

Preface

This book was originally meant to be a translation of the book I published in France in 2010 called *Histoire critique des monopoles. Une perspective juridique et économique* (Paris, LGDJ, 2010), which focused on the economic history of developing countries with a colonial past.

However, during the translation, I realized that, although mentioned in the original version of the book, I had not given enough emphasis to a phenomenon that is each day more evident: the globalization of economic and social problems. Countries and economic systems have globalized social, environmental and economic problems. The borderline between developed and underdeveloped countries, if we take social and economic structures into account, is less clear, not because the latter have developed but because the former are starting to have economic structures and social problems similar to those that prevail in the less developed world since colonial times. Monopolization, unemployment, poverty and exclusion (all of them interconnected) turn to be the face of global capitalism in the twenty-first century, from the peripheries of Washington or Paris, with the poor being condemned to a growing social apartheid, to the shanty towns in the suburbs of São Paulo or Delhi.

The book was then partially transformed, adapted and given a new emphasis. Although it is still centred on the evolution of economic structures in colonized economies, it shows the effects of these structures on global reality today, that is, on all economies, both those considered developed and the ones called underdeveloped. Actually, the final result of the historic description seems to be a revenge of colonial past (and economic power structures formed during it), historically developing from a regionally restricted economic system of exploitation of some countries and regions (during colonial times and industrial times until deep in the twentieth century) to be one of the main features of the functioning

of present global markets worldwide (end of the twentieth century and twenty-first century).

Obviously, the academic challenges involved in the elaboration of such a comprehensive essay on economic and social history are enormous and the thoughts presented here are only its first steps.

On the other hand, the risks being taken and problems (economic, social, environmental) being created every day by the functioning of monopolized global markets and economic systems based on such structures seem unbearable and their discussion cannot be postponed.