

Uneven and combined development in XXI century

**the emergence of a multipolar world and
the new face of imperialism**

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Outline

« Le résultat d'une crise longue et générale, c'est souvent de clarifier la carte du monde » - Fernand Braudel

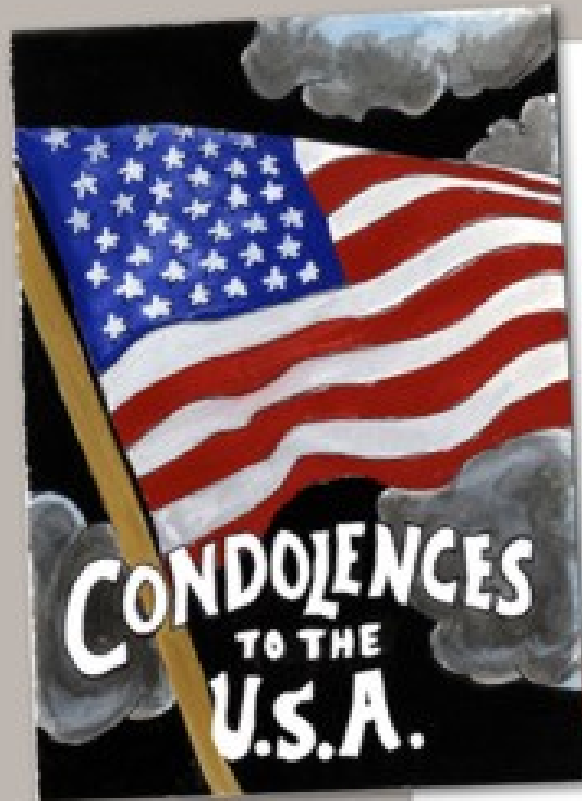
1. Competing interpretation of imperialism at the beginning of the XXI
2. Uneven and combined development in the XXI century: the variety of socio-political regimes of struggle

Competing theories of imperialism in the light of the current crisis

Imperialism : articulation between logic of territorial power and capitalist competition

- Empire (Hardt and Negri)
- Still US hegemony (Panitch and Gindin)
- Revival of geopolitical struggles within a new imperialism (Harvey..)
- A shift of hegemony (Arrighi)

Is it so clear ?

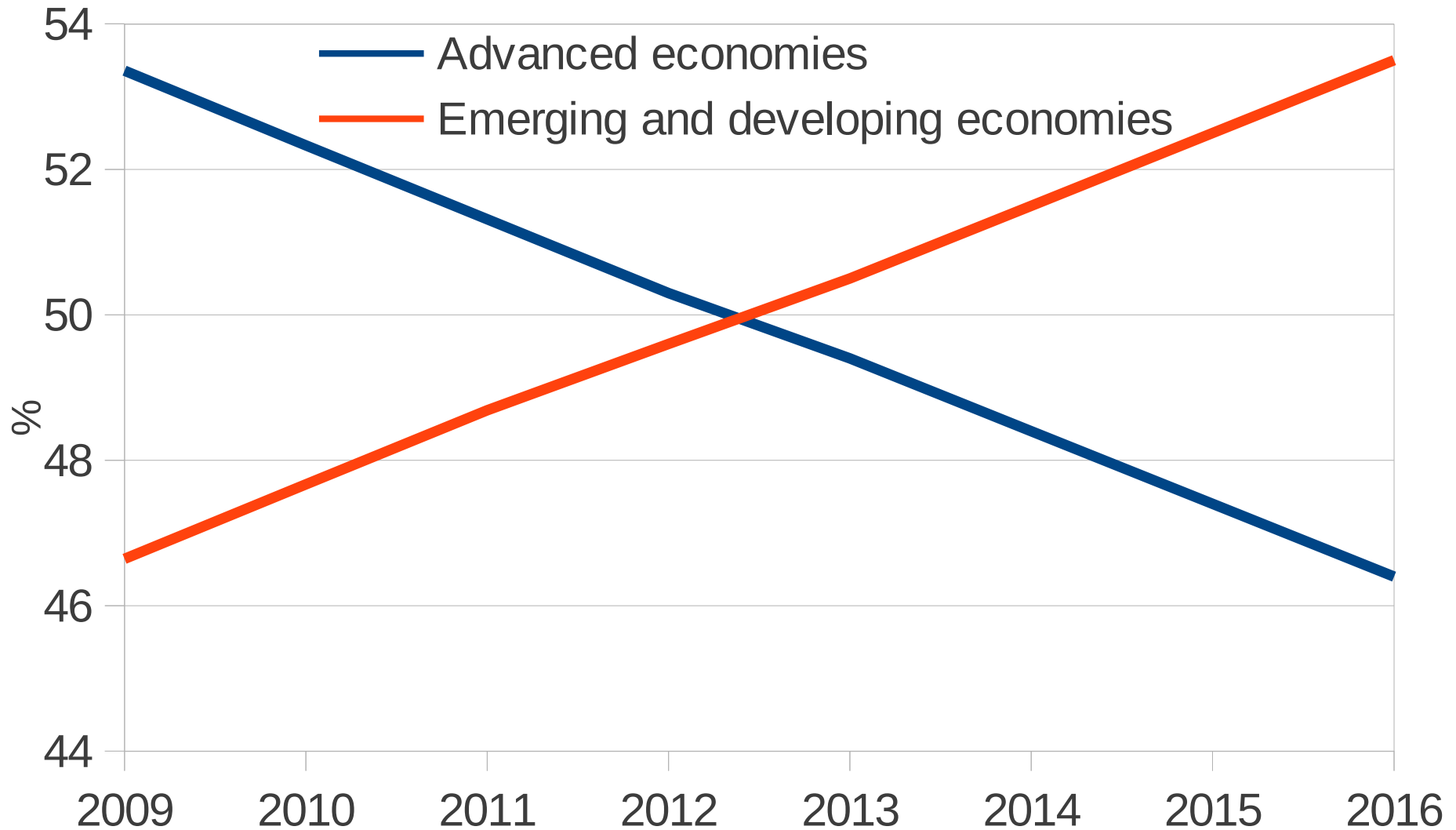


Un basculement du monde ?

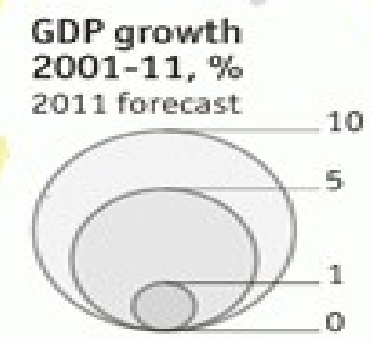
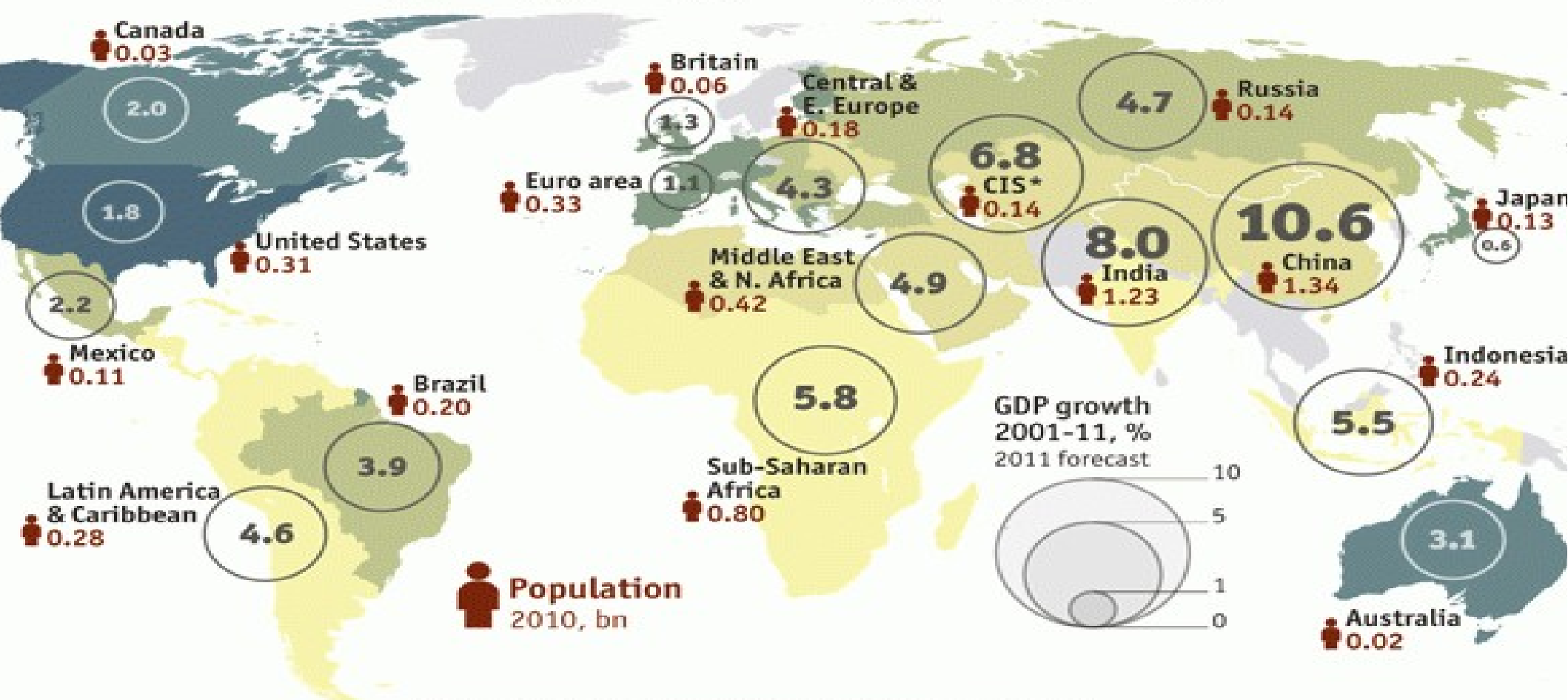
- Fin de la grande divergence
 - La part des pays du G7 dans PIB mondial : 56% au début des années 1980 à environ 40% en 2010 (en parité de pouvoir d'achat et de 70% à 50% en prix de marché)
 - . émergence de multinationales du sud
- Chine, première économie mondiale ?
 - D'ici à la fin de la décennie si...
 - Mais revenu moyen/hab de l'ordre de 1 pour 5 entre la Chine et les États-Unis

Share of world GDP

based on purchasing-power-parity (PPP) - IMF-WEO



GDP per person, 2010, PPP \$'000



Official foreign-exchange reserves, Q2 2011

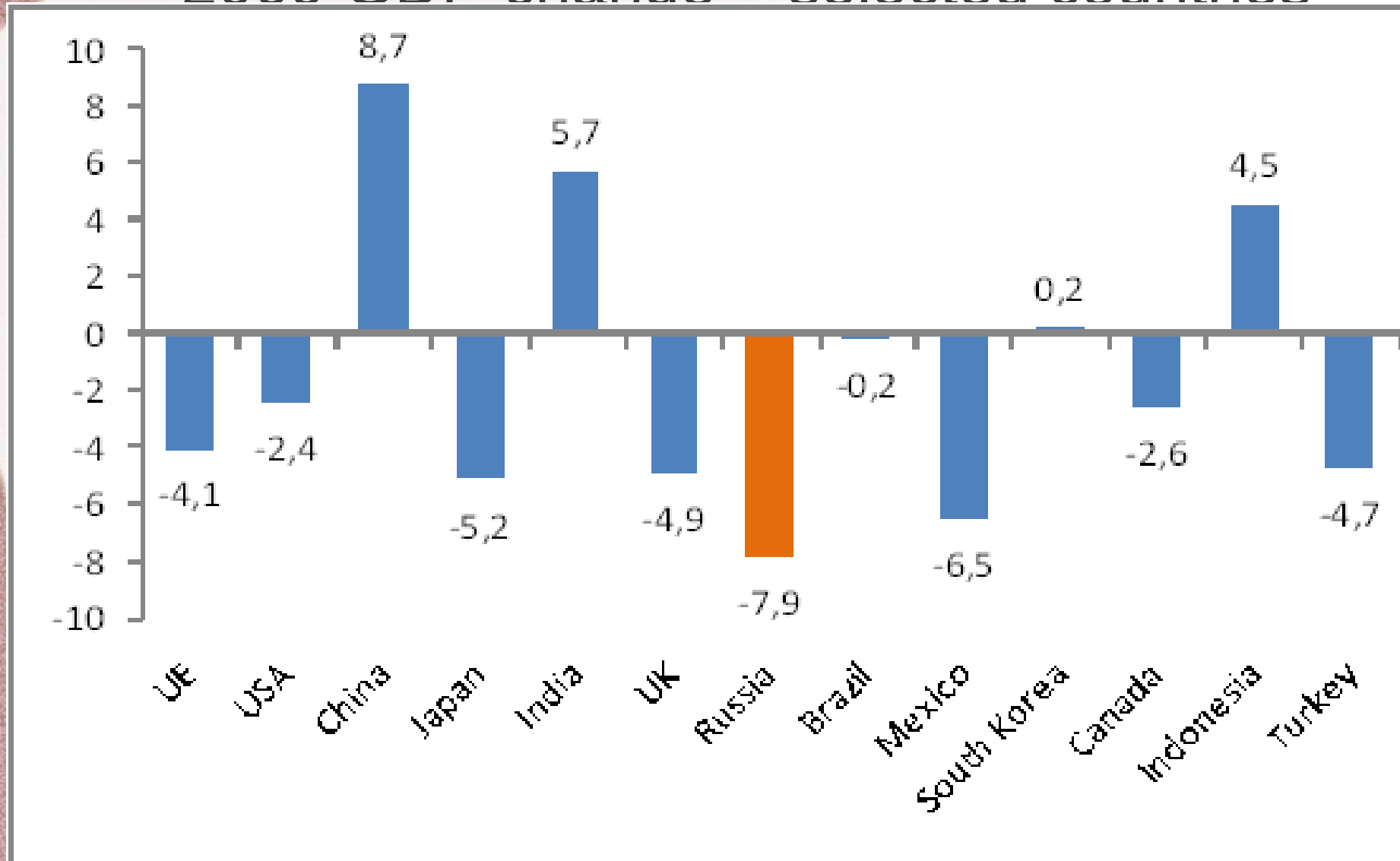


Sources: IMF; UN; The Economist

* Commonwealth of Independent States

A structural crisis... of the global north ?

2009 GDP change – selected countries



Réorganisation politique globale

- G20 ; La réforme du FMI
- Les émergents à la rescousse de la zone euro ?

“If you look at the troubles which have happened in European societies, this is purely because of the accumulated troubles of the worn-out welfare society. The labour laws induce sloth and indolence rather than hard work.”

Jin Liqun de China Investment Corporation s/ Al Jazeera

Slavoj Zizek

" Would you like to live in a world where the only alternative is either anglo-saxon neoliberalism or Chinese-Singaporean capitalism with Asian values? I claim if we do nothing we will gradually approach a kind of a new type of authoritarian society. Until now there was one good argument for capitalism: sooner or later it brought a demand for democracy... What I'm afraid of is with this capitalism with Asian values, we get a capitalism much more efficient and dynamic than our western capitalism. (...) **no, the marriage between capitalism and democracy is over.**"

Crisis management as an open-ended process

The reorganization of institutional « trenches and fortifications » (Gramsci)

- To contain instability of accumulation
- Rise of non-democratic bodies in crisis

Diverse ability to manage the crisis
participate of inter-imperialist competition

- The collapse of the UE project
- The new assertiveness of big developing countries which are so far successful
- Structural political strength but a weakening leadership

The US, the pretention to stay the only global power

After the semi failure in Irak and Afghanistan a reorientation of military fire power in front of China

B. Obama yesterday

« The US is a Pacific power and we're here to stay »

H. Clinton

« We are the only power with a network of strong alliances in the region, no territorial ambitions, and a long record of providing for the common good »

Some preliminary conclusions

- A clear loss of relative economic weight of the west
- A very deeply integrated world economy
- A competition between political regime of leading capitalist power
- A still un challenged military domination of the US which limits the scope for direct political rivalry



***Uneven and combined
development in the XXI
century***

Unevenness : universalizing and differentiating tendencies

« Capitalism (..) aims at economic expansion, at the penetration of new territories, the surmounting of economic differences, the conversion of self-sufficient provincial and national economies into a system of financial interrelationships. »

But by « drawing the countries economically closer to one another and levelling out their stages of development, capitalism' (...) works to set 'one country against another, and one branch of industry against another developing some parts of world economy, while hampering and throwing back the development of others ».

Trotsky (1936)

Combination : non linearity

« Historical backwardness engenders an entirely new 'combined' social formation in which the latest conquests of capitalist technique and structure root themselves into relations of feudal and pre-feudal barbarism, transforming and subjecting them and creating peculiar relations of classes. »

What is lacking : Which are the feedback effects of catching up on already developed economies ?

Main theoretical points

the 'advantages of backwardness'

- possibilities for poor countries to skip developmental 'stages'
- late industrialization would unleash great social tensions
 - might undermine industrialization
- non-inevitability of industrialization
 - the world system as a differentiating mechanism, generating both economic advance and retardation.
- Possibility of relative and absolute économic regression

4 main kind of dynamics

- The exhaustion of capitalist dynamism in advanced economies
- The last catching up of south and east asia
- The rise of new rent dominated economies
- The malediction of close peripheries : the weak link ?

Devalorisation and dispossession in the global north

- The crisis of the global north as the reverse side of catching up by developed economies ?
 - Overaccumulation and changing form of competition at the world scale (Crotty, Brenner)
- Harsch austerity
 - Polanyan social struggles in a context of weakened labor movement
- The main contradiction : austerity
 - Building a new form of unique front

The malediction of close peripheries and the prospects for political change

- Stagnating economically and degrading socially
 - Mexico
 - Central Europe
 - North africa
- Economies dominated by Multinationals
- Lack of political room of manoeuvre
- But social aspirations in line with political and social standards relative of the west

Rent dominated economies : buying the social peace

The comeback of the rent issue in the globale economy

- Relative exhaustion of ressources
- Negative impact on the accumulation, especially in developed economies
- Huge flow of income in some countries
- Give political room of manoeuvre

Corporatist integration of labor

- « democratic » brazilian
- « Socialist » venezuealan path
- « authoritarian » Russian path

The reversal of a downward trend that had last a century

Metal detector

The Economist industrial commodity-price index, real* \$ terms, 1845-50=100



Sources: *The Economist*; Thomson Reuters

*Adjusted by US GDP deflator

Catching up : from bloody taylorism to a huge middle income population ?

An explosive configuration

- Rising workers militancy of at the shopfloor level
 - Luttes à la Marx (Chine, Inde Vietnam)
- Rapid degradation of the conditions of production (O' connor)
 - Overcrowded Cities, pollution, health
 - decreasing treshold of hiatus between GDP and 'genuine progress'
 - Luttes à la Polanyi