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A SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE ON FORCED MIGRATION AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article analyzes the critical dimensions of the current neoliberal capitalist crisis, particularly the conditions of human insecurity and forced migration fostered by the dynamics of the accumulation model and power system behind neoliberal globalization. We argue that, in the context of free market ideology, the capitalist world system has focused on reinforcing the power of international monopoly capital in the production, finance, service and trade areas via regressive strategies such as labor overexploitation, rentism and the destruction of nature. Large multinational corporations appropriate strategic and profitable segments of peripheral economies and their economic surplus, thereby exacerbating social and territorial inequalities. The reinsertion of peripheral countries into the world economy has fashioned enclave economies specialized in surplus transfer, which diverts both the natural and human resources needed to promote growth, accumulation and development in the Third World. Human insecurity, forced migration and the civilization crisis define the prevailing social conditions in peripheral countries. We propose a reconceptualization of human development from a south-based perspective so as to promote a social transformation that leads to equality, social justice and the common good.

Keywords: monopoly capital, civilization crisis, forced migration, human development, human security.

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INTRODUCTION

Orthodox theories have put forth several theses on development and migration in an attempt to justify the ongoing neoliberal globalization project: 1) development is tantamount to economic growth, competitiveness and private investment; 2) structural adjustment neoliberal reforms have created ideal conditions for businesses; 3) the “war against poverty” is the new social policy to counterbalance extreme poverty; 4) the current crisis is short-term and limited to the financial segment; its solution has been a result of putting neoliberal policies into practice, and 5) there is a positive relation between international migration and development—that is, labor export has been a source of development, migrants are members of a transnational community capable of establishing well-balanced relations between places of origin and destination, and remittances have acted as investment funds.

We wish to call into question the dominant northern perspective from a south-based viewpoint that may disclose the basis of the accumulation model, the power structure behind the capital world system and the asymmetries between central and peripheral countries, as well as the differences between social classes and groups. The purpose of this article is to outline a critical conceptual framework for the study of the capitalist world system and the dynamics of unequal development on a spatial and social level, as well as to understand the dimensions of the current crisis of neoliberal capitalism, particularly in regards to human insecurity and its consequence: forced migration.

As far as the free market myth is concerned, we argue that the capitalist world system has revolved around the monopolization of finances, production, services and trade, as well as labor exploitation and environmental degradation. The system has intensified its mechanisms of labor exploitation, rentism and plundering of nature on global level. Large businesses have expanded a worldwide network of production, financing, distribution and investment that has allowed it to seize the strategic and profitable segments of peripheral economies and appropriate their economic surplus, the result of multiple social efforts and sacrifices.

THE CAPITAL GLOBAL NETWORK

The architecture of transnational power

Central countries, which until recently dominated extensive regions of the world we now know today as peripheral, underdeveloped or dependent nations, still control the global power system. The new imperialism no longer requires wars of conquest (although, as Iraq and Afghanistan show, these have not been fully abandoned); the display of political, diplomatic and military power is enough, with the backing of international, mainly financial organizations, the cultural and entertainment industries, and the acquiescence of peripheral governments that have adopted the so-called Washington Consensus and free market ideology as political justification. The mechanisms of liberal democracy are reduced to holding elections controlled by a small political elite at the service of big businesses.

Allied central governments led by the United States, the European Union (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) and Japan exercise control over the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which operate as key institutions in the development of government programs and public policies that favor the interests of multinational companies (MNCs). Likewise, military coalitions between the United States and NATO exercise supranational powers to intervene against antidemocratic regimes that may, at one time have been allies, and have abundant reserves of natural resources, such as gas and oil.

The rule of international monopoly capital

The major MNCs, under the protection of the most powerful countries in the world and led by the United States, the WB, the IMF and the WTO, have undertaken a thorough process of capitalist restructuring known as *neoliberal globalization*. This process has transformed the global economy via practices such as subcontracting and/or intra-business commerce among large corporations, which have expanded over most of the world's geography. This means of expansion entails export

platforms that operate as enclaves in peripheral countries with abundant and cheap natural and human resources. Approximately between 55 million (Robinson 2008) and 66 million workers from the south (Singa Boyenge 2007) work in this kind of plants. The operating agents are large manufacturing, financial, agricultural, commercial and service corporations. Financial capital generates speculative strategies that favor channeling investment funds, sovereign wealth funds and social surpluses toward new financial instruments that offer short-term high profit margins while risking recurrent crises and massive frauds that hinder or affect the way the so-called real economy works.

The model of global accumulation is centered on placing power, capital and wealth in the hands of a transnational social elite that holds sway over MNCs, the governments of central States and international financial organizations. The links of global capital have created a new international division of labor, where peripheral countries dismantle their own production chains and domestic markets to act as providers of plentiful cheap labor force and natural resources. This leads to a transfer of surplus and resources to central countries that impairs accumulation and development processes in Third World regions and countries.

Subsumption of living and labor standards to monopoly capital

The strategies implemented by neoliberal globalization to generate extraordinary profits go against traditional tenets of technological innovation and encompass extreme forms of labor exploitation, environmental mercantilization, new ways of appropriating scientific and technological work and the geostrategic role of the state.

The postmodern myth of a blurred nation-state has been shattered and remains only in documents. The state is the main promoter of the interests of MNCs. While central states undertake political, diplomatic, military and cultural assaults in support of global production chains, peripheral states have ceased to nurture the domestic market and social protection and expanded spaces for the valorization of international monopolist capitalism. There is no evidence, in this regard, that the state apparatus will stop working because its budget, for example, will not col-

lapse; its social subdivision, however, will in order to favor transfers to the private sector through various means. The geostrategic role of the state is essential to the preservation of social asymmetries and inequalities that attract investment. The predominance of monopoly capital cannot be explained without state interference inasmuch as, in addition to guaranteeing corporate profitability, it controls the workforce, systematically lowers salaries and squanders the nation's natural resources and patrimony.

Countries immersed in serious underdevelopment and dependency, where social degradation precludes any attempts at "social cohesion," belong within the dangerous category of "the failed state," known for its corruption, criminality, insecurity, lack of democracy and ungovernability. Within these borders, power vacuums lead to the rise of factual powers; that is, powers that have no accountability nor are they democratically elected but nevertheless make crucial decisions regarding the performance of the government and formal institutions. Some examples include the media, the entrepreneurial elite, the church hierarchy, the military, militias, and conservative intellectuals. In most extreme cases, power vacuums and social unrest act as incentives for drug cartels and paramilitary groups that embark on armed attacks against institutional power, turning the defenseless civil population into casualties. Large drug cartels have, in their own way, taken the shape of a multinational company that manages a broad-spectrum political and criminal business conglomerate. The absence of counterpowers or counterhegemonic social powers makes it easier for the state to play a double role as a monopolist agent and failed promoter of social development. This double feature of the neoliberal state is pervasive in peripheral regions, where it operates as an efficient agent of monopoly capital, favoring the accelerated dismantling of welfare and creating optimal conditions for the over-exploitation of nature, labor and the establishment of subcontracting chains and intra-business commerce linked to the internationalization strategy of the MNCs.

One of the main cogs in the capitalist system has been the lowering of labor costs. Underdeveloped countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the former Soviet bloc proffer a large contingent of cheap workforce that employers and managers in the labor market channel to differentiated and precarious segments, both nationally and internationally. In the

absence of an internationally and domestically consolidated organization, oversupply and labor mobility have turned the working class into an easy prey of official and covert policies that promote social alienation and interclassist divisionism by establishing labor, national, regional, racial and cultural hierarchies. This is why large corporations enjoy paradises of cheap, flexible and disorganized labor force (Harvey 2007; Schierup, Hansen and Castles 2006; Delgado Wise and Márquez 2009).

Natural resources, and domestic and communal goods have been appropriated, as never before, by large corporations that seek to intensify in order to increase profits, heedless of the fact that this compulsiveness looms disproportionately over the reproduction rates of ecosystems. Socioenvironmental degradation has become part of the landscape of neoliberal modernization—a kind of collateral damage legitimized by neoliberal ideology. This is why the exploitation and pollution of the environment, or the spread of starvation and diseases, signal problems that, at most, inspire conscientious citizens to undertake philanthropic actions. The scientific community has warned us about climate change, which results in global warming and extreme climate changes of increased frequency and intensity. Unrestrained accumulation mechanisms damage interactions between human society and nature (Foladori 2001; Foster 1999; Hinkelammer and Mora 2008, Márquez 2010a).

Fascination with the advent of a new economy based on a knowledge society, technoscience and the digital era has diluted differences between social and territorial inequality; the emergence of a flat world linked in real time and propped up by allegedly creative financial instruments has already been proclaimed. Nonetheless, the technological advances in informatics, telecommunications, biotechnology, new materials and nanotechnology answer to the demands of the great MNCs and their quest to maximize profits. A great transformation is taking place behind the scenes: scientific and technological work is being reorganized via mechanisms such as outsourcing and offshore outsourcing. Major corporations have subordinated the majority of scientists through collaboration agreements meant to finance applied research projects. The subsumption of scientific/technological work has transferred research and development (R&D) risks and responsibilities from

central to peripheral countries while simultaneously reaping benefits from amassing patents and commercializing the products. An unprecedented mercantilization of scientific/technological work is taking place under a short-term perspective lacking any social concerns (Freeman 2005; Lester and Piore 2004).

UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT

An intrinsic feature of neoliberal globalization is the depth of unequal development. The dynamics of world capital accumulation, the international division of labor, the system of global power and the diverse class conflicts have made economic, social, political and cultural polarization more extreme across geographical spaces and social classes (Márquez 2010b). The most conspicuous result is the disproportionate concentration of capital, power and wealth in the hands of a small elite *vis-à-vis* the permanent degradation of the living and working conditions of the majority of the population. This contradiction is echoed¹ by increasingly marked differences between the central or developed countries and the majority of peripheral or underdeveloped countries. Social differentiation, however, has reached alarming registers on both sides of the spectrum.

Systematic transfer of surplus and resources

The merging of old and new mechanisms of extraction and/or resource and surplus transfer has intensified the spatial and social differences in several spheres and on different levels: 1) in the periphery, due to the economic and political imperialism that enforces metropolitan interests, 2) between developed and underdeveloped countries, even among the latter, as a result of asymmetric regional integration schemes, and 3) internationally and as a consequence of exclusionary policies of national development. The transfer of profits and resources materializes through mechanisms such as payment of the foreign debt, public subsidies to

1. There are important exceptions, such as the state-based management of industrialization in countries that keep a distance from neoliberal precepts or promote counter-hegemonic projects, particularly in Southeast Asia and South America.

MNCs, and the appropriation of the fruits of technological progress, financialization and natural resource extraction.

Within the framework of so-called development aid and the structural adjustment programs, international financial organizations such as the IMF and the WB, as well as the large international private banks based in central countries have imposed credit schemes on underdeveloped countries. In the most cases, the foreign debt has multiplied, forcing the debtor countries to transfer their currency and sacrifice government expenditure on social development and infrastructure.

The local and national governments of peripheral countries have allotted significant amounts of budgetary resources to the facilitation of foreign investment; the initial investment is subsidized by infrastructure, the donation of land plots and industrial plants, trainee salaries, fiscal exemptions and payment for several public services. Likewise, under schemes of public/private investment, governments have grant preferential concessions to international monopoly capital and backed this with public resources so that new tourist, real estate, industrial, commercial and service developments can be undertaken.

International monopoly capital restructures innovation systems on a global level by controlling the patents and products of technological progress, as well as the employment of scientific/technological workers in the peripheral countries. This reduces costs and risks, in addition to securing sources of extraordinary profit. By subsuming the scientific and technological work of the global south, capital redirects its ability for innovation while continuing to strengthen the hegemonic role of the central nations and intensify underdevelopment and dependence on the peripheral world.

Financial capital, a prevalent fraction of international monopoly capital, has implemented the speculative strategies that characterize of fictitious capital to easily generate short-term profits while working against the performance of so-called real economy and prompting massive frauds and recurring crises. High volatility and speculative games accelerate the elimination of capitals, which benefits the concentration and centralization of monopoly capital while fostering unemployment, starvation and pauperization. Participants include not only big business and savings in the First World, but also financial resources from the

Third World, such as sovereign funds, public budgets, and pension and investment funds. These resources are diverted from productive activities or social development to join the economy of the world casino.

Natural resources such as minerals, oil, gas, wood, and water are indiscriminately pillaged by MNCs, which set up enclave economies in areas of ample biodiversity or subsoil wealth. These they extract in large amounts and in the shortest time possible. The local workforce employed for this purpose receives low wages and is predestined to unemployment once the strategic supply of natural resources is exhausted. These types of overexploitation result in environmental pollution, the destruction of ecosystems, diseases and unemployment (Vega 2006).

The emergence of new modalities of unequal exchange

Seen from the structuralist perspective of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)² and dependency theories,³ the concept of unequal exchange used to be fundamental in the explanation of the dynamics of unequal development across central and peripheral nations. Contemporary analyses on world capitalism, however, do not consider it. Unequal exchange plays a crucial role in the surplus transfer carried out by global production chains.

The classical debate on unequal exchange was circumscribed to an international division of labor that confers peripheral countries the role of raw material suppliers and central countries that of industrial product suppliers. This division is still valid in a significant number of peripheral countries, but some of the recently-industrialized peripheral nations, mainly in the Asian region, are also acting as suppliers of industrialized

2. The Prebisch-Singer Hypothesis about deterioration in terms of exchange, introduced in the early 1950s, is fundamental to ECLAC's thinking (Prebisch 1986). Works by Celso Furtado also had a strong influence (Mallorquín 2007; Bresser-Pereira 2007).

3. Beyond the heated Marxist debates of the 1970s and '80s (Samir Amin *et al.* 1971; Shaikh 1979; Florian 1979; Valenzuela 1979; Chatelain 1979), the Emmanuel's pioneering works on unequal exchange (1973; originally published in 1969) undoubtedly influenced dependence theoreticians. That said, the multiple types of dependence analysis and theoretical work on unequal exchange offer viewpoints that need to be developed and adapted with regard to contemporary capitalism (Brewer 1980, 208-32; Munck 2000).

goods, including high technology components.⁴ A new modality of unequal exchange has been added to the traditional one, redefining the outline of a new international division of the workforce: export labor. This new modality entails a still more unfavorable exchange for peripheral countries than that of raw material for manufactured goods. The workforce export has two complementary mechanisms: direct and indirect.

1) *Indirect labor force export*

The structure of global production chains serving MNCs dismantles production chains in peripheral countries and these end as productive appendices to global chains. A large mass of workers from the agricultural, industrial, services and commerce sectors now work under this form of unequal exchange that transfers practically all extant economic surplus abroad. The productive subordination of peripheral countries defines the rationale of the exporting enclave, inhibiting any autonomous accumulation and development prospects.

Imported goods' supply is managed from abroad or through outsourcing tax-free (or even subsidized) contracts devoid of any labor-related or environmental responsibility. The fundamental export product is the work itself. Underneath their boom of export-ready raw materials and manufacturing, peripheral countries provide generally cheap labor force.

The socioeconomic reorientation of peripheral countries towards the productive, commercial and financial scaffolding constructed by the MNCs leads to their promotion of a multiplicity of jobs, both for the traditional proletariat (agriculture and industry) and the new proletariat (services and commerce). These jobs are, however, subject to a regime of job insecurity and overexploitation, including low wages, intense labor, long working days, workplace risks and accidents, and the threat of per-

4. In works written after his famous hypothesis with Prebisch about the decline of exchange terms, Singer (1975) foresees situations of this kind and goes beyond a simple analysis of the evolution of relative processes between two classes of merchandise to consider differing structures of production (center and periphery) with an emphasis on technical progress.

manent unemployment. Ultimately, MNCs unreservedly exploit plentiful sources of cheap work in the peripheral countries, considerably lowering production costs in the process (Delgado Wise and Márquez 2007a; Márquez 2007; Cypher and Delgado Wise 2010).

The effective contribution of foreign capital to peripheral regional and national accumulation is limited to small wage spillovers owing to the huge differences in salaries and, in the best of cases, a reduced multiplying effect via consumption. In the end, the indirect workforce export prompted by global production chains involves *the net transfer of profits abroad*.

A relatively recent qualitative change in indirect labor force export has been the creation of scientific/technological complexes in peripheral economies as part of the strategy to restructure systems of innovation in the more developed nations. These complexes, which work under subcontracting projects, transfer intangible goods abroad. These goods have a value and an even larger strategic significance than the net profits derived from manufacture and assembly plants. We are talking about the transfer of abilities for development and progress, which boosts the competitive advantages and extraordinary profits of those agents in control (the MNCs in this case).

2) *Direct labor force export*

Direct labor force export via forced migration means the transfer of future benefits and the expenses involved in the social formation and reproduction of the migrants. As can be seen in the case of Mexico, the main migrant exporter in the world, these costs are not compensated by remittance flow (Márquez 2007; Delgado Wise, Márquez and Rodríguez 2009).

For peripheral economies with an advanced stage of their demographic transition, labor export involves the transfer of a *demographic dividend*; that is, of a working age population that acts as support for economic dependents, mainly children and senior citizens. In a more profound sense, this transfer implies the loss of the most important resource a nation has: its workforce. Worse still, the exporting of highly qualified labor force exacerbates the problem by seriously decreasing the national capacity for innovation and the implementation of technology-

based development projects. Substantial contingents of R&D workers are being transferred through the migration of scientists and technologists.

The shift of a surplus or supernumerary population from peripheral to central regions not only covers central structural deficits in labor demand derived from an ageing population and insufficient labor force supply, it also tends to increase job competition across several segments of the target economy, leading to a decrease in the wages of the working class as a whole. More than a simple game of supply and demand, as the architects of the neoliberal model claim, this process is inscribed in the strategies of international monopoly capital⁵: the overexploitation of peripheral workforce at an invaluable cost for the countries and regions of origin.

Human mobility, which is inherent to the global expansion of capital, entails a mass of domestic and international migratory flows that respond to the dynamics of capital and, particularly, to the new division of domestic and international labor. In spite of all appearances, migrations constitute a significant modality of human and economic resource transfer for the benefit of big business. This dynamics has been associated with accumulation by dispossession and the emergence of new forms of direct labor overexploitation and control of scientific/technological work.

SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE AND HUMAN INSECURITY

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states member countries' commitment to the preservation of fundamental human rights, has been infringed by the economic and political forces of neoliberal globalization. The globalist discourse rests on free market ideology, the end of history, representative democracy and, most recently,

5. A clear example of this is the restructuring of the manufacturing sector in the United States which, through assembly operations or outsourcing and intra-business commerce, has transferred significant parts of the productive process abroad. This has severely impacted domestic employment: almost four million jobs in this sector were lost between 1994 and 2008. In addition to this measure that allows corporations to enjoy overseas paradises of cheap workforce, the replacement of native workers with immigrant labor force has been simultaneously promoted. In the case of the Mexican workforce, this amounts to receiving salaries that are, on average, half of those of native workers (Delgado Wise, Márquez and Rodríguez 2009).

the fight against terrorism. Nevertheless, this discourse has in fact promoted the interests of large corporations and propagated a single form of thought, nullifying alternatives. While this discourse praises the concept of citizenship and the rights and opportunities of citizens within the framework of an open economy, including full political participation, the latter is reduced to casting a vote in response to an electoral offer that has been often designed by an exclusivist political system. Basic human rights are simultaneously undermined and subordinated to doctrines of national security and the demands of a market economy that serves the interests of international monopoly capital.

World capitalist accumulation and the global power system lead to forms of systemic violence that affect underprivileged, marginalized and destitute segments of society. The state and big business have dismantled the social subsistence system, especially in rural areas. More than an economy, the rural socioproductive scaffolding provides a means of subsistence for agrarian communities and food for the general population. Furthermore, rural culture aids in the preservation of ecosystems and communal sociality.

A symptom of the struggle between capital and labor is the lengthy and extended war against the workforce, its autonomous organization and quality of life. Systematic attacks against workers, their organizations, fringe benefits and living conditions is one of the guiding principles of neoliberalism. Former labor triumphs such as labor legislation, social salary, remuneration salary and state protection, have been dismantled. A regime of labor insecurity and overexploitation has been enforced in their place, legitimizing the right to hire and fire, in addition to increasing workdays and labor intensity while decreasing salaries. According to estimates of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the number of workers in conditions of labor insecurity rose to 1,530 million in 2009 (more than half of the world's laboring population); 630 million were paid less than 1.25 dollars per day—in other words, they found themselves in situations of extreme poverty; the global number of unemployed was 205 million (ILO 2011).

The welfare or social state is breaking apart. The social protection network in terms of health, education, housing, employment and

food, in addition to public services, such as drinking water supply, garbage collection, infrastructure and public transportation, has been progressively or abruptly handed over to private capital as a way of satiating its thirst for profit.

The neoliberal project has also damaged food sovereignty in peripheral and poor countries. The new global agricultural and food order, commanded by agribusiness, controls food production and distribution and subjects these merchandises to speculative mechanisms of a financial and stock market-related nature. This makes foodstuffs more expensive and bars marginalized populations from accessing healthy and nutritional food in sufficient amounts to guarantee their survival and reproduction.

Dispossessed, excluded and marginalized individuals are reduced to the condition of human merchandise, a bodily form of increasingly overexploited live labor. Extant structural, political and institutional dynamics have systematically damaged living and working conditions while institutions attempt to soften these ravages through populist welfare policies, offering palliatives to those in extreme poverty. This policy has been termed “the war against poverty.”

Global imperialist strategies have also implemented a war against terrorism, organized crime and insecurity. In peripheral countries such as Russia, Colombia, Mexico, Afghanistan, Italy, Congo and others, power vacuums and/or the collusion between political and entrepreneurial powers have nurtured petty and organized crime, leading to a spiral of violence that threatens innocent citizens. Criminal actions have diversified, from drug to human trafficking or organ trafficking, piracy, cybernetic fraud, extortion, kidnapping, torture, and others. Criminal gangs associate with business, political and police conglomerates to control sources of wealth while spreading violence. Power mafias have adopted business, financial and political companies that engage in illegal but very profitable activities fostered by widespread impunity and corruption. Authoritarian governments see this as an excuse to militarize society, partly to intimidate rebel and opposition sector, and partly to propagate fear among the uninformed and easily frightened general population. This strategy, however, does not target

the financial core of organized crime but, rather, supports certain segments of the citizenry to increase coercive and punitive measures that may ultimately reinforce state violence and the criminalization of the most vulnerable social sectors. Criminal gangs recruit young people who have no prospects to act as cannon fodder (e.g., hired assassins or gunmen). Motivated by easy money, they are willing to kill or die. Criminalization of the excluded, poor and needy takes place every day through any possible governmental or criminal means. This is supplemented by fascist strategies of social cleansing that attempt to wipe the undesired spectacle of poverty from the streets or to annihilate rebellions using paramilitary groups or death squads imposing the law of the powers that be in territories under their authority.

Violence and warmongering policies against the most vulnerable segments of society are hardly ever in the limelight, but are part and parcel of the strategy of expansion and domination promoted by international monopoly capital and global powers. These also overlap with the multiple expressions of human insecurity that accompany contemporary migrations.

FORCED MIGRATION UNDER THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR

Migration has acquired a new role in the labor division of neoliberal globalization. Mechanisms of unequal development produce structural conditions, such as unemployment and inequality, which catapult the massive migration of dispossessed and marginalized. Compelled by the need to have access means of subsistence or opportunities of social mobility, large segments of the population are literally expelled from their territories to relocate within their own country or abroad.⁶ Labor

6. It is important to view forced migration in its broadest sense and oppose migration policies that appeal to sovereignty and national security while criminalizing migrants and infringing on their rights. Many temporary worker programs are good examples of apparently humanitarian schemes that conceal both exploitation and violations of human rights. Other important areas of discussion are irregular migration, human trafficking, discrimination, racialization and gender, as well as the safety of human right defenders, labor standards and a decent labor agenda, international instruments for the protection of all these rights and the progressiveness and non-regressive nature of rights as state obligations.

oversupply and worsening living conditions turn migration, particularly those from peripheral countries, into a form of *forced displacement* (Delgado Wise, Márquez and Puentes 2010; Márquez 2010b).⁷

Forced migration flows have three characteristics: *a*) they take place on a national and international level, and move mainly from deprived peripheral regions toward relatively more advanced areas in peripheral or central economies; *b*) they primarily affect the vulnerable, poor and marginalized who are barred, in their place of origin, from accessing basic material and subjective needs to guarantee their survival, nurture, and expectations of a decent life; *c*) they generate an oversupply of cheap and disorganized labor of which employers and corporations interested in keeping costs down take advantage, and *d*) they fuel mechanisms of direct and indirect labor export, both among low-skilled and high-skilled workers.

The number of migrants (most of whom come from peripheral regions) has increased in the last three and a half decades, from 84 million in 1975 to 215 million in 2010. The main flows go in a south-north direction (82 million) followed by the south-south direction (74 million); there is also a significant contingent of domestic migrants (750 million) that, as a whole, have reshaped the labor map and turned migration into a keystone of the capitalist restructuring process (UNO 2004, 2006 and 2010; Delgado Wise and [Márquez 2007b and 2009](#)). Documented migration on a south-south direction, including transit migration at an intra-national level in peripheral countries, is exposed to conditions of utmost vulnerability and occupies the lowest echelons in the displacement dynamics generated by accumulation by dispossession processes.

Consequently, flow of north-south remittances sent by migrants has been increasing at a faster pace, from 57 billion dollars in 1995 to 325 billion dollars in 2010 (World Bank 2010). When considering the social condition of remittances separately, international organizations such as the WB and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) obfuscate

7. From the perspective of human rights, this term is used to refer to a specific type of migrants: those who have been exiled, displaced, or are refugees; to a lesser extent, it can also encompass so-called economic migrants (Castles 2003; [Gzesh 2008](#)). Yet, for those who brandish the prevailing view, most migrants do not fit that notion, because their movement is considered free and voluntary.

reality and portray them as an inexhaustible source of wealth for the development of migrant-expelling countries. This fabled myth or new mantra of development (Kapur 2004) in fact masks the emergence of new forms of unequal exchange.

Typology of forced migration

Domestic and international forced migration characterizes most population movements under neoliberal capitalism. The driving force behind them entails structural, political and institutional violence, as well as the conditions of insecurity suffered by the poor of the world.

The main kinds of forced migration can be divided into:

- 1) *Environmental catastrophes or environmental changes.* Natural phenomena, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes and hurricanes, can effectively wipe out populated or residential areas besides damaging production infrastructure. The environmental destruction and pollution caused by the unrestrained expansion of urban areas destroys natural habitats, threatens biodiversity and limits the poor's access to natural resources. Furthermore, phenomena associated to climate change and global warming constitute, together with other elements, a recurring or emerging cause of forced migration. International aid policies use the term "refuge" to describe this kind of assistance to migrants (Castles 2002).⁸
- 2) *Sociopolitical and cultural conflict.* Social inequality, inter-group confrontations and political controversies promote social unrest, driving families, groups and social segments to abandon their homeland. The violence unleashed by this imbalance may come from the state, guerrillas, paramilitary groups or invading armies. This kind

8. Consideration of migrants due to environmental causes requires, however, eluding numerical speculations (Myers and Kent 1995, Shuaizhang *et al.* 2010, Lonergan and Swain 1999, Black 2001) without trivializing the negative impact of environmental changes. The critical issue is to decipher vulnerability and, if needed, the ability to adapt of the poorest populations in both natural and human-caused environmental emergencies.

of conflict is a reflection of weak governability and institutional loss of legitimacy, as well as that of development models. Some of these forms of migration are acknowledged in international law under asylum, refuge and displacement policies. That said, protective instruments are not always available to those who need them. The number of refugees and political refugees is currently estimated at 15 million (UNO 2009).

- 3) *Crime and drug trafficking.* Organized crime, which settles in the spaces left by governmental power vacuums, attack the civil population in a variety of ways, including assault, extortion, kidnapping, human trafficking, rape, torture, and murder. The violence confronts police and military forces against mafias and paramilitary groups and ultimately disrupts social coexistence, ruptures the social fabric, strips families of their possessions and breaks them apart. It also generates paranoia and psychosis, and discredits institutions. In such scenarios of social disintegration, people are forced to migrate to save their lives and preserve a certain degree of personal and familial peace of mind.
- 4) *Migration and human trafficking.* Human trafficking is associated with coercion, kidnapping and deceit, and includes sexual exploitation and illegal adoption among other serious human rights violations.⁹ This form of forced migration has increased in alarming fashion over the past few years and has become a highly profitable business given the restrictive policies of receiving nations and the harsh living conditions in peripheral ones.
- 5) *Dispossession of the means of production and subsistence.* The neoliberal project demands wide spaces for the optimization of big businesses. Populations engaged in subsistence economies are seen as a

9. The terms “human trafficking” and “illegal migrant trafficking” have been misused as synonyms. This is why human trafficking is often included in some of the others mentioned here. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in Palermo in 2000, has been a world response to the increase in this form of criminality, as is the Protocol to Prevent, Repress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, who are the most vulnerable populations. It has been estimated that there are at least 2.45 million people performing forced labor as a consequence of domestic or international human trafficking (OIM 2008).

burden and their space as an attractive sphere for the privatization and mercantilization of natural resources and workforce. Peripheral Governments have undertaken aggressive programs of structural adjustment in order to dismantle these production systems, including the so-called peasant, social economy and popular economies: they expropriate land and common goods in order to develop major infrastructure, urbanization and settlement projects for MNCs. This deprives large social segments of their means of production and subsistence. Paradoxically and in many cases, those who have been robbed end up working in their former lands as wage-earning employees for MNCs; others are compelled to emigrate.

- 6) *Social exclusion, structural unemployment and poverty.* The monopolization of domestic economies and their subjection to foreign capital involve structural changes meant to break apart and dismantle production, financial, commercial and service systems, forcing large population segments to emigrate in search of sustenance. Most of the population suffers social exclusion, whether as producers, workers, consumers and/or citizens ([Osorio 2010](#)). Structural unemployment is a characteristic feature of subaltern social groups. This makes it easy for capital to maneuver wage-decrease adjustments and depreciate other working conditions. Poverty affects most of the population, and migration to urban or more economically dynamic areas, at home or abroad, is a way to overcome it. Dispossession, exclusion, unemployment and poverty are behind the major contemporary labor migration flows; their main characteristics are vulnerability and extreme exploitation.
- 7) *Relatively overskilled labor.* Highly skilled labor segments such as academicians, researchers, intellectuals, artists, scientists, technologists and engineers play a critical role in national development because they generate forms of knowledge and culture that may be applied for the common good. Nonetheless, peripheral countries have precarious labor markets, limited institutional support, deficient infrastructure and low wages, so an important percentage of these workers becomes, paradoxically, a redundant population, an overskilled group that cannot profit the country of origin. Short-

age of opportunities, weakened innovation systems, labor market segmentation and limited institutional support make it difficult for many highly skilled workers to find a suitable job in their country or hometown. Since these people do not face major problems to relocate nor are they looking for a way to satisfy their basic needs, they resort to migration as an option to fulfill their labor and intellectual potentials, even when, in many cases, they experience labor degradation and salary discrimination in receiving nations.

Of the outlined forms of migration, Type 1 refers to vulnerability of certain human settlements that, lacking public and natural safety infrastructures, are helpless in the face of natural phenomena. Type 2 deals with social upheaval at a local, regional and national level, infighting between social groups and police and military forces, territorial control, and the predominance of particular ideologies, projects or interests. Types 3 and 4 describe extreme social degradation or a failed state since, in many places, armed criminal and paramilitary groups attempt to impose their dominance at the expense of the civil peace. Types 5, 6 and 7 refer to the imbalances in living and working conditions that result from the penetration of major MNCs, the imposition of neoliberal policies, and the disappointments of electoral democracy.

Violations of forced migrants' human rights

The conditions under which forced migrations develop involve multiple risks and dangers, particularly in the case of the most vulnerable groups. These involve permanent exposure to conditions of labor insecurity and instability and social exclusion in host societies. Furthermore and as has been mentioned, international migration is increasingly subjected to criminalization policies and practices, racialization, and race- and gender-based discrimination, which not only increase vulnerabilities and risk, but also often endanger life itself (Delgado Wise and Márquez 2009; Castles and Delgado Wise 2008).

The safeguarding of human rights is still a pending issue for most governments in countries of origin, transit and destination. Few na-

tions are exempt from this responsibility. Either because of the stigma of illegality or due to racial prejudices (and, in fact, mainly because of economic interests) destination countries espouse tacit ignorance regarding the labor and human rights of migrants. They also put up hindrances that bar them from easily obtaining legal residence and citizenship. Countries of origin or transit function under a double-standard: while governments denounce violations to the rights of their citizens in destination countries, the rights of foreigners in their own land are systematically violated. Furthermore, there is intentional ignorance regarding the fact that many of those who migrate do so because they have been literally forced to abandon their place of origin, which lacks developmental policies and decent employment opportunities.¹⁰

Even though international migrants have certain legal means of protection, such as the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families—still not ratified by any of the important receptor countries—there are still no effective mechanisms for their implementation. Instead of adequately typifying the problem they are exposed to, these groups are classified as “economic migrants” in a context that presupposes the existence of individual liberty, social mobility and a truly free (not monopolistic) market.

Labor migrants are currently subject to conditions of extreme exploitation. Under the principle of “national security,” they are exposed to conditions of extreme criminalization, exploitation, vulnerability and social exclusion (Delgado Wise, Márquez and Puentes 2010).

THE GENERAL CRISIS OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

At the end of the first decade of this century, the world underwent a general capitalist crisis; the United States, acting as global hegemon, was its epicenter. Most diagnoses offer a reductionist account: a short-term cri-

10. In the context of forced migration, it is essential to acknowledge that women are a group of high vulnerability, particularly when they're forced to cross frontiers by illegal means. Even though the extent and vulnerability of female migration has been increasingly acknowledged, this has not been the case in the design of gender-based migrating policies (Jolly 2005).

sis circumscribed to the financial sphere and caused by excessive speculation and greed. The solution is simple: rescue big businesses, regulate financial markets, and apply more neoliberal policies.

The problem is actually more complex. The crisis has affected multiple dimensions of the world system. The general crisis of contemporary capitalism is destructive turmoil involving capital, populations, nature, infrastructure, culture and knowledge. It does not only express a rupture in the financial system due to overproduction, but also points to the unsustainability of the current civilization model and heralds a rupture in social interactions with nature (Márquez 2009 and 2010c).

- 1) *Ruptures in the optimization process of global capital.* The general decline in profit rates has hastened the rupture of financing, production, distribution and consumption processes. There is an excess of capital in the global economy that cannot find its way to the productive domain due to the fall in profit margins and the decline of effective demand. The latter is the product of salary and income containment for nearly all of the population and has led to an overproduction crisis (Bello 2006). Concomitantly, the speculative expansion of financial capital in its fictitious form has produced a source of extraordinary profits and economic bubbles the eclosion of which blocks up the action of the real economy. The transfer of social surplus to the orbit of speculation is a profitable perversion of capitalist investment. The overflow of financial capitals has created speculative bubbles that affect the socioeconomic fabric, resulting in the depression of global economy (Foster and Magdof 2009). Beyond the depression of the world economy, corporate bankruptcy has destroyed and whittled down capitals. This ultimately enables the concentration of capital and, needless to say, increased power for the major MNCs which, nevertheless and paradoxically, are not exempt from the disruptive dynamics afflicting the capitalist system as a whole.
- 2) *Degradation of the social conditions for most of the population.* The territorial expansion and establishment of global capital demands the extreme lowering of labor costs. Furthermore, technological innovation processes have made large contingents of workers expend-

able. Meanwhile, major corporations implement layoff programs and subcontracting to whittle down their costs. Economic depressions have additionally sent off large numbers of workers into the streets. In short, workers are considered a disposable resource. In the meantime, the new food and agricultural sector, which sweeps away social subsistence systems such as the peasant one, has generated recurring episodes of scarcity and starvation for the poorest inhabitants of the planet. There is a vast pauperized population that does not have the necessary resources to satisfy their primary food needs. Major agroindustrial corporations speculate on prices, raw materials and new technologies (e.g., transgenics) at the expense of poor and landless peasants. Poverty envelops huge populated areas. Excluded individuals have limited access to productive, financial, technological, and educational resources, as well as employment sources and subsistence means. They suffer illnesses and deaths that can be prevented. In this sense, the life of millions of people on this planet is truly endangered. The socioeconomic exclusion of large population groups, in their role as both producers and consumers, has led to forced migration. Depopulation is a tragic symptom of this problem. Remittance inflow is a mirage; although it rekindles family incomes, it does so in a context of drastic social deterioration. Increasing social inequalities, the dismantling of the welfare state and the fragility of the subsistence system are underlined by poverty, unemployment, violence, insecurity and job precariousness, all of which exert pressure to migrate.

- 3) *Rupture of the metabolic process between society and nature.* Degradation of natural resources, climate change and the mercantilization of the ecosystem have contributed to the destruction of nature, leading to a structural rupture of the material foundations for the production and reproduction of human life (Hinkelammert and Mora 2008). This generalized crisis calls into question the prevailing style of globalization and, at a deeper level, a global systemic order that plunders the main sources of wealth, work and nature, over-exploiting and damaging them to such an extent that civilization itself is now in danger. The loss of animal and vegetable biodiversity,

the erosion of agricultural land, deforestation and pollution have become increasingly visible. To this add increasingly widespread problems such as climate change and global warming. The most severe structural problems, such as unequal ecological exchange, persist. They generate pollution, poverty, land abandonment and destruction in territories that are pillaged, following an extractivist logic, by major MNCs.

- 4) *Political and cultural regression.* Delegitimization looms over on the neoliberal model and its postulating political class. To make up for this, these individualistic, selfish, and conservative elites have promoted the depoliticization of society and the destruction of collective social subjects. The balance exists between polarities: dejection and apathy on the one hand and resistance and rebellion on the other. The imposition of a unique, neoliberal way of thinking has consolidated analytical frameworks with an evident inability to understand the present. The merciless import of theories and concepts is a fashionable resource invested with authorial prestige. Critical thinking is forgotten or seen as stagnant. The imposition of specific consumer patterns and ways of thinking, dressing, and acting have eroded socialization processes and given way to individualistic and consumerist identities. The influence of the entertainment industry, led by Hollywood and commercial TV, together with the degradation of the educational system, has led to a precarious form of citizenship.
- 5) *Accumulation of plutocratic power and social unsustainability.* Neoliberal globalization combines a model of world accumulation (monopoly capital) with a system of power that has the purpose of amassing power, capital and wealth in the hands of a small elite regardless of the environmental and social costs. Multimillionaires have incomparably increased their fortunes and possessions. The crisis has provided an opportunity to whittle down capitals and consolidate the power of plutocracies. In contrast, the middle class has shrunk and the excluded, dispossessed and marginalized experience increasingly severe living and working conditions, so much so that possibilities for a decent life have been compromised. The extreme poor face unemployment, hunger, pauperization, violence and death. The

oversupply of a cheap global labor force, the emergence of global production chains, and scientific and technological innovations have increased the production capacity of all forms of merchandise. And yet, the consumption capacity of the majority of the population has weakened given that global capitalism requires lower labor costs.

- 6) *Immigrants used as scapegoats for the crisis.* Migrant populations have been singled out as those responsible for the capitalist crisis, leading to laws and policies of an openly repressive and anti-immigrant nature (Massey and Sánchez 2010). A significant amount of jobs has been lost, while the conditions of those who manage to keep their employment has deteriorated and ended in deportations. The visible result is the drastic degradation of migrants' living standards, as well as those of their economic dependants. While there have been no massive migrant returns or a substantial decline in remittance inflow, the flow of new labor migrants has, indeed, decreased.

Governmental and international answers to this crisis have been short-term and excluding. Instead of dealing with the underlying causes of the problem, they promote rescue (or "salvage") programs that benefit major financial and manufacturing corporations facing bankruptcy problems. These programs promote labor flexibilization, tax increase and adjustments to social expenditure, among other similar provisions for which the working class must pay, in addition to the fact that intensified pilfering of surplus in peripheral countries is being used to rehabilitate the corporate finances of companies headquartered in major cities. These measures are no more than desperate attempts to prolong the privileges of the elite without addressing the roots of the acute systemic crisis.

AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

The development of social alternatives must address two fundamental aspects. The first one has to do with deconstructing the power of capital and the state—a constituent, structural power that acts as a hegemonic force and must be confronted. Not doing so will nullify any attempt to develop alternatives and justify illusory, naïve and irrelevant positions.

The second consideration involves detecting points of weakness or rupture, or spaces from which subordinate social segments may generate social development alternatives. This challenge is at the center of the debate between those who attempt to achieve social change without seizing power (e.g., by developing non-capitalist economic forms within capitalism) and those who propose the need for a complete change—another economy and another society. Without going into details, we merely want to stress that, from a south-based perspective, the current social order (or disorder) is perceived as an unfair, inhumane and predatory system: there is a need for alternatives that contemplate social development.

From a critical perspective (that is to say, one that questions neoliberal institutionality and the structural dynamics of capitalism in order to promote development alternatives that benefit the majority of the population), sustainable human development is understood as a social construction process that starts by creating awareness: the need for change, organization and social participation in order to generate a popular power that can then strive for social emancipation. This involves the eschewal of socially alienating relations that deprive people of their merits, destroy the environment, and damage social coexistence.

In order to characterize sustainable human development we must first unravel its essential components. Firstly, it must be centered on human life and cannot be conceived in opposition to capital and its demand for the highest possible profits. This first step is necessary but not sufficient, since it can remain in the realm of abstract humanism. Real human development requires social conditions that can enable equity and social justice on all social and spatial levels. Sustainability requires, in turn, that the strategy of development be feasible, realistic and long-lasting, with solid social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental foundations.

Nonetheless, human development cannot be defined *ex ante* as a globally applicable model, a prefabricated, one-size-fits-all design. It requires proposing and specifying concrete strategies having initially addressed structural hindrances, institutional restraints, local peculiarities, regional cultures, and the practices of involved social actors.

Redefining human development

The dominant concept of development, derived from neoclassic and neoliberal thinking, is restricted to economic growth, competitiveness, and free market. Development is presented as a route via which countries that adopt structural adjustment programs, the market economy, and liberal democracy will someday arrive in the idyllic First World. Nevertheless, empirical evidence reveals that the basic features of contemporary capitalism are growing asymmetries between countries and regions, and the expansion and intensification of social inequalities.

In the context of neoliberal ideology and with evidences of exclusion and dispossession everywhere, concepts such as human development (Sen 2000, PNUD 2009) indicate a remarkable advancement. However, these are insufficient to understand and address the complexity of the new dynamics of unequal development, forced migration, and infringement of human rights. We must consider aspects that are central to the issue of development: contextualize the problem, identify conflicting social projects, explore autonomous social organization, and define alternative agendas for social transformation. More than ever, we must rethink human development—not on the premise of individual liberty and free market, but as an alternative notion that can bring equality, social justice, and the common good.¹¹

In contrast to the regressive model of neoliberal globalization, the south-based perspective proposes a wide range of strategies and policies of a post-neoliberal nature that the mainstream has so far relegated to the sidelines, just as it did with structuralism and dependency theories.

11. A major problem in this debate is the banalization of language, which creates fashionable concepts devoid of content, eschews the explanatory power of social knowledge and ends up distancing itself from social mobilization. We must redefine these concepts in light of the concrete problem and reformulate alternatives, or use other categories. The first option has the considerable disadvantage that the gelatinous nature of the terms cancels subsequent inquiries; the second that using new terms would impair communication with most interlocutors. Faced with these two choices, we opt for the first one. In methodological terms, we must deconstruction and critically reconstruct the concept of development. A historical, structural and strategic view is possible from a south-based perspective.

Human development may be defined as a process of social emancipation aimed at social transformation that enables subaltern social groups to detach themselves from conditions of exploitation, oppression, dispossession and discrimination. The project for social change does not have a single form or answer, nor is it necessarily enlightened. It may even admit alternative expressions that maintain capital as a dominant mechanism, although not as an absolute and decisive factor in all forms of coexistence and socialization. The fulfillment of sustainable human development will only be possible when all forms of exploitation, inequality, and subordination among multiple social segments and territorial sphere are eschewed.

Human development must firstly generate good living conditions for subaltern classes, groups and segments; that is, the poor, the excluded and the dispossessed who constitute the majority of the population and are currently seen as simple and disposable raw production material.

Human development means reconstructing the social condition to ensure dignity, equality, social justice, and the common good. In order to develop good living conditions we must 1) discard the relations of exploitation, despoilment, oppression, discrimination and criminalization suffered by most of the population; 2) display personal and social abilities for production, creation, criticism, and participation; 3) guarantee the production and reproduction of human life in harmony with the natural environment; 4) build a social state and social protection network, and 5) channel efforts, energies, and public and social resources into ways of generating economic surplus, knowledge, public goods and culture that can support human development.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, we propose a series of theses to encourage the debate on the need for, and possibility of, alternative development.

1. *The current model of world accumulation and its power system cannot be dismantled nor shifted without the development of an autonomous and independent social power.* There is currently no collective agent

that can confront the power of big business (i.e., the major international monopolies and oligopolies, imperialist governments and their armies, international financial organizations, and the scaffolding of associated actors that provide them with ideological, diplomatic, and political support). There have been, however, major local, domestic and international efforts to organize social groups and movements that have defended their rights from the neoliberal onslaught, proposing some alternative ideas and projects. The materialization of an alternative project will not come “from above”; it will not be a consequence of putting the Washington Consensus or post-consensus policies into practice, nor a result of programs that attempt to bestow a human face on neoliberalism (e.g., anti-poverty policies, migration policies seeking to boost development or the Millennium Development Goals). Strategies for real human development will result from social construction processes carried out by organized groups, civil society and progressive academia on the local, domestic and, above all, international levels. The project for a counter-hegemonic social power cannot be postponed and that necessitates the free, autonomous, and independent civilian organization. This project has already seen important advances, as evidenced by initiatives such as the International Peasant Movement, the World Social Forum, the People’s Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights, and the World Social Forum on Migrations, among others.

2. *The neoliberal state acts as receiving agent and guarantor of corporate profitability. In contrast, the social state is the promoter of human development.* The resources of territories, nations, and populations are offered as low-priced (“competitive,” in neoliberal jargon) raw materials in order to guarantee high profit margins, while institutions and public policies act as guarantors of corporate demands. This is why the reconstruction of the state is a fundamental requirement for the activation of human development dynamics. Democratizing access to power through legitimate, legal and transparent means and promoting a parliamentary agenda and a legal framework related to popular interests must be the first steps in the development of a state-based social responsibility (e.g., a network of social pro-

tection that will guarantee that social efforts meant to generate surplus will be channeled toward redistribution mechanisms that aim for equality). The peasant economy, universal public education, the social security system, decent employment and the satisfaction of social needs such as food, education and health should be reestablished by the social state. The social state bears social responsibility for power, capital and the protection of labor and nature.

3. *The capitalist strategy of global expansion is grounded on the systematic despoilment of wealth sources, population and nature. We must therefore shift the focal point of accumulation so that decisions will center upon social sustainability.* In the current model, labor is ultimately the sole means of subsistence for most of the population. It is so precarious that it can become a source of poverty and insecurity. Nature, on the other hand, constitutes a productive resource or raw material that is mercantiled and decidedly overexploited to guarantee a comparative advantage that will result in extraordinary profits, regardless of the social and environmental costs. Social sustainability must fully guarantee human reproduction. This is not possible without encouraging a symbiotic relationship between the human population and nature—one that goes beyond radical conservationism. A strategy for sustainable human development also requires shifting the state's developmental management so that it can control foreign investment, establish equitable and complementary commercial treaties, produce its own infrastructure for scientific and technological development, and, in general, fight all forms of unequal exchange and surplus transfer. New modes of integration and regional cooperation must be underway to exercise sovereignty.
4. *Structural unemployment, job insecurity and overexploitation threaten the dignity and survival of the majority of the population. We must create decent, safe and well-paid types of employment.* Driven by the compulsive quest for profit, private capital resorts to flexibilization, subcontracting and unemployment to lower labor costs. Additionally, in technological innovation tends to make workers dispensable. Extremely precarious labor categories (e.g., informal employment, free-lancing and obligatory employment) have emerged in the labor

market. We must disassemble the strategies behind labor instability and insecurity by demanding labor rights that will include access to a decent job, restitution of the social security system, and the advancement of human development in both the peripheries and central nations. Labor sovereignty is essential: that is, we need state policies that guarantee full employment. The state must be a last-resort employer or provide unemployment insurance as both solicitor and manager of labor markets; these must guarantee enough formal jobs for the working-age population, particularly in those strategic sectors needed for human development.

5. *Elite democracy must be transformed into a truly representative and participative democracy.* The formal democracy imposed by neo-liberalism has been condensed to elections. Citizens, reduced to their minimal expression, are ritually called to deposit a ballot for a member of the political class who has been previously selected to represent the economic and political elites in the areas of government or parliamentary power. Encouraging the larger population to actively participate in public issues is an unavoidable requirement of alternative development. In addition to access to reliable information, said participation requires spaces for public reflection and decision-making. The system must encourage social organization and participation, and promote instruments of participation inherent to direct democracy (e.g., revocation of mandate, affirmative action, plebiscites, referendums and citizen initiatives).
6. *Given the climate of structural violence and human insecurity, the defense of human rights should involve civil society as well as the state.* The rights of big business openly surpass those of the population and the environment. A radical change in the system of values is needed to grant precedence to human rights across the economic, labor, social, political and cultural aspects. Furthermore, we should consider the right to human development as a way of guaranteeing the fulfillment of basic needs; access to a decent, safe and well-paid job; the nurturing of analytic, creative and artistic abilities, and access to participatory decision-making spaces. The problem of forced migration demands that we address the rights of migrants

and their families in places of origin, destination, permanence and return. The right *not* to emigrate should be in place in countries of origin. This implies creating a material and subjective infrastructure that allows the population to settle in an environment of generalized human development and common welfare that renders forced migration irrelevant. Right now we witness the free mobility of big business and all the obstacles to the free mobility of people. The right to free human mobility must be considered a first step toward world citizenship or, at least, as a factor in the of human freedom.

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