

Carlos Alberto Serrano Ferreira\*

In the midst of the world pandemic, in which the flows of goods and people from capitalist globalization are disrupted, when the normal functioning of the capitalist system is suspended, we must take our time to reflect on this process. And on several topics that have normally been circulated by the media, without much depth, incorporated in our debates almost thoughtlessly. Globalization, world economic crisis, neoliberalism, development and underdevelopment, decadence of the American power, Chinese rise... One of the major problems is that they are presented from an infinity of conflicting and disjointed concepts and perspectives, which makes it difficult for the lay citizen to understand and form his own interpretation. It is the didactic presentation of these main concepts and their integrated analysis that will allow us to understand the various phenomena of our world reality, their main trends and possibilities, from a perspective that interests the peoples, in a perspective of development and construction of a sustainable, fair, progressive and fraternal alternative society.

This is the task proposed by the Brazilian university professor Carlos Eduardo Martins in his book, first published in Portuguese by the publisher Boitempo, *Globalização, dependência e neoliberalismo na América Latina*. This book was first launched in 2011, and now has a new revised edition, edited in English by Brill, with the title *Dependency, Neoliberalism and Globalization in Latin America*, which makes this important contribution to Social Sciences accessible to an even wider audience.

Despite the title, although focusing attentively on the Latin American reality, a region with which the author is deeply connected, through multiple networks, above all due to his intellectual and political commitment to overcoming historical limits to the development and rights of his peoples, the book gives us clues to a much broader, worldwide understanding.

Martins' analyzes are valid for vast majorities in the so-called Third World, but not only. See in particular the case of the peoples of southern and eastern Europe, which

\* Mestre em Ciência Política, na variante Cidadania e Governança, pela Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias (Lisboa, Portugal), com especialização em Relações Internacionais pela Universidade Candido Mendes (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil), graduado em Ciências Sociais pela Universidade Federal Fluminense (Niterói, Brasil).

has witnessed a process of building economic dependence to the Nordic countries. For Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, Greeks, Romanians, Hungarians, etc., as for many of the peoples of the world, the promises of neoliberalism were frustrating. The ideology according to which the liberalization of the markets would transform the Third World into the First World has not been fulfilled, on the contrary: truly Third World zones are formed in the First World countries and typical mechanisms of Latin American capitalism, such as overexploitation of work, are beginning to be present in several European countries and in the systemic center, the USA. Inequalities in income, life expectancy, access to basic social services, such as health, education and pensions, both from the point of view of class, national origin, gender or race, are increasingly clear, and are in many cases become explosive.

The author, like the book, carries out the integration of the main Latin American contribution to Social Sciences, the Marxist Dependency Theory, created in the sixties and seventies by authors such as Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotonio dos Santos (who prefaced the book) and Vania Bambirra with whom Martins worked directly, and the World System Theories, developed by the American Immanuel Wallerstein, the Milanese Giovanni Arrighi and the German Andre Gunder Frank. In this way, the analyzes that helped to clarify that Latin American underdevelopment – and I would add, Asian and African – was not a time delay, nor the persistence of pre-capitalist remnants that could be overcome by a modernization process, but the historical social form of capitalism in the region, formed in a dialectical relationship with the development of capitalism in the central countries, it becomes part of a global systemic analysis and, therefore, gains even more explanatory capacity, both in depth and in extension.

It is noticeable in the book, as the author himself clarifies, the break with the liberal tradition and the search for integration between different sciences, resuming an interrupted path of the tradition of Latin American social thought, breaking with this fragmentation and incorporating the dimension of time in its articulated multiplicity: the times of structures, cycles and events, thought by Fernand Braudel. Such an approach also chooses to break with methodological nationalism, and integrates national and global; world superstructures and the world system.

Reading the seven chapters (more introduction and conclusion) allows us to understand what is most current in Social Sciences and in the debate about capitalism and dependence. In his first chapter, entitled 'Social Sciences and the Challenges of Globalization', Martins reviews the various existing views on the phenomenon of globalization, articulating the dialogue with them from the point of view of the combined analysis of the Marxist Theory of Dependence and of the World System

theories.

In the following, 'The Modern World System and Capitalism: Origins, Cycles and Secularity', he explains capitalist development based on the concept of historical capitalism, articulating secular trends and existing cycles, bringing Braudel and Marx closer, but dialoguing with other currents as the Schumpeterian tradition and neo-Schumpeterian, regulationist and institutionalist.

In the third chapter, 'Globalization and the Crisis of the Modern World System', he brings us another key element: the understanding of globalization as a revolutionary force, at the same time destructive and constructive, product of a Scientific-Technical Revolution that took a fabulous leap in the productive forces and placed the need for a new planetary civilization. Martins points out that we find ourselves in a historical bifurcation that, in our words, is the choice between an increasingly barbaric and imperial capitalism or a new socialist civilization, realization of the most sublime human aspirations.

Following, in 'The Impasses of US Hegemony: 21st Century Perspectives', the author discusses the two concepts present on American hegemony, the one that affirms its crisis and decay and the ones that affirm its strengthening. Martins puts himself in the first group, and brings strong arguments to corroborate this position, which seem unquestionable to us. The predictive capacity of the book is fully confirmed on this theme, since when it was published in 2011 the advanced state of degeneration of this power was still much less noticeable.

In the fifth chapter, called 'Dependency and Development in the Modern World System', the author presents the relationship between development and dependence based on Latin American theoretical contributions to understand the reasons for the delay and the role of international capital in it. Then, in 'Revisiting the Political Economy of Dependency in the Light of Marx and Contemporary Capitalism', addresses the concept developed by Ruy Mauro Marini of overexploitation of work and advances, including, with a mathematical formalization of it, a gap hitherto present in theory. Finally, in 'Latin America: Dependency, Neoliberalism and New Patterns of Development', presents the harmful effects of neoliberalism in Latin America, but which, with the necessary adaptations, reflects, as already mentioned, much of what the different peoples around the world are going through under the hegemony of this economic and social conception.

As also professor Emir Sader says in the ear of the book in portuguese, it is essential "think capitalism from the perspective of anti-capitalism, dependence from the perspective of emancipation and reality from the perspective of its revolutionary transformation". Therefore, introducing a global analysis, never losing sight of the

totality, in the study of globalization is the only way to understand it. Only in view of historical capitalism in its multiple constitutive aspects, as well as in the entire world extension that it covers, is it possible to understand its impacts on particular societies and regions. It is in the articulation between the world and the corner where we live that we can shed light on our past and thus point out the ways to overcome the dependence of our peoples. This task seems to have been brilliantly accomplished in this book.