

# Peace and Development In Latin America

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President Calderón with Latin American presidents and governors during the Puebla-Panama Plan Summit.

## INTRODUCTION

Peace is not just the absence of war. In the case of Latin America, the study of peace must be linked to matters of development and democracy. This attempt at globally interpreting the variables peace, development and democracy is part of the framework of a neo-structural analysis of Latin America.

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Underdevelopment marks the direction of the continent. Old and new theories attempt to explain its causes and possible alternatives. The current stage of globalization, begun between 1989 and 1990, offers new elements—probably negative ones—for structuring peace with social justice that could be called “*pax democratica*.”<sup>1</sup>

The relationship of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes to development, peace models and the democratic challenge deserves a lot of thought; plus, they prompt the question of whether a

regional peace without democracy and development is possible.

What is clear is that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Latin American regimes have moved from authoritarianism to formal democracy without promoting development, thus creating weak democracies. We can say, therefore, that a lasting peace will not be produced solely by the advent of a stage favorable to development, but by an authentic democracy that makes it possible to negotiate “among equals” to overcome the conflicts that may arise in the

future. As we shall see, development and democracy are necessary but insufficient prerequisites for regional peace.

LATIN AMERICA:  
PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

The weakness of nation-states for dealing with important crises reflects the inability of political regimes to overcome the poverty line and, of course, underdevelopment. One example is Argentina's 2001 crisis under President Fernando de la Rúa.

There is an unavoidable link between peace and development. A *pax democratica* implies the existence, exercise and preservation of social rights, the right to housing, health care, education and work, for which comprehensive development plays a preponderant role.<sup>2</sup>

The weakness of institutions and lack of democratic traditions are part of the lack of democratic development in the region.<sup>3</sup> Without falling into "determinism," it is logical to think that, as trends, the lack of development and democracy brings with it an absence of regional peace reflected, for example, in coup d'états.

Poverty, a characteristic of underdevelopment, becomes the main cause of the lack of comprehensive democratic development. In *El problema de la guerra y las vías de la paz* (The Problem of War and the Road to Peace), Norberto Bobbio writes that war is a blocked road that creates enormous confidence in the balance of terror: the impossibility of war.<sup>4</sup>

But, are there economic growth rates that are more favorable for keeping the peace? I do not think so. There is no such thing as a political-economic deter-

minism that manifests a peace policy fostered by macro-economic indicators. What does happen is that military governments are more likely to take a military way out, just like the case of Argentina with the Falklands War.<sup>5</sup>

Authoritarianism, for its part, has been linked with the "national" question, with nationalism, and this has resulted in a series of armed conflicts of different dimensions:<sup>6</sup> this is the case of Argentina, the civil war in Colombia, the political violence in Peru and certain conflicts in Mexico.

Violence organized from the state, like a modern Leviathan, has controlled civil society, if not made it completely disappear. Permanent economic crisis has created instability, emigration and violence.<sup>7</sup> Once again, the bureaucratic authoritarian state imposed in Argentina by Héctor Cámpora in the 1970s is an ominous example of this state terrorism.

LATIN AMERICA: GLOBALIZATION,  
PEACE AND NEOLIBERALISM

It is commonplace to say that Latin America arrived late and unequally to the beginning of globalization. What is worthwhile asking is to what extent globalization and neoliberalism affect the peace of our societies. However, there is no causal relationship between the two aspects of the problem.

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A first idea is that the existence of the neoliberal wave, as Touraine writes, increases and deepens the contradictions of the globalized nation-state.<sup>8</sup> In that sense we can say that neoliberalism has failed in its promise of development, since the majority of the population does not benefit from its supposed political and economic miracles.

In the second place, the globalization process accentuated ethnic and nationalist conflicts. For example, the Iran war "monopolized" the existence of global violence. However, many ethnic and "internal wars" continue to exist on a national level, such as the long civil war in Colombia, a far cry from the now defunct Cold War. A third effect of globalization, because it exacerbates conflicts and asymmetries between the center and the periphery, is that it has increased the risk of conflicts between powers, states and ethnic groups, as well as sub-regional wars like the Iraq War.

Lastly, neoliberalism should be linked to worsening conditions for peace and Latin American regional development. Privatizations, the supremacy of the market, *ad hoc* structural adjustments and the dismantling of the welfare state are all associated with globalization policies and offer a different, hegemonic vision of national problems and the global society. In this sense, they cause a move from classic wars to "globalized," "trans-state" wars, whether they be civil or ethnic wars.

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE  
IN THE REGION: THE PEACE  
AGREEMENTS

Peace agreements have become fashionable: for example, ETA's negotiations in Spain. But, what would a stable peace look like?<sup>9</sup> A positive peace is the guarantee of a stable peace in which there is a state monopoly of power, the rule of law, social justice, democratic participation, a culture of constructive conflict and self-control of countries due to their interdependence.

The national question plays an important role in globalization conflicts. Certainly, in many cases, these conflicts take on a markedly ethnic slant, and they have become a characteristic of the globalization process: Ireland (as a national movement), Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Latin American indigenous movements are examples.

POVERTY: DEVELOPMENT,  
GROWTH AND PEACE

It is tempting and fascinating to think about the relationship between growth, development and peace. Methodologically, it can only be thought of as a trend, rather than an inextricable, mechanical, causal relationship.

The proposal of neoliberal models, if we consider that they began to be imposed in the region in the late 1980s, was not closely related to representative democracy. The era of bureaucratic-authoritarian states is quite consistent with neoliberal formulas.<sup>10</sup> When democratization processes began, paradoxically this reinforced globalization with incomplete, weak transitions to representative democracy. In a word: without establishing social rights, since

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poverty and inequality not only continued, but actually increased.<sup>11</sup> As we know, poverty and domestic social polarization have awakened sharp contradictions in Latin American societies,<sup>12</sup> incurring high social costs, exclusion, tension and frequently a clash of intolerant ideologies.<sup>13</sup>

The *pax democratica* is a difficult equation to conceive. According to Latin-Barómetro, while in 2002, 57 percent of the population thought that democracy was the best form of government, only 33 percent was satisfied with its functioning. "It is not very believable that the disrepute in which democracy is held in our region corresponds to a preference for dictatorships. Latin American citizens are very familiar with the horrors of dictatorships, whether directly or indirectly, and they long for effective democracies that fulfill the principles that inspire this form of government."<sup>14</sup>

The crisis of the 1980s deepened poverty and inequality. From that we learned that macro-economic imbalances and fiscal irresponsibility are not a good recipe for achieving sustainable growth and that their effects can be devastating.<sup>15</sup> The average growth rate was 3.2 percent a year, a far cry from the 6 percent needed to reduce technological and social backwardness, as the ECLAC had pointed out in 2000.

Since 1990, Latin America's rhythm of growth has only averaged 2.6 per-

cent, half of the figure attained during state-led industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s (5.5 percent). Even the best performance of the "new-style development," between 1990 and 1997, only produced a 3.7 percent annual growth rate, very much below what Latin America experienced until the debt crisis.<sup>16</sup>

This made a paradoxical advance possible: Latin America became the region that most clearly combined the advance in representative democracy with market liberalization. All this poses a question: Is it possible to achieve *pax democratica* under a neoliberal regime?

NEOLIBERALISM:  
PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Neoliberalism places the market at the center of public affairs. Ocampo estimates that a new equilibrium is needed between the market and public interest "that will make it possible to deal with the powerful centrifugal forces of globalized markets."<sup>17</sup> A correct analysis of the relationship between neoliberalism and *pax democratica* means asking ourselves about the possible scenarios. Ulrich Beck proposes cosmopolitanism, which involves the experience of the crisis of world society, interdependence, the principle of recognizing the differences in world society, that of cosmopolitan empathy and the

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change of perspective, that of the impossibility of living in a world society without borders, and that of the mix and interpenetration of cultures.<sup>18</sup>

In a cosmopolitan framework, the relationship between neoliberalism and *pax democrática* might be timely. The democratic idea would be the one that allows for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to be in force. In that sense, the neostructuralist perspective put forward new alternatives when it called for a “total” market to be in force, reformulated a selective strategy of imports and exports, and proposed direct action by the state in the fight against poverty. But, does it have any relation with the universalization of neoliberal democracy? Naturally, since the idea is to adapt the economic model to the political model: market democracy. The problem lies in the fact that neoliberal or market democracy has not managed to decrease poverty and underdevelopment levels; it has not been capable of resolving the social debt and unemployment.

The challenge is to build an egalitarian democracy, which first of all means a correspondence between democracy and citizenship. Beyond political rights, it implies recognizing the current validity of the values of equality, solidarity and non-discrimination. In the second place, it means admitting that democracy is diversity. That is to say, it is necessary to recognize

that there are many alternatives, the freedom to choose among the different kinds of existing welfare states.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to sustain *pax democrática* without a real democracy; and representative democracy is the best environment—necessary though insufficient—for keeping the peace.

The “end of history” is not the disappearance of the state. We can say that the current dispute is about whether there is a larger or smaller state, a larger or smaller market.

Peace is a comprehensive concept, just like development. This article situates itself in the theoretical tradition of the analysis of the *pax democrática* as a central concept for studying the relationships between peace, globalization and development, as well as their connection to the neoliberal system.<sup>19</sup> ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mark Pecera and Carolina C. Beer, “Dictatorial Peace?” *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 1, March 2002, p. 15 on.

<sup>2</sup> Luis T. Díaz Müller, “América Latina: derechos sociales y desarrollo,” paper presented at the International Human Rights Congress

organized by the UNAM Institute for Legal Research in Mexico City in 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Claudio Fuentes and David Álvarez, “¿América Latina en la encrucijada?” *Nueva Sociedad* no. 198, July-August 2005, p. 74 on.

<sup>4</sup> Norberto Bobbio, *El problema de la guerra y las vías de la paz* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> Luis T. Díaz Müller, *América Latina. Relaciones internacionales y derechos humanos* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Waldmann and Fernando Reinares, comps., *Sociedades en guerra civil* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Mary Kaldor, *Las nuevas guerras. Violencia organizada en la era global* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Alain Touraine, “El fin de la ola neoliberal,” paper included in the report on the series of lectures entitled “Inequality and Globalization,” at the School of Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Editorial Manantial, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Heinrich Krumwiede, “Posibilidades de pacificación de las guerras civiles: preguntas e hipótesis,” Waldmann and Reinares, op. cit., p. 109 on.

<sup>10</sup> Luis T. Díaz Müller, “América Latina derechos sociales y desarrollo,” op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Touraine, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Bernardo Kliksberg, “Un tema ético central: el impacto de la pobreza sobre la familia en América Latina,” Bernardo Kliksberg, comp., *La agenda ética pendiente de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: FCE/BID, 2005), p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> José Antonio Ocampo, “Economía y democracia,” Bernardo Kliksberg, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> Rebeca Grynspan, “La desigualdad de las oportunidades de América Latina: una revisión crítica de los resultados de las últimas dos décadas,” Bernardo Kliksberg, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>16</sup> José A. Ocampo, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>18</sup> Ulrico Beck, *La mirada cosmopolita o la guerra es la paz* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> David Kinsella, “No Rest for the Democratic Peace,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3, August 2005, p. 453 on.