

Observaciones críticas sobre el capitalismo neoliberal, el sujeto político y las crisis sociopolíticas del siglo XXI. Una cartografía general del presente y el futuro de América Latina, Europa, África y Asia.

Critical observations on neoliberal capitalism, the political subject and the socio-political crises of the 21st century. A general cartography of the present and future of Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

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#### Resumen

El presente texto tiene por objetivo rastrear, a través de la filosofía moral de Adorno, la posibilidad de actuar éticamente en un mundo falso, injusto y lleno de contradicciones. Con miras a ello, analizaremos primeramente las características de dicho mundo; acto seguido, presentaremos la necesidad de los individuos de proyectar sus actos en un mundo indeterminado para poder subjetivarse a través del acierto. Posteriormente, plantearemos que en una sociedad administrada con todas las variables fijadas no es posible que el individuo se subjetive. Por último, trazaremos las coordenadas para la emergencia del sujeto moral en un contexto de inmoralidad.

Palabras clave: Adorno, filosofía moral, individuo, ética, integración, subjetivación, mediación-

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this text is to trace, through Adorno's moral philosophy, the possibility of acting ethically in a false, unfair and full of contradictions world. With a view to this, we will first analyze the characteristics of said world; Immediately afterwards, we will present the need for individuals to project their actions in an indeterminate world in order to be able to subject themselves through success. Subsequently, we will state that in a society managed with all the variables fixed it is not possible for the individual to subject himself. Finally, we will trace the coordinates for the emergence of the moral subject in a context of immorality.

Keywords: Adorno, moral philosophy, individual, ethics, integration, subjectivation, mediation.

#### I. Introduction

No country is an island. No war, crises, or ecological disaster is limited by national borders. Everything spills over. Nothing is contained. Firstly, this essay examined the various ways that crises "spill over" national, political, and financial boundaries, both in terms of past influence and future effect, paying special attention to the differences in the European, Latin American, and Asian contexts. Yet another step is also taken, as different theories of extra-territorial influence are themselves taken to task, showing how the way we understand the influence of one country on another illuminates preconceptions held about both national and international contexts. For example, Felwine Sarr's idea of Afrotopia addresses how one issue facing understandings of Africa is that the continent is trapped in a double-bind between oppression and freedom: "The current debates about Africa are dominated by this double movement: a faith in a brilliant future and a consternation when confronted with a seemingly chaotic present fraught with a number of different convulsions" (Sarr xi). What is needed is a new metaphor for Africa's different situations in the present and future, since "Africa lacks an autonomous and endogenous teleonomy resulting from its own reflection on its present situation, fate, and the future it will provide itself" (xii). The three main sections of this essay also attempt to develop specific metaphors to describe the effects of crises on different areas of the world.

For example, in the European context, an understanding of the post-political subject is seen to explain the dire lack of political will. On the other hand, for Latin America, focus is given to the double-influence of both inward of migration flows and disabling violence. In Asia, with a special focus on China, finance is seen as a key player, using the ideas of an unequal exchange and overexploitation in order to posit the question of whether China is actually a model socialist country. Yet, at the same time, the essay suggests that any differentiation between an "authentic" autochthonous metaphor for internal struggle and taking a metaphor from outside one's self is a false one, and this too must be interrogated.

As Slavoj Žižek has argued in his essay "Sublimation and Dislocation: A False Choice," the choice between seeing world-historical events in terms of others (the Haitian Revolution as the "fulfillment" of the French Revolution, or the "sublimation" of the French Revolution in the Haitian one) and seeing such events in

their "own" terms, in which historical "elements are thoroughly re-contextualized, integrated into a new symbolic and social space which confers on them a new meaning unrelated to the original meaning one can in no way 'deduce' this new meaning from the original one" (2024, 10) (the *dislocation* of his title) is not fruitful to peruse, since revolution actually arises from the conflict between one type of metaphor and the other. This is the "double-bind" that Farr mentions in relation to his *Afrotopia*, in which, as Žižek says, the tension between overdetermination and self-determination is "inscribed into the very heart of the revolutionary process" (11). All three sections of this essay develop this tension in its true revolutionary potential, rather than making the false choice of one type of understanding over another.

# II. The Double Political Negation, or The Fall of the Political Subject. The Crises of the 21st Century in Europe

There seems to be no shortage of crises at the moment. What is interesting about the phenomenon that is commonly described under the term crisis is that it cannot usually be regarded as separate and isolated from other critical phenomena. For example, climate change cannot be understood as a phenomenon with clear territorial boundaries, as it is — to put it somewhat boldly — cosmopolitan in its own structural nature (albeit not in the positive connotation by which the term cosmopolitanism is commonly used). The COVID-19 pandemic also provides an apt example of this, not to mention the current wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. It is obviously true — and indeed empirically proven — that different nations are affected by the aforementioned crises to varying degrees. For example, as María Ramírez recently pointed out in an article in the Guardian, Catalonia is already struggling with severe periods of drought (Ramírez, 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, it also became clear that different countries were affected by the consequences of the pandemic to different degrees due to a differential distribution of relevant resources, which could have been organized differently. For example, Mike Ryan, one of the WHO's top crisis managers, repeatedly denounced at the height of vaccine production that developing countries had not received the necessary vaccines (Schumann and Arzt, 2021). Nevertheless, many of the crises that humanity is currently facing are united by the fact that they are interrelated and cannot be viewed as isolated from one another — an aspect that economic historian Adam Tooze recently drew attention to with the term "polycrisis" (Tooze, 2022).

If one intends to analyse the extent to which the European situation is shaped by the critical trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems worthwhile to start from three historical turning points, which in turn go beyond the territorial coordinates of the European continent, but, according to our central thesis, are formative for the ideological foundations that characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century in concrete terms: 9/11 in 2001, the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2022. According to the thesis to be presented below, these cornerstones also mark the negation of the political subject. Even if the impression may initially appear that in 2020 a re-politicization of social issues took place primarily during the pandemic, it will be argued that we have now entered a state of *hyperpolitics*, to use a term coined by Belgian historian Anton Jäger (Jäger, 2023), especially in many EU countries. While the post-political subject is to be understood as a clear negation of the critical subject in Kant's sense, the *hyperpolitical subject* also represents a clear negation of the political subject — with the paradox that it is highly political in its activities.

Post-Politics and the Death of the Responsible Subject

Against the backdrop of the election of the right-wing conservative Austrian politician Jörg Haider, Žižek pointedly drew attention to what specifically characterizes the post-political subject as early as 2000. According to Žižek's analysis, the unanimous rejection of Haider's election at EU level showed that the terrain of the political in the form of a false democratic consensus had been abandoned:

The message of this relief was: finally the enemy we can all really hate together, whom we can sacrifice — excommunicate — to demonstrate our democratic consensus! This relief must be read against the backdrop of what is usually called the emerging "post-political consensus" (Žižek, 2000).

According to Žižek, the consensus-democratic attitude that characterizes post-political subjectivity leads to the *political* being sacrificed in favour of an administrative mentality characterized by pragmatism. Whereas the political takes the form of an insight-led and practical fight against social antagonisms, administrative pragmatism ignores areas of political conflict and treats all antagonistic sides as pragmatically indifferent. Consequently, pragmatism only deals with questions of pragmatic differences to be made around multicultural openness and tolerance, thus expressing a feigned "us-them" opposition (i.e., are you now for the conservatives or do you count yourself among the progressive liberals?). According to Žižek's apt analysis, this ignores the fact that this "us-them" opposition is only expressed on a cultural level, as both modern left-liberals and conservatives start from the economic material premise that neoliberalism is a system without alternatives (ibid.).

b. 9/11 and the Emergence of Post-Political Subjectivity

Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Lausten (2004) accurately point out that 9/11 represents a historical moment in which the primacy of post-political subjectivity is clearly instrumentalized on a political level, which is why it seems logical to define the beginning of the 21st century as an important momentum of post-political subjectivity. According to Diken and Lausten, the *War on Terror* was based on the fundamental obscuration of the Kantian primacy of thinking for oneself, that one has the autonomy to self-legislate moral principles on the basis of reason and the understanding. In place of Kantian moral autonomy, a post-political discourse that assumes an us/them opposition constructed by the Bush administration is favoured at the expense of the antagonisms (sub\urban, 2024) that could be used as an explanation for the emergence of terrorist acts that are, therefore, neglected:

It is however central also to insist that the Western tradition is a tradition for democracy and criticism. Rather than undermining democracy in the war against terrorism, we must support it; and rather than keeping away from criticizing Bush's international policies in the name of patriotism and unity of the nation, we must criticize it mercilessly. Independence could refer to independence in the classical Kantian sense; namely, as *selbstdenken*: independent thinking. The ultimate catastrophe is the simple and simplifying distinction between the good and the evil, a rhetoric that basically copies the terrorist rhetoric and makes it impossible to think independently (Diken and Bagge Lausten 2004, 109).

This example clearly shows an aspect that is characteristic of post-political subjectivity: the ideology of democratic consensus does not necessarily mean that political antagonisms have completely disappeared from public political discourse. Rather, in the best Freudian sense, a projection (Freud 1940, 79) of political antagonisms onto ideologically fictitious and culturalized antagonisms is taking place. To return to Zižek's example: with regard to far-right politicians, the antagonism consists only in the fact that there is the left-liberal consensus, which stands for pluralism and tolerance (at least judging by their rhetoric), and the right, which stands outside this consensus as in the case of the AfD (Alternative for Germany). The War on Terror initiated by the Bush administration made use of similar discursive mechanisms: a genuine individualization of deeply political areas of conflict took place by suggesting that the Muslim represents the cultural stranger against whom the Western subject must position itself in a feeling of deepest mistrust, according to the prevailing consensus. The numerous acts of racist violence against Muslims and mosques immediately after 9/11 illustrate this development (Diken and Bagge Lausten 2004, 107).

The emergence of post-political subjectivation processes in the EU countries in the 21st century can of course only be outlined in broad strokes and incompletely. There are two key dates that are undoubtedly significant in this context. First, the "Agenda 2010" adopted from 2003 onwards by the SPD (the German Social Democratic Party) and the Greens, which led to the betrayal of the basic social democratic idea by none other than the social democrats themselves. The neoliberal reforms of the "Agenda 2010" policy hit those hardest whom social democracy had previously claimed to represent: the working class itself, which was now forced to take any job it could get in order to prove its own willingness to work (Heinrich 2004, 482). Numerous German TV programs that construct the image of the "lazy unemployed" bear witness to the fact that the logic of post-political thinking is also expressed here. However, the neoliberal undermining of the European welfare state was not only shown by the agenda reforms, but also by the European debt crisis of 2010, which hit Greece particularly hard. Instead of standing by Greece in solidarity, Germany confronted it with a massive form of austerity policy under the leadership of CDU politician Wolfgang Schäuble and thwarted the principle of European solidarity as a consequence — an aspect that former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis repeatedly and quite rightly pointed out in the context of his disputes with Schäuble (Varoufakis, 2015). Here, too, the post-political discourse in Germany reached its full effect, with the Greeks constantly being put in a bad light by claiming that they are simply not working hard enough to pay off their debts (Dückers, 2010).

## c. The Age of Hyperpolitics

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the primacy of politicization seems to have returned to the agenda — a development that the Belgian author Anton Jäger summarizes under the term "hyperpolitics". According to Jäger's thesis, hyperpolitics initially indicates that many areas of life are experiencing a re-politicization in contrast to the post-political state and that consensus-democratic subjectivity is in danger of eroding. What unites the post-political and hyperpolitical states, however, is the fact that the political (sub\urban, 2024) in itself remains neglected in both forms of political subjectivity. Jäger writes that, although the primacy of political debate has returned to social discourse, it is now focused on interpersonal and individual phenomena. The consensual apathy of post-politics is not being replaced by new political battles fought on a party-political basis, but rather by a moralization of every conceivable area of life (Jäger, 2022). Global phenomena such as climate

change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current geopolitical situation that was triggered by Russia's attack on Ukraine are being addressed politically, but — and here lies the decisive difference — the political itself is being ignored (sub\urban, 2024). To return to the example of the COVID-19 pandemic, the German debate was often only about how people felt about the vaccination itself in the form of statements on social media, Facebook profile picture frames, etc. without taking into account the larger political structural contexts, such as the unfair distribution of vaccines on a global level (Ryan, 2021). Similar apolitical forms of politicization are also appearing in relation to the war in Ukraine and the current Middle East conflict with many social media users adorning their profile pictures with Ukrainian, Israeli, or Palestinian flags. Alfie Bown (2018, 323) pointed out with great insight that the function of the emotion is to relieve the subject of the obligation to react actively to a political grievance (which would be a deeply political gesture) in line with the concept of "interpassivity" (2018) coined by Robert Pfaller. At the same time, the emoticon expresses one's own attitude with regard to political issues, which makes it a profoundly hyper-political phenomenon. Such apolitical forms of politicization, which are characteristic of the phenomenon of hyperpolitics, can also be observed in the case of climate change. In this context, Slavoj Žižek pointedly explains why hyperpolitical subjectivity is inevitably always dependent on a form of political superego:

A series of situations that characterize today's society perfectly exemplify this type of superego-individualization: ecology, political correctness, poverty, up to indebtedness in general. Does the predominant ecological discourse not address us as a priori guilty, indebted to Mother Nature, under the constant pressure of the ecological superego-agency which addresses us in our individuality: [...] The ideological stakes of such individualization are easily discernible: I get lost in my own self-examination instead of raising much more pertinent global questions about our entire industrial civilization. This is why it is in a way quite justified that I feel guilty: following the injunctions to recycle etc. ultimately means that I follow rituals which allow me to postpone doing something that would really address the causes of ecological crisis (Žižek 2022, 249).

Hyperpolitical subjectivity is apolitical precisely because it ignores the genuinely *political* which, according to Mouffe, describes the conflict-laden/antagonistic structure of socio-political issues (Mouffe 1993, 2). Instead, hyperpolitical subjectivity favours socio-political individualization and makes neoliberalism appear to have no alternative. A return to the genuinely political would mean that, in the words of Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo (2021), people are capable of imagining and constructing a new normalcy subsequently by taking themselves as political subjects.

#### III. Crisis and Transitions in Latin America

To address the continental situation in Latin America while considering some of the most significant crises and transitions, it is relevant to focus on three key axes: migration and its human consequences, violence and the urgency for peace, and the ecological crisis.

Latin America has historically been characterized by intense migration flows. One constant within this complex phenomenon is that "facing power structures represents a moment of great vulnerability" (Nolán and Muñoz, 2021, 8). According to the Inter-American Development Bank, the region has shifted from "being a region of emigration where historically most people moved to Europe or North America, to a region of much more complex internal migration flows" (Muñoz, 2023). Notably, the migration of millions of Venezuelans who have been displaced with the majority remaining in the region (6,538,756 out of 7,722,579) (Harris, 2021, 32) (R4V, 2023); the Haitian diaspora which drove millions of Haitians to the United States following the 2010 earthquake and which have sought refuge in other countries such as Brazil and Chile because of the difficulties in reaching the United States (Harris 2023, 9) (Merola 2022); the significant value of remittances for the countries of origin (Muñoz, 2023); and the humanitarian crises in strategic areas for migration flows such as Necolí, Iquique, Tapachula, Tijuana (BBC, 2021).

According to some authors, the responses to migration flows generally favor controlling instead of protecting migrants (Ceja et al., 2021, 12-13). The strategies employed include deterring policies and increased militarization. Cárdenas (2003) outlines different types of deterrence: repressive, generally preventing the settling and residence of the migrants; coercive, controlling the entry and transit of migrants in a territory; and preventive, discouraging migrants from leaving their countries (5). Militarization can manifest itself in various aspects: designation of men in the Military to Government positions, military practices, transfer of functions, and transfer of resources (6). Mexico's migration policy during the 2018-2024 government serves as an example of the effects of the externalization of the United States' border throughout the continent (Ceja et al, 2021, 12), particularly the militarization since 2019 when, under pressure to impose taxes on Mexican exports, a security policy was agreed upon and implemented through the National Guard (Cárdenas, 12).

The "Migrations and Human Mobility" platform of CLACSO points out that the prevailing perspective regarding migrants has been to "differentiate between nationals and non-nationals, with the latter seen as a threat that deepens—or causes—different problems" (CLACSO, 2023). However, migration in the continent

goes beyond economic aspects, as it involves practices of discrimination, xenophobia, aporophobia, human rights violations in detention and confinement centers, exploitation, and hostility along the routes they traverse (Herrera, 2023, 14-16). The migratory experience implies a transformation of subjectivities that were traditionally tied to a territory or culture, becoming now border subjectivities not only at the crossroads of different borders and cultures but also in the "agreement and disagreement between various forms of oppression and belonging that are often perceived more as contradictions and ambiguities than as certainties" (26).

The second key axis which accounts for the most significant crises and transitions on the continent is violence. According to Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, Vice President of the World Bank, "Latin America and the Caribbean are the most violent regions in the world, and violence is on the rise." (Jaramillo, 2024) The Global Organized Crime Index 2023, in comparison to the 2021 edition, also indicates that all indicators related to criminal actors are increasing (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023, 111).

This violence has many aspects and impacts various social spheres. It is one of the main factors influencing people's decision to migrate, it has significant consequences for economic growth (Jaramillo, 2024), but above all, it reflects inequality, the vulnerability of individuals, and also the governments' inability to manage such violence — a dystopia of capitalism (Valencia, 2018) and a manifestation of necropower (Jaitman, 2017), (Estévez, 2018).

According to Nilia Viscardi and Gabriel Tenenbaum:

The main causes of the radicalization of violence (settling scores, contract killings, cruelty in causing death, etc.) in the region are legal and illegal protection networks, prohibitionist drug policies, and the territorial governance of criminal groups. This tragedy is closely linked to the issue of missing persons, unidentified bodies, families displaced from their homes and communities, and the deportation of migrants from the United States. However, it is also intimately connected to agricultural production, the international value of raw materials, market opening, financial deregulation, the development of communications and transportation, and the overall process of globalization (2023, 7).

The crises of violence in the region are linked to the ways of governing and democracy. On the one hand, the politicians promise to address during their campaigns the social demands for peace and justice; however, the money and territorial dominance of organized crime, along with its political pressure, limit the scope for social transformation once in power. There is a wide range of responses to tackle the issue of violence ranging from strengthening social policies to dissuade the most vulnerable population from viewing drug trafficking as an option, "Abrazos, no ba-

lazos" (García-Kobeh and Mariscal 2023); advocating for a long-term strategy with results yet to be seen and with a discreet role for the armed forces; to more radical strategies like the "Territorial Control Plan" focusing on penal facility control, disrupting organized crime financing, and bolstering security forces. The latter offers short-term results but with reservations regarding human rights respect (Salmon, 2023).

There is no clear horizon for solving the multifaceted problem of violence in the region, as homicides, missing persons, human trafficking, and forced recruitment, especially of youths, are the most alarming and visible symptoms of massive structural violence within the countries. Addressing this would require extensive public policies for peace (Galtung, 2014, XIV) and the ability to confront structural violence in the global system (Tortosa, 2010, 41-52), going beyond normalized violence within a neoliberal peace (Martínez, 2024), particularly against women (Sánchez-Hernández, et al., 2023).

Migration and violence in the region are closely related to the ecological crisis. The former is exacerbated by the effects of climate change, natural disasters, deforestation, and water scarcity. Regarding the latter, organized crime has diversified its interests and forms of revenue and found significant income sources in environmental crimes (Jones, 2021). Furthermore, the increasing murders of environmental defenders in recent years are particularly severe (Yañez, 2023). In 2022, Latin America accounted for 88% of global cases of these murders (Global Witness, 2023).

According to CEPAL (Gligo et al, 2020), the ecological crisis in the region is part of a global and civilizational crossroads that requires structural, paradigmatic, and cultural change to enable life sustainability and put a stop to the capitalist development model. Some data reflecting the magnitude of the problem in Latin America and the Caribbean include the following: by 2010, 40% of the forests, corresponding to 650 million hectares, had been completely stripped or were severely degraded (20), impacting poverty and increasing the population's vulnerability. Concerning water, about 25% of the population, 150.6 million people, live in countries with high water stress (70). Regarding biodiversity loss, the *Living Planet Report 2022* reports that among researched populations Latin America experiences the greatest regional decline (WWF, 2022, 4).

We consider that migration, violence, and environmental deterioration are crises that impact the present and future of the region in material terms, but they also transform the subjectivity of individuals in terms of their vulnerability, contingency, and fragility. People are constantly exposed to harm in their daily lives, a harm that arises not from something transcendent or monstrous but from the way indi-

viduals relate to each other. It requires an effort, a commitment, to avoid causing unnecessary harm to ourselves (Yébenes, 2022, e556).

## IV. Crisis of globalized financial neoliberal capitalism: Asia a New Master?

In this section, we divide it into three parts: first, we discuss the crisis of globalized neoliberal financial capitalism, noting also the predicament of Euro-Atlantic modernity. Second, we review and briefly discuss unequal exchange, underdevelopment and how the periphery and semi-periphery of Asian countries continue to be exploited by the North; third, we discuss China's model of socialist political economy as an alternative political project for the Global South, what constitutes a new alternative modernity and its relevance for a "long transition" to world socialism. The third part allows us to answer whether China is seeking its place as a new Master.

## a. Financial Neoliberal Capitalism: Inequality, Austerity and Scarcity

The crisis of Euro-Atlantic modernity today means the crisis of the Euro-American-Japanese finance capital bloc. This "collective imperialism of the triad" is a hegemonic world historical bloc, in which, finance capital plutocracies and the advance capitalist states control and monopolizing strategic sectors and resources on a global scale: natural resources, financial flows, new technologies, communications and weapons of mass destruction (Amin, 2021, p.17). The finance capital today is a merging between centralization and concentration of money, industrial and commercial capital (François Chesnais, 2016).

Today crisis is a condensation of previous historical crises and impasse of capitalism, one of the premises is that world capitalism has not fully recovered from the inevitable and periodic crisis of 2008-09, where the advance capitalist states of the North has persistently stand still in the long depression economy (Michael Roberts, 2016). Despite that, the continuous market access, capital circulation and massive surplus value transfer from Global South to the North allows the metropolis to overcome the stagnation and control inflation.

However, the bourgeois economists foster their dogmatism and illusion that there was always a happy-ending economic recovery, boom and prosperity after the crisis, or recession. Consequently, global capitalist imperialism dragged itself into another trap of its own creation, derived from decades since the end of long golden

era of capitalism (1945-1975) and five decades of neoliberalism (1970s-present): the excessive spending, growth and moving the capital beyond the 'actual existing capitalism' into a non-productive, non-real, ecologically destructive and parasitic sectors of the capitalist economy than ever before in world history: financialization, militarism and rentier digital capitalism.

In addition, these three sectors are currently the dominant strategies of the collective imperialism of the triad and their finance plutocracies to maintain the accumulation and domination amidst its long depression. Instead of boom and prosperity after the crisis, we have more war, crisis, apartheidism, not to count the drained wealth and precarious economic formation of digital "neofeudalism" (Jodi Dean 2020). Today, global capitalist imperialism exploits and oppresses the working masses and threatening the foundation of ecological reproduction mostly in terms of financial-military-rent nexus (See Hudson 2003 & 2016).

In effect, the world has encountered the extreme rise of wealth inequality at the unprecedented global levels, and even within nations of the North and South. The Oxfam Report 2022 shows the top ten richest men of the earth own more than 3.1 billion people combined, and 1% richest people account 70% global wealth. The wealth of the richest 1% doubled since the pandemic, and from 2020-2021, a billionaire appeared every 30 hours, while the incomes of the 99% were declining and one million people pushed into poverty every 33 hours (Oxfam 2022). Almost same, the World Inequality Report (2022) reveal that the bottom 50% people share 2% global wealth, while the plutocracies 1% shows a faster growing of wealth comparing to 10% middle class in the North and rich of Global South is growing slower. For three decades, the top 1% captured 38% of global wealth, socializing 2% to the 50% people at the bottom, and this makes the wealth of 0.1% richest people on earth rise from 7% to 11% in the past thirty years. In addition, the richest in North America and Western Europe collect 35% of national wealth and income while the bottom 50% receive only 19% of national wealth. More extreme is in the Global South, where the richest 10% gains 45-58% of national income, while the poor 50% share only 9-12% of national wealth (Chancel et.al 2022). And the fact is, most of the plutocracies based in the West are coming from the financial, digital and military industrial sectors that coalesce in what we referred above as the most beneficial in our current financial neoliberal capitalism.

Thus, the acute growth of wealth for minority 1% accompanied with stagnant and wealth drain of the majority 99% is a problem of cycle of capitalist underdevelopment and austerity-debt trap that imposed to people and government all over the world, specially the South by financial neoliberal capitalism and the imperialist economic apparatus such as IMF, World Bank and WTO. At least, hundreds of sta-

tes are being neoliberalized, and persistently follows the western dictate of austerity since the 2008 crisis (Ortiz, Isabel, Cummins et.al, 2015).

These swing of antagonism between the collective imperialism of the triad and its outskirts, within the plutocracies, and the monopolies with their junior national bourgeoisie of the Global South, and between both against the majority popular class and working masses, can be articulated as a battle between contradictory projects and desires of progress and modernity (Tricontinental, 2023). It manifested that, capitalism deepened multiple crises, war, and sustained a transfer of gigantic wealth flowing in colossal amounts into a minority financial-military-rentier complex plutocracies in the North and their junior subordination in the South. In contrast to it, socialist experimentation in the twenty-first century is aimed at the success of material development, productive capacity, and well-being of the majority. At national level, the majority popular class faces scarcity and austerity amidst the transfer of national wealth and abundance to the tiny and oligarchic.

## b. Asia: Unequal Exchange, Over-Exploited and Development

Since the crisis of Asian Tigers during the 1990s, people continue to be amazed with another successful history of capitalist triumphalism in Asia, and the name was converted into what some have misappropriated as 'Chinese Miracle'. Regardless, the world turned attention to Asia, US imperialism redefining the strategy of 'Asia Rebalance' and their 'Indo-Pacific Strategy', signaled a new cold war targeting China that, even, our Western leftist denounce it. Some, continued, referred to this centuries to come as the Asia Century, signaling the shift of center of global political power from Europe to Asia, and reduced the confrontation in Asia simply into the geographical-deterministic fault-line of the clash of civilization (Kaplan 2012 & 2015). Thus, we are dictated to believe that, the oriental despotic autocracies from the continent of rebellion and revolution, has fully embrace the capitalism of the West, set to be the next successor hegemonies of world capitalism, stabilizer power that prevented the monstrous capitalist civilization to collapse.

These ideas are almost legitimate the following erroneous leftist positions: the Asian emerging power, and the capitalist states of the periphery are standing equal with the West, and are about to catch up the North, the emerging power such as China shared the prosperity by extracted and expropriated massive profits with the West from their less, undeveloped neighbor of the South. Second, it permits the idea that the inter-imperialist rivalry is now between Asian Capitalism and Western Capitalism, or Chinese imperialism and North imperialism. Third, it prevented the

idea that we are not living in a new cold war of US-led western imperialist alliance to weaken and destroy Chinese socialist alternatives.

Asia was once united, with the African continent, for a common project of decolonization, democracy and auto-centric development demonstrated in the third world initiatives such as Bandung Movement (1950s-80s), that succeeding with the continuous creation of Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and G77. Today, Asia is a region of diverse, complex, and uneven. The people in it are fragile and encircled and weakened by imperialism, superstitious and religious fanaticism, cultural resurgence, and rising right populism with peculiar backward-looking. Former crony members and family dynasties of previous dictators are reelected in major Southeast Asian countries that self-proclaimed as the biggest democracy of Muslim and catholic dominated archipelagic states such as Indonesia to Philippines.

The major question facing today in Asia is underdevelopment and over-exploitation, rent monopoly and deepening financialization and neofeudalism of economy, and on the other, destruction of land, agriculture and ecology in general. And the West, the North imperialism alone, must bear the full responsibility.

Asia, despite rapid growth, modernization, and overseas expansion through trade and a significant share of global production output, the massive hidden surplus values have relentlessly transferred to the North. Through the asymmetric, unequal international trade exchanges between 1990-2015, the North high income countries appropriated resources and values that sustain their high income and mass consumption from the net exports of ecological resources such as cheap raw materials, labor to energy from the South, in Asia's most lumpen-development states except China and India (Christian Dorninger et.al. 2021).

We may see a massive number of industries previously in the metropolis are reallocating to Asia due to low wages, and rollback of protective regulatory policies from the state over the labor and resources. However, the final extraction and appropriation of value produced in Asia including the semi-periphery country such as China, or extra-periphery such as India consistently lost by being transferred to the North until nowadays.

In a not long past report from a global south economist, indicated that the South losses more than it can benefit from the North. Two socialist market economies in Asia such as China and Vietnam suffered greater losses due to unequal exchange with the North. China's absolute loss 2% of its GDP output equivalent to \$357 billion are transferred to the North, while Vietnam losses 17% from its output. Despite this, China's transfer to the North declined from 42% from total value transfer from the South to the North in 2005, and by 2017 it accounted for only 16% of the total. This decline of losses is due China's strong bargaining

role in the global economy by resisting the neoliberalization and structural adjustment attempted by the North. Although, removing China from the list, the transfer from the rest of the south is still the same. Thus from 1960-2018, the global south lost \$160 trillion to the North, now, each year, the South loses 2.2 trillion USD to the North, an amount that could end massive extreme poverty in the globe. From this number, Asia including China, Southeast Asia to Pacific, from Central Asia to the Middle East are the most exploited regions that *developing* the North by contributing to the growth, high income and consumption styles of the North. And that exploitation increased exponentially since a period of deepening of neoliberal policies reform and ascendancy of financialisation across the Global South in the 1980s-1990s until the present (Jason Hickel, et.al, 2021).

With these numbers, it is ironic to say that, the North is developing the South, or the bourgeoisie of the North, imperialism is making Asia like the other, in its own image. Because, some still say that, us, the colonized in Asia that now gained national independence was the sole European modern invention: *Euro-Atlantic capitalist imperialism with the agency of colonialism*. Does a socialist revolution and national liberation invent another modernity? – Doesn't nation and people were born from politics of social struggle, history and the modern subject itself that sovereignty proclaims themselves as a people and nations? – Independence from colonial and neocolonial modernity is a self-determined modern invention of the people of the rest and Asia, not a gift offered by their former colonial power. *To affirm that, Asia is not a product of the Cold War (See Alex Taek-Gwang Lee; and Gustavo Oliveira)*.

These objective situations led us to conceive the vitality of the national-popular agenda of anti-neoliberal, financial imperialism in Asia, and toward the importance of sovereignty, development and modernization projects of the Asian periphery countries. That is to say, independence is just an initial stage for complete liberation of the people and human freedom – the name is *socialist-communist modernity*. In this initial stages, independence states and socialist in Asia either chose to build a new productive power and social relations, auto-centric development, and the intellectual and virtuous principles centered on abundance and wealth, or they are adjust and compromise to the demand of the capitalist imperialism that ended up with dancing nowhere with scarcity and dependency, ones that oppose to long complete break with capitalist-imperialism.

Today, Asia has been divided into three formations of nation-states, no matter what ideological representations are dominated in the states: first, is the emerging power seeking to complete break with capitalist imperialism, that is China

or Vietnam, using the market as organic component of the socialism to resist the imperialism and choose the path of development; second, is the emerging power of capitalist states of periphery that serving the needs of the center such as India or Indonesia, that is seemed to continue the Western-dictate subservient economy that still posed the elements of lumpen-development; and the last is, the underdeveloped, war-torn states, super-exploited periphery capitalist states of Asia such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Philippine, Timor-Leste, and so on that confine in the cycle of conflict, famine, polarization, mass impoverishment, to a dispossession, dependency, maldevelopment and cheap raw material suppliers. The last two forms of states are certain to fail and be controlled by the Western imperialism. Citizens living in those two forms of states confronted not only a question of building a popular and democratic sovereignty of masses, but the need to overthrow their national elites and oligarchic powers serve as vassals of the imperialist North. While in the former case such as China, what is needed is to repoliticized the masses through popular participation in political-economic governance.

China, as a "model" of socialist market economy, does not join all other emerging powers that serve imperialism, nor can they be categorized as lumpen-development (Cheng Enfu & Xin Xiangyang 2011). Which is why we need to further elaborate in the next final section.

## c. China's Socialist Development and Modernity

The question remains that, is China really not a socialist state, but an emerging global power seeking to replace the old Master as a new imperialist power? Is China doing a dirty imperialist politics of destruction, plundering and dispossessing the others, both people and nations?

China is a semi-periphery country, despite of undertake unequal exchange and exploitative relations with the poor third world of Asia, Africa and Latin America, however, the vast surplus values produced in the South and in China are mostly transferred to the North and their capital monopolies (Minqi Li 2021). Chinese socialist modernization is opposite to Western modernity that is "based on colonisation, plunder, slavery, and predatory exploitation of the natural resources and peoples in the Global South." However, China has a distinct modernization path that being centered on "principles of shared prosperity among a massive population, material and ethical-cultural progress, harmony between humans and nature, and peaceful development" (Marco Fernandes, 2023, p.7).

On the another, it is right to ask the following questions that, is socialism with each characteristic rooted in social and historical formations of a nation's more democratic and diverse, potential for pluripolar modernity than a universe of scarcity and poverty standardized uniformly by the world financial-monetary-trading apparatus on behalf of 'bureaucratic Caesarism' (Keucheyan & Durand, 2015)' of the Empires and the financial plutocracies of the North – which is better served for humanity and ecology? Will China inspire and affect Asia as a whole to construct a common project of alternative modernity?

The first wave of socialism (Nineteenth century socialist working class movement) toward second socialist wave (Twenty century with socialist and national liberation), China is now, a leading country of third wave socialism, that characterized as socialist constructions in the twenty-first century marked with the use of market in socialist modernization and development. Yang Ping (2023) wrote:

"At a time when the contemporary capitalist world system is facing tremendous crises, the opportunity for a new global wave of socialism has once again emerged. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is likely to be a key factor in initiating this wave. As China continues to rise and becomes a leading global power, the Chinese path of development will attract more attention as a viable alternative mode of production and way of life, promoting the formation of a new global socialist system and value system that is increasingly accepted by people around the world"... various forces of international capitalism are mobilising against China. Attacks and smears from liberal, nationalist, and populist political forces are endless. Even some international left-wing forces harshly criticise China on issues of democracy, human rights, and environmental protection, and even question whether China is truly socialist. Since the Biden administration came to power in the United States, alliance politics have ramped up on a global scale. A US-led bourgeois 'holy alliance' is rapidly coalescing under the pretext of containing China."

The Chinese nation-state resists the internal enemies and imperialist powers, the CCP consolidated the power and managed the development in the unequal exchange and asymmetrical world formation, international division of labor and uneven development in the globe. Chinese geopolitical economic resistance against imperialist power is a class struggle of people and nations on a global scale. The sovereignty, territory and resources is a matter of resistance politics of people and nation. As Prabhat Patnaik wrote the route toward "internationalism lies in an anti-imperialist national agenda", and "nation still remains the only practical point of intervention in the struggle against imperialism".

Thus, instead of pointed to Chinese Communist Party as the Big Other, Asian Capitalism or Chinese totalitarian capitalism, or perhaps, we start asking different, right questions that, are we in the lumpen-development country of the South nor

we the people in the North, has a real choice to choose the genuine leadership and representations aside from right populist, oligarchic and disciple of free market neoliberalism dictated and appointed by the imperialist North? – Nations, people and states that resist the unilateral authoritarianism and totalitarianism of capitalist imperialism are contributing to a discontinuity and break, to genuine progress of real development and democracy, that is to say, objective historical tasks of building a long transition toward a complete liberation and world socialism.

The desire of each big national bourgeoisie in the South is to replace the foreign capital instead of simply becoming an intermediary class. However, the Chinese are not going to replace the foreign masters and Western monopolies as a new hegemonic imperialist power. The logic of Hegelian master-slave is operated, evident in concrete contradictions between China's new alternative project in the current established imperialist world. China did not seek domination and subordination of the West and the Rest. China is a facticity bound to the Global South in which China stands its destiny with (Yang Ping, 2023 p.12).

Unequal exchanges, and economic expansion of China into the Rest, while continuing to submit to the imperialist North and monopolies, doesn't make China join the established oppressor, or seem to be part of a new oppressor from now on. It was a formation that China posed in this interdependency relations with the master and their combined development project in the imperialist system, where it needed to support the Rest, and at the same time, they needed to detach from the master, and to annihilate the master at the same trajectory. This historical dilemma is described at the end of the Twenty Century that "if getting caught in the vortex of globalized finance is painful, getting out of it is equally painful" (Prabhat Patnaik 1999).

Certainly, the Chinese masses enjoyed considerable satisfaction, productivity, needs and peace since the "reform" (1970s), until the so-called "new era" of socialist modernization. The basis of Chinese existence, and socialist modernization are incompatible with the continuous preservation of the current imperialist system. Unite with imperialists means fatal self-destruction of China, and it required a further transformation of its projection to a higher stages of socialist modernization. As it shows in the 'delinking' project and socialist modernization in China today shows a path toward development and decolonization, not dependency nor even a domination (see Amin 1987).

We think that's what the Chinese communist sought to materialize and manage in the extremely barbarous, decadency time of ours. *The contradictory nature of socialist construction under the global capitalist imperialism is inevitable*. China is in the fight and resistance, development and modernization, consol-

idation and construction of socialism, to fulfill its own mission, and not to betray: *liberation*.

#### V. Conclusion

The aim of this essay was to characterise, at least in part, the crises that are currently paralysing the various regions operating - willingly or unwillingly - within the capitalist system-world. And even though these crises often resemble each other - recall: in South America it is, in our view, migration and its human consequences, violence and the urgency for peace, and the ecological crisis; in Asia, financial exploitation and the exacerbation of relations towards peripheral regions (being diverse, complex and uneven). It seems necessary to refer for a moment to the central and semiperipheral countries of the so-called Global North. They can be characterised, following Wallerstein and Ake (in the case of the latter, his analysis of the situation of a peripheral country such as Nigeria in his time), as characterised by greater commodification of individuals, but, at the same time, greater freedom understood in the bourgeois sense, that is, only the political one and given only to the few.

As was recently stated by Ness (2023), it is not always about simple North-South relations. Looking at migration flows, for example, one can see that the relationship is more complicated - with migration always functioning as abusive and exploitative (ibid: 18). The complexity of the process also shows the complexity of the relationship that currently exists between the countries. As Ness writes about it, we can speak about the fundamental division between rich countries of Global North and poor countries of Global South - but one must remember, that some variations create "greater complexity" (ibid: 14).

This leads to divisions that go beyond pre-imposed, fixed divisions. For example, Nicolas Verón in breugel (2023) pointed out that both Russia and Ukraine could - in economic terms - be considered countries of the Global South. This is why the important magazine of the Ukrainian left, Commons, wrote that "Ukraine is not a part of the Western world", claiming that it has a peripheral status (2023).

In this sense, as we tend to think, it is important to refer to the division between centre and periphery, having its basis in the foundation texts for critical thought. Going beyond geographical divisions, it is possible to create new alliances, based on a chain of equivalences of different demands, as Laclau proposes in his theory of populism. In doing so, we should bear in mind that the aversion to alliances - associated by Laclau and Mouffe with the figure of Karl Kautsky - is "the centrepiece of

a fundamentally conservative strategy", as his "radicalism relied on a process which did not require political initiatives, it could only lead to quietism and waiting" (2001: 22).

In a situation of polycrisis - usually one of the symptoms of a systemic interregnum, as Gramsci put it - it is necessary to forge new alliances. For, the problems presented in the above text, although seeming *regional*, are in fact universal, occurring simply in different places with different intensities. Financialisation, as can be seen from the work of Lapavitsas (e.g. 2023), also affects the semiperipheries of Europe. Migration is a global problem, as presented, for example, by Ness (2023). The list could be endless.

Conclusions can be also drawn as to the regions described in the text. Asia is a good example - formerly united with Africa in a common struggle, it is now, as highlighted in the text, very diverse. This can be seen in the example of China, described like a place, to fulfil its own mission, and not to betray: liberation; but also an imperialist power, even though categorised as semiperipheral and not defending the socialist values. These are complex phenomena and require detailed class analysis and also recourse to theories of imperialism. What seems particularly relevant here is the demand to speak of hyperpolitics, often separated from the political, as Jäger, whom we have already quoted, wrote about. We may see now a highly politically engaged subject, but one that does not act politically par excellence. It therefore makes political action impossible. We are dealing with a post-political subject, as Zizek wrote about - and for that, impossible for activism. Hence, it is necessary to develop an appropriate theoretical practice to combat the hegemony of global post-capitalism.

Clearly that, socialism, is a project for new modernity that aims at creating more wealth abundance for many and annihilating the power of the few and corrupted representation. The capitalist imperialism with the face of financial, neoliberal and digital is antithetical to these, and entails a synonymous with a paramount inequality, austerity and scarcity. New socialist modernity shall be developed and built from the advancement and abundance.

So, what has been the response so far from the national, popular and socialist project outside the collective imperialism of the triad? The Rest opposes by launching varied initiatives to contribute to genuine auto-centric industrial development, dedollarized, and multipolar world of peaceful transition toward world socialism. We need a popular counter-hegemonic bloc internationally, and it won't be a working-class movement. It requires a massive composition balancing forces between the broad popular sectors of working people and class, nations, and states. That is why multipolar and internationalism are two sides of the same coin (Xi-

menes, 2023, p.343). The two sides of projections could advance the people and the working-class movement and states in resistance, for real development, decolonization but also for liberation from unilateral, monocultural and 'Whiteness' modernity of capitalist imperialism (Bolivar Echeverria, 2019).

In conclusion, it is certainly worth referring to the concept of Bolívar Echeverría that we have already mentioned. Through the 'dialogue of the periphery', it is possible to detect new forms of the hegemony of 'whiteness' of which he wrote. To go beyond the 'Americanisation' of modernity (2010: 53 etc.) and pay attention to its other forms, leading to a new project. In this sense, it is only possible to lead to a practice leading from the theory we have outlined in the text above.

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