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BACKGROUND PAPER**

**CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY:
THE ASPECT OF REGIONAL DIVERSITY**

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A discussion of the role of the federal state in the integration of regionally and socially based minorities raises questions of both principle and efficiency. This article will attempt to discuss these issues in the light of these dimensions, and, by pointing out some of the problems involved, to discuss what can be done. In section 1 we introduce participatory citizenship as the major theme within the context of the problems involved. While the issue is the incorporation of minority segments of power in democratic federal countries, the problem of extending participation and representation emerges as one of the central themes. In section 2, the theme of social/regional diversity will be dealt with from the standpoint of non-expansion of horizontal solidarity, which has led to major differences in living conditions among groups. The following sections will point out some examples of the diversity that predominates in some federal countries and the difficulties and challenges involved in building institutions that more effectively include minority segments of power.

1. Participatory citizenship and regional diversity

History gives us important examples of how groups deprived of power over the past few centuries have won civil, political and social rights (Marshall, 1966; Bendix, 1996). Western European societies, in particular, have witnessed the winning of civil rights, freedom of opinion, of the press, of thought and of faith, the right to even-handed justice and the right to own property. Many social, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities have advanced in the area of representation, winning basic civil rights.

What happened in previous centuries is similar to what is happening today: in every case there is a clash of interests between a privileged elite and the many non-elite segments. A reading of *Lei e Opinião Pública na Inglaterra* [Law and public opinion in England], 1913, Dicey (Pizzorno, 1984) shows how, in the early years of the 20th century, collective movements made considerable advances, as can be seen from the legislation enacted by the British Parliament. A collectivist era followed a liberal era, with the extension of the vote, permanent organizations, representation of interests and amended legislation, reflecting the gradual advance in universal laws and in ways of dealing with diversities. These advances took place in accordance with the following basic principles: (a) all members of a polity have the right to be represented; and (b) every group of individuals with specific interests has the right to form stable organizations to promote their interests. The conditions for this include the individual identification of interests, the formation of collective solidarities and political professionalism. Without these conditions, it would be difficult for groups with different linguistic, ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds to participate and be represented.

Institutional innovation was a basic factor in the advances that occurred, with changes in

the field of political organization and in laws on representation, so that the various interests are represented in the state. The situations that had to be dealt with included: How did minority power groups solve the dilemma of political organization and form historical "areas of equality" aimed at defending their group interests? How did they build public institutions for safeguarding civil rights that effectively protect the least favored members of the national society? What are the real alternatives and channels for representing their interests?

A recent analysis (Reis, 1993) of federal countries draws our attention to the fact that the value which federations, as a form of political organization, must put into effect is adequate institutional inclusion of the collectivities. If national societies are divided into groups that differ in terms of major characteristics that constitute the very identity of their members --as in the case of ethno-linguistic groups, religious groups and territorially or regionally based groups-- federalism would be the suitable form for the development of institutional arrangements to represent the categories or subgroups. Would it not even be through this form of organization that groups could be represented, through actions that affect the system of inequalities, initiating processes that bring about civil, social and political equality? Since this discussion seeks to be pragmatic, some concepts would help us in the discussion and analysis of illustrative examples. Among these, the key concept is solidarity, which tends to equalize all members of a group, so that efforts to win rights are carried out on the basis of equal participation.

2. Federation, regional/social diversity, political coexistence and representation

The basic problem in any federal country divided into regional, ethnic, linguistic, religious and/or social groups, is how to live together politically and accommodate these diverse interests. The problems are of an emotional, moral and ideological nature. Integration is achieved through the accommodation of the interests of the different centers of solidarity. The groups' interests are of a collective nature and require public responses (Reis, 1989; Pizzorno, 1966). The state must have the efficiency to incorporate this multiplicity of interests.

Regional diversity within the federal framework poses problems resulting from the "contiguity" of the interests of many groups --namely, how to ensure the non-violent coexistence of the various centers of solidarity. Thus the crucial question is: What is the chance of a successful "institutional construct" that accommodates the various groups? If the diversity is based on different values or aims, how can the political "subcultures" be replaced by a common political culture, so that each identifiable group can live together with all the others?

It is important to return to the concepts of interests and solidarity (Pizzorno, Reis, op. cit.): interests refer to individual and collective players; solidarity refers to the sharing of aims and interests, whether in terms of the various groups and their identities, or in terms of territoriality. Only when territorially based solidarity is expanded and strengthened will the barriers to the free play of interests be eliminated, through recognition and legitimization of the different forces of solidarity and antagonism, with the presence of representative institutions that guarantee citizenship for the members of the different subcultures. The obstacles to territorially based solidarity and group incorporation arise from ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions, and from the major differences between social classes. This last dimension has led to divisions as deep as the others mentioned, since it results in real social apartheid. Such cleavages combine, in most cases, with the result that hierarchical relationships are crystallized, as in the case of the relationship of authority and power between blacks and whites (United States, South Africa, Brazil, etc). The political implications are enormous in terms of representation. The institutional rules do not include the different regional and subcultural identities, thus isolating the particular centers of solidarity. In a recent report published by the United Nations, several authors (Linz, Lipset, Pool, 1996) point out the development achieved by some countries with collectively based values, while in other countries the persistence of individual interests, the predominance of ties of a particularistic nature and the non-recognition of subgroups

delay expansion of territorially based solidarity and increase the differences. To promote common interests, it is essential to recognize and legitimize diversity in all its aspects -- whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural or social-- since such interests are included in the local, national and international framework.

3. Regional diversity: linguistic, ethnic, religious and social groups making up the picture of regional disparities

Regional diversity must allow room for collective identities corresponding to the values of the various subcultures, as these identities make for positive rather than negative social integration (Roth, 1963; Reis, 1989). The solutions for coordinating identities in the political arena will be highly diverse. The biggest problems involve inequalities in living conditions and opportunities available to the members of such groups. Significantly lower living conditions pose problems for the nature of the state. This is a very topical issue, especially in a Forum of Federations, as we will see further on.

Data from the Human Development Report commissioned by the United Nations Development Program (1993 and 1998) illustrate the inferior living conditions of individuals belonging to some ethnic and racial groups. In South Africa, at the start of the 1990s, whites had a life expectancy of 68 years, 14 years more than blacks (54 years). In Malaysia, the rate of lack of income among the Malay ethnic groups is 24%, nearly four times higher than in the Chinese ethnic group (6%). In Canada, the unemployment rate among Inuit men is 35%, while the average for Canadian men is 10%.

In the United States, 31% of Hispanics in the 25-65 age group have not completed grade 9, while the rate among whites is 6%. US blacks are one of the best-documented cases. While the mortality rate for white children is 8 per 1,000 live births, the rate among blacks is 19. The real per capita GDP of whites in 1990 was approximately \$22,000, while for blacks it was \$17,000. The most recent figures show that more than half of black children live with their mothers, the majority of whom have never been married. Andrew Hacker notes (UNDP/IPEA, 1998) that some religious groups may form voluntary subcultures, but blacks have to endure a segregation that they have not chosen.

The Human Development Index (HDI) also provides an illustrative measurement. In the case of South Africa, in 1994 the HDI for whites was 0.878 and for blacks 0.462. Although apartheid has been officially abolished, blacks still occupy a distinctly inferior position: the richest 5%, who are white, own 88% of all private property; half the black population lives below the poverty level; 40% of rural children and 15% of urban children suffer from rickets caused by malnutrition; a third of the black population over the age of 15 is illiterate (more than 3 million persons); more than 70% of black teachers are not qualified to teach, thus perpetuating the cycle of deprivation and discrimination.

In Namibia, human poverty index (HPI) by linguistic group is as follows: English-speaking, 8%; German-speaking, 10%; other languages: Tswana: 21%, Lozi/Caprivi: 41%, San: 65%.

Spain provides an example of regional diversity based on multilingual and multi-ethnic autonomy, and shows how such diversities can be accommodated. The federal form of the post-Franco era, safeguarding regional autonomy, marked the successful transition to democracy (1975-1978), following the regional conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries. Elazar states that a variety of arrangements point to emerging forms of federalism that accommodate center-periphery conflicts, so as to maintain national unity. This case shows how institutional innovation is also possible in modern welfare states that assimilate regional differences. The regional solution was achieved through the establishment of government agencies and political elites in all regions. The result, according to Elazar, has been a search for common purposes while maintaining group integrity. Article 138 of the Constitution calls for the "establish[ment of] a fair and proper balance among the different areas."

The challenge in building Spanish federal institutions was to create a set of mechanisms and agreements that would address the essentials: recognize the status of historic

territories through regional governments, along with the multilingual reality of subnational identities deeply rooted in the culture of the regions. The agreements recognizing bilingualism, with six co-official languages (Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Galician, Valencian and Majorcan), marked a new era of accommodation of linguistic diversity.

Several authors (Linz, 1973; Agranoff, 1996) agree that the problematic center-periphery relations arising from a "state with autonomous units," with all their subnational ethnic demands, were accommodated through innovative federal arrangements. Programs for economic development, environmental protection and public health were put into effect through cooperative federalism.

There are many countries with strong regional disparities that will have to find institutional solutions such as those which occurred in Spain. In Eastern Europe, many countries, such as Russia and Romania, will have to start from the beginning in building their economic and political systems, with federal solutions yet to be found. Solidarity will have to be expressed in objective terms, with the transfer of substantial resources and funds from richer to poorer areas. As one politician put it, "We don't need aid; what we need is investment and real political and social inclusiveness."

With globalization, the gap is also gradually widening between countries, e.g. between the North and South. In 1960, the income of the 20% of the world's population in the rich countries was 30 times higher than that of the poorest 20%; by 1995 that number had multiplied 82 times. Thus the ultra-rich are gradually leaving the rest of the world behind, their vast wealth standing in stark contrast with the low incomes in the developing world. The assets of the wealthiest three persons in the world exceed the joint GDP of 48 less developed countries (Human Development Report, 1998), and the assets of the 32 richest people exceed the total GDP of Southern Asia.

The disparities are equally striking within countries. For example, in Costa Rica, in the 1980s, the per capita income of the top 20% was \$14,400, compared with \$1,340 for the bottom 20%.

There is also a gap between rural and urban dwellers: in the developing countries, 43% of rural men are illiterate, more than twice the rate in urban areas. The urban literacy rate in El Salvador is 88%, while the rural rate is 66%. Nearly 90% of the population in urban areas has access to potable water, whereas the rural rate is only 60%.

From a strictly regional standpoint, in Turkey the secondary-school enrolment rate in the Aegean and Marmara regions is 62%, compared with 34% in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. In Gambia, the mortality rate among children under the age of 5 years is 162 per 1,000 live births in Maudonko, almost twice the rate (83) in Banjul.

4. Regional diversities resulting from major social inequalities: "social apartheid" in Brazil

The emphasis on cleavages and subcultures resulting from ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity underestimates class distinctions, which divide individuals and groups into very separate worlds, thus posing the greatest challenge to federal states. It is no exaggeration to say that today "social apartheid" is one of the main challenges faced by many federal countries, especially in the developing world.

To illustrate the seriousness of this problem, let us look at some social indexes in Brazil, a country that has the highest rates of both wealth and poverty in Latin America. The income distribution curve for Brazil and several other Latin American countries shows that in Brazil the poorest 10% is poorer than this segment in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Uruguay. By contrast, the richest 10% in Brazil are richer than this segment in any of those countries. Between 1960 and 1990, the income of the richest 20% rose by 11%, while the income of the poorest 50% fell by 6%. The gap is wide both between regions and within regions, thus creating divisions between real subcultures. Poverty has a clearly regional component, with the highest rates in the north (43%) and northeast (46%), and a lower rate in the south (20%). The rates are also

higher in the rural population (39%) and in the large cities, as shown by data on the "metropolitanization of poverty," since the big-city poor have increased significantly. Extreme polarization and critical poverty are found in the rural northeast and in the big cities in the southeast. The resulting picture is one of social apartheid.

The Brazilian population is composed of 55.3% whites, 4.9% blacks, 39.3% browns (mulattoes) and 0.5% yellows. Browns and blacks together comprise 44.2% of the population. The average income of black and brown men is 63% and 68% respectively that of white men. The income of black and brown women is 68% that of white women. The color factor combines with the regional dimension: in the southeast and south, whites predominate (83% and 66% respectively); in the north and northeast, browns predominate (71% and 65% respectively). In other words, blacks and browns are concentrated mainly in the poorest regions. More-complex analyses taking color into account show that differences in income and access to education result simultaneously from race and region. These factors combine and indicate a huge gap between classes. As part of this picture of real social apartheid, it is important to note the statistics on the position of women: working women earn, on average, 63% as much as males, and the number of female-headed households rose from 9% in 1980 to 13% in 1991.

In summary, during the previous two decades (1970-1991) the gap in per capita family income widened. It was highest in the northeast, with intramunicipal differences accounting to a large extent for this concentration and social divide between individuals and groups. What the analysis shows us when we consider region, race and gender is that the social question poses as many challenges as all the other differences considered in the area of regional diversity. That is why Brazil is noteworthy among federal countries. From the political standpoint, interests are far from being well accommodated. On the contrary, a large number of studies have shown that many of the problems that have led to the concentration of wealth, widening the gap between classes, have an institutional basis.

5. Challenges and outlook

In order to minimize conflicts arising from regional disparities and really include the various groups, the question to be asked is: What is to be done? In this perspective we propose that the discussion center on some points of consensus in various countries, which can be summarized under four headings: (a) Political participation and recognition of groups; (b) Legislation on political representation; (c) Mechanisms for decentralization with participation of the collectivities; (d) Nature of the state.

a) Political participation and recognition of organized groups. The debate on the main legacy of the revolutionary period that culminated in the French Revolution is very topical: the possibility of civic participation in politics when, since then, it has gradually been admitted that the values that legitimize the inequalities arising from minority positions of power should be checked by means of political organization and representation. The winning of civil rights by different groups was a very slow process. In the 18th and 19th centuries, political and civil rights were broadened, and, in the 20th century, especially in the social-democratic countries of Europe, social rights became a reality even for members of ethnic, linguistic and other minorities. It must be recognized that solidarity was a key concept in this process. To make any type of representation in the "center" viable, resulting from a position of inequality or from a "peripheral" position, it is essential to form "areas of equality" in order to defend collective interests. The ties of horizontal solidarity constitute the social capital of a society (Putnam, 1993). However, to legitimize the various interest centers in any country, it is essential to create appropriate representative institutions and to rethink the central role of the state in the promotion of common interests. Participation and representation must be viewed from the perspective whereby the overarching collectivities, divided into partial collectivities, will have to improve the rules for the effective defence of their interests. There is an urgent need for a thorough analysis of the solutions proposed for forging collective identities from the partnerships between civil society and government. We cannot overlook the good examples from the

past, even in the examination of "new solutions." From this perspective we must evaluate the role of NGOs and determine which ones actually defend collective interests. Proposals of an anti-political nature may widen divisions and exacerbate conflicts.

b) Legislation governing representation. The discussion on representative mechanisms must address the persistence of inequality in the representation of minority interests. Federalism, in its electoral dimension, has often been used to justify political inequalities. Countless studies call attention to the artificially imposed rules for unequal representation of regional interests. One of these rules is proportional legislation based on the consociative model. The debate involves almost opposite positions. On one hand are those who say that in many countries the proportional legislation that governs representation in the center has made it possible for the dominant oligarchies to perpetuate themselves in the electoral colleges; they advocate the rule of majority representation and claim that demographic proportionalism reinforces inequality. On the other hand, there are those who strongly defend the opposite idea, asserting that if the federation corresponds to any value to be made concrete, the rule of representation through the majority principle should not always be followed. According to this point of view, if the societies in question are plural, with a significant diversity of groups (i.e. ethnic, linguistic, religious or territorial), it would be difficult to make decisions by means of a plebiscite, since this does not reflect the interests of the groups that make up the diversity. As Reis notes in a recent article (1993), while federalism is the most classic form of recourse to the principle involved in the consociative model, it does not make sense to try to apply to the federal organization the majority or plebiscite egalitarianism which has been proclaimed with such vigor, since it ignores the intermediation of groups and relates to the level of individuals. How, then, in a Forum of Federations, can we enlarge the examination of legislation to find the best design in the area of representation, taking as examples those that have provided the best solutions? More light is shed on the discussion when one notes distorted results that have led to "democracies of the dissatisfied," as Linz points out (1990). Research studies by Latinobarometro show that, in almost all Latin American countries, the large majority has been excluded from decision making, with the system of representation geared to the interests of the oligarchic minority.

c) Decentralization with participation: The 20th century has given us countless examples of breakdowns in democracy, periods of exception and authoritarianism and transitions to new democracies, in addition to revitalization of ethnic hatreds. Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia are some of the regions where political institutions will have to find ways to improve democratic institutions, especially federated states based on the principle political decentralization. Each country will have to find a variety of institutional arrangements that solve the problem of the vertical distribution of power. Let us take the history of the Latin American countries as an example. In the 19th century, when they became independent, their constituent provinces, often spread over vast territories, were highly autonomous political units, with locally based political power. The federal form recently invented by the United States was assimilated. But how can one unite entities with a relative degree of independence, promoting the interests of all the groups and also those of the central power? Which institutions best balance the interests of the regions with those of the center? The arrangements that have resulted in decades of centralization have failed in terms of social redistribution. Decentralization has been adopted as a means of institutional improvement. The question should address intermediate levels of power, far beyond municipal or state levels, in the resolution of conflicts of interest, strengthening other politico-territorial levels. Look at the examples of Italy and the regional governments introduced in the 1970s, the regional governments in Chile, Spain and Belgium. Old federations such as Germany and Switzerland have embraced decentralization in an attempt not only to provide a democratic framework for accommodating diverse interests, but also to distribute resources more efficiently and to increase tolerance among the groups.

The debate on decentralization has arisen at a time when economic globalization and regionalization have become definite realities. Changes in the ways production is organized

and the general removal of trade barriers (Garcia, 1998) have moved economic decision-making power away from nation states to international corporations. As this is a highly discordant and asymmetric process, one of the results is an increase in inequalities. International bodies therefore tend to recommend decentralization, having the state withdraw from its role as the major arbiter in the social arena. The question that we must address is how decentralization can help the state reduce disparities resulting from social diversity, without minimalizing the state, as we will see further on.

A good example in Brazil is Minas Gerais, a state as large as Spain or Sweden (588,000 km²) with a population of 16 million. Regional diversity in this state is the result of great differences in living conditions in its 853 municipalities. By means of a process of decentralization at more than three levels, the state's territory was divided into 25 "Regional Administrations." This led to greater efficiency in the distribution of resources, with the recognition that the real social apartheid was a result of negative integration of the interests involved.

d) The nature of the state: Decentralization does not mean promoting the "minimalist state." On the contrary, it is important to discuss the role of the state in promoting collective interests and collectivities, along with its role in the resolution of redistributive conflicts. It is impossible to set aside the ethical and social-justice dimension of the state's role, in favor of its "efficiency." Above all, efficiency is a matter of recognizing the horizontal networks of interests and solidarity.

In the context of globalization, the interventionist state is not compatible with liberalization. What, then, is the degree of autonomy of federal states, especially in developing countries? How will each state deal with its domestic issues and the problems arising from its inclusion in globalized economies?

In this end-of-century historical context --marked by the fall of utopias and the rise of minimalisms such as pure political democracy-- the state must be seen as the major player in the promotion of the basic rights of citizens and not only of economic groups. Political democracies and social democracies, in the final analysis, must be able to promote both internal and external interests, and to deal in a regular and institutionalized way with the everyday interplay of minority interests (Reis, op. cit.).

Thus what is advocated is a state that defines itself as a stable and guiding center for the unequal relations among the various centers of interest. Federal states will have to redefine the role of the state in the midst of the rise of neo-liberalism and the decline of the welfare state.

These are some of the tasks we face.

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