



## PEOPLE'S VOTE COMPATIBLE WITH PEOPLE'S FATE A democratic alternative to liberal democracy

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*"We're the rightful owners of this country...  
Since you can't govern, give us back the power...  
Let us govern!"<sup>1</sup>*

### ABSTRACT

Power, not by bullet, ballot or wallet, but by representation is the only political rescue option for the troubled societies of contemporary world that can permit genuine democracy and trigger development. Liberal democracy, based on appropriation of power by induced consent, has failed to deliver and is historically exhausted as an option. The joint pursuit of development, representation and development ideology is the only realm for the mobilization of the three critical factors that shape history: social forces, survival and awareness. That is the only alternative to social death for derailing societies, given the imminent external danger of globalization into extinction. The alternative, as is argued out of an assessment of historical experience, is the mobilization of all positive social forces and the moral stock of society, in order to create democratic social and political development movements based on social agency, solidarity and representation, as the democratic alternative to liberal democracy.

The 'democratic' appropriation of power is no guarantee for a democratic exercise of rule. Appropriation of power can neither assure a fair allocation of resources in the pursuit of collective interests, nor safeguard the survival of the nation and the future of a polity. Many people in contemporary world, looking back half a century, find this awful truth dominating their history as the main flaw of liberal democracy.<sup>2</sup>

A whole century of evidence corroborates that liberal democracy has not been incompatible with social and economic inequality, with anti-democratic rule, with physical oppression, with partisan distribution of resources and systemic corruption. Universal suffrage and collective suffering went hand in hand. Explosive social disruption and political instability, ethnic conflict and religious confrontation, civil war and separatism, the abortion of development and the truncation of social evolution, those have been the social cost of the structural democratic deficit of the liberal option, most saliently in independent nation states that emerged on three continents in the twentieth century.

These enormous social and human costs of historically aborted development pose critical threats, both nationally and globally, to stability, peace and survival, particularly in the era of neoliberal globalization that has turned the picture before us grimmer. Dooming circumstances of beleaguered societies, without any perspective for stability, peace or development, urge both social science and politics in contemporary world to promptly

<sup>1</sup> This was the response of opposition Senator Germán 'El Inca' Choquehuanca's at the height of Bolivia's social and political crisis to Bolivian Vice-President Carlos Meza. See: "Bolivia: Aymara Rebellion and Democratic Dictatorship" by Forrest Hylton. Znet, October 13, 2003 (<http://www.zmag.org/weluser.htm>).

<sup>2</sup> Liberal democracy includes parliamentary democracy, the presidential system and all political systems where power is endorsed by the secret ballot through individual-based universal suffrage with a multiparty system.

formulate a feasible alternative for the future. The aim of these reflections on politics, power and governance is to draw the contours of a democratic alternative to liberal democracy, where people's vote is compatible with people's fate.

## **1. Governance and liberal democracy**

The nature and quality of governance and rule always constitute a critical factor for development, stability and survival of a society. Notwithstanding unprecedented advances in science and technology, humanity has been unable to find viable answers to essential matters as social coexistence, ecological survival, justice, peace and governance. The strife of humanity, triggered by the innate drive for survival and self-realization, to benefit from control and manipulation of nature has come to a dead end.

At this point, the most critical flaw in the evolution of humanity is the breach between its intellectual and social development. Unable to control the products of its own intelligence, extraordinary achievements of centuries of science, technology and knowledge could neither secure social development, nor prevent an explosive breach in inequality, injustice and suffering at a global scale, nor restrain intolerance in culture and creed. Revolutionary human incursions in the realm of knowledge and ability rather provoked imminent manmade apocalyptic dangers in the field of ecology, development, social stability and peace. Sophisticated weaponry, war and destruction figure among the most prominent applications of science and technology. The key challenge of humanity facing these multiple man-made threats to survival is, therefore, not technical but social, not to subdue nature but to discipline human race, not the control of matter but the control of man. This casts all footlights on the sphere of governance and on the say of people in the rule over all.

The appropriation of power to govern and rule, by force, conspiracy or elections, has been no guarantee for good governance, social justice or development. That may well be an inherent problem, since any appropriation of power constitutes a paternalist negation of democracy. Historically, democracy has been claimed in the full ideological continuum from universal suffrage systems of capitalist liberal democracy up to the democratic centralism of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Communism, fascism, dictatorship, caudillismo<sup>3</sup> and liberal democracy can be bracketed together for providing bitter episodes of elite provoked derailment, instability and crises all over the globe. The toll paid by peoples and societies suffering from domination, tyranny and despotism at the hand of self-proclaimed or elected vanguards or rulers has been unacceptably high in the twentieth century in East, West, North and South.

In communism - whether in its Marxist-Leninist, Stalinist or Maoist version - an ideological vanguard of intellectuals, rather than the class deemed revolutionary, seizes leadership and command for the cause of the proletariat. An 'enlightened' elite, versatile in proletarian ideology, claims to act in their name. The legitimacy of its dictatorship of the proletariat and democratic centralism got a severe blow by the collapse of blocs and walls. Fascism, opportunistically seeking advantages in the troubled waters of deep social crises and despair, was marginalized by historic defeat in big war. Repeatedly, dictatorship and caudillismo, exploiting frustrations and social despair, were overrun with severe tolls of vindictive democratic, human rights and liberation movements, most salient in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In our days, these failed systems of governance and rule have vanished as a viable option to offer an alternative for the future of troubled societies. Liberal democracy not only gained momentum in a favorable capitalist environment that went global, but now claims universal validity as the only viable system of governance, in the 'end-of-ideology' ideology of neo-liberalism.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Caudillismo' is the usurpation of state power by a military leader by using the military institution and support among the military to appropriate and sustain political power.

With other systems on their way to oblivion, liberal democracy has grown into a universally coined system of legalization of governance, power and rule, endorsed by the aggregated votes of citizens. In contemporary world, with the fall of the socialist bloc, liberal democracy based on general elections have become the system of governance that claims exclusive and uncontested universal validity, as a context-free device that can be readily imposed on all societies by argument, persuasion or coercion. In the light of its dramatic failure to respond to the social and political reality of three continents, in the course of the twentieth century, the first issue to address is whether the democratic appropriation of power can constitute a guarantee for a democratic exercise of governance. This draws full attention to the last of the Mohicans, liberal democracy. The first task to embark upon, therefore, is the diagnosis of the origin, nature and performance of liberal democracy.

Politics, as the goal-directed mobilization of human assets for actions to administrate the present and shape the future, finds its culmination in the conquest and maintenance of power to govern over a polity. What now is the principle that substantiates the claim of a vanguard or leader to rule over all?

Since ancient times, the origin of power and rule in society, community and social group, whether family, tribe, kingdom or republic, constituted an issue for struggle and dispute among members of the polity and a matter of social concern among thinkers and scholars. Many ideas, concepts and strategies on politics and governance have emerged in a millenary search that dates back to the first state-like structures of Sumer, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. From Greek philosophers and Roman statesmen to Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Marx, Weber, Rosa Luxemburg, Gramsci, Gandhi, Martin Luther King up to Nelson Mandela, the single concept that dominated this longstanding debate was 'legitimacy'. The support for governance, the loyalty to the sovereign, the guarantee for social and political stability, and the conservation of rule, all rotate around the concept of 'legitimacy'.

Power to govern over all was substantiated by the incarnation of gods, the legacy of prophets, the heir of kings, the liberator from serfdom and the winner of democratic elections. This mix of ethical and practical criteria creates ambiguities that hamper the analysis of the substantiation of rule. Conceptual clarity, therefore, demands a clear distinction between legality, legitimacy and justice.

Legality is understood, here, as lawfulness related to the obedience of formally established or imposed institutions, rules and *de facto* power constellations, enforceable by coercion and sanction. Legality, therefore, relates to the compliance with laws enforced upon tribe or state, and the capacity to impose rules to sanction defiance. Victory in war, conquest, colonization, revolution, seizure of power, suffrage and even expansionist occupation, whenever successful, determine the reigning legality.

Legitimacy is defined as the degree of acceptance, obedience and support of the leadership by collective and individual social actors in a group, community or society. Legitimacy is, therefore, not an ethical concept laden with subjectivism, but relates strictly to support for authority, to laws of hearts and minds, to obedience by people and to acceptance of the ruler, whether generated by election, revolution, war, kin or religion. By its very nature, legitimacy is located in the perception and conscience of social actors. In a strict sense, legitimacy is the degree of control of the minds of people, based on an internalized discourse for the claim of leadership.

Justice covers the full scope of the ethical dimension, based on the statement of principles on what is honest, fair, reasonable, respectable and desirable. Justice relates to obedience of morals and gods, and derives from principles and values in religion, philosophy and cosmogony.

With these key concepts defined, an assessment can now be made of the nature and practice of liberal democracy, in the first place focusing on legitimacy, the prime agent to sustain power and rule.

Liberal democracy is individual-endorsed control of governance and rule over all by vested and newborn elites, derived from the mobilization of existing allegiance or from induced consent. It authorizes control of collective assets and command of the destiny of society through individualized electoral processes, based on the tenet that a society can be represented fairly by the aggregate of its individuals and the arithmetic sum of their votes.

Capitalism and liberal democracy are not universal systems, but were born as the historical outcome of a specific internal socio-economic process in the West that marked the rise of individualism. Capitalism could not use a tribe knocking at the front gate for work, but needed detribalized detached solitary workers, one at a time. Its sibling, liberal democracy, on its guard against social responses and collective action that tend to be subversive to oligarchy and elite, installed the one-person-one-vote system in secret ballots that aborted threatening social forces as the prime agents of change and development. For that purpose, tribe, community, social belonging, social cohesion, solidarity, culture and kin were perceived as the antithesis of freedom, and replaced by scattered desocialised competing individuals. People bonded by solidarity in culture and structure disintegrated into atomized individuals. The next step was to mechanically aggregate all into the electorate and the free labor force, in a marriage of convenience of capital and liberalism. The tenet that free market or privatization is a requirement for democracy is a crude invention. There is no free access to the free market.<sup>4</sup> That is what Paul Baran pointed to, more than four decades ago: "Thus the campaign for the preservation of capitalism is advertised today more energetically than ever as a crusade for democracy and freedom."<sup>5</sup>

In the course of the twentieth century, liberal democracy based on atomistic individualism and claiming universal validity, was transferred with dramatic complications to countries based on communal life in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The result is an anthology of social and political instability, violence, ethnic unrest and civil war that severely undermined the prospects for development and progress. Under the banner of democracy, individual-based majority rule typically combined elite affluence with widespread misery, asphyxiating any real option for development and progress. This fusion of universal political freedom with structural social injustice produced a stable symbiosis of equality in the political and juridical realm, with structural inequality in most other fields of social existence. The historical record of liberal democracy abundantly maps the appropriation of resources of the state for partisan, particularistic or sectarian use, with systemic corruption, clientelism, minority oppression and majority marginalization, among its prominent flaws. The consistently bad record and failure of liberal democracy to offer a viable political system in the vast majority of the countries of the globe and the unacceptably high social cost it demanded and still has in store for humanity, poses an urgent challenge to governance and politics at a global scale, in the twenty first century.

Compared to medieval absolutism, liberal democracy is a step forward in the wrong direction, if judged against the ancient Chinese thought of Meng-Tzu that the people come first, the country second, and the king third.<sup>6</sup> Contemporary politics inverted the order: the ruler first, the country second and the people third.

This brings us to two basic avenues open to achieve power and rule in a polity with a say of the people. The choice is between delegation and representation. Delegation is the political process of people abdicating their power, rights and influence by investing a limited number of persons with the authority to act with full autonomy, to their own discretion, on behalf of all. Representation is the political process where people claim active use of power, rights and influence to secure their own interests and development, by directly nourishing

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<sup>4</sup> See also Hugo Assmann. *Las falacias religiosas del mercado* (The religious falacies of the market). In: Alberto Moreira y René Zicman, *Misticismo e novas religiões*. Vozes, Petropolis 1994 (published on Internet 1997 <http://www.fespinal.com>).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Baran, *The political economy of growth* 1957, p. 408.

<sup>6</sup> Claus-Georg Riegel. *Inventing Asian traditions: The Controversy between Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae Jung*. *Development and Society*, Vol. 29, Number 1, June 2000, pp. 86.

and controlling the voices that speak and act in their name. The elaborate these alternatives of delegation and representation we should first elaborate the paradigm that forms its theoretical base.

## **2. Development-envelopment paradigm**

All development theories of the last fifty years have failed, without exception. Worldwide, ambitious development initiatives derailed into deep crisis, casting the majority of humanity, living in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, in deep trouble and grave sorrow for the future. These failures, both in theory and in praxis, had one indisputable historical cause.

The empire that does not claim bringing civilization has yet to be born. By deduction, the other is the barbarian. What was labeled as ‘development’ was, in reality, its very opposite, ‘envelopment’, a paternalist process to incorporate the other, to overwhelm, to enclose and wrap up by envelopment, as done with an envelope. Annexation, insertion and incorporation into an alien genealogy and teleology were the goal, rather than support of inner forces to grow and to flourish from within the society. In the false development/underdevelopment dichotomy, the transfer and mimicry of devices from abroad were taken as the prime agents of progress, in an imperial attempt of cloning oneself into other societies, instead of mobilizing the inner forces of a community. The correct definition of development is the mobilization of the own potentialities and social forces in a project of self-realization, in interactive response to nature, habitat, resources, culture and history for the realization of a project of one’s own.<sup>7</sup> Development is a process from within that one can trigger, support and sustain, but never donate by transfer, not even as a generous gift. This unmasking of the false development discourse led to a new promising explanatory model, the development/envelopment paradigm, with development as self-realization and its negation, envelopment, as the incorporation of subdued people in a project that is alien to their internal social dynamism.<sup>8</sup>

By merging the development/envelopment paradigm with the social-reality based extradisciplinary method, a powerful practical tool becomes available to formulate a democratic alternative in the realm of politics. The extradisciplinary approach<sup>9</sup> eliminates the dichotomy between theory and praxis by putting an end to the inverted logic of current social sciences that the anatomy of academia determines the anatomy of society. This reality-based de-academisation of social science, that rejects autonomous social science disciplines, overcomes the gulf between theory and practice inherent in the academic tradition. Complex social reality and history demand specializations for purposes of study rather than autonomous disciplines derived from academia, but always with the compelling requirement to put bits together before making any final statement. Social reality, rather than fragmentation in disciplines, becomes both the starting place and the end of the scientific enterprise in the extradisciplinary approach.<sup>10</sup>

With the development/envelopment paradigm the nature of the alternatives of delegation and representation can be elaborated, since delegation is based on envelopment, while representation is an outcome of development.

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<sup>7</sup> Development will be used exclusively in this meaning in the remainder.

<sup>8</sup> See Glenn Sankatsing, *The Caribbean between Envelopment and Development* (2003) and Glenn Sankatsing, *The Caribbean: Archipelago of trailer societies* (Trinidad and Tobago Review, December 1998). “Internal social dynamism measures the degree to which the development and evolution of a social unit are the product of the operation of endogenous social forces, as the manifestation of the own logic and inner clock.” (Both articles to be found at [www.crscenter.com](http://www.crscenter.com))

<sup>9</sup> Glenn Sankatsing, “Medio Siglo de Ciencias Sociales en el Caribe de Habla Inglesa y Holandesa: Un Análisis Extradisciplinario” (Half a Century of Social Sciences in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean: An Extradisciplinary Analysis). Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Caracas, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1994. See also Glenn Sankatsing, *Social Science as a victim of its own disciplines. The English & Dutch-speaking Caribbean*. In: Christine Barrow and Rhoda Reddock. *Caribbean Sociology. Introductory Reader*. Kingston, Ian Randle, 2001, p. 56-68.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 1998.

Development, based on this new paradigm, immediately poses the critical issue to the political realm of how the free individual voice can help secure both its self-realization and the collective destiny, in a future-directed, development-oriented politics. Development, democracy and representation go hand in hand. Only in their close conjunction, a genuine project of society is possible under the command of social forces as the architects of history. Only people jointly determining the path to mobilize their own potentialities can control the own destiny by taking their concerns, needs and aspirations as the focal point.

### **3. Delegation**

Delegation, a system of appropriation of power by self-postulated parties and leaders through authorization of tenure by universal suffrage, is the cornerstone of liberal democracy. Delegation is endorsement of power by the electorate through voluntary vote or lured into induced consent by the pied piper of Hamelin. The electoral contest is, in the first place, a legalizing process of the mandate of the new ruler, sanctioned by the electorate. To delegate is to hand over decision making, to renounce power and to give up direct control by investing others with authority. Delegation turns liberal democracy into a 'carte blanche' democracy with regard to policy and decision-making. A designated political elite, thus, gains autonomy to act on behalf of the people, constrained only by some checks and balances to protect constitutional rights and to prevent major excesses.

Liberal democracy is even debatable as a process of legitimate endorsement of power. From a social science point of view, 'electorate' is not the equivalent of 'people', and does not even represent any meaningful social force or social group. The electorate is an amorphous aggregate of individuals, delinked from social ties, social contexts and social networks, which lacks any meaningful existence outside the ballot. The prime actor to assign, the electorate, is not a social category but a political construct. Liberal democracy, therefore, does not breathe out the democratic air of mobilized people who jointly speak out to decide and stand up for their rights and interests. The people, the formidable force that shapes history, is merely an electoral jury to endorse the next ruler out of a menu of ambitious contenders. Liberal democracy is, therefore, neither a system of people's rule, nor a model of people acting out of their own concerns, not even a legitimizing device, but rather a legalizing system in an open contest for endorsement and appropriation of political power. People marginalize their own voice in the act of choosing their next ruler. Consequently, delegation easily derails into oligarchy, dynasty and arbitrariness. Delegation is the apparent inclusion of citizens by allowing them to cast their free vote to endorse the rule of new kings, while simultaneously deciding their effective exclusion in a hibernation that will take four to five years, until the next election.

Political power at the highest level is often not even the direct outcome of people's vote, but rather the bargained compromise of thousand and one economic, ideological, ethnic, sectarian and other rival powers and contenders, both in the process of forging electoral pacts and in the aftermath of coalition building. In parliamentary democracy, inter-elite linkage and bargaining are far more influential in the political outcome than mass-elite relationships, since liberal democracy is not primarily concerned about democracy, but in the first place about vertical mobility in power structures. The contest of power-seeking contenders to conquer political command posts is the main force that triggers the dynamism of liberal democracy, rather than people in action.

In practical politics of liberal democracy, a complicated network of political leaders, intermediary organizations, key persons and opinion making institutions rearrange pre-existing social, economic, cultural, religious and ethnic power structures into bargained legal authority. That endows vested interests, economic elites and dominating powers with ample space to translate their fractional influence in society into a concerted effort to control the monopoly of power of the state.

Liberal democracy is an ambulant monarchy, with elected rather than hereditary sovereigns periodically assigned as the next ruler for a limited amount of time, while people and country are temporarily hijacked by elites who gain full access to the allocation of national assets. For most contenders in liberal democracy, corruption is not an excess of democracy, but the premium of democracy.

Guillermo O'Donnell's describes delegative democracy for the case of Latin America.

"The combination of institutionalized elections, particularism as a dominant political institution, and a big gap between the formal rules and the way most political institutions actually work makes for a strong affinity with delegative, not representative, notions of political authority. By this I mean a caesaristic, plebiscitarian executive that once elected sees itself as empowered to govern the country as it deems fit."<sup>11</sup>

While his understanding of non-representative delegative democracy is correct, O'Donnell is trapped in the myth of the democratic nature of liberal democracy in Europe and the United States. Checks and balances in the form of legal provisions for fair elections, a free press, an independent judiciary and a strong civil society, can significantly reduce the degree of arbitrariness. Nevertheless, parliamentary democracy is delegative by nature, both in its location of birth and as transferred to other latitudes by imposition or imitation.

In affluent Western societies, liberal democracy underwent significant cosmetic changes in their strife to conjure social crises and revolution, without eliminating the fundamental inequalities of capitalism. Copious surpluses out of benefits harvested from expansionism, colonialism, domination, control of global markets and asymmetric relationships, provided ample resources for reformist solutions to negotiate stability and buy social peace at home, beyond the confines of liberal capitalist rationality and accumulation aspiration. The specter of Marx that was haunting Europe made affordable reform a safe substitute for revolution. Capitalism was pragmatic, because reformism with someone else paying the bill was worth the sacrifice of opportunistically backing down on its sacred doctrine of profit maximization. The democratization of the West required the dehumanization of the rest of the world, with own self-regulation by starvation of others. The West delivered freedom to all nations on the four corners of the globe with the armored vehicle of colonialism, imperialism and globalization. That was the dear price humanity paid for the global imposition of a system with selfishness as its highest virtue. Colonialism was not a regrettable accident, it was a requirement.

The domination and exploitation of the world was the oxygen for the growth of Western civilization and the platform for the successful launch of parliamentary democracy. Still, in these days of neoliberal globalization, the Siamese twin of benign capitalism at home and ruthless economic harvesting overseas is the classical recipe for internal social stability in the West and the accumulation of wealth by globalized Western capitalism.

The process of envelopment, with the implementation of a Xerox copy of a system that historically flourished at the expense of other latitudes, bereaved the enveloped societies of the material conditions for reformism. That explains why liberal democracy in the enveloped world went hand in hand with insurmountable social, economic and political crises, instability and disruption in three continents. This systemic democratic deficit of liberal democracy explains its historical bankruptcy and its failure to respond to the basic requirements for survival and to the development aspirations of people in enveloped societies.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, 'Illusions about consolidation', *Journal of Democracy* 7.2 (1996) p. 44. See also Guillermo O'Donnell, *Delegative democracy?* Working Paper Series, [The Helen Kellogg Institute For International Studies](http://www.nd.edu/~kellogg) (<http://www.nd.edu/~kellogg>).

<sup>12</sup> Previously (see Sankatsing 1998), instead of 'enveloped societies', the term 'trailer societies' was used. The latter identifies the victims of the globalisation of the local experience of the West in the form of societies that were towed, not towards their own destiny but towards the destiny and teleology of Western civilisation. Trailer society is a descriptive concept, whereas 'enveloped society' is an explanatory term.

A second flaw is that political parties, the cornerstones of liberal democracy, are typically born in a non-democratic way as an initiative of a small group of ambitious individuals with aspiration to power. Notwithstanding its claims of democracy, the liberal system is not an open sphere, but rather a semi-closed system to reproduce political leadership by oligarchy-like structures of heritage, patriarchy, adoption and co-optation. In liberal democracy, political parties are not democratically constituted to allow vertical mobility and reproduction of leadership out of the best of membership. A *de jure* open system turns out to be a *de facto* closed system with informal and institutionalized mechanisms for self-reproduction of political elites. As by birth certificate, the self-proclaimed founding fathers (seldom mothers) of the new party constitute the core leadership for times to come, as the inner circle to produce board members, members of parliament, prime ministers or presidents, whichever may show up in the adventure. From the outset, without awaiting the support of the iron law of Michels<sup>13</sup>, an oligarchy of pioneers takes the reins in the party, laying claims on leadership for decades to come. The most democratic institution of the reigning delegative democracy is death, because that marks the moment that new leadership can be chosen. Vertical mobility and leadership in liberal democracy typically sprout from self-reproduction, inbreeding and cooptation by existing party elites, notwithstanding the democratic coating of internal structures. Instead of a clear-cut democratic inner life, the party typically operates as the private property of a self-proclaimed elite of founding fathers, their biological or political offspring and political in-laws accepted for their capacity to enhance the electoral base.

Liberal democracy is not primarily informed by people and their concerns. Its main concern is to secure the right of the political entrepreneur and party to access power by means of transparent competition rules and procedures that are fair for the contenders in an open arena. Liberal democracy's claim for secret and fair elections is not in the first place to safeguard the rights of the people, but above all to defend the inalienable rights of the contenders for power. Liberal democracy is alarmed, not when people are denied the voice to speak or are bereft of their right to decide and the freedom to act, but when the right of contenders to appropriate political power is thwarted. Only then, echoes of alarm will sound from the four corners of the state, and even beyond, that democracy is in danger.

The combination of self-postulation by non-democratic party formation and the endorsement of rule by delegation explain largely the nature of the political culture and the rules of the game in the political arena. Sun Tzu's<sup>14</sup> statement that all warfare is based on deception, amended by Von Clausewitz's<sup>15</sup> maxim that politics is the continuation of war by other means, along with Machiavelli's<sup>16</sup> view that one should break a pledge when the conditions which forced a person to make the pledge have been resolved, those are widely accepted guiding principles in modern parliamentary democracy.

Resort to checks and balances cannot adequately remedy these structural flaws of delegative democracy. The symbiotic nature of horizontal control, particularly the mutual controls of state agencies over other state institutions, cannot secure vertical control by the vast majority. External pressure and monitoring by civil society may well provide some moderating effect, but whenever a system permanently requires the remedy of a series of informal monitoring controls to prevent derailment, it is inherently flawed. Control by the people should be an essential inbuilt part of the democratic process itself, rather than a cosmetic beautification that is added afterwards.

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<sup>13</sup> According to Michels, it is inevitable that a small oligarchic elite develops, whenever a large group of people gather within an organization.

<sup>14</sup> Sun Tzu, *The art of war* (Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles.) Mineola (N.Y.), Dover Publications, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Karl von Clausewitz, *The book of war*. (Introduction by Ralph Peters.) New York, Modern Library, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Machiavelli Niccolò, *The prince*. A bilingual ed. Translated and edited by Mark Musa. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1964.



Even the institution of a free and autonomous press is not save from elite manipulation. Freedom of press, acclaimed as an indispensable pluralist pillar of democracy that airs many voices of society not hindered by government censorship, is seriously undermined when equating free press to private commercial press. A dominance of commercial media serving the corporate interests of private investors, capital groups and powerful elites, undermines the function of the press as a means of social communication and a guardian of democracy. Free capitalist enterprise in the information realm can seriously impair the sacred right to speak and the right to be heard by society. Only a non-profit and non-monopolistic press that is not controlled by politics, capital or ideology constitutes a free, independent and democratic institution and instrument that is capable of opening full access to all social forces of society. Free press is an asset of the people to provide an accessible forum for all to raise their voice, and definitely not the substitution of private censorship for government censorship.

Fully aware of the internal weakness of liberal democracy, Montesquieu's basic tenet that power can only be controlled by parallel power led to the proposition of the 'trias politica', a discourse of separation of powers readily adopted by liberal democracy. However, the crude reality of liberal democracy in recently independent states falsifies this tenet of the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial power. The political party has a preponderant role in the national political realm, whereas party politics tends to permeate all spheres of society. The result is a hierarchical dependency relation between government and parliament, particularly in electoral systems that lack independent elections for legislative and executive powers. Top party members typically claim and hold executive posts, leaving parliament to the mercy of first runners up. What we have, in reality, is the inverted situation that the parliament becomes an executive instrument of the government.<sup>17</sup> As overheard at a meeting in the Caribbean, "our parliamentary democracy is not a Westminster system, but a 'Yes Minister' system."<sup>18</sup> Trias politica in these societies is a fiction, for at best there is a 'duas politica', and even that is often challenged due to a monistic system that leaves little effective space for an independent judiciary, which is usually appointed by the government. The real rationale behind the separation of powers, the trias politica, may well be sterile horizontal control by parallel elite institutions to claim transparency, while preventing vertical control by people's organizations or by networks of civil society demanding accountability.

The structural democratic deficit of delegation is not a technical shortcoming that can be excused by the famous outworn argument of the practical impossibility for all to decide at the same time. Virtual democracy or e-democracy, offering real time decision making by all in cyberspace, has now overcome that limitation, while the much acclaimed decentralization can cut down the distance between the local and the national. Unless delegation is abandoned, cyberspace will be of no avail, and the majority can be worse off with decentralization. A decentralized 'gangster politics',<sup>19</sup> much like a decentralized mafia, tends to double the trouble. Though powerful tools to bring rule closer to people's life, decentralization and e-democracy alone are of no avail, since the fault of delegative democracy is not a matter of efficiency but of effectiveness and principle that cannot be solved mechanically, neither by a permanent referendum nor by turning every town hall into a parliament.

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<sup>17</sup> A.G. Croes elaborates this absence of trias politica for the insular Dutch Caribbean. ('Good Government, Bad Politics' in 'Deugdelijkheid van bestuur in kleine landen'. Aruba, Koninkrijksymposium. Samengesteld onder Redactie van de Koninkrijksymposiumcommissie, April 1995.)

<sup>18</sup> A remark from the audience at "Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom. Testimonial Conference in Honour of Lloyd Best", organized by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social & Economic Studies. The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago. September 19-20, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> 'Gangster politics' is an expressive term used to characterize the widespread demeanor of rulers by delegation to administrate state resources as private property with a partisan policy intruding aggressively into the private sphere.

All this points to a single conclusion with far reaching implications for the political options that are open to the future. The current system of liberal democracy based on delegation, does not work, never worked and cannot work. Liberal democracy is a system of privatization of power and rule that functions as a cunning institutional technique to give excluded people the feeling of being the real decision makers. Even much debated concepts as 'consolidated democracy' and 'good governance' totally miss the point. Lack of stable democracy and good governance are not the cause but an effect of the absence of democracy. The degree of consolidation of liberal democracy only points to a successful discursive legitimization of what in reality is a mockery of democracy.<sup>20</sup>

Delegation turns the system unfit to express the will of the majority of the people or to take care for their interests. That is the reason why liberal democracy typically derails into elite decision-making and sectarian politics. Appropriation of power by demonizing the adversary while offering paradise, in order to seduce the electorate, can offer no genuine democracy. On the other hand, the response of usurpation of power, using force or coercion, by military coup, uprising, dictatorship or polarizing revolution, offers remedies that are worse than the evil, since they rather aggravate instability while introducing additional sources of deep social disruption.

This rejection of delegation, appropriation and usurpation of power narrows down the options. The only realm left open to search for a democratic solution is people taking command of their own destiny, in order to see to the fulfillment of their own needs, interests and aspirations for physical and social survival.

#### **4. Representation**

Unable to cope with the tide of popular mobilization against his government, recently the President of Bolivia, a champion of neoliberalism, complained: "They want to govern from the streets, not from parliament and within our institutions."<sup>21</sup> Unwittingly, he made the candid diagnosis that liberal democracy feels the need to defend itself against the people. Put in a more neutral way, people have had enough of delegation in futile institutions that primarily serve the concerns and interests of a tiny slice of society and the bonanza politics of small closed groups of political entrepreneurs and adventurers, at the expense of the people. The street is where people live, suffer and die on a daily base, not the parliament and the sterile elite institutions that derive their power from induced consent of an aggregate of socially vulnerable loose individuals. "There is no such thing as society, there are only individuals," lectured another champion of neoliberalism, Margaret Thatcher. A society as a sum of individuals is harmless, but if they become a crowd, they become a mob. This cynicism of considering the people as the 'street' is characteristic for the political culture of liberal democracy.

Political cynicism, an important factor to understand liberal democracy, still lacks significant research. One salient exception in the Caribbean is Wendell Bell's research in the 1960s on nation, state and democracy in Jamaica, with results that can still be highlighted. He concluded that "political cynicism was fairly widespread; half of the leaders were at least moderately cynical and a fifth of them were cynical in the extreme."<sup>22</sup> 'Cynicism' was defined as a contemptuous and disrespectful attitude towards voters who are seen as incompetent, in the

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<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the different positions on democracy focussed on the Caribbean, see: Francine Jacome. Democracy and governability. Integration and regionalization processes in the Wider Caribbean. In: Peter Wickham et al. Elements of regional integration: The way forward. Kingston, Ian Randle. Critical Issues in Caribbean Development Number 6, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> Forrest Hylton "Bolivia: Crisis and opportunity", in Znet October 03, 2003. <http://www.zmag.org/weluser.htm>. Within weeks, the power of the street turned out large enough to oust the president out of power.

<sup>22</sup> Wendell Bell, Jamaican leaders: Political attitudes in a new nation. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1964, p. 130.

belief that “the electorate acting collectively are fools to be tricked, herded, or grossly manipulated”.<sup>23</sup> Liberal democracy does not even hesitate to resort to biblical scenes to underscore its deep distrust of people: Today it is hallelujah, tomorrow crucify Him! Except for their vote, people are an awkward obstacle.

The prime democratic concern of political parties and politicians is their craving for popular endorsement by the ballot. Alternative parties with proposals for change, rejuvenation, modernity and innovation that enter the political arena of delegation are no exception. They too are swiftly encapsulated in the existing political culture, notwithstanding their efforts to distinguish themselves with dichotomies as ‘new versus old politics’, ‘modern versus traditional politics’, ‘innovation versus continuation’, and ‘progressive versus conservative’. Even parties in the political arena genuinely aspiring democracy, progress and prosperity, eventually, end up in deep frustration and rejection of the system, when confronted with the impotence to realize their ideals in an environment dominated by power seeking contenders.

Historically, the failure to respond with an alternative within the system conduced to extremes as political retreat, apathy and the pursuit of extra-constitutional options by disobedience, military coup, revolution and civil war. The danger, however, does not always originate from anti-democratic forces, but as the case of Jamaica illustrates, it can even come from

“among the change-leaders themselves who are trying to move the people of Jamaica into a better future but who sometimes become impatient with the democratic process when it appears to them to impede the progress they hope to achieve. This particular kind of antidemocratic or politically cynical attitude carries with it its own legitimation and can be expressed freely, since it is anti-democracy in the name of the people's welfare, in the name of economic and social progress.”<sup>24</sup>

Stripped from all discourse and cosmetics, the choice of democracy is between democracy by delegation and democracy by representation. Delegation, as a paternalist top-down command, is democratic appropriation of power by a self-postulated vanguard, based on induced consent, which typically leads to oligarchy and marginalization of the people. Delegative democracy can offer no solution, given the inherent Frankensteinian danger in the field of politics of the incapacity of the assigning agents to keep their political creation under control. In delegative democracy, participation is the equivalent of loyalty; in representative democracy, participation is the equivalent of agency. Delegation leads to hierarchical authority, to paternalism, appropriation of power and envelopment, whereas representation leads to socially based and controlled authority, self-realization, empowerment and development. Indeed, “trust is good, control is better.”<sup>25</sup>

Representation is a democratic exercise of power, based on the mobilization of the social actors in society in pursuit of their own interests through participatory bottom-up control, which opens wide the avenue for people to opt for their own cause through participation and self-agency. Representation, briefly, is democracy of people speaking on their own behalf in the intonation and cadence of their own voice.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wendell Bell, *ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>24</sup> Wendell Bell, *ibid.* p. 131.

<sup>25</sup> A phrase of Mao Tse Tung (Mao Ze Dong).

<sup>26</sup> Ethymologically, democracy does not stand for ‘rule of the people’, but for ‘power of the people’, since ‘demos’ means ‘people’ and ‘cratein’ means ‘power’. (This emphasis on power is also found in aristocracy, plutocracy, meritocracy, theocracy.) Rule is expressed by the suffix ‘-archy’, like in monarchy (one ruler), anarchy (no ruler), oligarchy (family or small group rules) and hierarchy (structure of rule). So, what is needed is a democracy evolved into demoarchy, not just the power to elect, but rather the power to rule should be in hands of the people, not delegation but representation. Instead of introducing a neologism, in our understanding genuine democracy is people's power and people's rule at the same time, otherwise it is no democracy.

This casts the footlights on the three crucial creative factors in society that shape social history: (i) the social forces as the main agents; (ii) survival as the driving force, and (iii) awareness as the triggering factor to guide and motivate change and creation. In conjunction, these are the prime agents that engender development as the driving force of social evolution.

Cooperation and joint action of a species is a requirement for physical survival and assurance of social and cultural reproduction, turning social forces into the creators of history. Social processes, gradual or revolutionary, are not merely the product of lifeless economic factors or the magic of inorganic markets, as capitalist and Marxist ideologies endorse from opposing angles. They are, in the first place, the outcome of the agency of acting and interacting ensembles of individuals in the full continuum of social, economic, cultural and political activities, as the architects of social evolution.<sup>27</sup> These social forces, varying from family, kinship, cast, class and tribe to a wide differentiation of interest groups and social networks, are set in motion by what constitutes the driving force of life in the whole of the universe, the urge to survive. The drive for survival finds its direct practical translation in needs and interests perceived as relevant or critical by individuals and social groups.

Individuals may play a key role in social processes, but history is always the labor of social forces. Gandhi was an idea, Mandela a commitment, and only their capacity to mobilize the strategic social forces of society could remove Apartheid and achieve nonviolent decolonization, overcoming coercion and legitimating discourse. Individuals and ideas, as the critical catalysers, are agents of history to the degree to which they create awareness and mobilize social forces. Rather than the individual, an oligarchy or a self-postulated vanguard, social forces constitute the engine of development in society and the source of genuine democratic rule.

With social forces and the strife for survival always on the scene, the critical factor to motivate people to act in function of their own cause in the pursuit of self-realization, is awareness, where the deepest secret of political change is located. The conviction that real options to take command of the own destiny are available or can be brought within reach, is the key to liberate people from adulterating discourses and from induced consent. A practical definition of awareness is, therefore, to see an alternative to existing reality. Ideas are an important source for power, as Eric Wolf brilliantly illustrates in his in-depth analysis of such distant realities as the Amerindian society and Nazi Germany, demonstrating that culture, cosmology and ideology can be powerful tools for socially shaping power and rule.<sup>28</sup>

Operating within the ambit of awareness are factors capable of creating or hindering solidarity and concerted action, such as ideas, discourse and ideology, but also the stimulating force of culture as the expression of the heartbeat of the collectivity, whether crystallized in shared convention, literature, poetry, music or dance. In the Caribbean, as Angel Rivera reminds us, before the verb, there were the drum, rhythm and movement.<sup>29</sup> Music and dance, as the sonoric and dramatic response of history, could not be appropriated or adulterated by discourse, since it is not intervened by the mind or the text, but comes directly from 'the soul'. Music and dance have been the most democratic institutions throughout history. The drum, an extraordinarily subversive institution in the Caribbean, even more so than philosophy and science, interacts with ancestors and gods connecting the soul with the universe, with reality and with the inner clock in search of feasible outlets. By

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<sup>27</sup> None of those spheres should be privileged or downgraded in relation to another, as is the case of Marxism that tends, with different gradations, to understand the economic realm as the base and all the rest as a superstructure.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Wolf clearly illustrates with a study of the Kwakiutl Indians on the northern Pacific coast of North America, the Aztecs in Mexico and National Socialism in Germany, a close relationship between ideas and power, highlighting the influence of culture, cosmology and ideology. Eric Wolf, *Envisioning power. Ideologies of dominance and crisis*. Berkeley, University of California Press 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Angel Quintero Rivera. *Salsa, sabor y control. Sociología de la música tropical*. Mexico, Siglo XXI Editores, 1998.

saying without words what was discursively aborted in the voice, the drum represents joy, protest, suffering, love, and dreams of survival to a muted people, always ungraspable and embarrassing for colonial and imperial rule. Music and dance should be vindicated as powerful tools for development and democracy, as illustrated for the Dominican Republic in the statement that “the merengue is the only motive that groups together without discussion the most divergent sentiments of Dominicanship.”<sup>30</sup> A complete reassessment of the role of art is required as a vehicle for development. That is the only way to break with the weird reality of history that illiteracy constituted a valuable safety device against colonial discourse.

Hegemony and discourse are vital concepts to understand processes of awareness among social forces. A notable effort to overcome the constraints of economic reductionism within the Marxist tradition is Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, which highlights the role of non-economic factors. Hegemony is influence exercised by enhancing legitimacy in society, while domination is exercised through control of the state.<sup>31</sup> Hegemony

“can be understood as the degree to which a combination of coercion and consent establishes authority and leadership without a direct resort to visible force or violence. It does not draw on naked power but on the awe towards power; therefore, the contribution of ‘power’ to ‘hegemony’ does not lie in its application but rather in the persuasive capacity of power as a potential and latent entity without the need to resort to direct force or violence.”<sup>32</sup>

Hegemony is typically supported by discourses that function as justifying narrations presented as self-evident truths to mitigate the perception of reality. Their prime function is to prevent people and social forces from becoming aware of their real conditions and development options. Once social forces become conscious of their own reality and of their capacity to act, conditions are ready for them to design viable channels for collective survival, starting with the pursuit of interests and objectives that are critical for the own group.

With this key role in history of conscious social forces identified, the basis of representation can be defined. Representation is based on social agency, on social forces taking command of their own destiny, realizing their needs and interests and securing their development chances, like beneficiaries acting on their own behalf. Representation, therefore, should be rooted in a social movement, in a concerted action of social forces pursuing own specific group goals, as a powerful tool for development and democracy. Not homogenization or uniformity paves the collective road to the future, but respect for identity and the reconfirmation of diversity. Consensus should not be enforced, but harmony should be negotiated. Negotiation and joint action, based on the harmonization of divergent, even contrary interests among social forces, is the best available option to reach a viable project for the self-realization both of the social group and of society as a whole.

Representation based on a broad social movement can overcome the democratic deficit of delegative models that constitute a severe threat to development, by impairing the agency of social forces both in the social and economic realm. Representation builds on the dynamic principle that social evolution is the work of social forces that operate in society and shape, modify and erect vital structures and codes of conduct, in a project of survival and self-realization based on interest and benefit, both individual and collective, for the

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<sup>30</sup> Lara Yvette López de Jesús (*Encuentros sincopados. El caribe contemporáneo a través de sus prácticas musicales*. Mexico, Siglo XXI Editores, 2003), in an interesting account on the role of music in Caribbean history, makes reference to this statement of Fafá Taveras (“... el merengue es el único motivo que agrupa sin discusión los más diversos sentimientos de la dominicanidad.”)

<sup>31</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1995 (Originally written in 1951), p. 12

<sup>32</sup> Glenn Sankatsing, *Caribbean social science: An assessment*. Caracas: Unesco, 1989, p. 126.

realization of individual goals and collective survival. This raises the issue of defining the ideological basis of representative democracy as a political system and the identification of the practical steps to accomplish genuine democracy.

## **5. Development ideology**

Property, liberty, and equality, these are the three values that informed the great ideologies of the last centuries. Liberal capitalist ideology is based on property and liberty, to the detriment of equality. According to Samir Amin, "The United States is based on two values: liberty and property. When you put them together you get a cowboy."<sup>33</sup> Exclusive focus on liberty and property produces the cowboy ideology of capitalist neoliberalism, to the detriment of equality. Communist ideology, on the other hand, is based on property and equality, to the detriment of liberty. Exclusive focus on property and equality produces the big-brother ideology of communism. To have, only to enjoy without sharing, turns greed into the highest of values in capitalism, producing egoism, competition and inequality. To have, only to share without freedom to enjoy turns greed in the highest of values in communism, producing ideological vanguardism and usurpation by boss, to the detriment of free agency.

Liberal capitalist and communist ideologies, as concretely manifested in historical practice, should be rejected flatly for missing one indispensable value, offering either the sacred right to speak to the unfed mouth, or the sacred right to eat to a muted crowd. Liberal capitalist ideology scores high on individual and juridical rights, but low on social and economic rights, guaranteeing freedom to vote to all, even to those who cannot survive physically. Communist ideology scores high on social and economic rights, but low on individual and juridical rights, offering a fair share of scarce goods without freedom of speech.

Fraternity as a prominent value has long vanished from the scene, ever since it took front stage in the French revolution, due to its incompatibility with capitalism. Lack of belief in humaneness and solidarity has been the most notorious casualty of the preponderance of the economic realm, both in liberal capitalist and communist ideologies. The outcome easily derailed in the use of coercion as the only viable answer, either by the dictatorship of capital or by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Freedom could dominate the ideological scenery of the twentieth century in two flavors, set either by neoliberal capitalist or by communist ideology, leading to the paradox of wars of national liberation directed against the 'free world'.

These two evils of Western genealogy and heritage were imposed on the globe as an exclusive dichotomy, saddling the rest of the planet with troubles derived from their left-right rivalry that were totally unrelated to their own collectivity-based reality and historical process. Severe polarization, internecine conflict, instability and war, as the social toll that deformed three continents, provide the compelling reason to reject both capitalist and communist ideology, when searching for feasible options for representative democracy.

Contrary to the widespread belief at the time, the demolition of the Berlin Wall did not enhance freedom, prosperity or security, but quite the opposite, it turned the world into an openly dangerous place. With the unrestrained globalized neoliberal scourge now haunting the world, it is hard to tell on which side of the wall the prison was actually located. One may well prefer two devils fighting than one devil winning. For enveloped societies on three continents, it has become clear, by now, that superpower cooperation is no improvement over superpower rivalry, because "whether elephants make war or love, it is grass that

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<sup>33</sup> Empire of chaos challenged. Al Ahram, 24 - 30 October 2002. Issue No. 609. Interview of Samir Amin by Fatemah Farag.

suffers,” as African wisdom teaches.<sup>34</sup> Dramatic recent episodes of hyper power abuse confirm that, on the debris of the Berlin Wall, the prospect for peace and prosperity has been the main victim. Everybody is worse off now, in the first place genuine democracy in the countries under the scourge of envelopment.

This ruthless dichotomizing ideological war brought a threatening stasis in contemporary world, after more than a century of casualties. What the confrontation between neoliberal appropriation of authority by delegation and communist usurpation of power by revolution amounted to was nothing else than a tribal quarrel in economic reductionism between the unilateral focus on the market and the struggle for the possession of the means of production. Right, left and the magic of the center, two evils and their golden midpoint, all biased as the artifact of a false dichotomy, could only sow political disaster on top of social suffering in all enveloped societies.

A new ideology is required with the full ambit of culture as the prime realm. Culture is neither an archaic ornament of society, nor a creative decoration of social life. Culture is the materialization of the yearning to survive in interactive response to forces of nature and the institutionalization of coexistence through conventions and shared institutions in pursuit of order, stability and peace in a project of self-realization. Culture is not an adornment, but the heartbeat of society, and definitely not a superstructure supported by the economic realm.

A society is collective by nature, by anatomy, by culture, by concerted effort. Language, religion, social code system, physical reproduction to procreate and social reproduction to socialize the newborn are all attributes of a collectivity. Culture, as a collective convention, is the crystallization in material and immaterial traits of the drive of humanity to survive, defend itself, grow and develop, and to realize dreams in concert. Far beyond ancestor worship, culture is a heritage under constant social scrutiny, in order to comply with the urge of society to survive and develop. The vigor of culture does not lie in nostalgia of the past but in the validity of its response to challenges.

Individualism is, for that reason, the most critical contradiction that modernity was trapped in over time, because society can never be understood as an aggregate of ‘free’ individuals. Unattached competing individuals cannot be matched with the commands of culture and collective survival. Atomistic self-indulgence and freewheeling individuals do not fit in the cosmic streams of survival and evolution as a species. This explains why delegative democracy, as an offspring of Western modernity, failed historically, with its most dramatic expression in enveloped societies.

Representation requires a new ideology in the field of agency and politics based on the full ambit of culture and a harmony between the individual and collective realm, geared towards self-realization of society and its members. The new response is development ideology that takes property, equality<sup>35</sup>, liberty and solidarity, as its four fundamental values and cornerstones. A balanced fusion between having, sharing, shaping and heeding, turns development ideology into a timely option for humanity on a troubled globe that intuitively knows that a system based on selfishness can harbor no alternative for the future, while the counter option of the sacrifice of freedom to a dictatorship of a vanguard can never be humane. Development ideology is not a theology upholding the axiom of prevailing goodness, but a practical survival device rooted in development as the driving force that commands history, evolution and nature, through processes not of paternalism but of self-agency. The solution for our contemporary world does not lie in de-ideologization, as claimed by the ‘end-of-history’ missionaries, but rather in the re-ideologization based on the development ideology, in order to enhance awareness and restore belief in agency to shape the future.

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<sup>34</sup> This proverb in Swahili inspired the title of Thomas Weiss and James Blight (eds.) *The Suffering Grass: Superpowers and regional conflict in Southern Africa and the Caribbean*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Equality is understood as including ‘justice’.

In politics and action, the choice is, therefore, between disintegrating liberal capitalist ideology, totalitarian communist ideology and holistic development ideology. Only development ideology cemented on respect for freedom, agency and democracy, is capable of establishing a balance between the individual and the collective, between present and future, and between theory and practice. Freedom is not a discursive invention or a gift to the barbarian, but it is closely related to the strife for self-realization based on internal social dynamism. Freedom leads to self-realization and development, whereas development is the only landscape where freedom can flourish, outside which only its caricature can exist in the form of envelopment, paternalism, patriarchy and tyranny. Development, freedom and democracy, therefore, go hand in hand as the three faces of the same evolutionary dynamism. Unless democracy merges with freedom and development, it derails into the false baseless discourse of imposing 'freedom' to the detriment of equality, dignity and diversity, as championed by neoliberal globalization.

Informed by the development ideology, the combined theoretical and practical approach of development and the extradisciplinary methodology provides a powerful instrument in contemporary world for the outline of a practical political escape route for enveloped societies, based on a critical analysis of their genesis.

## **6. Political genesis and present reality of enveloped society<sup>36</sup>**

The most painful conclusion regarding the social evolution of former colonies is that the process of decolonization was not an exercise in development, but rather a showcase of envelopment. It was not an indigenous project driven by the own culture in an effort to develop out of own potentialities. Far from the emancipated masses or traditional groups in the colony, decolonization was orchestrated and executed by the most westernized minds and educated layers in the dying days of colonial rule. They became the newborn elites that took control of the power structure, whether informed by liberal capitalism or by its Marxist refutation.<sup>37</sup> Cynically, decolonizing peoples were saddled with alien models, the success of which historically required their own enslavement and oppression. The urge to liberate them into the ideal of a modern western nation-state by context-free mimicry of western modernization provoked disruption with extreme social costs. Decolonization became the own image of the West in the broken mirror of the shattered colony.

Preexisting ethnic, cultural, religious and other social affiliations in societies erected upon collective belonging and communal life were rearranged in the matrix of atomistic individualism, that was taken as the axiomatic norm for progress and prosperity. Delegative democracy, thus, became a powerful tool in hands of westernized local exponents educated under colonial legality to fill the vacuum of authority left behind by disintegrating colonialism and to seize the reins in the independent state with newborn party structures.

Predictable drama came over three continents. In Africa, the rationale of foreign domination and exploitation cartographically collapsed different tribes into a single balkanized polity, redrawing the map for imperial rule. In the Caribbean, implantation stuffed Caribbean territories with a quilt of tribes and nationalities relocated as a labor force,

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<sup>36</sup> For two reasons 'enveloped society' is a better term than the widely used concept 'postcolonial society'. In the first place, enveloped society is a descriptive term of the present condition of social reality. 'Postcolonial society', on the other hand, defines the present in function of a past history. In the second place, 'postcolonial society' requires a precise conceptual delimitation beyond its literary meaning, because not all ex-colonies can be regarded as postcolonial societies. The United States is not a postcolonial society, but the reincarnation of Europe.

<sup>37</sup> "Capitalism, it should be reminded, was only indigenous in the Occident, where it was generated out of historical processes. International capitalism is simply globalised Western capitalism, not the outcome of industrial revolutions in Ghana or Indonesia, or of rationalisation processes in Brazil, or class struggle in Nigeria. Capitalism has no heart, but it does have homelands, definitely not to be looked for in Latin America or Africa, but rather in Europe and its reincarnation in North America." (Glenn Sankatsing, *The Caribbean: Archipelago of trailer societies*, 1998, at [www.crscenter.com](http://www.crscenter.com)). As a critical response to Western capitalism, Marxism, too, lacks universalism. The tenet that capitalism and Marxism are universals is part of the Eurocentric image of the world that all universals are born in the West.



for the sole purpose to plant for colonial exploitation. Both variants of envelopment artificially created weakly integrated, multi-ethnic societies in poorly institutionalized states. Furnivall,<sup>38</sup> in his study of South-East Asian countries, was the one to label them with the misnomer 'plural society', a curious designation that insinuates that 'society' is some additive composition rather than an interacting unit, however polarized. This crude descriptive concept without any explanatory power provoked half a century of overheated debate in the Caribbean, not for its spectacular theoretical and practical merits, but due to the persistent tension between ethnic diversity and political stability for which social science could offer no meaningful solution. Despite its survival as a concept to date, the plural society concept hardly contributed to understanding the complex societies of the Caribbean and much less to a feasible strategy for the future. Labels do not reveal, names do not clarify, and definitions, even if accurate and revealing in description, do not explain reality, as the plural society confusion clearly illustrates.

The liberal democracy model imposed from outside in implanted or artificially created societies only aggravated political, social and cultural instability. Envelopment - by conquest, colonialism, imperialism, neocolonialism or modern neoliberal globalization - naturally clashes with any genuine democratic movement that seeks the mobilization of the own potentialities, in order to take command of the own destiny. Already in 1957, Paul Baran made clear that regardless of the nature of the regime "economic development in underdeveloped countries is profoundly inimical to the dominant interests in the advanced capitalist countries", particularly when the enveloped country "seeks to reduce the foreign grip on its economy and to provide for a measure of independent development."<sup>39</sup>

No empire can ever impart democracy, for expansionism, colonialism and imperialism are always the very negation of development and democracy. By definition, democracy is always subversive to any paternalist project. The picture gets only grimmer, when in addition to foreign imposed liberal democracy, ethnic or religious elites become the local contenders of the political contest in non-homogeneous multi-ethnic societies. Social difference and cultural diversity can, then, escalate into dangerous cleavages, for political manipulation of ethnicity is always an open invitation for war.

In response to historically created ethnic complexity, by implantation or by remapping the social geography, social science studies searched for a viable alternative for politics in plural society. Consociational democracy, an attempt to respond to the plural society dilemma of instability in a balkanized society,<sup>40</sup> is a system of shared political rule based on an elite cartel that integrates the top echelons of monolithic ethnic groups, in an attempt to secure social peace and cooperation. 'Elite cartel democracy', however, is an internal contradiction. It is undemocratic by nature, anti-democratic by design and the very negation of participation, of representation, and even of delegation. The elite cartel is a form of meta-domination by horizontal legitimation at the top echelons that allows elites to become mutually supportive for the consolidation of their position and project, by bringing inter-elite discords under control without addressing inequality in society. Consociational democracy is peaceful coexistence of elites to domesticate a motley crowd.

Elites are typically an impediment - never a stimulating force - for the enhancement of democracy. Social science studies on democracy that take the elite as the focal point are,

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<sup>38</sup> 'Plural society' is a controversial descriptive concept invented by J.S. Furnivall to understand East-Asian societies (Colonial policy and practice. A comparative study of Burma and Netherlands India. New York, New York University Press, 1956; Orig. 1948). After it was introduced in the Caribbean by Rudolf van Lier (The Development and nature of society in the West Indies. Amsterdam, Het Indisch Instituut, 1950) and further elaborated by M.G. Smith (The plural society in the British West Indies. Berkeley (California), University of California Press, 1965).

<sup>39</sup> Paul Baran, The political economy of growth. London, Pelican Books, 1973 (Orig. 1957), p. 120.

<sup>40</sup> Arthur Lewis (Politics in West Africa. London, Allen and Unwin, 1965) was the first to comprehensive search for an alternative model of democracy in multiethnic societies. To a large extent building on his work, Arend Lijphart proposed the model of consociational democracy that would provoke much discussion and controversy (Arend Lijphart, Consociational democracy. World Politics, 21, 1969, and Democracy in plural societies. A comparative exploration. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977).

therefore, completely out of focus and a waste of time. Dominant political elites are a barrier, never a stimulating factor for any form of democracy. The most formidable life-threatening enemy of any political or social elite is precisely genuine democracy, by definition subversive to oligarchy.

After a dark colonial era, liberal politics in newly emerging states was the main vehicle for ambition and career, with a political system responding in the first place to the sectarian projects of traditional and newborn elites, instead of its functionality for a political project geared towards the development of society.

Contrary to what characterized the rise of capitalism in Europe, where largely the economic realm shaped political power, postcolonial enveloped societies exhibit an inverted relation, with politics typically generating economic power. Both legally and illegally, the state frequently serves as an instrument to appropriate public resources and to impart economic favors to party affiliates, political allies, family members and friends.<sup>41</sup> The conquest of political power by vote or gun formed a solid base for the establishment of economic elites in emerging nation-states.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, the political enterprise or a voyage in politics was the investment in society with the highest returns. Due to this inverted relation between economic and political power, the political domain became the location of extreme competition, turning politics into an attractive strategic target for nascent economic elites, labor union oligarchy, religious elites, ambitious adventurers, and ordinary people looking for crevices with access to the source of clientelist benefits. An alloy of politics, partisanship, corruption and clientelism, thus, became the venue for political entrepreneurship with significant economic gains in store. Liberal democracy, as the best available option to upward social and economic mobility and enhancement of access to power in society, provided the most effective shortcut to affluence in society.

The reading of the current political map of three continents, with their landscape beleaguered by instability and crisis, turns social, cultural and economic survival of enveloped societies into an alarming concern. Enveloped societies typically deteriorated into hit-and-run bazaar economies, where everybody is mixed up in selling and hustling to the detriment of production, creation and solidarity. The prime victim is development, with immeasurable social costs in distorted societies scattered over three continents.

Frustration and despair over the persistent democratic deficit, by a systemic failure of parliamentary democracy and its institutions, led to apathy, political indifference, electoral abstention, retreat and emigration. At times, it even provoked a ferocious social rejection of the political system by extra-constitutional authoritarian options through military coups, guerilla, popular uprisings and public violence. Others targeted the state, infected by bureaucracy, corruption and inefficiency, as the cause of all evil, proposing to strip the state by a ruthless privatization that would deliver the national assets to market fundamentalism in the neoliberal maxim of a free-for-all, which in reality is always trimmed down into a lucrative free-for-some. "Privatization is the antithesis of democracy. It is the process of transferring public assets, held in trust for the public good, to private companies to amass private profit", according to Arundhati Roy.<sup>43</sup> The historical record corroborates that these responses that separated people from the steering wheel and command post of history only accelerated the steady downward slope of derailment.

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<sup>41</sup> Clive Y. Thomas, *The poor and the powerless: Economic policy and change in the Caribbean*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1988, p. 192. See also Clive Y. Thomas, *The Rise of the Authoritarian State in Peripheral Societies*. New York, Monthly Review Press (1984b), p. 61-62. "State power is used to form the nucleus of an indigenous bourgeoisie."

<sup>42</sup> 'State-nation' would be a better term. In Europe, the state was typically the product of the nation, but postcolonial society showed the reverse relation. A colonial state, the administrative skeleton for domination, was stuffed with a multicolored quilt that should eventually produce the nation. Nation-state, as a xerox copied concept from Europe, does not make much sense in the societies of the Caribbean that are rather state-nations. See Glenn Sankatsing, *The Caribbean: Archipelago of Trailer societies*, 1998, at [www.crscenter.com](http://www.crscenter.com).

<sup>43</sup> Arundhati Roy interviewed by Anthony Arnow. Arundhati Roy talks about 'The war that never ends' October 1, 2003 <http://war-times.org/issues/12art2.html>

## **7. People's vote compatible with people's fate**

Hundred years of benefit of doubt leaves no doubt about the lack of benefit. The reigning suffrage system and political culture, anchored in delegative democracy, failed in enveloped societies<sup>44</sup> and is now exhausted as an option, due to its incapacity to make people's vote compatible with people's fate. Liberal delegative democracy operates as an ambulant monarchy that periodically mobilizes people to choose their new ruler, hijacking and kidnapping society and its resources in the venture. No matter its avowed ideology, creed and, occasionally, good intentions, it tends to derail into oligarchy-like structures. Michels' iron law of oligarchy is perfectly valid, but only so in the case of delegation, not of representation.

A legality lacking legitimacy has been the typical outcome of delegative political processes, marked by severe distrust of people who in their majority have lost all belief in political parties, the political arena, the political system and political leadership. One needs only glance at the recent history of Latin America, where in the last six years six democratically elected presidents were ousted out of office by mass popular protest, while it has become the norm that a former president stands trial for charges of corruption and other misdemeanor during tenure.

In enveloped societies, the appropriation of rule by delegation or conquest of power by usurpation has no genuine democratic solution in store for people or society and can offer no escape route to derailment and social disaster. The painful conclusion is that from within the system no solution exists, for delegative political parties embedded in the liberal democratic political arena cannot offer an escape route, since the traditional beneficiaries of the system are not the most inclined actors to modify it structurally. Rather than changing the rules of the game, what is at stake, is to change the game itself, in order to allow people to take command of their own destiny at a time the stakes are high. A metaphor for most contemporary enveloped societies, is the drunk driver of a bus owned by the passengers, who is scolded for irresponsible behavior while traveling through the plains. Dangerous cliffs are now ahead, and instead of scolding, the waiting is for the passenger to take over the steer wheel.

Only the sphere of development can offer a feasible democratic option, by bringing evolution, context and people's agency back in, in the form of representative democracy, allowing people, as the rightful owners of society, to recuperate their country and to control their destiny. That is what echoed amidst unprecedented crisis among the desperate Argentinean people, when shouting out in choir against the whole political arena of delegation: "Que se vayan todos!" (Let them all go!)

Unrestrained globalization makes the picture of envelopment even grimmer. The choice in derailing enveloped societies is now between certain social death by delegation and a survival chance by representation. The main challenge for social science and politics, in contemporary world in the decades to come, is therefore to design, in a fusion of theory and practice, a practically feasible model of representative democracy to restore the agency of people as the architect of history.

The most important single factor to trigger social change is awareness, defined as the sight of an alternative to existing reality. Two widely accepted tenacious myths surround the concept among social scientists and social reformers. The first is the tenet that the level of awareness and eagerness to take corrective action bears a causal relationship with the degree of pauperization, much like what in Marx's concept was the 'Verelendungstheorie'<sup>45</sup>. Second, it is believed that change in awareness is impossible on short notice, for changing

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<sup>44</sup> Even though much of what is stated hold for core Western states as well, the focus is here on enveloped societies.

<sup>45</sup> 'Verelendung' is German for pauperization. The theory sustains that if the level of poverty and misery is sufficiently high, people will naturally be inclined to insurgency.

the mentality of people requires huge efforts during an extended length of time, sometimes even generations. By inference, structural social and political change becomes utopian. The history of Caribbean slavery demystifies this defeatist tenet that only serves the status quo and the vague concept of mentality, nobody cares to define with precision.

Inspired by the Last Supper, a devout planter in colonial Cuba decided to line up his slaves and wash their feet during the Eastern tide, offering them a banquet in addition. Few days after that amazing spectacle, the slaves launched an attack on the plantation, making havoc of his possessions and killing his daughter in the uprising. Historiography recorded this violent incident of slavery as the apex of ingratitude, rather than a salient example of awareness change. The slave-owner had just committed the unforgivable mistake to destroy the discourse of white supremacy that justified and sustained slavery. In the fear of his own God, he had admitted that the slaves were his equals by washing their feet. His humane deed instantly liberated slave consciousness. The expression on the face of the slaves was one of "Wait a minute!" He was nothing else than a shameless tyrant, an abuser, and a despot, knowingly mistreating them to steal their labor and to chain their freedom.

In a span of minutes, the master accomplished what decades of suffering and 'Verelendung' in cruel slavery was unable to achieve amongst those docile slaves. Slave 'mentality', whatever it may mean, evaporated on the spot by awareness with less than half an hour of incubation time. Here history dramatically shows that one can only dominate people by controlling their mind, thought and consciousness. It also provides the valuable lesson that under the weight of harsh reality avenues exist to trigger awareness on short notice. Accumulated frustration and hopelessness alone are not enough, but there comes a point that naked reality can overwhelm the strongest discourse. Time is then ripe for the minds and energies of people to be liberated, by watching the conditions of their own reality, unmitigated by false narration. As Jean Paul Sartre observed when unmasking false narratives in the aftermath of slavery in the Americas: "Our victims know us by their scars and their chains, and it is this that makes their evidence irrefutable."<sup>46</sup> Evidence turned into action always triggers the motor of history.

Within the realm of the new development paradigm, we can now sketch the general contours of a democratic alternative to parliamentary democracy for enveloped societies that are deeply immersed in social and political crisis without any apparent escape route, particularly when responding to the following profile.

- i. The country is on a steady downward slope, experiencing recurrent social and economic crises, political instability and social polarization.
- ii. A democratic deficit of the system, the lack of internal party democracy and systemic corruption undermine the legitimacy, as a consequence of which people lost belief in the democratic content of the political system, in the honesty of politicians and leaders and in their capacity to govern.
- iii. The hunt for the vote of the people in delegative democracy derails into a permanent destructive polarization between opposition and coalition at the expense of national goals, with personal loyalty and party support more important than free democratic thought and speech.
- iv. The country still has a minimum critical mass of honest and positive people, primarily outside the political arena, particularly in organizations of civil society, who if joined together can create a formidable force in society.

Given the dead end alley of delegative politics dominated by elite controlled oligarchic political parties in the political arena, only a representation-based social and political movement can mobilize the own potentialities for self-realization and offer a genuine

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<sup>46</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre's Foreword to Franz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*. London, Penguin Books, 1973 (Orig. 1961), p. 12.

alternative for these societies. The translation of development into a political project by mobilizing the three critical factors that shape history - social agency, survival and awareness – forms the basis for a representative, democratic, bottom-up movement based on property, equality, liberty and solidarity, as its fundamental values.

The key issue to be dealt with by representation is how to mold the pluralist platform of spontaneous and independent mobilization of divergent social forces into an organized, structured and transparent democratic force capable of gaining the political control of the state to run a country in an accountable way that can accommodate all major social forces, without the danger of fragmentation or derailment into a new bureaucracy or oligarchy.

At the brink of disaster, being destroyed from within by the persistent negation of democracy and from outside by an imminent globalization into extinction, a rearrangement of politics beyond the traditional political arena is the first imperative step. The only option for people to demand their country back is representative democracy based on development ideology beyond the confines of traditional politics, the reigning political culture and the domination structures of the status quo. Its starting point is the mobilization of all positive honest and constructive forces in a society in need of a rescue operation in a transparent cooperative project that is participative and democratic in nature. Representation, building on conscious individuals and social forces striving for their own genuine interests as the architects of history and social evolution, in an atmosphere of dialogue, harmony, negotiation, respect for diversity in culture and for economic agency, opens promising paths for development and progress.

Ideas are powerful tools to mobilize social forces as agents that shape history. A critical role to create awareness for the mobilization of social forces is, therefore, in the hands of catalyzing individuals. A joint strategy for action of social forces, individuals and ideas can fuse the three critical factors of history: social agents, the needs of the social forces as the crystallization of the innate strive to survive and an awareness that a new reality can be shaped. A salient role in triggering awareness, by enhancing the belief in an alternative and in the capacity to mobilize and sustain the rise of the movement, will be assumed or entrusted to people held in great esteem and with high standards, who constitute the moral stock of society. The solution is not a new brand of self-postulated ambitious delegates eager to take the reins by establishing another party, but genuine democratic representatives who are engendered by the social forces out of the moral reserves of society. Potential leadership is located in the best stock of society that was marginalized by delegative politics into sterile observer roles in the outskirts of society, into apathy and even into the diaspora, either by active exclusion or by voluntary retreat after deep frustration.

The agency of NGOs, churches, mass organizations, professional associations, and social and cultural organizations, each one in their own way involved in the defense of particular target groups, social values and national goals, is critical for genuine development. The dilemma of the NGOs, however, lies in the “N”, representing their ‘non-governmental’ statute of independent autonomous defenders of civil society, far from politics and capital not in pursuit of power and governance. There is an increasing awareness that without a change in the system their focused action is a struggle against the currents and the tides. Deteriorating conditions of social and political reality undermine their actions in defense of a specific target group, even in the short run, confronting these organizations of civil society directly with the realm of politics so desperately avoided.

Notwithstanding their social aims to protect the weak, fight injustice and claim the social good, the inclination of NGOs to defuse direct social action to conquer power may constitute a barrier for the aspiration of forces from below to take command of their own destiny. NGOs are not subversive because they do not contest state power and the dominating system. That is the reason why they are amply tolerated, coopted and facilitated by the status quo of injustice, and seldom suffer the kind of repressive responses that were traditionally reserved for democratic and social movements aspiring system change.

Representative democracy opens the way for the NGOs and other organizations in civil society to widen their agenda and join forces to foster a democratic political movement for system change, without losing their autonomy, independence and focused targets, since critical support rather than loyalty is the basis of representation. NGOs, then, can become part of the mobilization of all positive forces for structural and system change, without losing their autonomous status.

A comprehensive social and political movement uniting the moral stock of society, initiated from outside the political arena of liberal democracy, in a joint mobilization of forces of the wider society and positive cadres of political parties constitutes the platform for a strong representative democracy. This will open the path for new talents to surface out of the moral reserves of society, not hindered by solid barriers of oligarchic party structures with gurus established for life. Humane, moral, honest, intellectual and social talents, will gain ample space to stand up and act in a political rescue mission based on development, development ideology and representation, rather than to be driven passively into exclusion or self-marginalization by the democratic deficit and immorality that reign the current political arena.

Practical solutions will be required to mobilize a quilt of many diverging groups, each one pursuing its own survival, interests and goals, into a solid concerted national force to serve development. Democracy is not the tyranny of the majority, but a shared negotiating strategy to harmonize the interests of the variety of social groups in society, in order to balance group interests and collective targets within a framework of collective well-being. Translated into a political strategy, the political movement is based on social groups each with an own agenda related to their genuine concerns and interests, but at the same time bound by ties of collective goals and solidarity. In representative democracy, workers, entrepreneurs, youth, women, intellectuals, religious people, professionals, minorities and people in other social settings, instead of constituting monolithic polarizing blocs, all meet in a joint political project, in a like manner as they meet in real life in ongoing social processes and interaction. Knowledge, experience and charisma are assets for good governance, but only second to honesty, democracy and reliability. 'No leadership by self-postulation' may well become a general code of conduct for representative democracy, in order to prevent turning alleged mass support, knowledge or experience into the prime sources for claims of leadership.

The active mobilization and harmonization of the own potentialities of social groups in the pursuit of development produces a realm of interconnected diversity. The target of democratic deliberation is, therefore, not the imposition of unity or consensus but the pursuit of a negotiated solution informed by the need of collective destiny to take one road at the time. The core of the social and political movement, based on representative democracy, is located in the guiding principle that each social group or force in society is entitled to freely pursue its own interests, without impeding others to pursue their targets. Since the concerns and interests of different groups can conflict, the only harmonious outcome is a negotiated compromise as the best available option for the time being to accommodate all in the forest of diverging interests. Differences should be prevented from becoming conflict, not by suppressing them or imposing a unilateral solution, but by a constructive, concerted, negotiated option based on representative democracy, as the fundament for legitimacy, legality and justice, and the best guarantee for social peace at the local, national, regional and global level.

Deliberation, persuasion or coercion cannot discursively erase differences between individuals or social groups, whenever divergent interests have a material base. The strife for uniformity and homogenization, as pursued historically by the civilizing mission of the West in the era of colonialism and in contemporary world by neoliberal globalization, asphyxiates the mobilization of the own potentialities from within and, therefore, constitutes an assault against the principle of development. For the same reason, consensus,

though much acclaimed as a virtue, is not the goal of democracy, when conflicting interests rest on material differences. Not consensus should be pursued, but rather harmony, the achievement of a negotiated outcome in a dialogue between diverse interests, that is accepted by all parties.

Genuine democracy is the right to speak in the cadence of one's own voice, allowing everyone to have a say, to be listened to and be taken serious. The code of conduct is, therefore, respect for integrity, identity, dignity, philosophy and belief systems of all, taken as a fundamental principle that should never be trampled down. Since right is not predestined to side with the majority, no arrogant majority-based elite shall unilaterally impose its will on a defenseless minority. Concessions are, therefore, required both from the weak and from the powerful, in order to let personal and circumstantial differences and considerations cede for collective interests geared towards survival and development of all. Representative democracy, by its very virtues, will therefore place each negotiating representative in a position to argue the result back to the represented, as the best result that could be achieved for the time being in a permanent negotiating dialogue.

Informed by this joint concerted approach with a harmonious balance between the group and the individual, the aim of the political movement is to gain momentum and force to take command of the power of the state in a constitutional, non-violent, cooperative project through participation in general elections, outside which no feasible option exists or will be tolerated in contemporary world. Genuine democracy can thus be achieved in a system formally based on delegation, by a genuinely democratic social movement outside the political arena, which is itself internally based on representative democracy. This, then, is the democratic response to liberal democracy. Even if the system, that cannot be evaded, is not democratic and the parties that typically participate in the contest lack internal democracy and are allergic against social responses, real democracy is possible by the governance of a movement with an internal democratic structure based on representation that is capable of mobilizing the potentialities of people and society. By taking command of the state, the democratic political movement turns governance into democratic rule and makes people's vote compatible with people's fate. Power, then, is no longer a goal and end but a vehicle and precondition to realize development by mobilizing all potentialities in a project of self-realization.

The foregoing reflective remarks are, evidently, neither the model, nor the manifest or program of the political movement. Practical answers will be required for the democratic assignment of individuals to voice the concerns of the people, with agreed rules of decision-making beyond the tyranny of the majority, with inbuilt guarantees to prevent new oligarchies. Councils at different levels of representation will obviously be required, with provisions to prevent oligarchy formation and derailment into delegation, and the presence of inbuilt control mechanisms should be elaborated in the process. Since no two countries and no two social and political realities are the same, no standard solution exists outside agency in concrete reality. These reflections, which go beyond the tradition in social science and politics to retreat in the quarantine of theory and to leave the practical implications for politics, establish the contours of the practical solution. It will require a creative practical elaboration both at the stage of designing the code of conduct and of formulating the operative principles of the democratic movement, in order to secure transparent deliberation and participatory decision-making within the framework of a new representative democracy.

The creative shaping of the new representative democracy may widely benefit from the longstanding search for direct, participatory democracy. Delegation and representation take central stage too in anarchism, which uses these terms with a similar content although switching their meanings. Representative democracy overcomes the flaw of most anarchist options to reject - out of fear for a new oligarchy - any authority and power. In fact, anarchism is trapped in the defeatist axiom of liberal democracy that sustains that no rule can ever be controlled properly, which deprives it from the required power structure to

defend the authority from rival contenders, once power has been seized. Representative democracy, with people's vote compatible with people's fate, can bring the solution for the unsolved dilemma of anarchism that some form of rule and power is indispensable to destroy oligarchic power, to prevent it from sprouting again and to facilitate and steer development.

Important lessons can be drawn, as well, from existing collectivity-based solutions of deliberation, such as ubuntu philosophy from Africa, mushawara from Indonesia and krutu from the maroon societies in Surinam,<sup>47</sup> all addressing the difficult issue of seeking harmony between the individual and collective realm. Ubuntu philosophy<sup>48</sup> and worldview is based on the tenet that "a person is a person through other persons". The collective and the shared take precedence over the member of the community, but only to serve both the self-realization of the individual and the development of society. Maxims as "I am what I am because of you", "an injury to one is an injury to all" and "it takes a village to grow a child" all are embedded in ubuntu philosophy. The philosophical-ethical implication is that what happens to the whole group happens to the individual, and if something happens to the individual, it resounds in the group. That principle casts a different light to solidarity, respect, and cooperation than the practice of liberal democracy. Ubuntu is based on principles that take precedence over competition, ambition, and conflict. A critical evaluation and analysis of these collectivity based approaches can widely contribute to find the right balance between individual freedom and collective belonging, far from tribal fundamentalism and from cowboy ideology, far from the skirmishes of Taliban with the trigger happy cowboy.

Somewhere beyond - rather than between - tribal totalitarian communalist control and the elite abuse of atomistic individual freedom lies buried the real engine of development and history. The response does not lie in the search of some mechanical midpoint, but in a qualitatively different developmental approach, where the collective and individual realm escape reductionist dichotomization and fuse in a joint project for development of humanity, which after all is one single race.

## **8. Conclusion**

Power, not by bullet, ballot or wallet, but by representation that mobilizes the strategic forces of society, as the agents of history, is the only feasible response to social death in contemporary world, in order to rescue democracy, trigger development and bring about harmony. Democracy is not about telling lies, not even about telling the truth, but about listening to the authors of history, to hear what people think and aspire, to feel their heart beat and to watch how people act on their own behalf. Authentic truths are not in the minds of experts and self-proclaimed leaders, but rather in the aspirations of people and society to respond to the urge for self-realization.

"In nature as well as in history there is a cosmic desire to survive, grow, flourish, bear fruit and even to defeat death by reproduction."<sup>49</sup> Democracy, as part of that cosmic desire, echoes in the ticking of the inner clock of society that calibrates the force of the internal social dynamism. In the feats of agency not in the exploits of paternalism is where the true content of democracy will be found. No other social body than people with awareness is, therefore, entitled or capable of securing development and, in the long run, social and physical survival. No paternalist option, not by patriarchy, colonialism or imperialism, can

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<sup>47</sup> Both mushawara and krutu are systems of decisionmaking not by vote but by prolonged deliberation until a solution is found that is accepted by all parties as the best available option to proceed as the group, regardless whether totally in line with its interests.

<sup>48</sup> Ubuntu philosophy takes a prominent place in the work of Desmond Tutu and contributed substantially to the search for political alternatives in South Africa after Apartheid.

<sup>49</sup> Glenn Sankatsing, *The Caribbean: Archipelago of trailer societies*, 1989. At [www.crscenter.com](http://www.crscenter.com) .



ever substitute participation, and no delegation can ever engender democracy, because paternalism paves the way to oligarchy.

These are harsh and merciless times of selfish globalization at the expense of development. One should be neither a pessimist nor an optimist, because both pessimism and optimism are forms of superstition that amend reality either by hope or by despair. Those who still insist on this dichotomy may well take advice from graffiti on the wall in a Latin American city: "Let us save pessimism for better times!"<sup>50</sup> Realism tells us that a solution can be created, when people stand up and take command of their own destiny. Ours is a time not to speculate about the future, but to regulate it. Cynical social scientists and politicians may better take Chinese wisdom at heart: "Men who say it cannot be done, should not interrupt those doing it."

Appropriation of power by elites only created social and political disasters in national policy and at the global level, and harbors only polarization and extreme violence. The globalization of appropriation of power and inter-elite confrontation, marginal to the genuine interests of the people of the world, recently set off *the first planetary war* between reciprocal fundamentalisms giving rise to two rival brands of terrorism, which threatens the survival of the species. Representative democracy is the only viable road left open to pursue global harmony by providing the minimum conditions to overcome three imminent threats, the collision in development, the collapse of ecology and the confrontation in religion, every single one of which directly endangering the survival of humanity.

Trapped in these avenues of destruction, the vast majority of the people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, immersed in persistent instability and crisis, are anxiously waiting for an alternative. Although, apparently, nobody holds the key for the solution, people are losing faith in usurpation and appropriation of power in their name, and begin to stand up to take command of their own destiny. That is the reading of contemporary history by the Zapatistas in Mexico in permanent revolt against officialdom, by the Aymara Indians in Bolivia, recently expelling their president, weary of five hundred years of sale of silver or gas, by the poor of Brazil who lifted up Lula not as a delegate but as their representative, by world civil society and peace movements demanding a critical say in their own future, by people weary of living under constant threat of horror scenarios of countries with imperial governments. Facing death, the organism becomes creative; facing social death society creatively searches for escape routes. Awareness is the sight of an alternative, but alternatives never exist by themselves. Much like a solution for a problem, they are created and designed as a response to concrete reality. In history, alternatives are not found in encyclopedias or Internet but are constructed as a willful act of conscious future-oriented people. It is always creation in real life on roads heading to a future, as a poet reminds us: "Wanderer, there is no way; as you go, you make the way."<sup>51</sup>

Development-based representation as the alternative to delegation is the only escape route to social death. Instead of people with a muted voice, representation turns them into their own ombudsman. At the same time, it opens the difficult but promising avenue to global harmony. Representative democracy, whose penetrating roots are anchored in justice, equality, freedom and solidarity, as non-negotiable basic values of human coexistence, is the only realm capable of offering a development-oriented project of society and a democratic response to usurpation of power.

A totemic respect for freedom of voice, agency and integrity of the people, as the author of history, is a mandatory prerequisite to turn development, representation and development ideology into the beacons of a future with stability, justice, social equality, harmony and peace in diversity. No other avenue to secure social survival is on hand, than

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<sup>50</sup> A remark of Eduardo Galeano at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001.

<sup>51</sup> "Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar" from the Spanish poet Antonio Machado.

people designing a viable way to take the future in their own hands by collectively inventing, in social and political action, a practical avenue to self-realization.

The immediate task to embark upon by all positive and constructive social forces in society and in the global human family is the creation of democratic social and political development movements based on social agency and representation. Only then will people's vote be compatible with people's fate. Omens that have become facts now envisage that any other option will deliver social death, both collectively and individually. It is still not too late, but swiftly we are running out of time. It is now or never, hence, now!

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