

THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON PROGRESS

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At this moment in history it is necessary to understand the relationships that exist between state and civil society, between social justice and democracy, that will guarantee the progress of the species. A *first* step should be to establish fundamental definitions and premises, that is, a general theoretical background. The purpose of this paper is to make an initial exploration into defining these fundamental concepts.

The Possibilities for Progressing into the 21st Century

The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War have begun a new historical phase for humanity, which not only creates different *scenarios* but also a new agenda where worldwide problems are concerned. It is not that the old problems have disappeared, but they must be placed within a new historical order defined by different perspectives. History does not happen in a purely linear and accumulative manner but its course is varied. At times accumulative and linear motion has characterized an epoch and at other times it has not. The spirit of an era has at times been determined by reform, during times of peace, and at other times by revolution. An understanding of the spirit of an era is decisive in orienting human actions towards the improvement of individuals.

In my opinion, faced with the 21st Century, the first thing to realize is that this new world order has provided humanity with greater access to the decision-making establishment, to culture, education, and the increased possibility of exercising universal rights. Setting ideological prejudice aside, we must recognize that many important tendencies favoring the progress of humanity and the maximum appreciation of the individual have been reinforced. The fall of the Soviet Union, and the political and social model it encompassed, must be considered a precursor to a profound historical shift that has given birth to a new wave in the evolution of man and allows developments in and possibilities for creativity and the felicity of individuals. This, however, does not exclude the existence of problems or presuppose that all has been resolved, nor that the presumed progress is inevitable.

On this point we must be very clear: our present does not assume the cessation of egotism, abuse, arrogance, chauvinism, extreme nationalism, racism, imperialism and the exploitation of men by other men. Evidently we will be confronted with another set of problems that had somehow been obscured, distorted or repressed by the spectre of the Cold War and the mere existence of Soviet communism. The most negative characteristics of our species and of the general social organization known as 'capitalism', though the term is too broad and less useful than normality thought, are a central part of our lives; much time will pass before all these ills are finally eliminated and, maybe, they will never be. The

integration of a multipolar world into a global cultural and economic world international structure with the existence of *apax americana* is unlikely to guarantee international stability and the triumph of 'good', nor even inevitably the well-being of nations and individuals. However, we are beginning a new historical phase at a decisive moment for mankind and the individual. And this is only the beginning.

There has been extraordinary cultural development: on the one hand, the levels of knowledge about natural and social reality, and on the other hand, the progress in the expression and creativity of individuals and nations constitute a clearly accountable reality that provides more elements for the control of life and for progress. Given its historical potential - the extraordinary technological advance since World War Two and especially since the Eighties, creating the resources that are possible instruments of progress in the quality of life, should be emphasized. However, as has occurred before, *una de caly una de arena*: they can also be (and have been) instruments of destruction; this has been an ever-present threat to the destiny of the species. However, that is our reality, that is what characterizes the history of mankind; more than ever, today we are faced with the enormous contradiction between that which could represent the maximum in advancement and progress in the quality of life of men and the greatest possibility of mass destruction. We are not pondering fatalism, socialism or barbarism, as Marx did, nor are we interested to the supposed contradiction between the development of the forces of production and the relations of property. We are only contemplating the possibilities for progress in the Post-Cold War era. We can be optimistic; optimism in this situation is in itself an active instrument in the pursuit of positive resources to the history of mankind. However, this does not imply that we do not have to assume the responsibilities or take the individual and collective decisions that, within this context, are needed; because progress is not something which just happens. Progress is a project in which the will of the individual and of a people is decisive and determinant. When Francis Fukuyama stated that occidental democracy and freedom, as well as the market economy, had become final dominant paradigms, irrespective of the existence of many contrary situations around the world, he supported his claim with the above-mentioned optimism. We must however be cautious, because there is no guarantee that a regression is not waiting for us around the next comer. How often have great ideas, reason and truth been defeated by cruel reality; there is nothing and no-one able to guarantee progress. Ever threatened by regression, decadence and, if you like, even barbarism, the human race hives in a permanent struggle to avoid the loss of its universal cultural and social achievements and in the pursuit of new and more extensive conditions that enhance the well-being of our species. It is a struggle played out at all levels and dimensions of human nature: ethical, political, cognitive, economic, etc. Therefore, we can be optimistic but it is also necessary that we use this optimism in a real strategy that will remain useful; for that it is vital that we define the specific roles each part of history and society must perform.

One of the principal themes is social organization: for millennia, we have erected forms of state and Government that each has shown their virtues and faults. To date, in spite of its inherent weaknesses, the most effective governmental mechanism has been that which elects a government through popular vote. In this respect Fukuyama is correct. However, one must be very careful because, even though the term 'capitalism' encapsulates many different and even contradictory societies, and the terms representative democracy

and 'liberty' are not accurate enough, they form the general framework for advancement to the central issue: the well-being of the human race, its quality of life. However, we can say that the current situation of each country has a precise correspondence with its history and culture. In the final analysis, the form of government is one of many dimensions of social life which conjoin to benefit the collective and the individual. Let us leave this discussion here however, and move on to another point.

Having previously established certain general premises pertaining to the best formula for government, we should also decide on the type of state this government should adopt and the relationship it should have with the civil society. The set of institutions and legal systems that the modern state has defined have fulfilled the need to provide certain guarantees to the people: security of citizenship, the protection of the nation and the interests of its citizens, arbitration of internal conflicts, the administration of justice, the quest for minimal social contradictions, at times the reduction of inequities and the promotion of economic advancement and fair distribution of wealth. In many ways, these objectives have been imposed upon the state, and a great number of state models have been created. Nearing the end of the 20th Century, it is clear that certain characteristics should dominate the definition of the modern state: strong but small, supervisor rather than administrator, promoter of medium to long-term collective initiatives, supporter of national action, but always supporter of the progress of the civil society and development of the individual. The idea of an interventionist state does not much appeal given the historical turn of events, but we can exclude no option.

The State and Civil Society

The consolidation of the European states in recent centuries seems to have given birth to the intellectual syndrome' of the interventionist state, director of all aspects of social life, although in its development no-one can deny the influence of certain phases of the French Revolution, and in some cases, Hegel's Philosophy of the State. It is interesting to note that the state/individual dialectics, resolved to the benefit of the former, has appeared in all the ideological traditions preoccupied with social injustice provoked by capitalism (maybe anarchism is the only political movement which in a somewhat extreme manner aspired to a radical reduction of the state in a new society).

It is clear that a social organization based exclusively on the economic accumulation and again of the individual, without other collective considerations, can only lead to inequality and contradictions serious enough to destroy the existing social order and stability. Maybe it is not an inherent quality of man that inevitably leads him to perpetrate the basest acts against his fellow humans in the absence of collective regulation, but it is true that individualism in the modern society has had a dissociating effect when left uncontrolled. It is not strange that the 19th Century gave birth to so many social models for regulating the excesses of an emerging society with, of the other hand, important revolutionary proposals to change the existing social order. From whatever vantage point, the role of the state seemed to be destined to be to carry the load of directing the course of society and what was assumed as inevitable progress. For Marxism, for example, once the bourgeois state' had been dismantled, the construction of a new state began (even though it was always thought that it would cease to exist in the final stages); Marxism altered the

‘character of class’, but not, fundamentally, the function of the state. Statism in economic and social life in general has occupied a central role in social organizations of our times not only as a theoretical exercise but more importantly as a social reality.

In general, it is my opinion that there must be some *equilibrium* in the relationship between state and the civil society. This *equilibrium* cannot be, however, the same for all societies or all times. The lack of *equilibrium* can provoke a reduction in individual social participation, that is, freedom (of any sort), with a series of other consequences for progress and human satisfaction, causing to the contrary social disruption and chaos. This type of statism, seen here as unbalance, has been demonstrated to be unable to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of man. The most evident case is that of the communist countries in which the reforms or revolutions in recent years have attempted to increase the level of participation of the individual and the civil society. It is clear that statism implies the reduction of the level of individual decision-making and therefore the level of responsibility and personal involvement of the individual. This situation, in which most decision-making lies in the hands of a ruling entity set above the individual, can only lead to lack of motivation and passiveness, apathy and lack of creativity on the part of the individual, which will drive inevitably to stagnation. This will be the case even without taking into account the fact that this controlling state also implies the existence of illicit mechanisms of social advancement, privileges and personal gain. Statism has therefore become a synonym for dehumanization, corruption and obstruction to progress and to attaining levels of social equality. Clearly neither abstract liberalism nor anarchism is satisfactory or viable alternatives to statism. Anarchism must be looked upon as a political residue of Romanticism lacking any historical feasibility, and liberalism, which ignores social reality, is no more than an academic experiment, or in the worst of cases, an ideological stand against the collective advancement of a society. The socialist utopia gave birth to communist totalitarianism, the death of millions and the unhappiness of many more. However, the absence of regulation and the existence of the state have not been able to assure a better quality of life or happiness, the negative tendencies of capitalism lead to inequality and a lack of social solidarity. If statism is not an option, neither is the absence of state strength. Evidently, after going through all of this, what is needed is some sort of social liberalism or liberal socialism or a redefinition of the terms to capture the *equilibrium* between state and civil society. The obvious philosophical alternative seems to be the affirmation of the individual in the state/individual dialectics, and the preeminence of the social organisms in their relationship with the state, although to a degree that avoids atomization and social chaos. The state is essential for the preservation of social harmony and nationality, but it must be subject to the needs and possibilities it provides for civil society. Regardless of the specific functions the state carries out, economic, political, cultural, etc, it must perform these to the advantage and under the control of civil society and for its amelioration. This is the methodological attitude that defines, in each instance, the *spectrum* of functions the state must assume. Only when the concrete historical and national conditions are determined can the specific terms be stated: the state can be larger or smaller, it may assume energetic production, the financial system or education, but always under the watchful eye of civil society, in which the population has the capacity to decide the structure of the state through the free vote. In other words, the starting point for determining the role of the state is the democratic decision. When a handful of

self-appointed arbiters or saviors of humanity attempt to make decisions above and beyond the democratic decision, the result is totalitarianism and disaster.

The civil society must, on the other hand, not be an idealistic abstraction, nor can it be associated with economically powerful special interest groups (in many cases, anti-state Liberalism has been used as a front for defending the interests of a few specific groups). The soundest suggestion is that of a society having strong and active institutions that organize the of the majority of the civil society. In the case of Latin America, this implies the mobilization of the large popular masses and the middle class. Without ample and dynamic participation, the limits of statism and social injustice are no more than mere speculation. In other words, it is possible for the state to be actively overseen but the civil society, that this body actively corrects its actions and defends collective and individual well-being is within its power: cultural, political, economic weaknesses etc in the civil society are the basis for authoritarianism. bureaucratization inefficiency, corruption and the disabling of the state. Stated differently, the maturity of the civil society determines the functions of the state. Those policies that do not promote the prompt strengthening of the civil society are condemned to produce instability and encourage the vices that statism generates. The best option is therefore a state that is sufficiently strong and capable to realize collective plans in spite of pressures from individualist groups, but is still highly controlled by a civil society structured to enhance the influence of the majority of the population. To a certain degree, this entails the existence of institutions and judicial structures that are strong but at the same time allow for constant regulation and the removal of functionales according to the needs and desires of the society, all of this within a social framework that protects against chaos and an ungovernable entity. By the same token, the concrete design of such a governing structure can only be determined by the specific conditions under which it must exist: this calls for a reduction to a minimum in social action of the dogmatic and ideological *criteria* or special interests.

Social Justice, Democracy and the State

Just as democracy has been one of the goals incorporated in any social engineering project - at least formally or theoretically - so has so-called social justice. A nation, along with governing itself under the will of the majority manifested through free elections, must also provide for the well-being of the majority of the population. This problem can be formulated in many ways. The question is: how can one guarantee social justice? What mechanisms allow this? Communism attempted to assure social equality and the best conditions for all by satisfying the material needs of the people. Its method: elimination of private property and state control over production and even the fair distribution of wealth. The result is well known. The idea is to reformulate this concept, but first we must clarify some basic points.

What is fair distribution of wealth? Theoretically, this refers to wealth that can be distributed equally to the members of a society. Very well, two lines of thought must now be explored. On the one hand: is this possible or even convenient? Is this a nice thought that is absolutely impossible to achieve or even worse? Will this generate more problems to become an obstacle to social advancement? On the other hand the questions would be:

how does one go about doing this? What should be done and who should effect this distribution of wealth? If we attempt to answer the latter first, we will conclude that historically the obvious choice has been the state. If the state is responsible, how does it go about distributing the wealth? Without a doubt, through control and coercion on the part of the state against individuals or groups. The fundamental problem is: how does one decide who is to be coerced? Who is to be restricted or to provide the wealth for redistribution? Who decides which groups are to be subject to these limitations and pressures? This is a very serious issue that generates complex problems. Complex not as a result of the violence incurred in the act of coercion, but more importantly a more general violence: how does one guarantee that such an action does not endanger society as a whole? How do we guarantee that these impositions do not adversely affect the creation of national wealth that in the long run is in the best interest of the society as a whole?

History has demonstrated that a nation does not progress as a result of the identical and equal contributions of all members of the society, but more so through the key actions of certain individuals or groups that pull the rest of the nation on their coat-tails towards material progress. The progress and material advancement of a nation can never be explained on the basis of equal contributions by all. Individual wealth, or that of a specific group, is not in itself an impediment to the progress or regression of a society unless this wealth is a result of exploitation, theft, usury or violence against the individual and her freedom. There must be some regulation and a set of state and collective actions, and sanctions against those who have acted unjustly. However, when this wealth is the result of individual, collective or cooperative actions considered totally valid within a social structure that has been established democratically, then this wealth should be viewed as recognition for this individual or group's efforts and should stand as an example to the rest of the society. This brings up two philosophical problems: on the one hand, wealth is not an intrinsically shameful evil which must be purged from society; it is, in fact, through the wealth of all individuals that a society can advance. It is therefore necessary to liberate ourselves from these popular and egalitarian views that openly or secretly condemn individual wealth. Material wealth, and in particular private property, is not the metaphysical evil that upholds alienation, as preached by Marxism. As with any social issue, the established regulations and limits must not become obstacles for social advancement. We must unveil our eyes and recognize the stimulating effect personal wealth has on the collective development of society. To date, the increase in personal wealth and all that it entails has been essential to the progress of man. Though it is true that material improvement and the search for personal gain has at times led to negative actions and extreme egoistic individualism, it is also true that it has been a driving motor of history. The issue is therefore not the elimination of this stimulus but the search for conditions in which the individual quest for material gain can be socially constructive, whilst providing the economically less privileged with more access to higher standards of personal wealth. In this case the role of the state can no longer be that of distributor of wealth. It must become the stimulator of the creation of wealth and provider of opportunities for access to this wealth for those in less favored sectors of society. My conclusion is clear: it is not possible, to begin with, to redistribute wealth without recourse to coercive methods on the part of the state; which in the worst case can lead to a totalitarian system; it is not possible nor suitable to erect a state that is the supreme distributor of wealth. Aside from the social tension between different factions and groups of society, this can cause weakening of the

action of the economically and socially more productive sectors of society, which under clearly defined conditions could provide for national development and collective well-being. Therefore, the redistribution of wealth becomes extremely dangerous unless we endow it with the reference frame as explained above.

The redistribution of wealth must be the result of political stimulation of individuals and social sectors, but not through administrative channels, which would necessarily imply coercion and possibly restrict the progress of individuals and the nation as a whole. Social politics is therefore an instrument of social protection, not a means to define coercive or restrictive actions.

I am not of the opinion that the free market or the law of the jungle' can singlehandedly determine the development of the society and at the same time generate the appropriate organization' of wealth and collective well-being. The state can only intervene through mechanisms that provide stimuli, promote and nurture the appearance of conditions that provide certain weaker social sectors with the opportunity to advance on their own and reach higher levels. The problem here is how to choose the sectors in need of these stimuli. For this, a national evaluation and consensus of the active forces in the society are required so that once the choice is made; it is collectively accepted and does not create contradictions or antagonism between sectors, which could rend the fabric of society.

There must be equality of opportunity for all individuals within the society. This equality, from a legal and formal viewpoint, is relatively easy to obtain and define. The problem however is more profound. Within a formal structure, there are economic, political and social forces that obstruct this equality of opportunity. This is inevitable. Again, it is not the role of the state to attempt to administrate this reality by exercising pressure on specific groups to the benefit of others, but more so generate formal and then real initiatives for the weaker sectors of the society, providing them with a wider range of possibilities. This democratization of opportunity can never be perceived as restriction or coercion.

One example of an attempt to 'attain social justice through taxation. Are taxes a valid source of revenue for social development? Yes and no. It depends on the circumstances. There are no fundamental principles barring the use of taxes to collect funds given a clearly defined and democratically chosen direction. However, at times an excess of taxation lessens the national wealth and the possibilities for social justice. The fundamental issue is that social justice must be linked to the economic and general advancement of society and not just some abstract and ethereal intentions. In a general way, fiscal policy must be seen within a global policy that allows greater wealth for the collective and therefore for all individuals that form a pan of the society. On occasion when improvised and mechanical taxation is imposed upon those individuals and industries that are solid and strong, it can produce weakening and demotivation; in other words, fiscal policy must be well planned, it should not hinder the advancement of productive sectors of society and industries that provide measurable benefits to the nation as a whole. In other words, a fiscal policy can obstruct national progress if it is not developed under flexible, ample and clear criteria that make it adaptable to a dynamic society. Among the criteria utilized in developing countries are those that aim to strengthen the efficiency and productivity level of productive organizations.

Another point is to enable the wealth produced by a sector or individual to be

capitalized and transferred to the rest of society; that is, the implantation of mechanisms that permit the efficient accumulation of wealth to play a collective role and not simply to satisfy individual aspirations and desire. This transfer must be promoted extremely delicately and carefully and must always be based on the consensus of the national community. In other words, society must seek to stimulate the individual quest for wealth and erect mechanisms that will transfer this wealth to society as a whole without endangering the continued accumulation of personal wealth. Under this precept the state and society must establish codes and regulations that permit and stimulate the creation of wealth and all the same time allow transfer of wealth to society; this can be accomplished through enacting labour codes, establishing salaries, providing quality working and living conditions for workers, monitoring the relationship between industry and the ecosystem etc. The efficient assignment of resources could be a means to favor production, general wealth and diversify transfer of this wealth to society. This distribution of resources must however be accompanied by a strategy establishing time scales and requiring monitoring of productivity and efficiency; otherwise this general policy would encourage a paternalistic character, reduce motivation for individual initiative, allow for possible corruption; again, civil consensus and national backing are important when specific private initiatives are assigned state resources. Consensus is a must, the logical question is: why assign resources to this sector and not another? The following must be said: the major determinant in economic initiatives is always the market. It is required that the distortions that the state incur be minimal, with fixed terms for the society as a whole. Any injection of funds or other resources into a given productive sector must be considered and with the understanding that sooner or later this social investment should be tested within the limits of the market.

Market, Substitution of State Models and Social Reengineering

For the most part in, for example, Latin America, statist models were adopted for decades. In the past few years these models have been severely criticized and many countries have tried the course of privatization of state-owned industries and institutions. This change of heart is entirely related to the situations discussed above. Two of the topics that we must clarify are: the social role of the market and the limitations of privatization in the statist models of development.

I will begin with the market. There are two extreme positions in this argument: one that decrees that the possibilities for human development must be left entirely at the mercy of the market forces, with no state intervention whatsoever, and another that proclaims that the state is *par excellence* the mechanism for the equal distribution of wealth and human development. I have already criticized the vision of the state as distributor of wealth and administrator of social justice. As I have stated previously, the state should provide opportunity and incentive for growth. In this respect, the state can be of great importance; however I must emphasize that it is inevitable that we resort to the free market and the free movement of private shares as the focal point to contrast economic and productive forces. I do not however advocate that the development of a society be left solely to the forces of the free market. That is, I do not believe that simple reliance on the forces of the free market in

itself is sufficient to generate human social progress. Nor do I believe that a society should establish its guidelines based on the market only, but it is fundamentally important that this reference system be considered when determining the actions and strategies that a country should assume. The complete rationalization and planning of the economic action of men, the establishment of mechanisms for redistribution of wealth and for establishing social justice above and beyond mere individual gain have constituted a quest for utopia that, like all previous quests and dreams of utopia, has rejected effective, practical processes with the specific and concrete objectives of advancing social justice and the collective well-being.

Using the idea of an all-powerful state that would eliminate the irrational character of the free market, plan and organize the equal distribution of wealth and rationalize the behavior of men on all levels, created a living economic, social and political hell for many nations; including the increase in egotistic interests on the part of some individuals and social groups in the privileged positions of power. Probably the formulation and abstractions were manifestations of the good intentions of some who honestly attempted to develop mechanisms for the improvement of the quality of life for the majority; to go from a 'Kingdom of Necessity' to a 'Kingdom of Freedom as Marx would say. Unfortunately, historical reality has demonstrated that the enforcement of these ideas instead created, and creates, misery, underdevelopment and dictatorship.

It is time to accept that the market continues to be the principal point of reference and indicator of the economic productivity of individuals and nations; that there is no way to eliminate its intrinsic randomness, that the apparent irrationality of it all cannot be eliminated either, that the uncertainty of human relationships is unavoidable. The market represents the reference point based on which one defines, directs and establishes the parameters for future strategy. When state intervention attempts to *permanently* distort this environment, all these good intentions have a negative impact on the aspirations of collective development. For this reason it is important to define the role of the market, and for that matter the level and manner in which the state should intervene in order to enhance the quality of life of its citizens.

Is privatization the only alternative to state-managed development? Yes and no. It depends on whether the guiding philosophy is laden with ideological dogmatism or if it resorts to a pragmatic and utilitarian view that does not censure any policy that has a positive social dividend. The most same approach is that of something I can define as *social nominalism*. This has been my approach throughout this discussion. Privatization of some social services is a good option for improving the efficiency and quality of the services. This is not merely a theoretical premise, it has been proven more than once that private enterprise, *with the appropriate regulation*, can resolve the bureaucratic problems and inefficiencies created by state management. I do not, however, advocate the complete privatization of all the social services currently controlled by the state. It is a question of determining which can be privatized, which can be reorganized under state control, and what steps need to be taken in each case, what is the range of activity, the responsibilities and duties that must be carried out in each sector. This is a substantial redefinition. At the same time it is important to provide the required education and cultural advancement to avoid negative feelings and doubt as a result of these measures, so that they do not lead to a slump in the quality of life of the people, even though these decisions, made in the hope of a better life in the medium to long term, presuppose some level of collective trauma. All these instructions imply a redefinition of the categories and concepts that have been used to date; starting with the concepts of justice, previously envisaged as a social

egalitarianism that denied the importance of differences and has been associated with the steadiest inclinations. These must be improved and must give way to a concept of social justice as a strategy for providing the opportunities for the structurally weaker sectors of society to acquire higher levels of wealth. This idea is linked to the perspective that it is only possible to have greater access to prosperity and to satisfy material and spiritual needs if society is more productive and generates more resources. Social justice, therefore, can only be associated with higher levels of national wealth; it is then simply a matter of defining the individual and collective mechanisms for generating greater social wealth. It is not through taking from some to give to others that we will be able to realize this ideal of social justice in a nation. Therefore, getting back to our theme, it is in effect necessary to privatize but we must determine how, when and where. It is a matter of determining which initiatives provide better conditions for individual and collective activity and which contribute more efficiently to the national economy. The dominant perspective must be that which provides the most liberty and opportunity for individual endeavour. In a few Latin American countries the privatization of state-owned companies has been performed under other guidelines; in some cases as an attempt to resolve problems with monetary flow on a short-term basis or simply to comply with the interests of the economically powerful groups within and outside the country. The positive impact that privatization can have on the development of civil society should be clearly linked to a 'clean' national strategy.

We must clarify one point: the privatization of a service does not necessarily guarantee greater efficiency; greater efficiency may or may not ensue. We need to define more elements if we intend to obtain the efficiency we propose; this therefore becomes a complex and profound problem. We know that the state promotes inefficiency, bureaucracy and low-quality services, but we also know that even the private sector is capable of providing efficient, high-quality services that satisfy the needs of the population, it is not a given that it will; to obtain this efficiency and quality, there must be some controlling mechanisms promoted by the state and civil society itself. It is in this realm that community participation is primary, not only in the identification of the need, but also in the planning of programmes for its satisfaction and execution of these programmes. Such activities are not the sole responsibility of the state; community and civil mechanisms must exist to evaluate the real effect of the state services.

Efficiency, however, is not the only *criterion* by which the labour of the state should be evaluated. Clearly the quality of the services is an important parameter, but neither quality nor efficiency are sufficient, since neither is a goal in itself. The state must produce satisfaction within the society that feeds it, and its functions are determined by this end. That is, the situation is somewhat like changing from a strategy of 'Total Quality' to one of 'Re-Engineering, which have become important themes in modern business administration. Within this framework, the pleasure and satisfaction of the 'customer' is what globally defines the function of the state. Therefore, society must indicate to the state its approval or disapproval of the state's actions. It is the quality of life and the satisfaction of the population that must prevail and not the cold, metallic rationale of bureaucracy, no matter how efficient. The citizens are those who use the service, and the customer is always right: the citizens are always the starting point. This brings us back to our original issue: civil society, organized and mobilized, controls the actions of the state to its own benefit and to that of individual progress. The conclusion is evident: the role of the state must be

determined by the enhancement of the quality of life of its inhabitants. When we speak of 'state reform' or plans for institutional development, bureaucrats often initiate a quest for efficiency, usually measured by earnings and other economic and financial parameters, without taking into consideration the population to which they answer. The famous programmes for structural adjustment that were promoted by international financial organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s were based on this view. They were based on purely monetary and macro-economical criteria, disregarding the social aspect of the effects these actions would have. The new plans should set their sights on social re-engineering and provide for the satisfaction and quality of life of the national population as the core of state and national activity.

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