Atilio A. Boron*

& Gladys Lechini**

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.

14

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

* Executive Secretary of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO). Full Regular Professor of Political and Social Theory at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA).

** Academic coordinator of CLACSO's South-South Program. Regular Professor of International Relations at the National University of Rosario, Argentina.