This new nature of cities cannot be addressed without a consensus that can only arise from extensive and generalized discussions with various parties in order to plan the desired city. These new scenarios allow for many choices: from the
city to outline high quality modest roles without too many global connections, to innovative worldwide leadership in specific fields, whether they are productive, technological, cultural, touristic, environmental, and others. These challenges demand a city project. Experience has shown its usefulness. The difference between a successful and a failed city certainly lies in the existence or absence of a city project made by the parties of the place. There isn’t a case in which chance yielded a successful city.

A successful place is the result of only an idea that was collectively dreamed and built with lots of love for the place, civic patriotism, generous discussions, and the commitment of making dreams a reality.

Success has been the result of a transformation based in becoming aware of a challenge facing a crisis, the opportunities offered, the agreements between urban parties about a city project and the production of a proactive local leadership.

From all points of view, joint determination and citizen consensus is important for a city to move forward. The city project is important if it involves private and public parties, and if its execution is assessed from the beginning. It is a project that moves the community and for the internal and external promotion of the city. It is a project for the self-esteem of citizens. It requires questioning the way of ruling the city, the behavior of organizations. It proposes a political reform and a new coordination between the government and its citizens. The excuse for this lead could be the crisis due to globalization, an event, or an important date.

The quality of the local government must change to being a promoter, leader, entrepreneur, innovator, audacious, an integrator of all available energies in the city, and a democratic innovator. Much of the success is due to the strong personality of the mayors that have taken the lead of the city. Sometimes, local leadership can be initially taken by other actors, but this leadership must be well assembled. It is hard to move forward without the participation of the political authority, as it demands large resources and a strong political leadership.

The subject of the inclusion of all the social groups of the city into the collective project will always be present in such way that the social and cultural integration of its inhabitants results in everyone feeling like they belong to the place and are part of the process of change. The social capital, referred to associative networks, is of utmost importance for the positive outcome of these challenges.

Another important subject related to the latter is that of productivity, the competitiveness of the city and its enterprises, because the city must be capable of creating respectable work positions that yield good revenues for its inhabitants. The city, its inhabitants, its civic society, and local government must decide which economic model to be followed, the productive sectors to be promoted, the spaces to be occupied, and other aspects of the economic model that was collectively assumed.

Political management, its representation, and efficiency, or local government, cannot be the same it was before (bureaucratic, slow, representative). Now, challenges are big but attainable if the same successful paths others have taken are followed. Mostly, success is related to styles of government that are open, positive, transparent, and whose best tools are negotiation and consensus.
Besides, it all demands important innovation and undertaking processes. These processes are the ability of people, organizations, and the local government of finding new ways (or remember old ones) of strengthening their identity, eliminating the cultural obstacles that oppose to change, finding interesting niches to become inserted into the global economy and display positive energies that result in the multiplication of the desired project.

Urban innovation refers to the ability of a city to create new knowledge, new economic activities, products, and services based on their own reality and advantages, and complying with the designed project, strengthening their historic, cultural and territorial uniqueness.

Something that must be mentioned is that innovation comprises identity subjects, or the things that must not change, must stay as they are, and how they must be dealt with. These subjects can be intangible such as values, customs, traditions, and spirituality; and there are also natural spaces, buildings, etc.

**The Territorial Brand of The Place and Localized Innovation**

The eagerness for identity has originated the subject of the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), a mechanism created to protect the characteristics and the prestige achieved by a product (usually agricultural or food) that originated in a place.

Also, the concept of territorial quality mark has extended to refer not to the protection of a specific product but the group of goods and services, and even the cultural and natural heritage of a specific territory where its inhabitants have decided to develop quality processes. It is interesting that the processes related to the subject of marks are not only related to the “current being” but also with the “know-how”, that is, with the project the community wishes to built.

This is how various concepts related to the quality of a product that originated in a place, or a place that has become a product have spread: City Marketing, Rural Quality, Protected Geographical Indication, Traditional Speciality Guaranteed, among others.

This mechanism aims for the local human endogenous development based on the strengthening of its identity, improving its level of territorial competitiveness, and becoming wisely inserted in globalization.
Finally, it is important to note some reflections on axiological subjects and the process of localization. J.G. Herder quoted by Berlin (1999) stated that “being human means being able to feel at home, somewhere”. And being human in all of its meaning includes various dimensions that are closely related.

In Christian humanism, the “human person” is used to emphasize in the transcendent character of the human being, and among those several dimensions the most important is that of dignity, referred to the respect a person deserves for the fact of being a person, regardless of his gender, race, condition, religion, and other conditions.

In this sense, any cultural, economic, social, political, territorial, infrastructure or any other process must respect the dignity of the human person. Any project, no matter how noble it may be cannot skip this value, as it is the most sacred of all. Where else can the respect of human condition be better felt than in the place?

Another dimension is the possibility of transcending that the human person has of going beyond his condition of
“rational animal” and overcoming it by means of personal and spiritual development, in order to project himself to others, in his lifetime, in the future, in the place or beyond his territory.

For both important dimensions, the human person groups in families and communities, and joins different organizations. People meet home, at work, at a café or bar, in a square, chat, and express who they are and how they feel through these conversations. They build themselves and their reality and that of others, and it is all done in their place.

For their dignity to be respected, and in order to become known and to relate themselves, they must be free, as an important part of their human nature that was given freewill and the ability of thinking and acting as they please, with the only limitation of the responsibility of rules.

Because each person is different and has his own identity, heterogeneity and pluralism are consubstantial with the dignity of the human person. Uniformity, monism, and authoritarianism oppose to humanism. Each place must allow this variety to be expressed, even within its own identity. So, identity is not related with nationalism or other ideological perversions that discriminate anyone who is or thinks different.

In a place, besides receiving and offering respect to the dignity of others, having the possibility of transcending, associating, and being free, people should have the opportunity of living in peace, having economic wellbeing, possessing goods, receiving justice, and enjoying and creating beauty.

So, the place as an intimate living space of human beings must have all the characteristics so they can flourish as a human person. From their place, from their time for the world and for history.

The space where diversity is built is the local space, the place. When that superior combination is produced as the result of the mutual influence between man and his environment, geographic landscapes emerge full of uniqueness, details, and characteristics that make the image richer.

The locals build their homes, roads, and public buildings within the unique aspects of their territory such as the geology, topography, weather, vegetation, animal life, and other elements of the natural system, together with their cultural traditions, ways of being, technological tools, and values. They adapt nature and become adapted to it in a creative dialectic that yields a unique place, unlike any other.

We are then at a splendid, exceptional, and unique place where harmony lies in the process of doing, producing, and creating a continuous, permanent, and fluent *poïesis*.

With the new possibilities originated from the society of knowledge, these processes become stronger, not only applying science and technology to newer ways of interacting, but translating global innovations to local realities, studying the success other places have achieved using these methods, and also producing innovations as a result of the creativity of the locals.

This is how the innovative place emerges from the ancient place, as a wise combination of tradition and avant-garde. It is the complete and holistic place. A single and local system where the identity that makes the place unique harmonize with the innovations that keep the wellbeing of people and the environmental sustainability up to date.
Localization is that *self-poietic* process undergone by a place in order to keep its identity and become efficiently inserted into the global. That is, a constant reinvention while keeping its basic coherences and adapting to the society of knowledge without important ruptures.

Therefore, localization involves the nature of the place itself as a permanent change where the identity that makes that specific reality unique is in harmony with the changes that adapt it to the vanguard without compromising it but instead, making it stronger.

Localization is a process that is parallel to globalization and determines that a place uses the unique forces of the global to its unique way. It is a new creative and innovative synthesis that keeps the essential aspects of a place and allows it to enter the global world successfully.

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