Politics and Social Movements in an Hegemonic World
Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America

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This book is the outcome of a project of scholarly collaboration between social scientists from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Taking into consideration the worsening of social, economic, political and environmental conditions now overwhelming these regions and the shortcomings of the responses offered by the conventional wisdom, the concerned institutions intend with this project to open new paths in the production and distribution of relevant knowledge from a Southern perspective.

The chapters included in this book were presented and discussed in a workshop on South/South Scholarly Collaboration held in Havana, Cuba, in October 2003, sponsored by Sida/SAREC, and within the framework of CLACSO's XXI General Assembly.

The authors reflect their perceptions and shared concerns about issues such as the new "rules of the game" prevailing in the current international order and its consequences on state and politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America; the unsettled questions of land and agrarian reform; the uprising of new social actors and protest movements; and the possibilities and prospects arising from a new dialogue and concertation between states, societies and social forces in the South.

Indice

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Introduction

History and purposes

This book, which it is our pleasure to submit for the reader's consideration, constitutes part of a project of academic cooperation among institutions in Latin America, Africa and Asia whose aim is to recreate and re-discuss the production of knowledge in the social sciences in the countries of the so-called "South", and to favor its increasing circulation in the academic media and in the public space in our countries.

In this framework, the authors of its various chapters have diagnosed both the persistence and worsening of social problems in our respective regions as well as the clear inability of the conventional knowledge in the social sciences –which the academic centers themselves, in the metropolises, admit to be in crisis– to account for ever more complex realities and propose answers suited to the needs of the great majorities and to the overall interests of those societies. Hence the importance of the medium-term goal of this cooperation among institutions of the South: generating a "critical mass" of thought on fundamental issues in our societies, from economic development to democracy, and from the construction of a good society to the end of all violence and the reign of peace.

In the 1970s, CLACSO, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, and CODESRIA, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, began to develop several initiatives aimed at promoting a theoretical view based in the South. The political crisis that shook Latin America in the 1970s and early 1980s conspired against their success. By the 1990s, after the implosion of the USSR and along with the end of the East-West dispute, there emerged in the countries of the north, and very especially in the United States, views which, positing "the end of ideologies and of history", proposed the primacy of a global and saving "dominant thinking" that would redeem our societies from all their problems. The persuasive efficacy of this position, one of the most outstanding features of the victory of neoliberalism, rested less on its weak structure as regards arguments and much more on the enormous influence that was derived from the fact that the primacy of the "dominant thinking" was materialized in the "conditionalities" that the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, imposed on the exhausted economies of the South, bled by the foreign debt and, in some cases, especially in Africa, by interminable civil wars. At that time few voices were raised warning about the serious damages that would be caused by the imposition of the neoliberal model and the application of measures which would ultimately benefit just a few. The conventional knowledge in the social sciences showed itself as incapable both of perceiving these threats, which in the majority of the countries of the South gave rise to a lacerating "euthanasia of the poor", and of articulating an effective intervention in the public sphere that would sound the alarm about the approaching risks.

Taking into consideration the successive crises and the urgent need to rethink the social sphere from a Southern perspective, at the end of the 1990s new forcefulness was acquired by the need and importance of joining efforts to better understand the experiences, certainly very similar, that our societies had suffered as from the imposition of the prescriptions of the Washington Consensus. This concern needed to be translated into an attempt to construct new perspectives of analysis and interpretation that would account for the most diverse aspects of the reality of our countries and, last but not least, help them emerge from the crisis along a progressive and emancipating path.

In the year 2000 there started a new round of consultations among various academic institutions in the South devoted to teaching and research in the social sciences, with the idea of

again taking up a dialogue that over the course of the years had become diluted and that it was now more than ever necessary to develop and strengthen. In this way, contacts began, initially through loose mechanisms which later were gradually improved through the discussions developed with academics' participation in workshops, South/South panels and large regional conferences.

In this context, mention should be made of the conference sponsored by Sida/SAREC in Uppsala, Sweden, in the year 2000, with the aim of identifying institutions, subjects and interests for developing this kind of academic cooperation. In September 2002, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, CLACSO organized the second South/South meeting, its theme being "New Challenges in Peace and Conflict Studies: What Role for the Third World?", with the already more specific goal of finding consensus on areas of interest among the participating organizations –Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), African Association of Political Science (AAPS), Organization for Social Sciences Research in East and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Asian Political and International Studies Association (APISA) and Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN)– to develop comparative research projects, identify problems that affect the development of South-South cooperation, and explore the possibilities of advancing in the project of constructing an alternative vision to the dominant one.

These same problems also impinged on the subsequent development of the planning process, taking longer than expected to generate an activity in common. After an ad hoc meeting apropos the AAPS Congress in Durban, South Africa, in June 2003, the meeting in Havana was finally held, in the context of CLACSO's General Assembly, in October of the same year. There, in tandem with that gathering of the Social Sciences in Latin America, two activities were carried out specifically devoted to tightening South/South academic cooperation: a Special Retreat and a Workshop. The retreat aimed to achieve minimum consensuses on subjects on which a Working Proposal could be developed among the participating institutions over a three-year period. The workshop's goal was to advance in the identification of common outlooks and problems on the basis of the papers presented by academicians from the three regions, the majority of which are included in this book that we now submit to the public's consideration.

The subjects identified as important at prior meetings, which were the object of discussion at that workshop, dealt with issues such as the incidence of the international hegemonic order on the societies of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the existing possibilities, within that context, of strengthening and expanding South/South cooperation through the study of cases and of diverse *problématiques* that affect our societies, such as economic development, democracy, peace and security, regional integration and the peasant question. Special attention was likewise devoted to civil society's responses to social conflict, through the configuration of newly-coined or established popular movements which struggle for the construction of a new, fairer and more humane order.

Contending visions in the current international (dis)order

This section examines the role of the United States as global power and its impact on the political and economic development of the three major regions of the so-called "South", particularly the political, economic and social disarticulation that the imposition of the neoliberal order has caused in the societies of Africa, Latin America and Asia.

In his paper, the Chilean sociologist and politician Luis Maira sketches the relations between Latin America and the United States from a historical perspective. The author terms those relations asymmetrical, dependent and of secondary importance for policy formulators in Washington who have always held the conviction that a great power must impose its criteria on subordinate nations.

US imperial power was established in stages. The first circle of its expansion was located in Central America and the Caribbean towards the end of the nineteenth century and beginnings of the twentieth. The "big stick" policy inaugurated the first phase of what was to become an active and increasing presence of Washington in Latin America. In the first three decades of the twentieth century it was followed by a combination of "dollar diplomacy" and "gunboat diplomacy", the result of which was the establishment of ironclad protectorates. Nevertheless, by the 1930s F. D. Roosevelt sought to establish a more cooperative relationship through the "good neighbor policy".

The second stage was launched with the "politics of containment" of communism characteristic of the cold war, which lasted until 1989. This policy was decisive for determining the profile and content of contemporary White House policies towards the region. In this period there was a strong expansion of US influence towards the south of the continent, linked to the establishment of increasing control over Latin American economies and the governments of the area. The Organization of American States and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance were the institutional expressions of this process. The diverse Latin American national situations were thus put through the sieve of their impact on the global balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Only two of them had a global impact on US strategy: the Cuban revolution in 1959, and the toppling of the dictator Somoza, a United States ally, in 1979.

During the entire period, few were the overall projects articulated from Washington for the region as a whole: president Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress", president Carter's Human Rights Policy, and president Bush Sr.'s Initiative for the Americas, which Clinton converted into the proposal for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Likewise, and despite Washington's lip service to representative democracy, the United States government backed or promoted the emergence of a wave of Latin American dictatorships on the basis of its own security interests in the 1960s and 70s.

The third stage began with the end of the cold war and the lack of relevance of the Latin American countries for the United States. In the meantime, the region experienced important transformations. Despite the launching of democratic processes, the majorities have not changed their living conditions, generating a setting of disenchantment with democracy; the region has become even poorer (44% of its inhabitants) and more unequal, accentuating its worst historical features. There has also been an increase in social and productive heterogeneity within its biggest countries, as well as in the region as a whole, originating social tensions and problems of governability. Maira nevertheless identifies several subregions: Mexico, the Central American area, the Caribbean, the Andean region and the Southern Cone, each one of which poses different problems for US strategy in the region.

In this way he concludes that against this background of lack of US interest some significant changes are taking place in the political spectrum of the countries in the area, which could eventually give rise to new opportunities for redefining the relationship with the dominant power.

In line with the above contribution, the Brazilian sociologist Emir Sader carries out a summary of the political evolution of Latin America in the twentieth century, marking out three periods. In the first one, between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, primary exporting economies were predominant, guided by the theory of "comparative advantages" along with oligarchic political régimes. These found themselves increasingly harried by major social conflicts resulting from the urbanization process and the beginnings of industrialization. But the crisis of 1929-1930 was to trigger the replacement of almost all the governments of the area by reason of the collapse of the pattern of growth based on farming or mining exports. The following model, developed in the mid-1930s in the biggest countries in the area, was marked by industrialization for import substitution, and generated new power blocks around the local bourgeoisies and unionized urban sectors that expressed the emergence of the working classes. This period ended in the mid-1960s with the internationalization of economies and the consolidation of the large multinational corporations.

The new period, which witnessed a political dispute among three different projects –the socialist option (exemplified by the Cuban revolution), military nationalism (Peru) and military dictatorship (Brazil)– was introduced by means of military coups guided by the national security doctrine. The debt crisis of the early 1980s, which suddenly engendered large deficits in the balance of payments of the countries of the area, decreed the non-viability of development projects and definitively closed the "developmentist" period, opening the path for the neoliberal model. The 1980s were appropriately termed the "lost decade", and the hyperinflations that characterized the previous period were laid low by extremely harsh programs of monetary stability and fiscal balance. In this way Latin America turned into the cradle and laboratory of neoliberal experiments. The fight against inflation was the cornerstone of the political construction of the neoliberal hegemonic model, and the detailed implementation of the recommendations of the Washington Consensus was promoted as the compulsory, albeit

transitory, sacrifice that dependent economies needed to make to be in a condition to take up growth anew. The second stage of neoliberalism was articulated with the democratization processes underway since the early 1980s, and included the conversion of social democracy to this model.

The following stage opened with the Mexican crisis of 1994, which was followed by the Asian one in 1997, the Russian in 1998, and the Brazilian in 1999. The new Latin American governments failed in their attempts to sustain the fiscal adjustment policy, the source of economic and financial imbalances. The continent entered a new, deeper crisis, proving that after two decades of monetary stabilization programs and neoliberal hegemony not only hadn't development been taken up again, but that the social question and political instability had worsened considerably. Latin America shows states weakened on the external level, their sovereign prerogatives radically undermined, and with ever lesser legitimacy and capacity for action on the domestic level. The latter is characterized by ever more fragmented and unequal societies, with vast sectors excluded from basic rights, and economies lacking in dynamism of their own within a context of rising financialization, which turns them into extremely vulnerable targets of the periodic crises that affect the international financial system. The concepts of nationhood and sovereignty, which were the foundations of the social relations on which the Latin American State was built, were swept away by the neoliberal whirlwind of the last two decades of the twentieth century. The explosion of foreign indebtedness, added to the passage of the hegemonic model of capitalism from "developmentism" to neoliberalism, favored the hegemony of financial capital over the continent's economies. The opening to the international market, privatization of governmental enterprises, economic deregulation and labor flexibilization, acted to the detriment of productive capital and of the overall welfare of the population.

In this context Sader broaches the trajectory of the Latin American left, a tributary of the European labor movement, which gradually increased its vigor to star in some of the major events on the continent, dealt with in detail by the author. The beginnings of the twenty-first century find Latin America in crisis, with epicenters in Colombia, Venezuela and the Andean countries: Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Additionally, the region is faced with contradictory options within a complex international setting. The internal dilemmas of each country –extending the fiscal adjustment or breaking with neoliberalism and seeking an alternative model– are expressed at the regional level by the dilemma between the FTAA and MERCOSUR.

The Egyptian economist Samir Amin analyzes the contemporary context of a sole world, diverse and unequal, posing the following question: is it possible to construct an egalitarian modernity without sacrificing diversity? For Amin, modernity is subjected to two complementary driftages which hit the peripheral regions of the world system, and the countries of Africa and of the Arab world in particular. The first one refers to the contradiction that characterizes capitalism as the dominant ideology, forcing local specificities to be sacrificed on the altars of development. The second one is expressed in a violent rhetoric against modernity and in favor of the maintenance, without changes, of the cultural specificity threatened by globalization. In fact, Amin states, the challenge is to transform modernity to make it capable of constructing a sole, equal and diverse world.

There are two decisive moments in history: the first is the birth of modernity (and of capitalism, with the Enlightenment), which raises the idea that the human being is, individually or collectively, the maker of his own history. The concept of reason thus appears indissolubly linked to that of emancipation, as a transhistorical concept, although its historical nature is later demonstrated. Emancipating reason is expressed in a classical triptych: liberty, equality and property. Nevertheless, the libertarian ideology of the right has renounced giving equality its status as a fundamental value, causing ethics to disappear, since human beings aren't responsible for the inequalities they cause. Because bourgeois reason is not emancipating, it turns into an instrumental reason and is displaced onto the field of economics, causing "market" to equal "democracy". It gives up being emancipating and accepts to perform the roles of an enterprise engaged in the demolition of humanity.

The second decisive moment opens with Marx's criticism of the bourgeois emancipating reason of the century of the Enlightenment, opening a new chapter which this author calls of modernity critical of modernity, and that replaces property with fraternity. This concept refers to the idea of social property exercised by the social body as a whole for its own benefit. In this

context, Marxism is for Amin the efficient instrument that allows both to analyze the challenges and define the strategies capable of changing the world.

The ideology of globalized liberalism is grounded on an impoverished and exacerbated concept of modernity which no longer has room for diversity. The driftage is defined precisely by the abandonment of the economics/politics duality which is substituted by a unilateral concept of economics "without politics", as made manifest specially in the countries of metropolitan capitalism.

On broaching the driftage of political Islam, Amin maintains that the Muslim peoples and Islam, as in other regions of the world, have a history: the history of diverse interpretations of the relations between reason and faith and of the mutual transformations and adaptations of society and of its religion. The reality of this history is denied not only by the Eurocentric discourse, but also by the contemporary movements that claim to belong to Islam. One and the other share the same culturalist prejudice according to which the inherent "specificities" of the diverse trajectories of peoples and of their religions are believed to be of an intangible, unmeasurable and transhistorical nature. To the Eurocentrism of the Westerners, contemporary political Islam opposes nothing but a Eurocentrism with an inverse sign. For this reason, the two discourses of globalized liberal capitalism and of political Islam are perfectly complementary.

In an international order dominated by the United States, the Malaysian politologist Hari Singh engages in a debate regarding the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region, broaching questions such as the regional balance of power, institutions, international political economics and international rules.

Under the realistic theoretical assumption that (a) the international order is a condition for international relations in which states develop regular patterns of behavior on the basis of norms, rules, procedures and principles; and (b) the current international system has a hierarchic structure, in which the powerful determine the rules of the game, and the rest adjust to the oligopolistic competition, to the scheme of balance of power, Singh analyzes the outlook for the region under US hegemony.

In his analysis the first actor to be evaluated is China, a regional power that has applied a bandwagoning strategy in relation to the US, and one of balance of power with its nuclear neighbors, mainly Russia and India, and with the Southeast Asian States, in particular Vietnam, keeping North Korea at a distance. Japan also plays an important role in the Asian-Pacific security architecture, especially after September 11, when its vulnerability was increased and it reinforced its cooperation with the US. It also applies a bandwagoning strategy *vis-à-vis* the latter, aspiring to recognition as a great power and to recover its international status as a "normal" state. Like its neighbor, Japan has also sought to improve relations with Russia, China and South Korea. Although the prospects of a nuclear war among the great powers are unthinkable, such is not the case with a small state like North Korea, even though the United States would not tolerate a change in the regional balance of power that affects the global balance of power.

To the security dimension in the region one must add the evolution of transnational economic regimes such as APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), which has increased the role of the US in the area, to balance that of Europe. One must also stress the role of an expanded ASEAN with unresolved and latent internal problems, among them the Islamic component of the populations of some of those states.

Globalization has caused states to have difficulties in maintaining closed political structures. The ascent of an economic agenda in the politics of the post-cold war period has reinforced the democratic imperative in Asia. Governments have been under pressure to liberalize, and thus became more dependent on economic performance as a criterion of legitimacy. This reinforced the democratic dynamics of capitalism in Asian-Pacific societies. But capitalism has its contradictions, as illustrated by the financial crisis of 1997 that paralyzed the economies of South Korea and of other countries in Southeast Asia, exposing the personalization of the political power of the governing elites and public diseases such as corruption, connivance and cronyism. It also discredited the myth of the strong state as the basis for development, employed by governments to justify their authoritarianism. Inflation and shortages of basic products unleashed popular reactions under the banner of democratic reform. There was political instability, and authoritarian regimes were replaced in Thailand and Indonesia, while others were forced to introduce democratic reforms.

These developments tallied with the goals of the new international order imposed by the US. But after 9/11 the US abandoned its democratic agenda (except to legitimize its intervention), allowing authoritarian regimes, with populations with a Muslim majority, to employ the epithet "terrorists" to jail their opponents. Nevertheless, the influential international environment is limiting governments' ability to resort to repression, as was routinely the case during the cold war era.

Global terrorism made it clear that states no longer have the monopoly of threatening the established world order. In parallel to this, states have become conscious that the solution to non-traditional threats requires multilateral cooperation, strengthening the belief in global institutions as administrators of international society. But since such institutions are not exempted from power politics, they end up following the interests of the big powers, and particularly of the United States. As regards regional institutions, ASEAN, which was functional during the cold war, is no longer so in the face of a regionalization of the type of the Asia-Pacific Forum and APEC.

Lastly, the Chinese politologist Xu Shicheng deals with the analysis of the new US hegemony after 9/11 on the basis of the doctrine of the New Empire, the goal of which is to transform the world according to United States values and to establish a Pax Americana making use of the incomparable advantages offered it by its economic, political and military power.

For the author, this neoimperial theory constitutes a "new grand strategy" whose initial momentum is the reaction in the face of terrorism, but which justifies the US pretension of casting off the demands of its partners as well as global rules and institutions, playing a more unilateral and preemptive role in facing what the White House regards as terrorist threats. The rising economic and military power of the US in the post-cold war period constitutes the material basis and starting point for the neoimperial doctrine. The consciousness of a "Manifest Destiny" that confers a "redeeming mission" on US society and enshrines it as the "empire of Freedom" are its ideological underpinnings. The war against Iraq is the first step in the launching of its global strategy to build the neoempire.

After 9/11 the US has intensified its strategy of control over Latin America through military, political and economic relations with the countries of the region in general –and most particularly with the Andean countries– with the FTAA, the fight against the drug traffic and terrorism being the dominant issues on the agenda.

With regard to China, and despite a recent understanding between them, its relation with the United States presents still unsolved problems: Taiwan, human rights, the role of religion, and trade conflicts. Bill Clinton referred to China as a "strategic partner", while George W. Bush refers to it as "strategic competitor". Bilateral relations continue to be fragile and volatile, and the US continues acting for China to "change its color", as it does with Cuba. In the author's view, the US will fail in the attempt.

Society and politics in a neoliberal age

The texts in this chapter broach the political and social problems of the states in the three subregions in a context of hegemony of the United States and the international financial institutions. With nuances, the authors recognize progress towards more democratic and transparent processes, but within a framework marked by the negative influence of the programs of structural adjustment and reforms of the state, which have rendered it unable to face the pressing problems derived from the rising social exclusion and poverty, resulting from the application of the Washington Consensus model and the neoliberal agenda. These problems are expressed in conflicts of different types, but which can be summarized in the relationship between human security, inter-state conflicts and economic crises.

In his contribution, the Argentine politologist Atilio Boron analyzes the possibilities and limitations of democratic capitalism in the countries of the periphery. He bases his concern on the gradual hollowing out experienced by the regained Latin American democracy as a consequence of the application of neoliberal policies.

In practice, the "pseudoreformism" of the Washington Consensus recipes only produced a phenomenal concentration of wealth, through the opening of trade, the privatizations and financial deregulation. Consequently, the ill-named reforms are no more than "counter-reforms" that have accentuated the process of social involution, halting economic growth, weakening not

also the state but also the hopes placed in democracy. The examples of Argentina, Mexico and Bolivia render testimony to the various sides of this process.

With the state and society turned into hostages of the market, neoliberal policies promoted a profound process of social disintegration and violence, close to the Hobbesian state of nature. Additionally, the subordination of democracy to the dynamics of the markets ended up emptying it of content, discouraging civil participation, disarticulating the networks of social solidarity, satanizing the state and turning videopolitics into the false substitute of civil participation. In sum, the neoliberal counter-reforms have the goal of causing the rigors of the market to act as incentives to motivate supposedly more rational and innovative conducts by economic and political agents.

In conclusion, the paper composes a pessimistic diagnosis of Brazil's options under Lula and the PT (Workers' Party), which, despite seeking to implement a post-neoliberal program of economic and social reconstruction, appear to be capitulating in the face of extortion by international agents. The paper does not limit itself to criticizing the "really existing democracies" and ends up proposing some basic orientations of what neoliberal policy ought to be, founded on the comprehensive reconstruction of the state order on the basis of tax reform (with a model of progressive taxation that eradicates tax evasion and avoidance, in particular by the large national and transnational corporations) and of a deep political reform (which perfect the quality of our institutions and democratic practices). To this end it considers it essential to emancipate politics from the markets, by means of a state endowed with sufficient resources to provide the set of public goods, regain the lost economic and political sovereignty, and facilitate the unpostponable reconstruction of civil society.

The Nigerian politologist Adebayo Olukoshi broaches the *problématique* of the countries of Africa, recognizing the lack of consensus as regards the most appropriate approach to explain the changes in the structure, contents and dynamics of politics in that continent. This situation has triggered a crisis in the theory in the study of Africa, and has divided analyses between the so-called Afro-optimists and Afro-pessimists. The first accentuate all the progress, speaking of a second liberation or of an African renaissance, while the second place special emphasis on identifying all the problems that hinder progress towards a democratic consolidation in Africa.

The changes that have altered the African outlook are multidimensional. They can be found both at the level of formal politics and in the informal processes that underpin the political system, and have been generated by factors both internal and external to it. The greater part of scholars' interest has been concentrated on formal institutions and political procedures, because they are more visible and measurable. Also important, however, are the underlying processes that forge and remodel the formal institutions, especially the actors whose actions or inactions give life to the political system, although these subjects have, unfortunately, been neglected by academics.

For the author, the most significant changes in African politics over the last fifteen years refer to the restructurings operated in the area of political competition and governability. In this context he also notes the emergence of pluralism in the information media. The 1990s witnessed the breakup of the state monopoly on its ownership in a context of flourishing civil associations at local, national, subregional and continental levels, and of the emergence of new political actors that reinforced the democratic process. The changes in Africa are also observed in the fall of that last vestiges of colonialism and of institutionalized racism, from the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 to the multiracial elections in South Africa in 1994.

Other changes, although less visible, are related to the transformations that have taken place in the demographic structure, which have led youth to have a more prominent role in the life of African societies. One reflection of this is the appearance of a generation of new leaders who have neither experienced colonial rule nor taken part in the anti-colonial and liberation struggle. But, in counterpart, youth's lack of interest in politics and their alienation is seen, in general terms, as the product of unemployment, which in many cases has led them to direct participation in armed internal conflicts.

Also, the fast rate of urbanization and the associated internal migrations have generated the exacerbation of the rural-urban dichotomy, the rekindling of ethnic-regional/socio-cultural competition, the proliferation of armed urban gangs, the growth of intolerance and xenophobia especially toward the "non-natives", the rising challenges to social inclusion in ever more urbanized populations, the massive expansion of the informal sector, and the growth of new

religious expressions from syncretism to puritanism. This has led to the growth of contesting policies around issues such as citizenship, individual and group rights, the role of the state, and the nature of its capacities.

Post-independence politics in Africa have been centered on the key role of the state and of the public sector, in what was regarded as the model of accumulation of the interventionist state. During the 1980s this model collapsed, and efforts were carried out to replace it with a framework based on the free market, which changed the rules of the game. It was expected that a new middle class would emerge and lead the democratic transition, which unfortunately did not happen. Among the factors that account for this situation, mention must be made of the economic crisis that befell the continent, the national and international political realignments originating in the disappearance of the East/West conflict, the radical weakening of the African states, and the parallel and rising resort to violent means to solve internal issues. To this, as if it weren't enough, we must add the effects of the African diaspora, which deprives these societies of some of their best talents.

In his paper Olukoshi demonstrates the weaknesses of the conventional approaches of political science, as well as the sterility of the Afro-pessimistic/Afro-optimistic dualism that considers African politics as an exotic terrain, stereotyping African practices and experiences and, owing to its basic Eurocentric component, omitting to record the historical advances and steps back that are neither unilinear nor unidirectional. The text concludes by suggesting alternative paths for interpretation which open a whole set of queries that may be summarized in the following question: taking into account the failure of two decades of structural adjustment, can the latter turn into the secure base for the construction of a new social contract, or could it be that the continent will have to develop an alternative framework for achieving its development? In this regard, Olukoshi subscribes to the work of Mkandawire, who underwrites a development-oriented democracy as the framework for the restoration in Africa of a path toward economic growth that will, by definition, be socially inclusive and democratic.

The Nigerian politologist Musa Abutudu concerns himself with the challenges and perspectives for promoting human security in Africa taking into account the changes in the nature of conflicts at the international level caused by the end of the cold war. During that period, the concept of security was associated with the security of the state and hence with the security of the regime or the personal security of the ruler. Within domestic politics, opposition was perceived as a threat to national security, and this justified its repression. In Africa, systemic changes along with economic crises as a product of the structural adjustment programs, the wave of political liberalization, and the relative thriving of multiparty democracy, among other factors, led to the re-discussion of agendas and process both at global and at continental and national levels.

The neoliberal reforms impacted on the foundations of the nation-state project, undermining its legitimacy, engendering the hostility of the masses, and causing the re-emergence of old animosities on the basis of the increase in the number of the socially and economically excluded. The neoliberal agenda underlined the need to expand the market and reduced public expenditure, withdrawing subsidies from several social and productive sectors and exacerbating the insecurity of the population, whose protests over the rising destitution were violently repressed. For this reason the author links the economic genocide generated by the structural adjustment programs and globalization, on one hand, and the ethnic and communal violence that wracks Africa on the other.

For Abutudu, the concept of human security is centered both on the individual and on the community. The threats include all forms of economic deprivation, environmental contamination, expansion of infectious and non-infectious diseases (like AIDS and malaria, respectively). The concept necessarily addresses the state as the real or potential source of oppression and deprivations, or the contributor to situations that constitute threats to the condition of human security, wich confronts neoliberal economicism, inasmuch as it is a generator of economic and social crises and political violence, as proven by the cases of Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone among others.

Human security is not opposed to the traditional concept of security. The problem emerges when that notion in employed by the great powers to reorder priorities in a post-cold war world, in which it is interpreted as security in the framework of "the global war against terror". In this

way, African governments are now “measured” in terms of the existing perception regarding whether they are or are not assisting terrorist groups.

Social movements and the peasant question

In this section a review is carried out of the new configurations of the social movements which, on the three continents, oppose neoliberal globalization and its consequences. The standouts among them are the struggles of some trans-Atlantic African social movements, seldom seen in contemporary bibliography. Also discussed is the social role of development NGOs in the South, which in certain cases have taken over the roles of a state that deserts its responsibilities, causing, as some experiences demonstrate, the disappearance of popular movements.

A central issue in the three regions is the problem of agrarian reform and the situation of the peasants, analyzed both in the subregion of southern Africa and in the specific case of the peasants of Sri Lanka, who were forced to abandon their subsistence crops for the benefit of an export-oriented model in accordance with the World Bank’s recommendations.

In the first paper in this section, the sociologists José Seoane, Emilio Taddei and Clara Algranati deal with the new configurations that have been adopted by popular movements in Latin America after the advance of the neoliberal capitalist globalization of the 1990s. Although the rather localized and fragmented resistance and obstacles interposed have been unable to prevent the implementation of those policies, toward the end of that decade the launching of a new cycle of protest was seen, its collective subjects exhibiting new features. In some cases, the emergence of these new subjects precipitated the fall of several governments, originated serious political crises, and caused the failure of initiatives of a neoliberal character. These movements, with both a rural and urban territorial base, have been constituted in relation to their ethnic and cultural identity, in reference to a lack of something (the “less” movements, like those of the “roofless”, “landless”, “paperless”, etc.), or in relation to their shared living habitat.

In the case of the rural movements one may note the key role of aboriginal populations (in Ecuador, Mexico and Bolivia) accompanied by peasant movements with a significant national and regional presence (the Landless Movement in Brazil). In the urban space, meanwhile, the most emblematic group is that of the picketers in Argentina. But owing to the multiplicity of issues derived from the social polarization promoted by neoliberalism, other movements have also emerged that testify to the fragmentation and dualization of the urban space. Other social sectors, the survivors of a previous phase of struggles, such as teachers and professors, administration workers, health workers and civil servants in general, converged in their struggles with the new social movements. At the same time, it should be noted that in recent years unprecedented processes of regional and international articulation have been taking place in the continent, through the coordination of labor, women’s and students’ movements and NGOs and political parties, stimulated, among other factors, by the proposals arising from the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. The authors stress the role of three elements characteristic of the practice that constitutes the majority of Latin American social movements: territorial appropriation, the revaluation of democratic participation and decision-taking mechanisms, and the emergence of a “new internationalism” grounded in the Porto Alegre WSF or in the campaigns against the FTAA. The response of the established powers has been “armed neoliberalism”.

Chadian internationalist Madeleine Alingué underlines the role of trans-Atlantic African resistance and movements, especially within the framework of the appropriation of the space of resistance by anti-globalization activists, and draws attention to the surprising “invisibility” of African contributions to the construction and evolution of modern resistance activities.

After pointing out that Afrodescendants in the Americas and the Caribbean now number more than 150 million, she deals with the genealogy of modern African resistance from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. Alongside the triangular exchanges of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, there arose the first African resistance and mobilizations in the face of the double discrimination by class and race, which have continued up to our days, with the proposal for a new world economic order, for NEPAD (New Economic Partnership for African Develop-ment), or for a new debt-free millennium. The author also analyzes the political victories obtained by these movements –such as affirmative action or the recognition of multiculturalism– and the appropriation of the issue by academics, through a process of formulation and internal

definition. She likewise refers to the trans-Atlantic African social strategies that instrumentalize and combine different negotiation spaces such as miscegenation, the maintenance of African identity through autonomy and self-determination, juridical mobilizations to obtain collective land titling processes, and the establishment of ethno-education and ethno-development policies.

The politologists Kande Mutsaku Kamilamba, of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mariana Castro Álvarez, of Mexico, discuss up to what point development NGOs in the South have turned into agents of neoliberalism instead of fulfilling their role of promoting the organization and autonomy of the popular sectors. The question emerges in the face of the observation that humanitarian organizations have not escaped the logic of the marketplace, converting into instruments of the government, easing the privatization of roles and tasks that the state should carry out, contributing to the demobilization and ulterior disappearance of popular movements, and depoliticizing the demands of the discrepant sectors.

In their paper they maintain that for societies to reach a certain degree of economic prosperity there is a need for the kind of social cohesiveness that is achieved when social capital and NGOs join forces. Initially, hopes were placed in the idea that the latter were the spearhead of civil society and would contribute to the development of the countries of the South, even attracting assistance originating in the North. However, upon analyzing the intentions, collective consciousness, social roles and institutional logic of NGOs, the authors conclude that their performance has not been the expected, and that very often they have been more concerned with ensuring their own survival than with attaining the goals for which they were created.

Zimbabwean sociologist Sam Moyo analyzes the agrarian and peasant issue in Southern Africa, dominated by the negative effects of the decolonization processes, and associated with failure in their attempt to achieve sustainable development within a democratic framework. Despite each country's own particular features, similarities exist in sub-Saharan Africa regarding fundamental social, political and economic issues, derived from the persistence of conflicts originating both in the unequal distribution of the land and in the precariousness of landholding systems.

Land is the basic source of subsistence in the majority of Southern African countries, and it is fundamental for the development of agriculture, tourism and housing. This issue is not only agrarian but also a critical social matter linked to inequitable patterns of allocation of resources in the rural-urban division and to the agriculture-industry division, and causes the conflict-ridden class, gender, race and ethnic relations to stand in relief, within a context of marginalization of the majority of the rural populations in the area.

Moyo analyzes the incidence of the expropriations carried out during the colonization in various countries, as well as the role of development projects in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia in attracting migrant labor in the region. These inequalities were in turn deepened after independence, when national systems were articulated with global capital through international financial institutions, "development aid" and the international trade system. Nevertheless, in the 1960s and 70s the SADC states (Southern Africa Development Community) oscillated between the neoliberal approach and attempts at a radical-nationalist land reform.

The author also broaches the nature and significance of the peasantry in Southern Africa, not a class in itself since it nestles within it the opposing trends of proletarian and landowner, to which the issues of race and gender are added. He then deals with the issues of concentration of land ownership, privatizations, and foreign control. He maintains that little progress has been achieved in the implementation of agrarian reform and in facing all the problems derived from an unequal access to land ownership, concentrated in some countries, in white minorities, to which the new concessions awarded to foreign investors are added.

Demands for the redistribution of the land, both because of historical racial inequalities and the rising needs of the black population, have been a constant in the region. Governments have nevertheless underestimated their nature and scale, ignoring the racial tensions that still persist owing to an unfinished agenda of reforms. Agrarian social movements, small and with little structure, have been relegated by the greater activism of middle-class groups that defend market-based methods. For this reason, avoiding to face the problem of an unequal distribution of the land properly has fed agitation in favor of radical reforms. Solving the agrarian issue constitutes a crucial ingredient for national reconciliation and development, and an essential element for the solution of the national question and of democratization processes.

The Belgian sociologist François Houtart explains the causes why, starting in 1977, peasants had to abandon their rice crops in Sri Lanka as a result of the World Bank's recommendations, accepted by a minority class of Sri Lanka that controlled the government. Those recommendations aimed at transforming agriculture into an export industry. No consideration was given to the catastrophic social effects produced by repressing the revolts of young peasants who had lost their employment.

In the face of the rising poverty and dissolving effects of their policies, the international financial institutions insisted on recommending to the government of Sri Lanka to deepen the opening of the market, definitively abandoning the Keynesian policies weakly attempted until then. This process was accompanied by loans to accelerate the reforms, which were eventually suspended when the reforms were not carried out in accordance with the prescriptions supplied by the technocrats. This led the government to launch a new cycle of neoliberal reforms chiming in with the findings of the Washington Consensus.

Although these policies faced a determined popular resistance, organized "from the bottom up" by civil society, they were backed up by an implacable system of decisions at government level, committed to integrating the country into the capitalist world economy, despite the fact that the food self-sufficiency became a thing of the past. The author concludes that to modify these policies and reorient development goals, the forces of local social and political resistance will need to converge with the social forces and movements that operate on a global scale.

Building a new African, Asian and Latin American dialogue

In the previous chapters the authors have analyzed the political and social problems from a regional perspective. The articles in this chapter broach the possibilities of advancing in a South-South cooperation among the three regions under study, dealing specifically with the relations among China, Africa and South Africa, and the foreign policies of Brazil and Argentina towards African states and with South Africa in particular.

Also contemplated is the need to build up cooperation to generate more autonomous international positions, taking the MERCOSUR, in Latin America's southern cone, as an example, to conclude with a contribution proposing the creation of *a Tri-continental of knowledge*, through the strengthening of cooperation among the academic communities of the three regions to develop a new emancipative process.

The South African politologist Garth Shelton delves into an analysis of the way in which China, within the framework of South/South cooperation, seeks to establish strong relations that will allow it to face US hegemony through the strengthening of economic cooperation with Africa. The author maintains that China and Africa, in belonging to the developing world, have no areas in dispute but common strategic interests, with a shared view of the main international issues. Therefore, through the increase of governmental channels and contacts, there have been attempts to coordinate positions and policies with regard to commercial matters and rules of the international economic system in the main multilateral forums, such as the WTO and UNCTAD, as well as on issues related to bilateral trade.

The author places special emphasis on analyzing China's African policy and its relations with African states, particularly with South Africa, after the formal establishment of relations in 1998. In reference to this case, the efforts that both governments developed to advance in diverse cooperation programs in a variety of areas are analyzed, especially as regards the synchronization of policies referring to South/South relevant issue areas, since both Pretoria and Beijing seek to restructure the global political and economic agenda.

After producing empirical evidence in favor of his interpretations, the author concludes that China and Africa now have a strategic opportunity to move into a new stage in South/South cooperation that could be effective in pursuit of the reform of the present global order, offering hope and inspiration to underdeveloped countries and a new framework for participation in the North/South debate.

The Argentine internationalist Gladys Lechini analyzes the foreign policies of Argentina and Brazil as regards South Africa in the framework of their relations with African states, with the aim of promoting a new agenda for research framed by South/South cooperation. Her work discusses two models of South/South cooperation on the basis of the relations of Argentina and

Brazil with the new, democratic South Africa. In the case of Argentina, the relation was developed within the framework of an intermittent, impulse-driven policy; and in the case of Brazil, through the persistent construction of an African policy. Although both Latin American states decided to move forward in their relations with South Africa, their styles and goals were different. Brazil carried out a political and simultaneously commercial policy, while Argentina limited itself to increasing commercial relations and attracting South African investments.

In this context, the way in which Brazil designs and puts into operation its international insertion, constructing strategic associations, constitutes a good example of the new modes of action which will allow progress along the path towards more successful South/South cooperation. In its search for convergent interests in specific areas, Brazil has structured a latticework of cooperation with the same partners, but in different settings. For the case under study, the relationship with South Africa emerges as central in its negotiating strategy. Brazil advances in bilateral cooperation and then prompts Argentina, its main regional partner, to negotiate through the MERCOSUR for free trade agreements with South Africa and the SACU (Southern Africa Customs Union). It does the same with India, but in turn generates a trilateral arena, IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa), to maintain common positions on issues in which the three countries have converging interests in varied multilateral settings, particularly the G20.

The author concludes that an effective South/South cooperation must be constructed step by step, in specific thematic areas and with precise goals, controlling both the pressures generated by the most powerful actors and the trend among countries of the South to disperse their efforts.

For the Argentine internationalist Miryam Colacrai, the MERCOSUR has entailed the creation of a singular system of cooperation unprecedented in South America. A series of positive factors combined within this process: the consolidation of democracy, the conformation of an area of peace, the increase in borderline links and a common economic space. Its constitution also allowed significant progress in political understanding among the party states, also co-opting the support of the nations' societies and allowing greater visibility as regards grouping and unity.

Despite these strengths, many difficulties persist for consolidating the integration process. Since Colacrai admits that one of the weaknesses of the MERCOSUR resides on the level of ideas, she proposes reflecting on the basis of the contributions of the "constructivist approach" of international relations, since it offers the greatest number of possibilities for creating bridges with other social disciplines and rendering account of more complex explanations.

After broaching the advantages of such a perspective for the re-launching of the MERCOSUR, she analyzes some central ideas around which it would possible to motorize that launching, which have to do with a redefinition of national autonomy that necessarily includes the regional perspective. She considers that it is important to make room for the "theory of autonomy" in the design of policies, especially because during the 1990s, in some countries, particularly in Argentina, there was an ill-understood pragmatism that impaired it as a guide to action.

Colacrai also poses the need to correct the MERCOSUR's institutional deficit and to recognize the necessity to emphasize the non-economic agenda of the integrationist project. Only within that framework, she concludes, it will be possible to link ideas, institutions and the participation of civil society and the epistemic communities in the shaping of the "virtuous circle" needed to strengthen this integration process.

Finally, the Colombian politologist Jaime Zuluaga Nieto broaches the possibility of recreating in the present the Tri-continental organization created in 1966 in Havana on the basis of a Tri-continental of knowledge.

The former aimed at turning into a space for the convergence of revolutionary movements and governments of the states of Africa, Asia and Latin America in order to face the domination of US capital. Despite its fleeting existence, its legacy was the need to articulate efforts, exchange experiences and develop forms of solidarity among the peoples and countries of these three regions.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Zuluaga Nieto poses the need to strengthen academic and scientific communities to create the conditions for the development of critical thinking and the production of knowledge placed at the service of man and of the construction of solidary, equitable and just societies.

Through the characterization of this phase of capitalist development as the society of knowledge, the production and appropriation of knowledge have been spotlighted as one of the most efficient instruments of domination and as a field of struggle for emancipation.

Nevertheless, despite the wealth of experience accumulated in the countries of the South, the "coloniality of knowledge" has often prevented us from making the most of that rich potential and has induced us to look North. But our societies face common economic, social and political problems, thus sharing dares and challenges that fill South/South cooperation with content. To this end we must know one another better through the strengthening of the academic communities of the three continents, defining common agendas in pursuit of the collective construction of societies with social justice and freedom.

Notas

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Relations Between Latin America and the United States: Balance and Prospects**

The Caribbean and Central America at the origin of the United States imperial expansion

If the relations between the United States and Latin America are studied from a historical perspective, they appear to be considerably more stable and to have greater continuity than is suggested by an examination based on specific circumstances. Since the Latin American countries consolidated their independence from the Spanish Empire in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, their links with the leading country in the north of the hemisphere have been asymmetrical, dependent and of secondary importance for policy-makers in Washington. Exceptions to this are only found under certain "crisis situations" that quite occasionally take place in Latin American countries. The rest of the time, a routine course prevails in which decisions are left to middle rank officials at the State Department who handles the situations faced by the diverse governments of the south on a case-by-case basis.

Very early on, those in charge of defining foreign policy established the guiding principle for their conduct: combining carrots and sticks, following the experience that the villagers of the thirteen colonies located along the Atlantic applied to get their donkeys to move; in other words, a stimulus for the beast to achieve an appropriate pace, coupled with punishment if the owner's instructions weren't obeyed. The only thing that has varied from one stage to another is the proportion of incentives and punishments. But at the basis of the realistic thinking that serves as theoretical framework for the foreign decisions of US bureaucrats in their international policy, the conviction has always existed that a great power must impose its criteria on the lesser nations, and that in order to achieve this goal it is the behavior of the country in question that determines the type of treatment it receives.

The asymmetry between the two areas has its roots in the final phases of the colonial period experienced by Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America[1]. United States historians stress the individualistic nature of the conquest and colonization of North America. Louis Hartz[2] has made famous the expression "fragment society" to point out that the colonies of the eastern United States were populated on the basis of individual contracts fulfilled by modern colonization companies that transported colonists across the Atlantic who "carried capitalism in their bones" and sought to reproduce the conditions of an England that was already readying the first industrial revolution. In Spanish and Portuguese America, on the other hand, there was a mixture between religious evangelization and imperial domination that gave rise to societies which were much more backward and further removed from the capitalist spirit.

Contrary to what is also believed, over the course of the nineteenth century the United States did not have a policy of imperial expansion that sought to build colonies or dominions far from its territory. The celebrated 1796 Farewell Address of the first president, George Washington, espoused an isolationist policy that would give the United States the advantages of not participating in intense European conflicts, seen as pointless, stressing its potential as "the first of the new nations" and assuring its inhabitants that they should safeguard the advantage of living in the best-organized society on earth. In fact, the entire nineteenth century was devoted to expanding its domestic frontiers until attaining the gigantic territory that was rounded out with the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The acquisition of Louisiana from Napoleon and of Florida from Spain, the integration of Oregon, and above all the enormous surfaces wrenched away from Mexico in California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico in the war of 1846 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, were, along with the conquest of the

West, a means towards developing a continental-size country (from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean) and generating the material basis of the future superpower.

The Monroe doctrine of 1823 that rejected any presence by the European powers on American soil was thus a true "reservation clause" to make future operations possible[3]. All the invasion and annexation projects for Cuba or Jamaica proposed mainly by the Southern states were rejected at that time of prevailing internal tensions, only solved by the Civil War and the victory of the North in 1865. As of that moment the foreign policy of the United States began to be constructed, establishing the bases for the first imperial expansion which took place via the war against Spain in 1898.

By that time the United States had turned into the world's top industrial power (a status it achieved in 1894), and the reticence with regard to an expanded international presence began to be dispelled. US imperial power was established in stages, and its first circle of extension encompassed Central America and the Caribbean[4]. The presence of Theodore Roosevelt in the White House established an entire new phase, tougher and more aggressive –the so-called "Big Stick" policy. The virtual annexation of Puerto Rico was followed by the intervention in Cuba through the Platt Amendment, and later by the active presence of the Marines, who landed in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Nicaragua in open support of US investments. In the first decades of the twentieth century, iron-clad protectorates were established that included the US administration of ports, customs and tax services to ensure the collection of pending debts through occupation processes that extended over lengthy periods. In the language of the time, "dollar diplomacy" was intensively combined with "gunboat diplomacy".

Things changed only when the world context was modified. In 1933 president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, under pressure from the effects of the Great Depression, and with a horizon of tension that would lead to the Second World War, sought to establish a more cooperative relationship with Latin American countries which would ensure a good support for the United States in case of conflict with the Axis powers, as it actually happened. This gave rise to the "Good Neighbor Policy", proclaimed at the Pan-American Conference of Montevideo, which suspended all forcible action and withdrew all US forces from the area[5]. Ensuingly, situations that in another context would have led to a very tough response, such as the oil expropriation by president Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico in March 1938 or the victory of the Popular Front in Chile in October of that same year, led to seldom seen negotiations and adjustments.

It could thus be said that phase one of the active imperial presence of the United States in Latin America constituted its most flagrant stage, and the one witnessing the most systematic political and economic intervention, which did not exclude, at least temporarily, the occupation of countries. The end of this period was characterized by a more open attitude, as a consequence of its global interests, and this caused the majority of the countries to indeed back the Allies during the following conflict, in particular the United States, by delivering their raw materials and strategic products at preferential rates and, in the case of the bigger nations like Brazil and Mexico, even contributing with a small amount of troops to the war fronts.

Latin America and the containment policy during the Cold War

Between 1945 and 1989 the Cold War stage marks a second period in relations, more recent and more decisive in determining the profile and content of current policies[6]. The emergence of the bipolar world and the systematic conflict with the Soviet Union and the communist camp shaped a new profile of alliances and conflicts in which "the clash of civilizations", in the sense accorded to this term by the neoconservative expert Norman Podhoretz[7] of choosing between the United States or the USSR lifestyle, was the cornerstone for calibrating, over almost five decades, the treatment received by Latin American countries.

The end of the Second World War coincided with the period of greatest power ever attained by the United States in its entire history. Habituated to having the advantage of not waging wars on its own territory, and to turning them into a factor of economic reinforcement, in 1945, with less than 5% of the world's population, the United States had 35% of the world's GDP, 47% of its total industrial capacity, 22% of the exports in the world economy, and 50% of the stock of private investment. In such a context, the disciplining of Latin American economies operated in tandem with a strong political control over their governments. The previous and lax Pan-American system was turned in 1948 into the Organization of American States (OAS),

considered by its critics as the “the United States Ministry of Colonies for Latin America”. One year earlier, in September 1947, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), the first of the regional military alliances created by the United States, which preceded NATO by two years, had been set up in Rio de Janeiro. According to article 5 of this legal instrument, the signers of the text were to provide one another with mutual assistance with their military forces if one of the participants happened to be the object of “an extra-continental aggression”. In this way the Latin American countries became, in advance, compelled to support the United States in case of an eventual conflict with the Soviet Union –a Third World War– which most of the experts in Washington considered inevitable toward the mid-1950s. A Convention for the proscription of communism from the hemisphere agreed on at the Caracas Conference in 1954 was further added to this. As never before, Latin America recognized it was part of a tight and solid block of support for US foreign policy.

By then Washington’s international activity had, in turn, become much more complex. Until 1939 there was *“one”* US foreign policy which the State Department coordinated in full. From 1945 onwards, instead, a series of foreign strategies handled by diverse government agencies operated. The first one to become manifest was the international economic policy that originated the main preparatory designs for the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences between 1943 and 1945 at which the victors defined the spheres of influence and the new world order. The second in importance was the defense and security policy that had its rules of the game included in the National Security Act of 1947. But later numerous other specific fields appeared, such as the agricultural foreign policy for the placement of its enormous farm surpluses; the foreign policy for energy to ensure the supply of oil and control over its sources in the developing countries; the foreign policy for transport to ensure the preeminence of its corporations in the aviation and maritime field. The foreign policies related to the environment and to social development irrupted later. In all of these new spheres the Department of State has very little say, so that the application of the United States’ foreign interests now corresponds to an intricate maze of departments and decision-making circuits and agencies in which the dynamics of cooperation and conflict crisscross[8].

Latin America has been one of the settings for this complexity, which in some cases has led to a given country concretely deciding to go beyond the diplomatic sphere: this happened in the 1980s with Honduras on the occasion of the Central American crisis. The country, the poorest in the subregion, was considered almost as an “aircraft carrier on land” for the mobilization –under the dictates of the Department of Defense– of US influences and resources in the civil conflicts in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Over the course of recent decades the Latin American area saw a rigorous application of the strategy of containment that served as the basis of the US international design for the Cold War. The diverse national situations were put through the sieve of their impact on the global balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. For the same reason, another very important structural variation in Washington’s decision-making was the distinction between situations of normalcy and crisis situations, the latter corresponding to circumstances of a rise by left-wing forces or of a conduct close to Soviet positions in a given country. While normal situations generated very few initiatives and were handled by a Country Director, a third-level official who led the “desk” for a Latin American country, crisis situations originated what was known as a test case. In such circumstances the decision-making level rose and coordination was increased, so as to measure the impact of all actions promoted by the US government.

In the five decades of the Cold War there were only two considerable situations emanating from the region that had an overall impact on US strategy. The first one was the Cuban Revolution of 1959, that embodied the worst nightmares of the Department of State by leading a country of the hemisphere to communism and a direct association with the Soviet Union[9] (curiously, the situation of Cuba continues to be the object of the same restrictive policies, such as the economic embargo and the Helms-Burton Amendment following the end of the Cold War and the abandonment of its content in the entire rest of the world). The second one was the great political crisis that burst out in Central America after the toppling of the dictator Anastasio Somoza Jr. in Nicaragua in July 1979[10]. Like a cluster bomb, this situation spread to neighboring countries, linking up with other bloody internal conflicts that opposed military forces backed by the United States against the armed organizations of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and the Guatemalan guerrilla groups gathered in the Union for Guatemalan National Resistance (URNG). In this case, a theoretical proposal

formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, known as the "domino effect", was applied. Kissinger maintained that in the struggle against communism there were no second or third-level countries, since the downfall of a small country under Soviet influence could generate a linked effect of new, more important losses, making it necessary to establish barriers and avoid communist takeovers in every spot.

Other significant cases in those years, also dominated by the fear of an expansion of communism, were: the toppling of the regime of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala that put an end to the so-called Democratic Revolution launched in 1944 under the accusation of a rising influence of the country's small Communist Party, but actually triggered by the threat of an agrarian reform that could deprive the powerful US corporation United Fruit Company of part of its lands; later, the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 to contain the possible Cuban influence on the government led by Colonel Francisco Camaño in the political aftermath of the assassination of the emblematic dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo in that country; and finally, the active US participation in the sharp political struggle that preceded the Chilean *coup d'état* of September 11 1973, which put an end to democracy in that country and cost the life of president Salvador Allende.

In general it may be stated that the organizations that formulate foreign policy toward Latin America normally have not attempted to work with articulated visions or specific projects. This only happened when they felt their interests were being affected globally by some process in the region or when they attained a certain electoral impact. In those cases, proposals such as president John F. Kennedy's "Alliance For Progress", the Human Rights Policy of the Carter administration, or the Initiative for the Americas of president George Bush Sr. which Bill Clinton later turned into the proposal for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which was scheduled to come into being in 2005 and is currently under complex discussion, were formulated. These more ambitious visions usually came into conflict with the more routine-bound pace of the career officials at the Department of State, and as a consequence they did not come into practice.

If these episodes are excluded, the remainder of the relations between the United States and Latin America was of a normalcy based on subordination or observance by the countries of the region of the guidelines set by the policies imposed by Washington. Although there has been a permanent statement of espousal by the occupants of the White House of the principles of representative democracy expressly enshrined in the charter of the OAS, in practice the United States helped establish or backed many dictatorial regimes that openly diverged from those criteria, under the argument of making their national interests prevail. The most significant example of this line was the sponsorship of the so-called "national security military dictatorships", much more repressive and systematic than the traditional kind. On the basis of conceptions emerging from the National War College of the United States, the so-called National Security Doctrine –a counter-ideology to communism that advised the military to take over political power and to refund in their countries institutions of a conservative nature– was imposed. In the 1960s and 1970s, military regimes which acted in close coordination in the design of state terrorism were set up in Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile[11] to root out dissident political and social organizations and reorganize the economy according to the guidelines of a neoliberal model.

The changing post-Cold War and globalization setting

As of the end of the Cold War, relations between the United States and Latin America entered a third stage, the rationale for which is also completely different from the previous ones. The period of the post-Cold War era and of globalization originated this "epochal change" so stressed by historians, which has brought about huge effects in the style and contents of hemispheric policy. From the rigorously bipolar order of the blocs' policy we went on to a heterogeneous situation in which the international system is unipolar in the military and communicational spheres, but considerably more open and multipolar in the economic and political fields[12]. In a subordinated region such as Latin America, Washington's power over it was felt in full force.

Beyond the equivocal effect that might by suggested by the search for a regional Free Trade Agreement, the marginality and lack of significance of the countries located south of the Rio Bravo has been manifest, leading to the fragmentation and opaqueness of the United States

policy. The change in the image of the world after the end of the Soviet Union and the communist world, and the immense scientific and technological transformations that have accompanied the third industrial revolution, have at the same time generated a nonplusing effect on Latin American leadership groups, which have seen these immense changes merely as a crisis caused by a specific situation and awaited without success for things to return to the previous normalcy.

For its part, Latin America as a region has experienced transformations of vast size and is now very different from what it was barely two decades ago. The dictatorships have disappeared, and democratic regimes have been set up with quite transparent electoral processes as regards the generation of authorities. But this has not entailed perceptible changes in the living conditions of the big majorities, and for various and complex reasons a situation of disenchantment with democracy has been reached. The Argentine analyst Guillermo O'Donnell has accurately spoken of "low-intensity democracies" with governments, parliaments and political parties graded poorly by society, generating a process of increasing abstention in elections and a loss of legitimacy of their work.

At the same time, the region has become even poorer and more unequal, accentuating its worst historical features. According to figures of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), in 1980 130 million people lived in poverty in the Latin American and Caribbean countries. In 1990, after the so-called "lost decade" and the problems caused by the outbreak of the foreign debt crisis, they had risen to 190 million. In 2002, despite the initial expectations of an improvement of the situation in the 1990s, the number had again increased, to 210 million people living in poverty. This means that today 44% of the inhabitants of Latin America are poor.

Meanwhile, inequality has been maintained or reinforced. Latin America has for a long time been the least equitable region in the developing world. And this feature has been further reinforced by the negative effects of the globalization process and the shortage of public resources originating in the adjustment programs inspired by the IMF, which have reduced the funds allocated to social policies. On average, in Latin America the poorest 10% of the population receives less than 2% of the National Income (from 1,8 to 1,9% depending on the year), while the wealthiest 10% receives more than 41% of it.

The most extreme case is Brazil, the biggest country in the area, where the first decile barely tops 1% of total income, while the decile of the richest approaches 60% of total income.

A significant increase in the social and productive heterogeneity of the biggest countries, which increases the internal difficulties among the main subnational groupings, is added to this. A recent report has spoken of "five Mexicos"[13], while in Brazil one may trace a huge rectangle of poverty that stretches from the city of Fortaleza on the Atlantic, in the north, to Manaus in the interior of the Amazon, descends along the jungle to the latitude of the state of Minas Gerais, and heads towards the coast passing through Belo Horizonte and Vitoria. In the several million square kilometers encompassed by this space live some of the most wretched communities of the continent. The center and south Brazil, in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Curitiba, Santa Catarina or Rio Grande do Sul, on the other hand, is more modern and nuanced. Industrial power, services and latest-generation activities concentrate there. Like in Mexico, any set of social indicators shows differences that extend from 1 to 3 or more between the most prosperous states and the poorest ones.

In the Latin America of today, the existence of several countries in the same national territory originates gigantic social tensions and very serious problems of governability.

This is something that could also happen to those countries not homogeneously developed, such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela, among others.

In a comparison of cases, the distance between Latin American nations is broader than it was fifty years ago. Homogeneity is now located in the subregions: Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean region or the Southern Cone, with Mexico –with all the complexities entailed by having a 3,200-km-long common border with the United States and an FTA that has concentrated more than 85% of foreign trade towards the north– as a region in itself.

Since the end of the communist camp, the United States has inaugurated a less enthusiastic policy towards the countries to its south in the hemisphere. At some point the international expert and former Mexican foreign relations minister Bernardo Sepúlveda called these periods

"times of no policy toward Latin America". This, as we have suggested, has been the case on many previous occasions. But this time the US's lack of interest seems to have a more strategic horizon, unless a tremendous social catastrophe shakes the continent. Such a trend has been reinforced after the change in the international setting that followed the attacks on September 11 2001[14]. As from then onwards, the struggle against terrorism and the preemptive actions against the states that presumably harbor it have been entirely dominant. This is a fairly remote setup as regards its impact in this region. Only the initial concerns, later ruled out, about the possible existence of radical Islamic bands in Ciudad del Este and on the triple border among Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, or the sealing of the Mexican border in the north and south of its territory, are connected to that setup. The rest involves the critical situation in Colombia and the actions undertaken by its government against the armed organizations FARC and ELN and the organizations of cocaine traffickers, regarding which the Pentagon promotes the Colombia Plan, or the possible reemergence of the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru, which might originate equivalent actions. The remainder lies beyond central US concerns and priorities, even though dramatic situations such as the Argentine disorders of December 2001 or the increase in squalor in Central America switch on the alarm system, threatening increases in political conflict and social explosions.

This explains the fact that many significant things are happening without the United States paying much attention. For the first time the new Brazilian government of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva gives access to power to a clearly left-wing force such as the Workers' Party. In Argentina, the new head of state, Néstor Kirchner, surprises observers with radical measures that reorganize the judiciary, combat corruption and repeal the "full stop" laws in the field of human rights. In Uruguay, the *Frente Amplio* and its leader Tabaré Vázquez garner over 50% of preferences just a year before the upcoming presidential elections, threatening to put an end to almost a century and a half of hegemony by the traditional Blanco and Colorado Parties. Chile has been governed since March 2000 by Ricardo Lagos, a socialist president, and his sector has grown to be a majority within the coalition that displaced General Pinochet from power and leads the country since 1990. In El Salvador, many analysts believe that this time the governing ARENA party will be displaced from power and replaced by a candidate of the center-left or left. In Mexico, all the surveys that explore the trends ahead of the next elections in June 2006 give pride of place to the mayor of Mexico City, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, of the Democratic Revolution Party.

Everything leads to the conclusion that in today's Latin America what is happening within it is more important than its relations with the United States, and that Washington has little time left in which to pay attention to the new, emerging setting.

Notas

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Latin America in the XXI Century[1]

NEVER BEFORE in its history has Latin America contained as many democratic political regimes in accordance with liberal canons as at the outset of the twenty-first century. After the replacement of the PRI governments in Mexico by that of Vicente Fox linked to the hitherto opposition PAN, the conversion of the guerrilla movements in Guatemala and El Salvador for institutional struggles, the formal reconquest of institutionality in Haiti, the substitution of the Fujimori regime by that of Alejandro Toledo in Peru, the setting up of a formal process of institutional alternation in Paraguay with the end of the government of General Stroessner, and with the transition from military dictatorships to electoral systems in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Bolivia, Latin America appears to have established the reign of democratic political regimes over virtually the whole continent. Only Cuba appears to maintain a regime that does not correspond to the liberal criteria on democracy. Even the government of Hugo Chávez, in Venezuela, despite charges by the opposition of being dictatorial or authoritarian, was established in accordance with liberal guidelines, through elections and a set of plebiscites which approved a new Constitution for the country.

It is as if, after having been a continent of revolutions in previous decades, and after having been transformed into a continent of counter-revolutions, a kind of balanced synthesis of the two moments had been established, under the form of generalized democracies, which have arrived to stay. Regimes backed and legitimated by the popular vote, which, putting policies into practice with the approval of the majority of the population, appear to express the Latin American mode of insertion in the model of liberal democracy in force in the United States and in Europe. Some authors went so far as to express what amounted to the end of the Latin America utopia –like Jorge Castañeda, in his book *Utopia Unarmed*[2]– and the surrender of the continent to Anglo-Saxon liberalism, preannouncing the flood of liberalism to which it was to be subjected in the two following decades.

These two decades witnessed the biggest concentrated transformations in Latin American history, which demand a balance sheet that will make it possible not only to understand the nature of those regimes, but also to know to what extent they allowed progress in the construction of democratic societies. This would at the same time make it easier to understand what Latin America is, what its problems and potentialities are.

Latin America is experiencing –in clearest fashion since the mid-1990s– its worst economic and social crisis since the 1930s. Its economies reveal an enormous external fragility; the profile of their international integration was lowered both economically and politically. What was the relationship of democracy to this setting?

A first and hasty answer would be to attribute to it the responsibility, total or partial, for the crisis of these regimes. There is a coincidence in time between its establishment or reestablishment and the emergence, in an ever more accentuated manner, of the crisis factors. To such an extent that neoliberalism, as an economic policy and as an ideology, turned into an apparently inseparable expression of such liberal-democratic regimes. The burden of the crisis lies, in fact, on the economic policies and on the ideology that came to preside over the new governments, with direct effects on politics.

Another possible answer is to consider that these regimes do not correspond to real democracies. Or that such regimes, democratic or not, are not compatible with the conditions necessary for the solution of the continent's crisis –views which we will discuss later on.

It is significant that during the years of the ascent and zenith of neoliberalism in Latin America presidents managed to get themselves elected and reelected almost automatically, as it happened in a telling manner with Menem, Fujimori and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. As a reflection of its phase of exhaustion and decadence, the exact opposite came to happen: those elected presidents who did not break with neoliberalism quickly lost legitimacy, as was mainly the case with Fernando de la Rúa, Sánchez de Lozada and Alejandro Toledo, and others like Vicente Fox, Ricardo Lagos and Jorge Battle.

For the first time, the election of Lula, as well as that of Lucio Gutiérrez, gives the presidency

to candidates who in their election campaigns proposed breaking with neoliberal policies and opening a new historical period in Latin America.

Latin America before neoliberalism

Latin America underwent three clearly differentiated periods over the course of the twentieth century: in the first, virtually an extension of the nineteenth century, there was a predominance of economies oriented to the export of raw materials, guided by theories on international trade based on the concept of "comparative advantages". To these models of accumulation corresponded oligarchic political regimes, in which the diverse fractions of the economic elites wrangled with one another over the appropriation of the state and, on that basis, of export resources and the resources of foreign trade in general.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Latin America lacked any significant importance and weight on the world stage, save as an arena for exploitation by the colonial powers; no major phenomenon, no major personage was recognized internationally, not even the independence revolutions, which remained in the shadow of the United States revolution.

The most important transformation of the nineteenth century, after independence, was the entry of the United States into the sphere of imperial nations, with the incorporation of vast Mexican territories –including California, Texas and Florida, the war between the US and Spain, and the direct tutelage the US began to exercise over Cuba and Puerto Rico, in addition to the design already preannounced by José Martí of its project of hegemony over the entire continent, made explicit in the Monroe Doctrine.

In compensation, as soon as the twentieth century had begun, the continent revealed what type of century lay ahead for it, with the massacre of the miners at Santa María de Iquique, in northern Chile, and especially with the Mexican Revolution, which represented the definitive entry of Latin America into the roll call of major historical events of worldwide consequences. Its image was projected over the entire continent, firstly into peasant culture and imaginary, but also as regards the feasibility of political projects with a strong component of national and agrarian issues, which for a long time would mark the political line of popular movements on the continent. The Mexican Revolution attracted the attention of revolutionaries around the world, only shadowed by the emergence of the Russian Revolution, which for the first time brought up the possibility of a worker and peasant power substituting capitalism with socialism.

Simultaneously, as a consequence of the urbanization process and of the initial steps in the industrialization processes, the continent began to exhibit new dimensions of its social conflicts and of the constitution of new political subjects. Examples of this were the university reform in Córdoba, Argentina; the founding of the communist parties; the movements of rebelliousness by sectors of the middle class, such as *tenentismo* in Brazil, APRA in Peru and Radicalism in Argentina –which led to the 1929 crisis and the different reactions to it, by announcing the first major framework of a new historical period on the continent.

Deeply affected by the 1929 crisis, Latin America saw practically all its governments, conservative or progressive, substituted as a consequence of the shudders of the export-oriented models, put into question by the international recession. Events such as the peasant rebellion in El Salvador led by Farabundo Martí, Sandino's anti-imperialist struggle in Nicaragua, the "socialist republic" in Chile, the 1930 Revolution in Brazil, the semi-insurrectional movement that toppled Gerardo Machado's dictatorship in Cuba, among various other analogous movements, belong to this kind of popular mobilization, which led in several countries to nationalist governments, their best-known expressions being Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico, and Perón in Argentina.

In the decades after the 1929 crisis, several countries of the continent developed policies which ECLA would later theorize about under the name of "import-substitution industrializations", and which made it possible, on the basis of the vacuum created by the recession in the center of capitalism, to advance on one of the most significant and innovative economic and social phenomena of the twentieth century: the industrialization –albeit delayed and dependent– of countries on the periphery of capitalism. Until then, the division between the center and periphery of the system had camouflaged the one that existed between industrialized and raw material-exporting economies, between urbanized and agrarian societies, with evident mechanisms of unequal exchanges among them. As from that moment, new blocks

established themselves in power, hegemonized by industrial fractions of the local bourgeoisies, with the participation, although subservient, of fractions of the subordinated classes, generally represented by their unionized urban sectors.

This industrialization process allowed the emergence and strengthening of the working classes in several Latin American countries, modifying the social and political setting of the continent, which was the basis for the constitution of the first political forces by the dominated classes centered on the labor movement –be it of a classist nature or under populist leaderships. Based on political alliances led by nationalist projects, several countries of the continent underwent significant popular experiences, which represented the first major appearance of the mass movement. It was the period of greatest economic growth in countries like Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Peru, which in a few decades would transform their physiognomy more than in the preceding centuries. It is no coincidence that the countries with the greatest relative economic development, that had made the most direct use of the 1929 crisis to implement their industrialization process –Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, had as their predominant political force parties or leaders who gave pride of place to the national issue over the class question, shunting classist parties to a secondary position.

This period began to reach exhaustion with the end of the Korean War and the running out of the "truce" which the imperialist countries had been forced to offer because of the recession, and later because of the war economies imposed owing to the deflagration of the Second World War (1939-1945). It had already been preannounced with the change in the international setting to the situation dominated by the Cold War, in which communist parties were declared illegal, having more direct effects in those countries in which these parties had a more important political role, like Chile and Brazil, but with effects in them all, particularly impacting political alliances and the space for the labor movement.

The period fully ended in the mid-1960s, in accordance with the process of internationalization of economies, consolidation of the large multinational corporations and tightening of national accumulation spaces. The Popular Front government in Chile, the Bolivian revolution of 1952, and the so-called "Bogotazo" movement of 1948 in Colombia as a popular reaction to the murder of the Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, are some of the biggest convulsions of the period, which would attain its most important moment with the Cuban revolution.

The new period will witness a political dispute among three different projects –the socialist option introduced in the continent by the Cuban revolution, the military nationalism of Velasco Alvarado in Peru, and the military dictatorship in Brazil. The three wrestled for the space left open by the exhaustion of the import substitution model on the economic level, and by the crises of the liberal-democratic regimes, with military coups in several countries, especially in Latin America's Southern Cone.

This new period was introduced by the military coups in Brazil and in Bolivia in 1964, followed by other, similar ones –Argentina in 1966 and 1976, Bolivia again in 1971, Chile and Uruguay in 1973. In little over a decade, the liberal-democratic political regimes of the subregion were all reduced to military dictatorships guided by the national security doctrine. In the Brazilian case an industrial development policy was still maintained, but with an already strongly anti-popular character –because of the repression of wages and of the unions– and with multinational corporations having an hegemonic role by virtue of the internationalization of the economy. Nevertheless, as of the transition of capitalism to its long recessionary cycle in the mid-1970s and the Latin American countries' debt crisis in 1980-1981, the economies of the continent as a whole entered a recessionary phase in which the conditions were generated for adhering to neoliberal models, definitively closing the "developmentist" period and introducing consensus around the fight against inflation and "monetary stability", the engines of neoliberalism in Latin America.

The transition to the subsequent period was triggered by the "debt crisis" unleashed in 1980, which generated balance of payments deficits which made the development projects for the region non-viable. The decade of the 1980s was termed the "lost decade" basically because governments devoted themselves to seeking trade surpluses that would reduce the figures for those deficits. The hyperinflations encompassed by this process would become fundamental references for substituting development goals with those of monetary stability –the lever for the rooting of neoliberalism in Latin America.

The new consensus: the fight against inflation

Latin America was the cradle and the experimental laboratory of neoliberalism. It was in the fight against Bolivian hyperinflation that Jeffrey Sachs was able to test the models of monetary stability that were later exported to Eastern Europe countries. It was in Pinochet's Chile that the Chicago School economists, led by Milton Friedman, first found the suitable political conditions for experimenting with their proposals for opening up and deregulating the economy.

The struggle against inflation was the cornerstone of the construction of the neoliberal hegemonic model. The diagnoses that led to the deregulation policies were those that attacked inflation as the source of the problems that led to economic stagnation, the deterioration of social services and of the infrastructure of the state, and the generalized impoverishment of the population. The arguments of the "inflationary tax" and the attack on the work of the state, its deficit said to be the source of inflation, enjoyed great acceptance and demonstrated their immediate efficacy the moment they were applied.

There was a rapid dissemination of the effect of these laboratories, multiplied by the new liberal wave spread by the Reagan-Thatcher duo, likewise reproduced at great speed by the international media, and picked up again by the local media and by the economic and technocratic cadres of capital. Chile was undergoing a process of economic "modernization", Bolivia was managing to overcome hyperinflation –the results being set against the prices that were paid for these bitter medicines.

Chile returned to being an exporting country –its economy based on the "comparative advantages" of copper, fruit, wood and fish–, abandoned its intermediate level of industrial development backed by the Andean Pact, and went back to massively importing industrial products. On the social level, from being one of the countries with the best indices, alongside Costa Rica and Uruguay, the country came dangerously close to the Brazilian indices.

Bolivia paid for the control of inflation with the dismantling of its mining economy, taking its mines to pieces and leaving tens of thousands of people unemployed. Gas exports to Brazil and Argentina replaced that economic activity, and at the same time the coca-growing economy was expanded. Some of the mining leadership moved to the countryside, and their experience in the labor movement served the struggle of the coca growers.

At that point, there was a very fast proliferation of what was to be called the "Washington Consensus", a kind of passageway compulsory for the economies of all countries worldwide, to position themselves as able to regain economic growth. The second stage of neoliberalism –articulated with redemocratization and including the conversion of social democracy to this model– begun in Western Europe with the shift by François Mitterrand's government in 1983 and was quickly reproduced in Latin America, having its emblematic expression in the neoliberal conversion of Peronism. After the failure of the government of Raúl Alfonsín, Carlos Menem carried out an election campaign in accordance with the classic molds of Peronism, centered on the "production shock". However, immediately after the elections he called on the most diehard historical adversaries of Peronism to apply the liberal policies of the Chicago School in Argentina.

While in Western Europe the hegemonic character of neoliberalism was marked by the adherence of social democracy, in Latin America those who had embodied "statism", "regulationism" and "redistributionism" were currents such as Peronism in Argentina, the Mexican PRI, and Democratic Action in Venezuela. One after the other, and resembling the succession of European espousals that followed Mitterrand and Felipe González, those parties began to adopt the models of fiscal adjustment, monetary stability, deregulation, privatization and opening of the economies to the international market, with policies that mechanically reproduced the "consensus" recommended by the IMF and the World Bank. In Latin America, the governments of Menem in Argentina, Salinas de Gortari and Ernesto Zedillo in Mexico, Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso in Brazil, reproduced the conversion of center-left forces to the neoliberal models.

The following stage was inaugurated by the Mexican crisis of 1994 and definitively installed by the Asian crisis of 1997, followed by that of Russia in 1998 and that of Brazil in January 1999. The passage of the United States' capitalism to a new recessionary cycle since 2001 gives this stage an emphatic feeling of having reached a limit, the hegemonic potential

exhausted, with expectably harsh effects on the Mexican economy –test case of the second half of the 1990s– and on the rest of the continent. The Argentine crisis, in putting into question the exchange parity policy, as well as the dollarization in Ecuador and in El Salvador, demonstrate how a new horizon became necessary to provide oxygen to neoliberalism when even the "third way" itself –that of Ricardo Lagos in Chile, of Fernando de la Rúa in Argentina, of Vicente Fox in Mexico– became impotent to do so in the way the Clinton and Blair governments worked in the United States and in Britain.

The failure of Fernando de la Rúa, Sánchez de Losada and Alejandro Toledo confirmed how times had changed in Latin America. The maintenance of the economic policy of fiscal adjustment –with its promises of reconquering economic development, job creation and emphasis on social policies– failed in all cases. If previously the candidates who put these policies into practice had been elected and reelected, as in the cases of Menem, Fujimori and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, now, on the contrary, maintaining these policies became a recipe for failure, since they had exhausted their stabilizing effect, they were unable to take up development again and turned into a source of economic and financial imbalance. From apparent solutions to the crisis, the fiscal adjustment policies turned into causes of crisis because of the imbalances in the balance of payments and the multiplication of public indebtedness under international conditions which no longer favored the attraction of capital. The continent entered headlong into its worst, most extended and deepest crisis since the 1930s.

The Latin American crisis

Within this framework, what does the current Latin American crisis consist of? Approximately two decades of monetary stabilization programs, neoliberal hegemony and predominance of financial accumulation have not led the continent –or even some countries– to take up development again, to make up for their backwardness in the technological race, to stabilize and extend the democratic regimes, to reduce social problems, to project technologically and culturally dynamic and creative societies.

On the contrary, the continent is experiencing the deep and extensive hangover resulting from the neoliberal medicine and its generalized collateral effects. The current situation remits us to the worst possible scenario: states that are weakened on the external level and with ever less capacity for action on the internal level; ever more fragmented and unequal societies with vast sectors excluded from their basic rights, beginning with the right to formal employment; economies that lost dynamism and went back to depending massively on the export of raw materials while having entered conditions of rising financialization which they are unable to emerge from. Culturally, the continent, under the strong pressure of the international press, reveals an incapacity to restart the cycles of creativity and originality that characterized it in the preceding decades.

Two decades of application of neoliberal policies undermined the basis of the social relations on which the Latin American state had been built: the concepts of nation and of sovereignty. These were articulated in pursuit of the goal of economic development –with industrialization as the engine of social integration– around a nationally structured domestic market, with expanding formal labor relations and external independence identified with the expansion of foreign trade. These three goals –economic development, and the domestic and external markets– were the ideas that had promoted the remodeling of the Latin American state, especially in the second half of the twentieth century.

The current Latin American crisis is the hangover resulting from the application of deregulation policies over the course of more than a decade. The above mentioned negative effects are the expression of a crisis of accumulation severely affected by the financialization of the economy, the result of the application of essentially recessionary stabilization policies. The exhaustion of the industrialization models took place in a sudden manner between the years 1960 and 1970. Brazil was the exception, delaying this exhaustion until the end of the 1970s, because the military dictatorship was able to take advantage of the expansionary period in international capitalism to give this cycle a new boost. Nevertheless, in the transition from the 1970s to the 1980s the debt crisis generalized to the whole continent, causing Latin America to swing into a lengthy recessionary cycle from which it has still not been able to emerge.

The explosion of indebtedness, added to the transition of the hegemonic model of capitalism to neoliberalism, favored the hegemony of financial capital over the economies of the continent. The opening toward the international market, the privatization of government enterprises, economic deregulation and "labor flexibilization" were instruments that led to this hegemony, which permeated their economies as a whole to the detriment of productive capital. The profit rates obtained by financial investment, added to its liquidity, turned it into the great pole of attraction that transferred resources to the speculative sphere. This mechanism was particularly strong in Latin America, pushed by indebtedness and by government deficits, reflected in uncontrolled inflation.

In the face of a debilitated Latin America, the different solution outlooks may be summarized in the two international reinsertion proposals made: the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), as renewed, strengthened and expanded in accordance with the proposal of the Lula government.

The crisis and the Latin American left

It is impossible to understand the current paths of Latin America, its recent historical swings, current crisis and possible options, without considering the trajectory of the Latin American left. If initially the continent's left was a direct tributary of the European labor movement, generating movements with a strong ideological component and few roots in each country, over the course of the twentieth century it gained in both muscle and roots, acquiring a key role in the major events experienced in the continent, particularly after the first three decades of the last century.

During the first period of its history the Latin American left was marked by the emergence of the labor movement in Europe, with elementary forms of labor organization and the first party expressions –socialist and communist– in tandem with the strong immigration phenomenon, which brought the European experiences to the continent, especially from Spain, Italy and Portugal. Countries like Argentina, by virtue of its greater relative economic development, and Chile, because of the nature of its mining economy, were the setting for the first major mass experiences of the labor movement, the original social basis of the left on the continent.

The impact of the Bolshevik victory saw its first immediate political effects in the founding of the parties and the virtual disappearance of anarchism. The impact was also translated into the emergence of political leaders who, in the style of the Bolshevik leaders, simultaneously had the capacity for theoretical output. The Chilean Luis Emilio Recabarren, founder of the Chilean and Argentine communist parties, may be included under this heading; the phenomenon was to be repeated later with the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui and the Cuban Julio Antonio Mella –the three Latin American communist leaders who corresponded to the theoretical and political profile.

Although a major part of the economies of the continent was agricultural, the difficulties in organizing farm workers, given the brutality of the domination, which extensively maintained pre-capitalist forms of exploitation, led the Latin American left to emerge with a link to the first moments of the industrialization process and of the urban working class, or linked to mining production. Argentina and Chile are clear examples of such processes.

Argentina had a working class that developed early in the nineteenth century, as well as forms directly linked to industrialization, urbanization and the immigration of European workers, such as a socialist party. The Chilean case is different: characterized by a mining economy, it produced concentrated enclaves of workers where the mining of saltpeter and later of copper took place, generating workers' poles with a classist organization and ideology which at the same time held the key to the country's export-oriented economy, owned by foreign capital – British in saltpeter until the 1920s, US in copper as from the 1930s. This strong tension partly explains the violent character of the labor struggles in Chile, with a succession of a large labor mobilization movements which constantly ended in massacres.

The policies implemented as of the 1930s, giving priority to industrialization and relegating agrarian reform to a secondary position, save in Mexico by virtue of the achievements of the revolution, progressively separated the fate of urban workers from that of rural workers. This was paradigmatically the case with the introduction of labor rights by Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, restricted to urban workers, while the majority of the mass of Brazilian workers was located in the countryside, thus defining a differentiated destiny for each of them and adding one further

reason to the lack of agrarian reform for the exodus of the working mass from the countryside to the city. In Chile, an analogous phenomenon took place with the explicit endorsement of the socialist and communist parties and of the labor headquarters that they led, which, under the Popular Front government, committed themselves not to carry out a rural unionization in favor of an anti-fascist front that would gather farm owners.

The two events cited as an introduction to Latin America in the twentieth century –the massacre in Santa María de Iquique and the Mexican Revolution– herald the two most significant trajectories in the constitution of the Latin American left as a political force. The first involved the budding Chilean left with classist political parties, while the Mexican showed the way to experiences centered on national and popular issues. Chile and Uruguay were the clearest examples of left-wing movements in which the socialist and communist parties had the main role, while Mexico and Argentina, with the PRI and Peronism, are examples of the predominance of national and popular experiences. In one, the strength of the labor movement was politically expressed through the socialist and communist parties, with their classist ideology and anti-capitalist program. In the other, this strength led to popular national movements. This phenomenon is directly linked to the strength of the native bourgeoisies because of the greater development of the industrialization process that in those two countries, along with Brazil, generated popular leaderships centered on the national question with predominance over the social issue, privileged by the communist and socialist parties.

The cases of Argentina and Brazil differ, originating different fates for their left-wing movements in the following decades which partly explain the vast difference in the situations in which they currently find themselves. Getúlio Vargas took over the provisional government of Brazil in 1930 as a reaction to the raw material-exporting policies of the block in power, deeply affected by the 1929 crisis. Over the course of his years in power he imposed an industrialization policy that recognized urban workers' right to unionize, albeit subordinated to the Labor Ministry. His government was linked to an incipient working class, the product of the country's low level of industrial development, worsened by the economic crisis of 1929 that raised Brazil's unemployment figures even further. Thus Getúlio did not find it difficult to impose his hegemony on the labor movement, especially because the Communist Party had criticized and had also maintained itself distant from the "revolution of 1930" –an anti-oligarchic movement led by low and medium-ranking military officers– still in the name of the line of the "third period" of the Communist International, which preached the struggle for power based on worker-peasant alliances. This orientation further isolated the communists, facilitating the Getulist hegemony over the still budding urban worker movement.

The differentiated reaction of the Latin American countries to the 1929 crisis was a determining factor for these forces to be constituted and take root in their respective countries. In the same way that the crisis was a challenge for each country, it was also so for their respective left-wing movements. The nature of each country and of its left emerged from the crisis transformed, and in a way conditioned the countries' political trajectory in subsequent decades. The crisis of 1929, and decades later the advent of neoliberal policies, were the most significant and determining tests for the left-wing forces on the continent: they acted as filters which selected those forces ready to grasp the historical mechanisms they were facing and to offer themselves as alternatives.

The second historical stage unfolded from 1930 until the 1980s. It is the most important period in the history of the left so far, and at the same time of the history of Latin America itself. In this period the socialist and communist parties turned into mass forces (this was notably achieved by Chile and Uruguay, and secondarily by Brazil and Colombia, among others). Also developing as mass forces were the Mexican PRI, with the spotlight on the Lázaro Cárdenas government in the second half of the 1930s, Getulism in Brazil, Peronism in Argentina and APRA in Peru, as well as unions and union federations over almost the entire continent.

This period was introduced by the reactions to the crisis of 1929, especially by the "revolution of 1930" in Brazil, the "socialist republic" in Chile, and the movement that toppled the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado in Cuba, among others. It was continued during the 1930s by insurrectional movements in El Salvador and Nicaragua respectively led by Farabundo Martí and Augusto César Sandino, the government of the Popular Front in Chile in 1938, and the government of Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico.

These events were inserted in the unstable international framework between the wars, with

political regimes destabilized by the tremors caused by the 1929 crisis which allowed various countries to take advantage of it to promote industrialization processes and thus strengthen their working classes, and to expand the democratic fronts struggling against fascism, fronts which, although only being translated into a government team with the Popular Front in Chile, exerted an influence on the political situation in several countries, introducing –alongside the classist *problématique* of the socialist and communist parties– the question of democracy and, at the same time, the complex issue regarding the nature of the Latin American nationalist regimes and movements like Getulism and Peronism, thus allowing false analogies with European fascisms.

In its second cycle in the post-war period there came together movements like Peronism and Getulism and revolutions such as those of Bolivia in 1952 and Cuba in 1959, constituting the strongest moment of the Latin American left by virtue of what it was to unleash. The triumph of the Cuban revolution had, as we have said, more influence in Latin America than the victory of the Russian Revolution in Europe. The guerrilla war model spread to a large number of countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. While the spread of the "socialist camp" strengthened the communist parties (CPs) on the continent, their hegemony in the sphere of the left suffered two hard setbacks. First, the split between China and the Soviet Union, because of denounces regarding the road taken by the latter, the loss of the world's most populous country and the emergence of Maoist divisions within the CPs, which, although generally expressing little, weakened this field. Second, the victory of the Cuban revolution, revealing that the first strategic victory on the continent was taking place outside the Communist Party and as an alternative to it. Socialism and the insurrectional path seemed to turn into the dominant goal and form of struggle from that moment onwards.

The victory of the Cuban revolution was quickly transformed from the toppling of a dictatorship into a regime that, for the first time in the continent and in the western hemisphere, adopted socialism. This represented a radical novelty for Latin America. From a distant Soviet or Chinese reality, socialism turned into a tangible historical reality; it became the representation of an immediate possibility at the very moment in which capitalism started exhibiting signs of the exhaustion of its expansionary cycle of import-substitution industrialization on the continent and while military dictatorships were replacing liberal democracies.

Although Chile's attempt at a peaceful transition to socialism was to take place later, the Cuban victory sealed the destiny of the CPs on the continent, and the Chilean outcome came to confirm this situation. The Latin American left thus closed its first great historical stage in the framework of the passage of Latin American capitalism from expansion to symptoms of exhaustion of its capacity to continue growing within the molds of the original industrializing project, which also allowed the alliance between the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle layers and the labor movement, the beginning of the cycle of military dictatorships in the continent's Southern Cone and the victory of the Cuban revolution, as well as the influences that the Cuban insurrectional model exerted on the continent as a whole.

This was the third period in the history of the Latin American left, strongly marked by the influence of the success of the revolution in Cuba. In the international context, that influence was strengthened by a balanced relation of forces between the capitalist camp led by the United States and the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, in a framework of apparent strengthening of the latter –at least as regards its expansion– and weakening of the former. The Vietnam War, with the wearing down of the US and the extensive world solidarity with the Vietnamese; the Chinese "Cultural Revolution", or at least the version disseminated to a large part of the world of what that phenomenon was believed to be; the Algerian victory in the anti-colonial struggle against France; the mobilizations of the second half of the 1960s, particularly in France, Germany, Italy, and Mexico, but others too in Japan and Brazil; the very death of Che Guevara, a hard blow to the revolutionary movements in Latin America and the world. All of this immediately served to strengthen the revolutionary spirit. At the same time, the preannouncements of the exhaustion of the greatest cycle of growth of capitalism pointed to a horizon of crisis in accumulation.

It was within this framework that several short cycles of armed struggle took place on the continent, always having the Cuban revolution as a reference –as a victorious model. They included Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Peru and Guatemala, basically, with a rural guerrilla model quite similar to the Cuban, at least in its codification through the texts of the Che and of

Régis Debray. They were defeated, but quickly returned, following similar molds, in Guatemala, Peru and Venezuela, with the addition of forms of urban guerrilla warfare in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, urban and rural forms in Colombia, and the countryside in Mexico.

The two cycles were harshly defeated, in relatively short timespans, over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, to a great extent because they lost the surprise factor, which had been important in the Cuban case, and also because of the mechanical repetition of the Cuban experience in the cases of rural guerrillas. In the case of the other form, the defeat took place because of the inability to resolve the impasses of the urban guerrilla struggle by translating manners of accumulation of force typical of rural guerrilla warfare to the centers of political and military domination, thus accelerating clashes under unfavorable conditions, even though significant levels of accumulation of force were attained in Uruguay and Argentina.

Even so, in the case of those countries with an economic and social structure, and even forms of political domination, that most resembled Cuba's –those of Central America, there was a third cycle of armed struggle over the course of the 1970s, in particular in the second half in Nicaragua, its victory in 1979 encouraging the spread of similar processes in Guatemala and El Salvador. The Sandinist victory was closely articulated with the United States' defeat in Vietnam and the internal crisis in the Nixon government, which ended up generating an inability by the US to undertake new external interventions, a factor which replaced the surprise in the Cuban case. The defeat of Jimmy Carter, who represented the assimilation of the blows suffered by the United States, and the US return to the political and military offensive with the victory of Ronald Reagan in 1990, altered this setting, which would end up being decisive for the Sandinist failure and the non-viability of new victories by the guerrillas in Guatemala and in El Salvador, determining the recycling of the guerrilla movements in the two countries into the institutional struggle, especially after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, and thus confining the cycles of insurrectional struggle in Latin America. Colombia has a trajectory of its own, previous to the cycles mentioned, since the civil war unleashed by the "Bogotazo" of 1948, unfolding over the course of the 1950s, as a continuation by the left –the FARC– of the national union agreement of the two traditional parties protagonists of the civil war, the Liberal and the Conservative, which from that point on turned to jointly co-governing the country.

The Chilean experience with an attempt at an institutional transition to socialism is a special case, which took place against the trends and the correlation of forces on the continent and in particular in the Southern Cone region, something which would end up becoming one of the factors of its failure –its isolation and the regional encirclement. Chile was a kind of laboratory for political experiments in Latin America –adapting to the continent Friedrich Engels' expression for France. Its labor movement began relatively early because, being a raw material-exporting economy which produced and exported minerals, it generated a working class at the same time already at the end of the nineteenth century –a class that participated in major labor struggles over the course of the entire twentieth century.

Chile had a working class before it had an industrial bourgeoisie. It had labor federations and socialist and communist parties participating directly in the Popular Front government even in the 1930s. It had a stellar role in the attempt at an alternative experience to the Cuban revolution, promoted by the United States through the "Alliance for Progress" –the Christian Democrat government of Eduardo Frei, in the 1960s. And lastly –and therefore not by chance– it was the setting of the world's only political experiment with an institutional transition to socialism, with the Popular Unity government, between 1970 and 1973.

It was a unique development on the continent, perhaps only comparable to that of Uruguay, with which it shared a long democratic tradition. Uruguay adopted an eight-hour workday a year before the United States did, had a divorce law seventy years before Spain, and female suffrage fourteen years before France. It abolished corporal punishment one hundred and twenty years before Great Britain did[3].

Chile chose all its presidents through elections between 1830 and 1970, with the exception of 1891 and the period between 1924 and 1931. A Congress was developed in that country before it existed in European countries, save Britain and Norway. Electoral participation in Chile towards the mid-nineteenth century was equivalent to that which existed at the same time in Holland, something Britain had achieved only twenty years earlier and Italy would only have twenty years later. Chile imposed the secret ballot in 1874, before it was available in Belgium, Denmark, Norway or France. It had parties that took part in the three workers' Internationals.

And it was the only country other than France and Spain to have a Popular Front government.

Chile experienced this democratic tradition of alternation. It had Popular Front governments, with the radical, socialist and communist parties, at the end of the 1930s; a government of military populism led by General Carlos Ibáñez, backed by Perón, in the 1950s; a conservative government, a Christian Democrat one, and finally a socialist-communist one.

It was therefore not by chance that Chile became the setting for an attempt at a transition from capitalism to socialism along an institutional path. Such was the trust in the country's democracy, in the right to alternation in government: in previous decades, four governments with differentiated ideological policies had succeeded one another in government without institutional ruptures. The Chilean left was a tributary to this vision and bet heavily on an institutional transition, even with an election victory in which it received little over a third of the votes, without measuring the far-reaching nature of the proposed transition, which entailed turning the one hundred and fifty biggest monopolies in the country over to state control, as well as the nationalization of the copper mines –the country's main source of foreign currency, held by United States capital.

Its defeat ended the communist parties' trajectory in the continent, which had for decades been preaching, to varying degrees, the path that the Chilean left attempted to put into practice. In the 1970s the Latin American left saw its main settings transferred from the Southern Cone to Central America, advancing without a balance that would enable the incorporation of experiences, the readaptation of paths and forms of struggle.

The image of the left on the continent was, in 1990, the most fragile since it arose on the Latin American political scene in the first decades of the twentieth century. In virtually all the countries in which they had developed, armed movements had been harshly defeated by tough repressive offensives and dictatorial regimes, disappearing from the political setting. The Sandinist regime, exhausted, had been defeated at the ballot-box in 1990. The communist parties –even those that traditionally had been stronger, save the Cuban, the CPs of Chile and Uruguay– were reduced to impotence, the labor federations led or hegemonized by them likewise weakened. Some reached the point of changing their names and losing their character, as in the case of the Brazilian CP. Everything happened in a way quite parallel to what occurred with the CPs of Western Europe, demonstrating how the end of the Soviet Union had been a decisive factor in their decadence. Labor organizations in general were weakened under the impact of the recessionary policies of fiscal adjustment and "labor flexibilization", which as a whole boosted the precariousness of job relations for the majority of the continent's workers.

Socialist and social democratic parties, as well as movements and parties known as "populist" and nationalist, were recycled, also in parallel fashion to the European phenomenon, towards neoliberal policies. Peronism, the Mexican PRI, the Chilean Socialist Party, Brazil's PSDB, Democratic Action in Venezuela and the MIR in Bolivia are clear examples of that process. With this they helped to even further isolate the CPs and other more radical forces on the left, abandoned their traditional policies of government control of the distribution of income, and became responsible for the spread of neoliberalism over the continent as a whole, abandoning the already debilitated field of the left.

A specific movement typical of the period of defeat of the left was the attempt to create an axis for a Latin American "third way" through the so-called Buenos Aires Consensus. By means of a statement drawn up by the Brazilian political scientist Roberto Mangabeira Unger, who resided in the United States, and by Jorge Castañeda, Mexican Foreign Relations Minister to be, the document sought to set an option between the traditional left, considered "Statist", and the neoliberal forces. The movement corresponded to the second current of neoliberalism, led by the governments of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, from the center of capitalism. The final statement was signed by leaders who later took over the government of their countries, like the Chilean Ricardo Lagos, the Mexican Vicente Fox and the Argentine Fernando De la Rúa, and by the candidate to the Brazilian presidency who was not elected, Ciro Gomes. The movement thus appeared to be launched to success, in the face of the crisis of the left, the signs of exhaustion of the first neoliberal cycle, and Clinton and Blair's stellar role on a worldwide scale.

Cuba, in turn, a key reference for the continent's left, was especially affected by the disappearance of the "socialist camp". The Cuban regime managed to survive, unlike the regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself, demonstrating how the legitimacy achieved by the conquests of the Cuban revolution was of a different quality than those of the

Eastern European regimes, resulting from the arrival of the Soviet troops which defeated the Nazi occupation. Nevertheless, the price paid by the Cuban regime was high, left without the international integration into the planning of the "socialist camp" which allowed it to obtain oil, among other strategic goods, in exchange from sugar, citrus fruit and nickel. Attacks were hard and caused the Cuban regime to undergo its worst moments between the years 1989 and 1994. Partly in order to survive the crisis, the Cuban government generated a drastic swing in its economic policy, allowing private activities hitherto only reserved for the state sector, save for education and health, as well as tolerating an area of circulation of the dollar and expanding contracts with foreign corporations in the country.

As a result of the new policy, in which Cuba sets for itself the goal of not retreating and also of not advancing in the construction of socialism, owing to the negative shift in the international correlation of forces with its direct effect on the country's economy, the island ceased to be an alternative reference point for the continent's left. The solidarity with Cuba is maintained *vis-à-vis* the US blockade, but the experience ceases to be a horizon for the Latin American popular movement, either as a political system or as a social and economic model.

The field of the left became composed of remainders of the forces that survived the previous period (particularly communist parties, weakened); social movements, including labor federations that resisted neoliberalism; and some *sui generis* forces which took part in the main political struggles at the institutional level –the PRD in Mexico, Farabundo Martí in El Salvador, *Frente Amplio* in Uruguay and Workers' Party in Brazil– in addition to the special case of the Cuban Communist Party. They are all forces of diverse origins: the PRD is the result of the fusion between a splinter of the PRI and other left-wing forces, including the Communist Party; the Farabundo Martí front converted from the armed to the institutional struggle; the *Frente Amplio* is the continuation of the front formed by the groups of the Uruguayan left participating in the institutional struggle in the country since the 1960s; and the Workers' Party originated in the social movements in Brazil that organized into a political party in 1980. Despite their different origins, these four forces have several elements in common, being the heirs of the struggles of the institutional left in the continent, either in their program of democratic struggles for reform or in organizational forms. They are all part, along with the other forces of the left on the continent, of the São Paulo Forum, a space for meeting, exchanging experiences and holding debates that since the mid-1980s has met periodically in several countries of the continent. It bears that name because its first gathering was in São Paulo.

Latin America at the time of Lula

Brazil had been transformed into the most fragile link in Latin America by combining explosive economic and social factors with an accumulation of forces of the popular movement on social and political levels higher than those of the other countries of the continent since the 1980s. It was comparatively the most backward country of the region in terms of social and economic development and of the construction of political forces.

Brazil was favored by the "privilege of backwardness" –a category employed by Trotsky– upon reversing the conditions that affected it unfavorably. Between the military coup of 1964 and the end of the dictatorship a new left and a new social movement were structured, while other countries with stronger left wings and popular movements, like Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, experienced coups relatively later given that greater strength, but for that reason were also victims of harsher repression.

As a result Brazil developed further in industrial terms during the military dictatorship, without solving the agrarian issue and without overcoming its significantly worse distribution of income. The left was strengthened, within a social framework that maintained its fragility. The Workers' Party, the CUT and the MST are the direct products of this combination, which ended up making the contradictions more acute in Brazil and in the other countries of the region.

Lula's election is –as he himself stated in his inaugural speech– the result of a lengthy historical process which leads to the first left-wing president elected in the country. His victory opens a new period in Latin America, regardless of which the fate of his government will be, because it represents the election of a candidate and of a party that, for the first time in the continent, propose a rupture with the neoliberal model put into practice in Brazil in the previous decade.

Latin America entered the twenty-first century undergoing its worst crisis in seventy years as a result of neoliberal policies which increased the fragility of their economies, weakened their states and diminished their economic and political weight in the world. The United States' FTAA project and the bilateral free trade agreements between the US and several countries in the continent –Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador– entailed an even greater expansion of the US hegemonic capacity over the continent, weakening its margins of sovereignty.

The continent's crisis, the passage of the US economy to recession, and the change in the US discourse, giving preference to the militarization of the world's conflicts, produced a space of regional leadership which had shrunk considerably in the previous period through the concurrence of virtually all the governments of the region with "free trade" and economic deregulation policies. The Argentine crisis was the extreme case in terms of economic and social backsliding and, at the same time, of absence of the US discourse. It was the first application of the new policy that the Bush government adopted and managed to have the IMF endorse: that countries should go bankrupt, like companies, without the international organization assuming any responsibility in relation to the crisis. This attitude led Argentina, after having applied the IMF's policies in the most rigorous manner, to enter the worst economic and social crisis experienced by a country in the recent historical period of capitalism, without any aid from the international organizations.

The combination of these international conditions and the exhaustion of the neoliberal model, clearer in Latin America owing to the more thorough and generalized application of such policies in the continent, generated a hegemonic crisis of which the electoral victories of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil and Lucio Gutiérrez –as well as the favorable chances of the *Frente Amplio* in the Uruguayan general elections of 2004– are an expression.

The data are clear: there was an increase of nine percentage points in the region's poverty rate, from 35% in 1982 to 44% in 2002, and of five points in the indigence level, from 15% to 20%, in the same period, precisely that which was marked by the generalized application of the policies of fiscal adjustment and economic deregulation. The continent went on the experience its worst unemployment crisis, begun in 1995, the year of the Mexican crisis, and reaching around 10%, entailing a total of 18 million people. In Argentina, unemployment went from 7,5% in 1990 to 21,5% at the beginning of 2002. Forty-five percent of the population –45 million people– lacked a decent job in 1990, a figure that rose to 50,5%, that is to say, 53 million inhabitants. Of every ten jobs created in this period, seven were in the off-the-books sector, in which only two out of every ten people employed have access to social services.

During his first term former US president Bill Clinton didn't even cross the Río Grande to confer on how NAFTA was doing in Mexico. The continent appeared to adjust placidly to the neoliberal proposals while the Clinton government enjoyed the honeymoon of the combination of the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the liberal victory in the countries of Eastern Europe, and the regaining of growth by the US economy.

During his second administration, in the second half of the 1990s, Clinton had to coexist with a transition to generalized crises in the continent, still manifested at national level –the Brazilian crisis of 1999, the general degradation of Argentina, the institutional crises in Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay and the election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. The inheritance he leaves to his successor is a map of the continent like a sea of crises, wherever one looks: from Haiti to Uruguay, from Guatemala to Peru.

The Latin American crisis, with its national specificities, can only be understood within the framework of the generalized application of neoliberal policies in the two previous decades. Otherwise, nothing would explain the concomitance of the crises. The social explosiveness in the different countries and the very weakness of political groupings in terms of facing the crisis are typical products of the application of those policies. Their particular modes of application allow the specific forms and timeframes to be understood.

The principal current epicenters of the crisis are Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina and the Andean countries: Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru. Colombia has been hauling a deep crisis for several decades. The end of the civil war unleashed at the end of the 1950s through a political agreement between the two main parties –the Liberal and the Conservative– meant peace between the two of them, but never managed to bring in the country as a whole, especially in the countryside, the main setting of armed conflict. The country began to live schizophrenically between an institutionalized political system that existed with 70% abstention rates and rural

guerrilla movements originating in that war, like the FARC, or others that emerged afterwards, like the ELN. Later on, another element was introduced, drug trafficking, which from its outset organized paramilitary forces to fight the guerrilla groups with the connivance of the armed forces.

When drug trafficking attained a national projection, showing how it had deeply penetrated the state structure, and due to the pressure of succeeding US governments, Colombian presidents began to act against it and the guerrillas at the same time. The US policy of exporting its problems seeks, in the eradication of coca leaf plantations and the fight against drug traffickers, the solution to a domestic difficulty –drug consumption by the world's wealthiest market. By doing this, the US diverts attention away from its domestic setting and at the same time finds pretexts for positioning military forces in a strategic region for its expansionist plans – the Andean-Amazonian area.

The new US doctrine spotlights Colombia as one of the epicenters of the "war against terrorism", alongside Palestine. These are countries in which the Bush government believes it has found "terrorism" in a "pure state", a "terrorism" to which it should not yield ground by accepting negotiations, because this would represent a victory and an incentive for it. In this way, the form of war which the US, along with the Colombian government, puts into practice, is the "war of extermination", of destruction of the insurgent forces, in the same way it is done with the Palestinians. This, therefore, involves a deflagrated, open focus of war, its unfolding depending on the triumph of the US strategy at an international level, the success of alternative continental integration policies, and the local capacity of the opposing forces to win over vast popular sectors that will oppose to solving the crisis through violence.

The Venezuelan crisis has another origin and another character. For various reasons, Venezuela never saw a neoliberal program actually put into practice. After he was elected for the second time, in 1989, Carlos Andrés Pérez, of the then social democratic Democratic Action party, did something analogous to what Carlos Menem did in Argentina, announcing a neoliberal program the day after taking office, in opposition to the tradition of his party and to his own election campaign. The result was an enormous popular demonstration known as the *Caracazo*, which was violently suppressed with the official balance of four hundred people dead. The government was condemned to failure from its outset, a fact that was capitalized on by the military uprising led by Hugo Chávez. Sentenced soon afterwards for corruption, Carlos Andrés saw his program interrupted, in similar fashion to Fernando Collor in Brazil.

He was succeeded by another former president, from the other traditional party, the COPEI, of Christian Democratic origin: Rafael Caldera, who attempted heterodox fiscal adjustment formulas resting on a former guerrilla, Teodoro Petkoff, who in a way attempted to be the Fernando Henrique Cardoso of a government that might be compared to that of Itamar Franco in Brazil. The new attempt also failed, and Hugo Chávez capitalized on the discontent with the performance of the Venezuelan elites in previous decades which starred in the "oil revelry", squandering the high prices of the fuel to the detriment of what might have been a boost for the industrialization and welfare of the country. On the contrary, corruption, to a great extent, explains the fact that Venezuela has continued to be an oil country, with the ups and downs that such a circumstance generates for the country's economy.

Hugo Chávez won with the vote of the marginated by society and of the critics of the traditional parties, managed to obtain approval of a new Constitution via a plebiscite, reformed the organs of Justice, and obtained a parliamentary majority. His policy was based on the reorganization of OPEC and favored by the increase in the prices of oil, with which he promoted social policies aimed at the popular classes but without altering the internal power structure of the country –both the power, endowed with autonomy, of the state oil company, and of the large private monopolies, beginning with that of the communication media. His economic policy was founded on fiscal adjustment, but while the prices of oil favored him, his social policies had a relatively effective redistributive role.

It wasn't long before the policies of foreign and domestic sabotage had an effect, among them the coup attempt of April 2002, the systematic capital flight, the withholding of supplies and the lock-out between December 2002 and February 2003, including the interruption of oil production. The coup was avoided with the backing not of the top-ranking officers who had accompanied Chávez on his accession to government, but of low-ranking officers, and above all through the mobilization of an emerging popular movement that realized it would be the main

victim of the coup.

The run became one against time. The opposition sought to topple Chávez before the Latin American situation altered in his favor, before the new oil law regained for the government a good share of the 80% of the royalties that remained with the technocracy of the company, and before the new land law against urban speculation and rural latifundia came into effect. And additionally, before the new mass movement could constitute itself into an organic force capable of counter-balancing the power of the media and of the public opinion shaped by it. This run is what leaves the Venezuelan process open, in a dependence on the political evolution of the process of South American integration of MERCOSUR, led by Brazil and by Argentina, on the fate of the bellicose policy of the Bush government and on the situation of internal political and social dispute.

Argentina was a country that experienced extreme situations –in a way it succeeded Chile as the laboratory for Latin American political tests– ever since the failure of the military dictatorship that emerged with the 1966 coup and the transition to a return to liberal democracy, with the expected election victory of the Peronism. The latter, however, mingled with another phenomenon on the rise in the continent at the time, in particular in the Southern Cone: urban guerrillas also present in Uruguay and in Brazil.

Peronism won, adding sectors of the extreme right which had always been present in the midst of Peronism. This time, articulated with sectors of the armed forces, represented by López Rega and the Triple A, to guerrilla groups, of which the Montoneros were the strongest expression, including a great part of the national business sector, and particularly the then-strong organized labor movement.

The military coup that put an end to the failed return of Peronism in 1976 was the most developed model of a regime of terror against the popular movement and against any surviving democratic vestiges, deeply striking their capacity for organization and social and political expression. The also frustrated democratic transition led by the Radicals, including two hyperinflation crises, led to the return of the Peronists, this time as agents of neoliberal policies, with Carlos Menem. After promising a “production shock”, as soon as he had taken office he handed the reins of the economy over to the most traditional liberal economists, historical adversaries of Peronism, until the scheme of “parity” was reached, put into practice by Domingo Cavallo –the most extreme form achieved by the priority given to monetary stability in a country traumatized by the regime of political terror and by the hyperinflationary bouts. It was then, in the hands of the traditional party force representing the labor movement, that neoliberalism was implanted in Argentina, in a pioneering form.

The current crisis faced by the country is a consequence of the extent of the crisis triggered by the artificial solution that the exchange parity adopted represented for Argentina.

Never before has a country regressed so much outside times of war. What had been a paradigm for the IMF and the World Bank turned into the opposite, as an inevitable consequence of having adopted the policies of the international organizations in such an orthodox manner.

The Andean countries, particularly Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, represented, over the course of recent years, the best examples of the structural crisis of countries for which the international market, reorganized within the molds of neoliberal policies, leaves no room, relegating them to the situation of their Central American peers, with raw material-exporting economies totally dependent on the US market. The special feature of these countries is the presence of a mass movement of rural origin, the axis of which is the Aboriginal movement.

The inefficacy of the neoliberal policies put into practice over the course of the last two decades deepened the existing social crisis, without having managed to restart development or attain political stability, generating a series of institutional crises that signal the recent political history of these countries as a reflection of a profound hegemonic crisis. Ecuador, unable to exercise a relatively extended experience such as that of Fujimori –consolidated in power by monetary stability, but also by success in the fight against the guerrillas– and without a certain surviving party structure as that of Bolivia –MNR, MIR– and the political leadership of Hugo Banzer, reflected this economic, social and political instability in a more direct manner, with the succession of elected and deposed presidents, the dollarization, and the election of Lucio Gutiérrez as president with the backing of the Aboriginal movement, which for the first time in

the country's history had a direct participation in government.

The twenty-first century finds Latin America facing contradictory options within a complex international setting. On one hand, a world framework of strong US hegemony, although not based on a capacity for economic expansion: on the contrary, upon exhaustion, the expansionary cycle of the United States' economy was replaced by a recessionary cycle, with the consequent restriction of international trade and of the demands originating in the central capitalist markets. The United States seeks to protect itself extending its hegemony in the continent through the FTAA proposal, which would enable it to expand the economic might of its corporations without counterweights, as already occurs in North America with NAFTA.

The internal dilemmas of every country in Latin America –extending the fiscal adjustment model or breaking with neoliberalism and seeking an alternative model– are expressed at the regional level by the dilemma between the FTAA and MERCOSUR. The former is the logical upshot of the application of the policies of opening up national economies in this region of the world, at a time in which large areas of integration of the biggest economies of the planet are being articulated and when few currencies will be able to resist at an international scale. The proposal for continental integration under the aegis of the biggest economy in the world, within the framework of their own currency, seems like the natural complement to the policies practiced on the continent in the last two decades, of which NAFTA is a regional expression. Latin America at the time of Lula entails that the Latin American left must settle accounts with its own path in recent years. That is why 2003 is as important for the left and for the continent as was 1973, three decades ago. At that time, the end was rung on a historical cycle of advances and political attempts to construct alternatives to the dependent, crisis-hit capitalism, concluding with the military coups in Chile and in Uruguay, closing the encirclement of what was to become the new Peronist government in Argentina until the 1976 coup definitively consolidated the new counter-revolutionary period in the region.

2003 may constitute the beginning of a new historical period of the continent or of exhaustion of a model, and with it of the forces that, in opposition to it, did not know how or were unable to overcome it. The first signs are not auspicious: the initial phase of the governments of Lula and of Lucio Gutiérrez gives more the impression of continuity than of a break. The violent events that mark the outset of the government of Sánchez de Lozada in Bolivia reveal how societies that are extremely exhausted by the brutal rise in the levels of exploitation and of expropriation of rights cannot bear a new cycle of recessionary adjustments.

And nevertheless, it seems that this is precisely what the new governments, now backed by the social movements and in the name of the left, note as a transition towards the exit from the model or towards its renewal. When Lula was elected, the British weekly *The Economist* titled its editorial "Will he finish the job?", referring to the complementation of the "reforms" carried out by Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the same way that Tony Blair, also elected against the neoliberal model, did with Margaret Thatcher. In a short time, this hope of the right and the fears of the left appear to find a footing, as members of the new Brazilian government present reforms of the pension and tax system as their first steps, as ways to conquer favorable market indices and thus, by diminishing the so-called "Brazil risk", managing to lower the interest rates and passing from the current vicious circle inherited from neoliberalism to a virtuous circle. Also, members of that government claim for themselves the "courage" to carry out the "reforms" that Fernando Henrique Cardoso had been unable to push through, as if confirming that the set of reforms is really turning into the so-called "second generation" of "reforms" proposed by the World Bank.

Everything confirms that 2003 has turned into a decisive year for Latin America and its left. The direction that Latin American history will take in the new century begins to be decided as of this moment.

Notas

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The Driftages of Modernity: the Case of Africa and the Arab World

The driftages of modernity

1. The contemporary world is simultaneously one, diverse and unequal.

It is one, whether we like it or not, because of the "force of facts", that is to say, because of that power that characterizes capitalism –"the market", to name it with the common, approximate and ambiguous term with which the dominant discourse describes the world system– namely that of integrating, even if under unequal terms, all the peoples of all regions of the world, within a system ruled by the same dominant logic. What we today call "globalization" –the integration in question– is, without being something truly new, the expression of that reality.

Yet it also is and remains diverse. Peoples have their history, which did not wait for modernity or for integration into the world system of capitalism to be constructed. Peoples, while incorporating modernity –well or badly– haven't erased their past; rather, they have transformed their inheritance, reinterpreting it, lucidly or not. The ideology –the hope, the will itself, for many– that thinks that by doing so they would end up erasing the diversity that had characterized their previous paths to become similar in their social organizations, their ways of life, their adherence to a system of common values, in sum, to a common culture, relegating specificities to the folklore museum or to what is of little significance or downright insignificant, has been and continues to be denied by the facts. Specificities are resistant, and therefore, whether this pleases or saddens us, they must be taken into account.

It is also, and at the same time, unequal. The formation and development of the modern world system have not reduced –not even gradually– the inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power among the peoples of the planet. Quite on the contrary, these inequalities have been deepened and made even more blatant.

2. The cultural issue, like the others –development or geopolitics– is inscribed within that contradictory framework of a world that is one, diverse and unequal.

The challenge may therefore be formulated in the terms of the following alternative: can we construct (or reconstruct) a coequal modernity (abolishing the inequality of wealth and power)? And in that case, is it necessary to sacrifice diversity, destined to be gradually extinguished? Or can we "save" the latter, even stress and develop it to place it at the service of the project of creating a coequal other world? Or else, since modernity appears to be incapable, by itself, of becoming something different from what it is –in other words, since inequality appears to be immanent in it– should it be repudiated, and the diversity of origins, which is being lost, refounded? Thus proposing a radical criticism of modernity. What is the status of each of these options: are they realistic, equally realistic and therefore credible, and more than that, probable? Are they efficient –and under what conditions?

The debate with regard to these issues is not new. It has obsessed the days and the nights of all thinkers, particularly those of Asia and Africa, since their peoples found themselves "integrated", willingly or under duress, into the world system of the really existing capitalist modernity. Each of the answers sketched out here has had its defenders. And none has been definitively removed from the scene, even if, at one moment or another, here and there, one of the answers appeared to be the vanquisher, expelling the others to the wings. Until they

reappear on stage! Each of these answers has been associated, according to circumstances, with formulations that could be classified in political terms as “right-wing” (respectful towards the interests of the property-owning and leadership classes) or “left-wing” (aspiring to “serve the people”, i.e., its dominated majorities). Each of these formulations has attempted, according to circumstances, either to conciliate the strategies it espoused with the concerns we term “democratic” (conferring a definite sense on them), or else to roundly reject the issue.

3. Modernity is thus permanently subjected to two drift movements that operate in opposite directions, but are in fact complementary to each other and sometimes also curiously associated.

This twofold driftage hits all the peripheral regions of the contemporary world system, in particular Asia and Africa, whose historical cultures are “non-European”. At the current time, this double driftage is manifested with violence, as we shall illustrate with the examples of the contemporary Arab and African worlds.

The first driftage is produced by the contradiction that characterizes the dominant ideology of the really existing –that is to say, capitalist– culture of modernity. The discourse that issues a call to rally around its flag (today that of globalization) claims that the system offers all peoples “the opportunity to develop” –on condition that they accept to sacrifice those “specificities” of their inherited culture that are in conflict with the fundamental logic of capitalist expansion. Now then, in the actual event this expansion generates a growing inequality among peoples. The leading classes of Asia and Africa that accept globalization as it is therefore nourish a driftage that empties cultural diversity of any serious content –the “right to difference” must be accompanied by the accepted inequality.

The second driftage is expressed in a violent rhetoric against modernity, rejected in the name of the cultural specificity that it is attempted to safeguard. But the regard directed toward this specificity is in fact a conservative one: it is not a question of acting for the culture to be transformed; it is about conserving it as it is, even of “returning to the origins”, eliminating the damage with which modernity may have contaminated it.

“Condemning” these two attitudes, or condemning just one of them to legitimate the other, does not solve the problem –since the challenge is precisely that of transforming modernity itself to make it capable of constructing a world that is *one, coequal and diverse*. The two drifts deserve their name; they are the expression of impotence in the face of the challenge formulated in my previous sentence. One alternates with the other to stand at stage center, or else share it.

The Arab and African worlds offer a good illustration both of this succession and of this combination. At the moment of the apparent “ascent” of the nations of Asia and of Africa –the decades from 1950 to 1980– modernity is espoused by the dominant ideologies of the (“national-populist”) systems and claims to solve the issue: “recover” and draw abreast of the developed centers and “remain themselves” (politically and culturally). These experiences quickly reach their historical limits and end in a double failure: limited recovery, in the best of cases; loss of meaning of the national cultures. The setting is thus in place for the ascendancy of the other discourse, “anti-modernistic” in every way, attempting to re-establish the “authenticity” manifested by the cultures of the past.

In these worlds, the first period is marked by a “national” project of “recovery”, social (if not socialist), that is to say concerned with reducing social inequalities, secularizing (if not secular). These projects are expressed in a “pan-Arab” framework for some (Nasser), “pan-African” for the others (Nkrumah). In the second period, political Islam is triumphant among the Arabs (and other Asian and African Muslim peoples) and “ethnicity” among the others.

This tragedy is not specific to the Arab and African example that illustrate our exposition. In India, the ideological succession of Congress (and the communist parties) and of the so-called Hindutva (“Hinduism”) and in China that of Maoism, followed by the contemporary confusion (well studied by Chen Yan), illustrate the same pendulum-like movement from one driftage to the other.

MODERNITY, REASON AND EMANCIPATION

There are moments in history whose impact seems to me to have been decisive for us.

1. The first of these moments refers to the birth of modernity. It is the time of the Enlightenment (the European seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), which is also, and not coincidentally, that of the birth of capitalism. I shall not return here to the comments I have made of this moment: I will be satisfied with summarizing it in two propositions.

The first of these propositions is related to the definition of modernity, which is to my mind the affirmation that the human being must and can, individually or collectively, create his own history. An affirmation that marks a rupture with the dominant thinking in all previous societies – in Europe and elsewhere– which were founded on the principle that God, having created the universe and the human being, is the ultimate "legislator". The ethical principles that this divine legislation erects are, of course, formulated through the historical religions or transcendental philosophers, thus opening the door to diverse interpretations through which the social realities under permanent transformation have been expressed. Reason is in that case frequently –but not always– invoked in order to serve those interpretations, but in that case it is subjected to the duty of "conciliating faith and reason". The new affirmation that defines modernity frees itself from this duty, without necessarily ignoring issues of faith. The new affirmation closes a chapter, but opens another with its own problems: the freedom that human beings give themselves must be defined in turn. History, when it no longer operates as a force outside mankind, must be explained by other "laws" whose discovery is the object of a new set of sciences, whose constitution becomes simultaneously possible and necessary: those of man and society. Reason is mobilized anew in search of these objective determinations of the movement of societies. The new freedom that modern mankind confers on itself therefore remains subjected to the limitations of what we believe constitutes the logic of social reproduction and the dynamics of the transformation of societies.

The second refers to the bourgeois character of modernity as expressed by the thinking of the Enlightenment. The emergence of capitalism and the emergence of modernity constitute the two facets of one and the same reality.

The thinking of the Enlightenment thus offers us a concept of reason, inseparably associated with that of emancipation, without which the phrase "the human being creates his own history" would lack meaning.

It turns out that the emancipation in question is defined and limited by what is demanded and allowed by capitalism. The discourse of the Enlightenment nevertheless proposes a concept of emancipative Reason that claims to be transhistorical, while the examination of what it actually is will show its terribly historical nature.

The most systematic fundamental expression of this discourse is the one that has been formulated by Adam Smith, unfortunately calling it "utilitarianism", an ambiguous but spontaneous word in the tradition of English empiricism. In this view of the human world, society is conceived as an assembly of individuals, and here we have a view that breaks with the tradition of the *ancien régime*. It is therefore an unarguably emancipative ideology for the individual, once again one of the dimensions of modernity. This individual is, meanwhile, of course endowed with reason. The social order that must ensure the victory of this emancipative Reason –and therefore the happiness of human beings– is therefore imagined as a system of "good institutions", to employ the phrase still used today in United States social thinking. This system is in turn founded on the separation, in social life, of the arena of politics and that of the economy. The "good institutions" that must ensure the management of political life by reason are those institutions of democracy that guarantee the liberty and equality of individuals. In the management of economic life, reason imposes choosing contractual freedom (expressed in another way, "the market") as the foundation of relations of exchange and of the organization of the division of labor among the "individuals" which society is composed of. And the healthy operation of the economy in turn demands the protection of property, considered as of that time as a sacrosanct value in the "good society".

Emancipative Reason is therefore expressed in a classical triptych: liberty, equality, property. The formula of the successive precocious revolutions of the United Provinces and of the English "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, before being more systematically taken up again by the United States Revolution and later by the French Revolution in its first period.

The constitutive elements of the triptych are regarded as “naturally” and harmoniously complementary with one another. And to the present day the statement that there is an equal sign between “market” and “democracy” has continued to be the cornerstone of bourgeois ideology. The conflict that in actual fact has, on the contrary, incessantly pitted the extension of democratic rights to all citizens, men and women, bourgeois and proletarian, whether property owners or not, against the unconditional defenders of “the market” –a conflict on which I have insisted elsewhere– is removed from the debate from the outset.

Adam Smith and the thinking of the Enlightenment certainly contain the intuition that the system of the “good society” that they propose –rational and emancipative for all the eternity– faces some difficulties. But these, they ignore. The “invisible hand” that guarantees the triumph of reason in the management of economic life very often appears as an “unpredictable” hand, for that very reason again putting into question human beings’ capacity to really create their own history as modernity envisions. And the guaranteeing of freedom, of equality, of the security of property implies that the “visible fist” of the state must complete the work of the invisible hand of the market.

The emancipative Reason of the Enlightenment does not exclude, but actually implies, the importance that is attached to an ethical principle. Reason here is not instrumental but rather inseparable from the emancipative goals and means whose triptych summarizes the fundamental ethical elements.

The ethical aspect associated with the thinking of the Enlightenment may or may not be of religious inspiration. God is present for those who attribute to him the quality of being at the origin of the need for emancipation to which all human beings aspire. He disappears when this aspiration is only verified as “natural”. The difference is minimal.

The contemporary version of bourgeois emancipative Reason made fashionable with all the insistence that is allowed by vulgarization through the mass media –that of the egalitarian liberalism of John Rawls– does not contribute anything new, having remained a prisoner of the liberty-equality-property triptych. Challenged by the liberty/equality conflict that is necessarily implied by the unequal distribution of property, the liberalism that is termed egalitarian is only very moderately so. The inequality is accepted and legitimized by a scarcely “reasonable” acrobatics, which takes from vulgarized economy its pseudo-concept of “allocations”. It is a very simple-minded analysis: the “individuals” (society being the sum of these latter) who participate in the “market” are endowed with differing fortunes (some are –by chance?– the heads of powerful corporations, others have nothing). These unequal “allocations” nevertheless continue to be legitimate since they are the product (evidently an inherited one) of work done and of savings made (by their ancestors). We are therefore invited to turn backwards the chain of history until the –mythical– day when the original social contract was signed among equals. Yet later these formerly equal fellows became unequal because supposedly they wanted to, by virtue of the inequality of the sacrifices they consented to make. I believe that this form of facing the issues related to the specificity of capitalism does not even deserve to be considered as elegant.

But if the falsely egalitarian liberalism is stubbornly proposed as an ideological alternative in face of the bewilderment of the society of our period it is because the front stage is no longer occupied by utilitarianism (which the so-called egalitarian liberalism barely distinguishes itself from) but by the driftage represented by the right-wing (actually an extreme right) libertarian ideology. This ideology substitutes the “liberty-property” diptych for the Enlightenment’s triptych, decisively refusing to give equality the status of a fundamental value. The Von Hayek version of this new extreme right-wing ideological formula reestablishes that of its inventors, the “liberals” of the nineteenth century (Bastiat and company) who were at the origin of the driftage, coming as they did from a declared aversion towards the Enlightenment, responsible for the French Revolution. But the diptych in question has for a long time now constituted the kernel of the “US ideology”, establishing a contrast with European ideologies that still remain partly faithful to the Enlightenment. I remit the reader here to what I wrote elsewhere on the subject of this contrast.

In the right-wing libertarian version ethics disappears because human beings, if they create their own history properly, are authorized to create it by behaving as if they were in the jungle: they are not responsible for the consequences of their actions, in particular for the inequalities which they may deepen, and which are even welcome. Therefore, without responsibility there is no ethics. Little therefore matters that some –in fact many– of these right-wing libertarians

proclaim themselves to be “believers” –in this case Christians. Their religion is in fact amoral, tending for that very reason to be transformed into simple social convenience, an expression of “communitarian” singularity and nothing else. This is perhaps one possible interpretation of religion; the least we can say is that it continues to be arguable.

2. The second decisive moment is launched by the criticism that Marx directs at the bourgeois emancipative Reason of the Enlightenment.

This criticism opens up a new chapter in modernity, which I call modernity critical of modernity.

Emancipative Reason cannot ignore this second moment of its deployment –more precisely, of the beginning of its redeployment. After Marx, social thinking can no longer be what it had been before him. What I wrote earlier referring to the criticism of the emancipative Reason of the Enlightenment –my second observation– certainly couldn’t have been so without Marx. Marx is inevitable.

Emancipative Reason can no longer inscribe its analyses and its propositions under the “liberty-equality-property” triptych. Having grasped the magnitude of the unsolvable conflict that pits the conservation of capitalist ownership against the deployment of equality among human beings, emancipative Reason cannot but suppress the third term of the triptych. And must substitute it by that of fraternity, stronger than that of “solidarity”, proposed here and there today by one and the other. “Fraternity” thus meaning, evidently, the abolition of a capitalist ownership which necessarily pertains to some –a minority, the true dominant and exploiting bourgeois class– while depriving the others (the majority) of access to the conditions for an equality worthy of that name. “Fraternity” thus meaning substitution of this exclusive and exclusionary form of ownership by a new form: that of social ownership, exercised by and for the benefit of the social body as a whole. Social integration would then operate by democracy, an inevitable requisite not only for the sound management of political life in the strictest sense of the term but for social ownership as well.

Integration through democracy would replace the partial and unequal integration via nature operated within the limits of respect for capitalist ownership, that is to say, for the exclusive “market”, to employ the language of the dominant vulgate.

“Liberty, equality, fraternity” –the motto was not invented by Marx, as every Tom, Dick and Harry knows. The French Revolution, like all the great revolutions, as I already wrote elsewhere, was ahead of its time and is projected far beyond its demands. For that reason it both is a bourgeois revolution (and will tardily become stabilized on that basis) and, being projected forward, is experienced as a popular revolution and can be read today as initiating the socialist criticism of the bourgeois system. Exactly in the same way that the two other great revolutions of modern times –the Russian and the Chinese– are projected in an attempt at a communist society far beyond the immediate demands and possibilities of their societies.

The “popular ownership” that the French Revolution believes it can and therefore must guarantee is that of millions of peasants and artisans; and the “market” that it protects, it is declared, must be authentically open and competitive, shutting out monopolies and the profits they produce. But this popular ownership is already, in that period, threatened both on the right and on the left. On the right, by the bourgeoisie of the large businessmen and capitalists who will crystallize in the symbol represented by those famous “two hundred families” that own the Bank of France. On the left, by all those excluded in the city (proletarians and the hard-scrabble poor) and in the countryside (poor and landless peasants). The jolts of the French Revolution will take up the entire nineteenth century through to its end, as of when the “Republic” becomes stabilized, adopting the motto of the Revolution, but after having quashed the Commune and emptied the term “fraternity” of its original content, to eventually substitute it by that which can be expressed in, and by, being a part of the “national” community.

All the ambiguities, contradictions and diverging interpretations of “French ideology” constitute the essence of this story, up to our time. And it is these ambiguities that we today seek to rid ourselves of by means of a brutal return to the formula that guarantees the supremacy of the security of bourgeois property.

Bourgeois reason, placed on its feet again, is no longer, can no longer be, emancipative. At the same time, it stands only on its two feet: liberty and property. From this point onwards, Bastiat and Von Hayek, who proclaim their open hostility against any fancy for attaching any importance to equality, are the true representatives of a degenerate reason, which isn't even that which the Enlightenment had conceived. And this is why the bourgeois reason reduced to liberty and to ownership is the reason of the "US ideology"; this retreat –the abolition from thinking of the French Revolution, as well as, naturally, of the Russian and French ones– is nothing but the expression of the essence of what we may understand by "Americanization of the world".

This bourgeois reason, deprived from that point on of every emancipative ambition, thus becomes by the force of facts an instrumental reason, summary, hollow, irresponsible (and therefore lacking in an ethical foundation).

The consummate expression of this non-emancipative reason is displayed in the field of "what pertains to economics", which, by the way, is defined by its inventors and defenders as "a pure science" ("pure economics"). I shall recall here very briefly the criticism I directed on another occasion at this truncated rationality. In the first place, the fact that it never reaches the point of establishing, with consistent logical arguments (in the simplest sense of the term "logical"), the veracity of its fundamental proposition: that market freedom produces an "optimum general equilibrium". Next, that it obstinately refuses to reflect on the reasons for its failure, reasons which are the result of its unreal conception of society, reduced to the sum of the individuals that compose it. On the contrary, it attempts to emerge from the confusion in which it has installed itself by reinforcing its initial axiom (the individual constitutes the exclusive cell of which society is constituted) with the invention of those famous "anticipations". But the integration of the latter into "economic reasoning" worsens the chaos and leads to a sole possible conclusion: that the market shifts from imbalance to imbalance without ever tending towards equilibrium (a conclusion to which Marx and even Keynes had arrived a long time before). The cherry on the cake that the term "social optimum" wanted to cause it to disappear. It should not remain at that pure economics that gives up this ambition, without which, however, the emancipation of the human being –the happiness of the Enlightenment and of Adam Smith– loses sense. The human being is declared as irresponsible as the market through which he expresses himself. The cynics of pure economics will dare think and say it, and it is necessary to thank them for this courage. The market can produce three billion "useless" human beings, a rising proportion of "poor" in the wealthiest countries –it matters little. It seems to be "rational". Reason, converted into a destroyer of the alienated and/or excluded human being, of nature (something which the economic calculation that is called rational, always a short-term one, implies) and of entire societies (and therefore of human cultures), not only gives up on being emancipative, but also accepts to perform the role of a demolition company against humanity.

I don't know if the "culturalist" adversaries of the real world and of the trends in its evolution –understood as "Americanization" by some, "Westernization" (in general) by others– can be termed "rational". Confronting the threats of "Americanization", some therefore solely defend the "cultural values" without questioning the general trends in the system, as if reality could be cut into slices, like salami, for the purpose of saving "a piece for tomorrow". Others, having previously confused capitalism with "the West", forgetting the determining reality of the latter for the sake of a gratuitous and false affirmation of a supposedly eternal "West", believe they can transfer the locus of the confrontation from the terrain of a social reality in permanent movement to the heaven of a trans-historical cultural imaginary for everyone.

The heteroclitical contents of these attics –the pure economics of imaginary markets, plus the falsely egalitarian liberalism, plus the trans-historical culturalist lucubrations– are pompously set up as a "new" thinking, the so-called "post-modernism". Having erased the criticism of bourgeois modernism and the reason having given up of its emancipative vocation, hasn't contemporary bourgeois thought become anything other than the thinking of a system well advanced in the stage of senility?

A dangerous senility, and a danger reinforced by adherence to the principle of irresponsibility. A dangerous senility because the system has reached a degree characterized by the monstrous power of its destructive capabilities. Destruction, I have said earlier, of the human being, of nature, of entire societies. Emancipative Reason must respond to this challenge.

3. Reason is emancipative, or it is not reason.

The concept of reason therefore implies more than the creation of a set of mental procedures that allow the progress of intelligence on the relations among objects and all sort of phenomena. This intelligence on relations is also about the extent of their degree of necessity, which is absolute –or virtually so– only in situations of extreme banality of no interest. The deployment of science –knowing more but also, and above all, knowing the limits of knowledge– therefore allows the localization of the degree of freedom with which human actions can be endowed, the definition of the possible and efficient options. But also the recognition that there is uncertainty (few absolute certainties) and the appreciation, as much as possible, of its margins.

This set of procedures does not in itself constitute reason, even if numerous researchers in the sciences termed as sciences of nature or sciences of man can, in a first approximation, not only adhere to this (it is necessary to do so) but also be satisfied, be content with it. All live beings –and above all the higher species– put into practice, over the course of their lives, methods of action and choices that testify to a certain degree of this type of intelligence, at least in its first step, intelligence about relations.

Reason demands more. Because emancipation presupposes responsibility, without which the options among different possibilities have neither scope nor meaning. He who says responsibility says ethics, the principles of which cannot be eliminated from a reflection that aspires to be scientific.

The principles of the ethics in question can be those that non-deistic (and *a fortiori* non-religious) universalist humanism inspires since the Enlightenment (and even previously), in Marxism and in our own times. But they can also be those of a deistic universalist humanism – even a religious one in the sense that is inscribed in a given religious tradition, Christian or other. Strong probabilities exist that these tributaries would flow into the same great river. The example that comes immediately to our mind is that of the theologians of liberation whom I read as believers for whom being a Christian isn't to stop at Christ but to start out from him. There could be other religious interpretations (Islamic, Buddhist and other), or non-western philosophical ones (in the sense that their ancestry isn't the "Hellenism" common to the peoples of the Christian and Muslim worlds), that will appear in this future to be built, common to all humanity. It is in this sense and only in this sense that one must, with regard to the diversity named as cultural (for want of a better description), more than "respect" it ("tolerate" it is a pejorative term, as I have said elsewhere), wish to see it deployed in all its potential richness. I distinguish this diversity –oriented, in the tradition of emancipative Reason, toward the construction of the future– from the false diversity of the specificities inherited from the past, which the culturalists turn into trans-historical invariants (which they are not) in order to cling neurotically to them.

To return to the challenge which emancipative reason faces today is to invent the efficient means that may allow progress toward well-defined goals, progress in the direction of emancipation from mercantile alienation, a distancing from the practices that destroy the potential of nature and of life, a convergence toward the abolition of the gigantic disparities of the so-called (material) "development" that the polarizing expansion of world capitalism necessarily produces.

Marxism is to my mind the efficient instrument that makes it possible both to analyze the challenges and to define strategies capable of changing the world in the directions specified here, as long as we also consider that Marx only launched the reflection and actions in this regard. Stated differently: what we will define as arising from Marx and not ending with him.

I won't go here beyond this conclusion formulated in very general terms. I shall only say that it is not enough to proclaim adhesion to emancipative Reason or even to make efforts to define what we believe to be the challenges that it must overcome (or vanquish) to advance the cause. The true difficulties begin at that point. Marxism, understood as a living theory and practice, and capable therefore of permanent enrichment, cannot have readymade recipes in response to challenges, any more so than any other appropriate method for contributing to the conceptualization of the demands of emancipative Reason.

The issues to be solved, in theory and in practice, are complex, and in their entangled condition they do not allow any one-sided solution, since the latter would ignore the conflicts arising among the different elements of the challenge. I shall select just one example, because it entails, to my mind, the greatest magnitude of the challenge on a global scale. The huge centers/peripheries contrast which capitalism has constructed must be destroyed. This will, without any doubt, demand a certain development of productive forces on the peripheries of the system –and we must admit that by doing so we run the risk of relegating the other dimensions of emancipation to the background. The contradiction resides in reality itself. Some think it can be overcome by eliminating one of its terms. They persist in ignoring 80% of humanity, being content to declare that it must first "pass through the capitalist stage" without taking into account that the polarization that is immanent in this system will never allow them to "catch up" with the others. They ignore the dimensions of emancipation as a whole, to the exclusive benefit of the prior development of productive forces. Emancipating Reason, must, in its living Marxist formulation, be able to combine the two contradictory terms of the challenge.

The exacerbated modernity of the contemporary liberal discourse

1. The ideology of globalized liberalism is founded on an impoverished and exacerbated concept of modernity.

The "general ideas" that command the dominant liberal vision of the world at the present time are simple, in fact, and are summarized, in some of the following propositions.

a) Social efficiency is confused with economic efficiency, and economic efficiency is confused with the financial profitability of capital. These confusions reflect the dominance of the economy, inherent in capitalism. The atrophied social thinking ensuing from this is economicist in the extreme. Curiously, this reproach –wrongly aimed at Marxism– in fact applies to liberal thinking, which is the thinking of capitalism *par excellence*.

b) The deployment of the generalized market (as little regulated as possible) and of democracy are decreed to be complementary to each other. The issue of the conflict between the social interests that are expressed through their interventions in the marketplace and those that gave to political democracy its meaning and scope is not even posed. Economy and politics do not constitute two dimensions of social reality, each one with its own autonomy, and operating in a dialectical relationship; the capitalist economy in fact rules over politics, whose own creative potential it annihilates.

c) The seemingly most "developed" country, in which politics is indeed conceived and practiced entirely at the exclusive service of the economy (in reality of capital) –evidently the United States– is the best model for "everyone". Its institutions and practices must be imitated by all those who hope being present on the world scene.

d) There appears to be no alternative to the proposed model founded on economicist postulates, the market/democracies identity and the reduction of the political at the service of the economy, since the socialist option, attempted in the Soviet Union and in China, has demonstrated it is both inefficient in economic terms and anti-democratic on the political level.

That is to say that the propositions formulated above would have the virtue of being "eternal truths" ("the Reason"), revealed through the deployment of contemporary history.

Their victory is assured, especially since the disappearance of the "socialist" alternative experiences. We appear to have arrived, as has been stated, to the end of history. Historical reason has triumphed. This victory thus means that we live in the best of all worlds, at least potentially, in the sense that the world will indeed be so when the ideas on which it is founded are admitted by all and put into practice everywhere. All the blemishes of today's reality are only due to the simple fact that these eternal principles of reason still aren't being put into practice in the societies that suffer these deficiencies, particularly those of the South.

In this simplistic and exacerbated view of modernity, there is no more room for diversity.

The hegemony of the United States, the normal expression of its vanguard position in bringing reason (liberal, necessarily) into practice, is for this reason both inevitable and also favorable for the progress of all humanity. There is no "American imperialism" but only good ("benign") –painless– leadership, as it is termed by liberal United States intellectuals.

In reality these “ideas” are nothing but nonsense, founded on a para-science, so-called “pure” economics, and on an accompanying ideology, “post-modernism”. “Pure” economics isn’t the theory of the real world –of the really existing capitalism– but that of an imaginary capitalism. It isn’t even a rigorous theory of this imaginary capitalism, whose foundations and development of arguments would merit to be considered as “consistent”. It is no more than a para-science, closer at times to sorcery than to the “sciences of nature” whose model it attempts to imitate. As regards post-modernism, it constitutes no more than a discourse meant as an accompaniment, one which calls for acting only within the limits of the liberal system, for “adjusting to it”.

The reconstruction of a citizenship policy demands that the movements of resistance, protest and struggle against the real effects of this system get rid of the liberal virus.

2. This is a matter of an authentic driftage, since, in its deployment in two stages –the bourgeois philosophy of the Enlightenment and then its critical improvement by the ideologies of socialism, in particular by Marxism– modernity has shown itself to be both contradictory and unfinished.

The globalized liberalism, that nowadays catches the full wind in its sails, ignores the contradiction that characterizes the real world modeled by the capitalist modernity that proclaims itself “fulfilled” (the end of history). It ignores the fact that, under the limiting obligations of capitalism, modernity promises much more than it can deliver, and this generates unfulfilled hopes.

Modernity sketches out an enormous social advancement summarized in the term “emancipation” and testified by the progress of political democracy, however limited it may have been. It has given legitimacy to the action of the dominated, exploited and oppressed classes, and has allowed them to gradually wrest democratic rights from the power of the dominant capital, rights which never were spontaneously produced by the logic of capitalist expansion and of accumulation. It has freed a potential for political transformation that allows the expansion of the class struggle, establishing a sense of equivalence between these two terms, politics and class struggle, which imbues them with their full strength. But at the same time, it has invented and developed the means that allowed it to reduce the potential power of emancipative democracy.

Simultaneously, the capitalism that was being accompanied by modernism has triggered the development of productive forces at a pace never seen before in history. The potential of this development should allow a solution to the major material problems of mankind as a whole. But the logic that governs capitalist accumulation precludes this from being so, on the contrary ceaselessly deepening a polarization of wealth on a scale heretofore unknown in universal history.

Contemporary peoples are thus confronted with the challenges constituted by the really existing capitalism and modernity. Nowadays the dominant ideology only devotes itself to ignoring the challenges. This fact of ignoring them is expressed in a naive manner, despite the eventual sophistication of their language, by the ideologues of liberalism. This “discourse of the satiated” only recognizes one sole human value, to which it reduces modernity: individual freedom. It does so at the price of ignoring that this freedom is what, in the framework of capitalism, allows the strongest to impose their law on the others; that this freedom is perfectly illusory for the vast majority (the liberal hypothesis imagines that each individual can potentially become a Rockefeller, as it was said that each soldier carried a marshal’s baton in his knapsack); that it smashes head-on against the aspiration to equality that constitutes the foundation of democracy.

This same fundamental ideology is shared by all the defenders of the system –for whom capitalism constitutes an insurmountable horizon, the “end of history”. The most extremist do not hesitate to accept that society can be conceived as a jungle of “individuals”, to sacrifice the eventual pacifying interventions of the state to the principles of an administration that reduces public power to the functions of an instrument at the exclusive service of the “winners”. Others wish to give a human face to this dictatorship and attempt to mitigate the extremism of the exclusive principle of individual freedom by diluting it in positions that associate it with other pragmatic considerations of social justice and of “recognition of the differences”, communitarian

ones among others. Post-modernism, with its invitation to “accept” and to “adjust” to contemporary reality, to “administer” it well close to the ground as best as possible, in the immediate term, without further ado, is likewise inscribed in this perspective of denial of the challenge.

For the vast majorities, this modernity in question is simply hateful, hypocritical, based on the cynical practice of “two weights, two measures”. Their rejection is therefore violent, and this violence is perfectly legitimate. The really existing capitalism and the modernity that it accompanies have nothing to offer to this majority.

Capitalism is, from its outset, riven by unbridgeable contradictions that leads us to think about its historical supersession.

This social need is expressed very early on and at all the great moments of modern history: the three great revolutions of modern times, the French, the Russian and the Chinese. For this reason, the French Revolution occupies an exceptional place in modern history. The radical Jacobin wing very soon perceives the reality of the contradictions of the bourgeois project, and clearly expresses their nature, namely that economic liberalism is the enemy of democracy. It will attempt to ensure the victory of a concept of popular revolution that will go beyond the “objective demands” of the moment, that is to say, the achievement of the strictly bourgeois tasks. From this radical current will therefore emerge a first generation of communist critics of the budding capitalism (the Babeufists).

In the same way, the Russian and Chinese revolutions will project themselves far beyond the tasks that their societies were immediately called on to perform, and will set themselves a communist goal that is far beyond them. It is therefore no coincidence that each one of these three revolutions, unlike others, was followed by a restoration. The progress that marked them at their best nevertheless continues to be a living symbol for the future, having placed the equality of human beings and their liberation from the market’s alignment at the heart of their project, very preciously so in the case of the French Revolution.

In a general way, the historical conditions that have accompanied the development of capitalism in Europe have favored the ripening, in the dominated classes, of a political class consciousness. This appears very early on, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, inspired by the most radical advances of the French Revolution. At the end of the century, it inspires the formation of great parties that will force capital, over the course of the twentieth century, to “adapt itself” to social demands that do not emerge from the exclusive logic of the accumulation of capital. “Equality”, as a value, is thus imposed, in a conflictive complementation, with that of “liberty”.

The alienation of the market leads to privileging liberty among human values. That of the individual in general, certainly, but more particularly that of the capitalist businessman whose energy it frees and those economic power it reinforces. Equality, on the contrary, does not proceed directly from the demands of capitalism, except in its most immediate dimension, that of the (partial) equality of the rights that on one hand allow the development of free enterprise, condemning on the other the freed worker to submit to the status of wage-earner –a seller of labor, itself a merchandise. At a higher level, the value of “equality” enters into conflict with that of “freedom”. But, in the history of one part of Europe, especially in France, the two values are proclaimed on an equal footing, as in the motto of the Republic. It is no happenstance.

The complex history of Europe finally leads to a dual concept that articulates economy on one hand and politics on the other, in a dialectic that respects the autonomy of each of the two terms.

3. The driftage is defined, precisely, by the abandonment of the economy/politics duality, which is substituted by a unilateral concept of economy “without politics”.

The specific conditions of the historical formation of the American society lent themselves to this driftage, which Europe had more or less resisted until now.

Political culture is the product of history regarded over the long term, which is always, of course, specific to each country. That of the United States, on this level, is marked by specificities that break with those that characterized history on the European continent: the founding of New England by extremist Protestant sects, the genocide of the aboriginal

populations, and the displacement of the “communitarisms” associated with the migratory waves of the nineteenth century.

The Protestant sects that found themselves compelled to emigrate from seventeenth-century England had developed a very particular interpretation of Christianity which is not shared by either Catholics or the Orthodox, or even –at least not with the same degree of extremism– by the majority of European Protestants, including of course Anglicans, predominant among the leading classes in Britain. The Reformation as a whole reestablished the Old Testament that Catholicism and Orthodoxy had marginalized in an interpretation of Christianity that did not see it as a continuation of Judaism but as a break with it. Here I refer to what I have written elsewhere with regard to the real or pretended specificities of Christianity, of Islam and of Judaism. The use, which has become frequent, of the appellation “Judeo-Christian”, popularized by the expansion of the US-Protestant discourse, testifies to this shift in the vision of the relations among these two monotheistic religions, with which the Catholics (but not the Orthodox) have aligned themselves without much conviction, but rather because of political opportunism.

The Reformation, as we know, has been associated with the birth of capitalism, in a relation of cause and effect interpreted in very different ways in modern social thinking. We know the popularized version of Max Weber’s thesis, which became famous and certainly dominant in the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant world, according to which the Reformation is said to have allowed capitalism. A thesis that appeared in counterpoint –purposely, I believe– to that of Marx, who reads the Reformation as an effect of the transformations caused by the constitution of capitalism. Hence the variety of Protestantisms, according to whether what is expressed through them is the protest of the popular classes victimized by the nascent capitalism, or the strategies of the dominant classes.

The fragments of ideologies and the value systems that are expressed in this religious terrain retain all the traces of primitive forms of reaction to the capitalist challenge. The Renaissance had been further ahead in some of these aspects (Machiavelli is one of the most eloquent witnesses to this). Now, then, the Renaissance is deployed in a Catholic terrain (Italy). And the management of some Italian cities as true commercial societies led by the syndicate of the wealthiest shareholders (Venice being the prototype) establishes an even more frank relation with the first forms of capitalism than the relation that will exist between Protestantism and capitalism. Later, the Enlightenment that spreads both in Catholic countries (France) and in Protestant ones (Britain, Low Countries and Germany) is situated more closely in the secular tradition of the Renaissance than in that of religious reform. Lastly, the French Revolution, because of its radical nature, gives secularism its full bloom, deliberately abandoning the terrain of religious reinterpretations in order to situate itself in that of modern politics, which is to a vast extent the product of its invention.

Now, then, the particular form of Protestantism implanted in New England was destined to leave a profound mark in the American ideology with a strong imprint, up to our days, since it will be the means by which the new society will set off the conquest of the continent, legitimizing it with terms drawn from the Bible (the violent conquest by Israel of the promised land, an example repeated to exhaustion in the dominant US discourse).

Later the United States would extend to the entire planet the project of carrying out the work that “God” had reserved for them to accomplish, since the Americans perceive themselves as the “chosen people” –a synonym for the Nazi’s *Herrenvolk*, to take that parallel once again. This is where we are today.

The successive immigrant waves have likewise played their part in the reinforcement of the US ideology. The immigrants are certainly not responsible for the squalor and oppression that stand at the origin of their departure. On the contrary, they are their victims.

Nonetheless, circumstances –i.e. their emigration– lead them to renounce the collective struggle to change the conditions common to their classes or groups in their own countries, for the benefit of adherence to an ideology of individual success in the country that receives them. This adherence is stimulated by the American system, which plays its part to perfection. It hinders the acquisition of a class consciousness which, as soon as it has begun to mature, must face a new wave of immigrants that causes its political crystallization to be aborted. But at the same time migration stimulates the “communitarization” of US society, since individual success does not preclude a strong insertion in a community of origin (the Irish, the Italians, etc.),

without which individual isolation could become unbearable. Now, here too the reinforcement of this dimension of identity –which the American system regains and praises– is carried out to the detriment of class consciousness and of the shaping of the citizen.

While in Paris the people got ready to set off to “take heaven by storm” (I refer here to the Commune of 1871), in the United States the bands constituted by the successive generations of impoverished immigrants (the Irish, Italians, etc.) slaughtered one another, manipulated with perfect cynicism by the dominant classes.

In the United States there is no workers’ party; there was never one. Labor unions, which are powerful, are “non-political” in every sense of the term, referencing to no political party that might feel close to them by nature and unable to remedy this situation by generating themselves a socialist ideology. They share with the rest of society the liberal ideology that is dominant without any rivals. They struggle, therefore, within the limited and precise sphere of demands that do not put liberalism into question. Concretely, they are “post-modernist” and have always been so.

Communitarian ideologies could not substitute for the absence of a socialist ideology in the working classes. This applies even for the most radical of these, the black community, since by definition, communitarism is inscribed within the framework of the generalized racism that it intends to fight in the latter’s terrain.

The result is that US society disdains equality. Extreme inequality is not only tolerated, it is appreciated as the symbol of the “success” that liberty promotes. Now, liberty without equality is equal to savagery. The violence under every form that this unilateral ideology produces is not the result of chance, nor in any way a motive of radicalization; quite the contrary. The dominant culture in European societies had until now combined the values of liberty and equality with less imbalance; this combination then constituted the foundation of the historical commitment of social democracy. It so happens that unfortunately the evolution of contemporary Europe tends to bring the society and culture of this continent closer to those of the United States, erected into models, and the object of a very uncritical admiration that invades us.

One of the most neglected aspects in the analysis of the differences opposing “European” ideologies (in their diversity) and the US ideology refers to the impact of the Philosophy of the Enlightenment in their respective shaping.

As we know, the Philosophy of the Enlightenment is the decisive launching element in the constitution of the cultures and of the ideologies of modern Europe, to the extent that its impact continues to be important up to our days. This is true not only for the early centers of the budding capitalism, be they Catholic (France) or Protestant (Britain and the Low Countries), but also for Germany and even Russia. In the United States, on the contrary, the Philosophy of the Enlightenment only had a marginal impact, in fact only having interested an “aristocratic” (and slave-holding!) layer represented to perfection by Jefferson, Madison and a few others, the New England of the sects remaining impervious to its critical spirit. Its dominant culture is closer to the Witches of Salem than to the “ungodly” Enlightenment.

What ensued from this, consolidating along with the strengthening of the “Yankee” bourgeoisie that arose from New England, is a simple and wrong substitution: that “Science” (to be understood as the hard Sciences-Physics) governs the march of society.

This has undoubtedly been one of the most commonly shared opinions in the United States, for more than a century, both among the dominant classes and, by repercussion, among the exploited and oppressed classes as well.

On the basis of this substitution I can explain some of the outstanding features of the US ideology. In the first place the insignificance of its philosophy, reduced to the most wretched version of empiricism. Then, its insane search for the reduction of the social sciences and the humanities to “pure” (and “hard”) sciences: “pure” economics substituting for political economy, “gene science” for anthropology and sociology. This latter driftage comes very close, unfortunately, to the contemporary ideology that was promoted by the Nazis and that has undoubtedly found a terrain facilitated by the thorough racism generated by the history of the United States. Another driftage that ensues from this vision of “Science”: the attraction for cosmological Constructions (the “Big Bang” being the most popular expression). The Enlightenment had made it understood that Physics is the science of the “parts” of the Universe chosen as the arena for research not the science of the Universe as a whole, which is a

metaphysical concept, and consequently a non-scientific one. US thinking is, in this terrain, closer to the pre-modern (not to say medieval-like) vision concerned with conciliating Faith and Reason, than to the modern scientific tradition. This –backward– drift was as convenient to the sectarians of New England Protestantism as to the society steeped in the diffuse religiosity that it has produced.

The combination pertinent to the way United States society was historically shaped – "Biblical" religious dominant ideology and absence of a workers' party– ultimately produced a still unparalleled situation, that of a *de facto* sole party, the party of capital.

The two segments that constitute this sole party share the same fundamental liberalism. One and the other aim at the only minority –40% of the electorate– that "participates" in this type of truncated and impotent democratic life that is offered to it. Each one of them has its own clientele –in the middle classes, because the popular classes don't vote– and has adapted its language to it. Each one of them crystallizes in its midst a conglomerate of segmentary capitalist interests (the lobbies) or of "communitary" supports.

US democracy today constitutes the advanced model of what I call "low-intensity democracy". Its operation is based on a total separation between the management of political life, based on the practice of electoral democracy, and that of economic life, regulated by the laws of accumulation of capital. And what is more, this separation isn't the object of any radical questioning, but rather a part of what we call the political sphere. It castrates representative institutions (parliaments and others), which become impotent in the face of "the market", whose impositions they accept. To vote Democrat, to vote Republican, that has no importance at all, since the voters' future does not depend on their electoral choice but on the contingencies of the market.

The US state is, for this reason, at the exclusive service of the economy (that is to say of capital, whose faithful and exclusive servant it is, without having to concern itself with other social interests). It can be so because the historical formation of US society has –in the popular classes– blocked the maturing of political class consciousness.

4. The exacerbated modernity in the form of a liberalism without obligations stands at the origin of an ideological conflict that is growing in the midst of the "Western" cultural area, the most severe expression of which currently pits Europe against the United States.

The above reasoning has made it possible to discover the origins of the difference, that even today remains visible, between US society and culture on one hand and those of Europe on the other. The operation and the interests of the dominant capital in the United States and in Europe are probably not as different as we sometimes suggest (through the very well-known opposition between "Anglo-Saxon capitalism" and "Rhineland capitalism"). The coming together of their interests undoubtedly explains the solidity of the "triad" (United States-Europe-Japan). But the judgments of society, the societary projects that trouble spirits, even in an implicit manner, are to a certain extent different. In the United States, the value of "liberty" alone occupies all the ground without this causing any problems. In Europe it is permanently counterbalanced by support for the value of "equality", with which the former must be ready to compromise.

It turns out that the alignment of the dominant segments of transnationalized European capital with unfettered liberalism is a threat to Europe which is not safe from an impoverishing driftage of this nature, given the liberal alignment of its socialist parties and the crisis in the labor world that it has already unfailingly begun. But Europe could avoid it. Because in Europe the state has been (and could again become) the compulsory meeting ground of the confrontation among social interests and can, as from there, favor the historical commitments that give meaning and real scope to democratic practice. If the state is not compelled to perform this role by class struggles and political struggles that preserve their autonomy in the face of the exclusive logic of the accumulation of capital, then democracy is transformed into a derisory practice, as it now is in the United States.

The US ideology is liberalism without obligations disguised as para-religious fundamentalism and wrapped in an insipid "democratic" rhetoric. This ideology fulfills the roles that power expects of it, because, naturally, the US ideology in question is not the cause of the imperialist expansion of the United States. The latter follows the logic of the accumulation of capital, whose

interests it serves (the completely material interests). But this ideology comes in wonderfully handy by messing the cards.

Will European ideology follow the example of this driftage, even if it is without the religious disguise?

At the same time, the exacerbation of the drifting “Western” modernity is therefore articulated with the complementary drifts –despite their apparent opposition– that affect the peripheries of the system. I examine below the Arab and African examples.

In the Arab world: the driftage of political Islam

1. The fatal mistake is to believe that the appearance of political movements that mobilize masses while reaffirming Islam is the unavoidable product of the bursting onstage of culturally and politically backward peoples incapable of understanding any other language than that of an almost atavistic obscurantism.

A mistake unfortunately widely disseminated by the dominant, oversimplifying media, and taken up again in the pseudo-scientific discourses of Eurocentrism and of bad “Orientalism”. Discourses based on the prejudice that only the West could invent modernity, while the Muslim peoples are believed to be locked inside an immutable “tradition” that makes them incapable of understanding the scope of the change needed.

Like other regions of the world, the Muslim peoples and Islam have a history of diverse interpretations of the relations between reason and faith, of the transformations and mutual adaptations of society and of its religion. But the reality of this history is denied not only by Eurocentric discourses, but also by the contemporary movements that claim to pertain to Islam. One and the other in fact share the same culturalist prejudice by virtue of which the “specificities” inherent in the different trajectories of peoples and of their religions are believed to be of an intangible, immeasurable and trans-historical nature. To the Eurocentrism of the Westerners, contemporary political Islam does not oppose anything other than reverse Eurocentrism.

The emergence of movements that claim to belong to Islam is in fact the expression of a violent rebellion against the destructive effects of the really existing capitalism; against the unfinished, truncated and deceitful modernity that accompanies it. It is the expression of a perfectly legitimate rebellion against a system that has nothing to offer to the peoples in question.

2. The discourse of Islam that is proposed as an alternative to capitalist modernity (to which the experiences of modernity of the historical socialisms are assimilated without nuances) is of a political and in no way theological nature.

The charges of “integrism” and “fundamentalism” that is often foisted on it in no way corresponds to this discourse which, it must be said, makes no allusion to that, except among some contemporary Muslim intellectuals who use those terms to address Western opinion rather than their own.

The proposed Islam is in this case the adversary of any theology of liberation. Political Islam is a call to submission, not to emancipation. The only attempt at a reading of Islam that moved in the direction of emancipation was that of the Sudanese Mahmoud Taha.

Sentenced to death and executed by the power in Khartoum, Taha has not been championed by any party within the Islamic current, whether “radical” or “moderate”, and was not defended by any of the intellectuals who claim to favor the “Islamic Renaissance” or even just express the wish to hold a dialogue with those movements.

The heralds of the “Islamic Renaissance” in question have no interest in theology, and never mention the great texts that refer to it. In this aspect, what they understand as Islam seems to be only a conventional and social version of religion, reduced to a formal and thorough respect for ritual practice. The Islam in question would define a “community” to which one belongs by inheritance, like ethnicity, and not an intimate and strong personal conviction. It is merely a question of affirming a “collective identity”, nothing more. This is the reason why the expression

"political Islam", with which these movements as a whole are named in the Arab countries, is certainly more accurate.

3. Modern political Islam had been invented by the Orientalists at the service of British power in India, before being taken up again unchanged by the Pakistani Mawdudi.

It was a question of "proving" that Muslim believers are not authorized to live in a state that would not be Islamic –looking ahead to the division of India– because Islam was believed to ignore the possibility of a separation between state and religion. The Orientalists in question had omitted to notice that the English of the thirteenth century could not have conceived their survival outside Christendom either!

Abul Ala Al Mawdudi thus takes up again the issue by which power emanates from God and from him alone (*wilaya al faqih*), ruling out the concept of citizens who have the right to legislate; the state only has the duty to apply the law defined once and forever (the *sharia*). Joseph de Maistre had already written analogous things accusing the Revolution of the crime of having invented modern democracy and the emancipation of the individual.

Challenging the concept of emancipative modernity, political Islam rejects the very principle of democracy –the right of society to construct its future through the freedom to legislate that it endows itself with.

The principle of *Shura* that political Islam claims to be the only Islamic form of democracy is no such thing, since that principle is still prisoner of the interdiction of innovation (*ibda*) not accepting, except at its extreme, anything more than the endless re-interpretation of tradition (*ijtihad*). The *Shura* is just one of the multiple forms of consultation that we find in all pre-modern, pre-democratic societies. Surely this interpretation has sometimes been the vehicle of real transformations, imposed by new demands. But it turns out that by this very principle –the rejection of the right to a rupture with the past– that interpretation locks the modern struggle for social change and democracy inside a *cul-de-sac*. The alleged resemblance between Islamic parties –radical or moderate, since they all adhere to those same "anti-modernist" principles in the name of the supposed specificity of Islam– and the Christian Democrat parties of modern Europe lacks in fact validity, although the US media and diplomacy make constant allusion to this to legitimize their support for potentially "Islamist" regimes. Christian Democracy is located within modernity, of which it accepts the fundamental concept of creative democracy as essential for the concept of secularism. Political Islam rejects modernity. It proclaims it, without being in a condition to understand its meaning.

Therefore, the proposed Islam in no way deserves to be called "modern"; and the arguments wielded in this field by the friends of "dialogue" are of an extreme banality, ranging from the use of cassettes by its propagandists to the observation that the latter are recruited among the "educated" strata –engineers, for example! The discourse of these movements, meanwhile, does not involve anything other than the Wahabite Islam, that rejects everything that the interaction between historical Islam and Greek philosophy had produced in its time, an contents itself with repeating the banal writings of the most reactionary of the theologians of the Middle Ages –Ibn Taymiya. Although some of their heralds term this interpretation a "return to the sources" (even to the Islam of the time of the Prophet), in actual fact it is nothing but a return to the conceptions reigning two hundred years ago, the years of a society halted in its development for many centuries.

4. Contemporary political Islam is not the product of a reaction against the supposed abuses of secularism, as is unfortunately very often stated.

This is because no Muslim society in modern times –save in the defunct Soviet Union– has ever been truly secular, much less affected by the boldness of any aggressively "atheistic" power. The semi-modern states of Kemalist Turkey, of Nasserite Egypt, of Baathist Syria and Iraq, had been content with taming the clerics (as had often happened in the past) by imposing a discourse aiming exclusively at legitimizing the state's political options. The outline of a secular idea existed only in some critical intellectual groups but with no much influence over the state. This state, driven by a nationalist project, has often retreated in this arena, as is testified

by the worrisome involution launched in Nasser's era, which produced a rupture with the policy that the Wafd had adopted since 1919.

The explanation for this driftage is perhaps evident: rejecting democracy, the regimes in question substituted it with the "homogeneity of the community", the danger of which is seen to increase even in the regressing democracy of the contemporary West itself (cf. diversity inherited from the past and diversity in the invention of the future).

Political Islam seeks to conclude an evolution already widely underway in the countries concerned, attempting to reestablish an undisguisedly conservative theocratic order, associated with a political power of a "Mameluke" type. The reference to this military caste wielding leadership until two centuries ago, positioning itself above all law (simulating to know only the *Sharia* in this sphere), seizing for itself all the benefits of economic life and accepting –in the name of "realism"– to incorporate itself in an ancillary position in the capitalist globalization of the period, comes suddenly to the mind of anyone who observes both the degraded post-nationalist regimes of the region and the new allegedly Islamic regimes, their twin brothers.

5. There is, from this fundamental point of view, almost no difference between the so-called "radical" currents of political Islam and those that would like to present a "moderate" aspect. The project of one and the other is identical.

The case of Iran itself does not escape the general rule despite the confusions that were at the origin of its success, owing to the concomitance between the expansion of the Islamist movement and the struggle carried out against the dictatorship of the socially retrograde and politically pro-US Shah. In a first instance, the extremist extravagances of the theocratic power were compensated by its anti-imperialist positions, from which it extracted its legitimacy and which gave it an echo of powerful popularity beyond the borders of Iran.

But the regime was gradually to prove that it was incapable of meeting the challenge of an economic and social development offering renewals. The "dictatorship of the turbans" (the clerics) that had replaced that of the "caps" (of the military men and technocrats), as is said in Iran, leads to a fantastic degradation of the country's economic apparatus. The Iran that boasted it was "doing like Korea" is today positioned among the countries of the "Fourth World". The insensitivity of the hard liners to the social problems confronting the country's popular classes is the reason for its replacement by those who called themselves "reformers". The latter defended a project certainly capable to mitigate the rigors of the theocratic dictatorship. But this project does not give up the principle –enshrined in the constitution (*wilaya al faqih*)– on which rests the monopoly of their power that has gradually led them to abandon their "anti-imperialist" positions in order to integrate into the banal "compradore" world of the capitalism of the peripheries[1].

The system of political Islam is at a standstill in Iran. The political and social struggles to which the Iranian people are as of now openly committed must sooner or later lead to the rejection of the very principle of the *wilaya al faqih* that places the clerics above all institutions of political and civil society. It is the condition for their success.

Political Islam is in the ultimate analysis nothing more than an adaptation of the ancillary condition of purchaser capitalism. For this reason, its allegedly "moderate" form probably constitutes the principal danger threatening the peoples in question, the violence of the "radicals" having no other role than that of destabilizing the state to allow the installation of the new "compradore" power. The lucid support that the diplomacy of the countries of the Triad aligned behind the United States provides for this "solution" to the problem is perfectly consistent with its will to impose the globalized liberal order at the service of the dominant capital.

6. The two discourses of globalized liberal capitalism and of political Islam are not in conflict, but on the contrary, perfectly complementary.

The ideology of the US-style "communitarisms" that the current fashion endeavors to popularize annuls collective consciousness and social struggles to substitute them with supposedly collective "identities" that ignore them. This ideology is thus perfectly instrumented by the strategy of domination of capital, because it shifts the struggles from the area of real

social contradictions to the world of the imaginary described as cultural, trans-historical and absolute. Now, political Islam is precisely a “communitarism”.

The diplomacy of the G7 powers, and especially that of the United States, knows what they are doing in choosing to support political Islam. They have done so in Afghanistan, terming its Islamists as “freedom fighters (!)” against “the horrible dictatorship of communism”, which was actually only a project of enlightened despotism, national and populist, which had the audacity to open school doors to girls. They continue to do so from Egypt to Algeria. They know that the power of political Islam has the virtue –for them– of reducing the peoples in question to impotence, and consequently ensures their “compradorization” without hindrance.

With the cynicism that characterizes it, the US establishment knows how to obtain further profit from political Islam. The forms of “driftage” of the regimes it inspires (the Taliban, for example) –which actually constitute no drift, but, although it may seem impossible, are inscribed within the logic of their programs– can be exploited each time imperialism judges it useful to intervene, brutally if necessary. The “savagery” attributed to the peoples who are the first victims of political Islam allows “Islamophobia” to be nourished. That makes it easier to accept the prospect of an “apartheid at worldwide scale” that is the logical and necessary result of an ever more polarizing capitalist expansion.

The only political movements identified with Islam that are condemned without mitigating factors by the G7 powers are those inscribed –by the objective local situation– in anti-imperialist struggles: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine. It is no coincidence.

The ethnicist driftage in Africa: the case of Ethiopia

1. The reactions of driftage of the victims of capitalist expansion in the face of the challenge constituted in that event by modernity adopt diverse forms. Ethnicism is one of them, a particularly devastating one in Africa, but not exclusively there, as can be seen in the examples in Eastern Europe.

The triumphant modernity produced by the current of national liberation in the 1950s and 60s had been invested in a project of trans-ethnic national construction, both in the states that accepted submission to the demands of neo-colonial imperialism and in those that aspired to free themselves through “socialism” (in reality populist nationalist formulas).

The reflux has caused the legitimacy of the powers resulting from national liberation to be questioned anew. The cornered leading classes have in most cases sought to reconstruct a new legitimacy on the basis of ethnicity (or of religion). The urban popular and peasant classes had experienced their “ethnic specificity” without any conflict with their adherence to the national project as long as the latter, in its deployment, allowed the hope of greater welfare. It isn’t the people but the leading classes that have again spotlighted “ethnic authenticity”. Fish starts rotting from the head, it is said in Africa. Examples of this model of driftage are not lacking. The latest: Côte d’Ivoire, previously hailed as a triumphant model of capitalist modernity.

If I choose here the case of Ethiopia, it is because in many ways it seems to me to be exemplary. The historic Ethiopia lived under a feudal-family system originating in the north of the country, and then extended in particular ways in the southern regions conquered by Menelik in the nineteenth century. It later knew two forms of modernization, the first one frankly capitalist, established by Emperor Haile Selassie, and the second populist national, under the leadership of the Derg and of Haile Mariam Mengistu. The successive exhaustion of these two experiments in modernity is the origin of the ethnicist driftage promoted by the leading classes in power in Addis Ababa.

2. During the period of “imperial restoration” that followed the country’s liberation (1942) and until the fall of the Empire (1975), Ethiopia was the object of systematic “modernization” policies through integration into world capitalism, promoted by power and its leading class.

In this framework, the members of the leading class (generally the “good families” of the aristocracy, whose offspring were educated at least in part to fill the best posts in the modernized state, but also the “new rich” who had become wealthy in trade), acting with the complicity of the authorities, appropriated major tracts of farmland, among the best in the country. There they developed an exclusively commercial production (for export and for the

new, expanding urban market) and resorted to a variety of means to exploit labor (in part wage-earners, but above all tenant farmers). In addition, all the means assigned by the state to "agricultural development", be they banking credit or subsidies (for imported equipment), were exclusively aimed at this small minority of beneficiaries of the new agrarian capitalism. The work on communication infrastructure (roads) likewise privileged the regions favored by this expansion.

Nothing –or virtually nothing– was done for the rest of the rural countryside, condemned for this reason to vegetate. But still there was no peasant rebellion, protest or vindication "movement"; rather, there were only localized, sporadic explosions, as there had always been in the ancient history of the country. In the regions affected by modernization, the peasants were no more than the passive "objects" of social transformation, not its active "subjects".

The pauperization produced by this development model, despite the "successes" expressed in the growth rates for export-oriented output, reached dramatic proportions in the 1970s –years of drought and famine. But it is not the battered rural world that causes the monarchy to fall: it is a revolt by the army (in a prolonged war in Eritrea) and the radicalized urban elites (especially the students).

The new regime (the Derg, from 1975 to 1991) proceeded to carry out a radical agrarian reform, at one stroke of the pen suppressing almost all the medieval forms of exploitation of the peasantry, and setting up in this way a gigantic, free "small peasantry" of small family landowners/cultivators. The reform was not the product of a peasant movement, but awarded by the new political leadership class emerging from segments of the petit bourgeoisie and from the radicalized urban intellectuals who thus established claim to being socialists, even in a "Marxist-Leninist" version. Nevertheless, it was very well received by the peasants.

The balance of the period is a mixed one. On the positive side: efforts (modest but real) to improve peasants' access to credit and to facilities for the commercialization of their goods, roads, and especially schools and health centers. Signs are also seen of the birth of a political consciousness among the rural masses, produced by the complexity of support measures and of conflicts between them and the administrations in charge of handling them, which took the place of the old aristocracies and of the Church. On the negative side: the rise in the bureaucratization of the towns' administrative management (and with it, in corruption), vague and disorderly projects for "cooperatives" without much continuity, but above all, the drain represented by recruitment for the army.

3. The crisis in this system is entirely the product of conflicts that have developed within the new "statist-socialist" leading class.

Beyond the diversity of reasons for these conflicts and of their forms of expression, note must be taken of the greater driftage to which they have ultimately led. "Power" claimed to be "pan-Ethiopian" refusing to make any reference to the diversity of ethnic groups that constitute the Ethiopian nation. The force of the major opposition, which "has taken the maquis" (EPRP) and formed an alliance with the Eritrean liberation front in the leadership of the civil war, has opted for a "federative plurinational" vision of its project for a new Ethiopia (cut off from Eritrea).

The driftage produced a displacement of the central issue in the debates in the midst of the radicalized political class. The central concern of the diverse segments of this class centered on this question: how to build a popular national alliance associating urban workers (quickly termed "proletarians"), the peasantry, and "revolutionary" intellectuals.

The clear or confused answers, the proposals for strategies and tactics, the means defined to attain the goals, the struggles for power that might be hidden behind the arguments wielded by one group or another, were all articulated around the central issue of "popular unity".

The civil war substituted it with a new question: "the ethnic issue". It should be noted that adherence to ethnicity comes exclusively from fractions of the urban middle classes, which have sometimes taken the initiative in creating "liberation movements" (Oromo and others). In the country, no force, organized or spontaneous, sees itself reflected in these "ethnic" movements.

Will the new –"federal"– constitution and the curious and scarcely democratic stipulations that characterize it (voting rights reserved exclusively for the ethnic groups declared to be the majority in each of the regions in which the country has been divided) poison relations among

the ethnic groups within the popular masses? Up to now, fortunately, this has not been the case. The driftage in the Yugoslav manner has therefore been avoided.

Inherited cultural diversity and diversity in the invention of the future

1. All human societies have a history over the course of which they have been transformed, sometimes through minor and gradual changes operating within the logic of their system, sometimes though qualitative changes in the system.

The participants in these changes, which we could call revolutions, have always proclaimed their decision not to take anything from the past: the Enlightenment intended to destroy the *ancien régime* in every aspect, the Paris Commune and the socialist revolutions "to make a clean sweep of the past", Maoism to write a new history of China "on an empty page".

But in fact, it has never been possible to erase the past entirely. Some of its components have been recovered and transformed in order to be placed at the service of new logics; others survived as means of resistance, braking change. The precise combination of the new and the old, specific to each of the historical trajectories considered, constitutes the first source of diversity, in part, therefore, inherited. The modalities of secularism as they are conceived and practiced in the societies that entered capitalist modernity provide a good example of this diversity. Secularism is even more radical than the bourgeois revolution was (as in France). When, on the contrary, the capitalist transformation opened a path for itself through compromises between the new bourgeoisie and the old dominant classes (as in most of Europe), secularism did not exclude the survival of a religious reference in public behavior. There are even national Churches (in the Protestant countries) that have been molded within the new system of capitalism and that have survived as such although they may lost the coercionary power that they enjoyed prior to modernity. The state/religion separation, which defines the concept of secularism, is therefore, according to case, more or less formally confirmed. Let us point out here, in passing, that the modernity that is implied in this separation says nothing further. Modernity is not a negation of religious faith. A "state atheism" (with only one known model, the one attempted by Soviet communism) acts to some extent like a state religion: one and the other distort the very principle of modernity, which leaves opinions –philosophical, religious, political, ideological, scientific– to the exclusive free judgment of individuals.

Nevertheless, the insistence on the need to admit and respect the inherited diversity –which the dominant contemporary discourse rendered fashionable– is not lacking in consequences, since it frequently serves to legitimate policies that aim to reinforce conservative powers, as has been seen in the European debate on, precisely, secularism. What is the purpose of a reference to Christian values in a declaration of rights?

2. There are many other areas of social reality characterized by diversity, the roots of which are frequently remote, as testified by the variety of languages and religions. This diversity has survived even when the elements that constitute it have themselves been transformed over the course of history.

Does the multinationality and/or multiculturalism in the midst of the modern state, that is to say, the state formed by citizens that have a legal right to construct their future, pose problems for the practice of democracy? Does it constitute a challenge to it? Diverse attitudes are proposed in answer to this question.

Fierce partisans of national and cultural homogeneity as the only means of definition of the common identity that according to them is necessary for the exercise of civil rights, will not hesitate to propose either a forcible assimilation of the recalcitrant (very often minorities), or, if they are democratic, the divorce and partition of the state. Meanwhile, as second best, they will only accept a "tolerance" of diversity. The quotation marks are here to remind us that tolerance is something eventually granted to somebody which one dislikes ("one must tolerate one's mother-in-law"). They will therefore be in favor if a "multi-communitarian" construction –in the US manner– without ever really renouncing to hierarchize these "communities" in the national system. For them, community identity –which is inherited and cannot be the object of personal choice– is essential. A certain "right to a difference" is affirmed here, but at the price of denying its complementary opposite, which has an equal status –the right to similarity, to identical

treatment– and in a more general manner the inalienable individual right not to accept being defined by membership in an inherited community.

Emancipative modernity is founded on a totally different concept of democracy, which implies the rigorous equality of all rights and duties (and the creation of conditions for this equality to be made real) and simultaneously a respect for existing differences. “Respect” is a stronger term than “tolerance”. It implies that the state’s policies create the conditions for equality despite the diversity. “Despite” here merely means that we do not attempt to immobilize the diversity in question, that we allow history to do its work and perhaps lead to an assimilation that thus is no longer forcible. We act for the diversity not to end up being a juxtaposition of communities that are closed and, for that reason, mutually hostile.

It is useful to remember here that socialists –be they Austro-Marxists or Bolsheviks– have called for the launching of this type of delicate dynamics. It is useful to recall that modern classes –the working classes and major fractions of the bourgeoisies– had a favorable view of this kind of solutions that safeguard the advantages of a great state in which multinationality becomes a source of wealth and not of impoverishing oppression.

Meanwhile, the partisans of “communitarian homogeneity” were primarily recruited among the old classes and the traditional peasantry.

This reminder makes it possible to size up the regression represented by the proposals that characterize the dominant fashion. The insistence on the “communities” emerges from a real betrayal of the concepts of emancipating modernity; it accompanies a degradation of democracy through the negation of the manifold dimensions of identity (nationality perhaps, but also social class, sex, eventual ideological or religious persuasion, etcetera). The fashionable discourse no longer recognizes citizens, who are at the same time individuals and persons with multidimensional identities, and substitutes them by “people” (“consumers” for economists, television spectators for politicians), therefore manipulable both as amorphous individuals and as subjects of inherited and imposed communities.

3. Inherited diversities pose problems, since they do exist. But by fixing the attention on them, other much more interesting diversities remain unseen, as those which the invention of the future necessarily generates in its movement. These diversities are much more interesting because their concept ensues from the same origin as emancipative democracy and the always unfinished modernity that accompanies it.

To say that policies must be launched for the liberty of individuals not to be deployed to the detriment of their equality but, on the contrary, for both of these values to be able to advance together, is to affirm that history has not ended, that some transformations of the system are necessary, and that it is necessary to struggle for the latter to move in the direction of progress in real emancipation. Who could therefore say that there is no more than one path, one sole recipe of whose knowledge one or the other would have the monopoly, to meet that need?

The creative utopias around which the struggles can crystallize, endowing them with perspectival goals, have always found their legitimization on the basis of systems with a diversity of values, whether they appeal to any of the versions of secular humanism or are of religious inspiration (the theologies of liberation). Their necessary complement –the systems for the analysis of society– are inspired in scientific social theories, themselves diverse. The proposed strategies for efficiently advancing in the agreed-on direction cannot themselves be the monopoly of any organization.

In the invention of the future these diversities are not only inevitable but they are welcome to everyone who does not share any given dogmatism. This dogmatism would supposedly provide him with a vain certainty about a knowledge that it is much more appropriate to conceive of as always unfinished and in construction.

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Notas

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1. By "compradore" bourgeoisie we refer to the part of the bourgeoisie of the colonial, semi colonial and dependent countries that operates as intermediary of the imperialistic bourgeoisie. The expression was created by Mao Zedong to explain the influence of the commercial bourgeoisie in China (translator's note).

Hari Singh*

Asia-Pacific in (America's) New World Order

Introduction

Order is a condition in international relations. It implies interaction among states in an environment of predictability, reciprocity and evolutionary change. Conflict, while unavoidable, should not be revolutionary in nature, so as not to radically alter the international system as it happened after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and the First and Second World Wars in 1918 and 1945.

Under such a condition, states develop regularized patterns of behavior based on a general adherence to norms, rules, procedures and principles. In a word, order can be equated with an international regime. Thus, the post-Napoleonic order was based on a classical balance of power institutionalized as the Concert of Europe. The retreat to utopia at the expense of power politics may explain why the inter-war order was short lived. However, after 1945, the dynamics of bipolarity (and nuclear weapons) helped institutionalize a Cold War regime that lasted for more than half a century.

In all three cases, order was predicated on a hierarchical structure. There was a pecking order of super and great powers, middling powers and small and minor powers. Only the "top dogs" in the international system –as "system-determining" powers– had the privilege of determining the rules of the game. Others, depending on the level of their capabilities, adjusted to the oligopolistic competition in varying degrees.

Based on the theoretical premise set out above, order in the post-Cold War international system would be based on the dynamics of unipolarity, that is, America's global hegemony, institutionalized as the "New World Order". This is not to suggest that there are no autonomous policy outputs in the international system, but these are not free from the constraints imposed by American foreign policy. The question is: How comfortably does Asia sit in an American-dominated world order? In examining this question, the analysis is organized along the following themes: balance of power; institutions and organizations; international political economy; and international norms.

Balance of power

Military might is a critical component of hegemony. Though not always the case, the state with superior military capabilities often assumes the mantle of dominant power in a regional or international system. American dominance had begun at the close of the Second World War. It is significant to note that by 1945 Japan was on the verge of defeat. Yet, the United States chose to drop two atomic bombs on Japan, claiming that such an action would save more lives in the long term. But it was clear that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a demonstration effect, meant as a signal to the rest of the world that the post-World War order would be American-based. Indeed, this American-oriented world order saw the creation of American-sponsored institutions such as the United Nations and economic organizations such as GATT, IMF and the World Bank. Admittedly, American hegemony was tempered by the rise of the Soviet Union as a superpower.

The transition between the end of the Cold War and the evolution of the new post-Cold War international system displayed remarkable similarities with the situation in 1945. In 1991, the United States employed awesome military power to evict Iraq from Kuwait. Clearly, it was Washington's signal to the rest of the world that the *pax* Americana would underpin the new international system, especially in the absence of a countervailing superpower. And the United

States also made it plain that it would not tolerate any challenges to a world order that sustains its dominant position. Thus, Iraq was severely punished for its transgression.

These rules of the game would explain US-Asian and intra-Asian dynamics in the post-Cold War era. In 1995, the China-Taiwan crisis erupted. The lapse of bipolarity had made China a redundant player in the "strategic triangle", a development that was not lost upon the Taiwanese, who capitalized upon it to seek formal independence from China. True, the states has been consistent in its approach that it would not accept "reunification" by force. But, as was evident in the Iraqi case, neither was it willing to tolerate challenges to the present world order, especially since a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would have radically altered the balance of power in the Northeast Asian subsystem. This explains the despatch of two major fleets into the Straits of Taiwan. The United States was more than willing to risk a military confrontation with China. Significantly, it was China that "blinked".

On all counts, China was a secondary power when compared to the United States. This realization contributed to two opposing though related undertones in its foreign policy. The first was a strategy of bandwagoning that was already evident in it diplomacy at the United Nations in 1991 with regard to the Kuwait crisis. As the American invasion of Iraq would indicate, China has not opposed the United States where critical interests of the latter are at stake. In China's calculations, it had a lot to lose by inviting American retaliation especially in the realm of economics, given that not only military power, but increasingly political influence, was contingent upon economic growth, which was also vital in bolstering the legitimacy of the communist party. By the time of the second Bush administration, Sino-American relations had become the most cordial since rapprochement in 1972.

The second strategy pertained to balance of power politics. In this vein, it is important to note that Sino-Russian relations improved significantly, as have Sino-Indian ties, suggesting that it was not in China's interest to have tensions with its nuclear neighbors, who are also moving closer into the American embrace. Equally important, China has sought to strengthen its ties with the Southeast Asian states, notably with its neighbor Vietnam, the latter also serving as an ideological confluence for two out of the three remaining communist governments in Asia. Taking cognizance of the fact that, alongside Iraq, North Korea's supposed possession of "weapons of mass destruction" has invited America's *realpolitik* eye, China, wary of undue American influence in Northeast Asia, and unwilling to be viewed as an obstacle in the non-proliferation process, and also for other reasons, has distanced itself from the Pyongyang regime and encouraged compromise.

It should be noted that the United States prefers the term "engagement" when referring to its interaction with China. The usual yardstick to substantiate this argument would be the burgeoning trade ties and Washington's yearly renewal of most-favored nation status for China. In reality, engagement is an inter-state relationship conducted upon American-preferred rules of the game. Alternatively, "containment" is the other side of the same coin. China is a great power. World Bank estimates suggest that China would be the largest economy by the year 2010. How accurate this assessment is, is for the time being immaterial, inasmuch as the fact is that a rising economic power will invariably have commensurate political and military power. Especially since China's socio-political values and institutions do not correspond with those of the United States, as is the case with the Western great powers, the threat of China challenging America's world order is not unreal. Neither is it frivolous to mention that Hollywood began to give credence to the "China threat" with the decline of the Soviet spy in the post-Cold War era. The undertone of containment was already evident in Washington's desire to sustain Taiwan as an independent base of power at China's doorstep. Equally important is the role of Japan in America's strategy.

America's resolve to defend Taiwan in 1995 also reaffirmed its commitment to a security architecture in the Asia-Pacific that has been in place since the early 1950s, including Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia. Following America's declaration of war on international terrorism in the post-Cold War era, Singapore has been co-opted within this strategic framework, while Australia has assumed a higher profile as America's "sheriff" in the Asia-Pacific region. Be that as it may, the Japanese-American Security Treaty of 1951 remains the linchpin of this alliance structure. Significantly, the "revised guidelines" of 1995 amended the treaty's scope of operations to cover a wider strategic area. Though left unstated, it would appear that the treaty's revision covers the defence of Taiwan as well as the South China Sea

lanes. It is interesting to note that in both cases China is the main claimant to territorial sovereignty.

As a consequence, Japan has been tasked to shoulder an increased burden of strategic responsibility that it was reluctant to undertake during the Cold War for reasons related to its peace constitution, but also because such a task would have undermined its mercantilist foreign policy. In the post-Cold War period, in the absence of superpower competition to the United States, Japan had little leverage in fending off American pressure for a "level playing field" in the economic realm. Japan had even less leverage is the strategic domain: to abrogate the treaty was unthinkable in terms of Japan's defence, not to mention that "remilitarization" –in reality a euphemism, given Japan's defence capabilities– would have revived memories of Japanese aggression during the Second World War and hence invited negative reactions from East Asian countries.

Notwithstanding these considerations, a countervailing trend was also apparent in Japan's foreign policy. Implicit in a policy of bandwagoning with a superior power is the expectation of rewards. Japan's support for the United States adventure in Iraq was never in doubt. But what is more interesting is Japan's decision to send troops to serve in the American-occupied Iraq, which is quite distinct from its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Cambodia in 1991. Clearly, Japan was also redefining its national role conception in the present international system. Indications are that it is gradually moving towards a "normal" status and seeking acceptability of its rank as a great power. The increase in its military expenditure above its self-imposed limit, in conjunction with its peace constitution, its acceptance of increased responsibilities in the context of the Japanese-American Security Treaty, and its military presence overseas, demonstrate Japan's quest for normality. Similarly, the growing international opinion that Japan, alongside Germany, should be accorded a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, its mediation in the Cambodian crisis, and its economic diplomacy during the Asian Financial Crisis, suggest a role for Japan that is commensurate with the status of a great power.

Proceeding from the above analysis, it is evident that the "economics is security" approach that underpinned Japan's mercantilist foreign policy is no longer feasible in achieving its national goals. The steady transformation into a "normal" great power was also a means to balance Washington's growing obsession with the "relative gains" problem in its relationship with Japan in the post-Cold War era. Aside from internal balancing, Japan has also sought to improve its relations with Russia, China and South Korea. Nevertheless, there are limitations to this policy. The historical baggage, territorial disputes and ideological differences are among the more significant factors that debilitate closer political relations. This factor, together with the fact that the United States is the key in the balancing equation in Northeast Asia, reinforce Japan's joint destiny with the superpower.

This dependence is all the more pertinent with regard to the threat of North Korea's nuclear potential. By the late 1990s, North Korea had demonstrated its missile capability to hit targets in Japan, including American military installations in Okinawa. Especially in a post-September 11 world, Japan's vulnerability reinforced its decision to enter into close cooperation with the United States to develop a theatre missile defence. Using the same rationale against China, an increasingly assertive Taiwan has also opted for a similar scheme followed by Australia, which acted for no credible reason save to identify itself more closely with the Untied States. Be that as it may, the fact remains that North Korea, given its nuclear program at home, does constitute an important source of instability in the Northeast Asian security complex.

At first glance, it would appear that the security of the Northeast Asian region necessitates an international response to the North Korean nuclear threat. But the American spotlight on North Korea reaffirms the earlier assertion that the United States would not tolerate radical transformation in regional balances of power that would eventually undermine the central balance. To take the analysis to its logical conclusion, we return to the unipolar model comprising the United States and the secondary powers. Stratification of power determines the hierarchical order in the international system, and provides a niche for the great powers to play great power roles. This, together with the fact that the prospect of a nuclear war among the great powers is unthinkable (a proposition that has almost come to be accepted as a value by international society), bolsters the edifice of the New World Order. However, a nuclear capability in the hands of a small (and what is more, an impoverished) power provides North Korea with an inflated degree of systemic autonomy much to the chagrin of the United States. The

superpower is used to employing the law of the jungle when dealing with regional upstarts. Dealing with a nuclear power that has vowed to retaliate is another matter altogether.

The nuclear dilemma on the Korean peninsula, the China-Taiwan conflict, competing maritime claims and military clashes in the South China Sea, and shared perceptions of the United States as the main security provider in the Asia-Pacific, were factors that tended to strengthen the nexus between the Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian security complexes in the post-Cold War period. The security dimension, together with the evolution of transnational economic regimes like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum on which more will be said later, served to strengthen an "Asia-Pacific" regional identity that reinforced the *realpolitik* motif of America's New World Order. The demise of the Cold War had somewhat diminished Washington's central role in European politics, more so with the evolving special relationship between France and Germany. Apart from seeking leverage through an enlarged North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Asia-Pacific region emerged as an important counter to the influence of the European Union in America's balance of power strategy. Apart from Northeast Asia, the United States also had important strategic stakes in Southeast Asia.

It must be remembered that the United States had tried, albeit not too successfully, to assert its image of regional order in Southeast Asia after the Second World War. Taking into consideration that Southeast Asia was on the "periphery" of superpower competition, and given the intensification of the Sino-Soviet conflict from the 1960s onwards, the Soviet Union was more forceful in thwarting America's grand design than was China, which had vital interests in Southeast Asia. These considerations came to bear in the Laotian crises of the 1950s and the Vietnam quagmire in the 1960s. For the greater part of the Cold War, regional stability was confined to the ASEAN region, whereas the Indochina peninsula continued to be ravaged by war. This contrasting set of regional dynamics can be explained by the fact that there was an implicit understanding among the superpowers –which incidentally, also functioned as co-global security managers– of ASEAN being an American preserve, whereas Soviet influence in Indochina was actively resisted by China. Both sub-regions of Southeast Asia were fraught with historical, ideological, and territorial disputes. However, superpower moderation and dispensation of benefits, common external threat perceptions, similar ideologies, and the living lessons of war in Indochina, moderated sub-regional fissures and promoted cooperation within ASEAN. These conditions no longer wholly obtain in the post-Cold War era. The thawing of the Cold War glacier has resulted in the accentuation of intra-bloc competition within ASEAN against the background of the surfacing of old conflicts and unresolved issues, and the emergence of new axes of rivalries. Thus, on the one hand, the prospects of conflict in Southeast Asia have increased. On the other hand, the potential disruption to the existing regional order may be exaggerated. For one, nations can no longer tap an alternative base of superpower in furthering their objectives. Equally important, inter-bloc competition between communist Indochina and non-communist ASEAN became redundant with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decline of communist ideology. What is more, by 1997, ASEAN enlarged itself to cover all countries in Southeast Asia. Socialization of the new entrants into the "ASEAN Way" of conducting inter-state diplomacy reaffirms the role of international institutions in moderating the security dilemma. In this vein, earlier in 1993, ASEAN, alongside the great powers, had constructed a nascent security regime, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), to deliberate on Asia-Pacific security issues.

These regionalist endeavors were not totally autonomous from United States strategic interests. Regional order is a component of, and helps sustain, the New World Order. The ARF, in particular, reveals the underlying general insecurity among its members with regard to the Korean problem, the China-Taiwan issue and the South China Sea conflicts, not to mention Southeast Asian concerns regarding regional hegemons like China and India. It is clear that ASEAN regards the United States as the hub of the Asia-Pacific balance of power.

Nevertheless, Southeast Asian countries have not over-emphasized the role of institutions as underwriters of security. Traditional balance of power strategies within ASEAN has been employed for the same purpose. The inclusion of Vietnam into ASEAN was a means of blunting the rising power of the developed and near developed states within the region and China, as was the co-opting of Myanmar as a means to wean the internationally isolated state from the influence of China. Even among the original "ASEAN Five", regarded by some as having the potential of being a security community, mutual suspicion and positional competition has, in a world where alliances seem to have acquired a negative connotation, contributed to an alliance

pseudonyms called the “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU). It is significant that these MOUs have, almost without exception, been concluded with the United States.

Even those states without any formal agreements with the United States have found it prudent to partake in joint military exercises with the superpower or allow port visits by the Seventh Fleet.

The Cold War image of the United States as a “benign power” may be a factor that continues to shape foreign policy outputs although, it is suspected, no nation in Southeast Asia would like to be on the wrong side of the superpower, particularly in a post-September 11 world. If anything, certain countries like Singapore have taken advantage of America’s vulnerability to identify itself even more closely with the superpower in the anticipation of reaping political and economic dividends. Be that as it may, living in the shadow of a global hegemon has its perils, particularly among the Muslim-majority nations that happen to be in insular Southeast Asia. States are especially concerned about Washington’s declamatory policy of unilateral action to depose governments with supposed terrorist links. At any rate, governments that try to clamp down on Islamic fundamentalism, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, risk being displaced by theocratic regimes whose supporters view the United States as Islam’s greatest enemy.

International values

The reference to Islam serves as point of departure for discussing the normative aspects of the New World Order in relation to Asia-Pacific. A set of international values generally considered worthy of adoption by states is an important source of stability of an international order. Yet, norms are also critical to the legitimation of a hegemonic order in an international system. Theoretically speaking, in a unipolar world, these two themes should blend. But empirical evidence does not wholly support this generalization. The nuances are elaborated below.

Evidence suggests that the values of the hegemonic power are invariably replicated as the values of the international system. During the Cold War, America’s global hegemonic power was constrained by the power of the Soviet Union and China, and “Making the World Safe for Democracy” was tempered by “International Communism”, and later Soviet and Chinese communism. *Realpolitik* considerations would explain why the United States had to de-couple its commitment to democracy, as the superpower tolerated and even supported military dictatorships and fascist regimes in Asia-Pacific.

The removal of the Soviet pole of superpower and the retreat from communist utopia in Eastern Europe symbolized the triumph of democratic forces over authoritarian ones. In a word, democracy emerged as a powerful stimulus in world politics. This impulse fed on the intellectualization (which was, however, not free from the dominant ideological paradigm) within the United States that democracy was the final form of government in civilized societies. Already the United States, at least before 9/11, had become less tolerant of oppressive regimes. This may explain why South Korea and Taiwan, two of America’s key allies in Asia-Pacific, almost totally discarded their authoritarian garb in the 1990s. Later, America’s demolition of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq – both instances in the name of delivering democracy to the people– seem to reaffirm democracy as the ideological axle of the New World Order.

A common ideological framework no doubt provides reassurance to states (including the hegemonic power) that systemic rules and obligations are adhered to. Democracy also means greater plurality with domestic polities, and governments become more accountable to their people and less adventurous in foreign policy. In sum, these expectations lead to two conclusions. The first reactivates Immanuel Kant’s “democratic peace theory” that practically outlaws war in the international system. The second suggests that the United States, especially wounded by terrorism, would feel safer. After all, “they behave just like us”.

It is the image of ideological homogeneity that is academically and politically intriguing. Many forget that the thrust of Indian nationalism against British rule began with the former engaging the latter on the same plank of liberal democracy. This lesson may not have been consciously emulated by Asian nations that have come under increasing pressure to adjust to the dominant ideological structure of the international system being nurtured by United States power. But the fact remains that weaker nations do not have the capabilities to offset the demands of a

superior power. The only option left to these nations is to engage the superpower on a higher moral ground. Thus, the values debate.

States that seek to exempt themselves from international norms do so selectively, for in the most part, they too have benefited from these values. Usually, the grounds of exemption are based on the rationale that all values are relative in nature, and that what is considered a universal value may actually represent sectional interests in the international system but is salient because of power considerations. These "Western" sectional interests such as democracy neglect the unique experiences and cultural peculiarities of Asian societies. Hence the "Asian values" rearguard action by authoritarian regimes in Asia.

As has been explained elsewhere, Asian values have weak philosophical foundations, not to mention the fact that Asia is a continent of tremendous diversity, which reinforces the viewpoint that countries like Malaysia, Singapore and China –the main proponents of the debate– do not speak for Asia. Equally important, exclusionary claims are difficult to reconcile with the rules and norms of a Western-based international system. In any event, democracy is not the preserve of the West as communist states like Vietnam, North Korea and East Germany legitimized their existence in democratic terms.

Global democratization is not just a function of United States foreign policy. Globalization –in simple terms taken to mean the shrinkage of space and time, combined with the advancement in information technology, has made it more difficult for states to maintain closed political structures. This partly explains the growing political liberalization in states such as China, Vietnam and Myanmar in the post-Cold War world.

If anything, the ascendancy of the economic agenda in post-Cold War politics reinforced the democratic imperative in the Asia-Pacific. The collapse of the Soviet Union not only discredited communism as an alternative world order, but also acknowledged the power of capitalism in underpinning political systems. Needless to say that capitalism thrives in an environment of good corporate governance, transparency, accountability and rule of law –elements that contribute to democratic development. As governments themselves came under global pressure to liberalize –best illustrated by linkage politics involving trade– and political awareness in domestic politics increased, governments themselves became more dependent on economic performance as a criterion for legitimacy. This in turn reinforced the democratic dynamics of capitalism in Asia-Pacific societies.

To state the obvious, capitalism has its contradictions, best illustrated by the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) of 1997 that paralyzed the economies of South Korea and Southeast Asian countries. The crisis exposed the personalization of political power by governing elites and attendant ills like corruption, collusion and cronyism. It also discredited the myth of the "strong state" model as the basis for development used by governments to justify authoritarian structures in domestic politics. Inflation, asset shrinkage and food shortages unleashed populist reactions under the banner of democratic reform to centralized, top-down governance. The resulting political instability led to the displacement of authoritarian regimes in Thailand and Indonesia, and forced others to institute reforms. An important outcome in the regional context was a departure in ASEAN's policy on "non-interference" in its member's affairs, a policy that had tolerated human rights abuse in Indonesia and Myanmar, and which by extension had justified non-involvement in other non-ASEAN states, including Pol Pot's Cambodia during the Cold War. In the aftermath of the AFC, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia have taken the lead in advocating "flexible intervention" in ASEAN countries in times of political instability and "constructing engagement" –as applied to Myanmar– as a means to affect democratic change in that country.

Without doubt, these developments in Asia-Pacific corresponded with the objectives of America's New World Order. Yet, it is indeed ironic that it was also the United States that backtracked from its democratic agenda in a post-911 world (except when it was used to legitimize intervention and regime displacement). This provided the necessary respite to authoritarian political regimes, particularly in Muslim-based Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, which began to exploit the "terrorists" label to incarcerate their opponents. Nevertheless, the larger forces of capitalism and globalization mentioned above, increasing awareness of civil societies through transnational linkages, and the growing public revulsion in the United States with regard to the curtailment of civil liberties at home and abroad, have

limited the ability of governments in relatively open societies to resort to repression, as was the case during the Cold War.

International institutions

Global terrorism illustrated firstly that states no longer have the monopoly to threaten an established international order. The domain of non-traditional security issues like terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy and ecological disasters, among others, has come to acquire its proper place in international politics. Secondly, states have become increasingly aware that the solution to non-traditional threats cannot be instituted unilaterally or bilaterally, but requires multilateral cooperation. In a word, non-traditional security has strengthened the neo-liberal faith in institutions as managers of international society. But the fact remains that institutions are not free from the influence of power politics. For instance, piracy in Asia-Pacific does not directly impinge on American interests, and the International Maritime Agency operates quite independently of the positional competition among states. In contrast, the regional counter-terrorism centre established in Kuala Lumpur had its origins in United States foreign policy.

The fact remains that the New World Order is rooted in a state-centric international system. Notwithstanding the emergence of non-traditional security issues in the post-Cold War era, traditional security and economic concerns continue to dominate the agenda of states. This reaffirms the continuing relevance of certain post-war institutions and the evolution of newer ones. We will begin with the United Nations, the global security regime. The end of the Cold War seemed to signal the revitalization of this organization that had hitherto been paralyzed by bipolar politics, most strikingly illustrated by its response to the Kuwaiti crisis in 1991 and the resolution of the Cambodian crisis in 1991. But it was clear in the first example that the initiative was led by the United States, whose policy change was also instrumental in effecting a peace agreement in the second. So long as America's energies were directed towards enforcing the rules of the international system and the maintenance of peace, states were not uncomfortable with the New World Order.

Yet, a decade later, the United Nations appeared to be a tool of American foreign policy. Even more worrisome for states was the fact that the United States was willing to bypass the world body altogether in the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives, a willingness most notably exemplified by its diplomacy prior to the invasion of Iraq. This option, in particular, unnerved states the world over, not just in Asia-Pacific. For the global community in general, it was important that the United States operate within the ambit of the United Nations system. It allows secondary states to temper, if not constrain, the perils of global hegemony. This explains the growing agitation in the society of states for reforms in the United Nations, especially with regard to the Security Council veto. In this regard, countries like Malaysia have urged the community of nations to expand the Security Council so as to cater to the interests of weaker nations. The proposal to expand the Security Council has drawn the interest of Japan, which is seeking normality as a great power.

However, Asian states and scholars appear to miss the point about the role of the Security Council. The United Nations system addressed the weaknesses of the League of Nations, and combined the more idealist features of collective security with a realistic balance of power considerations. It is not just a question of submerging preponderant American influence in an enlarged, majority-vote Security Council inasmuch as it is also an issue of reconciling a truly hegemonic power with the rest of the secondary powers in sustaining global order, given the fact that the hegemon could defect from, or institute new, global security institutions.

Regional organizations complement global institutions in maintaining the stability of the New World Order. These organizations found space to develop in parts of Southeast Asia that was relatively free of superpower competition during the Cold War. This included ASEAN, the best known, and often touted as an example of successful regionalism in Asia-Pacific. ASEAN's expansion to cover all states of Southeast Asia may induce regional stability, as states are parties to collective decision-making and hence are obliged to adhere to ASEAN-based rules and conventions in their diplomatic dealings. Conversely, ASEAN itself is a Cold War relic. Then, its effectiveness stemmed from its members sharing a common threat perception, not to mention the fact that it also relied on the United States for structural leadership and benefits. Such a situation no longer obtains. Strategically, ASEAN has little relevance to the United States in the post-Cold War world compared to the Asia-Pacific regional conception. In fact, the

emergence of sub-regional economic zones in Southeast Asia on the one hand forebodes regional fragmentation that undermines the fit between ASEAN and cartographic Southeast Asia. On the other hand, ASEAN itself is becoming redundant in relation to other regional institutions. Mention has already been made of the ARF, which has in essence usurped ASEAN's security agenda. It is significant to note that the ARF is premised upon inclusionary regionalism based on balance of power politics, whereas ASEAN had preached exclusionary regionalism based on neutrality. Likewise, APEC has overshadowed ASEAN's Post-Ministerial Meeting dialogue on economic relations.

International political economy

APEC and its major detractor, the East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG), symbolize the evolution of new institutions in the Asia-Pacific seeking to adapt to the vicissitudes of the global capitalist system. Both institutions have their origins in the transition between the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Whereas the former regime operated by voluntary association, the latter functions by way of binding agreements. Whereas APEC promotes open (inclusionary) regionalism, the EAEG advocates closed (exclusionary) regionalism. However, the contradictory logic between these two approaches is not difficult to understand. Deregulation and dismantling of protectionist measures in domestic societies risked dumping of cheaper goods and closure of less competitive as well as cottage industries, especially in the developing world. The looming threat of protectionist trade blocs emerging following the lack of progress in the Uruguay round also influenced the espousal of the EAEC. The proponents of APEC, however, disagree that countries should enjoy the benefits of free trade and yet adopt protectionist measures at home.

It is this economic-based argument that has driven American foreign economic policy in the post-Cold War era. The disappearance of an alternative superpower base has made the United States less tolerant of unfair trade practices, advocating instead a "level playing field". This largely explains America's attitude towards Japan as well as the EAEG proposal, which it considers a racist-based protectionist trade bloc. But to state the obvious, it is difficult to separate economic issues from political and strategic ones which in combination provide a more holistic view of the economic foundations of the New World Order. For the United States, APEC exudes an Asia-Pacific identity that is critical to its region-building enterprise in the context of the global balance of power mentioned earlier. Equally important, APEC adds legitimacy to its Asia-Pacific role and ensures the involvement of its key allies in the region, Australia and New Zealand, in contrast to the EAEG. America's "level playing field" approach and the non-membership of the EAEG with regard to Japan, is motivated by its desire to check Japan's influence in the region.

These considerations are not lost upon the advocates and sympathizers of the EAEG, among whom one would also include the great powers, Japan and China. In the main, APEC provides a framework within which the United States hopes to realize, on a regional scale, its ambitions contained in the WTO. The fact that APEC comprises the United States and a subdued Japan –the core of the global capitalist system– also provides the superpower with tremendous influence in shaping the regime's agenda. This point has not gone unnoticed by regional states that are, however, themselves dependent on the United States for their economic wellbeing. This facet of reality suggests that regional states can only hope to moderate America's hegemony, an aspect best illustrated by the transformation of the EAEG into an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC).

If anything, the AFC drove home the point of America's economic hegemony in the Asia-Pacific economy. Conventional wisdom, rooted in the neo-liberal tradition, would posit that institutions facilitate state interests. But during the AFC it was clear that, for the sake of survival, states were held hostage to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. That the United States has controlling interests in these two institutions is a point not to be missed. Policy prescriptions proffered by these international regimes in the immediate term aggravated the economic crisis and political instability, effectively transforming the so-called "miracle economies" into mirages. Still related to the superpower, what is especially interesting is the aftermath of the AFC. First, it contributed to the restructuring of domestic politics along democratic lines that conformed with the normative contours of the New World Order. Secondly, states began to adopt, however grudgingly, the revised prescriptions of the IMF, particularly in

terms of good governance (including transparency, accountability and lack of corruption) and deregulation. This in turn reinforced the integration of the Asia-Pacific states into the capitalist, laissez-faire substructure of the New World Order. Needless to say that this development not only augments dependency structures around the core of the capitalist world economy, but also results in the less developed states becoming more susceptible to the vagaries and competitiveness of such a system.

The central thesis of Marxist theory is that the core would eventually be surrounded by regional production factories. Globalization, assisted by economic regionalization, has facilitated this process. In this regard, a number of sub-regional economic zones (SEZ) have sprung up in Asia-Pacific. In the main, these SEZs that span national borders combine the attributes of Japanese (and recently, NIE) capital, overseas Chinese entrepreneurship, skilled and semi-skilled labour, and land. But while the Marxists had predicted the retreat of the state under socialist conditions, the same appears to be occurring under conditions of capitalist ascension. Increasingly, the state has become an adjunct to market forces, as governments, increasingly beholden to economic performance for purposes of regime legitimation, have a greater responsibility for providing infrastructure and security than for decision-making. This in turn has implications for the state-based New World Order, which, in any event, has not addressed the old ills of poverty, inequality, exploitation and dependency of the old world orders.

Note

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Xu Shicheng*

The New Empire and the New US Hegemony

New US Empire

During the post-cold war, especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks, in the western countries, and mainly in the United States, an ideological current has risen: the New Empire or Neo-Empire doctrine. This doctrine establishes new points of view on how to face the new world situation and the new security threats: terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), etcetera.

One of the first to bring forth the doctrine of the New Empire was Robert Cooper, foreign policy advisor to Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair. His most representative work is the article entitled "Why we still need Empires", published in *The Observer* on April 7, 2002. After September 11, in public debates in the United States the terms *empire* and *imperialism* stop being pejorative. Some consider that the New Empire is on the rise under the Bush Administration. Through a series of foreign and Defense policies, the New Empire has stopped being cheap talk and turned into the theoretical basis of a great US strategy and of Bush's doctrine. The New Empire doctrine predominant in the US arises from the country's own interests, and is different from Robert Cooper's in England.

The New American Empire doctrine attempts to transform the world by applying US values and establishing an American Peace, taking advantage of the incomparable advantages of its political, economic and military power.

The Neo-American Empire is made up of the following elements:

- The United States is currently the most powerful country in the world since the disappearance of the Roman Empire. It is the only superpower/world power that can take on the role of leader of the New Empire.

- Important changes have occurred with regard to worldwide security, and the United States faces completely new threats.

- Traditional methods can hardly restrain the new threats. The US must find new methods, or in other words, the New Empire policies to protect itself and obtain world stability under the single-pole American hegemony.

G. John Ikenberry, professor at the University of Georgetown, analyzed and summarized the doctrine of the New Empire predominant in recent years in his article "America's imperial ambition", written to commemorate the first anniversary of September 11. He thinks that this neo-imperial theory constitutes "a new great strategy that is taking shape": its initial and most direct impulse is the reaction to terrorism, but it also constitutes a more global vision of how the United States will be less tied to its partners and to global regulations and organisms, being determined to play a more unilateral role and set on confronting terrorist threats and face the villain states striving to obtain WMD. The United States will employ its military power to control the world order.

Ikenberry has summarized this strategy in the following seven elements:

- Maintain a single-pole world in which the United States has no competitor at its level.

- A recent and alarming analysis of worldwide threats and how they should be confronted.

- The dissuasive concept typical of the Cold War is no longer applicable. The old defensive strategy of building missiles and other weapons that can survive a first attack will no longer guarantee security. The only option then is to take the offensive.

- A redefinition of what sovereignty is. Since terrorists do not respect frontiers, the United States cannot do so either.

- A general depreciation of regulations, treaties and international security associations.

- A need to act in a direct manner and without limitations in response to threats. No other country or coalition has the capacity to project forces to respond to threats.

- Not to grant great value to international stability. The old and traditional realistic and liberal strategy is useless to solve the security problem that the United States faces, and should be discarded[1].

Origins of the Neo-Empire Doctrine

The terrorist attacks of September 11 made Americans change their way of thinking: the United States is not isolated from the world; problems in other parts of the world can threaten and affect US security and interests sooner or later. Therefore, the United States should not react passively: it has to establish a safe atmosphere and a world order favorable to American interests and way of life.

The position of conservative forces prevails in the United States, especially that of the new conservative tendency in political and social life, which tends to adopt a unilateral and offensive strategy. The growing economic and military power of the United States after the Cold War constitutes the material basis and starting point of the neo-imperial doctrine. As it grows stronger, the elite and the authorities of the United States have successively changed their statements about their role in the world. At the beginning of the 90s, they said that “the United States led the world”. In the middle of the 90s, that “the United States would play an advantageous and leading role in the world”. In the late 90s they said that “it would play the most important role in the world”, and after 9/11 they said without restrictions that “the United States would have the influence of an empire”.

Consciousness of “the savior mission” and “the Liberty Empire” constitutes the ideological origin of the Neo-Empire doctrine.

The important changes in the international situation constitute the atmosphere and the international essence of the origin of the New Empire doctrine. The disintegration of the USSR led to the critical imbalance of the international system and made the American promotion of the Neo-Empire policy possible. The huge changes in the international security structure and the upgraded realization by the United States of the threats it faces made the Neo-Empire policy necessary.

The policies set forth by the neo-imperial doctrine clearly reflect the colors of traditional imperialism, characterized by the use of force, the search for hegemony, and absolute security. They include typical elements of the neo-imperial doctrine such as unilateralism, the definition of Axles of Evil, anticipated attacks, etc. If neo-imperial strategy turns into the main trend of American foreign policy, American hegemonic policies will be even more unrestrained and ruthless.

The war launched by the United States against Iraq marked the beginning of the application of its global strategy to build the neo-empire. The United States felt powerful enough not to let its interests be pulled either by diplomacy or by its allies.

New American Hegemony

The following aspects characterize the new American hegemony:

1. The imbalance in the correlation of international forces motivates the hegemonic ambition of the United States.

2. To an extreme degree, American interests are placed above all. For the United States, its interests have neither frontiers nor limits, and spread all around the world. In reality, they are hegemonic interests.

3. The new American hegemony seeks a global hegemony that takes up all aspects. In other words, a political, military, economic, cultural and judicial hegemony. Politically, the United States intervenes in domestic affairs, and attempts to impose its political system, ideology

and values on other countries. Economically, it seeks to direct the international economic order through the IMF, WB, FTAA and other institutions. Militarily speaking, by appealing to its military advantages, it threatens and attacks countries considered defiant and risky.

The New American Hegemony and Latin America

After 9/11, the United States is reinforcing its strategy to control Latin America. It is intensifying its military, political and economic relationships with the Latin American countries in general, and specifically with the Andean ones. It provides military support for Colombia and other countries in the region, and extends its military presence under the pretext of fighting terrorism and drug smuggling and through the Colombia Plan, the Andean Region Initiatives and the Andean Commerce Promotion Law.

After the war against Iraq, the United States is increasing its support for Colombia and for Central American countries, which backed it in the war against Iraq. Upon president Bush's invitation, the presidents of the Dominican Republic and of the Central American countries visited the United States. Bush expressed his desire to promote the free trade treaty with Central American countries, including the Dominican Republic. The United States has shown displeasure with Chile and Mexico for their express position of not supporting the United States in its war against Iraq.

Regarding its economic and commercial relations with Latin America, the United States is accelerating its steps to sign the FTAA treaty with the Latin American countries in early 2005. With the FTAA, the United States intends to control the Latin American economy. Nonetheless, the United States continues with its commercial protectionism practices by increasing its subsidies on agricultural products and imposing custom taxes on imported rolled steel.

With regard to the problems concerning the fight against drug smuggling and terrorism, several Latin American countries oppose the sending of American armed forces to Latin American countries in order to intervene in their domestic affairs by using the excuse of helping them fight drug smuggling and terrorism.

Cuba refutes over and over the United States' classification of it as one of the countries sponsoring terrorism. The United States rejects signing a bilateral treaty against terrorism with Cuba, while at the same time directly or indirectly performing subversive and sabotage activities to overthrow the current Cuban government. The Bush administration keeps applying a harsh policy against Cuba. The United States accuses Cuba without any foundation whatsoever, saying that Cuba is experimenting with biological bombs. Bush claims over and over that the United States will continue the blockade against Cuba unless the latter holds "free and fair elections", frees all political prisoners, and allows opponents to carry out their activities and form political parties legally. The United States continues to enforce the Cuban Adjustment Act to stimulate illegal Cuban emigration. It openly supports and finances Cuban counter-revolutionary groups, and is setting up a worldwide anti-Cuban campaign.

Mexico and the Central American countries criticize the United States for taking so long to sign the treaties regarding the immigration problem with them. In its annual report on the human rights situation, the United States accuses Mexico, Panama, Cuba, Haiti and other Latin American countries, criticizing them for not respecting human rights. However, these countries have energetically rejected the accusation of the United States.

There are contradictions between the United States and the Latin American countries on problems related to commerce, war on terrorism and drug smuggling, immigrants and human rights. The new American hegemony pretends to control Latin America politically, economically, ideologically and militarily, but faces even stronger resistance from the Latin American countries.

The New American Hegemony and China

After the triumph of the Chinese revolution, for a long period the United States applied a hostile policy towards China: military threats, economic blockades, commercial embargoes, and diplomatic isolation. In 1979, thirty years after the foundation of the Popular Republic of China, the United States and China established diplomatic relations. Notwithstanding, the United States essentially has not changed its harsh policy towards China. Chinese-American relations

develop in a zigzagging manner. The United States currently applies a “contact plus contention” policy towards China.

After the abrupt changes experimented by the Eastern European countries and the disintegration of the USSR in the late 80s and early 90s, Chinese-American relations have gone through three stages: first, the sanctions and counter-sanctions stage (1989-1992); then, the pressure and counter-pressures stage (1993-1996); finally, the contact and cooperation stage (1996). The problems related to Taiwan, human rights, and religious and commercial conflicts, have not been solved with the exchange of officials’ mutual visits, the development of commercial relationships or a certain cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Former president Bill Clinton termed China a “strategic partner”. Changing the rhetoric, George W. Bush terms China a “strategic competitor”. The truth is that bilateral relations are still very fragile and volatile. The United States keeps applying its “peaceful evolution” strategy towards China, that is to say, seeks to have China “change its color”. Here is an example: the Rand Corporation recently published a plan to destroy China.

The intentions of the new American hegemony to change the color of Socialist China will fail. The intentions of the new American hegemony to change the color of Socialist Cuba will fail. The intentions of the new American hegemony to control Latin America and the world will fail. China’s position is very clear: “All forms of hegemony and the policy of force need to be combated. China will never attempt hegemony or expansion”[2].

Notas

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1 Ikenberry, G. John 2002 “America’s Imperial Ambition” in Foreign Affairs, September/October.

2 Jiang Zemin, report presented at the XVI National Congress of the Communist Party on November 8, 2002, Beijing, China.

Atilio A. Boron*

After the Sacking: Latin American Capitalism at the Beginning of the XXI Century

Do not accept the usual as a natural thing. Because in times of disorder, of organized confusion, of dehumanized humanity, nothing must appear to be natural. Nothing must appear to be impossible to change

Bertolt Brecht

THE CENTRAL CONCERN of this article is to examine the possibilities and limits of a democratic capitalism in peripheral capitalism. Unfortunately, the main issue that we are going to briefly recapitulate, which can be deemed as exceedingly pessimistic by a complacent observer of the Latin American scene, have been emphatically confirmed by the historical developments unfolded in the last quarter of a century in our region.

Let us succinctly revise some of these arguments.

- The struggle for democracy in Latin America, that is to say, the conquest of equality, justice, liberty and citizen participation, is untenable apart from a resolute struggle against the capital's despotism. More democracy implies, necessarily, less capitalism.

- Neoliberalism leads to an ideological conception and a political practice deeply authoritarian in the management of the public affairs. That is why the neoliberal dilemma is not between the state and the market, as it ideologues want us to believe, but between democracy and the market. And their agents don't hesitate to sacrifice the first for the sake of the second.

- The *de facto* predominance of the dominant classes, defeated in the electoral arena but still controlling the commanding heights of the state apparatus, has disappointed the expectations of justice that large social sectors have entrusted to the new democratic order. It will not be long before the ominous sequels of all this are felt.

- The social agents of democracy cannot expect to "democratize the market". In that privileged kingdom of the private interests, the arguments of distributive justice don't fit.

- Latin American capitalism is so reactionary that even the most timid reforms are perceived as dangerous catalysts of revolution and, as such, fiercely fought back by the dominant classes.

- The discourse and the politics of "possibilist realism" are incapable of transforming reality and consummate the glorification of the status quo, consolidating society's inequities and structural injustices and frustrating the popular hopes nurtured by the recovery of democracy.

- Neoliberal policies bring forth the progressive exhaustion of the new democratic regimes. These revert to a pure formality deprived of all meaningful content, a periodical simulacrum of the democratic ideal while social life regress to the paroxysm of a "quasi-Hobbesian" situation of the war of the all against all, of the every one minding only for himself, which opens the doors to all types of aberrant and anomalous situations.

- Marxism is not a collection of fossilized and canonized dogmas, its theoretical and practical "success" guaranteed in advance. Without the creative praxis of men and women who are the real makers of history, the noble utopia designed by Marx can be frustrated, and what today we know as "civilization" can decay into the darkest barbarism.

Quite regrettably, history's unappealable verdict has confirmed the prognosis we drew up more than a decade ago about the course of capitalist development in our region. It was neither a profound pessimism nor a perverse desire for things "to go wrong" in the new historical cycle brought about by the advent of democracies in Latin America. Our forecasts were founded on a

concrete analysis of the nature and dynamics of Latin American capitalisms, and this analysis did not allow to share the illusory predictions formulated by the social sciences' conventional wisdom about the future of the new democracies and the type of society that would sprout out of the cruel processes of capitalist restructuring going on in the region. Just as we have repeatedly asserted in several opportunities, that debate has been settled, and not as a product of a scholastic polemic but as the result of the practical historical developments of our peoples.

In fact, there are no longer doubts about the significance and goals of neoliberal policies; neither as for the limitations of the re-democratization launched under so many hopes in the eighties. The myths that hid the real intentions of such policies vanished in the white-hot furnace of historical practice. What before were theoretical forecasts and postures –strongly combated by the representatives of *pensée unique*, of course– now give place to the distressing reckon up of the sacking, the mournful inventory of the victims that have been left in the lurch, the discouraging balance of the plunder of our riches, and the theft of our dreams. The Washington Consensus pseudo "reformism" was laid bare, and when the battle's haze and smoke and the false hopes cunningly promoted by the propaganda of the ideological agencies of capital were driven away, what appeared to our eyes was a terrifying landscape. An entire continent devastated by poverty, indigence and social exclusion; the environment assaulted and to a large extent destroyed, sacrificed for the profits of huge monopolies; a shattered society undergoing an accelerated process of social disintegration; an increasingly dependent economy, vulnerable, controlled by foreign firms; a political democracy reduced to a periodical electoral simulacrum in which the people's mandate ("people" being an expression that has been expelled from the public language and replaced by others more anodyne and deceptive, like the "folks", "civil society" or the "citizenry"!), not to talk of their hopes and expectations, is systematically ignored by the successive authorities sworn into office after each election. And lastly, in a listing that does not intend to be exhaustive, a state usually pockmarked by corruption, and almost always distressingly powerless to deal with the challenges of our time and to put an end to the anthropophagical vocation of monopolies, big imperialist capital and its allies.

Behind were left all the illusions neatly cultivated by the ideological apparatuses of capital: as predicted by Marxist theory the famous "trickle-down" that according to the neoliberal doctrinaires would prodigally discharge over the homes of the poor part of the wealth accumulated by the richest didn't occur. In its place, we have seen an unheard-of process of social and economic polarization and the phenomenal increase in the concentration of riches, which led our dominant classes to enrich more and more each day, while the number of poor and indigents that plunged into an unprecedented deprivation in our history skyrocketed. Commercial liberalization, which supposedly was to be corresponded by an equivalent move practiced by the developed economies at the capitalist core turned out to be an autistic gesture, with catastrophic consequences in the levels of employment of our societies. Privatizations hallowed the legal plundering of the public wealth and its transfer to huge monopolies –in many cases state-owned companies of the imperialist metropolis!– that in that way retained, at a shabby price, firms and resources that the countries had accumulated throughout several generations. Lastly, the financial deregulation, exalted by the neoliberal catechism as a sure source of capital inflows for our region, converted most of Latin America and Caribbean's economies in cheap subsidiaries of that biggest world casino of our times: the international financial system[1].

It is no surprise then to verify the increasing social destabilization of our countries and the worrying signs that speak of the weakness of their painfully recovered democracies. This is a fact usually skipped by those who feel content themselves with just a glance at the appearances and at the most superficial aspects of reality. A shining example of this attitude is found in the numberless papers written by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund staff extolling the soundness of the economic reforms in Latin America (Edwards, 1997). The fact, instead, is that, beyond formalisms, Latin American democracies have run empty of substance. Not by chance, diverse opinion polls applied in the region record the high frustration rates of citizens as regards the performances of democratic governments. Skepticism, apathy, and indifference with regard to democracy's institutional devices, grew with no respite in the last years. If this disenchantment persists, it would be scarcely a matter of time before it extends from governments –which are supposed to embody democratic aspirations– to the democratic regime itself. This contagion will be unavoidable insofar as governments, with scarcely slight differences among them, have completely detached themselves from the fate of the citizenry,

widening the gulf dividing rulers and the ruled, and concentrating their efforts to satisfy the demands of the privileged minorities and of a rapacious plutocracy. This regrettable condition now appears as the historical concretion of the democratic conquests and as an example of the free market's virtues.

The political expression of this widespread civic dissatisfaction has been varied: it goes from the Chiapas' Zapatista insurrection of January 1, 1994 to the formidable popular mobilizations of December 19 and 20, 2001, in Argentina, which overthrew Fernando de la Rua's government and, later, the mass repudiation that blasted, in the presidential elections in Argentina in April 2003, the attempted return to power of the man who has been the paradigm of neoliberal policies in the region, Carlos Saúl Menem. Other milestones in this path have been: the three great indigenous and peasants' mobilizations in Ecuador, which just recently ousted the third president in eight years; the urban protest in Peru which precipitated first Alberto Fujimori's fall and which now holds at bay the government of Alejandro Toledo, blessed from its beginnings by George W. Bush in person during his visit to Peru; the health workers' struggles in El Salvador and the rising popular demonstrations against the Free Trade Agreement in Guatemala and Nicaragua; the Bolivian new popular insurgency, linked to the fight for water and the defense of the autochthonous crops and strategic gas and oil reserves, and against the policies of infinite structural adjustment promoted by the, himself ousted too, president Sánchez de Lozada, a loyal viceroy of the White House who could barely speak Spanish; the crushing defeat suffered by the candidate of "neoliberal continuism" in Brazil, José Serra, in the hands of Luis Inácio "Lula" da Silva, with a clear popular mandate, unfortunately not honored yet, of abandoning those nefarious policies; the consolidation of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela's presidency, legitimized by an endless string of electoral victories notwithstanding the contrived conspiracy, with the White House's consent and organizational and financial support, by the most reactionaries and corrupted sectors of the Venezuelan society; the constitution of a striking protest movement in the Mexico of Vicente Fox, "The countryside can no longer hold" (*El campo no aguanta más*), against the neoliberal policies incited in the NAFTA and, more recently, the huge popular mobilization in Mexico City which forced the government to drop the charges of the phony legal process against López Obrador.

In the following pages we will try to bring forward an overview of the transformations that have come about in Latin American societies in recent years and that rest at the foundations of their tremulous political superstructures.

Nature and extents of neoliberal "reformism"

The decade of the eighties has witnessed a veritable reformist wave, which in an unequal way affected almost all the countries of the region. But before presenting the most outstanding outlines of this process it will be convenient to make a short pause to clarify a by no means irrelevant semantic matter.

It so happens that it has become a commonplace to talk about "reforms" to refer to what, in the tradition of western political thought, better responds to the expression "counter-reform". We have explored this theme in another place, so we are not going to make any further considerations on this matter[2]. It is enough for us to say that, actually, the policies executed in our region far from having introduced "reforms" –this is, gradual changes directed towards a greater equality, more social welfare benefits, and an enlarged enjoyment of all sort of freedoms for the whole population, in accordance with the meaning of the word "reform" in the tradition of the political philosophy–, what they did was exactly the opposite: to boost a set of transformations which cut down old civic rights, dramatically reduced the state's social security benefits, and consolidated a much more unjust and unequal society than the one that existed at the beginning of the "reformist" stage. What happens is that neoliberalism's ideological victory is expressed, among other things, by a singular semantic slide that causes words to lose their classic significance and adopt a new one; and in some cases, such as this one, clearly an antithetic meaning. In that sense, the "reforms" suffered by our societies in the last decades were in fact cruel "counter-reforms", unleashing profound processes of social regression. But the word "reform" has such a positive significance that the neoliberal ideologues were not ready to relinquish it into the hands of their adversaries, and they persisted in their claim that neoliberal rulers were the standard bearers of change and innovation, and their opponents a

bunch of nostalgic defenders of a decaying old order that deserved to be buried as soon as possible.

One of the most militant advocates of this peculiar brand of "reformism", Sebastian Edwards, former chief economist of the World Bank, offered an extraordinarily optimistic version of what has occurred since the eighties: "Halfway through 1993, analysts and international economic media perceived the reforms towards a market policy as a success and proclaimed that several Latin American countries were on the way to convert into a new generation of 'tigers'. Foreign investments rapidly came near the region and the consultants and studious hastened to analyze the experiences of Chile, Mexico and Argentina with the purpose of learning first-hand how countries that only a couple of years before appeared to have no hopes had become so attractive for the international money"3. According to this peculiar appreciation, Edwards divided the countries of the region into four categories (1997: 18-19):

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The considerable time passed since the beginning of these "reforms" allows us to evaluate in a more complete way their merits and compare them with the promises made by successive "reformers". It is no longer a discussion about the interpretation of one or two isolated facts or figures, but a much deeper analysis that allows the identification of the long term tendencies nurtured by the new policies implemented since the boom of the neoliberal ideas in the eighties and nineties. Of course, even the most elementary analysis done on this long run structural trends, with whatever methodology, will throw a result that will surely disappoint Edwards and the neoliberal ideologues: ten years after such a jubilant diagnostic, our region has miserably failed to produce a single economic "tiger", not to talk so of an entire generation of them.

When referring to the reform processes that took place in Brazil, a "late reformer", according to Edwards, Francisco de Oliveira noted that actually the expression "state reform" was a title that bore little connection with reality. As happened in other countries of the region, under that pompous name it was hidden a well-known and much more pedestrian policy: wholesale public budget cuts, massive lay offs of public servants and dramatic cuts of the labor rights of the survivors. Seen in historical perspective to this was reduced the much-celebrated "rationalization" and "modernization" of the public sector promoted by the governments of the G-7, the IMF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and carried out by the region's governments (Sader, 1996: 94-95). A few years later, the same World Bank would lament the deplorable implications of this policy. The state destruction promoted by neoliberalism in order to make room for the market dynamics went so far that at the end of the journey the state apparatus needed to run the countries, under any economic system, was no longer there. In some African countries the decay of the already rudimentary post-colonial state system reached to the point that the WB people realized to their dismay that there was not a single public agency left capable of organizing a rational distribution of the foodstuff coming from the international cooperation to fight famine. The enlightened "sorcerers" of capital began to get worried about how to "bring the state back in", to paraphrase a well known book dealing with these matters[5].

Oliveira's remarks are pertinent for the rest of Latin America, where the state reform was undertaken by governments dominated by a neoliberal zeal which led them first to demonize the state and then to its simple destruction. The consequences of these policies, promoted by the so-called "multilateral economic institutions" –euphemism to name institutions which are neither multilateral nor solely economic but mainly political, like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Trade Organization, among others– through the "conditionalities" imposed to indebted nations either too weak to resist foreign pressures or in bankruptcy, were, on the one hand, a dramatic increase of social exclusion in all the countries of the region and, on the other, a worrying debilitation of the democratic impulse that so many hopes had aroused in our countries since the decade of the eighties.

This process took place at a time in which the state as an institution was the object not only of concrete, material attacks (privatizations, budgetary reductions, organizational dismantling and "downsizing", etc.) but also of doggedly ideological criticisms by which the states was presented to the general public as an incurably corrupt and immoral institution dominated by

selfishly politicians completely detached from the search of the public good, an institution by "nature" inefficient in the management of delicate economic and financial matters and, as if the former were not enough, plagued by populist and demagogic propensities that must be uprooted in order to guarantee the good governance and sound economic policy-making.

However, while these attacks were carried out with renewed fervor, a kind of Hegelian "cunning of reason" gave back to the state the "centrality" and importance that was denied to it in other spheres. Thus, its irreplaceable contribution was paradoxically reaffirmed by a succession of governmental "summits" that against the prevailing neoliberal ethos emphatically underlined the crucial role of the states, and not of markets, in the struggle against poverty (Copenhagen), to promote women's rights, (Beijing), to control the exorbitant increase of the population (Cairo), or to preserve the biodiversity and the environment for future generations (Rio de Janeiro). In all these cases, in which several crucial civilizational problems today challenging humanity were confronted, the bankruptcy neoliberalism was blatantly evident, to the extent that even its more staunch supporters had to recognize that the "markets magics" don't have the slightest possibility to solve the crises analyzed in these summits, and that to find a way out of these problems the only alternative was in the hand of concerted state policies.

This certainty, which silently undermined the neoliberal "anti-statism", acquired even more decisive features when ratified by one the "gurus" of the free-market economic thought, Peter F. Drucker. In an article published in the commemorative number of the 75° anniversary of *Foreign Affairs*, Drucker examines what has happened with the states in the context of globalization. And after verifying the "amazing resistance" of the former to the influences of the latter, he concludes that "in all probability, therefore, the nation-state will survive the globalization of the economy and the information revolution that accompanies it" (Drucker, 1997: 160). Drucker rejects, in this way, the one of the more widespread beliefs of the *pensée unique* of late twentieth century: the illusion of the state extinction, a daydream that has captured not only the minds of intellectuals and ideologues of the right but has also made some important inroads in the thought, supposedly anti-establishment and contesting, as witnessed in the recent production of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000), and John Holloway (2002)[6].

In Argentina, this destructive task was literally carried out with unsurpassed meticulosity by several governments, especially after 1989. It is only fair to recognize, though, that the decade presided by Carlos Saúl Menem has the doubtful merit of being the real champion of this neoliberal crusade. In this country the so-called capitalism's "creative destruction", so extolled in Joseph Schumpeter's work, was exclusively limited to the first term of the expression: destruction was the voice of order of the day, while the task of creation is still a long way off. Not much different is the story of the "shock therapies" recommended *urbi et orbi* by the IMF pundits to "solve" the traditional problems of Latin American –and African, East European, Asian, etcetera!– economies. Again, the "shocks" proliferated but the therapies were conspicuously missing. In Argentina, this destructive enterprise went so far that it left the country at the mercy of all types of circumstances: if the natural forests of the Patagonia are set on fire there are no personal and material resources to face the catastrophe, save to elevate our prayers to the good Lord. Shocked by the losses of the 1996 fires, the Menem government decide to create a special fund to finance the fire fighting of the next dry season, discounting from the already ridiculously low budget of the national universities five million dollars.

Another absurd example: some areas of the rich province of Buenos Aires are flooded due to the lack of maintenance of the drainage channels its rivers and lagoons. These works have been postponed for years because of the need to ensure the control of public expenditures to pay the external debt. Nevertheless, the "savings" obtained with this official inaction originate much bigger losses in the production of one of the richer agricultural areas of the world. But this is a little thing that doesn't disturb our rulers and their experts, determined as they are to attain a "fiscal superavit" which would appease the angers of the envoys of the IMF and WB and facilitates the obtaining of new and ever more leonine foreign loans. All this is all the most tragic when one hears, at the same time, the ideologues and publicists of neoliberalism asserting that such a monstrous irrationality is necessary to "attract" foreign investments and reduce, or simply suppress, the taxes which may discourage big companies and big fortunes to invest in the country.

Loyal to this belief, the Argentine Minister of Economy Domingo Felipe Cavallo, a man who as president of the Central Bank during the rule of the bloody military junta "socialized" a external private –not public, but private!– debt of near 30 billion dollars, decided under the

"democratic" government of Carlos S. Menem to eliminate the "discriminatory taxes" which were placed on cola drinks, champagne and luxury rugs. As such initiative, applauded by the neoliberal experts, implied a loss of some 300 million dollars per year in tax incomes the government also decided to augment in two years the minimum retirement age of women, from 60 to 62 years, and in that way take advantage of the supposedly excellent health and medic care conditions available in neoliberal Argentina. Tragicomic examples as these may be multiplied ad infinitum, specially if it is reminded that the Argentine case, even though it was the most radical, was far from being alone. This real "crusade" that our governments undertook against the state, completely demonized by the dominant ideology, is a monument to the irrationality of capitalist development (Boron, 2003b).

To sum up, the verdict of history is unequivocal. Neoliberal "reforms" miserably failed in three fundamental aspects: they didn't promote a steady process of economic growth; they didn't succeed in fighting and reducing poverty and diminishing the social exclusion settled in our region as result of the collapse of the import-substitution model and the debt crisis; and far from strengthening the democratic institutions and their popular legitimacy, this model has weakened and discredited them up to an unprecedented level in the history of Latin America.

Neoliberal policies and economic growth

Regarding economic growth, the performance of the "adjusted" Latin America's economies from 1980 on could hardly have been more disappointing. The gross national product grew at an annual average rate of 1.7% in the decade of the eighties, and 3.4% in the following one. Provided that in the first of these periods the growth of the population was situated in a yearly 2%, this meant a downturn in the GDP per capita of around 0.3% annually all along the decade, fairly a good reason to call that decade the "lost decade". In the following, with a smaller rate of population growth, the preceding declining trend was barely reverted as the per capita GDP growth rate achieved a modest annual 1.7%. This figure amounts to less than half of the rate prevailing in the region in the three decades elapsing from the post-war years and the crisis of the mid seventies, when according to the IMF and the WB pundits the economic policies were incurably wrong, reinforcing economic backwardness and stagnation (CEPAL, 2002).

According to Edwards, the reformist pioneers had an advantage: they were able to advance rapidly in the sphere of structural transformations. This assertion is done without opening an argument about an essential question: the sign, or the direction, of such transformations. That is to say, without inquiring into who were its beneficiaries and who were its victims, not to talk about a more comprehensive appraisal aimed at pointing out if these "reforms" were instrumental in building a better society or if, on the contrary, they left as legacy one even more unjust and unequal than the preceding. For instance, our author doesn't save words to extol the Chilean case to the category of a model to follow, "because (Chile) started the reforms in 1975, almost ten years before the rest" (Edwards, 1997: 20). That is why in this country the reforms are much more advanced and have marked all the facets of the economic, political and social life. Of course, Edwards doesn't wonder if it is good or bad for the general welfare that almost all the facets of Chile's life are impregnated with the mercantile logic; or the fact that these reforms happened to be initiated and imposed by bloodiest dictatorship of Chile's history, with more than 3,000 persons killed or "disappeared", thousands in jails during almost two decades, surely a "political" theme in relation to which "serious" economists, trained in the best US universities, must never dare to explore. Moreover, Edwards passes completely over the fact that the application of these policies –which started immediately after the 1973 Pinochet *coup d'état*– ended in the phenomenal financial crash of 1982 and that only after 1985, twelve years later, did the Chilean economy took up again a path of growth. This was done by paying deaf ears to some basic tenets of the Washington Consensus: strict regulations were established to control the external capital account while the big copper mines –providers of Chile´s wage, according to Salvador Allende– were not privatized and kept under state control. On the other hand the land confiscated to the latifundistas in previous years remained in the hands of its new owners, giving birth to a dynamic, new class of rural medium-sized entrepreneurs while the role and economic presence of the state in key aspects of the economic life was if anything enhanced. In Chile, public expenditures went up while in the rest of the region they were rapidly decreasing.

Mexico, on the other hand, also pointed out in a first version of Edwards's book as a country in which neoliberal reforms had reached their maturity and were in process of consolidation, appeared in the final, 1997, version of the book under much less brilliant lights (Sader, 1996). Boasting of the pseudo-technical and "value-free" traditional rhetoric of conventional economics Edwards points out that "the social events (¡sic!) of Chiapas at the beginning of 1994 and the assassination of the presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio have introduced some doubts in relation to the exact direction in which the Mexican reforms will move forward during the next 12 years" (Edwards, 1997: 20). As if the preceding were little anecdotes bearing no importance, Edwards continues undisturbed with his analysis paying not attention, for instance, to the role played by that real "economic annexation" which Mexico experimented with the entry into the NAFTA and which extraordinarily increased its external vulnerability, undoubtedly another anecdotic fact. Wouldn't it be prudent to take into account the eloquent coincidence between this process of reforms and the appearance of the Zapatista guerrilla –not only a mere "social event" but a sign of the painful "social debt" that still prevails in Mexico– and of a whole series of new protest movements against the real euthanasia of the poor and the small firms caused by the NAFTA?

In any case, and proceeding within this line of argument, the reformist governments would have entered –in accordance with this World Bank's "semi-official" view– into the venturous track of the self-sustained growth, thus removing the serious obstacles that for decades had frustrated Latin American hopes. However, a more attentive reading of the figures that Edwards provides in his book allows other conclusions. In effect, although in the years immediately subsequent to the debt crisis (1982-1986) all the countries of the region experienced a dramatic downturn in the GDP growth rates, the following period shows very significant variations in the direction and rhythm of the economic recovery.

While no doubt Chile managed, from 1985 onwards, to get out of the phenomenal crisis in which it had fell when it adopted, with the zeal of the converted, the dreadful teachings of the Chicago School. But the marked recovery of the economy in those years wasn't but the contrast of the descent to the dark depths produced in 1982. In any case, it is essential to recognize that in the following years this tendency was reaffirmed, to show a new dynamism born from the renewed conditions in which the Chilean economy was being developed, conditions that were to persist until little before the end of the nineties. Afterwards, the growth rates of Chile were markedly reduced, and by the time these lines are being written, they haven't been able to recover the thrust shown in the second half of the eighties.

The case of Bolivia, another reformist "pioneer", is quite different. This country's economy has been during some time directly ran and monitored almost personally by one of the top gurus of contemporaneous neoliberalism, Harvard's economist Jeffrey Sachs. Loyal to the conviction that any activity that the state would undertake in the economic life is worse than useless, expensive, loss making, and a permanent temptation for corruption, Sachs did not save efforts to get the government to start an economic program that responded exactly to each one of the tenets of neoliberal catechism[7]. Nevertheless, the per capita growth rate of the GDP in was scarcely of an annual 0.7% for the period 1987-1992 (Edwards,1997: 18), whereas more recent data published by the CEPAL (2002: Chart 8) covering the decade 1991-2000 show that such rate for all this period was of 1.3% per year, much lower than the one reported by one of the countries which Edwards describes as "non-reformer" in a recalcitrant way, the Dominican Republic, whose yearly per capita growth rate of the GDP for the decade was 4%.

A similar commentary could be done in relation to Mexico, one of the first reformers, and in a way, one of the examples constantly displayed by the economists linked to the World Bank and the IMF. Mexico left behind the 1982 debt crisis, caused precisely by the Mexican default of August of that year, with a per capita growth rate of the GDP for the period 1987-1992 of 1% per year. But in spite of Edward's optimistic hopes, during the rest of the decade the performance of the Mexican economy did very little to endorse the rosy expectations of the neoliberals. If in the post-debt crisis period of 1987-1992 the Mexican rate of growth was noticeably inferior to the one achieved by two countries up until then recalcitrant to reformism, Colombia and Venezuela, with rates of 2 and 1.6% yearly respectively, the figures of the period 1991-2000 illustrate even in a more conclusive way the dimensions of this deception. In effect, and in spite of the great hopes opened with the conformation of NAFTA, the performance of the Mexican economy hardly reached a yearly rate of 1.8%, which unfavorably contrasts with the ones of other countries much more skeptic regarding the teachings of the Washington

Consensus: the already mentioned Dominican Republic, that grows in that same period at a rate of 4%; Panama with 2.7%; and Uruguay, where a popular plebiscite put an end to privatizations, with a 2.2%.

In conclusion, the concrete data that arises from the recent experience fully supports the thesis of the critics of the orthodox policies. In this sense, one may point out that the poor economic performance of the neoliberal age may hardly be considered as startling. Raúl Prebisch pointed out, in an insightful paper published as early as in 1982, that what appeared as a great innovation in the field of theory and economic policy-making was nothing more than a new wrapping of the old liberal formulas already proved as unsuccessful in the past. The founder of the CEPAL argued that after decades of having been excluded from any serious international public debate because of their responsibility in the production of the Great Depression of 1929, the neoclassical theory returned to the forefront, metamorphosed now as neoliberalism, catapulted by the crisis of Keynesianism and the trauma of stagflation in the seventies. In their reincarnation, these old theses were condensed in three real "articles of faith":

- Traditional neoclassical theory posed the existence of a natural international division of labor, based in the comparative advantages of the nations, to which the countries of the periphery must adapt, like it or not. Contemporaneous version of this theory: globalization, a "natural" and irresistible phenomenon in front of which sensible and realistic governments have no other option but to incline. In words of the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, the international division of labor means that some countries specialize in winning while others specialize in making losses.

- Traditional formulation of the theory: the state must refrain from interfering in economic life, except for some punctual and occasional interventions in infrastructure and other general undertakings unprofitable for the private actors. Current version of the theory: privatizations, reduction of the public expenditure, state downsizing, wholesale markets deregulation.

- Traditional formulation: primacy of the gold standard, now replaced by the dollar standard.

The crisis of 1929 put a sudden and traumatic end to the unchallenged predominance of neoclassic economics. But the exhaustion of this theory had been precociously pointed out by the penetrating, and lonely, voice of John M. Keynes in an exceptional short piece written in 1926, a few years before the outbreak of the crisis: "The end of the *laissez-faire*". To overcome the crisis governments turned to protectionism, from which it was then impossible to come back –as the endless failures of the GATT and WTO negotiations clearly prove. On the other hand, the crisis prompted a radical redefinition and enhancement of the state's roles in capitalist accumulation, leading to a real "statification" of this process[8]. Prebisch unsuccessfully warned about the inconvenience of returning to a model of macroeconomic management which had proved its radical inadequacy to face the problems of the development already in the decade of 1920, and that also involved enormous social and politic costs that should be imposed to the population in a democratic context, inflicting weakening social integration and damaging the legitimacy of the nascent democratic regimes (Prebisch, 1982: 73-78).

The social holocaust caused by the neoliberal policies

In relation to this theme, the historic evidence offers a not less conclusive verdict. Far from being the carrier of social progress, neoliberal policies precipitated a social holocaust unprecedented in Latin America's history. This resulted in the dramatic increase of social exclusion, poverty and the vulnerability of very large sections of Latin American societies (Ziccardi, 2002).

The neoliberal policies implemented, with the sole exception of Cuba, in the whole region in the eighties and nineties witnessed an unprecedented intensification of all the indices of social exclusion and mass poverty. In its servile obedience to the imperialism's dictates, our governments didn't content with instituting a market economy but, going one step farther, exerted themselves to create what Pierre Mauro has called a "market society", that is to say, a society in which citizen's rights are curtailed and forced to adapt to a mercantile logic decreeing the defenselessness and social disenfranchisement –not political but social disenfranchisement– of huge masses of our populations. The passage from a market economy to a market society is mediated by the capitulation of the state and the bankruptcy of its

capacities of intervention and management, which clearly places both, the state and society, as hostages of the market forces. This means that the markets can develop to its limits the social Darwinism that allows them to select the more suitable and profitable subjects, while eliminating the ones who are not: children, the old, the sick, unrecoverable educationally handicapped adults, etcetera.

It isn't necessary to overwhelm the reader with much arguments and evidence: the sad figures and data of all sorts documenting the unprecedented levels of poverty, inequality, social exclusion, injustice and exploitation prevailing in Latin American societies has stirred even some of the most reposed spirits and some of the most conservative international bureaucracies, such as the World Bank's, for instance. Dissatisfaction regarding the disappointing results of the neoliberal adjustment is already visible among some of its most resolute supporters. Towards the end of the nineties, Joseph Stiglitz (1998), at that time one the World Bank's vice-presidents, proclaimed the need to institute a "post-Washington" consensus. A few years later, after having been quickly fired by the World Bank due to his distressing public statements on the failure of neoliberal policies, Stiglitz published a series of works in which he showed, on the basis of his vast international experience, that the recommendations of the neoliberal catechism don't work (Stiglitz, 2000; 2002). They are utterly useless either as a way out from the crisis or as a strategy to grow; or to solve the problems of the external flank; and much less as a recipe to ease the social debt. In the last years, other economists –as Jeffrey Sachs, for instance– formerly staunch defenders of the neoliberal orthodoxy have started to move, although in a more carefully way, in the same direction as Stiglitz.

The impoverishing consequences of these policies had been denounced, already halfway through the eighties, by Agustín Cueva (1979). Looking at the Latin American social landscape Cueva observed the appearance and very rapid dissemination throughout our societies of two new social types: the beggar and the drug dealer, unmistakable symptoms of the social decay caused by the policies of the Washington Consensus. In front of this, the poor either "live on the charity of the North", used to say Cueva, "or has to trade with drugs". What characterizes the popular conglomerates in Latin America –those two thirds or four fifths of our societies that are regarded as "redundant" populations and, for that reason, left "outside" the game– is a profound process of social disintegration. The well-known discourse of the "end of the working class", so dear to some benevolent spirits, far from reflecting the overcoming of class exploitation and the appearance of a new, upgraded category of wage-earners, refers rather to a process of dreadful dissolution of the social and of withdrawal towards an ultra-individualism which could hardly be greeted as a passage to a better society.

In case these social trends continue, and if the region's governments don't definitively abandon the recipe book of the Washington Consensus, our societies will end up reconstructing the worst nightmares of the Hobbesian state of nature: a kind of social war of all against all, where the survival itself of the civil society –understood in the best of the Western philosophical tradition, as the *vivere civile e politico* that Machiavelli posed as a substitution for the war– will be at stakes. It is not necessary to be extremely pessimistic to agree with Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2005) when he notices the co-existence of "Hobbessian" and "Lockean" features in Latin America societies: Hobbes for the poor, Locke for the rich. The destruction –or radical weakening– of civil society, that in his classic study Karl Polanyi (1944) accurately related to the work of market's forces, is already a reality in most of the countries of the region. The breakdown of the social integration mechanisms and the progressive disarticulation of the collective actors that in a not very remote past held together the class societies in peripheral capitalisms gave free rein to deep antisocial tendencies and attitudes. The anomic individualism, the "every man for himself", as a cultural pattern emulating the pathological individualism of American society, and the parallel dismantling of popular organizations have established violence –open or concealed but equally violent– as the common format of social relations. This deterioration is, with no doubt, result of a real but scarcely declared "social war" which, fought by neoliberal agents, leads to the gradual extermination of the poor under a variety of forms: principally by massive incarceration, as in the US; "soft" economic genocide, as in South-Saharan Africa; or social and economic exclusion, as in most of Latin America. Instead of fighting poverty, Noam Chomsky observed with irony, neoliberal governments fight the poor. The consequence of all this is the "privatization" of violence seen in most capitalist countries today, where a real army of private guards and security personnel has in its charge the custody of the rich, while an increasing number of indigents cannot even satisfy their most fundamental human needs and are kept in line by the growing militarization of our societies and the

criminalization of social protest. This situation, joined to the fiscal crisis of the state and its desertion from its fundamental obligations, which among other things causes to be impossible to finance something as fundamental for the civilized coexistence as the administration of justice, precipitated the emerge of several practices tended to "take justice into one's own hand", in a range that goes from the "righteous" vigilante of the middle class who feels morally authorized to shoot at a marginal adolescent who tries to steal the radio from his car, to the popular "lynching" of corrupt local authorities caused by the justice's apathy and indifference in front of the grievances of the poor.

The attack to democracy

The third and last aspect that we would like to examine in these pages refers to the debilitation of the democratic impulse caused by the corrosive effects of the Washington Consensus. Far from having consolidated our new democracies, neoliberal policies have undermined them and its consequences are clearly felt today. That's why that after more than two decades of functioning the achievements of Latin American democratic capitalisms are quite disappointing. Our societies today are more unequal and unjust that the preceding ones. If between 1945 and 1980 they had experienced a moderate progress in direction of social equality, and if in that same period a diversity of political regimes, from variants of populism to some modalities of "developmentalism", had managed to lay the foundations of a policy that, in some countries, was aggressively "inclusive" and tended towards the social and political "enfranchisement" of large sections of our popular strata, traditionally deprived of every right, the period started with the debt crisis has a clearly contrary sign. The preceding trend is canceled and a new one starts, moving exactly in the opposite direction. In this new phase, celebrated as the definitive reconciliation of our countries with the inexorable imperatives of globalized markets, old rights –as health, education, housing, social security– were abruptly "commodified" and turned into unattainable mercantile goods, throwing large masses of our societies into poverty and indigence. The precarious nets of social solidarity were demolished *pari passu* with the social fragmentation and marginalization caused by the orthodox economic policies and the exorbitant individualism promoted by the new dominant values borne both by the "lords of the market" and the politic class that commanded these processes. Moreover, the collective actors and the social forces that in the past channeled and voiced the expectations and interests of the popular classes –labor unions, left wing parties, popular associations of all sorts, etc.– were artfully disorganized and weakened, or simply swept aside from the political scene. In this way, the citizens of our democracies found themselves trapped in a paradoxical situation: while in the ideological "heaven" of the new democratic capitalism the popular sovereignty and a wide repertoire of constitutionally reasserted rights were exalted, in the prosaic "earth" of the market and civil society citizens were carefully and meticulously deprived of these rights by means of sweeping processes of social and economic "disenfranchisement" which excluded them from the benefits of the economic progress and converted democracy in an empty simulacrum.

As a result of the former, democracy has become that "empty shell" of which Nelson Mandela so many times spoke, where increasingly irresponsible and corrupt politicians run our countries with total indifference regarding the common good and the interests of the citizenry. That this is so is proved by the enormous popular distrust regarding politicians, parties and parliaments, a phenomenon seen, with varying levels of intensity, in every single country of the region.

It shouldn't surprise us, in consequence, to find that the results of public-opinion polls in Latin America show high levels of dissatisfaction with the performance of our democratic regimes. Systematic measurements carried out by *Latinobarómetro* show extremely worrying results: if in 1997 41% of a region's sample (some 19,000 persons in 18 countries,) declared to be satisfied with democracy, in 2001 this proportion had descended to a 25% to improve a little bit in 2004, when the proportion rose up to 29%. Thus, for the period 1997-2004 there was a decline in 12 percentage points in the satisfaction with democracy in Latin America, a decline whose significance is enhanced by the fact that the starting point in the comparison, the year 1997, was far from being very reassuring. Only three countries deviated from this descending trend: Venezuela, where the percentage of people declared satisfied with the democratic regime increased seven points; and Brazil and Chile, where the proportion rose 5 and 3 percentage points respectively.

Generally speaking, it could be said that, in the ideological context signed by the primacy of neoliberalism, the political participation of the citizenry in public affairs was systematically discouraged. The "North Americanization" of Latin American politics, visible in the format –and the emptiness– of the electoral campaigns, the ideological dilution of the party competition, the parties' obsession to occupy the supposed "centre" of the ideological spectrum, and the primacy of videopolitics, with its insipid speeches and its convoluted advertising styles reinforces the political indifference and apathy already promoted by the market logic. The latter are typical of the public life of the United States, and far from being circumstantial features, they are the result of a conscious constitutional design forged by the founding fathers of the United States constitution that didn't save arguments to discourage, or prevent, the participation of the "lower classes" in the conduct of public affairs. Thereby, the United States is one of the few countries in the world in which elections –presidential, parliamentary or of governors– take place in working days, the other major case being the United Kingdom, not precisely outstanding by the strength of her democratic institutions. In Latin America, the discouragement of political participation relates, in first place, with the disrepute and disgrace of anything pertaining to the public sphere, like the state and the political process. The neoliberal propaganda has succeeded in its indoctrination efforts by which the public sphere, and very especially the state, came to be perceived as a field in which corruption, venality, irresponsibility and demagogy prevail without counterweight. A place, in synthesis, in which no honest person must worry to be part of. This negative evaluation sharply contrasts with the symmetrical exaltation of the virtues deposited in the market –a pure sphere in which the egoistic nature of men and women are sublimed and converted in inexhaustible forces of creativity and material progress– and in "civil society", conceived in the purity of the neoliberal propaganda as a neutral territory freed from the class, sexists and racists differences which indelibly mark "civil society" in he contemporaneous capitalisms (Meiksins Wood: 1995).

To the aforementioned factors of apathy and indifference it should be added two additional considerations: the fact that the collectivist strategies of political intervention had fell likewise into disgrace in favour of the strong individualism that prevails in the markets; and the trivialization of politics and of the citizenry's few participative moments –exemplified in the dictatorship of the markets and in the fact that these, as George Soros remembered, "voted every day" and not every four years, like the ordinary citizen–, ended by driving away citizens from the elections and promote the "privatization" of their activities. If every party elaborate the same discourse, if all of them pretend to gain a supposed political and ideological "centre", if nobody wants to differ and win the enmity of the "lords of the money", and if everybody is determined to govern according to the dictates of the market, why waste one's time looking for information on public affairs, comparing candidates and vote in the election day?

In short: it hardly could be maintained that a "neoliberal paradise" as we know in our region could sustain a democratic order founded on widespread citizenry participation. It rather looks as a propitious scenario for the rise of new forms of political despotism. In consequence, Latin America's unsubstantial democracies are suffering the blows not only of the "market orientated reforms", as euphemistically are called, but of an authentic social counter-reformation determined to reach any extremes necessary in order to preserve and reproduce the existing unequal and unfair social and economic structures of our societies, with all the privileges that they represent for the dominant groups. This counter-reformation has as a declared goal: to ensure that the rigor of the markets recover their role as incentives to set in motion supposedly more rational and innovative behaviors of the economic agents. This is the basic line of reasoning of F. Von Hayek, with his intransigent sermons against egalitarianism and collectivism. In his own words: "inequality, unbearable for so many, has been necessary to attain the relatively high level of incomes that today most people in the West enjoy" (Hayek, 1944: 27). That's why there can't be no doubt that, just as Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990: 22) has repeatedly observed, a good indicator of the degree of existing social justice in a country is given by the degree of "de-commodification" of the supply of basic goods and services required to satisfy the basic human needs of men and women. The "de-commodification" means that a person can survive without depending on the market's capricious movements and, as Esping-Andersen notes, it "strengthens the worker and debilitates the absolute authority of employers. This is, precisely, the reason why employers have always opposed to it". There where the provision of education, health, housing, recreation and social security –to mention the most common instances– happens to be freed from the exclusionary bias introduced by the markets we are likely to witness the rise of a fair society and of a strong democracy. The other face of

“commodification” is the exclusion, because it means that only who has enough money will be able to acquire the goods and services that in other societies are inherent to the condition of citizen. Therefore, societies with an unequal access to basic goods and services –that is to say, where those basic goods and services are no longer conceived as civil rights of universal adjudication– we will find injustice and all the repertoire of its aberrant signs: indigence and poverty, social disintegration and anomie, ignorance, illness, and multiple forms of oppression with all its regrettable sequels.

The Scandinavian countries and Latin America illustrate the contrasting features of this dichotomy: on the one hand, an effective politic citizenry firmly settled on the universal access to basic goods and services conceived a as a non-negotiable “citizen’s wage” already incorporated to the Nordic countries fundamental “social compact” and, in a rather more diluted way, to the European social formations in general. The “citizen’s wage” is a universal insurance against social exclusion because it guarantees, through “nom-market” political and institutional channels, the enjoyment of certain goods and services which, in view of the absence of such institute, should then be acquired in the market but only by those sectors whose incomes would empower them to do so (Bowles and Hintis, 1982). On the contrary, the Latin American democracies, with their mixture of inconsequential political processes of political enfranchisement riding over a rising “economic and social civic desenfranchisement” wound up in an empty formality, in an abstract proceduralism sure source of future despotisms. Then, after many years of “democratic transitions”, we have democracies without citizens, or free market-democracies whose supreme objective is to guarantee the profits of the dominant classes and not the social welfare of the population.

Notes for a conclusion

We would like to conclude this general view revision of the recent history of Latin America with some queries and proposals.

Firstly, it is fit now to remind Walter Benjamin’s clever words when he said that “there isn’t a more serious symptom of the seriousness of the crisis that things remain as they are”. But, will they remain as they are? Neoliberal ruling coalitions in Latin America have proven to be extraordinarily powerful and influential. The hopeful perspectives of change that opened out with the victory of the Workers Party in Brazil in the presidential election of 2002 have vanished without leaving traces. The economic policies implemented by Lula’s government have deepened the sway of the Washington Consensus in the economic policy-making of Brasilia.

The Brazilian demonstration effect was regarded of strategic value to foster the implementation of a post-neoliberal program in the other countries of the region. But the imperialistic blackmailing, joined to the internal extortion exercised by the “masters of the money” and their permanent threats of producing a “market coup” or to instigate an “investments strike” in Brazil look as if they have been able to bring to its knees a government that reached the peak strenghtened by a huge popular legitimacy and that, soon afterwards, adopted a policy direction driven by the suicidal obsession of pretending to “calm the markets”. This and not other was the cardinal principle that oriented the policies of the ill-fated government of the Alianza in Argentina, and that led its president, Fernando De la Rúa, to an apocalyptic and bloody collapse. It seems as if the current rulers of Brazil have not learnt this lesson.

At the moment of writing these lines, the capitulation of Lula’s government is impossible to hide, putting at stakes the future of post-neoliberal policies in the region. In effect, the WP is the first party that takes charge of the government after the neoliberal deluge, with a clear popular mandate of starting a post-neoliberal program of social and economic reconstruction. In Argentina, always pioneer in the matter of misfortunes, the fall of neoliberalism was completed long before, but its political alternative was not available yet. The traditional incapacity of the left and the centre-left sectors to build a serious reformist coalition to put an end to the ambitions of the right plotted against the construction of such alternative. In the case of Brazil, on the other hand, its international gravitation, its enormous territory, the size of its population, and the complexity of its economic structure, endows a president installed in Brasilia with a margin of movement unthinkable for any other country in the region. If Brazil is unable to free itself from the neoliberal trap, who could do it?

If the Lula experiment doesn't finish as originally expected, and taking into account the undoubted gravitation of Brazil in all Latin America, it seems pertinent to ask to what extent the type of society that emerges after the neoliberal deluge can be the appropriate historic soil of a process of democratization, or the mainstay from which a civilized society can be constructed. Shouldn't we rather expect the outbreak of strong tendencies towards political messianism, or towards a right-wing fundamentalism if the popular forces fail in their project to change the course of history? Aren't we, perhaps, seeing the development of the ominous egg of the fascist snake?

In light of the popular demands in favor of a post-neoliberal agenda, the publicists from the right argue that "there is no alternative". We are anything but condemned to this, they tell us. If a government pays deaf ears to this imperative it will fall in the traps of a dangerous voluntarism, leading to the false belief that it can withstand the overwhelming forces of globalization. Furthermore, the supporters of neoliberalism don't stop at that point and insistently pose to their adversaries the following question: what is your alternative to the free market model?

To the former one should say, first, that the assumption that a prerequisite for the solution of the crisis is the availability of a highly elaborated theoretical model does not hold against the historical evidence. This has never occurred in international economic history. It didn't happen with Keynesianism, whose codification came after, and not before, the post-1929 comprehensive restructuring of the capitalist states and the adoption of the new policy of state interventionism carried out by governments well before the appearance, in 1936, of Keynes's *General Theory*. It did not occur with neoliberalism either; its policies, even though inspired by the basic axioms underlying Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek's theoretical production, had more to do with the particular initiatives taken by the governments of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States at the beginning of he eighties than with the postulates of an esoteric sect that met almost clandestinely year after year in Mount Pellerin, Switzerland (Anderson, 2004).

Secondly, given the former it is possible to establish the fundamental orientations of what a post-neoliberal policy must be. This policy should include among its key components the following:

a) *State reconstruction*. It is completely illusory to think that a solution to the present crisis could be achieved without a complete reconstruction of the state. This implies taking some concrete initiatives, among of which stand out the following:

- the financial strengthening of the state. A poor state, lacking in resources, can't play a positive role in solving the crisis. Rather it would tend to aggravate it;

- the hierarchization of the public administration. A state cannot operate efficiently with badly paid and poorly trained officials, devoid of social recognition;

- a profound reform in the administrative and bureaucratic apparatuses, and in the general organization of the state, tending towards the reinforcement of its capacities in front of the unprecedented challenges of our time;

- all out struggle against corruption, because a corrupt state little or nothing can do except enriching even more the already rich and corrupting the state officials;

- redefine a new state intervention strategy in the economic and social life, starting from the awareness that the modalities and instruments proper of the Keynesian age require urgent and essential modifications;

- improve the functioning mechanisms of the state, in order to make possible the enhanced transparency and popular control of the decision-making process. A worthy experience to bear in mind is the participatory budgeting implemented by the Workers Party in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil.

b) *Tax reform*. All the former measures refer, in the last analysis, to the "mother of all the battles": the tributary reform. In effect, no state reform worthy of that name will be ever possible in Latin America without first definitively killing the Hydra of the Seven Heads of the "tax veto", a time-honored privilege and perquisite that until today the dominant classes of the region reap without remorse. Without eradicating this negative inheritance which comes from the colonial epoch –*conquistadores* and colonists didn't have to pay taxes, but they were entitled to receive a tribute from the natives instead!– there won't be state equipped

with the least necessary capacities to face the tasks demanded to exit the crisis. This supposes, then, to terminate such perverse tradition which still today enjoy the rich and the big companies, such an scandalous situation that even the very moderate studies and policy statements and surveys of the conventional economists seem to be far left pamphlets rather than documents elaborated by aloof experts. The fight against this social blemish presupposes likewise a combat against tax evasion and the "legal" tributary cheatings, and the creation of a progressive tax structure, which would dispose of the radical regressiveness of the old system. It isn't a crazy goal to propose that, in a lapse of five years, the tax structure of our countries could adopt comparable parameters –not equal, but more or less similar– to the ones prevailing in the less developed countries of the European Union, like Greece and Portugal. If this is not done, it is simply because there is not enough political will among our rulers to guarantee that in this supposedly globalized world European, American and Japanese firms would pay taxes approximately similar to the ones that pay without a word in their own countries.

c) *Reform of democratic institutions.* A post-neoliberal program requires, thirdly, launching a deep political reform that would radically improve the quality of our democratic institutions and practices. This requires the creation of better rules, agencies and institutions capable of effectively translating the popular sovereignty into policy decisions, a *sine qua non* condition of any democratic regime. For instance, refining legal institutes such as the referendum and the plebiscite and make them frequently operative; improving the systems of political representation, preventing the representatives from being "kidnapped" by big commercial interests; make the legislatures much more receptive of the civic demands; establishing the revocation of mandates for all the elected officials and representatives; devising mechanisms that would facilitate a better selection of the party´s leadership and other similar steps that would foster the democratic controls "from below" of the processes of formation of public decision. Without this reform, leading towards an irreversible process of socialization of political power, there will be no solution to our crisis.

d) *Public financing of political life*. In order to achieve the former it is indispensable, in consequence, to emancipate the politics from the markets. Nowadays, politics is financed by large firms and the wealthy. The result, Gore Vidal observed, is that democratic politics, or what pretends to be democratic politics, has been sequestered by market forces. Politics has become, in this "mass-mediatic age", in an extremely onerous activity which in our countries can only finance, not without expecting a fabulous reward, the rich and powerful. It isn't but natural that, once chosen, the new "democratically elected" authorities rule to the exclusive benefit of their patrons and financiers, without whose contribution the costly political campaign could have never been waged. If the elected rulers had an unlikely attack of amnesia a quick and timely "market coup" would refresh their memory immediately, reminding them that in present circumstances they are little more than the servile butlers of their capitalist masters.

e) *Universal access to media*. If public and transparent financing of political life is an essential ingredient of the new democratic statute, the unrestricted access to the mass media is the other necessary mainstay of an improved democracy. Today's political life is largely shaped, without any relevant counterweight, by the media. And the media is one of the most extremely concentrated branches of the economy worldwide, comparable to the banking and insurance systems. "Freedom of the press" means, almost everywhere and at all times, freedom to make profits manipulating the public opinion in such a way as to reinforce the pre-existing domination structure. But our populations are not free at all at the time of demanding complete, fair and balanced information. Freedom is for the firms, not for the public. Both things, public financing of political life and complete, fair and balanced information suppose the existence of a state endowed with enough means, personnel and resources to do the job. And now we see how the circle of the plutocratic domination closes perfectly well: neoliberals demand the reduction of public expenditures and of the "tax burden". As a result, a weak state can neither finance political life nor guarantee reliable information for all, all of which turns to the exclusive benefit of the dominant classes, the only ones who have the money to finance political campaigns and who also controls the mass media.

f) "*Decommodification*". Finally, the preceding requires inexorably carrying out new state policies aimed at supplying a set of fundamental public goods that in recent times suffered

acute processes of "commodification". That was the road followed by the European nations in the second post-war era, a road that, in a world devastated by the war, allowed the reconstruction both of the economy and of the civil society. These public policies, completely antithetical to the ones originated in the Washington Consensus, not only represent a noble and praiseworthy aim in themselves but, moreover, constitute an essential condition for the reconstruction of a strong democratic legitimacy that in its turn is indispensable to endow the state with the strength required to discipline the forces of the market, control the big capitals, and neutralize the pressure of imperialism and of other more powerful states. A state, in a word, that recovers the lost economic and political sovereignty, improves the quality of the democratic order and that permit to undertake the indispensable task of reconstructing civil society after the neoliberal deluge.

I would like to finish this paper by remembering the wise words of Bertolt Brecht with which this article started. They are more appropriate than ever to guide our praxis in times like ours. If as Marx posed in the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach we want to change the world and not only contemplate it, or interpret it, the starting point is to be totally intransigent in our rejection of the barbarianism that capitalism as a mode of production has imposed on humanity. These lines have sought, within their modest limits, to underline the profound humanist and ethical foundations of our intransigency.

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Notes

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1 The expression "casino capitalism" was coined by Professor Susan Strange (1986).

2 A non-critic acceptance of the content of such reforms prevails in most part of the social sciences conventional literature. Within that whole, the most lucid views are in Juan C. Torre (1998) and also in Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, José M. Maravall and Adam Przeworski's (1993). The lucidity and delicacy of their analysis don't exempt them, sadly, from falling in a speech that basically ended up ratifying, above all in the case of Torre, the legitimacy of the policies of adjustment and stabilization carried out in agreement with the Consensus of Washington's catechism. A critic to these conceptions is in Atilio A. Boron (2000).

3 We have partly altered the names of each one of those categories with the object of reflecting with greater clarity its main characteristics. Cf. Sebastián Edwards (1997: 17). The first edition appeared as an official document of the World Bank 1993 *América Latina y el Caribe. Diez años después de la crisis de la deuda* (Washington DC). The caution observed in relation to the Mexican case in the version of 1997 was absent in the preceding version.

4 We included it, well then in the original production this country appears as “non reformist”, ignoring the significance that the process launched by León Febres Cordero’s neoliberal government had at the end of the eighties and the Ecuadorian economy turning into the dollar currency at the end of the nineties.

5. Cf. Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol (1985). The World Bank produced also as one of its yearly reports a book on the state, perhaps with purpose of compensating its vicious role in the destruction of this institution in most of the Third World countries.

6 We have examined *in extenso* this theme in Atilio A. Boron (2005) and in our article “Poder, ‘contra-poder’ y ‘antipoder’. Notas sobre un extravío teórico político en el pensamiento crítico contemporáneo” (2003a). The authors mentioned refer to their works of recent publication.

7 In recent dates it seems that Sachs has abjured from his former convictions.

8 One of the most perceptive analysis of this process of "statification" is provided by Antonio Negri (1978) in his "Keynes and the capitalist theory of the state in 1929". Paradoxically, the recent writings of Negri do not follow this line of interpretation. Cf. Hardt and Negri (2000) and my criticism in Boron (2005).

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Changing Patterns of Politics in Africa

THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF in Africa's recent history have been marked by some dramatic and significant developments on the continent's political terrain. These developments have been as varied as they have been contradictory. They have also constituted a major source of challenge to political theory as different schools of thought grapple with them in terms of their weight and meaning. As can be imagined, there is no consensus on the most appropriate approach for interpreting the changes that are taking place in the structure, content and dynamics of African politics; indeed, efforts at conceptualizing the changes have produced a veritable Tower of Babel, with commentators not only speaking in different tongues but frequently past one another. The sense of confusion which is prevalent in the literature is indicative as much of the complexity of the changes themselves as of the crisis of theory in the study of Africa (Mkandawire, 1996; 2002; Zeleza, 1997; Mamdani, 1999). The contradictoriness of the changes, at once inspiring hope and generating despair, has polarized the scholarly and policy communities into Afro-optimist and Afro-pessimist camps. But for all the insights which they may offer into the problems and prospects of progressive change in Africa, both the Afro-pessimist and Afro-optimist frames are far too simplistic and subjective to serve as an enduring basis for capturing the dialectics of socio-political change and transformation. A more careful, historically-grounded interpretation of the changes occurring on the continent is, therefore needed, and for it to be useful, it should enable us to transcend the narrow and narrowing parameters that currently dominate the discourse on the processes and structures of change occurring in contemporary Africa.

Dimensions of political change in contemporary Africa

The changes that have taken place on the African political landscape over the last decade and a half have been multidimensional. They have occurred as much at the level of formal politics as in the arena of the informal processes that underpin the political system. They have been generated by factors internal to the political system and those external to it, necessitating a close attention to the contexts within which the changes are occurring. Furthermore, while domestic, local and national-level considerations are critical to the definition of the process of change, external factors and international actors also continue to play an important, even at some conjunctures determinant, role in shaping outcomes. Understandably, much of the attention which has been focused on political change in Africa has been concentrated on the formal institutions and procedures of politics, because these are both more visible and measurable. However, as is the case with politics elsewhere in the world, as important as institutions and procedures are, they do not tell the whole story in and of themselves. For this reason, it is important that attention be paid also to the processes that underpin and mould/remold formal institutions and procedures, including especially the actors and actresses whose actions –and inactions– give life to the political system. And this can be done without resort, as Chabal and Daloz (1999) do, to stereotyping African politics almost as a domain of *abracadabra* where the more one sees, the more mystified one becomes.

The main features of the changes in African politics occurred over the last 15 years that have attracted the most attention in the literature include the following.

The re-structuring of the terrain of political competition and governance: the decade of the 1990s in African history was ushered in with popular street protests or pressures, which in many cases culminated in concerted efforts at reforming the institutions and procedures of politics and governance. Among the most interesting developments occurred as part of this reform effort were: the convocation of sovereign national conferences in many Francophone and Lusophone African countries; widespread constitutional reforms that resulted either in the amendment of existing constitutions or the production of entirely new ones; the end of single party/military rule;

the restoration of multiparty politics and the organization of multiparty elections; the embrace of the notion of independent electoral commissions; the adoption of widespread electoral reforms, including mixed list and proportional representation systems; the achievement by a significant number of countries of a peaceful alternation of power between ruling parties and their opponents; and the organization of repeat elections that have been identified by some as a critical indicator of democratic consolidation. These changes were designed to open up the political space, and in so doing, allow for greater competition in the struggle for political power. The ambition was to create a level playing field for all political actors, make government more representative and accountable, allow for greater popular participation in national governance, and enrich the public space as an autonomous arena for the articulation of popular aspirations and/or the canvassing of policy and political alternatives (see Olukoshi, 1998, for further details). Afro-optimists have mostly concentrated their attention on the improved prospects for the continent around the re-structuring of the political terrain. Some early commentators were even to assess the changes in terms which spoke of a second liberation or an African renaissance. An Afro-barometer project (see <www.afrobarometer.org>) designed to capture the progressive changes occurring was also promoted. However, Afro-pessimists have in the main read the changes with skepticism, pointing to their shortcomings and the problems of democratic consolidation that persist.

The emergence of media pluralism: almost without exception, and as an integral part of the pressures for the opening up of the political space, the monopoly on media ownership exercised by the state was broken during the 1990s through the licensing by governments of private newspapers, radio stations (mostly FM stations) and television stations. Inroads were also made by digital satellite broadcasters and private Internet service providers. Apart from representing a radical departure from the situation previously prevailing, the development marked a new and important element in the promotion of political pluralism, governmental accountability, and popular participation (see Olukoshi, 1998; Fardon and Furniss, 2000; Hyden et al., 2002).

The efflorescence of associational life: during the course of the last one and a half decades, across Africa there has been a massive growth in the number and range of civil associations active in various spheres of life at the local, national, sub-regional and continental levels. Mostly set up as non-governmental organisations, they were seen by many as symbolizing the re-birth and vitality of civil society, and therefore as critical to the unfolding process of democratisation on the continent. Equally important, the civic associations were seen by some scholars as central to the emergence of new political actors in Africa –actors who, by the fact of their insertion in the civic arena, played the critical role of underwriting the African democratic transition and thus contributed to the dawn of a new era in the affairs of the continent (Chazan, 1982; 1983; Bratton, 1989; Diamond, 1994).

The demise of the last vestiges of colonial rule and institutionalized racism in Africa: the persistence of (settler) colonialism in the Southern part of Africa and the institutionalized racial discrimination that went with it constituted the most important challenge to African nationalism and its agenda of the total liberation of the continent from foreign domination. Beginning with the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, and culminating in the 1994 national elections in which the black majority in South Africa participated for the first time, the end of colonial rule and the collapse of formal apartheid unleashed new political forces and possibilities in the countries concerned. Within Southern Africa and in the rest of Africa, the development also unleashed new processes and alliances. If there was a perception that the unfinished business of national liberation prevented African countries from giving full attention to the challenges of overcoming their underdevelopment and dependence, the end of colonial rule and apartheid was interpreted as marking the end of an important phase in the history of the continent, and the beginning of a new one in which concerns about African unity and development would pre-dominate.

The revival of regional cooperation and integration efforts: there was a marked increase, in the period from the beginning of the 1990s, in the tempo of activities designed to promote sub-regional cooperation and integration in Africa both as an important exercise in its own right and as a building block towards pan-African economic unity. At the same time, new efforts were made to strengthen continental-level governance, as evidenced, among other things, by the enabling of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the outlawing by the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) of the unlawful seizure of power and the exclusion from the counsels of the continental body of all governments installed other than by lawful means, the intensification of efforts at promoting pan-African conflict resolution

mechanisms/peace-keeping instruments, and the transformation of the OAU into a new African Union (AU) complete with a pan-African parliament, a pan-African judicial system, and a reinvigorated commission.

The changing nature of inter-state relations: African countries attained independence in the 1960s on the basis of the inviolability of the boundaries they inherited and strict non-interference in the internal affairs of one another. These principles were, by and large, respected for some 30 years. In the 1990s, however, they began to be seriously questioned and challenged in the wake of the crises that engulfed the Great Lakes region of the continent, which culminated in the invasion and occupation of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by armies from several African countries. Armed conflicts in a number of other countries, most notably Liberia and Sierra Leone, further eroded the principle of non-interference, as sub-regional peacekeeping efforts were undertaken in the face of the actual or imminent collapse of central governmental authority. The position is now broadly established that governments involved in massive and gross violations are not entitled to enjoy the principle of non-interference in the affairs of their countries.

The politics of transitional justice: during the course of the 1990s, as part of the unfolding reform of political systems, various programmes were introduced to revisit the impact of the immediate authoritarian past with a view to establishing what had happened, who had responsibility, and what corrective measures could be taken in order to achieve national reconciliation. The first major experiment in this regard was undertaken in South Africa with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Various adaptations of the TRC model and/or principle were subsequently developed by several other countries, particularly those emerging from periods of violent conflict and prolonged military rule. There was also an experiment in Rwanda with the *Gatchacha* or community-based system of tackling and overcoming the legacy of the genocide which the country suffered.

An increased United Nations role in African governance: the context of the 1990s also featured new developments in the political system connected to an increase in the profile of the United Nations family of organisations in the domestic governance processes of African countries, particularly those emerging from protracted conflicts. There were various dimensions to this increased profile, but perhaps the most prominent are the international war crime tribunals that were established primarily on the ideology of discouraging impunity and sending a strong signal to political actors about the need to respect human rights and internationally established rules of conduct in situations of violent conflict and war.

The most evident and visible dimensions of change in African countries tell a substantial part of the story about the shifts that are occurring in the political systems of the countries of the continent. However, as far as they go, they only cover the obvious processes of change. Other less visible or measurable but nevertheless powerful dimensions of change which deserve to be factored into analyses, but which have not been sufficiently taken into account, include the fact that there have been significant demographic shifts in African countries which add up to project children and youths into a position of much greater prominence. With well over 50 per cent of the population of Africa made up of children and youths –a reason for which Africa is nowadays described as the "youngest" continent– a gradual but inevitable generational shift is occurring at several levels at the same time in the political system. The youth vote is perhaps the most important, easily recognised aspect of this development, but there is also the emergence into positions of leadership of a generation of politicians who did not directly experience colonial rule and were not directly part of the nationalist anti-colonial coalition. The implication of this shift for the agenda of politics is one area which remains under-researched beyond the early, self-serving references made in the late 1980s/early 1990s in some western foreign policy circles to the emergence of a new set of renaissance leaders in East Africa, the Horn, and Southern Africa. By contrast, the impact that youth alienation and disaffection –often connected to prolonged unemployment– could have on the stability of African polities has attracted the attention of scholars and policy intellectuals concerned with developing alternative interpretations of the conflicts that resulted in the collapse of central governmental authority in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. What is now referred to in some of the literature as the Youth Question in African politics constitutes an important dimension of change which addresses the core of the political system, including the process of constitution and renewal of citizenship, the social contract within which citizenship is articulated, the politics

of representation, and the legitimacy of government and state (Abdullah and Bangura, 1997; Abdullah, 2003; Mkandawire, 2002; Sesay, 2003).

Also critical to the changing frame of politics in Africa is the rapid rate of urbanisation taking place across the continent and the intensive internal population migration associated with it. As with the demographic shifts taking place, urbanisation and internal population flows would seem to be challenging many of the assumptions and structures on which post-colonial political governance was built. In addition to the obvious rural-urban reconfiguration that is occurring, there is also the growing politics of "settlers" and "natives", the revival of competing ethno-regional/socio-cultural networks, the proliferation of urban gangs/armed militias/neighborhood vigilante groups, the spread of intolerance and xenophobia which also finds expression in policies that are hostile to "non-natives", the increased challenges of social inclusion and service delivery for a rapidly growing urban population, the massive expansion of the boundaries of the informal sector and informal networks, and the spread of a new religiosity that ranges from the syncretic to the puritanical. The many different questions associated with the process of accelerated urbanisation have been refracted into the political system in the form of contestations around issues of citizenship, individual and group rights and entitlements, the role of the state and the nature of its political and policy capacities, the content and reach of social policy, the secular status of the state, and the entire spectrum of urban governance (Sesay, 2003; Mamdani, 2001; Mkandawire, 2002).

Post-independence politics in Africa was fashioned within the framework of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle that gathered steam in the period after the Second World War. The agenda of the anti-colonial nationalist coalition that ushered African countries into independence constituted the kernel of the social contract on the basis of which policy –political, economic and social– was developed. Almost without exception, a central role was reserved for the public sector in what has generally been described as the state-led or state interventionist post-colonial model of accumulation. It was a model of accumulation which came with its own structure of incentives –of rewards and penalties to which the players in the polity responded for much of the period it lasted, namely, the first two decades of independence. The collapse of the state interventionist model in the course of the 1980s and the efforts at replacing it with a "free" market-based framework also translated into the alteration of the incentives system in the polity. However, the impact of this development for the patterns of politics has not been seriously researched beyond the early efforts, which, heavily ideologically-driven by one-sided pro-market partisanship, were limited to suggestions that the market-based system would produce a new middle class that, drilled in the competitive ways of the market, would pioneer the African transition to a new era of (true liberal) democracy.

This perspective was connected to the view that the emergence of a vibrant civil society, defined as essential to sustainable democratisation, was the flipside of the free market system – as much as liberal democracy itself. The important question of the ways in which the collapse of the state-led model of development, the prolonged socio-economic crises which African countries have experienced, and the externally-driven efforts at market reform have produced a new incentive structure and redefined the normative boundaries of politics, remains insufficiently researched beyond anecdotal observations.

The various dimensions of change that have impacted on the pattern of politics in contemporary Africa have been the subject of competing interpretations to which we will return fully in this essay. The key point which is worth keeping in mind at this point is the fact that the dominant methodology that consists of seeking to establish a balance sheet of progress and regression has hardly been helpful in enabling students of contemporary African politics to capture the nuances of change. Often taken in isolation, rather than in their inter-connectedness, and frequently treated episodically rather than as part of a broader historical flow, the various elements of change are also routinely assessed without an adequate attention to the context within which they are unfolding. A first step towards redressing the prevalent analytical gaps in the study of contemporary Africa necessitates a discussion of the context within which political change is being fashioned and unfolded.

The context of political change

Irrespective of the interpretative weight which may be placed on the changes which have occurred on the African political landscape in the period since the onset of the 1980s, these changes have taken place in a context defined and characterized by:

- A prolonged economic crisis which African governments were encouraged or outrightly pressured to redress through an equally prolonged programme of orthodox International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank structural adjustment that has already lasted over two decades, and which has failed to overcome the difficulties it was introduced to help with at the same time that it has created new complications of its own (Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995; Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999). Economic crisis and decline, the state of maladjustment of African economies, the expansion of the informal sector, and the erosion of domestic policy autonomy and capacities, represent a critical component of the context within which politics is being restructured in Africa.

- The end of the old East-West Cold War as it was once played out, a development symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). While it lasted, the Cold War had a major impact on the domestic politics of many African countries as the rival ideological blocs immersed themselves in the internal political dynamics of different countries in their quest to contain each other and retain/expand their spheres of influence. The end of the Cold War may not have meant the end of history or ideology, as was hastily suggested by some commentators; however, it altered an important geo-political factor around which a welter of strategies and interests had mushroomed in the domestic politics of African countries. Post-Cold War African politics involved a complex set of re-alignment of forces and interests, in ways that affected the pre-existing patterns of politics.

- The significant weakening of the African state by a combination of factors, not least among them the distinctly anti-state market reform agenda promoted by the IMF, the World Bank and other donors. That agenda had the consequence not only of delegitimizing the state as an actor in the political economy, but also of eroding its capacities through a series of retrenchment measures that also served to fuel the brain drain, facilitate the erosion of the domestic policy system, and reduce Africa to the most under-governed region of the world. Given the central role that the African state assumed in every facet of the post-colonial political economy, the institutional decline and decay to which it was exposed represented a major development, which reverberated in all spheres of life –the economic, the socio-cultural and the political (Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995; Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999). The politics of filling the voids created by state retrenchment, delegitimation and decay has been at the heart of some of the changes that have occurred over the last decade and a half or more, including the emergence of new actors/actresses of various kinds with competing/conflicting projects.

- The widespread resort to violence and arms in managing domestic political conflicts or demonstrating disaffection. Connected to the end of the East-West Cold War and the retrenchment of the state in a manner which hobbled it, Africa witnessed the emergence/resurgence of conflicts, mostly of an intra-state type kind and with varying degrees of intensity. Some of the conflicts were carried over from the Cold War period, while others derived from grievances arising from other sources. The most spectacular and tragic of the conflicts had genocidal dimensions, while in many cases there was also the collapse of central governmental authority. Furthermore, in what some commentators presented as evidence of a new genre of wars, the conflicts departed from the traditional patterns in which professional armies were pitched against each other. Instead, armed civilian groups took on others and/or heavily factionalized professional armies. Also, the widespread recruitment and deployment of child soldiers represented another unique aspect of the conflicts, as did the terror and mayhem which was visited on unarmed civilian populations, especially in the rural areas. Lacking in ideological clarity or an alternative social project, these wars were easily dismissed by many as amounting to banditry at the interface of greed and grievance; in fact, they spoke a much more profound change associated with the emergence into political significance of a disaffected urban youth (Abdullah and Bangura, 1997; Abdullah, 2003; Mkandawire, 2002; Mamdani, 2001; Sesay, 2003).

- The emergence of a Diaspora of recent migrants from Africa also constitutes an important contextual factor, which is growing in significance as the new Diaspora grows in influence as a constituency whose influence is refracted back into the domestic political processes unfolding in different countries. The process of the constitution of this new Diaspora is recent and still on-going, as a wave of professionals, many of them still in their prime, migrate for a variety of reasons to Europe and North America at the same time that many who left temporarily to study abroad also choose to stay away. Their weight in lobbying around issues of political reform and human rights in their host countries is growing, and their voice in the affairs of their home countries reverberates among some important constituencies. It is a mark of their growing influence that formal recognition has been conferred on them by the African Union.

Dominant themes in the study of political change in Africa

The main contextual factors that have shaped the content and practice of politics in contemporary Africa also provide pointers to the themes that have preoccupied students of the process of change on the continent over the last decade and half. These themes vary in their details, but they can be summarised as including the following broad issues:

- Transition and electoral politics, including party and electoral systems, programmes promoted by political parties, the process of electioneering, the quality of access to the media enjoyed by the competing parties, the legislative structure adopted, voter education and turnout, and judicial independence.

- The problems and prospects of democratic consolidation on the basis of various competing frameworks for assessing and measuring the African transition.

- Constitutionalism and constitutional reform, encompassing the basic rights of citizenry, separation of powers, administrative decentralization, and political succession.

- The emergence, significance and role of an African civil society in the process of democratization.

- The nature of state politics, the dynamics of state-society relations, and the challenges of governance facing African countries.

- The causes, dimensions and consequences of contemporary African conflicts.

- The political economy of reform in Africa, with particular emphasis on the interface between market reforms and political liberalisation, “good” governance, and public sector reforms.

Easily, the bulk of the literature produced on African politics over the last decade and a half is focused on these broad themes. While the commonality of issues covered might suggest a convergence on the critical markers of change in African political systems, in reality there is diversity in the interpretative frames employed for reaching conclusions about the direction of politics. It is to these competing interpretations to which we now turn attention.

Interpreting political change in Africa

Of the various competing interpretations of the content, context and dynamics of political change in Africa, by far the most influential is the so-called new political economy/public choice approach which incorporates different shades of theories of patrimonialism/neo-patrimonialism, state criminalisation and post-colony (Bates, 1981; Jackson and Roseburg, 1983; Callaghy, 1984; Kasfir, 1984; Young and Turner, 1985; Ergas, 1987; Chabal, 1988; Rothchild and Chazan, 1988; Carter Centre, 1989a; 1989b; Bayart, 1993; Bratton and van der Walle, 1994; Reno, 1995; Bayart et al., 1999; Mbembe, 1992a; 1992b). Depending on the particular angle or entry point they choose, scholars working within this broad approach have tended to pitch themselves into an interpretative frame that is either optimistic or pessimistic about the patterns of politics in Africa, their problems and prospects. The literature demonstrates a wide spectrum of opinion, but the main issues that have emerged to constitute the dominant approach to interpreting African politics and the changes taking place within it can be illustrated with the discussion that has taken place on the socio-economic context of political change and the nature of civil society.

With regard to the socio-economic context of political change, by far the most dominant perspective is that rent-seeking behavioural patterns among political actors and neo-patrimonial pressures produced the decline in African economies, obstructed the full realisation of the goals of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes, nurtures a culture of informality/conviviality, and prevents the emergence of reform-minded coalitions able to initiate and govern far-reaching change in the form of economic and political liberalisation. For some of the contributors to the development of this perspective, rent-seeking is integral to the very nature of African culture and/or society, while for others the political/policy elite are the self-conscious producers of niches of opportunity which they exploit. Some of the rent-seeking niches are also held to arise from the nature of African economies, which have been structured within a state-interventionist model of development that allocates an important role to the exercise of policy discretion, facilitates oligopolistic practices, and discourages the emergence of market-driven pricing regimes. As to the neo-patrimonialist pressures that are considered to be a pervasive, all-encompassing feature of African polities, some of the contributors to the development of this perspective locate the pressures at the level of African society itself, while others place the emphasis on the internal workings of the state system. The society-centric approach, best illustrated by Bayart's notion of the politics of the belly, points to practices and norms in African society that prevent the embrace and sustained application of "rational" policy choices capable of promoting economic development and political liberalisation. By contrast, the state-centric approach locates the problem of neo-patrimonialism not in the society but in the state itself, pointing to the ways in which the state constitutes a burden on society on account of the politics of predation which it nurtures. In this connection, various theses of the shadow state or the state within the state have been advanced. Neo-patrimonialist pressures are also fuelled by the insatiable craving of the power elite for popular legitimacy. For this reason, layers and networks of patron-clientelism pervade the entire socio-economic and political system.

Irrespective of the particular point of view taken by different authors on the sources of rent-seeking and neo-patrimonialism, there is widespread agreement among them that Africa's economic development and political transition from authoritarian rule have been stymied and obstructed. The intellectual roots of Afro-pessimism can be traced to this perspective insofar as it represents a frame which, in treating rent-seeking behaviours, neo-patrimonialist practices and post-colony syndromes as ubiquitous and all-pervasive, almost sees no way out of the "dead end" to African development. For, if existing policy frames have failed because of the adverse consequences of the logic of rent-seeking, the economy of affection, the politics of the post-colony, and neo-patrimonialism, reform efforts have also foundered for the same reasons. It was partly in a bid to overcome the pessimism that is the logical outcome of this perspective, that Chabal and Daloz (1999) suggested that the way things are in Africa as captured in the critique of the rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist school should be accepted as the way Africa really works –in contradistinction to the orderliness in-built into Western state-society relations and structures. Although their intervention was presented as a departure from a euro-centric reading of Africa at work, it did not in fact succeed in going beyond the euro-centrism that was the object of their criticism, and in the end, their prognosis was also overwhelmed by a sense of pessimism.

Those who –while still working within the rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist framework– seek sources of hope and optimism, have had to turn to the an earlier generation of writings which saw in the orthodox economic reform efforts promoted by the IMF and the World Bank the possibility of the emergence of new patterns of politics in Africa that are allegedly more promoting of rational economic development and political renewal (Chazan, 1982; 1983; Diamond, 1994; Bates, 1981; Nelson, 1990). The arguments that have been marshalled in this regard are varied, but they frequently include the expectation that economic structural adjustment will produce or is producing a new bourgeoisie that is rooted in production and disciplined in the ways of the market so as to be in a position to mid-wife a genuine democratic transition in Africa. Others have suggested that the market reform process has empowered a new generation of technocrats who have become important players not only with regard to the struggle for the rational governance of economies, but also the restructuring of the parameters of politics. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the expectation that economic reforms will alter the structure of incentives in favor of rural Africa will not only increase the political weight of the rural populace in the national power equation of African countries, but also throw up new grassroots players who can serve as the voice of the people. Attention has also been payed to the changing patterns of interest group politics, especially the contestation between so-called

pro-reform (that is, pro-market reform) groups and anti-reform coalitions (often assumed to be people fully immersed in the rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist logic of the post-colony), and the new patterns of politics which they are producing in the quest for rational economic development and political liberalisation.

When it comes to the question of the African civil society, a theme to which a considerable amount of literature has been devoted, the polarisation between the Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists is equally in evidence (Chazan, 1983). While the bulk of the literature notes the expansion occurred in the course of the 1980s and 1990s in African associational life, the extent to which civil society represents a new, important arena or vector of politics is very much in contention. Some scholars contest the relevance of the concept of civil society to an African context that is still dominated by primordial ties and networks, while others point to the "uncivil" nature of African civil society, the dominance of a statist logic within it, and the proliferation of neo-patrimonialist relations that add up to limit its democratising potential. Others, however, take a more favorable view of African civil society, affirming the relevance/applicability of the concept to the African setting and suggesting that a process of socio-political renewal is underway across the continent that is underwritten by the principal civil society players. Furthermore, civil society, defined primarily in terms of an associational life that is autonomous of the state, is presented as evidence of the emergence of a new non-statist type of politics, with the leaders of the civic associations becoming the standard-bearers of the struggle for a democratic renewal that is anchored in the promotion of pluralism, secularism, civic duties, civil liberties/human rights, and the accountability of public office holders.

Pitfalls of the dominant interpretative frames

Although the dominant rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist framework which includes most of the efforts at interpreting political change in Africa may have offered some insights into problems of political reform and transition on the continent, it is replete with weaknesses which limit its utility for capturing the nuances of change (Mamdani, 1999; Zeleza, 1997; Mkandawire, 1996; Makandawire and Olukoshi, 1995). These weaknesses are, in part, internal to the framework itself, including the fact that it has been deployed to serve as a universally valid explanation for just about anything and everything, thereby ultimately losing its analytic value and precision. Other weaknesses of the framework derive from the manner of structuring and the methodological approaches of mainstream African Studies, which consist of:

- A continuing treatment of Africa and African politics as an exotic terrain that is replete with surprises, the bizarre and the Byzantine, and which pre-disposes students to sensationalism, exaggeration, condescension and even contempt in the way they handle the subjects of their research. It is little wonder that this approach has frequently resulted in the generation of the most inappropriate of notions about Africa, notions that, in the worst cases, are reminiscent of racist colonial anthropological approaches to understanding and characterising the "other".

- The construction and application of standards of assessment and measurement which tend to stereotype, in the African setting, practices and experiences which elsewhere are treated as routine, normal, or an exceptional aberration that is not worthy of special attention. The consequence is that in discussions about African politics, an excessive sense of *déjà vu* tends to predominate, thereby diminishing the struggles for change that take place, or minimizing the dimensions of change that does occur.

- A persistent reading of African historical experiences using the lenses of the histories and experiences of other peoples and regions of the world in what some scholars, at an earlier phase of debates on the methodology of African Studies, described as a heavily euro-centric unilinear evolutionism that holds that whatever Africa may be experiencing presently is little more than a replay of a similar phase in a much earlier period in the history of Europe or the West. By the same logic, Africa's future is seen as sensible and valid only if it is modelled along the lines of the political institutions of European countries. In consequence, attention to the specificity of the African context and historical experience, and the challenges for creativity and originality which they present, are lost in the analysis which is produced. In failing to assess African politics, economy and society on their own terms as distinct from the terms emanating from the history of others, unilinear evolutionism has served as an

instrument for a search, wittingly or unwittingly, for uniformity and conformity; it has not served the cause of diversity and universality.

- The unrealistic application of the principles of orthodox economics to the analysis of African politics, in an approach which also places a great deal of emphasis on quantitative measurements to the detriment of qualitative analyses. This problem is reflective, in part at least, of a movement within the discipline of political science to mimic the discipline of economics at a time when the latter is enjoying a hegemonic position in the social sciences and the orthodox stream within the discipline is on the ascendancy. The result has been that formulaic correlations are being applied to the study of Africa which are both diversionary and fail to capture the nuances of political change on the continent.

- The continuing analysis of African politics, economy and society on the basis of binary oppositions that separate and treat as distinct the formal and the informal, the private and the public, the state and the market, the rural and the urban, and the state and (civil) society. Yet, such rigid compartmentalisations are hardly useful for understanding the logic of politics in a setting where most actors/actresses straddle the distinct boxes on the basis of which an effort is made to understand them. Where attempts have been made to overcome this weakness, they have often produced outcomes that either attribute failure to the fact of straddling, or caricature straddling as one of the features of the exotic nature of African politics.

- The outright denial or complete neglect of the existence of a political community in Africa that is characterised by diversity, contestation, sacrifice and visions of a better society. The rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist discourse on Africa is carried out as though all Africans are collectively and uniformly immersed in that logic, with all actions, including those that simply happen by chance or which are the products of particular conjunctures, treated as the results of premeditated, self-serving neo-patrimonial calculations. This approach obviously limits the capacity of students to pay serious attention to the struggles that give meaning to politics in contemporary Africa and which propel the process of change.

In addition to the weaknesses of the rent-seeking/neo-patrimonialist framework for understanding the changing patterns of African politics, the perspectives that it has generated have not been helpful in grasping the complexities of change on the continent. In this connection, the debate between the Afro-optimists and Afro-pessimists, characterized as it is by a host of subjectivities, has tended to be diversionary insofar as social progress is a contradictory process distinguished by setbacks, stalemates, and advances in a process which is not unilinear or unidirectional. The dialectic of decomposition and recomposition as a fact of human society is one that has been factored out of the Afro-pessimist/Afro-optimist debate, and the ideals against which positions are taken either to be upbeat or downbeat about the prospects for Africa are mostly the products of a wishful thinking that does not correspond to any known historical experience. Where such ideals are abandoned, an excessive realism is brought into play by an all-round lowering of standards, which is encouraged in a manner that suggests that not much more can be expected from Africa. But, in fact, people in Africa also dream dreams, have visions of a greater tomorrow, and want to hold themselves and their governments to the highest standards of performance. It is only when this simple fact is fully appreciated that we can properly begin to grapple with the dialectic of change in contemporary African politics without being trapped by the Afro-pessimist/Afro-optimist divide.

Elements for an alternative interpretation of political change in Africa

In seeking alternative interpretative frames for understanding the new patterns of politics in Africa, it is important, as a starting point, to keep in mind that change is a continuous process. Change is also not always radical –indeed, in most cases, it is gradual, often incomplete, certainly far from being total, and is sometimes even imperceptible but nevertheless occurring. It is precisely because of the permanence of change that much of the processes integral to politics, economy and society across the world constitute pieces of work in progress, arenas where –be it the management of diversity, the construction of the state, the negotiation of citizenship, etc.– the best models which are available or which correspond to the social equilibrium of the moment still represent, in a historical perspective, an unfinished business.

That is why, wherever there is change, elements of continuity also abound. Change unfolds more often than not in the womb of one form or another of continuity. The forces that serve as the bearers of change are the makers of history, but they may sometimes be immersed enough in the tasks at hand or the demands of the moment as not to be fully aware of the epoch-making nature of their actions or omissions. In other words, change is not always the product of a consciously defined project, and even where an element of deliberation and planning is involved, outcomes are not as predictable as might be imagined. What all of this calls for is a historical perspective and methodology which is able to locate isolated events and episodes in their proper place in the flow of a welter of events. Only such an approach can enable us to fully grasp the significance of change that is occurring and to develop a process based on an understanding of history. As noted earlier, the process of change is, by definition, a contradictory one; assessing the process cannot be helped by intellectual swings from pessimism to optimism and back according to the pressures and contradictions thrown up at different moments.

African politics, as indeed politics elsewhere in the world, are in a permanent state of evolution. The current phase of the process of change in the politics of the continent is by definition contradictory and far from being unilinear or unidirectional. Indeed, considering that it is a process of change that is occurring at a time of massive decomposition and recomposition of social relations, it can be rightly argued that the continent is in a state of flux that is, at once, both confusing and ordered –often an admixture of both at the same time. The immediate context of the change that is taking place can be located in the collapse at the end of the 1970s/beginning of the 1980s of the post-colonial framework of accumulation on the basis of which various players within the polity constituted themselves and/or were constituted. It was a framework in which the state took a frontline role in the key socio-economic and political processes of the polity; it was also organic to the social contract on the basis of which the nationalist anti-colonial coalition that ushered African countries to independence was constructed. Furthermore, it was critical to the intensive recomposition of social relations and politics that included the acceleration of the process of class formation and class differentiation. The ideological slogan that underpinned the framework was that of nation-building. Governments, therefore, invested heavily in the promotion of national unity, although in most cases ethno-regional identities remained strong and overlapped with class and religious identities.

The reasons for the collapse of the post-colonial model of accumulation are already too well established in the literature to bear repeating here. What is important to note for now is that the collapse of the framework produced a rupture that called for a re-definition of state-society relations, as well as relations within society and the state themselves. The quest for this all-round definition of relations was inevitably tied to the competition for re-positioning by the various contending interests in the political system and the struggle for power, opportunity and advantage among them. In this struggle, all the resources that are critical to the acquisition and retention of power have been mobilised, whether these be class-based or simply ethnic, religious and regional. The struggle also served as the context for critical stocktaking as manifested in the (sovereign) national conferences that were convened, the constitutional review exercises that took place, and the truth and reconciliation exercises that were launched.

These different activities provided the occasion for the discontents of the post-colonial framework of accumulation and the politics that corresponded to them to be played out in the open. Their outcome, almost uniformly, comprised the formal abandonment of the authoritarian political systems, hitherto established in the form of single-party or military rule, and/or a military-civilian diarchy. In place of the old systems of political governance, multiparty regimes were introduced almost as the new complement of the economic liberalisation exercises associated with the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes that were introduced at the onset of the crisis of the post-colonial model of accumulation.

If the crisis of the post-colonial model of accumulation translated into a crisis for the established political order in most African countries, the struggle for the preservation of interests became an important feature of the transition from political authoritarianism to political liberalisation, a struggle made all the more critical for the key social players by the continuing environment of prolonged economic crises and structural adjustment that under-girded the transition. A process of re-alignment of interests was also launched, including the forging of new identities and alliances. In this process –and in a classic demonstration of the dialectics of

change and continuity– yesterday's single-party barons and military oligarchs became part of the movement for political pluralism and the expansion of the public space, by setting up or taking an active role in new political parties, non-governmental organisations, the religious associations that proliferated, and the numerous ethno-regional networks that were revived. Similarly, popular social movements, including trade unions, rediscovered their voices in the framework of the political liberalisation process. The inter-generational politics that mushroomed around the collapse of the post-colonial model of accumulation and the deep-seated socio-economic crises associated with it also threw up various youth groups and associations which openly staked claims on power and resources in the name of a younger generation of Africans. Their campaigns were bolstered by the demographic shifts that had occurred in Africa in favor of the younger generation. Women's groups also joined in the politics of voice and alliance-building in a bid to secure a better representation in the evolving new political system. As the old middle class that was nurtured in the framework of the post-colonial model of accumulation saw its ranks thinned out and gradually faded into decline, a new middle class thrown up by the market liberalisation reforms that were introduced began to emerge as part of a broader process of social recomposition and transformation. In the politics of re-alignment that were unleashed, no sector of society was left untouched, and the massive mobilisation that was embarked upon by the forces of change and the vested interests which remained around the *ancien régime* constituted the stuff of which transitional politics was made in the 1990s. That period was also easily one of the more exciting in post-independence African politics, prompting some to suggest, rather hastily and prematurely, that the continent was in the throes of a second liberation.

Amidst the politics of change associated with the end of the post-colonial model of development and the search for a new model, a new social equilibrium seemed to be in the making. But it was one whose emergence, in many parts of Africa, was both tortured and conflicted-ridden, sometimes taking on unimaginably violent dimensions. Part of the reason for this is the heightened uncertainty that was associated with the transitional process as the political liberalisation project was born in the context of the most prolonged and deep-seated socio-economic crises in the contemporary history of the continent. This state of uncertainty was heightened by a severe loss of confidence in the public institutions of government, especially in terms of their capacity to respond to basic citizen needs. Matters were not helped in this regard by the fact that the state, which once played a pivotal role in the polity, had, thanks to the single-minded anti-statism of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment, been weakened, hobbled and reduced to a shadow of itself. And yet, with the context of economic decline and structural adjustment having equally undermined and weakened a broad cross-section of social groups, the state, even in its situation of decline, still remained an important point of focus in the articulation of livelihood strategies, the (re)definition of interests and the promotion of alternative social projects. This was as true for groups that were closely connected to the post-colonial model of development –and many of which were hardest hit by the collapse of the framework– as for those that were generally less inserted into a state-led developmentalism. It is also true for the emerging new interests thrown up by the market reform process. It is for this reason that the politics of transition have been characterised by an admixture of resistance, adaptation, alliance-building and transformation.

The transition in African politics is also taking place at a time of expansion of the boundaries of informalisation. On account of the prolonged economic crises to which African countries were exposed, many formal processes and institutions went into decline and decay. Informal sector activities were boosted by the adoption of multiple modes of livelihood by the working poor and the erstwhile middle class. The intensification of the process of urbanisation also added to the pressures for the expansion of the informal sector. With the extension of the coverage and reach of the informal sector went the intensification of straddling with all the accompanying implications. Furthermore, the social reshuffling that is still underway in most countries produces both an element of ad hocism in the actions of interest groups and an unusual rapidity in the turnover of alliances. For these reasons, transitional politics have not associated with sharp ideological cleavages, even if the contestation for power has been intense and a range of critical issues centering on the restructuring of the state and state-society relations are being articulated in the public domain. If anything, the pursuit of multiple modes of livelihood within the context of an expanding informal sector has contributed to the emergence and/or revival of "traditional" social networks and a generalised religious fervor.

Concluding remarks

Overall, the transitional process has registered important new shifts in African politics which ought to be acknowledged for their significance in Africa's post-independence history. Of these shifts, perhaps the most important are the embrace by most of the key players of a multi-party liberal constitutional framework for managing political competition, the expansion and pluralisation of the public space, the open discussion of strategies for governing national diversities, and the emergence into prominence of non-state actors. But these changes have also been tempered by the deepening socio-economic inequalities occurring in most countries, the continuing toll exacted by the prolonged economic crises on the continent, the narrowing of opportunities for social advancement by the deflationary macro-economic framework promoted by the international financial institutions, the stagnation of national economies, and the continuing incapacitation of the state as a public institution. With the investments which have been made by various groups in the project of democratic reform failing to yield some of the socio-economic dividends that could have been expected, it should not be surprising that across Africa the citizenship question has emerged as perhaps the single most important issue around which the struggle for change has crystallized. Within this broad question, the issue of youth disaffection has come to the fore. It is a question that speaks to the fact that although the old, post-colonial model of accumulation and the social contract that was built on it may have exhausted themselves, the new market-based model of development whose basic blueprints were laid in the structural adjustment model of the IMF and the World Bank, amidst popular opposition, is yet to serve as an acceptable or workable framework for the constitution of a new social contract. The question which arises now is that, given the failure of two decades of structural adjustment to stem the decline in African economies (indeed, the adjustment programme became part and parcel of the dynamics of the continent's economic crises), is it capable of being a basis for the construction of a new social contract, or must the continent now simply count the costs of its maladjustment and develop an alternative framework for its development? This is both a research and policy question, and it is one which scholars like Mkandawire have recently been addressing through their arguments for a project of developmental democracy as a framework for restoring Africa to a path of economic growth that is also by definition socially inclusive and democratic. It is an issue to which students should be encouraged to pay closer attention through the investment of theoretical and empirical effort, in the hope that such an investment can enable us to go beyond the morass into which African Studies find themselves.

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Notes

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Human Security in Africa: Challenges and prospects

This is a critical moment in the history of African peoples. If I had to suggest one word to characterise their current status, it would be 'insecurity'

Joseph, 2003

Introduction

The 1990s witnessed radical changes in the nature of conflict around the world. The rapid decline in conflicts between states was matched in the opposite direction by the rapid rise in disputes, conflicts and "emergencies" within states (Leaning and Arie, 2000: 3). The changed situation, it is contended, requires, if not a wholesale shift in the dominant security paradigm, at least some fundamental paradigm adjustment. As the 1994 Human Development Report put it, in the current situation "we need another profound transition in thinking –from nuclear security to human security" (UNDP, 1994: 22).

The traditional conception of security is generally structured around the state –the defense and preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Threats to the security of the state are therefore seen as essentially emanating from a hostile external environment, defined in terms of other states which recognize no other authority beyond theirs. In this anarchic situation, containing such threats relied mainly on self-help and armed military might.

It was this framework of security that underpinned the Cold War. Military alliances, cemented along largely ideological lines, bifurcated the world in an east-west divide into which countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America were often induced or forcibly incorporated. In Africa, the path to independent statehood and the framework of post-colonial economic and social policy became issues in which the major powers in the east-west divide displayed an abiding interest within the framework of an essentially bipolar security framework. In fact, an often necessary dimension of the negotiation of the exit of the colonial master and independent statehood was some form of security treaty with the departing coloniser. These treaties had the effect of 'constructing' Africa's external friends as well as enemies. This of course also meant structuring relations among African countries within east-west dynamics, so that issues such as intra-African cooperation became bogged down in the global bipolar struggle for power. In assimilating the security *problématique* of African states into the east-west divide, a convenient lid was often imposed on various expressive forms in which domestic groups and individuals outside the state sought to air their grievances. While African regimes found the framework convenient for visiting oppression on opponents, regimes that tried to toe independent lines also found their hold on power a precarious matter.

The effect of this, quite often, was to plant the new state firmly within the western security alliance. Within this framework, any specificity or peculiarity was denied to the security needs of these countries. The incorporation of African countries into the east-west security networks meant an automatic assimilation into a conflict relationship among countries which hardly had any historical or material basis for such antagonism. On the other hand, the development of friendly interactions among states was essentially frozen within alliances.

This security paradigm and its practical manifestation during the Cold War meant that the security problems of the east and west were assumed and acted upon as the basic security *problématique* of the countries of Africa. Threats and risks which were hardly theirs nevertheless had decisive implications in shaping politics, economies and society in these countries, with their territories sometimes becoming proxy battlegrounds. State repression, violations of rights and political instability became intricately woven around a framework of security founded on the dominant global geo-political rivalry.

In much of post-colonial Africa, the conception of security as the security of the state took on its own peculiar narrow translation as regime security, or the personal security of the ruler who often increasingly identified himself as personifying the state. Opposition in domestic politics and criticisms of public policies became 'threats' to 'national security'. The result, more often than not, was institutionalised repression of whole regions, groups and peoples. The consequences of the traditional conception of security in Africa have therefore been more keenly felt by way of internal repression than of external hostilities. This is the sense in which "a concept of security grounded on interstate relations" turns the state itself into "a source of citizen insecurity" (Salih, 1999: 127; Abutudu, 2001). Thus, "rather than providing security for their citizens, states are frequently the instruments that destroy the security of their populations" (Wilkin, 1999: 28).

It might have taken the demise of the old Soviet Union and the end of the cold war to bring the new realities to the fore. However, even in its heyday, the dominant security construct did not go unchallenged. For example, major policy responses from Africa and countries of the south culminated in the formation of the non-aligned movement. Related, and perhaps partially arising from this, was the effort by countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America to reconceptualise, based on their own realities, the central contradiction in the global system in terms of the vastly unequal and exploitative economic relations between the north and the south, relations that were seen as fundamentally responsible for shaping life prospects within the third world countries. This effort, which was at its peak in the 1970s, could be seen to contain a hint of a different security paradigm, especially when read in conjunction with the sentiments that inform the economic and social strands of internationalism (the UN ECOSOC mechanism, for example) and some of the intellectual works on peace research which focus on structural violence (Galtung, 1974; Salmi, 1993). These show that, although certain threats may not be war-related, they nevertheless "result in individual human insecurity" (Wanzala, 1996: 87).

The attempt at redefining the framework of international relations from the perspective of the south met with strong resistance from the countries of the north, especially its western component. A resurgent neo-liberal economic globalism, largely associated with the administrations of Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in Britain, was to mount a ferocious onslaught that pushed it into the backburners of global policy. This did not result only in the atrophy of the North-South debate, but also in the withdrawal of certain key western countries from some international organisations whose emerging social philosophy was deemed to have imbibed too much of that discourse. This could be taken to have marked a conscious effort to reverse a trend that promised a centering of security on human lives and their qualitative improvement. Yet, human security entrenched itself as a mainstream discourse at a period that also marked the virtual global hegemony of the neo-liberal economic agenda.

However, the end of the Cold War, the economic crises in most African countries since the eighties, and the rash of IMF/World Bank intrusion by way of structural adjustment programmes which attended these crises, the wave of political 'liberalization' and multi-party democracy, various cases of communal, ethnic and religious violence and genocide, etc., have combined to compel an analysis of the implications of a number of platforms, agendas and processes at global, continental and national levels for human security in Africa. This is therefore a very general but critical exploration (in the context of Africa) of the dimensions of a concept that promises so much but yet can be rather slippery and elusive, not only in its expansive scope and 'catch-all' approach, but more importantly by the threat of captivity, an absorption, by a paradigm to which it is presented by some of its advocates as an alternative.

The nexus of security and economic crisis in Africa

The political liberalization process of the 1980s and 1990s "opened opportunities for people" but also opened "new fault lines" (Commission on Human Security, 2003: 2). Defined in ethnic, racial, religious, gender or class lines, it has been customary for conventional explanations to see these fault lines as the resurrection of old animosities, but often missing from this perspective is why the so-called ancient hatreds are given vent at these particular times. A few scholars have sought to explain these in the context of the acute deprivations that have attended the imposition of structural adjustment programs through the instrumentality of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Adjustment policies and neo-liberal reforms in

general are so severe in their impact that they have tended to undermine the basis of the nation-state project in post-colonial Africa, compounding the weakness of the state, engendering mass hostility to it, and undermining its legitimacy (Laasko and Olukoshi, 1996; Ake, 1996; Chossudovsky, 1997; 1999; Osaghae, 1998).

As "structural adjustment became an integral part of the dynamic of crisis in Africa" and increasingly complicated "the economic problems of the continent" (Laasko and Olukoshi, 1996: 19; Ake, 1996), sharp drops in living standards and mass hunger followed. Privatisation, denationalization and the unbridled reliance on market forces invariably compounded the concentration of wealth in a few hands, expanding at a heightened pace the number of the marginalized and excluded. As Ojo (1999: 6) perceptively observed, "nothing can be a greater threat to security than being excluded from life supporting economic activities". The CHS supports this view by noting that "the exclusion and deprivation of whole communities of people from the benefits of development naturally contribute to the tensions, violence and conflict within countries" (Commission on Human Security, 2003: 5).

The neo-liberal agenda has placed much stress on the necessity to shrink the state while enlarging the purview of the market. Indeed, the market is to be allowed to do its work unhindered. This has in practice meant the systematic effort to reverse those elements of the welfare state that in post-colonial Africa marked fundamental aspects of the nation-building project. Across Africa, policies such as the removal of state subsidies from various social and productive sectors (education, health and agriculture), privatization, denationalization, public sector down-sizing, etc., all of which the standard structural adjustment programme insists upon, have combined to unleash a wave of threats that may not be war-related, but undermine every conceivable idea of a meaningful life.

Beyond this, there are reasonable grounds to hold that the environment of scarcity created in the wake of adjustment programmes in Africa has exacerbated people's insecurity by massively visiting state repression on those who protest their increasing misery. Yet, this environment of deprivation could often directly heighten competition among dominant elites for dwindling state resources, a situation that has often sparked violence among groups, whether communal, ethnic or religious, who are easily mobilised behind their 'leaders'. Situations like this suggest a link between the "economic genocide" unleashed by structural adjustment programmes and globalization (Chossudovsky, 1997) and communal and ethnic violence in Africa.

The exit option, exercised increasingly by professionals (the brain drain), and the mass exodus by many others, is one response to the threat to livelihood. The exodus of skilled professionals further compounds the crisis as basic services delivery capabilities (in the health care sector for example) face decline. Some respond to the sharp drop in living standards by increasing the intensity of exploitation of the natural environment. The resulting over-exploitation degrades the environment and further compounds the threat to livelihood. In parts of Africa, for example, the end product has been the "lethal dynamics between environmental degradation and violent conflict", "people fighting government" and "communities fighting communities" (Ojo, 1999: 6). Marginalisation, deprivation and exclusion provide a steady supply of the poor for recruitment as foot soldiers for warlords.

Security and human life

Nearly a decade ago, the UNDP rightly pointed out that "for most people, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event". Security, for them, is about safety and protection "from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards" (UNDP, 1994: 22).

The concept of human security approaches security from the point of view of human life. Its starting point is to centre its concerns on those issues that from the traditional conception of national security are not considered as security issues, since they are not seen as posing a threat to the state. Human securities assume that, if they threaten lives, or detract from lives being lived in a fulfilling manner, such issues are considered a security concern. They in fact tend to produce consequences that create instability in the public arena. Thus, even the security of the state itself may be closely bound up with its capacity to meet the security needs of the people. It is precisely for this reason that Jinadu notes that "the problem of peace and security

in Africa is bound up with the nature and character of the modern state and its role and position in national and international society". The broad conception of security espoused in this case casts the state in the role of creating the "enabling environment for self-realisation and for the enjoyment and sustenance of self-development and self-actualisation" (Jinadu, 2000: 3).

How then do we define human security? Various definitions have been offered. The UNDP identifies two main aspects to the concept. In the first place, it means "safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression". In its other dimension, "it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life" (UNDP, 1994: 23).

According to the Human Security Commission, human security is defined by its aims: to protect the vital core of human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms –freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity (Commission on Human Security, 2003: 4).

For the Canadian Government, the concern of human security is the safety of people "from both violent and non-violent threats" (Government of Canada, 1999: 5).

Essentially, the approach of human security is centred on the person and the community, and it focuses on threats and conditions to peoples' security that are not normally seen as threats to the state. Such threats or 'menaces' would include various forms of economic deprivation, environmental pollution, and widespread prevalence of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Commission on Human Security, 2003: 6) or non infectious ones such as malaria. The concept necessarily interrogates the state as a source or potential source of oppression and deprivations, a probable producer or an aid of the 'menaces' that form the threat situations that constitute the condition of human insecurity. Thus, the concept also seeks to empower people against threats to the attainment of quality lives within their environment.

It is clear from the above that the concerns of human security have a wide range, and perhaps universal application. However, it is even more critical to Africa and the south in general, given the fact that the 'menaces' to individuals and group welfare that it seeks to ameliorate are mostly prevalent in these areas. Furthermore, the concept is dynamic, as what various groups may see as core to their attainment of quality life may, in certain respects, be culturally and contextually specific. It therefore aims to liberate, promote human freedom and empower, so as to enhance the capacity of people to make choices.

There is a strong developmental component to the concept of human security. If the conventional notion of security focuses mainly on military might to ward off aggression or contain adversarial states, human security relies on enhancing people's capability to qualitatively improve their lives. It seeks to protect against the 'menaces' that may diminish living a fulfilling life. It aims to be developmental in a holistic sense, recognizing that qualitative improvement to lives must be constructed around not only the notion of people as economic producers and consumers, but also as cultural producers and consumers. Finally, the developmental essence of the concept of human security is further captured in its ability to sensitize us and direct attention to the most "socially disadvantaged", especially "women and children who are particularly vulnerable to violence in its direct, structural and cultural forms" (Wanzala, 1996: 85).

From these three definitions, human security can be conceptually disentangled both as a condition and a dynamic process aimed at achieving a certain state of affairs. As a condition, it is epitomized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or their livelihoods. As a dynamic process, it implies the measures, the policies emplaced to realize the state of existence characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to the rights, safety and livelihood of people. As a condition, its catch-all character becomes apparent. This all-encompassing character is summarised under the categories of economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (UNDP, 1994: 24-33). This apparent all-inclusiveness creates difficulties in efforts to analytically distinguish it from concepts such as human development and human rights, a situation that gives the term the dubious character of one "which can mean all, and nothing" (Ogata, 2000). However, this relationship can also be read as one that helps to

establish the human centeredness of security and brings home quite clearly the fact that the issues that define security for the average person relate concretely to everyday issues in which survival and a meaningful life are predicated. Human security is therefore a condition typified in sustainable human development, and a framework of guaranteed group and individual rights.

It is in the process dimension that the major contradictions and challenges to human security in Africa are most critically visible. Here the most crucial factor lies in the policy environment. In most African countries, this environment has been dominated over nearly two decades by structural adjustment programmes imposed and enforced by the Bretton Woods Institutions. The contradictions and challenges which this framework of economic and social policy impose on the process are highlighted in terms of the working of the neo-liberal agenda in Africa, the political liberalization and democratization processes in the continent, and the current dominant position of US foreign policy or the global 'war on terrorism'.

Human security, globalization and the neo-liberal agenda in Africa

Human security as a concept has a history that suggests a latent, if not an obvious tension with neo-liberal economism. The re-emergence of this ideology as the major platform of contemporary economic reforms globally has also set in motion consequences that are associated with growing human insecurity in Africa.

In focusing on the issue of security around people, it is necessary to pay attention to certain elements in the conceptual makeup of human security as possible sources of ambiguity in its operationalisation. For example, terms such as 'freedom' or 'enabling environment' may be suggestive of efforts to sustain and provide a rationale for neo-liberal economism. It is clear, for example, that as put forward by the Human Security Commission, this framework is taken as given. It does not critique policies which generate 'deprivations and oppression', since such policies only become threats or 'menaces' when they generate 'long term deprivations and oppressions'. The debt crisis in Africa is a case in point. Nigeria borrowed US$ 3 billion between 1978 and 1983.

That debt has become a US$ 32 billion albatross by 2000, even after about US$ 10 billion has been used in servicing it in the intervening period. Servicing this debt annually in current terms requires about the principal sum originally borrowed.

Replicated among most African countries in varying degrees, this situation is an obvious 'menace' to the ability of African states to deploy resources to tackle ravaging diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS on the continent or make meaningful progress in eradicating illiteracy.

The ideology of neo-liberalism constitutes a serious impediment to the provision of social safety nets in Africa. The way the neo-liberal agenda has played itself out in several African countries suggests a serious need to interrogate it as a fuel for human insecurity on the continent. The linkage between economic crisis, IMF/World Bank sponsored reforms and varying degrees of political violence in Africa has been noted.

In Rwanda, the economic deterioration that followed in the wake of the collapse of the international coffee market in 1987, and the imposition of the IMF/World bank reforms, inflamed ethnic tensions and accelerated the process of economic collapse (Chossudovsky, 1997, 1999). The Rwandan (ethnic) genocide of 1994 was actually preceded, and its foundation laid, by what Chossudovsky (1999) referred to as "economic genocide" in that country.

In Somalia, an economic system based on exchanges between pastoralists and small agriculturalists, and virtually self-sufficient in food production up to the late 1970s, was disrupted when the Bretton Woods reform programme was introduced in the early 1980s. The periodic devaluation of the Somali shilling which came as part of this package in 1981 led to price hikes in the cost of farm inputs, even as the purchasing power of urban dwellers plunged. The livestock economy itself became a victim of the privatization of animal health, the commercialization of water and the neglect of water and rangeland conservation. Cattle exports, and therefore foreign exchange earnings, fell drastically. The basis of exchange between

pastoral and smallholder agriculture was undermined, and the foreign exchange earning capability was unhinged at the same time as the efforts to roll back the state were to unfold through the retrenchment of 40% of the public-sector work force (Chossudovsky, 1997; 1999).

Over the past two decades, various forms of communal and religious violence have been the hallmark of many an African country. Civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, etc., have been the more extreme expression of a process that has seen economic crisis and IMF/World Bank reforms pitching the state against its citizens, and community against community, in shooting wars.

Security, political liberalization and democratization

Liberalization and the democratization of the political terrain have been felt across much of the African political terrain in the last two decades or so. Of course, this has narrowly translated into written constitutions, plurality of political parties and periodic elections. For a continent were one-party rule and military dictatorship was the norm in the not too distant past, this transformation may indeed be seen as revolutionary. There is no doubt that the premise of democratic governance has been a major peg of human security, and that the institutional framework on which it is predicated, whether at the national or international level, assumes that a political system that is founded on the free choice of the people and is responsive to their needs is a prerequisite of human security. Indeed, at the international level, it will not be out of place to say that the relative ease with which most African leaders accepted a new initiative on intervention and the peer review mechanism of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) owes much to an emerging consensus of norms on the political sphere visible at the domestic level across a broad spectrum of African states.

This broad agreement refers to an idea, the idea of democracy: not its practice, not its reality, or least of all, the 'democracy dividends', whose absence has become a major source of mass disillusionment in many African countries. It is a discontent that threatens to undermine the idea itself. Many factors are at play, but we note two of the most critical. First, democracy as crafted in many African countries had the strong input of the IMF/World Bank group and other donors through the conditionality attached to structural adjustment programmes. Thus, in spite of the consensus that emerged on the idea, the democratic regime was constrained from the outset in economic and social policy. Its mandate in these respects generally discounted the needs of the voters in favor of implementing harsh adjustment policies, or at best, 'economic growth'. Secondly, democracy has come to typify, in Africa, a ritual of plural political parties and periodic elections. But the liberal democracy that supposedly arose from this has reduced democracy to multi-party elections, which are no longer threatening to African despots. It provides them with international respectability without constraining their absolutism, authoritarianism, corruption and ineffectiveness. It does not need to address the problems of the poor such as poverty, ignorance and disease, which keep them from effective participation in multiparty elections (Nnoli, 2003: 17-18).

As the state's ability to address issues of poverty, illiteracy and disease declines, the resulting mass disillusion creates problems of legitimacy for regimes, which may try to maintain themselves in power through repression and election rigging.

Human security and the "war against terror"

The point of view of human security does not necessarily always pose itself as an alternative to the traditional conception of security. It may even be complementary in a progressive sense if its concerns help to foster an international climate that aids the process of delegitimising inter-state or transnational wars and the human sufferings associated with them. However, the main threat is that of capturing and annexing a globalised concern for human security to the re-ordered priorities of major powers in a post-cold war world. As security is given new meaning in the post cold war world by the major powers (as security from acts of terrorism), the liberation of the concept of security from its Cold War clutches may be short-lived. East-West rivalries may now be replaced by the so-called "clash of civilizations". The "global war against terror" may lead to the kind of presence in which the domestic politics of many African countries will once again be dominated by the leaders of the 'war against terror' in the manner of the Cold War era.

This is aptly noted by Joseph when he opines that "Once again, following the lead of the United States, global security is defined, especially since the incidents of September 11, 2001, as security from acts of terrorism. In the post-Cold War world, counter-terrorism has replaced anti-communism as the major preoccupation of American foreign policy. In the same way that relations with African countries before 1989 were determined by East-West rivalries, they will now be greatly influenced by the global struggle against terrorist groups and governments considered to be directly or indirectly assisting such groups. African oil producers figure centrally in this new strategy as industrialized countries seek to reduce their dependence on Middle East oil" (Joseph, 2003: 11).

This will concentrate 'aid' on military assistance to fight 'terrorists', who for example in the context of the Nigerian oil producing Niger Delta can easily translate into local people protesting environmental pollution by giant oil multinationals, or demanding a fair share of the proceeds from oil revenue from the Nigerian state.

That the above scenario is increasingly playing itself out in Africa is captured in two major current foreign policy planks of the United States. The first is the failure of the United States to sign the treaty of the International Criminal Court of Justice, the first genuine global effort to impart an impartial, non-partisan, non-victor-induced outlook to crimes against humanity. In opting out of the jurisdiction of this court, the United States absolves its citizens of responsibility to a global authority for war crimes and crimes against humanity in any part of the world were its personnel may be involved in military operations. It may be argued that that some countries have well developed domestic laws and traditions of dealing with issues of this nature, but it has to be noted that the operative national laws may lack an impartial outlook, and in any case, what is bound to crop up as an invocation of patriotism, 'national interest' and 'national security' would invariably remove any pretence at impartiality in the national handling of such cases.

But the United States has gone further than this. It has energetically sought to co-opt many countries in Africa and elsewhere into ousting their prosecutorial jurisdiction in any international court of criminal justice in cases of crimes that may be committed by American personnel within their national jurisdiction. Some implications of this development for African countries and their people point to the provision of a platform for the 'menaces' to human security to flourish. This will necessarily mean the return of that conception of security that effectively subordinates the security concerns of African countries and their peoples to the narrow insistence that security must not only be national and a function of military-economic power, but also that it must be attained by a country at the expense of others. Finally, the US action restates a commitment to 'regime security', as long as such regimes remain 'friendly' to US interests, and irrespective of commitments to human security induced by the euphoria of the 1990s. This "close relations for strategic reasons with repressive regimes" (Joseph, 2003: 11) will be one more plank on which the retreat from human security to regime security (Baimu and Sturman, 2003) finds support in Africa.

Concluding comments

One major advantage of the approach of human security to countries of Africa is the manner it unifies domestic policy with foreign policy in protecting the lives of individuals and securing the lives of communities and groups. It puts not only the right to life but also the right to a decent life as its core, and in so doing, compels governments to observe some minimum standards in their dealings with their people. The observance of these minimum standards is not only part of the foundation for internal legitimacy; their violation could also form a basis for external humanitarian intervention. In Africa, where the state often bears direct charge for violating people physically, it is noteworthy that the African Union (AU) has institutionalised the right to intervene in member states not only in situations of unrest or external aggression, but also in cases where 'crimes against humanity' are being committed. This power of multilateral humanitarian intervention is complemented by the peer review mechanism of NEPAD, in which a continental authority oversees certain minimum standards of 'good governance' and accountability, including observance of human rights in member states.

The adoption of these initiatives at the continental level in Africa during the past decade is perhaps best exemplified in the metamorphosis of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU). If the former symbolised the conventional security paradigm, the latter indicates a transition that recognizes the core objectives of human security. In defining the

scope of external intervention in humanitarian terms, it places the preservation of people's lives on a pedestal that overcomes the notion of national sovereignty under certain circumstances. The multilateral basis of intervention also implies a commitment by member states to a code of conduct in the treatment of their citizens whose breach calls for collective condemnation and collective action.

The notion of human security necessarily indicates that there are dimensions of peoples' lives that need to transcend national laws, or should be subject to laws in which national authorities need not hold final powers of arbitration. These are commendable in various ways, but as this paper tried to show, the climate of economic and social policy that currently dominates the continent is necessarily antithetical to the realization of important dimensions of the objectives of human security. Furthermore, there is no assurance that the national governments in Africa or the international community can hold liable those large multinational corporations whose production practices lead to consequences that have proved harmful to the environment and people's livelihoods as well as their physical wellbeing. There is also the 'war on terror'. This 'war' as defined and prosecuted with reference to Africa and other countries in the south (in a manner that constitutes security in terms of the 'national interest') may actually act to undermine a people-centered approach to security.

Finally, in spite of democratization, the context of the neo-liberal economism in which it is invariably pursued has meant the virtual grant of absolution to the state from any commitment to combating poverty. As this responsibility increasingly devolves on the humanitarian instinct (of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 'civil society'), the pursuit of security centered on people in Africa and elsewhere in the south finds itself consigned to the uncertain machinery of charity, which, however, answers to no one.

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Note

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The New Configurations of Popular Movements in Latin America[1]

Neoliberalism and social conflict

The 1990s opened the way to a renewed capitalist globalization in its neoliberal form, whose impact on Latin America has been glaringly noticeable and profound. Extending a process begun in previous decades, promoted now by the so-called "Washington Consensus", the adoption of neoliberal policies was to become generalized all over the region, taking on a newly radical form. The governments of Carlos Menem (Argentina), Alberto Fujimori (Peru), Salinas de Gortari (Mexico), Collor de Melo and later Fernando H. Cardoso (Brazil), became some of its best-known presidential incarnations. The profound and regressive consequences in social and democratic terms entailed by the application of these policies (mass pauperization being one their most tragic expressions) were the result of the acute structural transformations that modified the societal geography of Latin American capitalisms in the framework of the new order that appeared to be imposed by so-called "neoliberal globalization"[2].

The application of these policies certainly faced numerous forms of resistance and protests in the region. In the first half of the 1990s two Latin American presidents (Collor de Melo in Brazil and Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela) had to leave their posts in an "unexpected" manner as the result, among other issues, of rising unease and social repudiation. Nevertheless, in the regional context, the acts of resistance in those years to the application of the neoliberal recipes exhibited a configuration much more fragmented in social terms and more localized in sectorial and territorial terms than those that preceded them, while being unable in most cases to hinder the implementation of those policies. In the terrain of the social disciplines, this process, mediated by the hegemony wrested by the dominant thinking and its formulations regarding the "end of history", meant the displacement of the *problématique* of conflict and of social movements from the relatively central space it had filled in the preceding decades – although from different perspectives– to an almost marginal and impoverished position.

Nevertheless, toward the end of that decade Latin America's social reality again appeared marked by a sustained increase in social conflictivity. The continuing nature of this process may be appreciated in the survey carried by the Latin American Social Observatory (in Spanish, OSAL-CLACSO) for the nineteen countries of the Latin American region (see Chart 1), which for the period ranging from May-August 2000 to the same quarter of 2002 shows a rise in the number of the episodes of conflict surveyed of more than 180%. Because of the regional magnitude it attains (beyond exceptions and national differences), because of the characteristics it exhibits, and because of its perdurability, this increase in social conflictivity accounts for the appearance of a new cycle of social protest, which, being inscribed in the force field resulting from the regressive structural transformations forged by the implanting of neoliberalism in our countries, emerges to contest the latter.

In some cases, the Zapatist uprising of early 1994 has been pointed out as the emblematic event of the awakening of this cycle. This reference turns out to be significant insofar as, from diverse points of view, the revolt of the Chiapas indigenous exhibits some of the elements that distinguish the social movements that were to characterize the political and social realities of the region in recent years. In this regard, the national and international impact of the

Zapatist uprising renders account of the emergence of movements of rural origin constituted on the basis of their indigenous identity; of the democratic demand for the collective rights of these peoples –which, in its claim for autonomy, questions the constitutive foundations of the nation-state; of the demand for a radical democratization of the political management of the state; and of the summoning of continental and global convergences. Beyond the specificity of the references that accompany and characterize Zapatism, its emergence sheds light, in a wider sense, on some of the particular aspects that appear to mark the majority of the popular movements that fill the ever more intense setting of social conflictivity in the region because of their organizational characteristics and of their forms of struggle, the inscriptions that give them an identity, their conceptualizations of collective action, and their understandings in relation to power, politics and the state. Therefore, it is not just a case of the beginning of a new cycle of social protests, but also of these appearing as incarnated in collective parties with particular features and that are different from those that had occupied the public scene in the past. At the same time, these experiences and the increase in social protest in Latin America were to develop in an almost simultaneous manner to the increase in conflict in other regions of the planet in a process that would mark the constitution of a space for international convergence in opposition to neoliberal globalization –what the mass media have named as the "antiglobalization" or "globaliphobe" movement and which, to be more precise, may be called an "alterglobalist" movement.

Lastly it may be pointed out that this rise in social protest and the emergence and consolidation of new social and popular movements converged into diverse social confrontation processes that, attaining major national significance, in some cases in recent years entailed the toppling of governments, the creation of deep political crises, or the failure of undertakings of a neoliberal character. In this regard, the "Gas War" (2003) in Bolivia, which ended with the resignation of the government of president Sánchez de Lozada and the opening of a transition that is still underway, emerges as inscribed within this process of mobilization of society that began with the "Water War" in Cochabamba (2000), also being expressed in the struggles of the coca-growing movement in the Chapare region and of the indigenous movement in the Altiplano plateau. Likewise, the indigenous uprising in Ecuador (2000), culminating in the fall of the government of Jamil Mahuad, marked the consolidation of the Confederation of the Indigenous Nations of Ecuador (in Spanish, CONAIE) in the context of social response to neoliberal policies in that country.

At the same time, the emergence and spread of the movement of unemployed workers in Argentina and the protests of the workers of the public sector in the second half of the 1990s converged with the mobilization of broad urban sectors of the middle classes to trigger the resignation of the government of president De la Rúa in late 2001. In the case of Brazil, one may stress the setting up of the Workers' Unified Center (in Portuguese, CUT, in 1983) and of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST, 1984), which starred in the opposition to neoliberal policies and were at the basis of the election victory of the presidential candidacy of Lula Da Silva (2002). In the same sense, the peasant mobilizations in Paraguay, which were to play an important role in the fall of president Cubas Grau (1999), will prolong themselves in the confrontation with the neoliberal policies promoted by succeeding governments; and the intense social protests in Peru (particularly the experience of the regional Civic Fronts) that were to mark the fall of the Fujimori regime (2000) were to continue in the resistance to the privatist policies promoted by the government of president Toledo (2002-2003).

It was precisely on the basis of the importance of these processes that, in early 2000, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) decided to create the Latin American Social Observatory (OSAL) program with the aim of promoting a monitoring of social conflictivity and studies on social movements as well as regional exchanges and debate about these subjects. Over this period of more than four years, the work performed by OSAL led to the development of a chronology of the events of social conflict in nineteen countries of the continent, as well as the preparation of a publication, three times a year, which –with the participation of numerous Latin American researchers– has broached an analysis and collective

reflection regarding the main acts of protest and the outstanding social movements on the regional scene over the course of these recent years. The main conclusions and pointers emerging from this extended endeavor nourish the present contribution.

In this regard, the initial goal of this article will consist in offering an approximation of the particular configuration that characterizes this cycle of protests and the popular movements that take part in it. In its first part we attempt to deal with this question on the basis of a general description that presents the recent social conflictivity in the region, its most outstanding features, and the parties that participate in it, to conclude by pointing out some elements that appear to distinguish the experience and actions of the most relevant social movements. The second part of the present contribution is centered on a more thorough analysis of the latter.

The contemporary scene of social protest in Latin America

We have already pointed out that the new cycle of protests that acquires momentum towards the end of the 1990s and the social movements that star in it offer distinctive features that differentiate them from those of the 1960s and 70s. The first evident fact tells us that the majority of the social organizations that promote these protests have emerged or been refounded in the last two decades. However, it is not only a matter of remitting exclusively to the organizational life or history of these movements, but particularly of the configuration they assume and that distinguishes them even within the map of the social conflictivity that characterized the 1980s and early 90s.

In this regard, if through the end of the 1980s, at least, the wage-earning Keynesian-Fordist conflict (and particularly the industrial conflict) constituted one of the main hubs of social conflictivity in the region, union organization additionally being the model that –in one way or another– marked the organizational nerve system of the majority of urban and rural social movements as well as fulfilling an outstanding role in the political and social articulation of the particular demands of collective participants, the structural transformations imposed by neoliberalism in all orders of social life (and in particular in the economy and the labor market under the de-industrialization and economic financiarization processes) were to sink that matrix of collective action into crisis, and weaken (albeit not eliminate) the weight of wage-earners' unions as the starring parties in the conflict. In counterpart, as a result of the process of concentration of income, wealth and natural resources that marks neoliberal policies, new social movements with a territorial basis both in the rural world and in the urban space have emerged on the Latin American stage, constituting themselves on the basis of their ethnic-cultural identity (the indigenous movements), in reference to what they lack (the so-called "-less movements", like the landless, roofless or jobless) or in relation to their shared life habitat (for example the movements of settlers).

Thus, the model of a return in the economy to raw materials, and the central role taken on in this context by agrarian restructuring processes, witness the emergence, in counterpart, of notable movements of rural origin. Also acting in the same direction is the privatization and intensive exploitation of natural resources that affects and upsets the life of numerous rural communities. This is undoubtedly one of the distinctive elements of the new phase that we analyze, and which crystallizes particularly in the major role of the indigenous movements, especially in Ecuador, Mexico and Bolivia. These movements attain an important influence at a national and international level that transcends sectorial claims, reaching the point of questioning both neoliberal economic policy and the political legitimacy of the governments that promote them as well as the constitutive form of the nation-state in Latin America. In this regard, for example, in the Ecuadorian case, the indigenous movement has striven for recognition for a political project which, reflected in the demand for a pluri-national state, seeks to guarantee self-government for the diverse indigenous nations. Under an even more radical claim of autonomy, the experience of the Zapatist movement demanded constitutional recognition for the rights of the indigenous peoples, which, partially crystallized in the so-called San Andrés Agreements (1995), would inspire the "caravan for dignity" that traveled through much of Mexico in the first months of 2001 to demand that they be complied with. To this brief listing one should add the

activity of the indigenous movements of the Bolivian Altiplano (and also, although to a lesser degree, on the Peruvian side) and of the so-called "coca-growing movements" of Aymara peasants in the Chapare and the Yunga region in Bolivia and southern Peru, against the policy of eradication of coca crops demanded by the United States government. The prolonged activity of the Mapuche peoples of southern Chile (particularly embodied in the so-called Arauco-Malleco Coordination) against the appropriation of their lands and the over-exploitation of natural resources, as well as in Colombia's Cauca Valley, are other outstanding examples of this type of struggle that seems to be carried out in the entire Latin American region. One may also point to the momentum acquired as of 2002 by the opposition of the original peoples of Central America against the Puebla Panama Plan, aimed at accelerating the penetration of transnational capital and investment in that region.

The appearance and consolidation of these indigenous movements on the political and social stage of the region is also accompanied by the emergence of numerous peasant movements that reach a significant presence at both national and regional levels. Standing out in this sense is the experience of the Brazilian Movement of the Landless Rural Workers (MST). The sustained takeovers of land and of public buildings to demand a progressive and comprehensive land reform, its actions against the spread of the model of genetically modified farming, and the development of the so-called "settlements", have turned the MST into one of the social movements with the greatest political significance in the region. Its experience exemplifies a process of increasing mobilization and organization of the rural sectors at a regional level, embodied in the dissemination of landless movements in other Latin American countries (for example in Bolivia and Paraguay) and in the intensification of the peasant struggles in Mexico, Paraguay and Central America, and in their ability to likewise convoke the small-scale producers hit hard by the policies of liberalization of the agricultural sector carried forward under the promotion of free trade agreements. In the same direction, one may point to the growth of the protests and of the convergence processes experienced in the countryside against the economic and social consequences caused in those sectors by the fall in the international prices of numerous farm products, draconian credit policies and the tariff barriers against that type of products erected in the industrialized countries.

At the same time, in the urban arena, the structural effects of unemployment generated by neoliberal policies have –especially in countries of the Southern Cone– entailed the appearance and consolidation of movements of jobless workers. Argentina appears in this sense as the most emblematic case of this phenomenon, in which these movements, which receive the name of *piqueteros*[3], occupy a central position –particularly as of 1999– on the stage of antineoliberal protest and in the acceleration of the political and social crisis that led to the resignation of president Fernando De la Rúa in December 2001.

Meanwhile, Latin American cities have been subjected to deep processes of spatial and social reconfiguration through the impact of liberal policies. The processes of "municipal decentralization" instrumented under the aegis of the fiscal adjustments (with the aim of "alleviating" the responsibility of the central governments to transfer resources to local administrations) have had enormous consequences on the daily life of the inhabitants of the cities. The processes of fragmentation and dualization of the urban space, abandonment of public spaces, deterioration in services and spread of violence have been only some of the most visible consequences of this profound social and spatial transformation that took place in the cities of the region. Recent urban conflicts seem to prove this multiplicity of troubles emanating from the social polarization promoted by neoliberalism. The struggles for access to housing (roofless movements), for the improvement of public services and against the rise in the rates of these, for the defense of public schooling, and against decentralization policies, also witness, in many cases, the confluence of diverse social sectors. The scourges caused by natural catastrophes (earthquakes, cyclones, floods) worsened by the increasing ecological impact of current capitalist development, as well as the abandonment of rural populations in the face of the need for governmental assistance and investment, explain the numerous mobilizations in demand of assistance by local and national governments.

The importance attained by these movements with a territorial basis that we have briefly summarized is far, however, from entailing the disappearance of the conflict involving urban wage-earning workers. Not only because in many of these movements one can make out the presence of workers in the diffuse and heterogeneous forms that this category assumes under a neoliberalism that leads to processes of "reidentification in terms not linked to the relation between capital and labor, but in other, very different ones, among which the criteria of 'poverty' and 'ethnicity', of occupations and of 'informal' activities and of primary communities are, probably, the most frequent" (Quijano, 2004). The verification that emerges from the monitoring of social conflicts in Latin America carried out by OSAL is that the world of labor, particularly in the urban space, far from being a secondary matter in the practice of defending claims, occupies an outstanding spot in the map of social protest, representing over a third of the conflicts surveyed over the course of the period extending from May 2000 to December 2003. Nevertheless, this quantitative weight in the register of protests contrasts with the difficulties which these (and the union organizations that promote them) face in transcending their sectorial nature and reaching a national dimension, and point to a redefinition in favor of a significant stellar role for civil servants, who account for around three quarters of the total of such protests[4].

These struggles by government-employed wage earners are undertaken in the face of the insistent reform and privatization efforts encouraged by neoliberal policies, in particular as a result of the launching of fiscal adjustment packets demanded and negotiated by governments with the international organizations. Of particular significance in this sector are the dynamics of teachers and professors whose claims refer fundamentally to wage increases, the payment of wages in arrears, increases in the education budget, and the rejection of education reform proposals (particularly the flexibilization of working conditions). In some countries, the actions that ensue from the opposition to the privatization of public education allow a convergence with student sectors (in the university arena) as well as with other sectors (pupils' parents, for example) which, backing the teachers' demands and participating in the defense of public education, seem to point to the appearance of the "education community" form in the development of these conflicts (*OSAL*, 2003).

Attention may also be drawn to the intense practice in defense of their claims by administrative employees who mobilize against dismissals, for wage increases or wages in arrears, and against the reform of the state. Within the government sector, one may also underline the conflicts in many countries involving health workers, over wage claims, in favor of increases in the budget allocated to public hospitals and to the sanitary system in general, and for the improvement of working conditions. It is interesting to stress that the form of protest in this sector recurrently adopts the modality of extended stoppages –including strikes for an indeterminate period– and are articulated both under the form of national and regional strikes called by labor federations (these are recurrently recorded in almost all countries) and with street mobilization processes. In the same sense, one may also stress the conflicts against the privatization of government-owned enterprises.

But if the "first generation" privatization wave undertaken at the beginning of the 1990s by some governments in the region was characterized by social resistance fundamentally led by unions and by the workers of the sectors affected, the struggles against the "second generation" privatizations in some cases appear as a moment of social aggregation of protest which becomes manifest through the emergence of spaces of political and social convergence of a wide-ranging character. In the first of these cases, where these protests remained restricted to the workers and were unable to constitute wider social fronts that would transcend particular demands, they were, in general, defeated. The conflict being circumscribed to the employees at the enterprises in question, after the privatization a large part of them were laid off and went on to swell the ranks of the unemployed. The new cycle of social protest that we are analyzing, on the contrary, seems to exhibit a change in relation to this question. Some recent examples, such as the protests promoted by the Civic Front of Arequipa in southern Peru against the sale of the government-run power utilities (2002), and by the Democratic Congress of the People in Paraguay for the repeal of the law that allowed the privatization of state-owned companies

(2002), serve to illustrate the broad convergence against the privatizations of social sectors (peasant federations, unions, students, NGOs and political parties) whose struggles are provisionally successful and force the governments to backtrack on their privatizing intentions[5]. This type of protests often takes on a markedly radical form (urban uprisings, lengthy highway blockades, takeover and occupation of company facilities) which appears to accompany a confrontational trend in its activities that characterizes the current cycle of protests that the region is undergoing. At the same time, the denunciation of corruption and the demand for greater democratic participation and transparency in local political life have prompted city dwellers to express their dissatisfaction, also promoting sectorial convergence processes under the form of popular uprising (*puebladas*) or of community mobilizations.

If in previous decades youthful participation and mobilization in Latin America was to a great extent channeled through the strong presence of the university student movement, youth protests now seem to adopt new forms and channels of expression. The decrease in the levels of school attendance resulting from the combined effects of the process of privatization of education and of the concentration of income and rise in poverty may perhaps explain, among other causes, the loss of relative weight of students' movements. Although students still constitute a dynamic sector in the context of social conflictivity, even being involved in multisectorial protests that go beyond educational demands, the expression of youthful discontent is also channeled through an active participation in the movements of the jobless, of young *favela* dwellers in Brazil, in alternative currents and collective cultural phenomena of diverse types, in human rights movements, in indigenous and peasant protests and union-related groupings of young, impoverished workers. Younger generations have had an active and outstanding participation in the mass protests of a political nature that led to the resignation of presidents or that radically put into question the implementation of adjustment policies and privatizations, thus nuancing the stereotyped views of reality that speak of a marked youthful disenchantment with political participation in a wide sense. In the same context, it is necessary to underline the major importance and role filled by women in the social movements referred to. Feminine figures also stand out in the constitution of these territorial movements (Zibechi, 2003), being reflected both in the notable role displayed by *piqueteras*, Zapatist and indigenous women, and in the revitalization and reformulation of the feminist currents of previous decades, which crystallized, among other experiences, in the so-called "world march of women" and in the reference to the "feminization of poverty" (Matte and Guay, 2001).

Lastly, in the current setting of Latin American social protest, particular significance is exhibited by the processes of regional and international convergence that have acquired a strong momentum in recent years and that, by virtue of their scope and geographical insertion and the number of movements and social groupings they are capable of attracting, constitute an unprecedented experience in this continent. In the past, the experiences of international coordination of social movements found their most conspicuous expressions in the areas of labor organizations or of university student sectors. These convergences centered fundamentally on the defense of sectorial or professional interests, a fact that entailed great difficulties in transcending the arena of their specific demands. The impact and consequences of the "neoliberal globalization", and consequently the irruption into national political settings of processes of continental scope (among others, for example, the so-called free trade agreements), in many cases linked to the penetration of transnational –particularly US– capital, have led to the appearance and reaffirmation of hemispheric coordination experiences with the confluence of labor, women's and students' movements, NGOs, political parties, and antimilitarist and environmental groupings in which a decisive role falls to peasant organizations (particularly through the Latin American Coordination of Peasant Organizations, CLOC, and its international articulation, Vía Campesina [Peasant Path]). The Continental Campaign against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), promoted by the Continental Social Alliance and other networks and groupings (as well as the constitution of the Social Movements International Network), constitutes perhaps the most outstanding example, to which the innumerable amount of regional and continental gatherings (which also include movements from North America)

against the Puebla Panama Plan and regional militarization and foreign interventions (particularly in reference to the so-called Colombia Plan and Andean Initiative) is added. In this process, the constitution of the World Social Forum (WSF, 2001-2004) appears as the most prominent experience of these convergences, not only at an international but also at a continental and regional level.

The new configuration of popular movements

Within this overview, which we have briefly summarized in relation to the features exhibited by social conflictivity in Latin America in recent years, some of the particular aspects that distinguish the actions and constitution of contemporary social and popular movements in our region already stand out. The analysis of these experiences and, particularly, the understanding and conceptualization of the novel aspects posed by those movements in the historical course of collective action and social contestation, constitute one of the centers of attention of the shaping and revitalization of current Latin American social thinking. The renewed generation of studies and publications about these subjects has also entailed the constitution of a new field of *problématiques* as well as an enrichment of the theoretical and methodological frameworks related to the study of social movements. One of the manifestations of these processes and of the debates posed is, for example, the position recently taken up within critical thinking by the discussion on the conceptualization of power and the role pertaining to the nation-state in reference to the views of social emancipation promoted by those movements[6]. It is not however our intention to present the *problématiques* orienting the debates and the reflections of social scientists –and of the movements themselves[7]. We are interested in underlining and going deeper into some of the features that distinguish the configuration of social movements at this time.

In relation to this, and with regard to the "repertories of protest", it is important to point out a trend toward a greater radicalness in the forms of struggle, which is manifested in the duration of protests (actions over prolonged or indeterminate periods); in the generalization of confrontational forms of struggle to the detriment of demonstrational measures; in the regional spread of certain modalities such as the blockading of roads (characteristic, for example, of the protests of both the movements of jobless workers in Argentina and of the indigenous and coca-growing movements in the Andean Area) and the takeover of land (promoted by the peasant movements) or of public or private buildings. At the same time, the recurrence of lengthy marches and demonstrations that traverse regional and national spaces over the course of days and weeks seems to want to counteract the dynamics of territorial segmentation promoted by neoliberalism. Likewise, the *puebladas* and urban uprisings appear to be strategies aimed at the collective re-appropriation of the community space and at the recovery of a social visibility denied by the mechanisms of power (Seoane and Taddei, 2003).

In relation to the social actors that seem to take part in this new cycle of protests analyzed, we may stress two features that we have already singled out previously. The first is the displacement of the wage earners' conflict to the public sector, to the detriment of the impact and importance of those promoted by workers in the private sector. This fact, in turn, implies a particular configuration that runs through the actions of labor organizations, while the dynamics of the posing of demands by the public sector calls on the participation and convergence of other social sectors in the defense of access to, and the quality of, education and health as human rights. In this sense, it is important to underline that in many cases the struggles against these policies of dismantlement and privatization, and the boosting of the convergence processes –which adopt the forms of coordinating units and civic fronts– don't necessarily rest on wage-earning labor dynamics. The role played by other organizations (peasant and indigenous movements, the unemployed, students, urban movements, among others) in the shaping of these "expanded social coalitions" is of major importance. The second characteristic refers to the consolidation of movements of rural origin –indigenous and peasants–, which reach national and regional significance and influence. These develop a notable capacity of interpellation and articulation with urban social sectors, in many cases successfully being able

to link the dynamics of the struggle against neoliberalism (agrarian policy, privatizations, fiscal adjustment) to a wider questioning of the bases of legitimacy of the political systems in the region.

These two brief pointers –as well as the description of the setting of social conflictivity presented earlier– therefore allow us to go deeper into the characterization of the particular configuration that appears to distinguish the experimentation of contemporary social movements in the region. Without seeking to exhaust this issue, it is necessary, in our understanding, to emphasize three elements that under different forms and with diverse intensities seem to run through the constitutive practice of the majority of the most significant Latin American social movements.

In the first place, a dynamics of territorial appropriation that characterizes the collective practice of what we have earlier referred to as rural and urban territorial movements. Presented as "the strategic response of the poor to the crisis of the old territoriality of the factory and the farm... [and to] the de-territorialization of production... [promoted by] neoliberal reforms" (Zibechi, 2003), as well as to the process of privatization of the public sphere and of politics (Boron, 2003a), this trend to re-appropriation by the community of the living space in which those movements are located remits to the expansion of the experiences of productive self-management (Sousa Santos, 2002b), the collective solution of social needs (for example in the field of education and of health), and autonomous forms of handling of public affairs. This diversified continuum encompasses the cooperative settlements of the Brazilian MST, the indigenous communities in Ecuador and Bolivia, the autonomous Zapatist town governments in Mexico, the productive undertakings of the various jobless movements and movement of recovered factories both in Argentina, as well as the *puebladas* and urban uprisings that implied the emergence of practices of management of the public space (such is the case for example of the "Water War" in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and of the experience of the popular assemblies that emerged in the main urban centers of Argentina after December 2001). In this sense, this rising "territorialization" of social movements is the result both of the extension of "forms of reciprocity, that is to say, of the exchange of labor force and of products without passing through the market, albeit with an inevitable, but ambiguous and tangential, relationship with it... [as well as of] new forms of political authority, of a communal character, that operate with and without the state" (Quijano, 2004). In permanent tension with the market and the state, extended in time or unstable and temporary, settling around practices of "production and reproduction of life" (Zibechi, 2003) or simply operating in the terrain of the management of public and political affairs, this dynamics of collective re-appropriation of the social territory appears to guide the experience not only of the indigenous and peasant movements, but also in the urban space (Seoane, 2003a). In this sense, we might state that "antineoliberal politics would appear to head towards an action of [...] reproduction and production of society beyond the expanded and dislocated production of transnational capital" (Tapia, 2000).

In consonance with this experience, the practice and discursiveness of the majority of the social movements described appears imbued with the revaluing of democratic mechanisms of participation and decision which, inspired in references to direct or semi-direct democracy, orient both their organizational models and their programmatics and demands *vis-à-vis* the state. In this regard, on one hand, the promotion of more horizontal and open forms of participation is seen as reinsurance in the face of the danger of "disconnection" between the different organizational levels and of bureaucratization and manipulation. On the other hand, the confrontation with the neoliberal hegemony in the terrain of public policies has been translated into a growing questioning of the political system, of the model of representative democracy, and of the form that the constitution of the nation-state adopted in Latin America, promoting a diversity of demands that ranges from those for consultations and referendums to claims for autonomy and self-government, boosted particularly by the indigenous movements. The experiences of social self-organization linked to assembly-like forms of organization were a feature of the emergence of many of these movements (for example of the organizations of jobless workers and of the popular assemblies in Argentina or the urban uprisings of the "Water

War" and the "Gas War" in Bolivia). Additionally, the traditional experiences of community management that characterized indigenous communities, reformulated under the impact of neoliberal policies, have served to pose a critical and alternative view of delegational and representative forms. In this terrain, the Zapatist experimentation crystallized in the watchword of "commanding while obeying" (Ceceña, 2001) is perhaps the clearest and most suggestive example, although not the only one. At the same time, the utilization and presence in the programmatics of many of these movements of instruments of semi-direct democracy can be verified, for example, in the demand for the gas referendum and the summoning to a Constitutional Assembly in the events of October in Bolivia (2003), in the referendums against the privatizations in Uruguay, or in the demand for binding plebiscites on the FTAA promoted by the social coalitions constituted in opposition to that trade agreement at a continental level. In the same direction, be it under the form of the demand for a plurinational state in the case of the Ecuadorian indigenous movements, or of the demand and construction of self-government in the autonomous Zapatist town governments, the claim of autonomy for indigenous peoples encompasses, in its projection on society, the broaching of a radical democratization of the forms of the nation-state, particularly in the "coloniality of power" that characterized its constitution (Lander, 2000). Lastly, access to local governments by representatives of those movements (especially in the experience of the Ecuadorian hills and in the Cauca valley in Colombia) has entailed the launching of mechanisms of popular participation and control in their handling (Larrea, 2004). In the diversity of the experiences described above, one many thus point to the emergence of a democratizing trend that traverses the collective practice of these social movements both in their spaces of autonomy and in the terrain of the state (Seoane, 2004; Bartra, 2003a), and expresses the extent to which "participatory democracy has taken on a new dynamics enacted by subordinate social communities and groups struggling against social exclusion and the trivialization of citizenship" (Sousa Santos, 2002a).

Lastly, it may be pointed out that, as from the protests against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MIA, 1997/98), the "battle of Seattle" that impeded the so-called Millennium Round of the World Trade Organization (1999), the creation and deepening of the experience of the World Social Forum (WSF, 2001 through 2004) and the "global days of action" against the military intervention in Iraq (2003/2004), the backbone of a "new internationalism" has left a deep and singular imprint on the experimentation of social movements in the world arena. The eminently social character of the actors involved (albeit not unlinked, should it be necessary to make this clear, to ideological and political inscriptions), their heterogeneity and scope, the truly international extension of the convergences, the organizational forms and the characteristics taken on by these articulations point to the novelty of this internationalism (Seoane and Taddei, 2001). As we have already shown, the Latin American region has not remained outside this process. On the contrary: the holding in 1996 of the 1st Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism organized by Zapatism in the depths of the Chiapas forest –which may be considered one of the first international summons located at the origin of this process–, as well as the fact that the birth of the WSF took place in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, point to the profound imbrication between the growth of protest and social movements in Latin America, and the emergence of the global convergences against neoliberal globalization. In this region, over the course of recent years, these experiences have been particularly marked by the evolution of the so-called agreements on trade liberalization, and especially of the United States' initiative of subsuming the countries of the region within a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). These resistance processes, that implied both the constitution of spaces of coordination at a regional level (which group a wide array of movements, social organizations and NGOs) and the emergence of similar convergence experiences at a national level (for example, the national campaigns against the FTAA), turn out to be, within the continental framework and along with the experience of the Social Forums and of the mobilizations against the war, an expression and extension of the alterglobalist movement that emerged and was consolidated in the last decade. In relation to this process of convergences against "free trade", the regional experience hails back to the protests triggered by the negotiation and launching (1994) of NAFTA (North

American Free Trade Agreement), the creation of the Continental Social Alliance (1997), the organization of the 1st Summit of the Peoples of the Americas (1998) in opposition to the 2nd Summit of presidents of the 34 American countries that participate in the negotiation over the FTAA, and the organization of the Hemispheric Meetings of Struggle Against the FTAA (Havana, Cuba; 2002 to 2004). Nevertheless, particularly in relation to the dynamics and characteristics taken on by these negotiations as of 2003 –marked by the proximity of the date foreseen for their conclusion (2005), the difficulties and resistance it faces and the acceleration of the plurilateral Free Trade Agreements–, these convergence and protest processes are intensified at a regional level[8]. In Central America, the fruit of these experiences has been the creation and development of the Mesoamerican Forums and of the so-called Central American Popular Block. In the case of the countries forming part of MERCOSUR, the so-called "National Campaigns against the FTAA" have promoted diverse and massive popular consultations and have evolved toward the increasing questioning of "free trade" in the face of the different trade negotiations undertaken by governments. Lastly, in the Andean Area the articulation between the rejection of these treaties with massive protests in the national spaces (for example, the "Gas War" in Bolivia, 2003) and the emergence of regional coordination processes (for example, in April 2004, the first Andean Day of Mobilization Against the FTAA) point to the wealth of such processes. In this direction, the forthcoming holding of the 1st Americas Social Forum in Ecuador (July 2004) will constitute an arrival point of these experiences as well as an event that will prove the maturity, depth, features and challenges faced by internationalism in the Latin American and continental arena.

"Neoliberalism of war" and social convergences

The process opened in Latin America in recent years –in the face of the exhaustion of the neoliberal model in the form in which the latter tragically crystallized in the 1990s in our region– is increasingly expressed in the intensification of the disputes regarding the direction to be adopted by a transition whose outcome remains uncertain. In this sense, the social and political realities of the various countries is seen to be marked, as we pointed out earlier, by renewed social protest –which at a regional level has grown in recent years– and by the activity of social and popular movements with features different from those that had occupied stage center in the immediate past. This process, in the framework of the economic crisis undergone by most of the region and in the face of the attempts to deepen neoliberal policies, has in some cases been translated into "popular uprisings" (that in most cases ended in the collapse of governments), in the constitution of "electoral majorities" critical of neoliberalism, and even in the reappearance of a political discursiveness that differentiates itself from the latter. In their diversity, these processes point to the growing crisis of legitimacy that puts into question the cultural, economic and political forms that underpinned the application of neoliberalism in the past.

Nevertheless, in the face of this process, the attempts to deepen neoliberal policies have tended to a rising militarization of social relations in a process that has been given the name of "neoliberalism of war" (González Casanova, 2002; Taddei, 2002). This refers not only to the policy of war and of military intervention wielded as an international prerogative by president Bush –particularly a posteriori of the attacks of September 11, 2001– but also to the deepening of a repressive social diagram that encompasses legal reforms that slash democratic rights and freedoms and award greater power and immunity to the actions of police forces, and the criminalization of poverty and social movements, the so-called "judicialization" of protest, the increase in state and para-state repression, and the rising intervention of the armed forces in domestic social conflict. Justified by the alleged fight against the drug traffic, terrorism or crime, the ideology of "security" thus seeks the reconstitution of the challenged "neoliberal governability". One of its most tragic expressions has been the increase of the United States military presence in the entire Latin American region (Quijano, 2004; Algranati, Seoane and Taddei, 2004). Additionally, in the terrain of domestic policies, the Colombian case emerges as one of the main laboratories for the implanting of these repressive diagrams, particularly under the administration of president Álvaro Uribe, who opened a process that seeks not only to

deepen the military confrontation with the guerrillas –after the peace agreements of the previous period were broken– but also the deployment of a policy of "social militarization" in the attempt to affirm an authoritarian legitimacy, particularly among middle-class urban sectors (Zuluaga Nieto, 2003). The face of the "neoliberalism of war" thus accompanies the promotion of a radical and even more regressive reconfiguration of the political, social and economic geography of the region as a result of the acceleration of the so-called "free trade agreements" that find their maximum expression in the FTAA.

We have attempted up to this point to give an account of the paths taken and features adopted by the process of social and political disputation opened by the crisis of the neoliberal model forged in the 1990s and of the characteristics that appear to distinguish the configuration of contemporary social movements. As we have pointed out, this process is not homogeneous, and is expressed in a differentiated manner in each of the regions into which the continent may be subdivided and even within these. In this regard, the evolution of the northern region (Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean) seems to evince a marked consolidation of trade liberalization processes, which constitute the cornerstone of Washington's strategic plans. At the same time, the convulsive political situation in a major part of the Andean region is a manifestation of the strong social tensions resulting from the attempts to deepen these "news" neoliberal recipe books, which are translated into the difficulty in the stabilization of the new political regimes that promote these policies. Expressions of this are the increasing popular discredit of the governments of Peru and of Ecuador; the setting opened with the "Bolivian October" that projects new confrontations and possible changes on the horizon, and the Venezuelan case, where the battle around the presidential recall referendum this coming August will undoubtedly acquire a regional dimension. The outcome of this process will be fundamental in Latin America with regard to the hegemonic aspirations of the White House to hinder the consolidation of democratic-popular political processes that challenge the neoliberal model. In the southern region, social movements face the great challenge of taking advantage of the chinks opened by the loss of legitimacy of neoliberalism to fight for the direction of the processes underway, maintaining and strengthening their autonomy in relation to governments.

Beyond the particular aspects exhibited by the processes at a subregional level, the generalization of free trade appears in all countries (with the exception of the Venezuelan case) as an axis emphasized by the political and economic elites to refound the neoliberal order and its legitimacy. In the face of this, the processes of regional convergence that on a national scale challenge the hegemonic economic model, and the emancipatory horizons that ensue from the practices and discourses that characterize social movements at the beginning of the twenty-first century, cast light on the outlines of those "other possible Americas" that our peoples so strongly call for.

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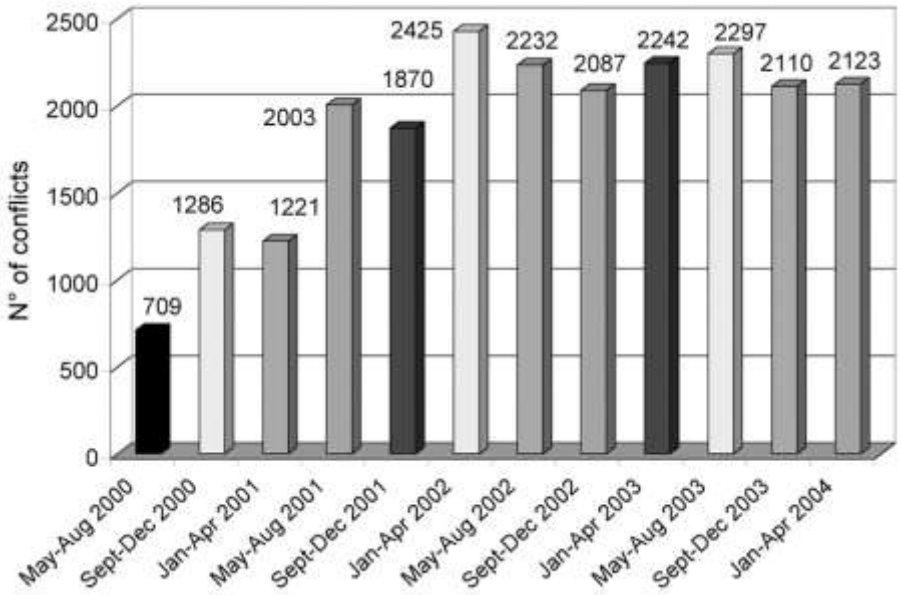
Chart 1
Evolution of social conflictivity in Latin America*
May 2000/April 2004



* Survey carried out on the basis of a perusal of national newspapers of 18 Latin American countries, namely: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Drawn up by the Latin American Social Observatory (OSAL), Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO).

Notes

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1 We are particularly grateful for the comments of Ivana Brighenti and Miguel Ángel Djanikian in the revision of the text.

2 We find it impossible to develop this issue here. Regarding the evolution of poverty and unemployment in Latin America, reference may be made to the reports on Human Development of the UNDP (2002) and of ECLAC (2002). With regard to the consequences in relation to democracy see Boron (2003a). Regarding the structural transformations of Latin American capitalism, see among others Quijano (2004) and Fiori (2001).

3 Road or highway blockade, generally for an extended period.

4 For example, for the year 2003, the conflicts involving workers of the public sector represent, according to the records supplied by OSAL (Latin American Social Observatory, CLACSO), 76% of the total number of protests by employed workers.

5 The most important among this type of protests undoubtedly turns out to be the so-called "Water War" in Cochabamba, Bolivia (2000), which frustrated the attempt to award a concession for, and privatize, the drinking water service in that city to an international consortium headed by the Bechtel company.

6 Regarding this debate one may consult, among other texts, the diverse dossiers published in numbers 12 and 13 of Chiapas magazine, as well as those included in numbers 4 and 7 of CLACSO's OSAL magazine.

7 We have broached that question in the course "Neoliberalism and Social Movements in Latin America: the Configuration of Social Protest", taught in the framework of the distance education courses under the platform of CLACSO's Virtual Campus, 2003.

8 An evaluation of this process may be consulted in OSAL (2004).

Madeleine Andebeng L. Alingué*

African Transatlantic Resistance and Movements

SEATTLE, PORTO ALEGRE, DURBAN and more recently Bombay are massive and conclusive expressions of the fight for a better future. From Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, to Europe and the United States, the planning and ordering of the global economic system gradually and dramatically imperils the life of millions of families. This phenomenon of increasing exclusion is mainly conditioned by a transnational economic logic, which establishes an eminently predatory consumption pattern that undermines the ecological, material and social basis of human life and dignity.

From a historical distance, the analysis of social movements makes it possible to prove that processes of change are constituted by "ruptures" expressed mainly by "resistance". Reciprocally, in order to generate ruptures, resistance must be massive, organized and sustainable. Therefore, the recent appropriation of the field of resistance by anti-globalization activists of industrialized countries has granted a new *input* to worldwide mobilizations: a mediatic *input* necessary for current protests.

Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have for centuries posed and designed "other" ways of resistance that, though less visible, have modified and altered international, regional and national balances. At present, the multiplication and diversification of worldwide resistance formats (political and economic) involves an increasing amount of affected people and implies recognizing the "fairness" of our fight. In addition, the possibility of counting on an observation and interpretation that includes contextual and temporal social movements makes it possible to understand their dimensions, potentialities and scope.

Africa, and especially the African transatlantic resistance, offers an experience that refers to the contemporary resistance's two mainstays: the first one, economic, on the formats and purposes of the production system; the second one, political, on racial discrimination and its social effects.

It is worth clarifying that even though there is a bibliographic gap about African experiences, based on specialized analyses, experts regret the "invisibility" of African contributions to the construction and evolution of modern resistance. This invisibility is understood as a "non existence", or as the "incapacity to become visible" in the framework of modern development. Afro-descendants in the Americas and the Caribbean are more than 150 million. In view of this evidence, I allow myself instead to question the systems and scientific approaches to the measurement of reality that cloud our social nuances.

African modern resistance's genealogy (XV-XX)

African transatlantic resistance arises and shares its origin with the development of triangular trade initiated in the XVI century among Africa, America and Europe. With a tri-continental geographic scenario connected by the Atlantic Ocean, triangular trade consisted of an exchange of products and services that set up the principles, structure and dynamics of Atlantic modern economic globalization.

For Latin America, the colonization and exploitation of raw materials required the importing of an African labor force. For Europe, the consolidation of nations-states, technological development, the food revolution and the pursuit of wealth consolidated American colonization and the opening of African commercial routes towards the Atlantic.

From the African continent, the implementation of territorial domains in the Americas and the resistance of Indian people offered options of diversification of commercial routes with the aim to expand their growth and development strategies. That is why, in the first stage of the

triangular trade, one can observe an organized and planned participation, from the XV century until the mid XVII. The experience of African labor force exports is not new in African economic history. Starting in the VI century, marine and land trade with Asia included an extensive range of products such as the African slave labor force. It is important to recall that trade in human beings was not an African exception but a reality in numerous regions of the world (Europe, Asia and America), based on a principle of economic exploitation.

From the XVII century onwards, the enlargement of colonial objectives in the Americas and the Caribbean generated the competitiveness of colonial and marine markets, and piracy and illegality gave shape to the industrialization of triangular trade. In this second stage, African participation and answers to the rising demand would show to be disordered and unplanned, leading to a new category of merchant: the "slave trader". This period will be denounced as that of the *slave trade* or *transatlantic trade.*

Additionally, since the XVI century, a model of social organization based on a cultural classification system and ranking according to racial castes[1] is established as from the American colonies. Colonial hegemony allowed the use of "terror" as a mediator of almost all the links between the white minority and the so-called "irrational", be them aboriginal population or black (Taussig, 1991: 5). The African "savage" represented the spiritual and rational level of Europeans when providence or reason freed them. Implicitly and explicitly, this interpretation permitted Europeans, in the name of Christ –through the system of the Inquisition–, or in the name of reason, to colonize, administer and, whenever possible, to enslave the savage.

For the people enslaved, the loss of freedom, labor exploitation and physical extermination hatched African transatlantic resistance and mobilizations. Between the XVI and the XIX century, the sabotage of agricultural and cattle production (Arocha, 1998: 343), open revolt and flight were common formats of resistance.

In the face of this double discrimination –*class* and *race*– Africans of the continent as well as of the Americas and the Caribbean designed strategies in order to restore the balances of survival and sustainability.

Economic strategies

Globalization is presented as a "free market", the result of a natural process of commercial expansion and a development generator. However, this presentation happens to be counteracted by a "reality" that questions its modalities and objectives.

This reality translates into the fact that 20% of the world's population holds 83% of the world GDP, controls 82% of international trade, uses up the 95% of the total of commercial loans granted in the planet, and generates 95% of all the research and development of the world. The last UNDP Human Development Report (PNUD, 2003)[2] pinpoints that 3,000 million people in the world survive on less than 2 dollars a day, while 1,200 million people survive on less than 1 dollar per day and lack drinking water. Finally, 2,400 million are in need of basic sanitation.

Systems, their modalities, and the tools (legal, scientific and technological) for the operation and development of the global market, are monopolized by the "West", marginalizing "peripheral societies" from the free market's benefits. This exclusion translates into the undervaluing of their products and into commercial logic.

In view of globalization's aim of being the engine of development, experts try to convince us that the display of negative results (high levels of poverty and effects on the environment, among others) is a consequence of local or national inability to take up a position within the global system. The subsequent imposition or importation of development models in the countries of the so-called Third World showed the limits of its applicability, causing effects contradictory to the ideal of development and precluding "exchange" in every way.

Due to the fact that it is in the African experience in the Americas and the Caribbean that this ambivalence is most crudely revealed, African transatlantic resistance movements have worked out interpretations and strategies in order to keep up and improve their population's quality of life. According to African transatlantic movements, the establishment of an organizational system based on racial stratification placed Afro-descendants at the bottom of the social scale. African populations in the Americas are affected by unemployment, a lack of basic services

such as health, education and housing, and an absence of communication networks that violate their private and civil rights.

From local initiatives for self-sufficiency (setting up cooperatives or creation of non-governmental organizations) to international negotiation processes, African transatlantic resistance strategies have made it possible to modify economic structures.

In 1975, Africa and the G77 with the proposal of a "New World Economic Order", which according to professor Samir Amin is a "project of rejuvenation of the controlled internationalization that would have allowed the continuation of general growth" (Amin, 1989), mobilized and combined several political, economic and social fronts to provide a way out for to the Third World's problems, and in particular for Afro-American transatlantic ones. More recently, from the African continent and its diasporas, the New Partnership for African Development –NEPAD– with South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria was designed, which aims to grant new competitive spaces to all Africans within and outside the continent.

The South-South Summit on debt, "Towards a new millennium free of debt", carried out in November 1999 in Johannesburg, and the International Meeting Dakar 2000 "From the Resistance to Alternatives", in December 2000, had as their aim to pressure for the annulment of the debt and the abandonment of the adjustment programs in the Third World. Among the most specific initiatives there exists, for instance, the African Business Roundtable, which gathers African and Afro-American businessmen who work for the strengthening of African transatlantic companies.

From the field of economy, a "labour of memory" is materialized, aimed at re-establishing, through compensation or reparation, ethic and economic balances for the reintegration and return to action of Africans as regards the productive processes. Therefore, for many spokespeople of this way of resistance, the "position consists in declaring that it is the duty of the states that have enriched themselves thanks to slavery, to grant a compensation to those that have been impoverished due to the latter [...] and that to the recognition of the crime should be added the debt cancellation of African, Latin American and Caribbean countries. In like manner, the restoration of the compensation must include the redistribution of the means of production and of exchange [...] We consider urgent also to suppress the social barriers that exist due to the persistence of the caste spirit"[3].

Even though these strategies have allowed an improvement in the conditions of economic negotiation, the results obtained continue to be negative for African communities. The low literacy rate and the lack of access to basic services reveal the inefficacy of an "equitable economic thought" *vis-à-vis* a perception of "irreversibility" of the conditions and processes of development in the framework of the national and global economic structure.

We know that globalization is an ideological "discourse" aimed at legitimizing capital's strategies (Amin, 1997). We know that this discourse is created by a mechanism that constructs it. There is therefore an urgent need to modify the perception and the instruments of participation of African transatlantic peoples in the world economy.

Political victories

From their beginnings, African transatlantic struggles and arguments rapidly produced positive results. Already in 1804, Haitian capabilities allowed total independence and the implementation of the first model of an African state in the Caribbean.

With regard to the American continent, the conditions of domination allowed the obtention of political and legal victories such as the abolition of slavery in 1850[4]. At present, they are expressed through policies of "affirmative action" or of "positive discrimination". In relation to these two mobilization settings, America's and the Caribbean's Afro-Americans expressed themselves mainly in two different formats.

First, *governability*. The experience of political independence (Haiti), with administrative management capacity, economic control and cultural development, showed its limits in the practice of autonomy (e.g., the recent expulsion of elected president Aristide). With a revolutionary Constitution, the management of society was organized on stiff, authoritarian and centralized practices. Additionally, the Island's geo-strategical position (the Greater Caribbean) sometimes had a dramatic influence on its development.

The second scheme: *multiculturalism*. From the Americas, the freedom (from slavery) attained did not involve Afro-Americans' active participation in the decision-making process. Until the new constitutions implemented in the 80s, Afro-Americans were recognized as "citizens with no rights" through a "modern apartheid" model. The American system identifies and legitimizes "Afros" or "negritude", but makes them invisible in their domestic and international agendas. This format of inclusion is generated through the logic of the "ethnic minority", in which perception and treatment cause a process of systematic marginalization, displayed in a behavior of "conscious" discrimination.

In view of this political and social invisibility, in both scenarios, numerous Afro-American and Caribbean intellectuals have drawn up interpretations in order to organize the transatlantic resistance. The actors of the construction of the African memory and struggle are located, in the main, within the pan-African movement.

This movement is a sphere of theoretical interpretations, political initiatives and economic strategies formulated by and for Africans. Its struggle is concentrated on the recognition and promotion of Africans. Its field of action includes the Americas, Caribbean, Africa and the new African Diasporas (Europe, Central Europe, Canada and Asia, among others). Structured at the end of the 19th century and beginnings of the 20th, the pan-African movement was organized and consolidated through the following international meetings: London in 1900, Paris in 1919, Paris in 1921, London in 1923, New York in 1927 and Manchester in 1945.

From Africa and from the Americas and the Caribbean, pan-Africanist leaders such as Edward W. Blyden (1832-1929).), W.E.B. Dubois (1868-1963), George Padmore (1902-1959), Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), Leopold Sedar Senghor (1903-2001), Aimé Césaire (1913), Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), Julius Nyerere (1922-1999), Jomo Kenyatta (1891-1978), Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), Emperador Hailé Selassié I (1892-1975), Martín Luther King (1928-1968), Malcolm X (1925-1965), C.L.R. James (1901-1989), Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) and Archie Mafeje (1937), just to name a few, identified theoretical and methodological options for the promotion of the African peoples. For each one of them, the extent of their mobilizations was carried out in different times and conditions. At present, all the pan-Africanist interpretative proposals have again acquired vigor and feed the formulation and design of coordinated and sustainable manners of existence.

Recently, academic settings have also appropriated the issue, granting continuity, shape and depth to African social movements. In the Caribbean, the annual "All African Students' Conference" held at the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, focuses, for instance, on themes such as "Pan-Africanism at the Beginning of the 21st Century: New Century, Same Challenges" and reporting on the theoretical advances of African legitimacy. With regard to the African continent, the conference "Intellectuals, Nationalism and the Pan-African Ideal" organized by the Council for Development and Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and held in Dakar, Senegal, in December 2003, is another evidence of the need to articulate and coordinate theoretical as well as practical efforts within contemporary African resistance.

In parallel with this process of internal formulation and definition, there also exist external mobilization strategies. The World Conference against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Similar Forms of Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, is an important opportunity for African social movements to debate and face the complex outlines of the "race" discourse that has excluded the "Afro"[5] from local, national and international public settings. International mobilizations have made it possible to establish alliances that create feedback, and enlarge and increase the options of legitimacy. Therefore, African transatlantic mobilizations organize on different levels.

In the first place, political and legal initiatives such as the Meeting of Afro-descendant Parliamentarians of the Americas and the Caribbean I and II, held in Brazil in October 2003 and in Colombia in May 2004 respectively. The conferences identified a great number of Afro-descendant parliamentarians and focused on the dissemination of local problems. Lastly, they reasserted the need to create strategic alliances for the promotion of policies on behalf of Afro-American and Caribbean populations and communities. In the second place, African mass participation (labor unions, intellectuals, academics, student and peasant movements) in the "Battle of Seattle" (1999) and the I World Social Forum of Porto Alegre (Brazil) to raise and discuss land rights, citizenship, liberty, equality and peace by means of the discourse regarding the redemption of the historic and social debt. Thirdly, one may identify mobilizations such as

the “Million Man March” (1995) in Washington DC, or the March against Racism, in favor of Equality and Life (2000) in Brazil, in which the dynamics consist in generating greater self-consciousness: “The only way we are going to stand up and be seen is if we do it together”.

Social strategies

Due to the fact that the social is the sole area in which all the actors negotiate their identity, it is within this field that African pressures have individual or collectively attained startling results. African transatlantic social strategies carry out and combine different fields of negotiation, with the aim of generating the changes necessary for their existence. As a main result of this process, in the Americas and the Caribbean more than 150 million Afro-Americans are to be found.

Even though census systems continue to be unreliable due to the fact they are “inflexible”, the Afro-descended population reaches 95% in Haiti, 90.4% in Jamaica, more than 90% in Trinidad and Tobago, 62% in Cuba, 47% in Brazil, 26% in Colombia, 18% in the United States, 10% in Ecuador, 4% in Uruguay, 3% in Peru and 2% in Chile. This is without cataloguing regions such as Central America (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama, Honduras, and Guatemala) and Caribbean territories such as the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Guyana, and the French Antilles due to their condition of colonies[6]. Their quantitative spread and territorial distribution prove their development and capacity of transformation. These capabilities develop through several social strategies.

First, *crossbreeding*. The establishment of racial stratification as an economic, cultural and social development model posed for the majority of Afro-descendants the need for “whitening” as a logic of integration. The *half-caste* is an option to break down the limits of labor and cultural discrimination. This conscious movement of acculturation designed new ways of African identity and made more flexible and ample the formats of African identity. Secondly, for many Afro-descendants the maintenance of an African identity has to do with autonomy and self-determination. Historically, freedom was associated with independence.

Therefore, the appropriation of land, as in the constitution of the Republic of Palmares in Brazil, or the Palenque of San Basilio in Colombia, are symbols of African mobilization. Additionally, as from the XVII century, the number of slaves who bought from their bosses letters of freedom and migrated from the mines of the gold-bearing areas to havens free of slavers increased (Arocha, 1998: 341-348; Friedmann and Arocha, 1995: 58-62). Nowadays, these efforts of libertarian separatism are displayed in legal mobilizations that have managed to speed up processes of *collective titling* of land. According to Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle (1988a), this need “integrates and incorporates them into the constitutional state [...] and transforms them [...] into citizens with a heritage to defend and into active participants in socioeconomic development”.

Thirdly, struggles aimed at the strengthening and preservation of African culture hatched other juridical processes that established policies of ethno education in the Americas. To this end, the promotion of intercultural education that will contribute to the recognition, knowledge and appraisal of cultural and ethnic differences is sought; to promote processes of education of African communities in the Americas; and, lastly, to contribute to the improvement in quality and expansion of Afro-descendants’ pre-school, basic, primary and advanced education.

In the fourth place, affirmative action policies concerning economic development called ethno-development. Within national development plans, ethnic development proposals that recovered traditional abilities and customs are incorporated. In Colombia, Brazil and Belize, projects tending towards the rescue, preservation and strengthening of cultural values are carried out, together with the training of members in small self-management enterprises, with the aim to fight unemployment, the worsening of the standard of living, mass emigration and the abandonment of the community heritage.

Fifth, in view of the labor market’s limits, Afro-descendants have delved since the eighties into new forms of economic organization, such as the Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). These are considered new modalities of economic production that not only foster the creation of companies but also constitute an independent political position which, in the case of Afro-descendants, refer to “Afro” identity.

Sixth and last, the creation of networks. Local efforts have had to confront to such amount of necessities that mobilizations required alliances. In Colombia, for instance, the *Process of Black Communities* has established contacts and agreements with other regional agents, such as the Andean network of black communities that includes Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru.

Thus, African responses reply to the challenges of legitimacy and sustainability. Afro-Americans have turned the New World into a democratic social and organizational model. For those who criticize Afro-descendants due to the way they build their identity in the process of construction of the nation, it is important to stress out that in every process of negotiation Africans have understood that coexistence depends –to a large extent– on the flexibility and adaptability of the actors.

The Colombian case

Unlike the majority of the countries that make up the Andean region, Colombia, due to its access to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, has been, through its port of Cartagena, one the main entry territories of enslaved Africans. Afro-Colombians (included the localized population of San Andres and Providencia) constitute 26.83%, that is to say, 11,745,403 people. The vast majority of Afro-Colombians live on the Pacific Coast, in the departments of Choco, Valle, Cauca and Nariño, but also in the big cities on the Atlantic Coast such as Barranquilla and Cartagena, and in the capital city, Bogota, where they are estimated in more than a million[7].

Since its constitution as a Republic, Colombia has undergone political and military violence, revealed in the systematic violation of the population's fundamental rights. This has worsened the situation of precariousness and economic and social penury, as well as of racial and ethnic discrimination in its population. The mass presence of Afro-Colombian populations in the regions of main economic and strategic significance is associated, likewise, with the zones of conflict, a fact that makes them doubly vulnerable[8].

It is within this context of extreme tension that Afro-Colombian social movements' constant demands have been satisfied by the dispositions of the Constitution of 1991. The Colombian nation's ratification of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity establishes principles and rights concerning autonomy, ethnic-cultural diversity and their own language, bilingual instruction, territoriality and own education for black communities.

Among Afro-Colombian victories, the Law 70 of 1993 and the General Education Law 115 of 1994 recognize the right to receive education for Indian, black and localized communities. Officially identified as ethno-education, it recognizes Colombia's black communities as an ethnic group and recognizes collective rights in the matter of territory, the use of natural resources, participation and socioeconomic development, in tune with their particular conditions. For the development of the Law, decree 1745 of 1945 was issued, regulating the procedure for collective title deeds. Nowadays, Afro-Colombian communities own 4.6 million hectares on the Colombian Pacific. Likewise, they have priority for the exploitation of existing natural resources there, and must be consulted in the processes aimed at granting permissions or authorizations for their exploitation.

This set of recognitions has allowed the African identity to be visible in Colombia. Since 1991, more than 1,080 Afro-Colombian organizations have been distributed all across the territory together with others related to particular sectors: homes for orphaned children, associations of female household heads, organizations for the displaced (AFRODES), cultural organizations (Black Colombia Foundation), political and educational associations, leadership schools (Maroon movements), musical groupings and associations for Afro youth. All of them act as pressure and mobilization groups for the promotion of Afro-American communities in Colombia.

Not to conclude

The African social movements' trajectory, pioneering in anti-capitalist mobilization, has demonstrated that within unequal structures, rebalancing formats are possible. In view of the double discrimination of *class* and *race*, the resistance has drawn up strategies that have managed in the Americas and the Caribbean to create more ample coexistence systems and, hence, more sustainable ones. The African transatlantic movement has provided a distinct

analysis that turns Africans into active participants in their history and fully shares the theoretical, economic, political and social basis of the new forms of mobilization.

The African experience –the most extensive, diverse and sustainable one– provides mechanisms that are rationally inserted within the new dynamics of world social movements. On the one hand, from a universal standpoint, African theoretical interpretations, by re-appropriating their Humanity, offer a progressive and equitable view and comprehension of the global system. On the other hand, strategies are worked on from the multisectorial angle, by recognizing and allowing each actor's objectives, modalities and aims that have been articulated and mobilized in order to create fairer organization and coexistence systems.

Even though these combined efforts have produced fundamental results in the evolution of worldwide human relations, it is important to recognize the limits of their scopes. African transatlantic movements have to face new technological, health, education and socioeconomic leveling challenges, among many other modern ones.

At present time, in view of the acceleration of the processes of marginalization, resistance movements are at a crucial stage of their credibility and sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen and extend the forms of mobilization, applying the feedback of particular experiences. To account for the meaning of these manifestations today, to integrate the diversity of contexts, actors and social demands as they are defined today, gives feasibility to the worldwide social movements.

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Notes

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1 Black codes used to regroup legislation on permitted behaviors for each class.

2 Available in <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/espanol/>.

3 Kuya, Dorothy 2000 "L'action du mouvement africain pour les réparations au Royaume-Uni" en Chalons, Serge et al. (dirs.) *De l'esclavage aux réparations* (Paris: Karthala) p. 182.

4 It is worthy of mention that, even though the African communities of the Americas participated massively in American independence, they would have to wait 40 years in order to ratify the abolition of slavery.

5 "Afro" refers to continental Africans and to the African Diaspora.

6 See *Infoplease*: <http://Infoplease.com/ipa/AO855617.html>.

7 United Nations' preliminary report, evaluating the situation of Afrodescendents in Colombia, 2001.

8 In 2003, among the 890,000 and 3 million excluded people in Colombia, 17% were Afro-Colombians.

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The NGOs of Development in the South: Neo-liberalism's Instruments or Popular Alternatives? A Critical Approach to the Third Sector***

THE WORLD BANK and the International Monetary Fund, both financial world organizations of great prestige, see NGOs as efficient agents in the fight against poverty. The channeling of private and public help for development does not seem to have any other way to reach its destination, and this is what caused many NGOs to think that they were the spearhead of organized civil society and at the same time to facilitate their proliferation in the world. They seem to be mushrooms that can be found in every corner and are turning into a *modus vivendi* of several intellectuals and political fighters tired of activism. Today, the so-called humanitarian organizations do not escape the market's logic and, instead of being its critical eyes, they are turning into instruments at the service of governments, instruments of the prevailing economic model, facilitating the privatization of certain roles that the state should play. In certain circumstances, they have played a supporting role in the disappearance of popular movements by occupying their political spaces and by depoliticizing several demands of the nonconformist sectors.

To illustrate and justify our position, we are going to look at the experiences of some NGOs related to development in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

To understand NGOs, we must realize that the concept of social capital is still in process of completion.

The World Bank has included it among the following basic forms of capital: natural, constructed, human and social. Numerous studies have shown that it is necessary to have social cohesion for societies to have economic prosperity and a sustainable development, a reason why it is important that there exist an adequate unity between social capital and the NGOs.

The aim of this paper is to bring a new view of development organizations in the Third World. First, we will look at what development is, and then cast a critical eye over the way in which this has been the object of the studies and work of the NGOs.

Issues concerning development[1]

Even those who were opposed to the capitalist strategies of the moment found themselves obliged to express their criticisms in terms of the need for development, through concepts such as "another development", "participating development" and "socialist development". The relevance of development and its necessity was not in doubt. Development had turned into a certainty in social thinking. It seemed as if it was impossible to describe social reality in any other terms.

Reality had been colonized by the development discourse, and those who were dissatisfied with this state of affairs had to fight within the same discursive space for degrees of freedom, with the hope that on the way a different reality could be constructed. Examples of these efforts are Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the birth of the theology of liberation during the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín in 1968, and the criticism of "intellectual colonialism" and economic dependence of the late sixties and beginning of the seventies. The most acute cultural critic of development has been Ivan Illich (1968, Conference on Inter-American Student Projects).

To see development as a historically produced discourse requires an inquiry into the reasons why so many countries had to start considering themselves underdeveloped in the period immediately after the second world war; how "to develop" turned for them into an essential problem; and how they became involved in the task of fighting their condition of being

underdeveloped, yielding their societies to more systematic, detailed and extensive interventions.

According to Ivan Illich, the perception of the foreigner as someone who needs help has successively taken the forms of the barbarian, the pagan, the disloyal, the savage, the native and the underdeveloped.

The study of development as a discourse is similar to the analysis by Edward Said of discourses on the East, in the sense that, like Orientalism, the policy of economic development has been and continues to be a Western style of domination, restructuring and authority over the Third World. However, it is mainly a representative regime, an imaginary one made for imperialistic capitalist interests. In contrast to Said, Arturo Escobar pays more attention to the display of the discourse through its concrete practices of thought and action through which the Third World is actually created. Moreover, he establishes that the policy of economic development is not a one-way road, but that there are also forms of resistance by people of the Third World against development interventions, who fight to create alternatives with which to be and to do.

He also takes ideas from authors such as the African philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe, who in his book *The Invention of Africa* shows that the Western discourse employed to tackle the knowledge of what Africa is reinterprets African history from its outward appearance, weakening the very notion of Africa. In this way, Asia, Africa and Latin America's representations as "Third World" and "underdeveloped" regions are inherited from an illustrious genealogy of Western conceptions about those parts of the world.

The West had begun to live as if the world were divided in two: a field of mere representations, and a field of the "real". An objective and empirical position that pronounces that the Third World and its people exist "outside there", to be known by means of theories and controlled from outside.

Because of this, we consider the context of the development era within the global space of modernity and especially from modern economic practices. From this perspective, development can be seen as a chapter of what can be called the "anthropology of modernity", that is to say, general research concerning Western modernity as a cultural and historic specific phenomenon. To treat Western cultural products as "exotic" so as to be able to see them the way they are.

The analysis of the discourse of development started in the late eighties. However, a few works have broached its deconstruction. For example, James Ferguson studied the development in Lesotho and questioned the productivity of the apparatus of development. Another deconstructive approach (Sachs, 1993: 6) analyses the main concepts or key words of development's discourse, such as market, planning, population, environment, production, equality, participation, needs and poverty. The aim of our paper is to disclose the concepts' arbitrary nature, their cultural and historic specificity, and the dangers that their use represent in the context of the Third World: an unfinished task that NGOs have neither faced nor taken into account. Therefore, the question that arises is whether their aim is to deepen the analysis or to be only useful palliatives, like aspirins to alleviate the symptoms.

One of the many changes that took place at the beginning of the second postwar period was the "discovery" of massive poverty in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The warlike discourse against fascism moved to the social field and to a new geographical territory: the Third World. A new war against poverty was now undertaken. The new emphasis was stimulated by the fact of the recognition of chronic poverty conditions and social malaise that existed in poor countries, and the threat that this represented for the most developed ones.

The United Nations estimated that the United States' per capita income was of 1,435 dollars in 1949, while in Indonesia it scarcely reached 25. This led to the conviction that something had to be done before the instability levels in the whole world became unbearable.

The conceptions of poverty were quite different before 1940. In colonial times, concern regarding poverty was conditioned by the belief that, even though "natives" could become a bit enlightened through the presence of the colonist, much could not really be done to alleviate their poverty, as their economic development was hopeless. Natives' capabilities in the sphere of science and technology, the basis of economic progress, were considered to be nil.

The treatment of poverty enabled society to conquer new territories. The administration of poverty demanded intervention in education, health, hygiene, morality, employment, the teaching of good habits of association, saving, bringing up children, etc. The result was the creation of a new field: “the social”, a privileged sphere for the birth of NGOs. This concluded in the XX century with the consolidation of the welfare state and the set of techniques grouped under the name of “social work”.

It had been created a separated class constituted by the poor. But the most significant aspect of this phenomenon was the establishment of an apparatus of knowledge and power dedicated to optimize life, producing it under modern and “scientific” conditions.

In this way, the history of modernity is not only the history of knowledge and of the economy: it is the history of the social. The history of development involves the continuation in other places of this history of the social.

When in 1948 the World Bank defined as poor those countries with a per capita income lower than 100 dollars, almost by decree, two thirds of the world population was transformed into impoverished individuals. And if the problem was insufficient income, the solution was economic growth. It was in this way that poverty became an organizing concept and the object of a new problem. As every problem, that of poverty created new discourses and practices, among which must be mentioned the birth of several NGOs, which gave shape to the reality they referred to.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development carried out economic missions, visiting underdeveloped countries to formulate a general development plan.

In the reports of the economic missions there stands out the discourse of the messianic feeling and quasi-religious fervor expressed in the notion of “salvation”: to “save” the underdeveloped country with neutral, desirable and universally applicable tools. Before development, nothing existed: “dependence on natural forces” did not produce the most felicitous results.

When approaching non-governmental organizations, one finds oneself at a crossroad where the diversity is such that it is not possible to know for certain which way to head. In fact, their definition, instead of being positive, is posed in negative form. They are non-governmental organizations at the service of development in the South of the planet. Their main characteristics are, or should be, the following: independence of the state, that is to say, not belonging to the state’s structure (note that saying that they do not belong to the state’s structure does not tell us anything about their internal criterions of organization or about the external criterions of their functions); they are the government’s critical eye which didn’t manage to constitute a response to the needs of their population; they are non-profit organizations, that is to say, “altruistic”; they receive their resources from donors and not from governments.

The growing increase in the number and not in the quality of development NGOs in the world is a sign of the importance that this issue had acquired for those who still lived in the expectation of emerging from a situation of poverty and destitution. And as if this were not enough, in and by themselves, there was conceived the idea that they were a spearhead of civil society that now was indeed laying the foundations that would serve for the development of the countries of the South.

The failure experienced in North-South relations set more than one person to think that NGOs would be a viable alternative for obtaining the support of the North for the South and that this would facilitate to improve the situation of those most in need. From this viewpoint, many organizations, fund suppliers and people worried regarding development in the South offered NGOs their help, although at this moment of evaluation appears more like a way to restrain rather than a course to attain development in the South. International organizations such as the World Bank and the regional development banks (BID, BAD) as well as several western governments turned into real sources of cash for the NGOs. This forces us to say that, today more than ever, it is necessary to see NGOs with an universalizing glance, that is to say, to carry out an analysis of their presence and activities on the basis of the social relations established between the North and the South and to avoid seeing only the aspect of their development activities detached from the intentions of their donors. This is a fact that the NGOs themselves refuse to accept as happens in the case of Africa, where nobody is able to know who their real donors are.

Our analysis would have several levels. The level of intentions, that is to say, the NGO's volunteers' aims; the level of the collective conscience wherein lie the aims of the NGO; the level of the NGO's social functions and their dimension; and the level of institutional logic.

With regard to intentions, we must say that NGOs always manifest a serious and firm concern for the development of the countries of the South and their resolute intention to help them to emerge from the situation in which they are. When one visits any NGO's website or when reading their foundation documents as well as their original intentions, one is always astonished at the altruistic nature with which they were instituted. However, as is said in Mexico, talking is not the same as actually doing. The performance of these NGOs in the countries of the South brings into evidence a contradiction between the writings and daily experience. Several NGOs have existed for decades already, and their impact on reality is, in the best of the cases, insignificant.

As for the level of the collective conscience, it is important to emphasize the culture from which the NGOs emerge. They are part of the culture of the societies in which they are born. There is a certain view of development in these cultures that the NGOs are in charge of taking to the South. This conception, as we have seen in recent years, links development to democracy and human rights. They thus emphasize elements that, being implicit in their culture, turn into universalized values for the achievement of their objectives though they do not appear explicitly in their intentions.

Regarding the level of their social functions, we can state that the NGOs, starting out from this culture and with these non-explicit appreciative elements, may become generators of conflicts in some societies of the South. In some cases, by not taking into account the existing inequalities, they may be a factor of consolidation of the status quo, or cause the strongest to turn into a more united class. Such is the case of the *food for work* program in India.

The so-called humanitarian NGOs have always worked on the solution of populations' immediate needs. That has also contributed to maintain reality as it has always been and have led governments, more and more, to pay no attention to their duties, a fact that neoliberalism not only salutes with pleasure but also promotes. The fact of their being present in the countries of the South and working towards easing the situation of the poor, also leads the population to leave aside their pressure on the government and be content with what the NGOs can give them. This contributes little to the creation of the population's critical conscience and does little to help the political culture of these areas of the South.

Finally, we must bear in mind that NGOs are not only oriented towards helping the needy but must also assure their own continuity as an institution and supplier of employment in their countries of origin as well as in those in which they work. At this level, we must try to carry out an ethical judgment related to the culture of the NGOs in the world. The insistence that we have seen in the last years regarding the NGOs' professionalization leads us precisely to question the weight of the institutional logic in their bosom.

Social capital: a possible alternative for development of the South?

What is social capital? There is not a definitive answer to this question. This may be one of the reasons why the term has been devalued, by being used as a banner by Non-Governmental Organizations to justify their lack of seriousness and commitment towards their community. Just as an introduction, we are going to talk about the "social capital's" history and the process that has characterized it from its invention to nowadays.

It is possible to trace the idea of social capital already in Alexis de Tocqueville (2001: 40), Emile Durkheim (2001: 40) and Max Weber's (2001: 40) investigations. In 1916, Lyda J. Hanifan made the first reference to this term within the context of education and local communities[2]. It has been used since then by several authors, such as Jacobs (2001: 40), Luoury (2001: 40), Coleman (2001: 40), Putman (2001a: 40) and Fukuyama (2001: 40), among others, in their analysis related to labor markets, human capital and the relations of the nation-state.

Bourdieu and Passeron (2001: 40) decided to investigate social capital starting from cultural capital. According to them, cultural capital is the set of resources that reside in families in which

individuals have a particular social status, while share capital refers to the resources gained through social ties, network members and arising from shared norms.

Some authors like Abramovitz and David (2001: 40), Omori (2001: 40), Hall and Jones (2001: 40), among others, decided to unite the concept of social capital with macro institutional issues, referring to the new term as “social capacities”.

Temple (2001: 40) mentioned that social capital is a term assigned to those social aspects that are difficult to measure and to incorporate into formal economic models. For some economists, the intuition regarding the fact that the society matters counts more that the lack of theoretical uphold.

It is necessary to distinguish at least four approaches in order to reach a definition of social capital.

1. Anthropological literature is the source that supports the idea that we human beings have natural instincts towards association.

2. Sociological literature describes not only social norms, but also the sources of human motivation, emphasizing the forms of social organization.

3. Economic literature draws on the assumption that people will maximize personal profits, deciding to interact with others. The key question resides in the strategies of investment of individuals when facing several uses of time.

4. Political science literature stresses institutions’ role and the social-political norms that govern human conduct.

A very important element within social capital is confidence, which can be seen in two ways: resort and result. It is possible to distinguish three different types of confidence: that which arises between relatives or colleagues; that which arises between strangers; that which people have in public and private institutions.

It is necessary to clarify that social capital *is* instead of what is *done*, thus leaving aside trust as the definition of social capital by understanding it as a result and not as an argument.

When there is not confidence among individuals and cooperation networks ensure conformity, the former tend not to cooperate. Social capital enables individuals, groups and communities to solve collective problems easily. Norms of reciprocity and cooperation networks ensure conformity.

Michael Woolcock (1998: 151-208) talks about the union of social capital with the capacity of individuals and communities for the leverage of resources, ideas and information of formal institutions, beyond the community’s immediate sphere. Moreover, he identifies three basic types of social capital, which he divides into social ties, bridges and links. Social ties arise between families and ethnic groups. Bridges arise between distant friends, associates and colleagues. Links refer to the status and the type of health care to which the different groups have access.

How can social capital be measured? If it is difficult to establish a term to talk about social capital, it is much more complicated to define the policies or ways that may happen to exist to measure it. The few measurements available have focused on the confidence and commitment levels between social interactions.

In 2000, Putman (2001b: 43) carried out a measurement of social capital based on an index taking account the intensity and the way of getting involved not only of the community, but also of the organizational life.

The World Bank has developed policies to measure social capital, working on the specific design of recognition models and with already existing modules. Narayan and Pritchett (2001: 43) in 1998 constructed a measurement of social capital in rural Tanzania and used the data of the SCPS (Recognition of Poverty and Social Capital of Tanzania).

Lastly, social capital’s policies are as follows: it is necessary to have support for families; backing for voluntary initiatives; governmental processes for decision-making; technology and social capital; the union of health care with communities (OECD, 2001).

Once we have presented the basic introduction to social capital we face the following problem: how is it social capital assigned to the Third World?

The World Bank has included social capital within capital's four basic forms: natural capital, constructed capital, human capital, social capital.

However, it looks as if this division is not at all applicable to the problems of the world, because, since there doesn't exist a definition of social capital, the term being multidimensional and applicable to different levels and units of analysis, situations come up such as the one in Colombia or Tanzania, where it is evident that the rates of development of modern society are limited but can not be classified or assessed. In 1997, Knack and Keefer (2001: 45) carried out experiments in Tanzania with the aim of establishing social capital measurements, finding that in contexts of most poverty, families with higher incomes are the ones that take part in collective organizations most, besides the fact that the accumulated social capital particularly benefited them. This completely nullifies the argument under which the term "social capital" was created.

It seems that the challenge of social capital is to solve and adapt to the problems of the Third World with regard to development, running up against the fact that there are problems in its application because of the fact that the socialization of material and intellectual goods is required, and this is not always feasible.

Ethnic and racial discrimination, economic inequalities, differences in levels of education, and the absence of public health, are harmful to the development of a country. Thus, what we have to take into account is the fact that by creating a bridge within social capital these differences are stressed, as it is much more difficult for ideas and resources to circulate –mainly– among groups, causing the social, political and economic forces that divide regions and societies to acquire greater importance, slowing down and damaging development.

Although the community bridge turns out to be a risk for development, we find that the community view of social capital –identified with clubs, associations and civic groups– has had more success in those societies in which it has been tried.

Those interested in applying this view to certain communities argue that social capital is inherently good, and that its presence has always a positive impact on the community. They apparently try to fight against the complete absence of social cohesion that has been displayed in the last decades, in addition to the abrupt rupture of the chain of dependence of the poor –it being the case that for the first time they are utterly useless and not required– to which Dordick (1997) responds that from the view of social capital, social ties are essential for the poor who try to survive as they have something to lose: themselves.

According to this tautological situation in which the poor hold up from a feeble term –which social capital is– some studies have been carried out about the ties that develop in communities and the needs that have been posed. Some of these studies have ended up as policies.

One of social capital's great successes exists in Bangladesh, in the Grameen Bank. This last has fought for the decrease of poverty in a more general way. We find that in this bank, social capital is connected with a particular network used with the promotion programs of intra-group credits and that it has granted loans to women without backing, helping them to expand their micro-enterprises provided that they have small groups of equals as the basis of their membership. The system is evidently very well planned up to this point, but the difficulties start when people who seek a loan exceed the bank's budget, forcing it to close its credit plans for the rest. We must note above all that this system has not known how to apply this procedure to a great quantity of people, forgetting that it was created to help the poor, so it seems to be a funnel where only the first-come obtain benefits, the other poor being neglected and forgotten.

We must not forget the synergistic proposal, which from our point of view surpasses social capital's institutional view. The institutional view brandishes the idea that the community networks' and civilian society's vitality are intrinsically related to the political context, social capital thus being a dependent variable of the system.

The reason for assigning greater strength to synergy than to the institutional is that the institutional does not consider the macroeconomic component over macroeconomic policy, while the synergy proposes to integrate both institutional spheres as networks searching for the following conditions: professional alliances, dynamics and relations between and within state bureaucracies, and several actors of civilian society.

We know the criticism that has arisen regarding the implementation of social capital policies to big societies and nations, in addition to being conscious of the bottleneck that exists between

social capital and the poor. What struck us about the synergy within social capital is that it promotes an utter integration between governmental policies and civic action, relying on the principle of complementarity and on the formulation of three main policies:

1. to identify the nature and extent of the formal social and institutional relations of a community, as well as the way in which these interact;

2. to develop institutional strategies based on social relations (in their three categories), focusing in particular on the amount of social capital constructed from unit ties and bridges, so as to

3. work out social capital's positive signs, such as cooperation, confidence, the ties that spring up, and the fact that the institutions dedicated to their work can compensate for sectarianism, isolationism and corruption (Woolcock and Narayan, 2002).

Once these policies are available, it would seem to be easy to assign them to countries' development, but the fact is that social capital's application is one of the great challenges of development.

In order to have an optimal viability, it is necessary firstly to carry out a geographical social study. This will show the needs per region of the communities to which it is desired to take the social capital so as to be able to use the policies of development. According to the research that has been done, social scientists have noticed that needs change drastically from one community to the next. Hence, it is necessary to implement a policy that covers them all –in spite of the diversity.

It is also very important to make it clear that the people who implement social capital in these regions must be ethical in their discourse, since only in this way will it be possible to obtain that all those involved in the question of development in the chosen region are consulted about the issues, it then being possible to reach consensus and decide priorities, what is fair and what is not.

It is necessary that in the regions in which it is desired to use social capital in an institutional way –legitimizing clubs, organizations, bridges and links– there exist an ethical environment and above all that the concept be emphasized of the ethics of the alliance, through which we will mutually recognize people as such beyond a previously established tie.

Social capital is not salvation for the development problems that the Third World faces. Even though it must be used in a just and ethical way, it must also be studied from an objective perspective, so that it may then indeed become a key element. Up until now, it has been used as a standard of Non-Governmental Organizations with not much seriousness.

Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan (2002) suggest a policy of "learning by doing" with regard to social capital, and not waiting until researchers draw up the necessary policies to attack the great problem of worldwide development. May be this is a little bit venturesome, yet it is in fact necessary to go into action in order to face a daily problem such as development, but it is precisely a problem such that if the term hasn't been well defined and it is not known how to use it adequately, must be faced under the "learning by doing" system. For development and social capital to complement, there must exist simultaneous practices and policies. We cannot expect researchers to do everything while the people for whom it is aimed allocate it according to their necessities. It must be a joint work; it must take into account people's needs, and researchers must work on a real and applicable basis. Only then will they be able to talk about development with social capital as a whole.

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Notes

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1 We take up again the ideas relating to development from Kande Mutsaku Kamilamba (2003).

2 “[T]hose tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit… The individual is

helpless socially, if left to himself… If he comes into contact with his neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of help, the sympathy and the fellowship of his neighbors". Taken from The School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University. In

<http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/inquiry/spring2001/dean.html>.

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The Land Question and the Peasantry in Southern Africa**

Introduction

The land questions facing Southern Africa are dominated by the negative effects of distorted settler-colonial decolonization and the associated failure to address the national question, sustainable development, and democracy, within the context of incomplete national democratic revolutions. While important differences exist in the nature of the Southern African countries' land questions and ways in which these have been addressed, there are critical similarities in the fundamental socio-political and economic questions that arise from the persistent conflicts that ensue from unequal land distribution and discriminatory land tenure systems (Moyo, 2003).

Land remains a basic source of the livelihood of the majority of Southern Africans, and is essential to the development of agriculture, tourism and housing. Economic development within a context of agrarian transformation and industrialization tends to be distorted by the spread of skewed agrarian structures in the region. Thus, the land question is not only an agrarian issue but also a critical social question regarding inequitable patterns of resource allocation within the rural-urban divide and the agricultural-industrial divide. This underlies the persistently conflictive relations of class, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as the processes of inter-class labour exploitation, differential taxation and resource access and benefits, in the context of the marginalization of the majority rural populations in the region. Even in South Africa and Zambia, more urbanized than elsewhere in the region, high unemployment rates (ranging between 30-50%) have caused land questions to be attenuated by the wider crisis of homeless and jobless urbanization and dependence on straddling rural-urban livelihoods. Inequitable land ownership and utilisation patterns distort the integration of space and developments strategy due to the predominance of narrow enclave development (Nzimande, 2004).

The peasant question in Southern Africa has for long been subordinated in terms of ideology and substance by white setter landlordism and institutionalized racial discrimination by the state and capital, and justified by an agrarian modernization project based on peripheral export oriented capitalist agriculture (Moyo, *The land question in Africa*). Thus, land and racial conflicts that affect Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have remained unaddressed for long, despite the fact that their peasantries continue to be marginalized and to expand. In other Southern African countries, new land questions arise from emerging land and agrarian differentiation.

Zimbabwe has broken with this trend, and exhibits critical insights on the future of the peasantry having reshaped its agrarian structure substantially in terms of the scale and quality of the producer base and social relations. This has yielded rural and/agrarian class formation processes which, while enabling the peasantry to maintain itself at basic levels of social reproduction, have spawned a new differentiated agrarian class structure, which however privileges "peripheral" (or semi-peripheral) capital accumulation among an expanded but deracialised economically straddling elite. This essentially bimodal path of agrarian change presents the contradictory class interests of large capitalists, middle "peasants" and "poor" peasants and workers, whereby resolving racial aspects of the land question through a peripheral export economic model predicates the continuation of poverty among a peasantry within a marginalized economy.

On the other hand, the land question in South Africa remains unresolved partly because of its own gradualistic neoliberal approach to land reform, but largely because the peasant question (or even the small farmer development trajectory) has been denied by official land reform policy and intellectual debate. This reflects teleological tendencies of debates, which envision greater industrial and non-agricultural employment growth that is expected to diminish peasant demand for land, as well as ideologies that decry the "inefficiency" of peasant

production systems and livelihoods *per se*. The growing urban and peri–urban demand for land, required for housing and petty commodity production, which is contingent upon growing semi-proletarianisation and unemployment, has however also been neglected by South Africa's market based land reform and neoliberal social security policies. These trends raise the spectre of increased land conflicts resulting from the demands of a growing but blocked peasantry and the urban poor, as well as a nascent black bourgeoisie, poised against minority white landlords.

The dilemmas of the land question in Southern Africa arise from a poor understanding of the peasant question in particular, and of the constraints on "articulated" development in the semi-periphery.

The fate of the peasantry in terms of its socio-economic character and political significance under capitalism remains central to neo-colonial Southern African futures[1]. Is the peasantry disappearing economically or becoming politically insignificant (Moyo and Yeros, 2004) given the emerging perception on agrarian change, since "the implementation of structural adjustment policies and market liberalisation worldwide has had a dissolving effect on peasant livelihoods"? (Bryceson, 2000). In this light, what is the land question in Southern Africa?

The land question in Southern Africa

From decolonization to radical and neoliberal land reforms

Different forms of settler colonization in the region, with regard to the degree of colonial expropriation of land, define the main differences in the land questions faced, particularly with regard to the nature of the unresolved national questions. Thus, where mild land expropriation and white settler occupation was obtained, for instance in Swaziland, Botswana, Zambia, and Malawi, less explosive land questions are found, although over time land concentration among blacks has become the issue. Extreme settlerist land expropriation in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola led to a more protracted liberation struggle and persistent land conflicts. However, it is critical to recognise the regionally systemic nature of the land questions that the legacy of colonialisation brought to Southern Africa. Namely, that land expropriation in parts of the region, generalized migrant labour mobilization (especially in Lesotho), and dispossession of land in the current free state of Malawi, the former Rhodesia and South Africa, were intertwined facets of the growth of South Africa's regional agro-industrial, mining and commercial farm enclaves, and of Zimbabwe and Zambian mining and agricultural enclaves in the middle of the last century.

The regions' economies founded on labour migration and enclave settlement patterns depended on the subsidizing of urban wage incomes by the so-called rural subsistence economies, based on marginal lands, as well as on the combined rural-urban livelihoods that define popular income flows in the regional economy. The linkage of agro-industrial capital in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region today reflects historically hegemonic settler interactions and common models of land and agrarian management, within an agro-industrial development strategy focused on European exports, and are mediated mainly through large South African capital and regional labour markets. This development model defines the highly inequitable income and consumption distribution patterns, and the persistence of marginalized rural and informal economies.

The form and outcome of the national liberation process has had varied implications on the manner in which the national question, the land questions and democracy have been addressed in Southern Africa. Specific national approaches to resolving the land question reflected the varied decolonization processes and mobilizations of the liberation movements, particularly since the mid-1970s, when détente emerged, and the waning 'end' of the cold war from the 1980s. Hence, the varied tactics of land reform experienced in Southern Africa since the 1970s (in the Lusophone zone), in the 1980s and early 1990s in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the post-apartheid approaches (of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) as well as the neo-liberal land (essentially tenure) policy formation processes experienced since the 1960s in other SADC countries. Where liberation was decisively concluded, as in Mozambique and Angola, in spite of internal armed conflicts over the national question, fuelled by external destabilization, the land question appears to have been broadly resolved. Where liberation was partially concluded, as in the main settler territories of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, negotiated settlements left both the national and land question relatively unresolved. In particular, the racial dimensions of

the national question have not been adequately addressed, as we have seen recently. Thus, racially inequitable structures of wealth, income and land distribution remained intact, while liberal democratic constitutions and market principles protected these inequalities and inequities. This limited the scope and pace of land and agrarian reforms.

Moreover, the corporatist-liberal states that emerged, and their articulation within global capital through the IFIs (especially the Bretton Woods Institutions), the development aid structures (bilateral and multi-lateral donors and lending structures) and the trade system, eventually consolidated the neo-liberal framework used to address the regions' national questions and the land reform strategies adopted. The latter can be seen to have been interconnected by an increasing common neo-liberal ideology and common economic management strategies of externally imposed and homegrown SAP-type macro-economic stabilization, outward-looking trade liberalisation and de-regulation of domestic markets (land, labour and commodity). These processes led, over four decades, from Tanzania to Zimbabwe, to varying degrees of de-industrialization of growth enclaves that had been based on capital-intensive industrialization processes, since the 1950s, alongside an increasing dependence of most of the regions' economies on land for social survival. The lessons from this are common failure of land reforms and economic transitions, and narrow dissidences of approach to land reform and economic management.

Therefore, the specific trajectory of land reform processes in the SADC region needs to be examined in terms of the 40-year history of national liberation, if the apparently varied experiences of the evolving land questions facing Southern Africa and the land reform tactics used are to be understood. Whereas different socio-economic and political specificities need to be critically reflected upon, it is however the gradual shifts in the terrain of national independence and liberation struggles among the countries since the 1960s, in terms of their ideological and political mobilisation of social forces in response to imperial tactics, which distinguishes the specific land reform strategies experienced.

Thus, the SADC region of the 1960s and 1970s experienced a clear divide between the radical nationalist-cum-socialist orientation to land reform and liberal approaches. The former were based upon the nationalization of settler lands and foreign commercial/industrial structures of capital (as pursued in Tanzania and Zambia during the 1960s and early 1970s) and in Mozambique and Angola (from the mid-1970s). In contradistinction to this, the more liberal strategies of land reform were found during the same period in the smaller colonial 'protectorates', which predominantly faced indirect colonial rule accompanied by minor degrees of white settlerism alongside cheap migrant labour systems in Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Malawi. In the latter countries, the land reform experiences involved a limited degree of market-based expropriation of settler lands, accompanied by market-led compensation with some colonial finance, as was the case in Swaziland and Botswana, for example. Such lands held by small settler communities were mainly indigenized with limited foreign and white minority-dominated large-scale land ownership and with estate farming, remaining alongside the emergence of state farms and the resilience of largely peasant and pastoral agrarian structures.

The nature and outcome of land reform radicalization also varied. Whereas Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique had pursued socialistic land and agrarian reforms largely based upon state marketing systems, and land settlement and use reorganization (villagisation and rural development in Tanzania and resettlement and integrated development in Zambia), Mozambique followed land nationalization with even more intensive attempts at socialistic transformation of the land and agrarian question through state and cooperative farms. Angola, which started mired in civil war throughout, did not pursue further significant land reform after the land nationalisation from 1975. Civil war in the Lusophone territories, fuelled by South African destabilization and relative international isolation, however contained radical agrarian reforms there.

The liberal approach to the resolution of the land question varied slightly. It consisted mainly of limited market-led land re-distribution efforts and attempts to modernize peasant agriculture within a contradictory context of imbalanced public resources allocations. The latter were focused primarily on developing the large-scale indigenized and state capitalist farming sub-sector and its increasing incorporation into global agricultural export markets. This form of land and agrarian reform led to intensified land concentration in the various Southern African countries, a steady growth of agrarian social differentiation based on capitalist accumulation,

labour exploitation and rural marginalization, and a bi-modal agrarian structure, which became entrenched at different scales throughout the region.

The nature and significance of the peasantry in Southern Africa

Peasantry –small-scale/family agriculturalists operating within the generalized system of commodity production– does not constitute a class in itself, but inherent in it are the antagonistic tendencies of proletarian and proprietor. The ideal-type 'peasant household' reproduces itself as both capital and labour simultaneously and in internal contradiction, but this combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within the peasantry, for two reasons. First, the peasantry is differentiated between the rich, middle, and poor petty-commodity producers, a spectrum that ranges from the capitalist who employs labour-power, beyond the family, to the semi-proletarian who sells it. As such, the middle peasantry is the only category that embodies the ideal-type of petty-bourgeois production, managing to neither hire nor sell labour-power – and which in turn is rare (Moyo and Yeros, 2004). Second, the combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within a single household either; differentiated by gender and generation, patriarchs will control the means of production, while women and children will provide unpaid labour. While this may appear on the surface as a 'different' mode of production, it has been argued convincingly that petty-commodity production is firmly embedded in the capitalist system and in fact is a normal feature of capitalist society, even if subordinate and unstable (Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985).

Under capitalism, the peasantry remains in a state of flux, within the centre-periphery structure spawned by colonialism, as proletarianisation co-exists with peasantisation and semi-proletarianisation. The form and scale of the actually existing peasantry is both an empirical and an interpretive problem to be understood from the composition of household income by source, including non-exchangeable sources of sustenance, and from an analysis of household residential patterns, and between town and country. It has been argued that under structural adjustment peasants have become 'problematic', insofar as they are 'multi-occupational, straddling urban and rural residences, [and] flooding labour markets' (Bryceson, 2000). Yet, the peasantry has been problematic in this way for much of the twentieth century[2].

Structural adjustment has been accompanied by intensified migration. Africa now has notched up the fastest rate of urbanization in the world (3.5% annually), and nearly 40% of the population is now urbanised. This fact is often used as proof that the land/agrarian question is losing its relevance. Migration does not mean full proletarianisation or permanent urbanisation, but the spreading of risk in highly adverse circumstances, with urbanization moving alongside de-industrialisation and retrenchments, illegal and unplanned settlement, so that, for example, half the urban population of Kenya and South Africa lives in slums (Moyo, *The land question in Africa*).

Migration is not merely one-way. Workers retrenched from mines and farms are also known to seek peasantisation, as recorded in a case study of rural 'squatting' in Zimbabwe (Yeros, 2002a), or as urbanites enter the land reform process (Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). Also, as opposed to secular urbanization, which Kay (2000) terms the 'ruralization of urban areas' and 'urbanization of rural areas', whereby rural and urban workers compete for both jobs, including agricultural jobs, and residential plots in both urban and rural areas. It has also been observed that retrenched workers from mines and industry have joined this struggle and sought to become peasants themselves (e.g. Bolivia where former miners have taken up coca production) (Petras, 1997).

Thus urbanization and proletarianisation are not definitive, and agrarian reform cannot be seen as anachronistic (see also Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001), nor must one underestimate the political significance of the countryside, in which the 'end of land reform' thesis writes off an alternative pattern of accumulation. The semi-proletarianisation thesis, under current agrarian change within the contemporary centre-periphery structure, does not provide for massive population relocations to the north (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

The effect has been the rise of a richer class of peasants, compared to the rest, who became semi-proletarianised or landless. Full proletarianisation was generally forestalled, not least by state action, and rural households held onto a plot of land and maintained the dual income strategy of petty-commodity production and wage labour (Harriss, 1992; Breman, 2000). Rural

non-farm activities and markets proliferated, so that between 30 and 40% of household incomes are now derived from off-farm sources (Mooij, 2000). This dual trend suggests that 'the informal sector [in the urban economy] is not a stepping stone towards a better and settled urban life, but a temporary abode for labour which can be pushed back to its place of origin when no longer needed' (Breman, cited by Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

The transition to capitalism in the periphery has taken place under disarticulated accumulation and subordinated to the accumulation needs of the centre. In consequence, it has not been characterised by an 'American path' (Moyo and Yeros, 2004), as identified by Lenin – that is, a broad-based accumulation by petty-commodity producers 'from below'– but by varied paths (Ibid and see inter alia de Janvry, 1981; Byres, 1991; and Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). These include a 'junker path' of landlords-turned-capitalists in Latin America and Asia (outside East Asia), with its variant in the white-settler societies of Southern Africa, operating in tandem with transnational capital (whether landowning or not). Recently, with large agrarian capital it has also expanded and converted land away farming to wildlife management, or 'eco-tourism' ventures, a 'merchant path' comprising a variety of urban [petty] bourgeois elements with access to land, whether leasehold or freehold, via the state, the market or land reform, farming on a medium scale but integrated into export markets and global agro-industry (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

Measures of 'poverty reduction', including 'integrated rural development programmes', sought to bolster this functional dualism at its moment of crisis from the 1980s, leading to the abandonment of the poverty agenda, and the tendency for proletarianisation to accelerate, although direct and indirect political action, and a series of social catastrophes, have (World Bank, 1990) even brought back land reform in its market-based form (Moyo and Yeros, 2004). Where the neoliberal social agenda failed spectacularly in Zimbabwe, large-scale re-peasantisation had taken place outside the control of the World Bank, and hence, because of penalties imposed from the north, a new pattern of 'accumulation from below' has not yet emerged (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*).

Various social hierarchies derived from gender, generation, race, caste and ethnicity have intensified under capitalism and functional dualism (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*), since disarticulated accumulation and its corollary of semi-proletarianisation provide the structural economic basis for the flourishing of powerful social hierarchies that either fuse with class (e.g. race, caste) or cut across it (gender), and reproduce apparently 'non-capitalist' forms of 'landlordism', even despite the historical culmination of the 'junker path' (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). The synergy between class and race is notable in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where both historical domination and the process of resistance have fused class and race discourses (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

Consequently, demands for agrarian reform have struck at the heart of the dominant national/cultural identities through which the conditions of super-exploitation are reproduced. In Africa, however, the issues of race and class have been strongly politicised for a longer period (Fanon, 2001; Cabral, 1979), and armed national liberation struggles against colonialism intensified them. The attainment of majority rule across the continent, within the neo-colonial framework, was characterised by the nurturing of small indigenous outward-looking bourgeoisies combined to defend nationally the disarticulated pattern of accumulation, while in Southern Africa neo-colonialism coincided with structural adjustment. National politics have been galvanised by rural and urban class struggles informed by growing class differentiation among blacks, and inter-capitalist conflict between emergent black bourgeoisies and established white capital, both outward looking, and both bidding over the land question. The result has been a stark bifurcation of the national question: on the one hand, black capital has confronted white capital, transforming the meaning of 'national liberation' in its own terms and hijacking land reform. On the other hand, the historical realities of class and race persist, characterised by functional dualism within a white supremacist framework, including the racialised landlordisms to which it gives rise (Moyo, 2001; Rutherford, 2001; Yeros, 2002b).

Gender hierarchy has been as intrinsic to functional dualism as race, male labour for mines and farms resting on a policy of confining women to the communal area by institutionalised means, under despotic chieftaincies (Channok, 1985; Schmidt, 1990; Mamdani, 1996). While chieftaincy has been transformed in variable ways, and women have entered the labour market in large numbers, they have continued to be a rural pillar of functional dualism. Under structural

adjustment, gender hierarchy has been thoroughly instrumentalised, as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have curtailed social services and relied on female reproductive labour, which in turn has intensified, as well as on child labour. At the same time, women have also been compelled to diversify the sources of household income. However, the traditional obstacles to access to land have persisted and remained subject to patriarchal kinship relations, while the illegal use of land has in many cases proliferated (Moyo, 1995; Agarwal, 1994; Deere and León, 2001).

The above trends underlie the emergence of scattered but significant land conflicts in the region, a direct negative outcome of neo-liberal land reforms, which tends to fuel renewed struggles over national and democracy questions. The rest of this paper examines these land questions and land reform experiences in Southern Africa, including the nature of the neo-radical fast-track land reforms of Zimbabwe, and the regional implications of these for the future land questions in the SADC region.

Land concentration, privatisation and external control in Southern Africa

Historical context of the land question in Southern Africa

The overriding land question facing Southern Africa is that little progress has been achieved in the implementation of land reform, especially with regard to redressing colonially derived and post-independence unequal land ownership, discriminatory land use regulations, and insecure land tenure systems, which marginalize the majority of rural and urban poor populations. The legacy of racially unequal land control, which confronted mainly the former settler colonies, was at independence maintained through constitutions that guaranteed the protection of private property by sanctifying willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches to the redistribution of freehold land. Those SADC states, with legacies of limited settler colonialism, have tended to face the challenges of promoting equitable legal and administrative systems of land tenure security and effective land management within a context of growing land concentration and agrarian class differentiation.

A major underlying problem which confronts these land questions in Southern Africa is the continued increase in population among the peasantries in marginal and congested lands, without a net increase in the access to the maldistributed and underutilized arable lands, and a slow rate of growth in land productivity and agricultural intensification. Discriminatory land use policies and practices, and land tenure laws, have tended to encourage underutilization of land or inefficient land use among large-scale farmers, who nonetheless have high levels of productivity on limited parts of the land they control. Yet, expanding the number of landholders through land redistribution could redress the land shortages and the patterns of insecurity of tenure that arise from maldistribution of land. Instead, Southern African land reform policies have focused on reforming the regulation of land use and environmental management practices among smallholders, as well as customary tenures towards market-based land tenure systems, in the belief that these can lead to increased agricultural investment and intensification.

A persistent feature of the land reform question in the sub-region is therefore that racial imbalance and historic grievances over land expropriation provide a binding force for the political mobilization of social grievance and growing poverty for land reform. Independence, political settlement and reconciliation policies in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have thus failed to curb racial conflict in a context where the peace dividend of the mid-1990s has not led to economic growth throughout the sub-region, nor delivered structural changes that include the majority into the formal economy. Not surprisingly, even in the non-settler territories, the land problem and its racial foundations resonate. Thus, conflict over land tends to be fueled by ideological and land policy discourses which, in Southern Africa, have not resolved the question of whether and to what degree the rights held by whites over land that had been expropriated historically are valid and socially and politically legitimate (Moyo, 2003).

Land reform discourses are further fueled by the myth that the freehold landholding system and private land markets are more efficient and superior to customary (so-called “communal”) land tenure systems. This myth tends to justify the preservation of unequally held land in the dual tenure systems, while incorrectly arguing that land reform *per se* undermines food security and exports, as well as the confidence of the investors in the economy. While this may be correct where conflictive land transfers obtain, as in Zimbabwe since 2000, this could be a short

to medium-term transitional problem, depending on the support given to new settlers. In this context, where smallholder farmers are regarded as being less efficient in land use, productivity and ecological practices, intrinsically, than large-scale white farmers, who hold large chunks of the prime lands and other resources, this prophecy can be sustained by the withholding of agricultural resources from so-called subsistence farmers. That is, land reform can only succeed to the degree that attendant resources are reallocated by the state and through appropriate market interventions.

Land conflicts today result from grievances over and struggles for access to land and natural resources by both the poor and emerging black capitalist classes. Such grievances reflect the deep roots of social polarisation along racial and nationality lines. These arise historically from the discriminatory treatment of blacks on farms, mines and towns through a proletarianisation process based on land alienation and cheap labour mobilisation, and the persistence of racially inequitable development. The increasing radicalization of land acquisition approaches in Namibia and South Africa, and the growth of the tactic of land occupations in the SADC region since the 1990s, are manifestations of this deeply rooted phenomenon of common grievances over the unresolved land questions, and the failure of markets or landowners to reallocate land to a broader constituency.

Racial and foreign land distribution patterns

The existing structure and patterns of land inequalities in Southern Africa are based upon a relatively unique racial distribution of socio-economic features including population, wealth, income and employment patterns (Moyo, 2003). Land expropriation was rampant in most Southern African countries, and only Botswana had no white settlers by 1958. On the other hand, Angola, Lesotho and Zambia had lower percentages of alienated land. In terms of settler population, Namibia seems to have had a significant white settler population, mainly composed of the Afrikaners and Germans, in 1960, with 19%. The greatest white settler land alienation occurred in South Africa, where 87% of the land was alienated in the 18th century.

Although at independence the white settler populations have tended to decrease, the proportion of land possessed by white minorities has tended not to decrease proportionately in former settler lands, while there has been a gradual increase in foreign landholdings in countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, in the context of renewed interest by private international capital in tourism based on the control of natural resources (Moyo, 2003).

Countries such as South Africa and Namibia are confronted with unequal land holdings with titled land in the hands of a few white commercial farmers. This pattern is excessive in South Africa, where 60,000 white farmers, who make up only 5% of the white population, own almost 87% (85.5 million) of the land. Only 20,000 white commercial farmers produce 80% of the gross agricultural product. A further 40,000, including some 2,000 black farmers, produce 15%, while 500,000 families living in the former homelands produce an estimated 5%. At least 12 million blacks inhabit 17.1 million hectares of land, and no more than 15% (or 2.6 million hectares) of this land is potentially arable (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). Thus, whites own 6 times more land in terms of the quantity of land available and its quality (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998).

However, Namibia has the highest number of white settlers, with about 8% of the total population. Commercial land under freehold title comprises approximately 6,300 farms, belonging to 4,128 mostly white farmers, and measuring about 36.2 million hectares. The freehold land covers 44% of available land and 70% of the most productive agricultural land, covering 36 million hectares. Only 2.2 million hectares of the commercial farmland belong to black farmers. By contrast, communal lands comprise 138,000 households with an area of 33.5 million hectares, which is only 41% of the land available.

In countries with predominant customary land tenure systems, there is a tendency to high population densities on land regarded as poor around largely mountainous areas and scarce arable land. In fact, in Swaziland and Malawi, the struggle for equitable land ownership invokes the control by traditional leaders over land allocation (Mashinini, 2000). Increased privatisation of state lands as part of the foreign investment drive has crowded out the poor onto the worst lands. In Mozambique, although all land is constitutionally state land, “privatisation” started in 1984 as part of the implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. This has created grounds for racial animosity, as foreigners and white South Africans tend to dominate this

investment. Confrontation over land in Zimbabwe has seen the emigration of white Zimbabweans to Mozambique[3]. Mozambican officials have called for greater social integration of incoming white farmers to avoid creation of "white islands" where commercial development outpaces that of the indigenous populations who surround these new settlers.

In Zimbabwe, before the fast-track land reform programme, most of the freehold lands were in the hands of 4,500 whites (comprising 0.03% of the population) and located in the most fertile parts of the country, with the most favorable climatic conditions and water resources. White farmers controlled 31% of the country's freehold land, or about 42% of the agricultural land, while 1.2 million black families subsisted on 41% of the country's area of 39 million hectares.

A diverse and differentiated structure of land tenure and land use also exists among the regions with white population. Racial ownership of land ranges from family landowners to a few white-dominated large companies –most of which are multinational companies with strong international linkages. Whilst these companies tend to under-utilize most of their land, it is however the nationality and citizenship of large landowners that is mostly contested. In Zimbabwe, it is estimated that between 20,000 to 30,000 white Zimbabweans are British and South Africans with dual citizenship[4]. While the definition of who is indigenous remains contested, even for non-white members of minority groups who are citizens by birth or through naturalization, absentee land ownership exacerbates feelings against foreign land ownership. In Namibia, corporate ownership of land hides the influx of foreign landowners, particularly those who are shifting land use from agricultural use to tourism.

Foreign land ownership has a historical and contemporary dimension to it. Past colonial land expropriation tends now to be reinforced by new land concessions to foreign investors. This tends to be complicated socially and politically by the physical absence of many foreign large-scale landowners. Foreign landowners increasingly use stock holding land tenure arrangements for the control of land, especially in the growing eco-tourist industry, thus increasing the globalization of the region's land question (Moyo, 2000). The rural poor are thus marginalized from their own landscape, and livelihood systems are undermined.

The market paradigm shift of the 1980s saw new waves of migration by white large farmers into Zambia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This migration, encouraged by neo-liberal investment policies, has led to increased foreign land ownership in many countries and pressures for increased private land tenure property regimes in order to protect investments.

The agricultural sector has been the prime target of such investment through lucrative incentives provided for foreign investment, especially in export processing zones.

Contested settler notions of land size and peasant marginalisation

Per capita arable land ownership per household has been declining due to the increase in population in the regions' customary tenure areas, while the few white and some black large-scale farmers own most of the best arable land in farms that are oversized. Thus, according to IFAD (2001), poverty tends to be concentrated in households with farm sizes under 1ha, and especially under 0.5ha. While poor black smallholders and the landless call for increased land redistribution, rural and urban black elites also call for access to large over-sized commercial farms, as it happened recently in Zimbabwe, where the prescribed land size ceilings are based upon outdated notions of the land sizes required for "viable" commercial farming[5].

Farm sizes in the region reflect the trends in land ownership. In Namibia, the average white LSCF farm size is 5,700 hectares. In Zimbabwe, the average was 2,500, with variation between NR II to V[6]. In the communal areas, the average farm size is around 2 hectares, and in resettlement, it is 5 hectares. In South Africa 28.5% of the farms were larger than 1,000 hectares (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). In Malawi 40% of the smallholders cultivate less than 0.5ha, with an average farm size of 0.28ha (IFAD, 2001). The areas inhabited by smallholders have the highest poverty.

The resettlement programmes in the region are proceeding on the basis of small-sized farms for blacks averaging less than 10 hectares of arable land in areas such as NR II in Zimbabwe. Land reform based on controlling farm sizes through ceilings has not been pursued in most of the countries.

This leaves a few landowners holding excessively large tracts of land. Using the cut-off point of over 10,000 hectares owned either through company or individual title, or as single or multiple farms, about 66 landowners (with 158 farms) occupied over two million hectares of Zimbabwe's land by 1998 (Moyo, 2003). Most of these farms are multiple owned company farms. Multiple farm ownership is thus a decided feature of Zimbabwe's landed gentry, whether company or individually owned.

The criterion used to determine viable farm sizes is based on a legacy of white settler notions of the 'small scale' being subsistence oriented, and the 'commercial' being large-scale white farms.

Although the categorisation is posited as a function of different resource levels, there is a fundamental class and racial basis for its definition. Historically, large farms have prescribed higher levels of income targets for whites, against lower 'subsistence' incomes for blacks. The latter were required to provide cheap labour to supplement incomes. Large-sized plots are also said to allow for multiple land uses at a 'commercial' scale, and to allow some of the land to remain fallow for some time. They are also considered necessary for mechanised agriculture, on the false grounds that economies of scale obtain in farming. Yet blacks have historically been unable to acquire large-scale machinery through institutionalised resource allocation biases and financial institution discrimination. However, whilst many of the large farms so supported are productive by the region's standards, most of their lands are underutilized.

In order to conceal land under-utilization and speculative uses of land, white commercial farmers and multinational companies have tended to put their land under wildlife ranching, even though the social and economic benefits of such uses remain contested (Moyo, 2000). Nonetheless investing in game ranching, tourism in the form of conservancy requires the continued exclusion from large areas of the poor, and in some countries the enclosure of newly consolidated lands to the same end. Various shareholding structures that remain in the clique of white farmers exclude both elite and poor blacks, who contest such arrangements through various strategies, including land occupations. The tourism sector has justified the exclusion of blacks by arguing that it is too technical for black smallholders' land management, and that its marketing requirements are too sophisticated for them. It is argued that the latter should instead concentrate on less technical crops such as food grains rather than horticulture export crops (World Bank, 1991; 1995).

This racist notion is buttressed by the belief that blacks only aim to secure home consumption and residence, and that they do not require land for commercial uses. However, the output performance of smallholders, including resettled black farmers and those who have invested in peri-urban areas, demonstrates that with adequate access to land blacks contribute substantially to domestic and export markets. Unfortunately, racism, in some donor circles as well, continues to pursue the misplaced notion that when blacks obtain large-sized land through state support, it is only a reflection of unproductive cronyism rather than a de-racialisation process. However, since historically whites obtained large-sized land aimed at commercialising farming through the same procedures, such notions are unfounded.

These contradictions of access to land based on race, class and nationality cleavages are thus a fundamental source of conflict over demands for land in a region where the hegemonic neoliberal ideology in fact promotes agrarian capitalism, with lip service paid to poverty reduction-focused land reform.

Land reform experiences in the SADC states

The demand for land reform

The demand for land redistribution, in terms both of redressing historical and racially grounded inequities and of growing needs by both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elites, has been a consistent feature of Southern African politics and policymaking. Recently, most of these countries have been formulating land policies in response to both pressures for redistribution.

These efforts are dominated by official perspectives that tend to emphasize the conversion of customary tenure systems to private freehold land tenure systems. Most official analyses of the land question have, however, tended to underestimate the nature and scale of demand for

land redistribution, and to ignore the racial tensions that have persisted as a result of the unfinished land reform agenda.

The demand for land reform takes various forms and arises from various sources. These include formal and informal demands, legal and underground, or illegal, forms of demand for land redistribution, and demands that may be based upon the restitution of historic rights, or contemporary demands based upon different needs. The different socio-political organizations that mediate such demands include civil society organizations, farmers' unions, political parties, War Veterans Associations, business representatives' associations, community-based organizations and traditional structures. Such structures are central to the evolution of the demand for land redistribution. The social content of these structures, however, is decidedly racially polarized in Southern Africa, while the class composition of the "visible" policy actors has been elitist.

Since the decolonization of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, the debate on land reform has mainly been focused on market instruments of land transfer. Despite broad consensus among governments, the landless, landowners and the international community on the need for land reform in the sub-region, land reform remains limited. The onset of structural adjustment programmes, as well as multiparty "democratization" in Southern Africa since the 1980s, have tended to reinforce the liberal political and market dimensions of debate on the land questions. In the process of economic liberalisation, however, informal rural political demands for land, including land occupations and natural resource poaching, have remained a critical source of advocacy for radical land reform, and, indeed, have succeeded in keeping land reform on the agenda (Moyo, 2001). Over time, the salient land demands of the black middle classes and elites have tended to be advanced within civil society organizations and both the ruling and opposition parties, within a liberal political and human rights framework, which leaves the fundamental issues of economic restructuring and redistribution of resources to the market (Moyo, 2001).

Thus, the predominantly urban-led civil society has not formally embraced the land reform agenda, perhaps due to the enduring middle-class basis of its leadership, especially in the NGO movement.

Limited civil society advocacy for land reform

This has relegated rural social movements on land reform to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organized, middle-class civic groups and policy organizations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal civic and political rights issues. Yet, the race question of land reform persistently dominates land reform struggles and debate, because the land to be redistributed is mainly expected to come from land largely owned by whites, while the black potential beneficiaries compete for redistribution and affirmative action along class lines, but in the common name of healing the wounds of past grievances.

This raises contradictory tendencies in the ideologies and foci of social movements between those who struggle for access to social (land and broader resource redistribution) rights and those focused on political (civic and human) rights. Thus, most civil society organisations, which are generally one-issue oriented in their advocacy, have tended to divide between those with structuralist (redistributionist) and proceduralist (governance) perspectives of social and economic change, even though in reality both issues need to be addressed in calibrated combination. Over the years, however, the formal demand for radical or merely extensive land reform has tended to be submerged, especially in recent struggles for democratization, by the proceduralist thrust of civil society activism, much of which is ensconced within a neoliberal framework. This is reinforced by the fact that the balance of external aid, in Zimbabwe, for example, has tilted in the last five years towards the support of governance activism.

While such support is necessary, this trend has served to highlight mainly the issues of human rights and electoral transgressions by the state, to the detriment of the redress of structural and social rights issues. The exceptions here are food aid and HIV/AIDS and health, which defy the dichotomy and tend to be considered as basic humanitarian support.

Civil society discourses on land reform, therefore, to the extent that they go beyond rule of law issues, have been focused on a critique of methods of land acquisition and allocation, without offering alternatives to land market acquisition and expropriation instruments or

mobilizing the more deserving beneficiaries of land reform in support of extensive land reform in the face of resistance by landlords and other stakeholders. Because of the polarization of society on political party and ideological grounds, in Zimbabwe, for example, engaging the state in furtherance of land reform has been sacrificed for rejecting the administrative processes and legal rules applied in land reform, despite legal challenges and resistance. Yet, there is a *fait acompli* redistribution on the grounds (see also Nyoni, 2004) that this trend of civil society land advocacy is not conjunctural or limited to the Zimbabwe experience.

Historically, Southern Africa in general has not had an organized civil society that has made radical demands for land reform or land redistribution. Under colonial rule the land cause was led by the liberation movements, and in the 1970s it was pursued by means of armed struggle (Chitiyo, 2000). In the independence period, civil society land advocacy has been constrained by their predominantly middle-class, social welfarist and neoliberal developmentalist values, which are in turn dependent on international aid. Meanwhile, formal rural and urban community-based organizations which seek land tend to be appendages of middle-class driven intermediary civil society organizations, while local land occupation movements have tended to be shunned by them (Moyo, 1998). The rural operations of NGOs within a neoliberal framework have thus been characterized by demands for funds for small "development" projects aimed at a few selected beneficiaries (Moyo, Raftopolous and Makumbe, 2000), and have left a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda.

Advocacy for land reform in the region has increasingly been dominated by former liberation movements' associations, scattered traditional leaders and spiritual mediums, special-interest groups and other narrowly based structures rather than by broadly-based civil society organisations, as we have seen in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. In the latter, a few left-leaning NGO groups have supported the formation of the Landless People's Movement (LPM), although the contradictions of white middle-class intellectual leadership of black people's landless structures, and the transclass and nationalist nature of the interests in land, have become evident in the slow maturation of a nation-wide radical land reform agenda.

Black indigenization or affirmative action lobbies, some with ethno-regional and gender foci, have on the other hand re-focused the land reform agenda, including the demand for the "return of lost lands" more towards the de-racialization of the ownership base of commercial farmland, at times as a racial substitution formula for capitalist farming (Moyo, 2001). So far, however, a dual approach of land redistribution to large black and poor peasants remains on the formal or official land reform agenda, even if resource allocations have tended to favour elites. However, large white farmer organizations, black technocrats, and many NGOs, have tended to support the commercial-farmer orientation of land redistribution in general, given their general tendency to believe in the inefficiency of small farmers. This has shifted policy discourses on the criteria for access to land, refocusing the redistribution vision from the "landless" and "insecure" towards the "capable", and presumed "efficient", indigenous agrarian capitalists, within the terms of the neoliberal global development paradigm.

This is exemplified, for instance, even in the similarity between the bi-focal land allocation policies of the opposed political parties, in the case of the Zanu-PF-led government of Zimbabwe and the MDC (MDC, 2004). The former talks about providing the needy (the landless and 'congested') and the 'capable' with land as defined by the A1 and A2 allocation schemes respectively, while the latter promises to give according to need and ability. Neither defines formally the proportionate class-based tilt intended in the land allocations, although in Zimbabwe 35% of the land has so far been given to the capable elites, which number less than 20,000, compared to 130,000 'needy' beneficiaries. This however suggests also that there is a common intra-elite bipartisan interest in a capitalist agrarian class project. These terms of the land reform agenda tend also to be dictated by the favourable disposition of the middle-class and elite dominated political party and civil society to external (global) markets, buttressed by optimistic expectations of the promise of foreign investment. The latter, it seems, tends to be expected to obviate the need for extensive redistributive land reform, and the belief exists that the latter could be substituted by other economic development benefits, including employment creation. But employment growth remains appallingly low and informalised and well below survival wages among the majority, while the rural remain marginalised.

Neoliberal land reform programme design

In this context, the objectives and strategies for land redistribution adopted in the region vary. Land redistribution programmes have tended to emphasize rehabilitating and politically stabilizing countries torn by armed struggles. The generic objectives of land reform in most Southern African countries tend to include: to decongest overpopulated areas; to increase the base of productive agriculture; to rehabilitate people displaced by war; to resettle squatters, the destitute, the landless; to promote equitable distribution of agricultural land; to de-racialise commercial agriculture. These are mostly underpinned by the aim of addressing historical injustices of colonial land expropriation and to assert the right of access of 'indigenes'. Land redistribution initiatives in the region have tended to be constrained by existing legal, institutional and constitutional frameworks, which have led to costly and slow processes of land acquisition and transfer of land rights to various beneficiaries. Land redistribution policies have tended to be influenced by market-oriented approaches to land acquisition and proscribed by the legal challenge, by large landowners, of the land expropriation mechanism, while the negotiated voluntary transfers of large amounts of land on a significant scale has not occurred. The experience with land redistribution in the SADC region has been in general based upon four inter-related tactical approaches.

The dominant approach, used mainly in Zimbabwe and Namibia before the implementation of compulsory land acquisition, is the *state-centred but market-based* approach to land transfers. Land was purchased by the state for redistribution following willing-seller-willing-buyer procedures. The private sector led land identification and supply through the market, and the central government was a reactive buyer choosing land on offer. Governments identify the demand and match the private supply with beneficiaries selected by its officials. The land restitution approach followed in South Africa is essentially a state initiative in which government pays mostly market prices for land claims of individuals and communities in a limited land rights and time-bound framework. These programmes were slow in redistributing land, except during the early years in Zimbabwe, when this was accompanied by extensive land occupations of abandoned white lands.

The use of *compulsory land acquisition by the state with compensation* for land and improvements has been pursued in the region since the 1990s, mainly in Zimbabwe. This approach involves direct intervention by the government in the identification and acquisition of land at market prices, and governments tend to manage the resettlement process, although settler selection is generally more locally controlled. Zimbabwe has used a mass compulsory acquisition strategy, and up to 7,000 farm properties have been gazetted for acquisition between 1992 and 2001. Litigation by landowners against compulsory acquisition has been a key constraint. In South Africa, a few cases of compulsory acquisition have recently evolved out of its land restitution programme, given the resistance of landowners to part with their land, while legislation was amended in 2003 to enable smoother land expropriation. The South African government argues that this approach will be used sparingly. In early 2004, the Namibian government initiated legal measures to expropriate eight farms, three of which are intended to assuage urban landlessness, while some of the others are being expropriated in response to the eviction of farm workers from their farms by their landlords.

A third approach to land redistribution that has been tried to a limited degree in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, in the context of testing "alternative" approaches, is the *market-assisted land reform* approach, espoused mainly by the World Bank. This land reform approach is meant to be led by the private sector, communities and NGOs, which identity land for transfer or beneficiaries to purchase land within a market framework. This framework of land acquisition seems to favour the large landowners' compensation requirements given the land price response to demand. However, black communities in the sub-region resist paying for land, which they feel was expropriated through conquest. Very little land has been redistributed through this approach so far, mainly in South Africa. Efforts to follow this approach in Zimbabwe during 1998 and 1999 were aborted before they took off as the actors tended to fail to agree on financing the process, on the combined use of market and compulsory acquisition, and on approaches to the identification of agreed amounts of land and beneficiaries for redistribution.

Finally there is the *community-led land self-provisioning* (Moyo, 2000) strategy, mainly in the form of land occupations or invasions by potential beneficiaries. This approach has tended to be either state facilitated and formalized, or repressed by the state at various points in time (Moyo, 2000; Raftopoulos, 2003; Alexander, 2003 and Marongwe, 2003). As a formal strategy to land

redistribution, it has not been implemented on a large scale in most of the countries, except in Zimbabwe during the first four years after independence, and in 2000 under different political and economic conditions, with different formal responses by the state in the two periods, and its repression during the mid-1980s to mid-1990s. Occasional isolated land occupations have been reported in Malawi, Botswana and South Africa. The latter however experienced large urban land occupations between the 1980s and early 1990s, which are being formalized in home ownership schemes. This however is not a formal government policy in the SADC region, and tends in fact to be officially discouraged in general.

These various approaches to land redistribution increasingly tend to be used in combination, although the market-based approach has remained dominant. Recent donor support for land reform tends to favour the as yet untested market-assisted approach to land reform, and is intended to provide an alternative to the pursuit of compulsory acquisition on a large scale or to pure willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches. However, most of the Southern African countries facing demands for land reform may require strong state intervention in land markets given the legacy of inequitable social capital and the control of financial markets.

Given the general slow pace of land reform in the region, persistent popular demands for land redistribution in terms of both redressing historical and racially-grounded inequities and in terms of the growing demands by both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elites for land to enhance their livelihoods and accumulation strategies respectively, have consistently resurfaced on the Southern Africa political and land policy agendas. These structures have tended to be central to influencing the evolution of the demand for land redistribution both in collaboration and in confrontation with the state.

The social and political mobilisation for land reform in Southern Africa has heightened racial and class polarisation and contradictions around approaches to implementing land reform within a context of democratisation. For example, in Zimbabwe, war veterans, landless peasants, and the urban poor, utilised land occupations, in collaboration with dominant elements in the state and ruling party, to force the government to pursue official compulsory land acquisition in a fast-track programme. In South Africa, the demand for land has mainly been in the urban and peri-urban areas, given that 70% of the population is urbanised. However, the demand for land in the rural areas is also growing and leading to polarisation at the political party level and between white farmers and blacks demanding access to the land of their ancestors, backed by significant violence against landowners. The emergence in South Africa of a landless people's movement demanding land redistribution for workers and peasants, with an explicit threat to boycott the ANC in elections, has had the effect (alongside the pressures from Zimbabwe's experiences) of bringing greater urgency to that government's land reform initiatives.

Official and formal studies tend to underestimate the demand for land, especially in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. Recent experiences of rural land occupations in Zimbabwe and in peri-urban South Africa and Namibia show the intensity of popular demand for land redistribution among a diverse range of beneficiaries such as the rural landless, former refugees, war veterans, the poor and former commercial farm workers, the urban poor and black elite (Moyo, 2001; Kinsey, 1999). Thus, while land reform has been rural-oriented and focused on promoting national food security and agricultural development, urban demand has also come to the fore. The cutting edge of demands for land reform at this stage thus rests on expanding the access and rights to land by the poor, the landless and disadvantaged sections of society such as women and farm workers, and a nascent black agrarian capitalist class.

The scale and nature of land redistribution

The scale and social composition of those benefiting from land redistribution thus far has been narrow. Since independence in 1990, only about 30,000 black Namibians have been resettled. Of these, 6,515 only have been resettled on commercial farms. The rest have been resettled in communal areas. Land reform in South Africa has gradually picked up pace, although less than 3% of the white-held lands have been redistributed. By 1998, Zimbabwe had redistributed 3.6 million hectares to 70.000 families, during the first five years of independence. Between 2000 and 2004, about 130,000 families have been resettled on about 10 million hectares of land expropriated under the fast-track programme. However, much of the acquired land is still being contested by landowners, and the provision of infrastructure and services to

the resettled families has been minimal, given the lack of state resources during the attendant economic downturn.

The demand for land redistribution increasingly includes the emerging black middle classes, such as business executives, agricultural graduates, academics, including civil servants. The key issue now facing the region's land reform policies is how to balance the control and access to land by existing large-scale landholders who underutilize their land, the demands of new small and medium-scale aspiring farmers. De-racialising commercial farming is a policy perspective that has been gaining importance in this context, and to a critical extent at the expense of the landless.

In Zimbabwe, land reform in the 1990s promoted emergent black large-scale farmers in what appeared less as a resettlement than a land reallocation programme intending to redress racial imbalances. Thus, state land had been used to facilitate access to land by about 400 middle-class blacks, while another 1,000 blacks used their own resources to purchase about 760,000 hectares.

By 1999, black elites held about 11% of Zimbabwe's commercial farmlands. The fast-track process then added 19,000 more new small to medium commercial-scale farmers, as discussed below. In South Africa and Namibia, policies have also sought to create and empower black commercial farmers as an integral aspect of land reform.

In this context, land reform has tended to marginalize critical vulnerable and organized groups. For example, special groups such as war veterans in Zimbabwe and elsewhere have received particular attention in policy, but their prescribed quota of resettlement land has generally not been met. Whereas significant progress has begun to be seen in recognizing women's land rights in policy, in practice women's land rights have remained marginalized at law in most of the countries. Farm workers' land rights, especially to residential and farming land, have tended to be marginalized in all the former settler territories. In Zimbabwe, the fast-track land reform programme has accommodated less than 3% of the farm workers, while in Namibia and South Africa landlords continue to evict them at will.

Conclusions: regional dimensions of radical land reform

The effects of the Zimbabwean land reforms since 2000, as a dissident model of radical land reform on the Southern Africa region, need to be recognised at various levels, although there is a tendency by some to dwell only on some of the impacts leading to a narrow discourse on this matter (Moyo, *Fast track land and agrarian reform*). By far the most commonly considered impact has been the expectation that the process of land occupations as a popular strategy for redressing land grievances and hunger might replicate itself widely, especially in former settler states such as South Africa (Cousins, 2000; Rutherford, 2001; Lahiff, 2002), in Namibia and even Kenya. The formation of the Landless Peoples Movement of South Africa in 2001 was a significant sign of the prospect for the diffusion of land occupations[7], since the urban land occupations in Johannesburg took place during 2001. These judgments all seem premature, given that the political coalition for majority rule appears to be relatively intact, and that the economic growth prospects of South Africa still look promising, despite the quite high levels of unemployment, poverty and wealth inequalities facing that country.

The greatest incidence of land occupations in South Africa had already shown itself in the late 1980s during the political struggle and turmoil at that time, while sporadic land occupations had been observed in the late 1990s in Botswana (Molomo, 2002), in Namibia and in Malawi (Kanyongolo, 2004). These incidents had coincided with the low profile and sporadic land occupations that Zimbabwe had experienced at that time. Given the strict evictions of land occupiers that the South African government had begun to pursue since majority rule, it could be confidently claimed that these would not spread widely there or elsewhere in the region, and that instead the SADC governments were now more intent on pursuing orderly land reform (Lahiff, 2002).

There has been a growing tendency among Southern African governments to rapidly develop comprehensive National Land Policies to pre-empt the Zimbabwe scenario, as we have seen in Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho in 2001, and in Botswana, Zambia and Angola in 2003 (Lahiff, 2002). These national policies are yet to be implemented. There have also been efforts to improve the land redistribution policy and strategy in South Africa and Namibia since 2001. In

both these countries, small-scale attempts to utilise land expropriation laws were undertaken without much success during that period. In South Africa, streamlining the bureaucratic procedures for land restitution has since increased the pace of land transfers. Namibia has moved quite swiftly between 2001 and 2003 to institute a land tax which, together with the threat of land expropriation, may be expected to release more land for redistribution. Both countries are introducing regulations which limit the purchase of land by foreigners, particularly absentee landlords in the Namibia case. It also appears that donors are increasing their funding of these two countries' land reforms.

In most of these countries, the most salient land policy change, however, and perhaps the one with the greatest potential to re-concentrate landholdings, has been the legal provisions introduced to enable customary land tenures, under which the majority of people live, to lease out land to developers through long-term leasehold and natural resources concession arrangements. These policy developments largely emulate the Mozambique and Botswana customary tenure arrangements and expand the land lease practices already found in state-held land and public natural resources property regimes. These policy directions have received much international donor support, while the SADC is currently in the process of adopting a Regional Land Reform Technical Facility intended to mobilise aid and regional expertise to improve land policy formation processes (Lahiff, 2002).

In conclusion, land reform policies in Southern Africa seem to be evolving through the interactive use of market and compulsory approaches to land acquisition for redistribution, restitution and tenure reform to both the landless and an emerging black agrarian bourgeoisie.

Official land reform policies are increasingly being forced to respond to growing popular demand for land. An important lesson to be learnt from the political independence settlements in the settler territories of the sub-region is that, by not sufficiently addressing the problem of inequitable land and natural resource ownership, the down-stream entrenchment of unequal racial economic opportunities ensuing from such control, in economies facing slow employment growth, is likely to fuel agitation for radical land reform. Thus, land redistribution, restitution and tenure reform to redress historical grievances, social justice and poverty are crucial ingredients of reconciliation and development, and essential to the resolution of the national question and democratization processes.

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Notes

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1 A recent collection of essays entitled Disappearing Peasantries? (Bryceson, Kay and Mooij, 2000).
2 Semi-proletarianisation has a longer pre-SAP history that is not well acknowledged, and is indeed generalisable to Africa (First, 1983; Cohen, 1991; Mamdani, 1996) and the rest of the periphery.
3 Mozambique expects 100 white Zimbabweans commercial farmers, while 10 have been allocated 4,000 hectares in the Manica province. A group of 63 white Zimbabweans had requested 400,000 hectares, but the government of Mozambique has put a ceiling of 1,000 hectares per individual application (Daily News, 20/07/2001).
4 Dual citizenship is not legal in Zimbabwe, and new amendments to tighten the law have recently been introduced, also generating problems around the citizenship of long standing Mozambicans and Malawian farm worker migrants who have not yet denounced their original citizenship.
5 These land sizes have since undergone further reduction, even though they still remain on the high scale for viable commercial farming.
6 That was until the government of Zimbabwe acquired and redistributed around 10 million hectares of land to an estimated 250,000 households (Moyo and Sukume, 2004). In addition, it gazetted maximum farm sizes per agro-ecological natural region that obliterated the large farm sizes.
7 Interview with Andile Mngxitama.

François Houtart*

Why Should Small Rice Farmers in Sri Lanka Disappear?

THE HEAVENLY ISLAND of Sri Lanka seemed destined for a long time to broadly offer its coasts fringed by coconut palms, its hills covered by tea plants and its rice plantation valleys, which change colors every season. But this could hardly last. The World Bank decided something else. In a globalized economy, producing rice in Sri Lanka is not a rational activity, for it is cheaper to acquire it in Vietnam or Thailand. As regards the one million rice-growing farmers, whose productivity is low, it appears that the time has come to turn them into a workforce for productivist agriculture and an exporting industry.

This contributes to satisfy a minority class of Sri Lankans, willing to continue supporting foreign interests, and fascinated by old president Premadasa's idea of transforming the island into the Singapore of Southern Asia. A few legal measures will then be enough to accelerate the process of transformation of the small farmers: to charge for irrigation waters, to establish property deeds allowing the selling of lands which have until now been public property, to abolish government services that promote farmers' agriculture, and to deregulate labor legislation. la legislación del trabajo.

For over 2,500 years, Sri Lanka was a rice society. Even now, rice represents about 75% of cereal consumption. Almost 80% of small farmers are rice producers. Society has been wrought by water control, a key factor for staple agricultural production, and not by the property of land, as in Europe. Political power was built on dominion over irrigation, from the small kingdoms of the first millennium before our age, to the unification of the island 500 years before our age, under a power capable of organizing an irrigation system. Once in government, Monarchy introduced Buddhism as a symbolic expression of the new construction.

Property of the land, always collective in tributary societies (where land belonged to the King, who was its administrator and granted its use to farmer families) was shortly affected by the Dutch and British colonial regimes. Coffee plantations first, and tea plantations later, were established in the hills and not in the valleys, reserved for rice and small crops (such as spices). After the independence, the first governments respected the public character of rice lands and developed, under the spirit of the welfare state, policies supportive of small agriculture, in order to prevent the social plague of landless farmers and the fragmentation of land property.

Since 1977, the UNP (United National Party) government oriented the economy according to the Washington Consensus (neoliberal): to produce for export, to liberalize markets, to erect infrastructure works in order to attract foreign investors, and to dismantle economic and social protective nets. Social effects were disastrous. Despite the fact that for the World Bank the medium growth achieved for this period is between 4 and 5% per year, poverty also rose: from 13.5% in 1965 to 46% in 1998, according to a study by the United Nations International Fund for Agrarian Development (IFAD, 1993). Social distances also augmented: in 1992, the country was vice champion in the Gini coefficient, which measures the distance between the highest and lowest income amounts (UNDP, 1992). Malnutrition became deeper: a study from the Medical Research Institute revealed that caloric ingestion diminished by about 33% between 1979 and 1999 (2000). Along with the decline of agricultural prices and the increase in consumer goods, family incomes collapsed. Despair spread, especially among small farmers. The suicide rate grew so high that it placed the country at the top of the ranking at the beginning of the 90s (Sri Lanka Government, 2002).

Is has been the real price of the transition towards the opening to the world market. The previous social and economic system had certainly produced a strong bureaucracy and needed to evolve. But it had assured a minimum of social protection for the weaker stratums, and given the country the highest scholarship rate in the old colonial Asia. Indeed, under the UNP government, social and cultural benefits for the poor melted like snow under the sun: small rural

schools closed, hospitals in these regions started lacking supplies, and technical services to small farmers were reduced or suppressed.

But the most dramatic effect was still to come. In 1972, an uprising of rural young people, jobless but educated, led 10,000 of them to death. Between 1989 and 1990, a second revolt burst out as a consequence of the Structural Adjustment Programs imposed on the country as the price for opening to international credits.

This rebellion was even more generalized than the one of 1972, because the situation of rural youths was even worse. Repression was brutal. The number of victims is estimated to be at least 60,000.

The country was in shock. After a brief period of neoliberal moderation, the offensive was stronger, and this time it had a revamped discourse. In order to fight poverty and to achieve a *pro-poor growth* it was necessary to accelerate the opening to the market and to put a definitive end to counterproductive keynesian policies. Two documents confirm this orientation.

The first one is a 1996 World Bank report which refers to the luck of small farmers in the context of a general policy of market liberalization (Hung and Lister, 1996). The tone is clear. Small farmers have to abandon low value products such as rice. One of the best means for this is to suppress free irrigation water: "Water is a commodity. It has to be commercialized by the private sector. The government should rule 'rights of property over water' […] This would allow irrigation water traditional users to sell (or to transfer) their land deeds" (Sarath, 2001b: 4). How smart the World Bank was! The key to this problem is situated in the control of irrigation. To transfer it to the private sector would push the transition from an agrarian society to the market economy.

The *Paddy Marketing Board*, a government institution that regulates the rice market, should also be suppressed, for its existence discourages private investments in agriculture. But to crown the new project, land should be transformed into a commodity. For that, it would be enough to grant a property deed to small farmers, who, unable to resist world market forces, would be obliged to sell their lands to more efficient economic operators. If we add a deregulated work market, we have all the ingredients for neoliberal growth. This is why the small rural peasantry should disappear in Sri Lanka: because this corresponds to a general policy (promoted, among others, by the World Bank), aiming to eliminate farming agriculture with high productivity enterprises.

Now then, these measures concern half of mankind: around three billion people1. In June 2000, the World Bank granted an 18.2 million US dollar loan for the setting up of reforms. It was, according to the Minister of Justice at that time, G.L. Pieris, "the major legal reform in the history of Sri Lanka, aiming to put the legislative and judicial system at the full service of the private sector" (Sarath, 2001a: 1). A year later, in 2001, the World Bank suspended the execution of the loan, estimating that the government had not put the indispensable reforms into practice for macroeconomic stability and for the restoration of investors' trust, and that it had also failed to create the legal environment necessary for the good functioning of the private sector.

The second document comes from the government. It is entitled *Regaining Sri Lanka* (Sri Lanka Government, 2003). Although absent in the title, the main subject is the fight against poverty2. After describing the gravity of the situation (between 1990/91 and 1995/96, the poverty rate increased from 33 to 39%), it refers to its causes. Clearly, these causes are related to the lack of growth. In order to redress this, it would be necessary to reduce the public deficit that restrains the activities of the private sector, to deregulate work, to introduce land in the market and to reduce the weight of the state administration (Sri Lanka Government, 2002: 2-10).

The authors of the document quote the World Bank text word by word, stating that the previous government did not fulfill its promises. The private sector has a need for favorable conditions in order to better use its capital and work, and to attract foreign investments. Now, privatizations should be accelerated, the deepest flexibility should be introduced into work, property deeds should be granted to farmers, obstacles for the acquisition of land by foreigners should be removed, protections should be suppressed, and the private sector should be allowed into education and health. Chile is a good example of this (Sri Lanka Government, 2002: 13-16). So as to achieve a *pro-poor growth*, the capacity of ports and airports has to be increased, car

routes built, the road network, railways and bus services improved, telecommunications and the Internet developed, the state decentralized, and micro-credit initiatives linked to the financial market.

In short, “this is about going from an economy based on low productivity subsistence agriculture towards an economy based on high productivity services and industrialization, a fact that would create an economic development which will contribute to the reduction of poverty” (Sri Lanka Government, 2002: 21). Growth will depend on the private sector, which should be inscribed within international market competition. And the civil war between Singhalese and Tamils, which isolates a part of the country, should be stopped in order to allow these policies to succeed. In consequence, peace negotiations should be supported.

Another caricatured vision of development, which we thought had been surpassed a long time ago, is the one that appears in the document in an almost messianic tone, using the argument of the “fight against poverty” in order to support the neoliberal project (an initiative from the World Bank). This reveals the true function of this sudden concern for the poor. There is not a single word about nutrition security3. There is not a single sign of concern for the luck of small farmers who will arrive at marginal neighborhoods to settle and will not be able to find jobs because Chinese and Vietnamese salaries are even lower. Written in American English, although the English-speaking Sri Lankan elite is concerned with maintaining its British accent4, the text reveals its origins: either it was written in Washington, or it is the work of the new generation of *brown Sabih* (an indigenous expression which refers to westernized natives).

But neoliberal policies did not remain unquestioned. Besides the 1980 general strike, which was repressed with the firing of over 40,000 workers, and the 1989/90 youth revolt which took 60,000 lives, there are a number of manifestos signed by important amounts of people that have followed. In 1981, 60,000 signatures were collected against the selling of land to foreigners. In 1993, the *People’s Memorandum* about agricultural policy, signed by 150,000 persons, was one of the elements that provoked the electoral failure of the government at that time. In 2000, 300,000 people supported the Jubilee *Memorandum* for the abolition of the debt. In 2002, a hundred rural organizations supported the hunger strike of small farmers in the region of Pollonaruwa, and a few thousand people took part in demonstrations in cities all over the country.

Since then, the resistance has been organized by the civil society from bottom to top. In 1993, over 130 rural organizations formed the Movement for National and Land Agricultural Reform (MONLAR), which multiplied the counterproposals, negotiated with the government and the World Bank, and organized demonstrations. In 2002, a wider coalition was created, gathering, among others, rural organizations, the main trade unions, NGOs and religious organizations within the National Alliance for the Protection of Natural resources and Human Rights. It is headed by a Buddhist monk, and gathers groups that stand against the privatization of the woods, the expropriation of lands for extending the airport, and the destruction of the environment and of local economies provoked by the construction of roads.

Different alternatives were proposed in order to solve the agrarian issue, not by taking the romantic perspective of saving the small traditional peasantry, but by assuming the perspective of helping it to improve and diversify production, to better the use of water and soil resources, and to produce progress in knowledge (small ecological agriculture). The Movement for National and Land Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) places its proposal within a wider vision: to produce goods and services for local use before exporting them, to rebuild the capacity for regenerating natural resources, to democratize society, and to lean on the creativity of the same poor people. All this is translated into concrete political proposals.

But such successive waves find themselves interrupted: the protests and alternative proposals that came along face the implacable decisional system that is leading the country towards its integration into the capitalist world economy. Certain of their theory that has turned into a dogma, ignoring social processes, hardly concerned about democracy, and contemptuous of the “poor” now reduced to the status of handicapped, the architects of the new economic order act as a *Terminator*. Would a third rural youth massacre be necessary to make them draw back? Will social and political resistance forces be able to modify policies and reorient development aims? In Sri Lanka, this does not depend only on local social fights but also on their worldwide convergence.

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1 The argument stands on the need for nourishing an increasing world population, but rural movements and many agrarian economy specialists answer that such an aim could only be achieved through promoting ecological modern agriculture, a price policy diversified according to regions, and a long term plan that would open the possibility of inserting part of the farmers into other economic activities (see *Alternatives Sud*, 2002).

2 He takes most of his ideas from the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (2002).

3 This concept implies the possibility for a country to produce by itself the essentials for consumption regarding staple food, a fact that places it under the shelter of eventual international policies. Nutritional security has been endangered by the agricultural liberalization policy of the WTO.

4 For instance, the word *labor* here is spelled with a single “o”, while in British English it is written with “ou” (*labour*).

Gladys Lechini*

Is South-South Co-operation still Possible? The Case of Brazil's Strategy and Argentina's Impulses Towards the New South Africa and Africa[1]

IN THE 70s, the countries of the South launched the idea of South-South cooperation to strengthen their capacity of negotiation with the North, through cooperative efforts aimed at solving issues of trade, development and the new international economic order. The success of the political bargaining that took place during the petrol price shock of 1973 served as a model of productive negotiation. However, the overall project of cooperation failed because of its loose nature and broad scope: the fallacy of the argument was its basic assumption that all underveloped countries had more commonalities that they really had, and that all solutions could be uniformly applied to each of them with equal success.

In the 80s, the debt crisis might have offered a good opportunity for coordinated action. However, bilateral actions implemented by developed countries together with private creditors, in addition to the indebted countries' economic frailties, dissolved the attempts of multilateral cooperation; although, Latin American countries were still able to develop agreements regarding common policies for conflict resolution in the region.

The debt crisis and the end of the Cold War in the late 80s hindered the Southern states' capacity for multilateral negotiation and bargaining power due to the East-West conflict. During the 90s, the effects of globalization exemplified that there were new winners and losers, but that almost none of the winners were among the developing countries.

Nowadays, the countries in the South are facing essential challenges, such as the dislocations produced by rapid social changes and the dissolution of traditional patterns of social life, major economic restructuring caused by globalization trends and domestic crises, and the broken promises of recovering democracies.

In this context, the idea of the South-South cooperation has reappeared on the agendas of some states, with modifications dictated by their past experiences. A new selective cooperation is developing in terms of actors and themes. Thus, it is possible to make progress in functional cooperation in fields such as democracy, social justice, development, trade, investment, environment, and security problems. An alternative is to take advantage of all the opportunities in the sphere of bilateral and multilateral relations, and gradually build a community of like-minded countries, through a critical dialogue and better mutual understanding.

The task seems to be very complex because, despite having problems in common, greater and mutual knowledge is needed to cope with the various constraints arising from the international system and the domestic setting. Furthermore, we need a more sophisticated theoretical and methodological approach in an increasingly polarized world that is also facing the threats of violence, terrorism and war. We also need to deepen our discussions about the most appropriate policies for constructing and consolidating horizontal ties between states, regional organizations and social movements, in order to promote and defend specific interests in the international arena.

Even though this study deals with inter-governmental relations, it is important to recognize the increasingly significant role that our civil societies are playing in order to react to what seems to be a "unique thought and an irreversible trend". These social movements, expressed in the World Social Fora, condemn the negative effects of neoliberalism and the northern states' attitude towards free trade. While the industrialized countries link the refinancing of the foreign debt of our countries to the implementation of neoliberal reforms and free trade, they protect their markets, denying free access to our products.

It is interesting to note that these same positions have recently been defended by the G22 (or G20+) at the inter-governmental level in Cancun, under the leaderships of Brazil, India, South Africa, Argentina and China. This group is a broad-based coalition with a new positive force aiming at showing our colleagues of the developed world on what and how we disagree.

This new force, including countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, is emerging as an alternative to the mainstream in developed countries, bringing some hope to the people of our regions. Nevertheless, a lot must be done, since our countries have now very little leeway, both at the systemic level and at the domestic one. The post Cold War international scenario does not offer any certainties and is increasingly unstable, both in terms of reaching a lasting peace and of improving the economic conditions for the development of our people. Neither are internal conditions very favorable, due to the negative consequences resulting from the neoliberal model of the 90s, which, among other effects, produced a minimization of the state, depriving it of the minimum conditions required to watch over the welfare of its people.

However, the acceptance of our present conditioning as inevitable only leads to stagnation. Therefore, we should advance in the search for possible options to extend the negotiating ability of public and private actors, as there is nothing worse than inaction. Although such a proposal may seem idealistic *vis-à-vis* our countries' schizophrenic external agendas and our shortage of human and material resources, the aim of this paper is to make clear, through a case study, both the limitations and the possibilities of promoting and widening South-South cooperation.

The following analysis, referring to Argentina's and Brazil's foreign policies towards South Africa in the framework of their relations with African states, is located in the context of this general proposal and has the aim of promoting avenues of research within South-South cooperation.

Argentina and Africa: a relation shaped by impulses

The foreign policy of Argentina towards the African states, from their independence until the end of the 90s, shows a pattern of relationship oriented by what I call "impulses". These impulses generated an inertial process, thus creating a spasmodic relationship. By "impulses" I mean external actions, normally without continuity, showing short periods of good understanding. These impulses were generated by a particular necessity or opportunity that was the basis of the approach. Thus, the intended objective turned out to be the content of the political action. That is why it is possible to talk about impulses with ideological, political or commercial objectives, according to the current needs of the decision-making units.

The political objectives aimed at creating an institutionalized diplomatic network in the framework of the principle of universality of international relations. Consequently, some embassies were opened (five in North Africa and nine in Sub-Saharan Africa), diplomatic missions were carried out, and framework agreements were signed. At this level, and generally speaking, the aim of the approach was to convince African states of Argentina's reasons to claim the Malvinas, and in exchange, to defend several African demands within international organizations.

Commercial objectives were present in almost all impulses as a result of Argentina's need for new markets, taking into consideration the protective measures of the European Economic Community –now European Union - particularly since the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy. But the ups and downs of the trade relation were due to the level of activism of private actors, and almost never a consequence of a political decision on trade policy, as the different Argentinean governments have never been keen on drawing up trading strategies. The strategic objectives were closely related to a Cold War scheme, attaching importance to the relationship with "Anticommunist, White South Africa", particularly during military regimes.

Therefore, impulses led to an erratic foreign policy towards African states, with a low profile, according to the level of significance of South-South relations within Argentina's foreign priorities, which were directed towards the US, Europe, and sometimes Latin America. The African states were left aside, and so were the Asian ones. But when there was an impulse, normally generated in Buenos Aires and directed towards any African state, the Argentine government usually received a complaint from its African partner with regard to Argentina's relations with racist South Africa. On the other hand, and in opposition to this usual tendency,

the relation with South Africa showed a scenario of mutual impulses, particularly during the last military government in Argentina (1976-1983).

This policy propelled by impulses reflects a particular decision-making process. Considering the low priority of African states in Argentina's Foreign Policy, decisions have been taken at an intermediate level in the decision-making structure, at what is called the routine level. At the same time, some initiatives to increase relations at a bilateral and a multilateral level (in the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement or the United Nations) were due to the goodwill and imagination of officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or, at that time, in the Department of Industry and Foreign Trade. The recommendations of some of our representatives in the UN, the energy of some ambassadors located in African capitals –which most of the time had to strive against Buenos Aires' inertia– and the activism of representatives of local firms (who wanted to do business in Africa), should also be taken into account. Even though those initiatives could sometimes grow and become external actions, they were not necessarily successful, due to the lack of coordination among the different governmental agencies.

Thus, the impulses reflected different initiatives generated in Buenos Aires, but without continuity, as they were not a part of any formal foreign policy initiative. Their intensity was directly related to the objective proposed, thus defining the location of the action in the decision making process according to Argentina's global priorities. This explains why the majority of the decisions related to African states were taken at the routine level. The most relevant exception was the breakdown of diplomatic relations with South Africa in 1986, and their subsequent re-establishment in 1991. This high-level decision-making process, together with the mutual impulses, makes South Africa's case exceptional in the framework of Argentine-African relations (Lechini, 1995).

During the 80s, with the re-establishment of democracy in Argentina, this policy shaped by impulses seemed to change. Alfonsín's government (1983-1989) began to implement an African policy within the Non-Aligned Movement. In that context, though trade and military relations continued, Argentina broke of diplomatic relations with Pretoria, putting an end to a dual policy toward African states and an ambiguous policy toward South Africa.

The dual policy refers to the differences shown between the multilateral and the bilateral fields. That is to say, Argentina backed resolutions condemning Apartheid in international organizations, and simultaneously maintained normal bilateral relations with the government in Pretoria. Ambiguous policy refers to the lack of definition on the part of Argentina when it was under pressure to adopt a position between Black Africa and South Africa. Although the tendency was to improve the relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa, Buenos Aires did not take up radical attitudes as regards Pretoria, ignoring the African demands to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa's White government –an issue always present in Black African countries' external agendas[2].

Alfonsín's administration initiated a period of increased contacts with Sub-Saharan Africa. It was believed that an alliance among the countries of the southern hemisphere could help secure areas of relative power on the basis of policies of cooperation. Foreign Minister Dante Caputo began to shape an African policy under the assumption that increasing both bilateral and multilateral political relations would also increase trade relations and foster South-South cooperation. His interest was also shown through diplomatic actions such as sending missions to Africa, opening new embassies, signing agreements, and developing activities in the sphere of scientific and technological cooperation.

However, in the 90s, with president Menem at the helm (1989-1999), Argentina's African policy vanished. The main features of his foreign policy were an "acritical alignment" with the United States and the acceptance of the requirements of the Washington Consensus. Belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement was considered irrelevant, as was association with African countries. Having lost the possibility of blackmailing either the East or the West, they were considered incapable of giving appropriate answers to a competitive and exclusive globalization. Thus, a period barren of strategies or actions intended for African countries –with the exception of North Africa– started, followed by the closure of embassies (Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Zaire and Gabon) under the argument of budgetary constraints. Yet, despite the low profile of African countries, diplomatic relations with South Africa were re-established in 1991, even when the democratic transition process did not, at the time, allow to predict the successful way out that took place in 1994. A new partner was chosen.

Argentina and South Africa in the nineties

A new impulse towards South Africa was born, with a tendency to increase commercial links and to receive investments, but showing a certain void in political-diplomatic relations. This vacuum could have been justified during Menem's initial years in charge of the administration, by taking into consideration South Africa's internal political process. Yet, it cannot be justified at a time when a new democratic, multi-racial government took power with Nelson Mandela as the elected president.

As soon as Mandela took office, Menem made explicit his strong will to visit South Africa. The trip took place on February 25, 1995. But the presidential visit did not show definite results. Taking into account the democratic changes in South Africa, a higher density of diplomatic relations was expected, particularly in comparison to Brazil. Much more could have been done between both countries in the building up of a common political agenda.

The conditions existed to generate a rapprochement that made the development of common agreed policies feasible. However, it was only another new impulse, which, although allowing an increase in commercial relations –in many cases carried out by transnational actors– was not part of a policy design, due to the lack of political will. The Argentine foreign policy had other priorities.

After the impulse resulting from the presidential trip, relations with South Africa reverted to nothing more than a series of sporadic actions, with increasing density depending on the goodwill of the officials in different areas, but without producing relevant political consequences. This can be verified by analyzing the mutual visits as well as the moments in which they occurred. The top level of South African officials who visited Argentina during those years showed a high political interest from Pretoria[3].

In this context, it is important to note the South African interest, shared by Brazil, in strengthening the commercial links through negotiations with MERCOSUR. An example was president Mandela's visit to Argentina for the meeting of MERCOSUR's presidents– and the associated countries, Chile and Bolivia– held in July 1999 in Ushuaia. Three bilateral agreements were signed on that occasion: an Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments, a Memorandum of Understanding on Consultations about Common Interest Issues, and an Accord on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Fight against Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances' Illicit Production and Traffic[4].

Even though the density of the political-diplomatic relation was not in accordance with its potentialities, a different analysis can be carried out using the concept of "micro relations". This concept refers to "relations taking place at a different level, that of smaller bureaucratic units and private actors". Accordingly, the bilateral relation has been growing, and thus creating a network of interactions across the South Atlantic Ocean.

One relevant area refers to the blossoming of interactions between the Argentine and South African navies, centered around the South Atlantic and with strategic economic cooperative connotations. With the end of the East-West conflict and the alignment with the United States, the Argentine government turned to a cooperative security agenda. In that context, the objective was to strengthen the relations in the South Atlantic through the participation in the ZPCSA (Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic) and military cooperation in the so-called Atlas Sur Operations.

With the political-diplomatic relation repaired and the links among the respective navies bolstered, previous contacts turned into definite cooperation in February 1993, through the first combined naval exercises in Argentine waters[5]. These so-called Atlas Sur Operations began to take place every two years. They consist of anti-submarine and anti-aircraft exercises, tactical and refueling maneuvers, and shooting at surface and aerial targets.

The first operation, Atlas Sur I, was carried out between Argentina and South Africa in 1993. Brazil and Uruguay took part in the following ones[6]: Atlas Sur II, in front of Cape Town's coasts, in 1995; Atlas Sur III, on the occasion of the South African Army 75th Anniversary and with the presence of the Chief of the Navy Admiral Carlos Marrón, in 1997; Atlas Sur IV, on Latin American coasts, in 1999; and Atlas Sur V, at Simmonstown, South Africa, in 2002. Atlas Sur V

also coincided with the 80th Anniversary of SAN. Atlas Sur VI was scheduled for 2005, and will be hosted by Uruguay.

Despite the budgetary constraints experienced, all the participating members have shown a continuing commitment towards Atlas Sur. In this cooperative context, it is important to note that the Atlas Sur operations are the only regularly scheduled exercise program of South Africa's Navy with foreign partners. In addition, Argentina's and South Africa's Armies signed an Agreement on Cooperation in Peace Times, in Buenos Aires, on October 6, 1997, passed by law 2514/99 in 1999.

Although the Argentine governmental answers to South African initiatives could be considered lukewarm, private firms developed intense negotiations. During those years, Argentine companies visited South Africa to explore new possibilities backed by agendas supplied by the Argentine embassy. Officials promoted the country not only in the academic but also in the business field, expounding on the Argentine economy and on the possibility for investing and developing bilateral trade.

Therefore, from the Argentine perspective, the most outstanding area was bilateral trade, with figures tripling from the beginning of the 90s until the end of the decade, showing a favorable trade balance for Argentina –except for 1993– and making South Africa an important market in the region. Although in the first quinquennium Argentine exports quadrupled, one cannot establish a direct relation between this increase and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations[7]. Argentine imports also increased remarkably during the first three years of the decade, fluctuating less than exports afterwards. But the effect of imports from South Africa in the whole of Argentina's imports from Africa is noteworthy, having stood 92.49% in 1990 and 83.50% in 1992, but falling to less than the 50% during the second quinquennium, and to only 19.19% in 2000.

Due to its significance, it is worthwhile to mention the continuity of Argentina's participation in SAITEX, the most important multi-modal fair in the region.A silver medal was obtained in 1994, and a bronze one in 1995. For 1998, the Argentine stand gathered 32 exporting companies together with the Bilateral Trade Chamber. In the following year, it signed up only one firm, because Argentina changed the participation criterion. After five years of a worthy performance in this fair, the decision was to direct energies at more specific ones[8].

On the other hand, the growth of South Atlantic contacts allowed an expansion of air links: to Malaysian Airways' two flights per week between South Africa and Argentina, South African Airways added –since November 30, 1995– another weekly flight between both destinations, with a stopover in São Paulo[9].

Academic contacts have also been increased, and most of the time with the backup of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The core issues discussed refer to the analysis of the varied possibilities of comparing and linking the two respective integration processes, MERCOSUR and SADC, to which I will refer later.

To sum up, Argentina's diplomatic relations with South Africa show some particularities, which make them different from those with other African states. Up to Alfonsín's government, mutual impulses generated a certain density of relations. The breakdown of diplomatic relations provoked a watershed, with the subsequent absence of political relations and impulses. But bilateral trade continued on separate avenues and was not strongly affected. The breaking-off of diplomatic relations was not an impulse; it was part of the general strategy of the foreign policy of Argentina at that time. The objective was to recover the credibility lost in the international setting under the military governments, and to defend the Human Rights cause.

The quick re-establishment of diplomatic relations decided by Menem turned that policy into an impulse. Even though during his administration a higher density of bilateral relations took place, South Africa was not included among Argentina's priorities. That is why the external actions were transformed into a new impulse, aiming at very specific objectives and missing a good opportunity to build common South-South political agendas. This impulse, with its peak during Menem's visit to South Africa, is much more connected with the way in which the president built his own image, under the assumption that this image was the final representation of his country, which deserved a place among the most important nations in the world.

During the 90s, the pattern of relationship developed as follows: the goal of the South African rapprochement was to learn from the Argentine experience in the privatization process

and economic reform, and the Argentine goal was to attract South African investments in mining and to increase exports by selling agricultural commodities.

With the coming of Fernando De la Rúa to the presidency in Argentina (1999), and despite the set of proposals of the Alliance that took him to power, substantial changes were not observed either in foreign policy or in relations with the states of the African continent.

The internal political and economic crisis that culminated with the president's resignation obliged all government agencies to use their energy for its management, both in its domestic dimension as well as in its international implications (Lechini, 2001). With president Eduardo Duhalde's inauguration on January 1, 2002, a certain internal stability was attained. However, after having declared a default, the negotiation of the foreign debt consumed almost all the energy of the government, leading to a reactive and inertial foreign policy.

Brazil's African policy

Brazil's relations with African states are different from those of Argentina, because *Itamaraty* constructed an African policy, with ups and downs, in the framework of a global strategy of its integration into the world. Although in the 60s both Brazil and Argentina began to design strategies with regard to the new African states, with Argentina even taking the lead, over the years their approaches showed different features. Brazil designed and implemented a set of political and diplomatic actions aiming at building a "critical mass" of commonalities, and Argentina created a spasmodic-like relation.

Though Brazil's African policy was characterized by Brazilian academics as a diffuse process, it turns out to be coherent in comparison with Argentina's impulses. Impulses in Brazil were "accumulative" and made possible the existence of a certain density of relations between Brazil and Africa, in what can be considered an "incremental policy". Unlike Argentina, impulses were generated at the upper levels of the decision-making process.

Thus, Brazil's foreign policy shows many more continuities than Argentina's, even with the changes in regimes (there were democratic and military regimes in both countries). In this context, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Itamaraty*, was able to maintain a great level of independence, even with different governments, in comparison with Argentina. With all possible nuances, there is a certain continuity in the design and implementation of Brazil's foreign policy, connected with the internal development project: national development through imports substitution.

As African states had a place in Brazil's foreign design, political actions resulted in the construction of an African policy. That explains the higher density of first diplomatic and then commercial relations. The rapprochement with African states had a political nature in the context of South-South relations, and a pragmatic commercial nature due to the interest in diversifying trading partners. This rapprochement, justified with a principle –the development of South-South solidarity– was inserted into a global strategy: the purpose was to have an international presence through the diversification of external relations and the building of alliances with the new states in the South, thus allowing Brazil to have a say in global issues. Perhaps these new relations can also be explained through the impossibility, at that stage, of having better relations with Latin American states, and particularly with Argentina, owing to the hypothesis of conflict between both countries' military governments.

Even though Brazilian officials resorted to a "cultural discourse" or "cultural diplomacy" recalling Brazil's African heritage –it is the country with the biggest African population outside Africa–, new actions were necessary in order to convince African states of Brasilia's intentions. Embassies were opened, and high-level missions were sent. Technical and academic cooperation was developed, and research centers were established. The seventies were termed as the "golden period" of Brazilian-African relations (Saraiva, 1996).

However, this policy had external conditionings. Although Portugal was very keen on any Brazilian development in the colonies, Brazil decided to recognize Angola's and the other Portuguese colonies' independence in spite of external and domestic pressures. On the other hand, the relation with South Africa showed varied angles. As in the case of Argentina, the African states always demanded the breakdown of relations with the racist government. Nonetheless, Brazil did not need to appeal to such a drastic action to show its commitment

towards African states and South Africa's people. This could be explained by the fact that Brazil had generated such a density of relations that not even the shadow of a doubt was left regarding Brazilian intentions.

The evolution of Brazil's policy towards South Africa in the most general framework of Brazilian-African relations also showed oscillations. Nevertheless, a lower profile was being defined, according to the improvement of Brazilian's relations with African states and the deterioration of South Africa's domestic situation. Therefore, South Africa's domestic policy became a participant variable in the development of Brasilia's relations with Pretoria. As in the Argentine case, the strongest impulse stemmed from South Africa with its "outward policy", holding strategic and commercial objectives.

In the bilateral relation Brasilia gave tepid answers to South African impulses –untill the middle of the seventies– which were understood by academics as ambiguities (Vilalva and Gala: 2001: 55), hesitancies (Penna, 2001), oscillations, contradictions (Saraiva, 1996) or ambivalences. Thus, the policy towards South Africa presented oscillations, as a consequence of the difference between principles and specific interests. It was a feasible adaptation of the clear and continuous objectives of national development. With these oscillations, Brazil tried to separate the approach to Black Africa from the traditional friendship with South Africa. Vilalva and Gala (2001: 40) illustrate this with the image of "two doors opening to Africa: *the black door and the white door*", the idea being clearly unfolded in the divergent opinions of Delfim Neto, the Treasury Minister, and Gibson Barboza, the Foreign Minister.

With the return to democracy in Brazil, Sarney's government passed the so-called Sarney Decree of 1985, which added new prohibitions to previously existing ones, banning cultural and sports exchanges, and oil, arms and military equipment exports. This decision, as well as the breaking of diplomatic relations that would be implemented by Argentina the following year, were the answer of both Latin American governments –now democratic– to the aggravation of repression by the white South African government, not only within the country but also in the Southern African region.

Brazilian policy towards South Africa after 1994

During the 90s, the Brazilian-African "honeymoon" showed its limits. Foreign Policy suffered some changes, particularly because of the end of the import substitution model and the new neoliberal orthodoxy implemented by Brasilia. And even though the diversification of external relations continued to be the objective in order to increase power in the international system, the setting moved from Africa to Latin America and the MERCOSUR. Furthermore, domestic-economic problems both in Brazil and in the African states contributed to the decline in the trans-Atlantic relationship, and the cooperative dreams vanished due to "Afro-pessimism".

At that time, the "grand strategy" turned into a "selective policy", fostering relations with those countries which were in condition to reply to Brazil's new requirements. The South-South cooperation of the 70s was now termed as "a strategic partnership". The African policy was reduced to some countries and to certain issues: bilateral cooperation with South Africa, Angola and Nigeria, multilateral cooperation with SADC –under the MERCOSUR umbrella–, with the newly created Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and within the Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic. Within this framework, diplomatic and political relations with the new South Africa became increasingly significant. From having no policies towards Pretoria –particularly after the Sarney Decree– Brazil moved forward to considering South Africa as a strategic partner in varied issue areas, and particularly in the multilateral arena. The level of the exchanged visits gives an account of the importance granted to the bilateral relation[10]. President Cardoso's visit to South Africa (1996) accompanied by ranking officials, and the subsequent signing of eight bilateral agreements, showed the increasing importance of these new ties. The strategy had two legs. The political dimension referred to the possibility of developing cooperative efforts in multilateral negotiations. The economic dimension aimed at fostering the existing commercial potentialities[11].

Comparing the preparatory works, the mission's development and its subsequent results with the visit of president Menem to South Africa the previous year, both government's intentions towards South Africa appear obvious: a high political-diplomatic profile and an outline

of commercial diplomacy in the case of Brazil, and in the case of Argentina a strong presidential urge to be in the limelight.

At any rate, Brazil's bilateral relations with South Africa did not end with the visit of Cardoso. Moreover, they were deepened and on December 13, 2000, it was signed the South Africa and Brazil Joint Commission Agreement[12], during Mbeki's state visit to Brazil. This Agreement was put into practice with the subsequent bilateral meetings in Brasilia (2002) and Pretoria (2003). The inaugural meeting was held in Brasilia from August 5 to 9, 2002. The Agreement provides for two levels of engagement: political discussions between the principals (i.e. the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs), and "focal point" discussions on mutual cooperation in various fields, at officials' level.

In this context, it is interesting to highlight that Cardoso and Lampreia laid the foundations of a relation that the new president Lula and his Foreign Minister Amorim would continue deepening and expanding. Consequently, the second meeting was celebrated on May 7, 2003, in Pretoria, and the third on January 2, 2004[13].

Commercial multilateralism

Together with the intensification of bilateral relations with the now democratic South Africa, the negotiations for the signing of a Free Trade Agreement between MERCOSUR and SADC also started during Cardoso's administration. Although the only African partner was finally South Africa, Brazil wanted to include Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. With the first, Brasilia conducts significant cooperation and trade; with Angola and Mozambique, cultural and political projects; and with Namibia, it has growing interests.

From the South African point of view, the idea of an association across the South Atlantic was mentioned in all the bilateral meetings with Brazil and Argentina. At the same time, this idea was backed by actions, such as the visit of president Mandela to Ushuaia, during a MERCOSUR Summit on July 24, 1998. Finally, on a new MERCOSUR Summit on December 14, 2000, in Florianopolis, Brazil, the Project for an Agreement for the creation of a Free Trade Area between MERCOSUR and South Africa was signed, with the presence of the new South African president, Thabo Mbeki.

Vis-à-vis the aforementioned agreement, the parties constituted a negotiating committee in order to exchange information concerning the existing tariff in each Party, bilateral trade and trade with third countries, the respective commercial policies and the access of each Party to the market (Art. 5). They also arranged to boost commercial promotion activities, to develop combined actions for the fulfillment of cooperation projects in the agricultural and industrial fields, and to promote cooperation in the sector of services, in the areas dealing with vegetable and animal sanitary conditions, and in the standardization and quality of foodstuffs.

As a proof of Latin America's intentions, the first combined commercial mission of businessmen from MERCOSUR's four partners was sent to South Africa on June 24-28, 2002, to promote products abroad[14]. At the meetings, stress was placed on businessmen's interest on the extensive range of opportunities offered not only by the South African market per se, but also as an exportation platform to other Southern Africa markets, to the whole continent and perhaps to the European Union, as from recent EU-South Africa agreements.

At the same time, this commercial mission constituted a challenge and a "test case" for the process of regional integration. The combined commercial promotion offers a window of opportunities that would fulfill a MERCOSUR foundational aim: to integrate in order to compete in the world[15].

Parallel to the private meetings, negotiators of MERCOSUR's four countries and of South Africa worked in a second round of talks to advance negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement, through the first mutual reductions in tariffs under a case-by-case system[16].

It was a gradual process. A new meeting took place in August 2002, in Brasilia, where it was resolved to give a formal start to the negotiations for the free trade area, in view of the next meeting that occurred on November 4-5 in South Africa.

However, and despite the strong initial step, the succeeding negotiations have been slow due to the difficulties in agreeing on which sectors would benefit from reductions. To justify the

slow pace, some have argued that South Africa has now included the SACU (South African Customs Union) in the negotiations[17]. In addition, an African lack of knowledge of the modalities of negotiation proposed by the members of MERCOSUR, who attempt to develop an ALADI-type model, has been adduced. The Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) created in 1980 provides for the concession of tariff preferences on specific groups of products, constituting a more modest model of commercial liberalization than the free trade zone. Moreover, as the current MERCOSUR-SACU trade does not have the volume yet to clearly foresee the parties' commercial sensibilities, time would be needed for the identification of products to be negotiated on the part of the respective business communities, which would have to identify their interests. Nevertheless, the final agreement is expected to be signed before the end of 2004.

The re-launching of Brazil's African policy

At this point, it is convenient to clarify that in the case of Brazil, the change of government with the assumption of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on January 1, 2003, promoted the deepening of relations with Africa, and specially with South Africa, not only at the level of discourse but with specific actions. During the first year of Lula's government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried out a tour through several states of Sub-Saharan Africa and organized the Brazil-Africa Forum, and the president visited the continent.

A few months after Lula took office, the Brazil-Africa Forum was inaugurated with a mega-meeting in Fortaleza on June 9-10, 2003. The subjects simultaneously undertaken were: political and social affairs, economy and trade, and education and culture. These summarize the prioritized areas in the re-launching of cooperation. The Forum was organized by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the Group of African Ambassadors in Brasilia, with the presence of diplomats, officials, scholars and businessmen. A sign of South African interest was the participation of Foreign Minister Dlamini Zuma as part of the African continent delegation, which included, among others, Cape Verde, Gabon, Ghana, Morocco and Angola.

It is worth mentioning that during the meeting Brazilian officials did not abandon the "cultural discourse" based on two pillars: the significance of African culture in the Brazilian ethos, and the great debt that Brazil has with the African continent since the period of slavery.

The event was organized after a visit to the African countries in May by Minister of Foreign Affairs Celso Amorim. This visit was preparatory of the presidential tour held in November 2003, and aimed to show the political will to regain a space in Brazilian diplomacy. Foreign Minister Amorim visited Mozambique, São Tome and Principe, Angola, Ghana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa to "strengthen the dialogue and the coordination between the respective governments". Among the chosen countries, South Africa still occupies the most important place, as a "spearhead" for developing a more solid relation with the other states of Africa – particularly with the Lusophone group of countries.

After underlining the political dimension of his visit to Pretoria, the Foreign Minister stressed the identification and establishment of synergies and the strategic managerial and political convergence between both countries. However, it should be noted that the partners privileged in Sub-Saharan Africa are almost the same than under Cardoso's selective African policy. What it is observed with Lula is a deepening and consolidation of the already established relations with certain partners, rather than an enlargement.

In addition to Amorim's visit, and as part of the strategy of Brazil's new foreign policy, in November 2003 president Lula –together with ten ministers, two secretaries of state and other guests, making up a total of 60 people– visited São Tome and Principe, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. About forty cooperation agreements[18] were signed.

This time South Africa also received most of the attention, in accordance with the issues discussed. The definition of a date to end the MERCOSUR-SACU negotiations was one of the results of president Lula's trip. The other was the signing of a bilateral agreement on scientific and technological cooperation including combined research in human, social and natural sciences. This cooperation comprises specific areas, such as agricultural processing, industrial technology, biodiversity, biotechnology, energy, clean technologies, information and communication technologies, materials research, space science and astronomy[19].

Enhanced South-South cooperation: IBSA and G20

By selecting South Africa, the Brazilian government went a step further from the traditional strategies adopted in its quest for a new African policy and a strengthening of the foreign relations established by the MERCOSUR. Such a choice suggests the inclusion of South Africa in a trilateral strategy (known as the South-South-South diplomatic encounter) which includes India as well. This initiative is not new: in the 90s Alec Erwin, minister of Trade and Industry of South Africa, had already envisioned the existence of a G7 for the South in order to solidify areas of convergent interests related to multilateral fields, such as the UN and WTO. Regardless of its origin, this idea grew and developed throughout a series of international meetings attended by representatives from the three countries at the highest level, and leading to the final meeting in Brasilia on June 6, 2003, with the presence of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Celso Amorim; of South Africa, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma; and of India, Jaswanth Sinha.

In the Brasilia Declaration, the participating ministers stated that "the activities of the Group of like-minded diverse mega countries should gain even greater importance, as they have laid the foundation for strategic South-South cooperation on a structured basis". They likewise stated that trilateral cooperation should focus on key areas that would guarantee short to medium-term results. The most efficient practices adopted by the three participating countries were to be showcased as examples to other developing countries. Their goal, as expressed in the Declaration, was to make the diverse processes of globalization inclusive, integrative, humane and equitable. A Trilateral Committee was formed to enable such cooperation. The Foreign Ministries would co-chair the meetings and operate as the focal points of activities. The secretariat facilities were to be coordinated by the Secretary in charge of the area at issue and within the Foreign Ministry of the host country.

The Group was formally launched at the 58th United Nations General Assembly in September 2003. The then Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil expressed the significance of this association in these words: "We have thought it would be best to begin with a nucleus that is not too large. Why not three? India, South Africa and Brazil, three great democracies on three continents –that is a good basis for discussion. Here in New York, we have decided to create a trilateral commission within the framework of this G3 to discuss cooperation projects. We shall attempt to coordinate our positions, for example with regard to the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization and, of course, the WTO"[20].

The three countries are considered important in their respective regions; they face similar situations and have similar interests. Their objective is to maximize their joint approaches and synergize their efforts in promoting a coherent strategy when dealing with international organizations such as the WTO on issues of public health and pharmaceutical patents. Only by acting cohesively and in unison can they overcome common handicaps on critical issues such as securing agreements on agriculture subsidies, TRIPS and public health. They have also identified the diverse areas of excellence each of their societies possess, especially in the fields of science and technology (biotechnology, alternative energy sources, outer space, aeronautics, information technology and agriculture), thus offering a broad range of potential opportunities for trade, investment, travel and tourism. However, by giving priority to the promotion of social equity and inclusion, they showed their interest in the welfare of their respective societies and, at the same time, one of their weakest points: the social question.

Likewise, they share other topics in the international agenda, such as the strengthening of the UN and their aspiration to secure places as permanent members of the Security Council if its structure were to be reformed and enlarged. Interestingly, the three countries agreed to back up each other's efforts in securing such a place, since each region must solve the disputes arising from similar ambitions of other states. Brazil shares the same purposes with Mexico and Argentina, South Africa with Nigeria and Egypt, and India with Pakistan and Indonesia.

Furthermore, the three countries have also decided to articulate their initiatives for trade liberalization, aware, as they are, of the increased economic vulnerability of developing countries to fluctuations in global prices of commodities. They stressed the importance of a predictable, rule-based and transparent international trading system, which would enable developing countries to maximize their development through gains from enhanced exports of goods and services.

The Fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancun, held in September of 2003, was the appropriate setting, conducive to negotiations. In August, prior to the meeting, Brazil, South Africa, India, China and Argentina began to organize this future alliance among developing countries to articulate positions against agricultural protectionism. Disregarding conflicting opinions and value judgments about the final results of the Cancun conference, it became clear that these three new partners stood on common ground, thus helping to launch negotiations.

On January 28, 2004, the Trade Agreement among South Africa, Brazil and India –now called IBSA– was signed by the three participating countries, as a result of a trip to India made by the Brazilian president. "A trilateral agreement among India, Brazil and South Africa will give our countries the political power within the World Trade Organization to attain the flexibility needed for our products, which are frequently submitted to taxation by the developed countries", declared president Lula da Silva in his speech to a group of businessmen. During his visit, acting as a spokesperson for the MERCOSUR, Lula signed a draft-agreement with New Delhi to further negotiations for a new trade agreement[21].

During the course of another meeting held between March 4-5, 2004, the "New Delhi Agenda for Cooperation" was established, and the ministers of the three participant countries continued discussing the adoption of a free trade agreement. At the same time, a Council representing private enterprises was established to maximize the benefits of the already existing preferential trade agreements.

Currently, discussions among IBSA members are expected to follow two main tracks: mutual cooperation in health, defense and trade on the one hand, and collaboration to bolster Southern influence on economic and security concerns in the WTO and UN on the other (Grudz, 2004: 2).

Whether these three strategic partners will deepen this cooperation remains to be seen. If their main goal is to increase their commercial ties and reduce tariffs among them, they will have to make some sacrifices and exhibit a strong political determination not to forsake the agreement. The three economies are competitive when it comes to exporting their products to developed countries. Likewise, if the objective is to strengthen their position in international commercial negotiations and to speak with one voice, time will tell if the expected results are fulfilled after Cancun: the resolution of deadlocks on issues of fundamental interest to developing countries.

However, other countries worry about the exclusionary nature of IBSA, as expansion is intrinsically a political decision. But until now, Russia has not shown interest in joining any group, especially due to its lack of stability in the G8, and China has aggressively pursued its own trade interests unilaterally.

Cancun and the G20

Since its inception, the IBSA group, as a trilateral block, became the hard core of a new group of developing countries, attending the Cancun meeting, in September 2003. These countries defended their position against the protectionist measures of developed countries, prompted by concerns about their less competitive sectors.

During this meeting, a group of countries from the South –later called G22– refused to accept a "pre-cooked deal" which would consolidate the US and EU positions, on the grounds that such an agreement worked against their interests. Voicing their belief that "Trade must be a tool not only to create wealth but also to distribute it in a more equitable way", they preferred to stop the negotiations rather than to further discussions detrimental to their interests. Foreign Minister Amorim, of Brazil, helped to coordinate G22[22] efforts to present a united front in agricultural matters: "we are confident that a virtuous alliance among those who support free trade and economic development throughout the globe will prevail in steering the Doha Round to a successful outcome, in line with the promises raised at its inception. Brazil will be working actively with all WTO trading partners to make this possible"[23].

Members of the G22 quickly responded to the criticism of the developed countries that the meeting was a failure because it had yielded no consensus: they argued that Cancun had prevented the industrialized countries from imposing a new agenda and from discarding Doha's dispositions on agro issues[24]. The G22 emerged triumphant, but it has not held together well since then, due to fragmentation. After Cancun, the G22 was re-named G20+ to reflect

fluctuations in participation. Such fluctuations show the weaknesses of this very heterogeneous group, which includes on one hand strong exporting countries like Argentina or Brazil –which envision the dissolution of all tariff barriers to their competitive agro exports- and on the other very protectionist economies, such as India, China or Pakistan –which strive to maintain their local subsidies in order to protect their small farmers.

The following meeting in Buenos Aires, in October 2003, was attended by 13 countries that passed a motion for "a fair and balanced trade liberalization" within the WTO[25]. Newcomers were Indonesia and Malaysia. Turkey held itself distant, and El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica and Guatemala withdrew. After the visit of the United States Trade representative, aimed at expanding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), these Central and South American countries resigned. Although the same objectives defended at the Cancun meeting were ratified in Buenos Aires, the countries attempted to define a less aggressive and more cooperative stance, while weakening its political connotations in order to attract more members and continue future negotiations.

These countries met once again in Brasilia on December 11, 2003, four days before the ministerial meeting in Geneva. This time the goal was to position themselves at the center of negotiations in agriculture. President Lula took matters a step further when he proposed the establishment of a free trade area with China, India and the members of the G20. Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim defined a system of trade preferences, in goods and in services, not valid for industrialized countries in the WTO.

Two key figures were present at the meeting: Pascal Lamy, the Trade Representative from the UE, and Supachai Panitchpakdi, WTO's General Director. Their presence meant recognition of the G20 as an entity with bargaining capacity, a well-deserved triumph in the eyes of the Brazilian minister of foreign affairs.

To some, the G20 will never go past the common front of agricultural subsidies established by wealthy countries. Yet, others regard Cancun as a turning point for the emergence of a less autocratic multilateral trading system. "The G-22 has the potential to alter the balance of power. There is no reason why the group cannot develop a program to serve common needs in the fields of industry and services or to further South-South cooperation in investments, capital flow or industrial, social or environmental policies", wrote Walden Bello. He also argued that the group's natural ally would be civil society, particularly movements against liberal globalization, which already in 1999, in Seattle, had made a WTO summit fail.

Final comments

Throughout this paper, two models of South-South cooperation became clear in the foreign relations between Argentina and Brazil and the new democratic South Africa. In the case of Argentina, the relation developed through a policy of impulses; in the case of Brazil, through the adoption of an African policy. Although both Latin American states decided to further their relations with South Africa, their styles and objectives differed. Brazil exhibited a multilateral and bilateral political and commercial diplomacy, while Argentina aimed at increasing economic and trading relations.

Brazil's foreign policy, both at bilateral and multilateral level, was directed towards the search for convergent interests as well as national concerns. Simultaneously, it aimed at forging a "critical mass" of conditions that would allow a better standing in the face of the risks of globalization. The changes of governments did not alter these strategies, but rather enhanced and enlarged them, paving the way for a South-South cooperation of variable geometry.

Marked by the election of two new presidents, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Néstor Kirchner, the year 2003 initiated political changes in Brazil and Argentina, and there seemed to be a new common understanding between these leaders regarding issues like MERCOSUR, the coordination of foreign policies, and the international setting. A new era of synergy between these two neighbors has opened areas of cooperation that would have been unthinkable of in the past.

It is also likely that new avenues of South-South cooperation will be opened as a result of Brazil's new African policy, launched by Lula, and the deepening of the relation with South Africa, together with efforts to accelerate the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between

MERCOSUR and SACU. These efforts will facilitate a better working relationship among our countries and foster the establishment of commonalities with a spillover effect.

A good example of the new modalities for a more productive South-South cooperation is the way in which Brazil has designed and implemented its insertion in the international system by building strategic relations. In its search for convergent interests in specific areas, it has structured a network of cooperation with the same partners but in different scenarios. In this case study, the relationship with South Africa is the center of its strategy for negotiations. Brazil pushes forward the bilateral cooperation and then drives Argentina, its main regional partner, to negotiate through MERCOSUR on free trade agreements with South Africa and SACU. It repeats the pattern in its relationship with India, and simultaneously sets a trilateral stage (IBSA) to hold common views on issues of converging interests relating to various multilateral scenarios. Finally, Brazil brings all these countries together in the G20.

Even though Kirchner bears a great empathy with Lula, the Argentine government has failed in its attempts to design a clear foreign policy, acting unsteadily, entangled in serious problems such as the negotiations to pay the external debt. With scanty resources of "hard" and "soft" power, officials seem to have forgotten that effective strategic negotiations could open new doors in various international settings, including that of South-South cooperation. By joining forces with Brazil, without ignoring its own national interest, Argentina could widen its margins of autonomy and would be able to generate greater capabilities.

The present crisis of the model implemented in the nineties opens a fresh and necessary forum of discussion. For this reason, this paper is not directed at closing a chapter by showing the weakness of Argentina's Foreign Policy, but at opening discussions through new perspectives for innovative avenues of research, in the framework of the new settings where processes of globalization and regionalization are taking place.

To be effective, South-South cooperation must be constructed systematically, through specific issue-areas and with precise objectives. Furthermore, we need to cope with the pressures generated by powerful actors, and at the same time to control our natural tendency to disperse efforts. We cannot afford to miss a new opportunity: we have already lost a lot. Countries in the South should be precise in what they need and what they want, and therefore discuss possible agendas of their own, begin building common agendas, and fight off offered or imposed agendas from the North.

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Notes

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1 The basic concepts reflected in this paper are the result of my PhD Thesis "Argentine Foreign Policy towards Africa in the Referential Framework of Brazil's African Policy. The Case of South Africa in the 90s", defended at the University of São Paulo.

2 However, it should be highlighted that Argentina was not the only state that upheld this ambiguous policy. As it will be observed, Brazil also developed an ambiguous policy which began to be defined during the seventies, as its relations with the states of Black Africa were strengthened. Meanwhile, Chile and Paraguay, with military governments, had been stable and reliable partners of Pretoria. On the other hand, the main developed states acted according to their global interests, combining their economic-commercial pretensions with their strategic perception of the East-West conflict.

3 From the Argentine perspective, it is worth mentioning the official visits of Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella to Mandela's inauguration in 1994; of Alieto Guadagni, Secretary of Industry, Trade and Mining in 1995; of Vice-president Carlos Ruckauf in 1996; of Jorge Rodriguez, Chief of Cabinet, to Mbeki's taking up office in 1999. Meanwhile, from South Africa, the travelers were: in 1994, Vice-president Frederick De Klerk; Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad in 1996; Vice-president Thabo Mbeki in 1997; president Mandela in July 1999; Nkosazama Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in December 1999 –for the assumption of president De la Rúa; the presidential Adviser Essop Pahad in 2000, followed in the same year by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad.

4 Moreover, due to resolution 1331 of the Ministry of the Interior, signed in July 1998, the decision was made to abolish the tourist and business visa for South African citizens. This is a unilateral regulation equivalent to the one issued in February 1995 by South Africa.

5 Previously Argentine ports had been officially visited by the frigates President Pretorius, President Kruger and by the logistics ship Tafelberg, in 1967, and nine years later by the hydrographical vessel Proteo. The frigate Libertad paid an official visit to Cape Town in 1970.

6 South Africa is an observer in the AMAS (Asociación Marítima del Atlántico Sur, or South Atlantic Maritime Association). This is an agreement signed in 1976 among Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, which aims for cooperation in maritime traffic. In addition to that, since June 1996, the South African army has been invited by its United States counterpart to take part in the annual combined exercise, UNITAS, with ships of the United States, South America and Europe.

7 South Africa bought soy cakes and residues, sunflower oils and cotton, gold, wheat and chemical wood pulp and sold fuels, mineral oils, foundry products, iron and steel, paper and cardboard, plastic materials, metallurgic minerals and slag and inorganic chemical products.

8 Author's interview with economic adviser Carlos Wydler, Pretoria, May 18, 1998.

9 Those flights had been interrupted in 1985.

10 In May 1995, Foreign Minister Lampreia traveled to South Africa. He also accompanied the president on November 25-28 of the following year. Those who also crossed the Atlantic: Minister for the Navy Rodriguez Pereira (1997); Minister of Justice Cezar Jobim (1997); Secretary of Strategic Affairs Ronaldo Sademberg (1997); General Staff Chief for the Army Gleuber Vieira (1998); Trade, Industry and Tourism Minister José Botafogo Gonçalves (1998); General Undersecretary for Political Affairs Ivan Cannabrava (1999); Vice-president Marco Maciel (1999); Foreign Minister Lampreia (March 1-3, 2000). From South Africa to Brasilia: Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo (1995); Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad (1996); Vice-president Thabo Mbeki and Industry and Trade Minister Alec Erwin (1997); president Nelson Mandela (July 21-22, 1998) and president Mbeki (December 12-15, 2000).

11 Brazil is South Africa's biggest trading partner in Latin America. South Africa's exports to Brazil reached their peak in 1996 with a total of US$ 414 million. More than 25% of this amount was represented by alcohol. Major South African exports to Brazil include precious and semi-precious stones and metals, anthracite and coal, iron and steel, miscellaneous chemical products, organic chemicals, aluminum, nickel, synthetic fibers, machinery and mechanical appliances, paper and paperboard. Brazilian exports to South Africa have steadily increased. Major Brazilian exports consist of vehicles and components, aircraft, machinery, mineral fuels, electrical machinery, animal and vegetable fats and oils, meat, ores, slag and ashes, organic chemicals and tobacco.

12 The first step in order to establish a Joint Commission between the two countries was taken during president Mbeki's visit to Brazil in September 1997, when the establishment of an "institutional mechanism" to deepen South African-Brazilian relations was suggested.

13 The following issues are under negotiation: Defense, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Matters, Minerals and Energy, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, Cultural Cooperation, Health and Medicine, Environment, Extradition and Assistance in Criminal Matters. The agreements in place refer to: Double Taxation of Profits Derived from Shipping and Aviation; Cooperation in the Field of Culture; Bilateral Air Services; Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Field of Combating the Production of and Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances and Related Matters; lifting of visas for diplomatic, service and ordinary passport holders for holiday and business visits for a period not exceeding 90 days and transit.

14 Representatives of 35 Brazilian, 24 Argentine and 15 Uruguayan enterprises traveled to South Africa, while there was a minimal participation of Paraguay, with the presence of its chargé d' affaires. MERCOSUR's delegation totaled 74 companies, 10 institutions and 91 people. On the South African side, 180 companies, representatives from government, public and private institutions, members of the media and of the local academic field, attended both the seminar organized on MERCOSUR and the programmed meetings among businessmen.

15 Argentine exports to South Africa consist mainly of food and agricultural products, generally marketed by multinational companies that decide where and how to sell according to their analysis of global markets. Among Brazilian exports industrialized products prevail, with a major participation of enterprises such as Embraer (airplanes) and Daimler Benz (automobile industry).

16 Officials from the four countries met with their counterpart of the Trade and Industry Ministry of South Africa, responsible for MERCOSUR-South Africa negotiations. A proposal from the MERCOSUR's members was discussed to establish a transitory Agreement on Fixed Tariff Preferences. They also talked about a proposal from the South African Foundation to sign a letter of intent to create a "Managerial Forum for contacts and consultations" among the private sectors and, at the same time, the suggestion was raised to include other entities such as SAFCOC (representing all the business communities).

17 This integration process, whose origins date back to an initiative of Apartheid South Africa, is led from Pretoria and includes Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. Brazil and Argentina, together with SACU, would make up a market of 800 billion dollars in GDP.

18 There seems to be a better empathy between the new presidents of Brazil and Argentina, in the context of furthering a complete integration, as was agreed with the signing of the Consensus of Buenos Aires. That is why in

October 2003 president Lula da Silva invited Argentine businessmen to join the more than 120-member Brazilian delegation participating in the Brazilian political-commercial mission to the African continent.

19 Brazil is an important tourist market for South Africa. In the recent past, South African Tourism has upgraded Brazil from a non-significant market to a tactical market. South African Airways has launched a fifth weekly flight between Johannesburg and São Paulo in June 2003, and demand already warrants a sixth weekly flight.

20 Interview to Senhor Ministro de Estado, Embaixador Celso Amorim, to Jornal Le Monde (Brasilia), September 26, 2003.

21 The next meeting between MERCOSUR and India was held in June 8, 2004, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The key questions to discuss were intra-regional South-South trade cooperation and the role of the private sector. Specific areas to be tackled by private actors refered to pharmaceuticals and herbal healthcare, chemicals and biotechnology, agro products, minerals, metals and trade, creative industries, information technology and education, automotive equipment, oil and natural gas.

22 These countries gather a population of 3,300 million people, a bit more than half the planet's, and represent nearly 60% of the agricultural workers, though they are only responsible for 20% of the world's agricultural production.

23 Amorim, Celso 2003 "The Real Cancun" in The Wall Street Journal, September 25.

24 Speaking strictly on trade issues, it is expected that the WTO's 148 countries will agree on new patterns for the reduction of the multi-million-dollar agricultural subsidies starting in 2005. Also in 2005, there will expire the so-called "peace clause" signed in 1995 to preserve the rich countries from possible complaints filed within the WTO due to their protectionist policies. The United States and the European Union want to extend that safe-conduct.

25 This Declaration was signed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Mexico, Paraguay, South Africa and Venezuela.

Garth Shelton*

China, Africa and South Africa Advancing South-South Co-operation

Mr. President, our countries and peoples are united by a common resolve to build a better life for themselves...We are committed also to contribute what we can to ensure a more equitable international political and economic order which addresses the just aspirations of the billions of people who belong to the developing countries.

Thabo Mbeki addressing visiting PRC President Jiang Zemin (Thomasson, 2000)

China and South-South co-operation

China's emphasis on South-South co-operation is seen as a key element in its efforts to oppose unilateral global dominance[1]. Through African economic co-operation, China hopes to build a stronger political relationship that will support Beijing's diplomatic offensive against "hegemonism"[2]. This strategy is not entirely new, as Mao Zedong argued in favour of subverting the capitalist system by mobilising revolutionary forces in the Third World. However, Beijing's new approach is designed to use economic and political co-operation as the means to strengthening and advancing the South's political and economic agenda with a view to building a more just and equitable international order. A priority for China's foreign policy is to mobilise African support in the international arena, especially at the United Nations. Beijing activates African support by arguing that China and Africa both belong to the developing world, and therefore have no disputes but only common strategic interests, with a shared view on major international issues. Beijing consistently argues that China and Africa should support each other in close co-operation on key global issues. Beijing continuously has to work hard to mobilise and maintain African support on key international issues (Guijin, 2001).

Beijing is seeking to: improve existing consultative mechanisms and make greater use of these channels of dialogue; strengthen contacts between governments; update and sign related bilateral agreements according to changes in the bilateral economic and trade situation so as to provide legal insurance for bilateral co-operation; and actively broaden the contact channel and gradually expand the scale of trade (Mbuende, 2001: 7). Beijing also favours the strengthening of China and Africa's co-operation and consultation in international multilateral forums such as the World Trade Organization and Untied Nations Trade and Development Conference (UNCTAD), to co-ordinate positions and strengthen the negotiating position of developing countries as a group in formulating a multilateral economic and trade system and related rules. In this way, Beijing argues that China and Africa could jointly make an effort to establish a new, fair and reasonable international economic order. Over the past few years, China has sought to build social, political and economic ties with Africa. For example, at the G-77 Summit in Cuba (the so called "South Summit Meeting"), presided by president Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, the head of the Chinese delegation, Li Lanqing, advised developing countries to strengthen South-South co-operation in order to keep pace with the world's scientific and technological development and thereby effectively cope with the challenges of the knowledge economy.

China's emphasis on South-South co-operation has found broad support in Africa, and especially South Africa. One of the central elements of South African president Thabo Mbeki's global foreign policy is to advance South-South co-operation as the key to unlocking a new political and economic international system within which developing countries have a better chance of accelerated economic development and eventual prosperity (Vale and Maseko, 2002; Mills, 1998; Lamy, 2001; Vaahtoranto, 2002). Part 1 of this paper discusses China's African policy and interaction with Africa in the context of efforts to support and advance South-South co-operation. Part 2 examines the China-South Africa links since formal diplomatic recognition in 1998, and efforts by both governments to develop collaboration in a variety of fields, especially the synchronisation of policy with regard to the South-South agenda. Given the prioritisation of South-South co-operation in South Africa's post-1999 foreign policy, relations with China have taken on a new significance, as Pretoria seeks to work with Beijing in restructuring the global political and economic agenda (Alden and Le Pere, 2003; Solomon, 2002).

China's Africa policy

Official statements confirm that China attaches great importance to co-operation with the African Union (AU) and other regional organisations in Africa, while voicing support for their efforts for economic integration and the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts[3]. Beijing has sought to consolidate on-going dialogue and consultation with the AU, formally the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as part of a programme to expand interaction with the African continent. In recent years, Sino-African trade and other areas of economic co-operation have shown significant progress. It is clear that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of trade and economic co-operation with Africa. The Chinese leadership often emphasizes that since 1956 China has provided assistance to African countries in a range of fields such as agriculture, fishery, food processing, textile and other light industries, energy, transportation, broadcasting and communication, water conservancy and power industry, machinery, public buildings and housing, culture, education, health, arts and the handicrafts industry[4].

In recent years, many African countries have begun to restructure their economies, while China has also initiated a period of economic reform and restructuring. In order to support economic development in China, Beijing is currently developing new forms of assistance that will include reducing aid to African countries. While China continues to provide intergovernmental aid to selected countries, Beijing has shifted its emphasis to provide official loans with government-subsidized interest rates and to develop co-partnership or joint ventures between companies from Africa and China. Through this process, Beijing hopes to stimulate African economies and thereby increase the demand for Chinese products. At the same time, it creates an opportunity for Chinese enterprises to establish a viable base in Africa.

Over the last ten years, Beijing has signed over thirty framework agreements on loans with more than twenty African countries. Some projects funded by these soft loans have achieved impressive successes, such as oil exploration in the Sudan, railway renovation in Botswana, agricultural development co-operation with Guinea, forest exploitation and timber processing in Equatorial Guinea, the Mulungushi Textile Mill, a joint venture in Zambia, and a cement factory in Zimbabwe. Beijing planners see Chinese and African economies as highly complementary to each other, arguing that China has the technology and managerial skills suitable for African countries, while Africa is endowed with rich natural resources. China has indicated its intention to continue providing economic aid to African countries within its "capacity to do so". At the same time, they are increasingly determined to encourage companies from both sides to co-operate with each other directly through joint ventures and other arrangements. The long-term goal for Sino-African co-operation has been outlined by Beijing as commercial interaction with private enterprises from both sides becoming the main actors in economic co-operation, opening a new dimension for South-South interaction.

Official statistics indicate that trade between China and Africa has expanded significantly in recent years. China has sought to improve trade relations with all the 53 African countries, and has established eleven investment and trade centers on the continent. There has also been clear progress in Sino-African co-operation in the fields of culture, education and health. To date, China has signed government agreements on cultural co-operation with 42 African

countries and 65 programmes for cultural exchanges. China has offered scholarships to 5,000 students from 51 African countries, with about 900 of them currently studying in China. Inter-college contacts have been established between 10 Chinese universities and 20 universities in 16 African countries. More than 400 Chinese professors and lecturers have been seconded to Africa, while 19 hospitals have been built in Africa with Chinese aid, and 15,000 Chinese medical personnel dispatched to 42 African countries, providing medical treatment to local people in remote towns and villages.

China consistently promotes positive relations with Africa by pointing out that when its seat in the UN was restored in 1971, among the 76 countries that voted in it favour, 26 were from Africa, accounting for more than one third of the total. Later, when expressing his appreciation, Chairman Mao Zedong said it was the African friends who carried China back to the UN[5]. More recently, China has stressed that on all issues involving African interests, China specifically takes into consideration the opinions of African countries and consistently appeals to the international community to work together for peace, stability and development in Africa. Beijing contends that under the current international situation, it is even more important for China and Africa to strengthen consultation and co-ordination on global affairs. It has been suggested that China and Africa should make joint efforts to take up the challenges resulting from globalization, to safeguard legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and to strive for a just and fair new international political and economic order. In China's view, the new international order would require acceptance of Beijing's pre-eminence in Asia and a much more increased international role in international organisations.

China's policy objective of strengthening and developing friendly co-operation with all developing countries, including and especially African countries, has long been an important component of China's foreign policy. Members of the Chinese Foreign Ministry have suggested that the principles governing relations between China and African countries were originally proposed by the late Premier Zhou Enlai during his visit to Africa in 1960s, and continue to broadly serve as the foundation for Sino-African friendship. In the early 1980s, Chinese leaders proposed during their African visits the Four Principles on Economic and Technological Cooperation between China and African countries, namely: equality and mutual benefit, stressing on practical results, diversity in forms of interaction, and attainment of common progress.

Jiang Zemin's visit to Africa

During his visit to six African countries in May 1996, PRC president Jiang Zemin outlined a "Five-Point Proposal" on developing a long-term and stable Sino-African relationship based on comprehensive co-operation and interaction (Peigeng, 1966: 5-13). The "Five Point Proposal" included: fostering "sincere friendship"; interaction based on equality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs; common development on the basis of mutual benefit; the enhancement of consultation and co-operation in global affairs; and the long-term creation of a "more splendid world" (via a just and fair new economic and political international order) (Weisan, 1996: 5-7). Jiang's new African policy laid the foundation for a strengthening and consolidation of Sino-African relations, which have subsequently been advanced through the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) with ministerial level meetings in Beijing during 2000 and Addis Ababa in 2003. In addition, Jiang's 1996 visit to Africa provided the framework for the establishment of a new diplomatic relationship with the Republic of South Africa (Tingen, 2002: 7-9).

Jiang's visit recast and refocused China's African policy following a long and often contradictory political engagement with the continent[6]. The Bandung Conference, held in Indonesia in April 18-24, 1955, had marked the beginning of an international campaign, strongly supported by Beijing, for Afro-Asian solidarity. At the conference, contacts were made for the first time between PRC and African diplomats, leading to the establishment of a Chinese embassy in Egypt as the first on the African continent. The institutional embodiment of Bandung was the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), in which China played a leading role. However, AAPSO failed to adequately translate words into action, thus frustrating the vast potential of Afro-Asian solidarity.

At a farewell banquet in Ghana on January 15, 1964, following a tour of ten African countries, Chinese Premier Zhou En-lai confirmed Beijing's support for African struggles against

imperialism, and set the stage for Africa as an ideological battleground with both Washington and Moscow. Zhou's announcement followed Mao Zedong's August 8, 1963 speech on colonialism and racism, which indicated the PRC's desire to lead the developing world, and confirmed the breakdown of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Zhou also declared that Africa's potential for revolution was "excellent", effectively calling for a second, post-colonial struggle against the new ruling African bourgeoisie. However, domestic economic and social difficulties, as well as China's own second revolution, the "Cultural revolution", undermined the PRC's efforts to implement foreign policy objectives in Africa. Preoccupied with reviving the Chinese economy under the post-Mao leadership of Deng Xiaoping, African policy shifted from support for Maoist inspired revolution to the search for new commercial engagements that would strengthen the PRC's economy. Deng adopted a non-interference approach, encouraging African countries to find political and economic models of development to suit their own particular circumstances (Qinmei, 1998: 16-22; Fei, 1995: 4-5). During a conversation with UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar in August 1982, Deng confirmed that his central foreign policy objective was support for China's "economic development". In a major policy speech delivered on June 4, 1985, Deng laid the foundation for China's post-Maoist foreign policy, largely unchanged to this day, by stressing that the PRC would "concentrate on economic development" in order to become a "modern, powerful socialist economy". He stressed that "economic development is our (China's) primary objective and everything else must be subordinated to it". Deng's domestic economic reforms and opening to the rest of the world effectively terminated the strong Maoist ideological content of China's foreign policy, elevating instead the two objectives of promoting trade and investment, both regarded as essential for China's future economic development. Jiang Zemin's 1996 visit to Africa was intended to advance China's "Africa first" foreign policy: he signed 23 economic and technical co-operative agreements with six African countries (China Internet Information Center, 2002a; 2002b). Moreover, he sought a new commercially based, rather than ideologically motivated, partnership with Africa through the confirmation of Africa's economic rather than revolutionary potential.

Beijing's approach towards Africa has been to jointly explore new ways to interact in an effort to expand economic and trade co-operation. Beijing is proposing that both sides make greater use of and further improve bilateral relations. At the same time, increased trade should lead to agreements relating to economy and trade, the encouragement and protection of investment, and the avoidance of dual taxation, being appropriately amended. Beijing has indicated that with the development of its economy and the increase in national strength, China will continue to offer economic and technological assistance to African countries, including further relaxing conditions for preferential loans. China also encourages its enterprises to carry out economic and trade co-operation in Africa, especially the setting up of projects that promise market benefits. China also encourages increased importation from Africa, and encourages its firms to participate in the economic development of African countries through contracting projects, technology and management co-operation.

Beijing has recognised that the quest for peace and development has been the main priority for the African continent, and that many countries have endeavored to rely on themselves to resolve African problems. China's response to Africa's plight has been the suggestion that Africa will be unable to achieve prosperity without stability, and that African countries need to develop in ways to suit their national conditions, work closely with each other, and mobilise international assistance and co-operation, for instance through collaboration with Beijing.

The Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC)

Jiang's new African policy led to the "Beijing Declaration" and the "Programme for China-Africa Co-operation in Economic and Social Development" adopted following the October 2000 Sino-African ministerial-level conference in Beijing (South African Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000). The two documents outlined a proposed new relationship between China and Africa, based on Deng Xiaoping's broad foreign policy framework and Jiang's Sino-African vision, crafted during his 1996 visit. The central purpose of the Forum was to strengthen economic co-operation and to consolidate areas of common interest. The conference was seen by Beijing as a meeting of "natural allies" on the road to economic development and the long hoped-for restructuring of the global economic architecture. Jiang Zemin set the tone for future Sino-African relations by committing China to closer South-South co-operation and the creation of

"an equitable and just new international political and economic order" (Edmonds, Chyungly and Mills, 2001). PRC Premier Zhu Rongji confirmed that economic interaction with Africa had taken centre stage and would define future relations. The specific plan included an expansion of trade, investment, joint projects and increased co-operation in the fields of agriculture, transportation, medical care, the exploitation of natural resources and banking.

During the October 2000 meeting, two-way trade was emphasized as an area of future expansion and development. The Beijing programme called on Sino-African business leaders to "vigorously explore" all the "opportunities offered" by the respective markets. The establishment of a China-Africa Joint Business Council was proposed as a mechanism for the further promotion of trade. The renewed emphasis on trade followed Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng's June 9, 2000 statement that Beijing would encourage Chinese companies to expand trade links with the African continent. Shi was encouraged by the record of growth in manufactured exports to Africa, especially in television sets, air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, textiles and light machinery. Beijing promised to promote investment in selected African countries through special funds for the establishment of joint ventures, facilitated through China and the African Development Bank (ADB) as well as the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank. In addition, the exploitation and effective utilisation of natural resources and energy sources on the African continent, long identified as extremely important for promoting continued growth of China's economy, was singled out for renewed focus.

During the October 2000 conference, Zhang Qiyue, a representative of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told a press conference that strengthening unity and co-operation with African countries constituted a major component of China's foreign policy. As Beijing pointed out, promoting a multi-polar global system and establishing a new international political and economic order are key goals of the international community, and particularly the developing countries. According to Zhang, "With the goal of fostering equal consultation, furthering understanding, expanding consensus, strengthening friendship and promoting cooperation, China and Africa will jointly explore the establishment of a just and fair international political and economic order and strengthen Sino-African economic and trade cooperation under the new situation"[7]. Deputy Foreign minister Ji Peiding stressed that two documents passed at the conference, the "Beijing Declaration" and the "Sino-African Co-operation Guidelines for Economic and Social Development", would serve as the framework for Sino-African relations in the new century.

An international conference on Sino-African ties was held as a follow-up to the Beijing meeting to address the issue of strengthening bilateral co-operation, especially economic and trade ties. In addition, China established a follow-up action committee to implement the decision made at the Beijing conference. Deputy minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation Sun Guangxiang stressed that the Chinese government encouraged two-way trade between China and Africa and would introduce more policy initiatives intended to galvanize support for Sino-African trade within the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). He confirmed that Beijing would also encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa, with a view to significantly expanding China's investment on the continent. Official Chinese documents outlined foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan's description of the key elements of Sino-African relations. These elements included: mutually respecting and strictly observing the principles of sovereignty, independence and on-interference in each other's internal affairs, and respecting the other side's social system and development options; treating each other equally, adhering to the principle of mutual benefit, and conducting diversified forms of co-operation in economic and trade fields without any attached political conditions; trusting each other and handling bilateral affairs through consultation in the spirit of friendliness and sincerity; supporting each other, consulting and co-operating with each other closely in international and regional affairs and jointly safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the developing countries[8].

According to Jiaxuan, to further consolidate and develop Sino-African relations is in the national interest of both China and Africa. Jiaxuan emphasised Beijing's determination to work hard and explore jointly with African countries to establish a new long-term, stable and mutually beneficial partnership within the framework of South-South co-operation, and to make the relationship an example of South-South co-operation.

In order to develop the new South-South partnership, Beijing proposed that both China and Africa could promote relations along the following lines:

- continue to strengthen top-level contacts and increasing communication and exchange between leaders so as to further consolidate the traditional Sino-African friendship;

- establish diverse forms of consultative and co-operative mechanisms, and expand dialogue and co-ordination in international affairs and bilateral issues so as to carry out more efficient co-operation in bilateral and multilateral realms and more efficiently safeguard the common interests of developing countries;

- energetically promote economic and trade co-operation to new levels; efforts should be concentrated on looking for new ways and fields for co-operation and encouraging enterprises of both sides to expand co-operation.

The Chinese government promised to adopt measures to guide and support domestic enterprises to enter into Africa and carry out mutually beneficial co-operation with their African counterparts, and to carry out omni-directional and multi-level contact. Besides the major channel of official contact, China will promote contracts between political parties and parliaments and between non-governmental groups of workers, youth and women, as well as cultural and education, health, news media, support and academic circles, and give full play to these organisations, thus forming an omni-directional setup for exchange at various levels[9].

Following the Sino-African meeting in Beijing, Premier Zhu Rongji's office suggested a number of guidelines for China-Africa relations. These included the expansion of bilateral trade; development of investment co-operation; improvement of China's aid work in African countries; expansion of co-operation in various fields and working together to facilitate the settlement of the African debt issue.

The PRC and Africa

In his report to the 16th Party Congress in November 2002, Jiang suggested that the first twenty years of the XXI century would be a "period of important strategic opportunities" (*zhongyao zhanlue jiyu qi*) which China should "grasp tightly" to accomplish its main goal of building a "well-off society" in China. Hu Jintao reiterated this point in his speech at the closing of the 10th National People's Congress in March 2003, confirming this idea is at the foundation of China's foreign policy agenda. In the African context, the new emphasis is on economic interaction via trade and investment along with the promotion of broadly common political and economic global objectives.

Access to Africa's raw materials, especially oil, is a key priority for the PRC. Hence, Beijing's efforts to develop close relations with African countries producing oil, such as Algeria, Angola, Nigeria and the Sudan. China is expected to import almost 50 percent of its oil requirements by 2005. Other important African raw materials identified in official statements include timber, copper, non-ferrous metals and iron ore. Continued spectacular economic growth in China will not be without guaranteed access to key raw materials. China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), China's largest oil refiner, has initiated a US$ 1.2 billion three-year expansion programme to secure oil and gas reserves overseas. The expansion programme is specifically intended to increase China's access to overseas oil supplies in response to a rapidly growing demand in the domestic economy. Presently, Sinopec acquires approximately 70 percent of its oil from Chinese producers. Over the longer term, Sinopec hopes to significantly increase international supplies. Sinopec is expected to seek acquisition of new oil fields in the Middle East, Russia, Central Asia and West Africa. Thus, Sinopec, along with the support of the PRC government, is expected to accelerate efforts to purchase oil fields in Africa. The Chinese government has also begun to develop new strategies to protect oil supplies as a consequence of increased instability and uncertainty in the Middle East. China is developing a comprehensive plan to prevent disruption to its oil supplies. China's annual domestic consumption of oil is expected to reach 300 million tons by 2010, of which more than half will have to be imported. Purchases of oil from the Middle East now account for half of all China's oil imports. Three key issues are expected to dominate China's oil strategy. Firstly, increasing supplies from Russia based on the proposed Russia-China oil pipeline. Secondly, the development of a national stockpile; and thirdly, faster development of alternative sources of supply. In this context, Africa's oil reserves are expected to become increasingly important to the PRC.

Relatively low cost Chinese manufactured products are considered ideal for African consumers. China is constantly seeking new opportunities to export to Africa. In 1993, China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation (MOFTEC) drafted a major report identifying Africa as a key market for Chinese consumer products. Investment opportunities in African economies that would benefit Chinese companies, such as mineral extraction, telecommunications and construction, are increasingly a priority. This process is largely advanced through joint ventures, backed by loans from China. There are now 577 Chinese companies operating in 49 African countries. Most of these companies are trading firms, industrial manufactures, transport and agriculture companies, or companies dealing in mineral extraction. China has prioritised investment in Africa and is actively encouraging and supporting Chinese companies who are interested in expanding their operations to Africa.

China has signed bilateral agreements with 21 African countries, encouraging and protecting investments. Chinese investment in Africa over the next few years is expected to increase very significantly. Chinese companies increasingly have advantages over competitors in Africa because of the strong backing they receive from their government. China's investment focus in future is expected to be increasingly on raw material extraction and transportation. Continued growth of the Chinese economy will increase the demand for raw materials, many of which will be sourced in Africa. The Chinese government has initiated a new programme to encourage companies to expand their operations overseas. MOFTEC has suggested that there are now good opportunities for new commercial ventures globally. By the end of 2002, there were over 7,000 Chinese investments overseas totaling approximately US$10 billion. MOFTEC is encouraging an expansion of this process as a key element in their plan to promote further economic growth in China. An increase in new Chinese investments and commercial operations in Africa is expected as part of this process (Mills and Shelton, 2003).

Chinese officials have often stressed the importance of African votes in the UN. One third of the votes in the UN General Assembly, and nearly half the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, are African. China seeks African support especially on human rights issues. Nigeria, for example, has often been a regular and vocal defender of China's human rights record. This is directly linked to mobilising support for China's "anti-hegemonism" and non-interference in internal affairs. China is increasingly concerned about international, especially US, criticism of its human rights record.

In advancing the "one China principal", Beijing clearly hopes to further isolate Taiwan in Africa. Unification of the PRC and Taiwan was identified by Jiang Zemin as one of China's "three primary tasks" for the new century –the other two being to continue the modernisation of China's economy and to "safeguard peace". As China's economy grows, economic and other incentives to win recognition from the African countries that presently recognise Taiwan are likely to be more effective. Under the new leadership of Hu Jintao, China is expected to advance and fine-tune the policy of 'caging in Taiwan' and stifling Taipei's efforts to expand diplomatic interaction (Liu, 2000; 2001). In April 2003, president Hu met with US senator William Frist and expressed hope that the US would not send "wrong signals to independence forces" in Taiwan. He reiterated that he expected the US and other countries to adhere to the "one China principle". Hu's statement followed growing support in Beijing for accelerating a policy of 'caging' Taiwan and undermining efforts to garner international support.

The Addis Ababa action plan

Foreign and trade ministers from 44 African countries met with PRC diplomats in Addis Ababa in December 15-16, 2003, for the Second Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation. The purpose of the second ministerial conference was identified as reviewing progress on implementation of the agreements reached at the October 2000 Beijing meeting, along with outlining a new, more focused action plan. The political framework of the "Addis Ababa Plan" provides for continued high-level exchanges and enhanced political dialogue, along with a renewed promise from Beijing to participate actively in African peacekeeping operations and to co-operate on a range of security related issues. Co-operation in the field of social development includes China's promise to expand its African Human Resources Development Fund to train up to 10,000 African technicians over the next three years (*People's Daily*, 2003). This will be complemented by China's agreement to assist in the areas of medical care and public health, cultural exchanges and people-to-people exchanges.

The Addis Ababa Action Plan proposes co-operation in the following areas (Embassy of the PRC, 2003).

Science and technology. In this context, China's experience in increasing agricultural output holds promise for African farmers.

China's participation in peacekeeping operations. This has been widely welcomed as a positive contribution to peace in Africa.

Non-traditional security issues. The PRC has promised to do more to counter drug trafficking and illegal migration.

Terrorism. The PRC's commitment to combating global terrorism has been widely supported.

The need to step up consultation and co-operation. This is expected to have a positive impact on advancing Sino-African links.

Restructuring of the UN and WTO etc. The PRC's support for restructuring of the UN is seen a key element in advancing the political agenda of the developing world.

Struggle against poverty. In this context, the PRC serves as a model and inspiration to African governments.

Support for the AU. The PRC's strong endorsement of and support for the AU is considered to be a key element in Sino-African relations.

Support for NEPAD. Beijing's vocal support for NEPAD gives the initiative a strong South-South context and opens the way for increased Chinese support for African development (Mingfang and Yongkang, 2003).

Agriculture. China promised to expand agricultural support to African countries via technical support and training. This promise has been welcomed by African governments, especially those seeking to restructure agricultural production.

Trade. China's trade with Africa during 2003 totaled over US$ 13.39 billion, a significant increase on the 2002 figures, which amounted to US$ 10.6 billion. Recent trends thus suggest potential for a further increase in two-way trade. The China-Africa Business Conference, arranged by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), held simultaneously with FOCAC, was specifically intended to boost Sino-African trade and investment. CCPIT facilitated the signing of 20 agreements to the value of US$ 460 million, involving 17 Chinese companies in 17 African countries. Moreover, CCPIT is planning to hold 30 Chinese business exhibitions in Africa during 2004. The focus of these exhibitions will be in African markets presently regarded as priorities, such as Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. The goal is to significantly boost trade with these key countries with a view to expanding commercial links to other African countries. The Chinese Academy of International Trade and Cooperation (CAITC), the official think tank for the Ministry of Commerce, has undertaken detailed studies on the question of increased Chinese trade with Africa over the longer term. Their studies suggest a significant potential for new Chinese exports to Africa in the following areas: agriculture, light industry, machinery, construction, tourism and telecommunications. CAITC predicts that within the next three to five years a number of African countries will enter a strong growth period creating a healthy demand for Chinese manufactured products. In the context of promoting trade into the Chinese market, Beijing's decision to grant zero-tariff treatment to some commodities from the least developed African countries has been widely welcomed (Jiabao, 2003).

Investment. To date, Chinese investors have established 602 businesses in 49 African countries, covering a wide range of commercial activities, such as agriculture, manufacturing and minerals extraction. Chinese companies have made a contracted investment of US$ 1.17 billion to Africa, and are presently involved in 296 projects on the continent covering construction, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, light industry and textiles. China has signed bilateral investment protection agreements with 20 African countries. These agreements also include avoidance of double taxation, fair treatment for foreign investors, and protection of assets. Beijing is expected to step up efforts to encourage and support Chinese companies wishing to invest in Africa through a special fund to assist companies with new investments in selected African countries. This will increasingly provide advantages to Chinese enterprises seeking new opportunities in Africa. Moreover, the Chinese government has

indicated its intention to consolidate the already established business centers in 11 African countries. The centers are expected to serve as focal points for increased Chinese trade and investment initiatives in Africa (Xinhua Online, 2003).

Tourism. Zambia has been granted Authorized Destination Status (ADS) for Chinese tourists. Other African countries with ADS include Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. African governments have identified significant potential for Chinese tourism to Africa given the continued and rapid growth of the Chinese economy.

Debt relief. As part of the FOCAC process, China has cancelled 156 debts totaling US$ 1.27 billion with 31 African countries. China's decision to cancel these outstanding debts was widely welcomed in Africa, and seen as a very positive step towards revitalising economic development on the continent.

Development Assistance. Beijing has indicated its intention to provide African countries with "unconditional assistance within its capacity". However, China's new emphasis is on relationships based primarily on trade and investment. China has undertaken to co-ordinate the FOCAC process with NEPAD through infrastructure development, treatment of infectious diseases, human resource development and agricultural training.

Natural Resources and Energy Development. Given the increasing demand for oil to supply the growing Chinese economy, Africa is rapidly becoming a key supplier to the PRC market. Beijing has prioritised oil and other raw material extraction as a central element in the expansion of commercial links with Africa.

The Sino-African Forum is widely regarded as an extremely valuable process for African diplomacy. Africa benefits significantly from regular and structured interaction with Beijing, building on past interactions and identifying new opportunities. Moreover, Chinese aid to Africa is extremely important to many African countries. Aid specifically identified as important includes medical assistance, agricultural management, construction and debt relief. China's commitment to follow up on decisions reached at the October 2000 Beijing meeting has been widely welcomed. Many did not expect China to fulfill the promises it made (especially debt reductions) at the October 2000 meeting. Beijing has incorporated 21 government departments into their follow-up process. MOFTEC is playing a leading role in advancing the programme and co-coordinating the activities of other Chinese government departments.

There are clear indications that some African countries have benefited from the PRC's involvement on the continent over the last few years. Beijing has provided assistance in a number of areas such as agriculture, health services and training. Debt cancellation has been especially welcomed. In addition, China promotes African interests at the UN and other forums, mainly by urging the developed countries to do more for Africa, such as for instance PRC UN representative Wang Yingfang's January 30, 2002 statement urging increased world attention to Africa's problems.

President Hu Jintao's African safari

President Hu Jintao's recent nine-days visit to Africa contributed significantly to advancing China's evolution as a major economic partner with the continent. China's efforts to expand commercial and political interaction with Africa were confirmed by Hu's visit to Egypt, Gabon and Algeria. While in Libreville, the capital of Gabon, Hu called for the strengthening of Sino-African co-operation "free of political conditionality and serving the interests of both Africa and China" (*Business Day*, 2002b). He committed China to promoting a new duty-free scheme for poorer African countries, which will open the Chinese market for African made products. In addition, Hu pointed out that China and Africa can exploit the complementarity of their respective economies and the huge potential for commercial interaction. Africa's enormous mineral wealth and human resources provide the wealth and capacity for effective engagement with the world's fastest growing economy.

Overall, Hu's visits and policy statements confirmed trends in the PRC's Africa policy in line with Jiang Zemin's approach, first enunciated during Jiang's 1996 visit to Africa. However, Hu has consolidated, strengthened and advanced Jiang's policy with a view to expanding Sino-African co-operation and diplomatic interaction. A number of key themes in Hu's African policy

are now evident. Hu has emphasized that building relations with developing countries, especially African countries, is a key element of the PRC's foreign policy. President Hu went so far as to suggest that PRC-developing country relations form a "cornerstone" of China's foreign policy. The importance which Hu attached to African countries has been widely welcomed on the continent and identified as a major opportunity for a strengthening of traditional links, while offering significant potential benefits for both Africa and China.

High level visits to Africa by Chinese officials and visits to Beijing by African officials are expected to remain a key feature of Sino-African relations. Hu confirmed an interest in continuing to promote high-level visits as a central element of the PRC's international diplomacy. This has long been a feature of Chinese diplomacy, and is intended to consolidate and advance friendly relations with African leaders. During his visit to Algeria, president Hu emphasized the need to expand trade links between China and Africa, thereby confirming China's interest in expanding exports to Africa, considered a major priority for the ongoing expansion and development of China's economy. At the same time, Hu has suggested that Beijing will help assist African countries through building new construction projects, the development of communications, agricultural assistance and human resource training. The consolidation of trade links thus holds the promise of expanded co-operation with China, which is expected to translate into major economic benefits for many African countries.

President Hu confirmed that Beijing is to focus on health care, culture, science and technology and education in advancing relations with African countries. The PRC is clearly hoping to "broaden and deepen" links with Africa. China is well satisfied with the progress of commercial and other interaction with Africa, and is now seeking to build on past successes with a view to expanding and consolidating relations in a number of key countries. Where Beijing has important, long-term economic objectives, such as in South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria, efforts will be made to increase interaction on all levels. Hu also specifically referred to techniques for "strengthening Sino-African relations" through interaction between legislatures, political parties, non-governmental organisations and youth organisations (Jintao, 2004). President Hu confirmed the need to continue party-to-party contacts, thereby consolidating historical links with key African political parties.

While in Algeria, Hu specifically mentioned the need for Africa and China to increase co-operation, in order to jointly explore oil and natural gas fields. Given China's expanding economy and concomitant need for increased energy supplies, interests in Africa's oil and natural gas are becoming more urgent. China will have to significantly increase both oil importation and domestic production to meet the needs of its economy. Thus, China's African policy is expected to increasingly focus on oil and gas exploitation over the next few years. Hu's visit to Algeria and Gabon, two important oil producers in Africa, was seen as part of Beijing's renewed effort to consolidate the supply of critical raw materials for its own economic growth. Hu's visit to Gabon concluded with the signing of a memorandum of understanding to institute joint oil exploration, exploitation, refinement and exportation. The deal was signed between Total Gabon and China's Sinotec, facilitating China's importation of oil from Gabon for the first time.

Hu stressed that China and Africa should "hold more consultations" on important regional and global issues, with a view to promoting the "democratisation" of international relations. Clearly, Beijing hopes to win support from African countries in promoting the establishment of a more fair, open and just international system. President Hu specifically referred to the China-Africa Co-operation Forum as a key mechanism for the advancement of Sino-African relations. The Forum has voiced support for the objectives of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Moreover, Beijing has promised to align its Africa policy with NEPAD, and to give full support to the African Union. While in Gabon, Hu raised the issue of China-Africa solidarity, suggesting that a common history of struggle against colonialism remains a central tenet of Chinese thinking with regard to relations with Africa. This reminder was welcomed in Africa as a central feature of Sino-African interaction, and served to corroborate the historical link between Africa and China (*Business Day*, 2004a).

President Hu indicated that China would use its UN Security Council seat to advance the interests of developing nations. Specifically, that Beijing would work to safeguard the rights and interests of developing nations. He argued that economic globalisation should benefit citizens in both developed and developing countries. This statement complemented his speech in Algiers, in which he pointed out that the people of the developing countries total over 90 percent of the

world's population and constitute 84 percent of the United Nations. China's efforts to advance the objectives of developing countries in international forums were widely welcomed in Africa. Beijing's commitment to advance the developing world's agenda is seen as a very positive contribution to Africa's efforts to combat poverty and economic hardship. While in Algiers, Hu sought to strengthen the Sino-African link by pointing to the "equality" of all nations, and confirmed China's efforts to defend developing countries against external criticism and interference (*Business Day*, 2004a).

As a further example of comprehensive Sino-African co-operation, on March 9 2004, Chinese military personnel began deployment to Liberia. A 70-member advance team of an engineering group left Shengyang and a 35-member medical team left Fuzhou for Liberia. In response to a request from the United Nations, Beijing agreed to send a 550 peacekeeping force to Liberia made up of a 240-member transport company, 275 engineers and 35 medical personnel. The troops are equipped primarily for support services, with very limited combat capability. China's decision to commit peacekeepers to Liberia has been strongly supported in Africa and points towards a growing policy synthesis with the ideals and objectives of the African Union. Many African leaders have interpreted Beijing's action as a positive contribution to advancing peace and stability on the African continent in line with the AU's priority agenda.

China's empathy for Africa's economic plight was further confirmed by Beijing's action in canceling the debt of 31 African countries amounting to US$ 1.27 billion. Thus, China has followed action with words in tackling one of Africa's biggest economic problems, and set an example for the developing world. Beijing has pointed out that the advancement of global peace and development is not possible without addressing the growing economic divide between North and South. China has therefore called on the developing countries to pay more attention to Africa and respond more energetically to the continent's socio-economic problems. Given China's similar colonial history and struggle against poverty, a Chinese understanding of Africa's economic dilemma lies at the root of Sino-African solidarity and serves as a strong foundation for cordial relations.

President Hu's African safari, along with China's evolving African policy, provides strategic opportunity for a significant advancement of Sino-African commercial interaction. In terms of trade, China's amicable agreement to open its markets to selected African products from the poorest African countries offers hope to African producers and sets an example for future broader free trade agreements. The clear compatibility of Chinese and African economies, exchanging primary products for manufactured goods, bodes well for accelerated trade over the longer-term. Investment flows to Africa from China are set to increase significantly as Beijing partners with African enterprises in the extraction and export of raw materials. Hu's African visit confirmed China's compassionate, friendly and supportive policy towards Africa, and strengthened the foundation for an accelerated advancement of mutually beneficial commercial interaction.

Diplomatic links with South Africa

Formal diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and South Africa were established on January 1 1998, opening a new chapter in Sino-African relations and bringing South Africa in line with African diplomacy (Le Pere, 1999; SAIIA Research Group, 1995; Geldenhuys, 1997: 93-131). During April 1998, then South African Deputy president Thabo Mbeki undertook a five-day visit to Beijing, which included meetings with Premier Zhu Rongji and Vice-president Hu Jintao. The visit was seen as the first step towards consolidating relations after formal diplomatic recognition earlier in the year. Official discussions focused on the potential for economic co-operation and the possibility of working together to establish a fair and just world economic and political order. Hu Jintao paid a reciprocal visit to South Africa in February 1999, during which he officially opened new consulates in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. While in South Africa, Hu stressed China's objective of enhancing trade with South Africa, suggesting that the new consulates would be important in this regard (Qiaocheng, 1999: 17).

During Nelson Mandela's visit to China in May 1999, the first by a South African head of state, Mandela thanked China for its consistent support of South Africa, particularly in the struggle against apartheid (Mkhondo, 2000). Moreover, Mandela indicated his determination to promote the development of a mutually beneficial Sino-South African diplomatic partnership.

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) identified the "promotion of bilateral trade and investment" as the focus of Mandela's visit and stressed the need to improve two-way trade (Wong, 1999). An important aspect of the Sino-South African relationship is the link between the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Communist Party of China (CPC). In November 1998, the general secretary of the SACP, Blade Nzimande, visited China and was received by president Jiang. During the meeting, Jiang described Nzimande as an "old friend of the Chinese people", and he thanked the SACP for its contribution to the establishment of diplomatic ties with South Africa. The decision was made to set up a regular mutual consultation mechanism, the first of its kind established between the CPC (Chinese Communist Party) and a foreign political party. At the same time, Jiang pointed out that formal diplomatic links between China and South Africa enhanced prospects for Sino-South African co-operation at all levels (Jiaxuan, 2002).

The political framework of cooperation

In April 2000, president Jiang Zemin paid a state visit to South Africa where he signed the "Pretoria Declaration" with his counter-part Thabo Mbeki. The "Pretoria Declaration on the Partnership Between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa" commits both countries to a "spirit of partnership and constructive dialogue" while uniting in the "moral imperative for developing countries to strengthen capacity for co-operation and mutual support in the international system" (Shelton, 2001: 389). The most important outcome of the agreement was the establishment of a Bi-National Commission (BNC) which would meet regularly to guide and co-ordinate all government-to-government relations between China and South Africa, while providing an effective forum for consultation on matters of mutual interest in bilateral and multilateral affairs (Wadula, 2000). In addition, the Pretoria Declaration committed China and South Africa to a "constructive dialogue", a concerted effort to expand economic links and a joint initiative to advance, peace, security and development on the African continent (Monyae, 2001).

Besides the Pretoria Declaration, China and South Africa signed six agreements including police co-operation, maritime transport, prevention of the spread of deadly pathogens, animal health and quarantine, arts and culture, and avoidance of double taxation. However, the emphasis of Jiang's and Mbeki's public statements at the time was on the need for both countries, along with the developing world, to work together to ensure benefits from globalization. China and South Africa confirmed a commitment to oppose the negative effects of globalization and to oppose global dominance by a single country. President Mbeki stressed South Africa's desire to "deepen existing relations" and to "extend relations to broader areas of co-operation" (Fei, 2000: 5). Mbeki also emphasized the need for South Africa and other developing countries to seek closer co-operation in international affairs with the objective of restructuring the global economic architecture. In response, Jiang pointed out that the constant expansion and deepening of Sino-South African relations fulfilled the "long-term fundamental interests" of both countries, while supporting and advancing "peace and global development".

Jiang suggested that South Africa's status as a regional power and a key international actor elevated the importance of the Beijing-Pretoria dialogue and government-to-government co-operation. A long-term, stable, friendly co-operative relationship was thus the objective of Jiang's vision for Sino-South African relations (Chetty, 2000). Moreover, as Jiang intimated "hegemony and power politics threaten world peace and security", thus making it more important for South Africa as a leading African nation and China as a leading Asian nation to strengthen contact and collaboration. Both Pretoria and Beijing confirmed a belief that the two countries strongly complemented each other in many fields, thus providing an excellent opportunity for long-term cooperation and political interaction. Mbeki alluded to the history of Sino-African relations, suggesting that Africa's struggle against colonialism received consistent and enthusiastic support from China. Moreover, the post-independence era witnessed a strong PRC involvement in African reconstruction and economic development programmes. Given China's constructive relationship with many African countries, Mbeki voiced support for South Africa's full participation in the FOCAC process, which he predicted would play a leading role in helping African countries overcome socio-economic problems.

Jiang's visit to South Africa also set the scene for Sino-South African co-operation and policy synchronisation on the issue of advancing the establishment of a new international economic order. He pointed out that the accelerated pace of economic globalization benefited the

developed countries far more than the developing ones, which face increasing risks and challenges. The continuous widening and accelerating gap between rich and poor nations, along with increasing tensions and conflict between North and South, threatened economic development and sustained growth in the countries of the South. In this context, both China and South Africa found themselves on the wrong side of the "digital divide" with declining prospects for bridging the North-South division (Fei, 2000: 5). Both Jiang and Mbeki concluded that the Bretton Woods system, along with quickening globalization, required that developing countries, such as China and South Africa, work together in a joint programme to reform the existing economic architecture with a view to establishing a new, just and rational economic order. Developed countries were urged to shoulder more responsibilities, reduce developing world debt, fulfill aid promises, and provide appropriate assistance to promote economic development in African and other developing countries. The developing countries, in turn, and especially Africa within Mbeki's African Renaissance vision, should strengthen solidarity, demand new global trade rules at the WTO (World Trade Organisation), and unite in defending legitimate rights and economic interests.

Mbeki's visit to Beijing

During mid-December 2001, South African president Thabo Mbeki conducted a state visit to Beijing, which included meetings with the senior leadership of the PRC. Mbeki's visit was widely seen as the confirmation of a strong political and economic relationship between Pretoria and Beijing, initiated only a few years earlier (Shelton, 2002). While in Beijing, Mbeki commented on the visible success of China's economic reform programme and thanked Jiang Zemin for his warm and friendly hospitality (*Business Day*, 2001). After extensive discussions with China's leadership structures, Mbeki reported a broad consensus on a range of key issues and confirmed South Africa's interest in advancing and expanding political, economic and cultural interaction with the PRC. In addition, president Mbeki expressed strong appreciation for China's ongoing efforts to develop relations with the African continent and contribute to Africa's economic development (*Business Day*, 2001).

The BNC was officially launched during president Mbeki's state visit to Beijing in December 2001. A range of discussions were held at ministerial and senior official level including the ministries of foreign affairs, economics and trade, public security, judiciary, science and technology, energy and tourism (*People's Daily*, 2001b). The initial BNC meeting led to the establishment of four sectoral committees on foreign affairs, economy and trade, science and technology, and national defense. A number of other government departments from both counties subsequently established direct channels of communication and maintain a regular and constructive dialogue (*People's Daily*, 2001a). The BNC provides a solid framework for the further development and enhancement of bilateral China-South African relations. Moreover, the BNC agenda has been complemented and strengthened by a frequent exchange of high-level visits between the two countries. Mbeki's visit to Beijing focused on expanding relations to include scientific and nuclear research, while the DFA confirmed that South Africa was looking to the PRC "both as a market and an investor". Mbeki was accompanied by the ministers of trade and industry, agriculture, tourism, defense and technology, as well as a group of businessmen seeking investment opportunities in China. President Mbeki stressed that the launching of the bilateral commission was a "historic moment" in the development of China-South African links and initiated a new phase of positive and constructive relations with opportunities to work together in a wide variety of areas. Mbeki specifically called for a strengthening of bilateral ties to include political, economic and multilateral issues. On his return from Beijing, Mbeki's message to political supporters in the publication *ANC Today* described his stay in China as a "goodwill visit", intended to strengthen already very warm and friendly relations (2002). Building on the BNC dialogue as well as on numerous high level visits and interactions, South Africa and China have to date have signed 32 agreements covering a wide range of political, social and economic issues (Zuma, 2003).

Economic relations

During the early 1990s, direct trade relations between China and South Africa were initiated, and within a relatively short period, two-way trade began to increase significantly (Shelton, 2001: 111-119). The volume of bilateral trade in 1991 was only US$ 14 million, but within six

years, it totaled over US$ 1.5 billion. The establishment of formal diplomatic links in 1998 provided a further boost to commercial interaction, with two-way trade levels reaching over US$ 2 billion in 2002. According to South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), China's exports to South Africa in 2003 amounted to US$ 2.37 billion, while South Africa's exports to China were almost US$ 1 billion (at current exchange rates). South Africa's exports to China have consisted mainly of raw materials such as aluminum, nickel, manganese, zirconium, vanadium oxides, chromium ores, granite, platinum and gold. China's exports to South Africa have included mainly manufactured products, such as footwear, textiles, plastic products, electrical appliances, tableware and kitchenware (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Africa, 2004).

The bourgeoning trade relationship has largely confirmed economists' predictions that the complementarity of the Chinese and South African economies would provide an excellent foundation for mutually beneficial commercial interaction. Writing in the February 1998 edition of *Chinafrica,* Tao Shu correctly identified the "vast potential for bilateral economic cooperation" (1998: 30). Tao pointed out that between 1991 and 1996 Sino-South African trade grew by 700 percent, making South Africa China's largest trade partner on the African continent. The complementary nature of the two economies provided the impetus for the rapid growth of trade. At the same time, bilateral trade amounts to only a very small percentage of both China and South Africa's international trade profile, suggesting that there is still enormous potential for an increased exchange of good and services (Xian, 1999). During his visit to South Africa, Jiang Zemin stressed the importance of trade as a key element in bilateral relations, and listed the enhancement of trade links as a priority. Given the rapid escalation of trade since his visit, Jiang's optimistic trade objective has been largely realised.

In addition to healthy growth in trade, bilateral investment has increased significantly. By early 2003, Chinese companies had invested US$ 160 million in 98 projects involving agriculture, textiles, electronics, mining, banking, transportation and communications. South Africa, in turn, has invested in over 200 projects in China. Key South African corporate investors in China include SABMillar, the MIH Group and Landpac. Beginning in 1994, SABMillar invested in China through a joint venture (JV) partnership with China Resources Enterprises (CRE) Group, to establish China Resources Breweries (CRB). CRB has seen rapid growth over the last ten years, becoming the second largest brewing business in China by volume, as well as one of the most profitable beer businesses in China. SABMillar's strategy has been to enter into JVs with local brewers in different parts of the country and thereby strengthen its position in what is expected to become the world's biggest beer market[10]. SABMillar is now present in a number of Chinese provinces including Liaoning, Sichuan and Anhui. The company's most recent JV agreement is a 29,6 percent stake in the Hong Kong listed Harbin Brewery, the oldest beer brand in China. SABMillar's corporate expansion strategy has positioned the company for future growth and market dominance in the lucrative Chinese market (African-Asian Society, 2003; Guijin, 2003).

Since 1998, MIH has worked with SARFT (State Academy for Radio, Film and Television) and CCTV (China Central Television) in establishing and maintaining an advanced television platform. MIH now provides services to 15 major clients, including China Central Television, Macao Cable, Shanghai Cable and TVB Hong Kong. Through a range of JVs, supported by MIH's own innovative technologies, the company now also provides entertainment, interactive and e-commerce services to the Chinese market. Since 1995, Landpac has been active in China, providing its Impact Compaction technology to numerous road-building projects. Landpac has engaged in construction initiatives across the length and breadth of China in the building of new roads, as well is in the maintenance or repair of existing transportation networks.

To support and advance South African trade and investment with China, the South African government has opened a consulate office in Shanghai, thereby accessing the heart of China's economic boom. In addition, the South Africa-China Business Association (SACBA), in co-operation with South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs, has identified a variety of trade and investment opportunities for South African businesses seeking to enter the Chinese market. These include automobile components, fruits and vegetables, pollution control equipment, advanced manufacturing technologies, fruit juices and wines, internet and e-commerce development, arts and crafts and jewellery. Given the rapid economic growth in China over the last twenty years, and the obvious potential for future growth, it is becoming increasingly

attractive for South African businesses to enter the Chinese market as a trader or as an investor (Ryan, 2002: 23).

Relations between South Africa and China have improved significantly since formal recognition only a few years ago. South Africa is now China's key trade partner in Africa, accounting for 20,8 percent of the total volume of China-Africa trade. China has set up more than 80 companies in South Africa since 1998, while China's investment in South Africa now totals more than US$ 200 million. In addition, a number of Chinese companies are close to concluding new investment agreements in South Africa[11]. There are now strong links between the two governments at various levels, and China is identified as a key global actor with whom South Africa seeks to broaden relations. China is a strong supporter of South-South co-operation, a key objective of South Africa's foreign policy. In this context, South Africa hopes to mobilise China's support to promote African concerns in the UN and other multilateral forum. For example, closer links with China are helping South Africa promote the interests of Africa in the WTO (Breslin, 2000: 27-29).

South African companies are now engaged in more than 70 different investment projects in China. South African companies have invested more than US$ 300 million in China since the mid 1990s. South African corporate involvement in China includes the following sectors: harbour construction, beverage manufacturing, textiles and building materials. China's entry into the WTO facilitates and encourages new foreign investment in China. At the same time, South African exports to China are increasing significantly and there is clearly enormous potential for increased trade between the two countries (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2004). Building on the solid foundation of a shared global political vision and accelerating economic interaction, China and South Africa are set to expand collaboration at all levels. A broadly common approach to international affairs and the growing synthesis of policy with regard to multilateral institutions and the international economy provides the building blocks for a substantial and mutually beneficial long-term relationship. Expanded co-operation and collaboration based on past interaction augur well for a continued warm friendship and a strengthened strategic partnership between the two countries. This provides the platform for increased commercial interaction and the further growth of trade and investment ties.

Advancing a new global order

The China-South Africa relationship has clearly advanced significantly at both the political and economic levels. The momentum of two-way trade is certain to accelerate in the years ahead given the evident complementarity of the Chinese and South African economies. Growing opportunities for investments in South Africa are expected to be attractive to Chinese enterprises, while the massive potential for investment in China cannot be ignored by South African businesses. At the political level, the synchronisation of foreign policy proposals and long-term objectives is expected to become a more urgent consideration. On the African continent, South Africa will increasingly look to China for support in the following areas:

- *The New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)*. China's FOCAC process could be merged with NEPAD, thereby providing a major impetus to Africa's economic development.

- *The African Union (AU).* Strong Chinese political and financial support for the programmes and objectives of the AU would be a very welcome contribution to Africa's revival.

- *Promotion of peace in Africa*. China's decision to deploy peacekeepers to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia has been widely welcomed as a very positive contribution towards the urgent need to promote greater peace and stability in Africa. Further contributions of this kind would be a very positive development.

In the context of a partnership to advance a new global order, the common foreign policy objective identified and confirmed by Mbeki and Jiang in December 2001, South Africa looks to China for support in the following areas:

- Restructuring the United Nations (UN), in line with the Group of 77 and China's UN Programme for Reform (A/51/950) as well as the Declaration of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of the G-77, which would bring strong permanent African and possibly

South African, representation to the UN Security Council (Declaration by Group of 77 and China, 1997; Chan, 2003).

- Reform of the global trading system (Xiaoye and Zhenghua, 2004: 43-53), as outlined by the Group of 77 and China in Geneva on August 22, 2003, aimed at improving the access of developing countries to the markets of the developed, industrialised economies and strengthen programmes to eradicate poverty, underdevelopment and economic vulnerability on the world's less developed (LDC) countries (Declaration by the Group of 77 and China, 2003; Institute of Reform and Development, 2002).

- Enhanced South-South cooperation in the spirit of the 1955 Bandung Conference's programme for African-Asian solidarity and collaboration to address global injustice, discrimination and the marginalization of developing countries (United Nations-General Assembly, 2004).

Conclusion: promoting a new global vision

Building on the solid foundation of a shared global political vision and accelerating economic interaction, China and Africa have a strategic opportunity to cement a new form of South-South co-operation, which could be very effective in advancing reform of the existing global order. The bonding of China and Africa in a common goal to eliminate the iniquities of the existing outdated economic and political system of global governance provides hope and inspiration to developing countries. The evolving China-African relationship, at the multilateral level via the FOCAC process, and at the bilateral level, such as the case of China-South African relations, via a formally constituted bin-national commission, serves as a model for South-South co-operation and provides a new framework for effective participation in the North-South debate. China-Africa relations have come a long way since Jiang Zemin's 1996 visit to the continent. Continued co-operation and collaboration based on the past augur well for a continued warm friendship and a long-term strategic partnership between China and Africa.

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Notes

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1 In this context, South-South co-operation is defined as the promotion of economic interaction among developing nations at the bilateral, regional and global level to achieve the goal of collective self-reliance. Co-operation envisaged by this process includes increased trade and investment along with technology transfers and appropriate political and economic co-operation through policy synchronisation (Alden, 1999).

2 The more pessimistic interpretations of China's long-term strategy are outlined in Bernstein and Munro (1998), Mosher (2000), Segal (1994) and Hornik (1994: 28-42).

3 In line with the PRC's six-point foreign policy framework. See "China's Foreign Policy", at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/china/>.

4 Interaction with Africa was a key part of China's overall Cold War foreign policy (Jun and Siyan, 2004: 95-164; Cotterell, 1993).

5 For an outline of Sino-African relations during the Cold War period see Brzezinski (1963); Cooley (1965); Larkin (1971); Albright (1980); Copper (1979); Harris and Worden (1980); Weinstein and Henriksen (1980); Hutchison (1980); Ogunsanwo (1974); Hinton (1976); Hevi (1977); Chou (1989); Yu (1975); Larkin (1971); Goodman and Segal (1991); Weiss (1988); Roy (1998).

6 Jiang's new Africa policy was in line with the broader post-Mao foreign policy changes (Starr, 1998: 287-304; Henderson, 1999: 135-156; Overholt, 1993: 211-247; Story, 2003: 25-53; Foreign Language Press, 2004: 91-102).

7 See PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/index.html>.

8 See Ministry of Commerce at <http://www1.moftec.gov.cn/moftec_en/>.

9 China-Africa Friendship and Co-operation, Secretariat of the Chinese Follow-up Committee of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation, Beijing, 2003.

10 The South Africa-China Business Association (SACBA) at <http://www.sacba.com.cn/about/about.htm>.

11 Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Pretoria, at <http://www.dti.gov.za/econdb/raportt/>.

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Steps Towards Integration in Latin America The Role of Ideas, Institutions and Policies in the MERCOSUR**

Starting point considerations

It is known that the unstable rise and fall of the MERCOSUR's goals has lately been placing its future viability at the centre of the debate. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that those who stress its weaknesses and difficulties often fail to make a broad and comprehensive reading of the variables at stake. They tend to emphasize explanations of issues denoting *asymmetries*, which often are not solved properly within a framework of interdependence generated precisely in a process of integration. Differences, difficult or non conducive negotiations, or circumstantial issues which are pessimistically considered as *objective conditions* and often used to discourage its continuation, generally mar other fulfillments. Broadly speaking, a large number of those analyses or comments on the current situation of the MERCOSUR and its prospects show an almost exclusively commercialist bias, and do not tackle the full scope of the phenomenon to which we refer.

Regarding this subject, I agree with the concept that "integration processes involve complex society movements whose keys cannot be covered within a temporary and merely commercialist interpretation". Their diversity and scope makes them solely achievable by means of an interdisciplinary and long term approach. And probably one of the major deficits of the MERCOSUR, which is felt during the most critical moments, is the absence of a 'way of thinking about it'" (Hirst et al., 2001).

If we consider the possibility of relaunching or re founding the MERCOSUR, this is an appropriate moment to work *in the field of "ideas"*. In order to make progress on this proposal, it is advisable not to be caught by "pessimistic" interpretations, nor by a naïve view. Therefore, it is worth making, at least in general terms, an evaluation of what the existence of the MERCOSUR has provided.

In 2001 the former Secretary of Commerce and International Economic Relations of Argentina, Martín Redrado, emphasized that there had been a fair amount of opinions advising, on several occasions, to retrace the steps and go back to a free trade area, or simply to defuse the integration process. When confronted with the dilemma of "advancing or retreating" in the process of integration, it is better to consider or to evaluate the issue under a structural perspective, avoiding the current ups and downs that may distort the analysis. First, we must not lose sight of the fact that in every process of integration it is common to witness periods of apparent stagnation. The European experience, which took eleven years to make up an imperfect customs association (while the MERCOSUR took four), thirty–six years to create a Common Market, and forty-two years to have a single currency (the Euro), and that between 1973 and 1985 stood a prolonged lethargy of "europessimism", is eloquent proof in this respect (Redrado, 2001: 200-201).

Therefore, if we analyze it in a comprehensive way, the MERCOSUR has meant the creation of a singular cooperation order, unprecedented up to this moment in South America, combined with a wide range of relevant issues. Among them, democratic consolidation (democracy being a condition to participate in the integration process) and the creation of a zone of peace are to be noticed[1], overcoming the conflict hypotheses which had largely guided the behaviors and relations among many of its members. Besides, it encouraged an increase of border bonds, so that these areas were then perceived as places of cooperation, contact and rapprochement instead of political and economic barriers. It generated a common economic space and

provided a significant level of political understanding between the member states engaging the national societies as well. Regarded as a unit, all of its members were made more visible than if they were individually considered.

Thus, taking into account those strengths and recognizing that the weaknesses of the MERCOSUR would reside in the ideational factor, it would be better to refer to the contributions of the International Relations "constructivist approaches". They offer greater possibilities for creating bridges with other social disciplines, justifying explanations that are more complex.

We will first refer to the advantages of adopting a constructivist perspective aiming at the re-launching of the MERCOSUR. Then, we will devote ourselves to the analysis of several "axes ideas" around which it would be possible to develop that launching. Some of them have to do with a *redefinition of the autonomy* that will necessarily include the regional dimension, together with the necessity of *measuring the institutional deficit* of the MERCOSUR, which would need correction, as well as recognizing the necessity of emphasizing its *non-economic agenda.*

The importance of adopting a constructivist analytical framework

Neo-realism in general, and the "theory of games", have shown little skill in explaining the various factors of weight in adopting decisions within the field of International Relations and Foreign Policy. The diversity of analyses related to the MERCOSUR has not been exempt from that shortsightedness. The analyses have been characterized almost exclusively by the incorporation of rationalist notions such as those related to power measuring and cost-benefit calculation, and at the same time, they have avoided the inclusion of cognitive elements.

Even the functionalist approaches, which supported various explanations about the creation of regional spaces and processes of integration, assigning a central place to the "spillover" effect[2], started from some assumptions. They related them almost mechanically, choosing a systemic dynamics and forgetting how processes are "built".

Lately, the recognition of failures hindering the understanding of many international relations processes has led a part of the academic world to focus on the rediscovery of the importance that *ideas* and *beliefs* have in the design and support of policies. Obviously, there still is a great deal of studies and investigations that do not attach any importance to these factors. The renewal attempt that is beginning to be observed has to do with the changes and complexities that our postmodern world experiences today. This world moves away from exclusively positivist calculations and needs to be tackled with a greater mental openness. It also suggests the necessity of imagining and giving sense to the creation of possible scenarios and not being trapped in analyses of *what is bound to happen*, as if it was impossible to generate changes and progress.

Institutions, ideas, experts' participation or "epistemic communities"[3], and the impact that legitimate political decision-makers can exercise, seem to form the necessary "virtuous circle" in order to meet a correspondence between the field of ideas and that of politics.

Thus, a good orientation is offered by a wide range of new visions, especially from the *constructivist school*[4], so that this can be turned into a fruitful field for the understanding of the various international events.

Those who want to hold on strictly to the "realist dogma" will say that a causal connection cannot be found between ideas and political consequences. We could reply by saying that neither is there a causal relation when explanations are based exclusively in factors such as military power and economic power. Obviously, nobody could doubt the incidence and weight of these, particularly if they go hand in hand, for example, in hegemony situations. But it is also true that in international politics there still is a large spectrum of possibilities to explain results that do not respond only to them. In that direction, a very rich field is opened up in order to investigate the impact these ideas – especially their strength and legitimacy– may have as shapers of behaviors and policies[5].

Taking into account that the MERCOSUR has taken the process of European integration as a maximum reference, I will refer in the first place to certain contributions that have brought about evidence of the weight of "ideas", both at the foundation stage of the European Economic Community and in the subsequent process that led to the formation of the current European Union.

Those who develop this view find the root of the community process, precisely, in the combination of perceptions and ideas about how the world works, about the validity of certain principles and values, and about the ways in which they believe it is possible to lay the new grounds for coordination and cooperation.

When that hard core offered by the first ideas is shared, it is later on strengthened with the creation of institutions. Ideas continue their development within its frame, following feedback dynamics. It is convenient to note here that such a process is not presented in an automatic way or out of habit. On the contrary, it needs to be strengthened through the legitimacy that the institutions themselves and the political decision-makers acquire in accordance with the effective development of policies[6]. As Noto (2001: 17-18) has suggested, "the relation between institutional development and progress in integration has occupied an important place in the regional processes. In the progressive evolution of the European process, a complex construction and reform of various institutions has taken place. They have fed back the integrationist tendencies". Therefore, we could say that *the key to success* lies there.

In order to refer to what has taken place in Europe, though superficially, and pointing some examples out, it would be worth to remember how the "ideational" element weighed in the emergence of its first common policy, the so-called CAP (Common Agriculture Policy), as well as the commitment to free competition principles, which led to a subsequent legal order and to the formation of institutions inside the EC that observed its fulfillment and punished its violations. In the same line, and among other achievements, we find the renewed Environmental Policies. On the other hand, the lack of a common Security Policy could be the result –among other factors– of a deficit as regards ideas. Nowadays, it appears that Europeans are thinking seriously about a "European Security and Defense Identity" in order to move away from their traditional American dependence.

After a rapid revision of the European example, let us remember that in the case of Latin America the decades from the 50s to the 70s formed a stage rich in ideas (some of them generated within the ECLAC itself), from which various *autonomization* proposals emerged, exceeding the supposed "irreversible rule" which predicted that the small and medium states are the "object" and not "subjects" of international politics, and subjected to a "permanent peripheralism". They have prepared the ground to think in terms of independent foreign policies, handling "margins of manoeuvre", with the aim of acting abroad and achieving better positions as regards integration in the world.

The possibility of generating a new debate about autonomy, which is precisely one of the "axes ideas" we propose in this paper, requires to carry out an analysis of this central concept and its evolution.

A new concept of autonomy? Revisiting the old one and constructing a "new idea"

During the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, a sort of *doctrinaire school on Latin American autonomy* was formed. It was led mainly by the academic works of Helio Jaguaribe in Brazil, and of Juan Carlos Puig in Argentina, who had a lot of disciples and followers[7]. Within the historical context of the bipolar order (where the concept is set and takes on significance), in this foundational stage of the autonomist school in Latin America, the strongest bet of autonomy was mainly placed on the possibility of confrontation. Another characteristic to emphasize in that definition of autonomy is the presence of the idea of "aggregation of strengths" offered by the linkage and the coordination of positions with the "equals". It was thought from the perspective of each of the states individually, and within it the regional dimension "added capacities", so that such national interests would be better preserved.

Unfortunately, during the 90s, the theoretical production that assigned some importance to autonomy was limited or almost nil. For many people, it was almost an "antique" or a

"consumption" of capacities, which would rather serve a pragmatic insertion in the world. That excess of pragmatism was not conducive at all, as shown by the reality of our countries, since perhaps it put creativity to sleep and fostered the adoption of a pattern of behaviour that progressively estranged itself from its own definitions in accordance of the region's interests[8].

A generic definition, within the field of International Relations, regards it as "an objective of policies which might be achieved in a gradual and increasing measure becoming mixed, in variable doses, with situations of dependence, interdependence and external conditioning" (Tomassini, 1989: 302).

The validity assigned to "autonomy" as a category of analysis and its importance for the region is beginning to generate new thoughts, though still in a manner too incipient to constitute a "theoretical body".

This new theoretical discussion took place with the advent of the year 2000, when certain Latin American governments once more recognize the importance of coordinating their policies and the adoption of common positions. It is necessary, therefore, for autonomy to be imbued with a new explanatory capacity.

An attempt to "re-conceptualize it", recovering it but in a non-confrontational sense, started to be outlined in some presentations made by Russell and Tokatlian[9]. They consider it necessary to re-signify the concept of "autonomy" as a "condition"; that is, the ability to take decisions in an independent way, without following other states' wishes, preferences or orders. They understand that its previous narrowness and national exclusiveness has now been modified. Conversely, it is boosted by democratization, cooperation and policy coordination processes developing in our region. That is why they would rather refer to "relational autonomy", which would constitute the capacity and disposition of states to take independent decisions together with other partners, in order *to* manage processes produced within and beyond their frontiers. In their analysis, they start from an allegedly strong point: that an increase in the autonomy level of our countries cannot today be the result of domestic or sub-regional policies of isolation, self-sufficiency or opposition.

The possibility of thinking of this kind of "relational autonomy" for Latin America must not be evaluated –as was considered in the 70s– according to the capacity to confront or oppose the United States, because it does not rule out agreements with the hegemonic power. It entails coordinated work, negotiation in international systems and in the regional dimension, the first circle for its practice being the South American region itself. Autonomy involving the political, economic and military areas is procured by means of internationalization and regionalization strategies rather than nationalization ones, and at this historical moment, it is clearly facilitated by the democratization of the region and the experimentation of regional integration processes.

In a similar way, there are also other academic works that promote the development of a "concerted autonomy"[10] as well as the attainment of a "new personality and autonomy" since cooperation and regional integration were deepened[11].

It is also possible to pick up concepts aiming in the same direction in a variety of forums and political speeches. In this respect, if one reviews the conceptual and programmatic content expressed in the "Brasilia Communiqué"[12], it is possible to find at least two axes that help in the construction of a new autonomy design, which it might be advantageous to think about for the region. First, a commitment to integration as a foreign policy objective, incorporated into the national identity of the countries of the area. Second, the possibility of facing the globalization challenges, deepening integration, and acting in a coordinated way and with solidarity in relation to the treatment of the great issues on the international economic and social agenda.

Sharing the same spirit, there is a reassertion of the integration objectives at the MERCOSUR Summit in Buenos Aires in July 2002, at the South American Summit of Guayaquil of July 27th of the same year, and in the document signed in 2003 by presidents Lula da Silva (Brazil) and Néstor Kirchner (Argentina), which came to be known as the "Buenos Aires Consensus".

The so-called "autonomy for integration" has also appeared within official discourses, which according to the description of then Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lampreia[13] responded to the new foreign policy design of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the president at that time. It was observed that the old conception of "autonomy" emphasized self-sufficiency and the

adoption of confrontational stances. On the contrary, an updated reformulation should not be isolationist, but a way of being articulated with the international environment. His words are eloquent in this sense: "The times of isolation and of self-sufficiency are over. National sovereignty has ceased to be an argument for behaviors that go against fundamental values". "Autonomy for integration means support for international regimes".

Let us bear in mind that declarations, speeches at summits, are statements of very important principles indeed, which are necessary though not sufficient. Still, they set up guidelines aiming at "constructing a body of theory". It is essential to be aware of this necessity, putting special emphasis on the responsibility-privilege that the so-called "epistemic communities" (of knowledge or academe) should have, in this case in relation to the working out of ideas.

The building of a new definition of autonomy requires that the regional dimension be incorporated as a part of its own essence, its way of thinking about it, and not as a mere "aggregation". In that sense, we understand that the regional dimension appears as a constitutive part of the new nature acquired by autonomy and not as a factor of "summing up capacities".

The advantages of a greater institutionalization

> Men are necessary for changes, institutions to make changes live […] There are no premature ideas, there are timely moments one should know how to wait for [...]
>
> Men do not accept changes except out of necessity: they do not see necessity except in a crisis
>
> Monnet[14]

The brilliance of Monnet's ideas is an appropriate prologue to draw attention to the institutional deficit that the MERCOSUR exhibits and of which we have frequently not been aware. From different angles, though predominantly from the economic and commercial standpoint, and mainly from the Argentine view, there has been an insistence on the necessity of an institutional adjustment, either because of the creation of new structures or the strengthening of existing ones.

As indicated by Redrado (2001: 231), on various occasions the necessity of eliminating "legal gaps" that are often fertile soil for controversies has been raised. The measures could be aimed at reforming the decision-making process, finding new formulas for the adoption of majorities instead of unanimity, establishing deadlines for the internalization of norms, or channeling controversies into the mechanisms foreseen for their resolution.

This includes a comprehensive revision of the institutional framework, sacrificing flexibility in order to gain legal security, which is vital for the partner-states, for individuals, and for the different environments of international negotiation. In Nofal's opinion[15], *the modus operandi* of the negotiation should be changed, assuring a greater participation of the government authorities having political decision power in negotiations of a technical nature, and promoting a greater institutionalization of justice administration that will allow the MERCOSUR to exhibit greater predictability and legal security, which will strengthen the investment attraction of the region. According to her suggestions, the setting up of a permanent Court of Justice, independent from governments, should be evaluated[16].

Considering a perspective that mainly centers on the topic of institutionalization from the legal and political aspect, it can be held that the MERCOSUR, according to the profile adopted until this moment, constitutes an intergovernmental entity. It is endowed with legal capacity but lacks supranational instances, it does not provide for any legal control of the acts announced by

the different organs, and it does not have in an explicit way a parliamentary control at the decision-making level. For Operti Badán[17], this configuration indicates that the internalization of the MERCOSUR's regulations within member states legal order is made by holding it down to the procedures of the respective national law, clearly showing the absence of supranationality.

These speculations about what the MERCOSUR should have or would have to be given maintain a close relationship with the way in which it will be conceived and projected in the future.

Before deciding what to do at the institutional level, its joint strategic conception should be defined. According to this, if it is agreed that maintaining it as an "economic cooperation" process is enough (though it is very difficult for the economic sphere to be affected or entwined with other issues which are to be harmonized), the improvement of its administrative instances (circulation, information, technical assistance and connections with the internal administrative structure) and its application in the member states should be worked on. Further, if it is considered that the MERCOSUR must be deepened as an economic and political process, its organic structure will have to undergo a qualitative and deep reform in order to endow it with another sort of institutionalization[18].

Starting from a revision of the positions held by the member countries relating to the subject of a greater institutionalization, some significant characteristics can be inferred. Although these views should not be taken as "official", but rather as the combination of statements in forums – on the part of politicians as well as staff– and in academic circles, there appears to exist a direct link between a greater political and economic weight, and a greater distance regarding the deepening of the MERCOSUR and the supranational commitments that each country is ready to assume. The request for instances "of a rather communitarian sort" has been frequent on the part of Uruguay and Paraguay. They understood that these would safeguard them from the dangers of unilateral policies that bigger members can adopt, and besides allow a better handling of interdependence within the bloc, and of their "member" status. In relation to Argentina, the general tendency has been directed at a greater institutionalization (perhaps excessively motivated by a "commercialist" reading of the process). For Brazil, in the opinion of Bernal Meza (2001: 65), "the problem does not lie in institutions but in what is cultural, since on the part of governments, businessmen and the elite there has been no transcendence of the MERCOSUR towards society as a whole"[19].

Underlying this are the regulatory capabilities given to norms and institutions by the more economicist approaches, as well as by those that stress the weight of legal and political variables. Our purpose in this paper is to explore the possibility of revising the institutions in a "constitutive" dimension, understanding, in accordance with the constructivist vision, that institutions have a lot to say regarding the change or transformation of identities and interests, for the actors within them are gradually shaping practices and interactions that are added to the changes in perceptions and ways of action.

It is important to re-emphasize the intrinsic value of institutions. Besides their contribution to giving order to the "governance" of the process, they favour the socialization of ideas and of a social learning process that would later have effects on policies.

What has been said up to this moment, at least at the level of hypothesis, would indicate that there might be a "virtuous circle" formed by ideas + institutions + political decision-makers = policies, occurring together in a process of continuous feedback.

In the same direction, it is necessary to reinforce the "non economic agenda" of the MERCOSUR within the framework of its own logic. What do we mean by this? If we go through other subjects of negotiation, such us migrational and environmental issues or education topics, it is possible to notice the strong commercial direction that breaks through all of them. Focused on the necessity of ensuring a space of "free circulation of goods and services" for the future, the underlying logic is perhaps excessively utilitarian and based on economic factors.

Some final thoughts

In order for the MERCOSUR to be able to emerge and consolidate, its "ideational" strengthening is a necessary task. In this direction, it will be necessary for the "epistemic

community", in this case the intelligentsia devoted to socio-political issues, to recover its capacity in order to establish and legitimate expanded definitions of *autonomy*.

It is necessary to reintroduce the debate on autonomy, especially taking into account that when considering some concepts such as "concerted autonomy", "that which pertains to relations" and "that which pertains to participation", there is a certain coincidence in giving centrality to the regional issue.

If a constructivist approach were adopted, it would aim for the construction of a new self-perception and a way of having an identity in relation to other regional spaces, for the management of common issues and for the insertion of the region in the interaction of "interdependence". Additionally, a consensus around the definition of the MERCOSUR as a strategic alliance should be reached, having an identity and the capacity to "cope with" international interdependence. In order to take action in an increasingly complex and less permissive international scenario for individual actions, it is necessary that policies be coordinated and agreed on from within the region.

This implies revitalizing the MERCOSUR based on what exists, but above all, creating, "constructing" institutions so that they prop up its launching and facilitate its subsequent strengthening[20].

Institutions can in turn help to strengthen regional integration, reducing the possibilities that its actual "vulnerability" should be profited by other actors. If we recognize the "constitutive" rather than the "regulatory" value possessed by institutions, we will be on the road to fulfill the virtuous circle we have defined as ideas + institutions + political decision-makers = policies, acting together in a process of continuous feedback.

In the countries of the region, we are going through times of "change", which adds to the perception of a deep crisis. It is precisely in relation to that diagnosis that I want to remember, once again, Monnet's brilliant words when he said, "men do not accept changes except out of necessity. They do not see necessity except in a crisis".

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Notes

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** The MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South) comprises Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. It was created with the adoption of the Treaty of Asunción signed on March 26, 1991. In 1996, Chile and Bolivia became members as "associated states".

1 The democratic clause and the establishment of a Zone of Peace are within the Ushuaia Protocol (July 24th, 1998). Moreover, the latter reiterates what the Presidential Declaration of Las Leñas of June 27, 1992, expresses, in the sense that the full validity of democratic institutions is an indispensable condition for the MERCOSUR's existence and development.

2 A functional "spillover" from some areas to others was hoped for. Even though the first spillover would be seen among related technical and economic areas, it would expand later towards other fields such as those of politics and culture (see, for example Haas, Ernst 1961 "International Integration: The European and the Universal Process" in International Organization, XV, Autumn). In a similar sense, expressions such as "branching" appeared (see Mitrany, David 1966 A Working Peace System, Chicago: Quadrangle Books).

3 In this respect, see the liminal works of Haas, Peter 1990 Saving the Mediterranean. The Politics of International Environmental Cooperation (New York: Columbia University Press) and 1992 "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination" in International Organization, Vol. 46/1: 1-35.

4 Since the incorporation of socio-cognitive factors that help to understand processes, there is an attempt, as from "constructivism", to overcome certain shortages shown by the neorealist and neo-liberal approaches. In addition, differences between rationalists and reflectivists seem to shorten within its bosom. In this respect, it can be pointed out that some contributions emphasize the production of international norms and the necessity of understanding not only the regulatory value of such norms, but their "constitutive" aspect (see Onuf, Nicholas 1989 World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations, Columbia University of South Carolina Press). This is what matters for constructivists. It tries to indicate that norms form an inter-subjective consensus among actors, which in turn constitutes or reconstitutes their identities and interests. In Wendt's opinion, in addition to the liberal arguments regarding their contribution to developing cooperative behaviors in spite of global anarchy, institutions and regimes have a major participation in the change or transformation of identities and interests. There are relations among actors that are gradually shaping practices and interactions that are added to the changes gradually produced in perceptions and ways of action. What they do and what they are should be explored. Being a member of an organization gradually shapes actors and their interests, and this also modifies their behaviors (see Wendt, Alexander 1992 "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of World Politics" in International Organization, Vol. 46/2: 391-425; 1995 "Constructing International Politics" in International Security, Vol. 20/1: 71-81. For other contributions, see Checkel, Jeffrey 1999 "International Institution and Socialization". Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, (Washington DC) February.

5 The debate presented by Yee, Albert S. 1996 "The causal effects of ideas on policies" in International Organization, Vol.50/1: 68-108, is very interesting.

6 In this respect, see Parsons, Craig 2002) "Showing Ideas as Causes: The origins of the European Union" in International Organization, Vol. 56/1: 47-84.

7 Let us mention the following papers: Puig, Juan Carlos 1980 International Doctrines and Latin American Autonomy (Caracas: Instituto de Altos Estudios de América Latina of the Simón Bolivar University); Jaguaribe, Helio et al. 1969 Dependence and Autonomy in Latin America (Mexico: Siglo XXI); Jaguaribe, Helio 1982 "Central Hegemony and Peripheral Autonomy" in Hill ,Eduardo and Tomassini, Luciano Latin America and the New International Economic Order (Buenos Aires: Belgrano). In relation with some issues linked to the design of Foreign Politics, I have dealt with the paper entitled "Foreign Policy, Regionalization and Autonomy: Revisiting Analysis Categories" presented at the International Seminar on Political Science (AUGM-UFRGS), Porto Alegre, October 3-5, 2001.

8 Gerhard Drekonja produced a significant reformulation and redefinition of his own ideas about "autonomy" with which his works on Foreign Policy of the end of the 70s and most of the 80s were identified –especially those referring to Colombia. He moves on to a definition and pragmatic interpretation of the foreign action courses that Latin American states may follow. Their international integration must be along the same side and in the same line as American policies. He emphasizes the depreciation suffered by autonomizing strategies, the loss of logic in the diversification of the bonds referring to "diagonal relations with Europe", and the impossibility of gaining access to the "middle class of the Third World nations" which had been the Latin American dream of the 70s and 80s. By virtue of this and of the redesign the world has experienced in the post-cold war era, he understands that "the discussion on peripheral autonomy belongs to the past" and that the future of Latin America cannot be conceived except alongside the United States (Drekonja, Gerhard 1993 "Peripheral Autonomy Redefined. Latin America in the

Decade of the Nineties" in Gómez, Drekonja, Tokatlian and Carvajal Redefining Autonomy in Internacional Politics (Centro de Estudios Internacionales of the Universidad de los Andes) Serie Documentos Ocasionales, Nº 31, July-September: 18-21. The Argentine case during the Menem administration can be exhibited as a paradigmatic example of uncritical alignment as regards the United States, framed by the dogmatic adoption of the "Washington Consensus" and a reading of "peripheral realism" that, applied to a country not strategically significant for the hegemonic power, who decided to "tie up" its policies to the hegemon with the perspective of some "future advantages" although not being able to provide the probable profits beforehand. See Escudé, Carlos 1992 Peripheral Realism. Grounds for the New Argentine Foreign Policy (Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta), and Escudé, Carlos 1991 "Menem's Foreign Policy and its Implicit Theoretical Support" in Latin America/International Letter, Vol. 8, Nº 27, January-March (some theoretical tendencies describe these kinds of visions as "utilitarian perspectives").

9 Preliminarily, these ideas were presented at the Workshop "The state of the Contemporary Debate in International Relations", Buenos Aires, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, July 27-28, 2000. Later, they were published in Russell, Roberto and Tokatlian, Juan G. "From Antagonistic Autonomy to Relational Autonomy: A Theoretical Look from the Southern Cone" in Postdata (Buenos Aires) Nº 7.

10 The proposal corresponds to work done by Venezuelan and Colombian academicians who introduce the idea of jointly processing agreement strategies, though not those on confrontation, even for treating issues related to the United States. See Bi-national Academic Group 1999 "Colombia-Venezuela. Analysis of the XXI Century Agenda" in Political Analysis (Bogota).

11 Vacchino, Juan M. 2001 "The South American Summit and the Development of an Utopia" in SELA Chapters (Caracas) Nº 61: 50. He makes special mention of cooperation, not only in the commercial field but also in areas such as the development of reciprocal investments, infrastructure and scientific and technological capability.

12 It includes the results of the First Meeting of Presidents of South America, called by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, then president of Brazil, and held in Brasilia between August 31 and September 1 2000. The following were present: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela.

13 See Lampreia, Luiz Felipe 1998 "A Politica externa do Governo FHC: continuidade e renovação" in Revista brasileira de Politica Internacional (Brasilia) Nº 2: 11. With reference to the same idea, Ambassador Gelson Fonseca Junior differentiates "autonomy because of distance" from "autonomy because of participation" in Dupas, Gilberto and Vigevani, Tullo (comp.) 2000 O Brasil e as novas dimensões da seguranca internacional (São Paulo: Alfa-Omega) 17-42.

14 These and other ideas can be found in Jean Monnet's thoughts in 1996 Repères pour une méthode (Paris: Fayard).

15 In this respect, see Nofal, María Beatriz 1997 "Great Unresolved Matters in MERCOSUR" in Boletín Informativo Techint Nº 292, October-December, p. 78-79, and Nofal, María Beatriz 1998 "Institutional and Economic Obstacles for the Consolidation and Deepening of the MERCOSUR: Proposals" in Boletín Informativo Techint Nº 294, April-June, p. 48.

16 While this paper was being presented (August 2004), it was announced the settlement of the MERCOSUR Court as an arbitration body.

17 Parts of these thoughts are within "Perspectives on the Institutionalization of the MERCOSUR", working paper presented at the MERCOSUR: Forum of the Future meeting, CARI, Buenos Aires, August 30, 1996. Also, Carlos Moneta explains the "institutional weakness" of the MERCOSUR, comparing it with other processes of regional integration. The most asymmetric comparison is the one referring to the European Union (see Chart 1, "Profile of Several Diagrams of Integration in the World. Indicators" in Moneta, Carlos 2002 "Integration, Politics and Markets in the Global Era: MERCOSUR and the ALCA" in Couffignal, Georges and Jozami, Aníbal (coords.) Latin America. The Beginning of the New Millennium (Buenos Aires: UNTREF) p. 105.

18 Some key concepts related to different institutionalization scenarios have been a subject of discussion at the Workshop "Institutional Challenges Facing the Current Situation of the MERCOSUR" sponsored by CARI, Buenos Aires, April 15, 1999.

19 Bernal Meza, Raúl 2001 "Institutionalization of the MERCOSUR" in Benecke, Dieter and Loschky, Alexander (eds.) MERCOSUR: Political Challenge (Buenos Aires: Konrad Adenauer/CIEDLA) p. 65.

20 The presidential campaign in Brazil, in 2002, allowed the visualization of explicit references related to the

MERCOSUR. “The MERCOSUR is treated as if it were a protocol of intentions and not a regional body”, states Anthony Garotinho 2002 “O Brasil e a questao externa” in International Letter, Year X, Nº 114, August, p. 8. In turn, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in “Presença soberana no Mundo”, refers to “a reconstructed MERCOSUR” that “must demand progress in the field of the institutions that are going to preside over the integration policy”, in International Letter, p. 9. A similar reference to the necessity of “institutionalization” was expressed by this candidate in the interview conducted by Marcelo Bonelli for the program “A Dos Voces”, broadcast by TN, Argentina, on September 23, 2002. These proposals are expanded when he expresses himself in favor of “a Parliament of the MERCOSUR” democratically elected by direct vote, which would legitimate the decisions taken at the presidents’ level. In this respect, see Gossman, Eleonora 2002 “A Destiny Staked in portuñol” in Clarín (Buenos Aires) September 29, p. 3. These policy guidelines also appear in “Interviews”, Foreign Politics, Vol. II Nº 2, Sept.-Oct.-Nov. 2002: 7, when the candidate Lula insists on the establishment of common public policies and an institutional framework that will allow status and societies to be represented, as steps that will strengthen the MERCOSUR. On January 13, 2003, when the meeting held between the new Brazilian president Lula da Silva and the then Argentine president Eduardo Duhalde took place, the ideas previously mentioned won support. For his part, in Argentina, during the television program “De ahora en más” broadcasted on May 23, 2003 and conducted by Van der Koy and Bertone, president-elect Néstor Kirchner, some days before assuming the post, expressed his commitment not only towards the widening of the MERCOSUR, but also to contributing to endow it with institutions, assigning it a political profile. In his presidential message before Congress, on May 25, he stressed the priority the MERCOSUR would have for his government.

Jaime Zuluaga Nieto*

A Tricontinental of Knowledge: a Space for South-South Co-operation

IN THE CONFLICT-RIDDEN history of the twentieth century, the staging of the Bandung Conference, in 1955, marked an important historical event: the search for economic, political and social alternatives by emerging nations in the midst of the polarization that marked the Cold War. The Conference was the starting point of the emergence of "third worldism" and of the Non-Aligned Movement, which set itself the goal of finding a path to development that differed from the capitalist path and from the Soviet socialist one.

Under the leadership of India, Indonesia, and somewhat later the Popular Republic of China, the emerging nations promoted the strengthening of relations among them in an attempt to break or transform the relationships of dependence with the old metropolitan centers and to construct new models of political organization and of economic and social development. These were the first forms of mutual approach among the countries of the "third world", which would later be called "underdeveloped", "peripheral" or "of the South".

The two decades that followed the Bandung Conference witnessed intense political, social and cultural agitation. By the mid-1960s, the colonial structure, laboriously built in the preceding centuries by the various European metropolises in Africa and Asia, had collapsed. Nationalism and socialism cornered the traditional forms of domination prevalent in the period. The so-called "socialist camp" split as a result of Sino-Soviet divergences, and in Eastern Europe the first major manifestations of rebelliousness against Soviet domination took place, especially in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Vietnam defeated French colonialism and the up to that time unbeatable United States military power. The large capitalist powers were shaken by the uprisings of young students and other social sectors in 1968. The struggles of women in the West and of blacks in the United States expanded the frontiers of political and social citizenship. In Latin America, the insurgent victory in Cuba and the Revolution's subscription to socialism extended the borders of the Cold War to the Caribbean. In many countries of the continent, there emerged revolutionary *guerrillas* with a socialist vocation. In this context, and with the promotion of the Cuban leadership with the aim of giving a common horizon to the struggles of the revolutionary movements, Asian, African and Latin American delegates gathered in Havana in 1966.

Thus was born the *Tricontinental*, which aimed to be a space of convergence of the revolutionary movements and of the governments that backed them to face the domination of capital and, in particular, that of the United States. The *Tricontinental* had a brief existence. Even before the end of the boom of the revolutionary struggles that shook the territories and nations of the three continents, it had already vanished. However, the idea of the need to articulate efforts, exchange experiences and develop forms of solidarity among those who were linked *de facto* by the need to wrest their liberation and transform their precarious social and economic living conditions, remained as a challenge.

This experience cannot but be evoked as we gather in Havana, almost forty years later, to reflect on the forms of cooperation among the societies and countries of the South. Today, like yesterday, it is imperative to erect spaces of cooperation that will contribute to the strengthening of our societies and to the development of our countries. If in the 1960s it was the revolutionary upsurge that boosted the *Tricontinental*, at the outset of the XXI century we are summoned by the urgency of strengthening our academic and scientific communities, creating the conditions that will allow the development of critical thinking and the generation of knowledge to be placed at the service of man and of the construction of solidary, equitable and fair societies, inspired in the unrenounceable struggle for freedom.

A Tricontinental for South-South co-operation

The changes that have taken place in the world system in the last decades of the twentieth century, in particular the scientific and technological revolution and the transformations it induced in production processes, have turned the production and appropriation of knowledge into one of the most efficient instruments of domination. Of course, this is not new. Alongside the traditional forms of economic and political domination exercised by the big powers, knowledge has always occupied an outstanding position. What is new is the greater importance it has acquired in the contemporary world compared to the traditional forms. In fact, there are those who characterize this phase of capitalist development as a *knowledge society*.

Those who hold this view attribute to the generation and appropriation of knowledge such an importance that it is even maintained that the difference between wealthy and poor societies resides, basically, in the levels of development of education and in their capacity to generate knowledge. Stated differently, if our societies lack the capacity to ensure decent living conditions for their inhabitants, this is fundamentally due to the weak development of knowledge, to technical backwardness, etc., and not to the global structures of domination which have been imposed on us, and which among other things have limited the possibilities of development for education and for the generation of knowledge.

By making the generation and appropriation of knowledge into one of the main instruments of domination, it is clear that it has also been turned into an arena of struggle for emancipation. One of our tasks is to create conditions so that, through cooperation among the societies and countries of the South, we can shape channels that will allow us to acquire greater strength in these fields, creating robust academic and scientific communities.

Let us get together on the basis of our diversity

The countries of the South constitute a rich diversity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and historical traditions. We know the indelible marks of domination, poverty, exclusion, but also libertarian struggles and the notable capacity to develop strategies for survival in the midst of poverty and exclusion. Overcoming enormous difficulties, we have accumulated an extraordinarily rich experience in the affirmation of our identities and the construction of our societies and countries. Nevertheless, a certain “coloniality of knowledge” hinders us from recognizing ourselves in them, and we neglect profiting from the rich potential represented by these experiences.

For historical and political reasons we continue to look to the North as the sole horizon and we have magnified it into the goal and the arrival point, within a perspective that undervalues our traditions and experiences. It is indispensable for us to turn our regard back toward our traditions and experiences. It is not a question of ignoring or undervaluing what the North has contributed to us, but of establishing a relation that will allow us to develop a “virtuous circle” in which it is possible to enrich ourselves with the knowledge and analysis of our realities, the dialogue among them, and their critical assimilation.

The societies and the countries of the South must unite based on our diversity to develop new forms of cooperation on the basis of the study of our history, culture, forms of organization and projects for society, and of the exchange and circulation of our scientific and technological knowledge.

A Tricontinental of knowledge

For historical reasons, we countries of the South have formed and strengthened our academic communities in a close relationship with Europe and the United States. There are conditions that explain that we should have concerned ourselves more with a greater strengthening of relations with European and North American research centers than with the countries of the South: the importance of these centers in the generation of knowledge, historical links with some of those countries, the availability of resources on their part, and the education policies they have promoted, among others. All of this has entailed undoubted advantages for us: we have shaped the foundations of our academic and scientific communities in some of the most important contemporary debates, and strengthened significant fields of learning, positioning us at the frontiers of knowledge.

Without ignoring these advantages, and without weakening our relations with the research centers of the countries of the North, it is necessary for us to strengthen relations among the societies and countries of the South, boosting relations and exchanges among the research centers and academic and scientific communities. As pointed out earlier, the societies and countries of the three continents –Asia, Africa and Latin America– enjoy an extraordinary wealth in their diversity. We come from different cultural traditions. We constitute a variegated ethnic, religious and linguistic mosaic. Our present is built above a complex and diverse past that we have not always sufficiently explored, and in some cases, we resist identifying ourselves with it. We experience diverse forms of economic, social and political organization in the incessant process of construction of projects of society.

In the midst of this rich diversity, we face a series of common economic, social and political problems, and we share challenges. I list, without any attempt at being exhaustive, some of the problems and of the challenges that they pose. The majorities of our societies are characterized by being markedly inequitable, exhibiting high levels of concentration of wealth and of massive poverty, and are led by social sectors deeply refractory to change. Under these conditions, the majority of their inhabitants lack access to the material goods required for subsistence and for enjoying a decent standard of living. In many countries, forms of political organization have been imposed that preclude the participation of majorities in the definition of the structuring of the society and of the possible paths towards their future. Likewise, many countries witness social and political conflicts, the mechanisms that would enable their peaceful handling and transformation not having been developed –which has made it possible for various forms of social and political violence to be deployed within them. From these problems ensue challenges for the societies and for social researchers. We must achieve a channeling of our societies along paths that will guarantee their economic growth and social development under equitable conditions, which will clear the path to the democratic construction of society on the basis of our specific historical conditions. Democracy in a restrictive sense, understood in the merely procedural sense, has been adopted in many cases as democracy's only form, without considering and creating the conditions, not only the opportunities, for its full fruition. We are in arrears as regards contributing to the theory of democracy the reflection about the experiences and possibilities of construction based on our specific historical conditions, which differ noticeably from those known by the societies that developed the classical forms currently applied. We require comprehensive democracies that are inclusive in economic, social and political aspects. We also face the challenges posed by interculturality and multiethnicity. Which are the political, social and cultural forms that will make coexistence possible, not despite the differences but acknowledging them, and without structuring relations of domination, subordination or exclusion on their basis? We do not know it yet with certainty, but the exploration of our histories and the analysis of current situations will surely throw light on this issue. For the moment, we know, as the result of experience in the construction of national states, that in most cases the latter have not managed to provide appropriate answers to those challenges.

The enunciation of some problems shared by a large number of our countries, and of the challenges that are derived from them, make manifest the magnitude of the task posed to social researchers and academic communities, and gives content to the proposal for South-South cooperation. We must start by accepting that, despite identifying these broad strokes, what we know about the realities of societies on other continents is very little. In particular, we Latin Americans know little about Asia and Africa. And very likely, our African and Asian colleagues know little about Latin America. Strengthening relations among the academic communities of the three continents cannot generate other than advantages for all; hence, the proposal for organizing what we may call a *Tricontinental of knowledge* as a space for South-South cooperation among social researchers in our continents. Knowledge of the experiences of others is a major resource in order to face current problems.

Some outlines for South-South cooperation

As the result of a lengthy march, significant academic communities have gradually been shaped in many of the countries of the three continents. Undoubtedly there are unequal developments. Some communities are more fully consolidated than others, which must be taken into account in the definition of the outlines for cooperation. For the definition and execution of a cooperation program, I propose the following elements:

- The establishment of relations, as is being done, among the main networks of research centers of the three continents. On the basis of relations among the networks it is possible to move forward on the following tasks: to identify the main research centers in the different countries; to identify the main lines of research they are carrying out; to promote intra-continental meetings that will make it possible to establish which lines of cooperation would have the highest priority.

- To define a common agenda regarding some shared lines of research that will allow the development of comparative studies at both intra and intercontinental level. A type of activity of this kind makes it possible to profit from the strengths developed by the centers that are part of the networks, promotes exchanges, and favors reciprocal knowledge about the realities of our societies. I propose some possible lines of research: interculturality; the overcoming of poverty; the construction of democracy; gender equitableness.

- To promote the establishment of research units on Latin American, Asian or African studies, as the case may be, at universities and research centers.

- To hold seminars, workshops, etc., that make it easier for researchers from the three continents to gather in order to move forward on comparative studies, as well as in the analysis and knowledge of specific realities.

- To define an exchange program among researchers of the centers in the networks at an intra and intercontinental level.

The strengthening of South-South cooperation for knowledge about our histories, and the development of relations on the basis of the differences, is a fundamental contribution to the consolidation of our identities and the search for shared horizons that will allow us to face and overcome the challenges derived from the manner in which our countries and societies have been configured, and a path for advancing in the collective construction of societies based on solidarity that will make equity, social justice and freedom real.

Notes

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