

## **Methodology of Coyuntural Analysis**

### **Notebook # 7: The Central Concepts of Coyuntural Analysis: The Correlation of Forces in the Context of a Theory of Power**

#### **Part two**

#### *GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE SERIES*

This material that you have in your hands is the product of a practice and reflection of many years of work. As a product of this process, we in SIPRO arrived to this systemization with the contribution of many people and with the valuable collaboration of Enrique Valencia who made the basic text of this edition possible. From his document we try to be loyal to the methodological process he plants in a difficult theme, but essential for those who carry out a labor of education and accompaniment to social processes and the reality of our country.

These materials are aimed at contributing to all of those people from the ngo's, promoters, advisors, students, professionals, educators who accompany processes of popular education and of social organizations, and for those intellectuals who produce coyuntural analysis.

The notebooks we present here are a basic text, a contribution that does not signify the last word over this subject. There is a lot still to be said, proposed, and written over it. For many, the approaches and concepts can be debatable, questionable and anachronistic. We are in agreement over that and that is what it is about: generate a reflection and understanding that begins to find new roads and horizons in this galloping reality.

The content of these notebooks can be used in multiple forms depending on the interest. It can easily be part of an extensive course, used for a more deep and focused discussion on the theme, or it can be used as a tool for consulting. It does exempt its readers from the task of going into depth, questioning, criticizing, connecting, proposing changes and even less so of the challenge of sharing in a more accessible way if the theme is deeply comprehended. This would be the central objective of our proposal.

In the face of the disordered reality in which we live, we see the necessity of stopping to analyze it with the objective of accompanying the historical process of change and be participants of it. That is why in *Servicios Informativos Procesados, A.C.*, we revisit this document and we retransmit it for those actors who want to be an active part of their own history.

We hope that the systemization of these notebooks can be a modest contribution and useful for the best development of the analysis of coyuntura.

Gustavo E. Castro Soto

## Contents

### Introduction

#### The Central Concepts of Coyuntural Analysis: The Correlation of Forces in the Context of a Theory of Power

A. Statement of the Problem

B. Conceptions of “Power”

C. The Concept of correlation of forces: indicative elements of the relations of power

D. General criteria for the measurement of forces

E. Proposals for the indicators of forces

F. Proposals of forms of comparisons of forces: the correlation

### Analytical Index

### Bibliography

## Introduction

We have arrived at the nexus of coyuntural analysis: the correlation of forces in a context of a theory of power. This notebook entails what has been seen in the ones preceding.

We hope that this methodological proposal is enriched by your experience and that you can communicate your contributions and suggestions to SIPRO.

In the notebook you will not find many examples so that you will be able to do it as a coyuntural analysis while going through the chapters.

Our questions at the end of each chapter are intended to open avenues reflection. We will talk about many concepts: power, hegemony, domination, consensus, militarism, politics, dictatorship, etc.

We will try to give an answer to the questions: What criteria do I use to measure the forces of other organizations? How can I do it? What indicators can I manage? What technique do I use to measure the forces?, etc.

Gustavo Castro Soto

## **THE CENTRAL CONCEPTS OF COYUNTURAL ANALYSIS: THE CORRELATION OF FORCES IN THE CONTEXT OF A THEORY OF POWER**

### **A) PROPOSING THE PROBLEM**

In the previous notebooks we have already introduced the topic which is:

**The CORRELATION OF FORCES is a *central concept* in coyuntural analysis.**

The methodologists agree on the following:

**In the unity of time-space a *confrontation of social forces* is expressed.**

However, we encounter two common problems:

1. Generally the content of this expression is taken for granted and few efforts are made to elucidate it (the central concept remains in the field of the implicit).
2. It is customary to manage a **theory of power** in familiar terrain without explaining its fundamental elements.

But these problems are not exclusive to the methodology of coyuntural analysis. In the combined social sciences there is still no satisfactory answer to the problematic of **POWER**.<sup>1</sup>

Systematic reflections of the question of **POWER** are relatively recent.

We need to recuperate the theoretical richness that is found in the discussions in reference to **POWER** and they have been relatively absent in the debates about the method of coyuntural analysis.

Here we will try to reclaim some elements contributed by Fossaert, Foucault, Gramsci, Marx, Poulantzas, and Weber, Cuéllar and Giménez.

What complicates this problematic is that the words **POWER** and **FORCE** are part of the usual vocabulary of daily life and that we suppose that we all know their meaning.

Using them with little regard gives rise to slipping into uncritical conceptions and appraisals.

### **B) CONCEPTIONS OF “POWER”**

In the coyuntural analysis exercises, among other slippery concepts, we highlight six extremes. We could mention others, but we will only refer to these by way of illustration.

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<sup>1</sup> GIMENEZ, 1981: 11.

6 extreme concepts of power:

1. The idea of power-no power
2. The idea of revolutionary power
3. The idea of dictatorial power
4. The idea of state power
5. The idea of economic power
6. The idea of contractual power

Let's look at them one by one:

### **1. The idea of the Power-No Power relation**

(Power or no power that is the question)

Power is something that

One has or one totally lacks

The extreme **relation Power/No Power** can then be described.<sup>2</sup> This distinction suits these hypotheses well. [*maniqueas?*]

Power is:  
considered as **negative**.  
suspected of lacking ethics.

is “bad,” “deceitful,” “swindling,” “authoritarian,” ambitious,” “unjust,” “elitist,” “corrupt,” etc.

No-Power is:  
considered as **positive**.  
covered by “Good and Christian customs.”

is “good,” “humble,” “just,” “honest,” “clean,” “healthy,” [sound] “balanced,” “democratic,” etc.

### **2. The revolutionary idea of Power**

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<sup>2</sup> See the critique of this conception in Foucault, 1979: 144.

Those who understand power as something totally foreign and that they are completely without, the correlation of forces and their modifications tend to be conceived on the same plane: No strength against Maximum strength.

Therefore: [*radical vuelta a la tortilla.*]

Then, this conception will mythically privilege revolutionary conjunctures –against the accumulation of forces in daily life—that supposedly open the doors for the assault of power: Revolution.

**The access to power is the work of one unique moment: Revolution!**

### **3. The dictatorship idea of Power**

Power is:

total dominance (dictatorship or pure domination)<sup>3</sup> that is basically exercised through violence (pure domination is an extreme case).

Within the conception we are discussing here supposedly would be the everyday case. Said another way: **Power is only equal to the domination of resources of physical force that is expressed in the privileged way of military strength.**

This conception of power demands the elimination of the enemy: not only to control him, but to make him to disappear.

One considers:

Power as: the capacity to eliminate enemies.<sup>4</sup>

the dominated as “potential rebels.”<sup>5</sup>

Power/No Power + Military dominance = DICTATORSHIP (To accede to Power is through a violent assault par excellence to exercise dictatorship)

E. Canetti, in his extraordinary essays “Power and Survival” describes for us in this way delirious power and “Hitler According to Speer” in the conscience of words. From here a psychoanalysis of the use we give (text and context) to the notion of power seems indispensable.

### **4. The state idea of power**

**It has its privileged and unique resource in the state apparatus.**<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 28.

<sup>4</sup> FCE, México, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 15.

<sup>6</sup> See the Foucauldian critique of this supposition in Morey, 1983: 257.

The path to arrive at power would be then the conquest of the apparatus (the army, the judicial and juridical apparatus, economic and financial, of external and internal relations).<sup>7</sup>

At the root:

Power = the state

Civil society = no power

This conception arrives at an erroneous conclusion: The correlation of forces will always favor those who control the apparatus.

## 5. The economistic idea of Power

The basic supposition is: **the economic forces are always the central political forces of a society.**<sup>8</sup>

If that were the case, a diagnostic of the productive sectors would be enough to find through magic the diagnostic of political forces.

To make this expression more ridiculous, it would go like this: **So much capital corresponds to so much political power.**

From the Marxist perspective the contributions of Gramsci are fundamental to discuss the basis of economism.

## 6. The contractualist idea of Power

The vote

The only source of potency comes from fundamental and intentional contractual act or the “cession” of individual sovereignty.

The relation would be: vote = power.

[we'll lend it to you for a little while – thank you.]

In other words:

- a. diverse individuals constituting the majority grant the power or decision making capacity to an elected person.
- b. only the vote of individuals can strip power from the elected individual and pass it on to another.
- c. it is an electoral notion of power.
- d. it reduces consensus to its mere electoral expression.

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<sup>7</sup> See Fossaert, 1977: 52-53 and Notebook No. 4.

<sup>8</sup> See the critique by Foucault, 1979: 134; distinctions in Cuellar, 1986: 111 (review the historical analysis of K. Marx).

- e. the privileged correlation of forces will be revealed in the recount of votes.

Well, up to here CONCEPTIONS OF POWER. We believe it is necessary to move to making explicit the contents of the central concept of coyuntural analysis and from there work theoretically on these uncritical conceptions and appraisals.

## QUESTIONS

1. Explain in your own words the diverse conceptions of power that are suggested.
2. Do you know another conception of power? Can you explain it in a few words?
3. Make a list of dictatorships that there have existed in Latin America and explain why consider them so.
4. Give concrete names —give examples—to the other conceptions of power that exist in your locality, region, country.
5. under what conception of power do you believe social change occurs?

## C) THE CONCEPT OF THE CORRELATION OF FORCES: ELEMENTS INDICATIVE OF THE RELATIONS OF POWER

We begin with the **definition of coyuntural analysis** as: as a correlation of forces in the current moment of a national totality.

Its not just any correlation, but a specific one “in the current moment of a social totality.”

In essence:

**We propose the investigation of conjuncture as a historic-present analysis of power in its broad and complex sense.**

Although we do not intend a complete presentation or discussion about the topic, we allow ourselves to show:

## 19 ELEMENTS INDICATIVE OF THE RELATIONS OF POWER

1. Power as a relation of force.
2. Where there is power there is correlation.
3. Power crosses all of society asymmetrically.
4. Actors have the power of their resources.
5. Resources have stages or moments.
6. Stages are articulated dialectically and organically.
7. Actors occupy a place in the social formation.
8. Actors do not always represent the entire class.
9. Classes and their representation are formed in social practice.
10. There is a complexity in the relations of power.
11. Domination crosses social structure.



12. Hegemony unites and leads.
13. There is active and passive consensus.
14. The state procures consensus and participation.
15. Power materializes in a historical bloc.
16. Strategic preparation possesses force.
17. Struggle is asymmetrical.
18. Domination is multidimensional.
19. This analysis of power is for capitalist society.

## 1. POWER as a RELATION OF FORCE

At the most generic level, we can talk about power as “a relation of force.”<sup>9</sup>

### POWER

→we do not understand as  
mere will to dominate (extreme subjectivity)  
mere capacity of an individual (extreme individualism)

→we understand power as  
“objective and structural characteristic of the entire social system in which will and individuals have their place.”

We also clarify this in relation to the opinion of Poulantzas: **“The concept of power, then, cannot be applied at a structural level.”**

Let’s recoup 2 characteristics:

- a. **Exercise of power** (the relation enacted)
- b. **Capacity or possibility to do** (force)<sup>10</sup>

It’s a current struggle and a potentiality.

## 2. Where there is POWER there is CORRELATION

“Where there is power there is resistance,”<sup>11</sup> where there is power there is correlation.

If we postulate the simple relation **A** → **B** we find that in B a “resistance” emerges: **b** → **a**.

The relation of force **A** → **B** will tend to react **b** → **a**, although the first relation can continue being the predominate one.

At this point the idea of correlation has an important meaning:  
Co-relation

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, 1979: 135. (Gimenez, 1981: 22) (Poulantzas, 1978: 118).

<sup>10</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 14.

<sup>11</sup> Foucault, 1983: 177.

→does not indicate a simple **relation of force**:  $A \leftrightarrow B$   
→signals a **reciprocal relation, confrontation or struggle**:  $A \leftrightarrow B$

### **3. POWER crosses all of society asymmetrically.**

Against the supposition of the binary opposition Power/No Power, we propose with Foucault that: **“We all have some kind of power in the body.”**<sup>12</sup>

In a **social formation** in which the **capitalist mode of production** is the subordinate, the least that **actors** have is the **power of labor**.

In representative societies, the “common man” possesses at the very least a “infinitesimal fraction of power” with which one decides “about the course of the life of the state.”<sup>13</sup>

All of the proceeding means: **Power crosses all of society**.

But neither do we propose the opposite extreme as if power was distributed in the best way.

We only try to break away from the models that tie **POWER** exclusively to a center or **dominant class** and ignore **the reactions of the dominated sectors** and therefore **social complexity**.<sup>14</sup>

We can then add: **Power crosses all of society asymmetrically**.

### **4. ACTORS have the FORCE of their RESOURCES**

We refer to the category of **FORCE** as:

→ the “resources”<sup>15</sup> that actors commit to the confrontation.

→ the “capacities”<sup>16</sup> (on the condition that they are not understood in a simply individualistic manner).

Even Marx makes “force” and “capacity” similar when he speaks of the force and capacity of work.

In confrontation x,  $A \leftrightarrow B$ , actor A intervenes with specific and different resources that B commits and therefore obtains the advantage.

**Here is the presence of asymmetry!**

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<sup>12</sup> Foucault, 1979: 144.

<sup>13</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 110.

<sup>14</sup> Fossaert, 1981: 29.

<sup>15</sup> See Cuellar, 1986: 107-108.

<sup>16</sup> Marx, 1980a: 203.

But the question of this differentiation does not refer only to RESOURCES that are committed to conjuncture or current resources (in the sense that they are in play in that period).

There is more at the root:

**The correlation implies an “asymmetry” or “inequality”<sup>17</sup> that we can call structural given that it does not develop in a vacuum but rather in an “objective structure of social inequality.”<sup>18</sup>**

Because of the position they maintain in the SYSTEM

→ the ACTORS in the confrontation depend on differentiated resources

economic

political

ideological

→ we call them

that can be utilized in conflicts<sup>19</sup>

→ POTENTIAL RESOURCES

(potential in the sense that they can be put into play in the conjuncture).

We can say it another way:

**ACTORS do not commit in all periods (with some exceptions) all of their resources; they are partial: they act on some in certain moments.**

But this structural “bookkeeping”:

- Is not a fact that is fixed forever; it is crossed over by social dynamism (modifications).
- It is not economic bookkeeping: more political and ideological resources necessarily for those who possess more economic resources.
- It is not a state bookkeeping: more resources always for those who control the state apparatus.

### **Example**

In a conjuncture X the consensus that a political organization can achieve

(let's suppose that it is not representative of the principal factions of capital nor the controlling bureaucracy of the state apparatus)

→ is a fundamental resource for the struggle and can destabilize the balance.

### **5 RESOURCES have their STAGES or MOMENTS**

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<sup>17</sup> See Cuellar, 1986: 97; Gimenez, 1981: 24.

<sup>18</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 23.

<sup>19</sup> Cuellar, 1986: 107.

This play of resources (what Gramsci also calls the “relation of forces”) implies diverse “**stages or moments**” that constitute an expression of the **contradictory social totality**:

a. The first: economic.

“A relation of social forces closely bound to the structure, objective, independent of the will of men, that can be measured with exact or physical scientific systems.” (Objective: analyze the disposition of forces in the sphere of production).

b. The second: political.

“A successive moment is the relation of political forces: that is to say, the appraisal of the stage of homogeneity, self consciousness and organization reached by the different social groups.”

c. The third: military.

“...it is that of the relation of military forces.”

## **6 STAGES are articulated DIALECTICALLY and ORGANICALLY**

### **FOR COYUNTURAL ANALYSIS**

→ DIALECTIC and ORGANIC ARTICULATION

→ THEORETICAL RECONSTRUCTION

↓

of these three stages

→ will allow us to reconstruct the CORRELATION OF RESOURCES that are confronted in a specified circumstance.

→ demands the concrete investigation of the nexus and contradictions of the economic, political-ideological and political-military forces.

But:

This ARTICULATION has nothing to do with **economism** that, for example, postulates that the “fundamental historical crisis are provoked immediately by economic crises.”<sup>20</sup>

(that the movements of forces in the economic moment immediately produce displacements of forces in the political-military).

Let’s clarify:

\* Proposing as methodological-theoretical principal once and for all the total superiority of dominant economic groups would be to ignore the **complex reality of power**.

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<sup>20</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 74.

\* Rejecting economism does not mean ignoring the conditioning that the economic moment exerts on the rest of the relations of forces.

\* The economic moment allows us to detect if the “**necessary and sufficient conditions**” exist for the transformation of society.<sup>21</sup>

Gramsci clearly speaks of **CONDITIONS** (the famous contradiction between the development of productive forces and the social relations of production), what is missing is the **COLLECTIVE WILL** or the social subject that achieves transformation; what is missing are the other two moments.

**In the second moment**, the political, one of the ideologies transformed in part [en partido]:

“tends to prevail, to impose itself, to distribute itself throughout every social area, determining besides the unity of economic and political ends, the intellectual and moral unity, proposing all of the questions around which the struggle boils not on a corporate plane but rather a “universal” plane and creating in that way the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.”<sup>22</sup>

The **FUNDAMENTAL ACTORS**, moreover, will tend to structurally safeguard their economic domination.

This will be another of the conditions of the “economic moment” and before which their **political-military** postures will relate [relativizarán] in different historical periods.

It has to do with **breaking from the economic equation**:

**ECONOMIC POWER = POLITICAL POWER:**

In the Eighteenth Brumaire Marx shows that in the case he studies, the bourgeoisie...

“in order to maintain intact its social power it has to weaken its political power; that bourgeois individuals can only continue exploiting other classes and gently enjoying property, family, religion, and order under the condition that its class be condemned with the other classes to the same political worthlessness [nulidad].”<sup>23</sup>

**7 ACTORS occupy a PLACE in the SOCIAL FORMATION**

The **PROTAGONISTS** that intervene in this struggle are “**collective actors**”<sup>24</sup> that occupy “places or positions within the social structure.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 67; 71.

<sup>22</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 72.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, 1980b: 447.

<sup>24</sup> Cuellar, 1986: 104.

<sup>25</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 23.

These **PLACES** refer to the different **INSTANCES** –that we already tackled in Notebook number 4—of the **SOCIAL TOTALITY**.

It is necessary to locate the position of the **protagonists** (where are they?) in the spheres of

↓ **production consumption**

↓ **political military relations**

↓ **cultural relations**

in the **POLITICAL and IDEOLOGICAL FORMATIONS**

↓ cohabit

↓ ally themselves

↓ confront eachother

→ an enormous quantity of groups or organizations cross [atravesados] by **social classes**

→ one of them (expression or representative of one or several fractions of a class)→ is able to articulate a national direction and conquers the state apparatus with which it guarantees an economic domination.

↓ This is the PLACE of the problem of political-ideological representative abilities [representatividad]

### **8 ACTORS do not always REPRESENT an ENTIRE CLASS**

We showed that the **collective actors** that are in confrontation are “traversed by social classes.” With this we evade falling into a simplistic notion: each organized group is always a direct and complete expression of a class.

CLASSES express themselves in the organizations and parties, but not every organization is a direct and complete expression of a class:

1<sup>st</sup> problem: In reality, CLASSES show themselves to be fractured in diverse component elements.

2<sup>nd</sup> problem: Except for special historical situations, with difficulty an organization is the true representative of class interests.

If we limit ourselves to what the organizations say, how many true representatives of the working, *campesino*, popular class would there be in Mexico! This takes us to:

3<sup>rd</sup> problem: being representative is not an issue of mere will; it is necessary that the will be effective, that it adequately interpret the interests that it says it defends and, in that way conquers representation.

4<sup>th</sup> problem: Representations do not only refer to a single fraction or class; there are also plural representations although one finds in them the leadership of one or several fractions [faction].

5<sup>th</sup> problem: Only because of economism are classes considered only in reference to production.

## **9 CLASSES and their REPRESENTATION are FORMED in SOCIAL PRACTICE**

In the sphere of PRODUCTION material conditions for the existence of classes are constituted, but:

it is in “the process of organization where identity and class consciousness are constructed.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Example**

The political parties “energetically act on them (the organizations) to develop, consolidate and universalize them.”<sup>27</sup>

That is to say: **Classes** are being constituted the same as **representation**.

→ Only in the periods in which different fractions of a class act as a BLOCK, can one speak of **global** expression or **representation**.

The BLOCK OF ALLIANCES, with one **direction**, is therefore **global representation**. In the same, one can situate here the COUNTER HEGEMONIC BLOCK.

On the other hand, generally in daily life, we find:

partial representations:

→fractions in struggle to consolidate a global representation.

or

→in the case of the subaltern classes a struggle to join popular interests.

In specific moments **fundamental classes** are expressed politically in their diverse fractions or through their political-ideological representations.

But → representation is not eternal → There are periods in which events separate fractions of classes from their representations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Aziz, 1982: 25.

<sup>27</sup> Gramsci, 1977: 81.

<sup>28</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 76.

Therefore: it is important to permanently analyze the nexus or the ruptures between an organization and those it represents, and the scope of the program it wants to achieve.

## **10 There Exists a COMPLEXITY in POWER RELATIONS**

The **question** is:

What is the content of this interaction between ACTORS that commit resources?  
To where does the “imminent[?] strategy in the relations of forces” point?<sup>29</sup>

In general, **one can answer partially**: The content is DOMINATION (A ->B).

The “probability of finding obedience to a command of specific content between given people.”<sup>30</sup>

But it takes this Weberian formulation and these aspects are stressed:

Not so much from the **command** (A) and the **obedience** (B) →

**RATHER** →

**From the middle** through which obedience is assured:

PHYSICAL FORCE or COERCION

(besides the physical, juridical or ideological).

Even in colloquial speech, the word **force** has a **sense of obligation and coercion**: “by force”. Therefore, the command of A will be effective only with the coercion of B.

So, the relation of forces is taken only as a repressive inter-relationship.

CAREFUL!

This vision rules out other change mechanisms in the correlation of forces →

- Negotiation
- Pressure
- Dialogue
- Peaceful demonstrations
- Civil disobedience
- Etc.

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<sup>29</sup> Foucault, 1983: 178.

<sup>30</sup> Weber, 1969: 43.



A position that is exceeded by the same **Weber**, who speaks of different **types of legitimacy**.<sup>31</sup>

Here is the point of **Foucault**'s famous question:

Would we obey power if it were only repressive, if all you had to do was say no?<sup>32</sup>

Magisterially, Gramsci proposes that:

**If “a nation’s dominant classes have not managed to surpass the stage of economic corporation[?] that impels them to exploit the popular masses, to the extreme conceit by the conditions of power, or, to reduce them to biological vegetation, it’s evident that one can not talk about the power of the State, rather, only of a disguise of power.”**<sup>33</sup>

**Gramsci** concludes:

**In a situation of this extreme economic domination, the structural solidity of a country will be minimal.**

There is only a disguise of **POWER**, fundamental aspects centered in the **HEGEMONIC RELATIONSHIP** are missing in order to give solidity and a consistent structural framework.

The **POWER RELATION** goes beyond mere **COERCION** (or pure domination).

Here lies one of the great contributions of **Gramsci**'s political reflection:

The **SUPREMACY** of the **social actors** can manifest itself in a:

**DOMINATION (COERCION)** and in a **HEGEMONY (CONSENSUS)**

Or in the combination:

**MORE COERCION → LESS CONSENSUS**

**LESS COERCION → MORE CONSENSUS**

Or in a certain equilibrium.

**We call this THE COMPLEXITY OF THE POWER RELATION:**

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid: 170-197.

<sup>32</sup> Morey, 1983: 244.

<sup>33</sup> Gramsci, 1977: 35.

## COERCION-CONSENSUS OR DOMINATION-HEGEMONY.<sup>34</sup>

The STRATEGY immanent to a relation of forces is a complex of actions that go beyond the simplicity that pulls out obedience in a brutal or co-active way.<sup>35</sup>

It includes, without negating the existence of the repression as an act of power, the generation of a **conception of the world** and the **acceptance of a social direction**.

Because of that:

**In the analysis of the correlation of forces of A<->B is indispensable to reconstruct this complexity of the domination-hegemony.**

### 11 DOMINATION crosses the SOCIAL STRUCTURE

We can understand as **DOMINATION**:

**The supremacy that a social group obtains with coercion**

That can be

PHYSICAL → (repression in the strict sense);

JURIDICAL → (legislation whose violation demands punishment);

ELECTORAL → (violence or fraud);

IDEOLOGICAL → (moral violence directed by propaganda, rumor, the media, schools, etc.)

The **last resort** of this form of predominance is **DICTATORSHIP**.<sup>36</sup> Here we are speaking about **political domination**.

The distinction that speaks of **economic domination** is essential:

**The capacity of a social actor to extract the excesses (appreciation) of others, thanks to the dominion that it has from fundamental economic resources and the position that it keeps in the social relations of production.**

**Economic coercion**, in a capitalist society, is the “method by which the *plustrabajo* is dispossessed.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Here we use the contributions in relation to Gramsci de Aziz, Buici-G., Fossaert, Giménez, Macciocchi and Portantiero.

<sup>35</sup> Fossaert, 1981: 42.

<sup>36</sup> Giménez, 1981: 21.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid: 61.

Marx, on several occasions, refers explicitly to **coercion or economic coercion**. They can be seen especially in the sections in which he speaks of the formal and real *subsunción* of the work of capital.<sup>38</sup>

It is a “deaf coercion”<sup>39</sup>:

- The worker on many occasions does not feel it in that way rather as a **natural law**, but it is present everyday in the work process.
- It takes place in a simple **monetary relationship** and from **the buying and selling of the labor force**, without the need for political or extra-economic coercion.
- The “**despotism of capitalism**” is completed through the movement of the law of supply and demand of work.
- A relative overpopulation (greater supply) maintains salaries within the lanes that suit capital.<sup>40</sup>
- Because of the competition among workers, the price of their labor tends to become cheaper.
- Along with the accumulation of capital appears the other side of the coin: “the accumulation of misery”.<sup>41</sup>

In the process of production and because of the hunger of appreciation:

**“capital is converted into a coercive relation that imposes on the working class the execution of more work prescribed by the narrow boundary of its own vital necessities.”<sup>42</sup>**

Distinguishing between **political and economic domination** does not mean that there exists an absolute separation between them.

Example:

On occasions when in union struggle solidarity and unity increase among organized workers, some fractions of capital can consider them an obstacle to the free play of supply and demand, and promote coercive actions on the part of the State.

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<sup>38</sup> See Marx, 1981: 54-77.

<sup>39</sup> Marx, 1980a: 922.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid: 797-922.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid: 805.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid: 376.

Moreover, the role of the State in the social formation dominated by capitalist relations implies an inter-relation between both dominations:

**Guaranteeing in a contradictory unity (representation of “general interests”) economic domination of the bourgeoisie. That is the function of the ideal capitalist collective.**

## **12 HEGEMONY UNITES and LEADS/MANAGES**

We understand HEGEMONY as:

“the intellectual and moral direction of a historical-national project.”<sup>43</sup>

It requires two things:

- a. The capacity to drive (direct) in order to effectively interpret and represent the interests of similar and allied groups.
- b. The capacity to create around itself a unity or at least a generative ideological-cultural convergence of consensus.<sup>44</sup>

A national hegemony:

- Implies enormous work in **direction** to **conquer** the support and participation of the “masses”.
- Includes a series of **initiatives** in all social fields to **articulate** a **worldview**, a national-popular culture.
- Includes the **proximity of leaders/masses**.

There are DEGREES in the **possible hegemonies** in a particular social situation.

## **13 There is ACTIVE CONSENSUS and PASSIVE CONSENSUS**

Conquered CONSENSUS<sup>45</sup> can simply be:

- a. PASSIVE and indirect, or ideally, b. ACTIVE and direct.<sup>46</sup>

Gramsci uses the word **consensus** not in the sense of **unanimous** assent. For **example**, he speaks of the “**consensus of the majority**” (**trust, adherence and assent**).

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<sup>43</sup> Aziz, 1986: 28.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid: 21.

<sup>45</sup> See Gramsci, 1975a: 109.

<sup>46</sup> A distinction of Gramsci, 1975a: 193 and 1975b: 18.

Let's look at each one:

a. ACTIVE CONSENSUS

Supposes:

The work and the presence of the “**new intellectual**” as “**permanently persuasive.**”<sup>47</sup>

A “center of formation, irradiation, diffusion, persuasion.”<sup>48</sup>

That conquers the trust of INDIVIDUALS or SOCIAL GROUPS.

But it goes beyond mere trust:

Whoever “**consents**”,  
And PARTICIPATES,<sup>49</sup>  
“**adheres to a program**”  
and “**intelligently elaborates**” it<sup>50</sup>;  
is identified as the “**individual with everything**”.

That is why it is---“**DIRECT**”.

It is the **place of the militant** or “**the active and responsible work vanguard**”.

**In ACTIVE CONSENSUS the “moment of the vote” is not the last phase, rather, only a moment of political participation in a strategy.**<sup>51</sup>

b. PASSIVE CONSENSUS

**It is the pure assent that is given to an individual, group, organization or party, fundamentally through conformity.**

- **It is not an active assent** but an attitude of “there is no other”, “better a known evil than an unknown good.”
- **This attitude is borne of the prestige and the relative trust** held by the hegemonic group.<sup>52</sup>
- **It is the place of the simple, passive citizen**, integrated in the masses and that only “consents” to the initiatives that come from the leaders.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid: 15.

<sup>48</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 109.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid: 193.

<sup>50</sup> ??

<sup>51</sup> Ibid: 110.

<sup>52</sup> Gramsci, 1975b: 18.

<sup>53</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:193.

- It is “**indirect**” because it bestows consent not in a militancy in which an organic militant/direction relationship is found, but in a simple conformist assent.

**Expressions of this passive consensus can be as much the vote as abstentions, both moved by conformity.**

#### **14 THE STATE procures CONSENSUS and PARTICIPATION**

**Relations of power** are considered **the sustenance of the State** and, at the same time, the **State** is conceived as the **fundamental unlawful retainer of Power**.

THE STATE = POWER

To conquer the **State** (apparatus and power) is to win Power.

Is the **state conception of Power**.

Without stopping to understand the importance of the **State** for relations of power, we assume that the latter is bigger than the [power of ?] Leviathan. **Foucault** puts forward that one “must study power from outside the model of Leviathan”<sup>54</sup>; **Fossaert**, that “the State is far from being the only organized power of society”<sup>55</sup>.

#### *Example*

In civil society there is a permanent struggle to win the trust of different sectors, there is an expression of social powers; of course, there exists the real power of the large consortia.

However, we should not neglect, through a desire for “theoretical anti-statism”, the fundamental question of the:

POWER of the STATE:

“It is the ultimate expression of **complex relations of domination and hegemony**”<sup>56</sup>, with a class character.

It is the expression of the correlation of forces **between social classes**.

**It overcomes the bipolar idea of POWER:**

There is a **struggle for control** of the institutional supports (**State apparatuses**) of the **POWER OF THE STATE**. **Those that control them:**

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<sup>54</sup> See Foucault, 1979:147.

<sup>55</sup> See Fossaert, 1981:28.

<sup>56</sup> Giménez, 1981:44.

Will have at hand the important resources to **impress their character upon the State**.

AND

Will be able to articulate the general interests.

**CAREFUL!**

While a **co-active conception** is maintained, **the State** will be spoken of as **especially repressive**, only from the perspective of the **legitimate monopolizing of the physical co-action**.<sup>57</sup>

A repressive sketch of the State will emerge with greater clarity in instrumentalist conceptions.

On the other hand, from Gramsci's perspective:

The State is "hegemony disguised as coercion"<sup>58</sup> (accent on hegemony), it is "dictatorship plus hegemony".<sup>59</sup>

The conception of the State as repressor:

- Omits the hegemonic relations.
- Falls easily into catastrophic visions.

If the framework that sustains a State were only co-action, it would have serious weaknesses. It could be broken more easily in organic crises. On the contrary, with:

The wide conception of the State:

- The strength that provides the capacity of direction and the consensus conquered by the masses is understood.<sup>60</sup>
- Hegemony is the cement and oil of the power of the State.

Without **hegemony** there is a disguise of POWER in as much that one of the fundamental elements of this relation is missing.

Because the **State**:

**"signifies, in particular, the conscious of the big national [multitudes]; then, what is necessary is a sentimental and ideological "contact" with such [multitudes], and in certain measure, sympathy and understanding of their needs and demands"**.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Weber, 1969:44.

<sup>58</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:165.

<sup>59</sup> Gramsci, 1977:92.

<sup>60</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 94.

That is:

**A consolidated and strong State will be one that conquers the CONSENSUS and the PARTICIPATION of the popular masses, one that achieves that the citizens are “functionaries” that adhere enthusiastically to the program of the State.**<sup>62</sup>

### **15 POWER materializes in a HISTORICAL BLOCK**

The struggle for power in a social formation materializes in the “HISTORICAL BLOCK”. Three groups can be distinguished:

- a. The leading fundamental class or class faction. *A block formed by the leading faction and...*
- b. The social groups (led) that are the social base of the hegemony. *...its allies, that exercises leadership from the State and that...*
- c. The excluded subaltern classes of the hegemonic system.<sup>63</sup> *...dominates the subaltern groups (on occasion we can speak of the subaltern block).*

THE HISTORICAL BLOCK:

- Is not merely and only an alliance between class factions.
- Implies the leadership by one of them.<sup>64</sup>
- Demands the presence of a “full State”,

With the **organic adherence** to:

Intellectuals and the people;

Leaders and those led;

Governors and the governed.<sup>65</sup>



WIDE CONSENSUS

It is the unit of infrastructure and superstructure, which means:

The social leadership (economic, political and ideological) AND  
The political guarantee of the

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<sup>61</sup> Gramsci, 1976:34.

<sup>62</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:201.

<sup>63</sup> Portelli, 1987:89.

<sup>64</sup> Buci-G., 1985:342.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.:347.



## REPRODUCTION OF SOCIAL FORMATION:

Permits the functioning of the social totality (economic formation, political formation and ideological formation):

Benefiting a class faction or group of factions.

In the context of a permanent struggle.

Gramsci shows:

“The fact of the hegemony undeniably presupposes that the interests and tendencies of the groups upon which hegemony is exerted are taken into account, that a certain balance of compromise is formed, that is, the leading group makes sacrifices of an economic-corporate order, but it is also undeniable that such sacrifices and such a compromise can not pertain to the essential, since if the hegemony is ethical-political it can not stop being economic, it can be nothing less than based on the decisive function that the leading group exercises in the ruling nucleus of the economic activity.”<sup>66</sup>

## **16 STRATEGIC PREPARATION possesses STRENGTH**

The asymmetrical struggles of power are directed in “relatively rational” modalities named:

STRATEGIES                      AND                      TACTICS<sup>67</sup>

According to:

The level of strategic preparation<sup>68</sup> of the contenders

AND

The development of the struggle.

These modalities can be:

EXPLICIT                      OR                      IMPLICIT

Therefore:

- The strategy—tactics is not a simple desire of intellectuals involved in politics, it is a necessity of the struggle.

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<sup>66</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:55.

<sup>67</sup> Giménez, 1981:25.

<sup>68</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:83.

- This strategic will to be efficient should begin with the real conditions of the social formation.
- The contender relies on another factor of power.
- We do not postulate a strategic voluntarism, but the given practice/totality relation.

If two quantitatively unbalanced forces (the number as resource) clash, the STRATEGIC PREPARATION can be the deciding factor and that which reverts the confrontation in favor of the one with less.

We can say this in another way:

- Who knows where it goes,
- Upon what resources does it rely,
- Which are the best roads to reach its objective,
- Where are the weaknesses of its opponent found,
- “the so-called ‘imponderable factors’ tend to reduce to zero”<sup>69</sup>,

It relies on a fundamental, qualitative RESOURCE (strength):

### **STRATEGIC PREPARATION.**

An indispensable element to rely on this resource:

“is the force permanently organized and long predisposed, that can be made to advance when it is judged that a situation is favorable (and it is favorable only in the measure in which such a force exists and is impregnated with combative ardor)”<sup>70</sup>.

### **17 STRUGGLE is ASYMMETRICAL**

The correlation of forces in specific moments of a social formation is revealed under the form of a “struggle”.

We can understand STRUGGLE as:

The “confrontation in action between protagonists endowed with a determined potential of power”<sup>71</sup>.

Diverse RESOURCES (economic, political and ideological) clash to conquer hegemony and domination.

There are 3 FUNDAMENTAL STRUGGLES:

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<sup>69</sup> Gramsci, 1975a:83.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid:75-76

<sup>71</sup> Giménez, 1981:24.

- a. Those that attempt to reach the control of the APPARATUSES and POWER of the STATE (wide) and obtain the monopoly on the LEGITIMATE COERCION, among other questions.
- b. Those whose PROTAGONISTS utilize RESOURCES in order to achieve LEADERSHIP and therefore the most ACTIVE CONSENSUS possible.
- c. Those that ACCUMULATE (potential) RESOURCES in order to use them in the conflicts that will so deserve them.

The CONFRONTATION DOES NOT TAKE PLACE in an absolutely polarized sphere between:

Absolute control of the State	No control of the State
Absolute coercion	no coercion
Absolute consensus	no consensus
Total leadership	no leadership

Rather, relativities clash in an asymmetrical frame where one (leading/dominant block) has the advantage;

for example, in the apparently most simple and bipolar case, that of COERCION.

Certainly a sector controls the so-called legitimate COERCION, but it confronts legal and illegal impositions of the other PROTAGONISTS.

The laws:

**Are not invented by the mere will of domination of one class faction (they are also crossed by the struggle of classes and they are an expression of it).**

So laws (juridical impositions) exist that the LEADING FACTION has to **accept—transfer in order to conserve its strategic predominance.**

Moreover, there are also forms of COUNTERHEGEMONIC STRUGGLES in which COERCION is used:

Armed struggle	Unacceptable forms within the framework of the law (civil resistance, land takeovers, work stoppages, etc.)	Acceptable forms within the framework of the law (strikes or legislation).
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Even in many situations of **armed struggle**, the **legal framework** becomes the only parameter to return to social and political “stability”, although it is lived in the context of absolute impunity that provokes the rules of law.

In the same way, **dictatorships** have ended in order to return to the framework of the **State of Law**. Consequently, **legal struggle** is also a recourse not at all despicable in certain moments of conjuncture, but not determinant.

In that which respects CONSENSUS, there is a **permanent battle** (with its highs and lows) **to conquer the trust of different sectors of society**.

**Example**

Political parties fight to continue amplifying their relative consensus that will be able to express themselves in the number of votes.

One case: the struggle between the different conceptions of economic politics in the country at a given moment are confrontations in that they lead to consensual movements, that is, sectors that are conquered for one position or another.

**18 DOMINATION is MULTIDIMENSIONAL**

To summarize:

**Domination demands from those dominated—economic and political discipline<sup>72</sup> before the imposition; the hegemony of those led; consensus; active participation in a cultural convergence.**

The relation

Dominant—dominated

leading—led

Is expressed in the relation

Coaction—discipline

driving—consensus

**Conclusion:**

If we were trying to schematically reduce it to a formula of the relation of power, it would be the following:

**POWER = DOMINATION (ECONOMIC COACTION + POLITICS + DISCIPLINE) + HEGEMONY (STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND PREPARATION + PASSIVE CONSENSUS + ACTIVE CONSENSUS).**

- a. For the **DOMINANT** (economic and politically) **CLASS OR CLASS FACTION NOT TO BE LEADING**, it only maintains passive consensus and has lost active

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<sup>72</sup> See Weber, 1969:43.

- consensus (it would “only be unlawfully detaining the single coercive force”<sup>73</sup> and the control of the excesses).
- b. For the ECONOMICALLY DOMINANT CLASS FACTION TO BE HEGEMONIC, but not politically dominant; or that it be hegemonic and dominant.<sup>74</sup>  
This complex or multi-dimensional relation gives rise to diverse situations:
  - c. That BEING HEGEMONIC AND DOMINANT (economically and politically) IT IS WEAK IN ITS STRATEGIC PREPARATION in a given moment.

Conclusion:

If we put forward a CORRELATION OF FORCES (confrontation of powers) with a mechanist or economist instrument we can in no way reconstruct the complex problematic of the DOMINATION—HEGEMONY.

In this way what is needed is the concrete analysis of multiple relations of power that are expressed in the coyuntura.

**19 This ANALYSIS OF POWER is for CAPITALIST SOCIETY**

We propose this **analysis of power** evidently for the **capitalist societies**.

Consequently **a fundamental question is raised regarding a STRATEGY of social transformation**.

How do you conceive of relations of power for a new social organization?

The answer exceeds the purposes of these Notebooks, we only affirm that:

From the point of view of a DEMOCRATIC and POPULAR STRATEGY, the following is required:

The **tone** in the ACTIVE CONSENSUAL RELATIONS

The **reduction** to the minimal expression, of COACTIVE ACTIONS

The effective distribution (due not to the volunteerism of a few individuals, but to the form of social organization) of the ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

Truly the implicit, utopic horizon is the total elimination of social co-action.

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<sup>73</sup> Gramsci, 1977:52.

<sup>74</sup> Cuellar, 1986:111.

This project of social organization with accent on the CONSENSUAL and on the distribution of RESOURCES, does not mean leaving for the future the realization of these aspects.

In the same action of the PRESENT, in its social demands and its way of organizing itself, a democratic and popular project needs to go advancing in the indicated lines.

## PREGUNTAS

1. Explain in your own words each one of the 19 elements indicative of the relations of power. Explain their principal concepts.
2. What would you vary or add to each one?
3. Do you find other elements indicative of capitalist society?
4. Elaborate [come up with] an exercise of coyuntural analysis applying sequentially these indicative elements.
5. Based on these elements being characteristics of a capitalist society, what “indicative elements” could you formulate for an “education for peace”?
6. Do you have another option for defining the proposed concepts? Which ones?
7. In the correlation of military forces, what other indicators make reference to its imbalance? Conquered territory? Liberated zones?
8. Come up with a list of dictatorship that have developed lately in Latin America and express why (using the elements and concepts seen here).
9. Can the interests dialogue and negotiate with a contradiction of the social system that is excluding?
10. Do you consider national campaigns called “National Reconciliation,” “National Dialogue,” etc., to be effective instruments or resources?

## **D) GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF FORCES**

How to proceed with the coyuntural analysis to **theoretically reproduce** the very correlation of forces of a certain period of a social formation?

We present schematically the following **6 CRITERIA**, based above all on the theoretical aspects reviewed in the preceding chapter.

We suppose that:

**The CORRELATION OF FORCES is a confrontation of RESOURCES to conquer more POWER (in its broad and complex sense: hegemony-domination), in the context of a strategy.**

We will broach these **6 CRITERIA**:

- 1. COMPARE THE STRENGTHS AMONG THE BLOCKS**
- 2. DISTINGUIS THE MOMENT OF THE RESOURCES**
- 3. VALORIZE THE RESOURCES WITH OBJECTIVITY**
- 4. ANALYSE THE RESOURCES OF THE SOCIAL TOTALITY**
- 5. EXPLAIN WHY THE CORRELATION OF FORCES CHANGED**
- 6. PERMANENTLY DIAGNOSE THE RESOURCES**

Let's look at each one:

### **1. COMPARE THE STRENGTHS AMONG THE BLOCKS**

A **CORRELATION OF FORCES** means:

A relativity, in the context of the presence of a **HISTORICAL BLOCK** that articulates a given **SOCIAL FORMATION**: relative forces (blocks) confront each other, although one of them is asymmetrical, and they compare themselves to each other.

The strength of one block



Is the weakness of the other

And vice versa

The weakness of one block



is the strength of the other

### **2. DISTINGUIS THE MOMENT OF THE RESOURCES**

One should distinguish between the contenders:

**RESOURCES**

**POTENTIAL FORCES**

those that can be employed

in a coyuntura already

those that have access  
fundamentally for  
**structural reasons**

**ACTUAL FORCES**

those that are being  
used effectively in a  
coyuntura

This distinction is necessary **to comprehend**:

Why in certain situations there exists an equilibrium between forces that are structurally very imbalanced.

The root principle is that all the available resources are not employed in every coyuntura.

Nevertheless, the fact that an organization possesses greater potential resources given its situation in the social structure, implies a threat or latent force that its counterpart analyzes and takes into account.

### **3. VALORIZE THE RESOURCES WITH OBJECTIVITY**

In this “**accounting**” of **ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL RESOURCES**, the coyuntural analysis demands the greatest level of **OBJECTIVITY** possible.

This requires a **permanent epistemological vigilance** and in its **proper measure** about the:

#### **VALORIZATION OF RESOURCES**

**a** of the **same organization** or block

**b** of the **other organizations** or blocks (especially those considered enemies)

without under or over valorizations

There are no magic potions to achieve this **objectivity**. However, the confrontation of the analysis of forces with its practical results (the **defined tactics**) is an indispensable element.

### **4. ANALYSE THE RESOURCES OF THE SOCIAL TOTALITY**

**The “accounting” of resources crosses over the social totality (economic, political-military, and political-cultural).**

The analysis needs to include the resources of each block in the context of the totality and with the condition of the economic moment:

**a)** For the control of the production process and of the surplus (knowing that the control of the resources that reproduce the economic domination will be defended by capital).

**b)** By the control of the apparatus and the power, by the social direction, by consensus and cultural unity.

Those that refer to the **STRUGGLE**:



Objective:  
to diagnose the unequal disposition of resources in the productive sphere.

Objective:  
to diagnose the unequal disposition of resources in relation to the political/hegemony domination.

In the exercise of conyuntural analysis the fear of the analysis of this second factor often presents itself. As if diagnosing it implied a guerrilla proposal in the short run.

None of that. This fear (obstacle) should be questioned to open the door to the diagnostic of the disposition of unequal police-military resources.

Simply for prevention, it is a fundamental question for the analysis in social movements.

In the case of the **BLOCKS**



(as are included the relations  
direction/ those led,  
political representatives/ class faction,  
tactical alliances, strategic alliances)

the form should be distinguished in which the **available resources** are articulated  
actual and  
potential

**For example:** does one make use of such **resources** only in a momentary way? Are they a lasting **articulation of resources** or weak “casual groups”?

We can extend in this direction the description that Gramsci makes of the “casual groups”:

“a multitude of people dominated by immediate interests or prisoner of the passion stirred up by impression of the moment, transmitted without any critique or ‘reunited’ as a ‘multitude during a rainstorm under a shed,’ made by men not ground by responsibilities toward other men.”<sup>75</sup>

## 5. EXPLAIN WHY THE CORRELATION OF FORCES CHANGED

The **objective** should not only be to confront relativities, but also:

To explain the most significant variations of the correlation of forces between the blocks:

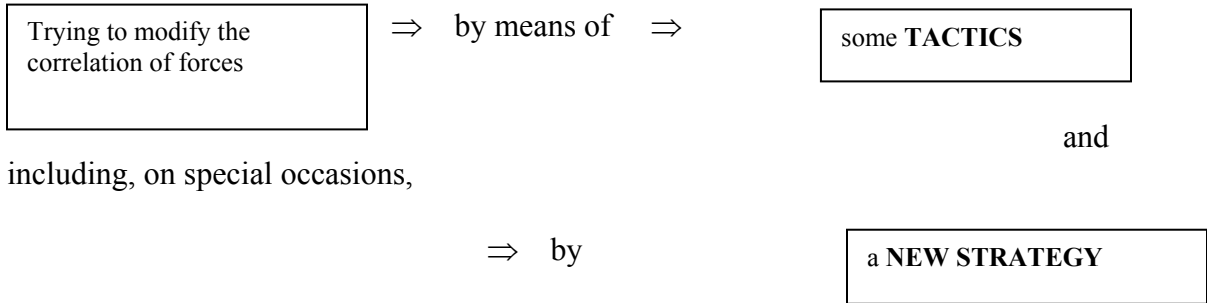
Was a potential resource used? Was a new and greater strength accumulated in the same conjuncture? Were resources lost? Why?

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<sup>75</sup> Gramsci, 1985 a: 184.

(It will help to see the elements mentioned in the F Chapter, point 2, about the criteria of “significance.” Included here are the distinctions between “organic” and “occasional” movements, according to Gramsci’s<sup>76</sup> nomenclature.)

The explication of the previous questions will be a point of departure for:

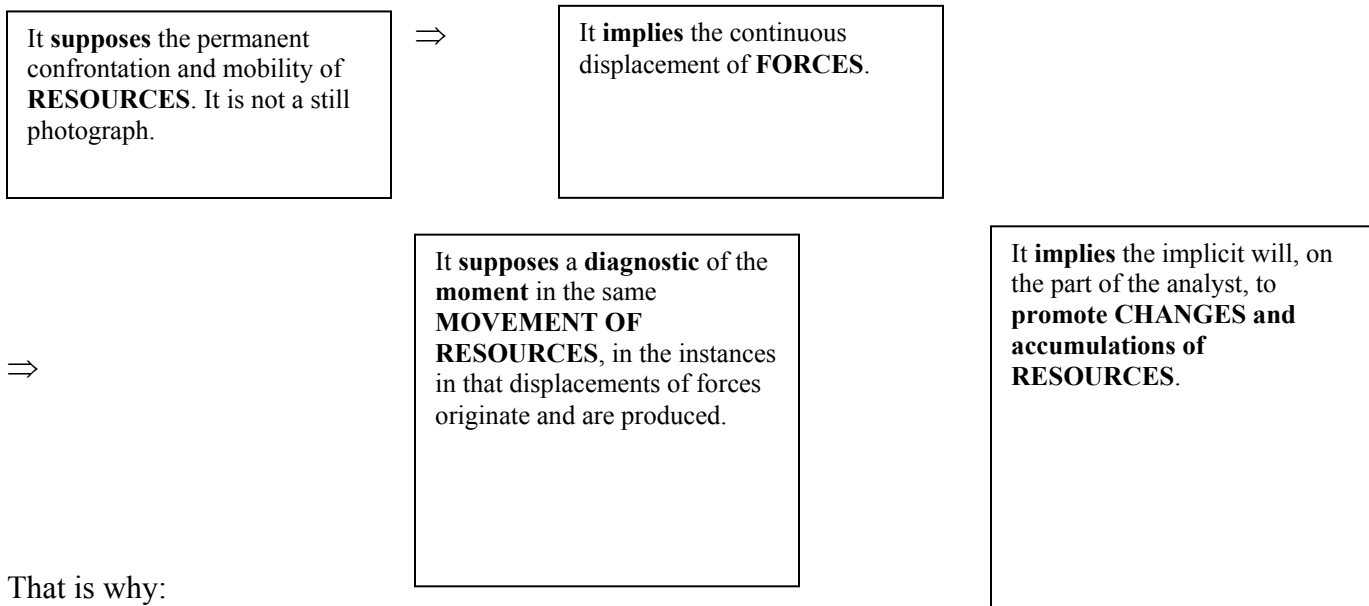


That is:

It deals with a **NON-NEUTRAL** criteria: **the will to transform the relations of forces in benefit of the block.**

## 6. PERMANENTLY DIAGNOSE THE RESOURCES

This “accounting” is **DIALECTICAL**:



That is why:

**The accounting of the RESOURCES is a hypothetical correlation of forces, solidly founded, that requires a contrast in the daily social struggle.**

<sup>76</sup> Gramsci, 1

## PREGUNTAS

1. Explain in your own words each one of the 6 general criteria for the measuring of forces.
2. What would you change or add to each one of them?
3. What other methodological criteria would you propose?
4. Design an exercise of coyuntural analysis applying these criteria.
5. Do you believe the State should play a role as arbiter, negotiator, facilitator, rector or director?

## E) PROPOSALS OF THE INDICATORS OF FORCES

For the coyuntural analysis we should construct a series of **INDICATORS** that permit us to measure with the greatest precision possible the **resources** that are confronted in the fields of the **economic and political domination**, and in that of the **hegemony**.

So, Gramsci:

“To identify with exactitude the fundamental and permanent elements of the process” so as to respect the production and in relation to the political: reduce to zero the imponderable factors.<sup>77</sup>

We can come up with an endless list but here we will present a series of **indicators** that emerge from the criteria mentioned in the preceding chapter. As well as what was already shown in **Notebooks 5** and **6** (temporal and spatial delineation).

We will first present the **indicators** that we will broach schematically:

### 1 INDICATORS FOR THE ECONOMIC FIELD (national, regional, or local)

- a fundamental factions of capital in the economic aspect.
- b fundamental popular sectors in the economic aspect.
- c economic politics.

### 2 INDICATORS FOR THE FIELDS OF HEGEMONY/DOMINATION

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<sup>77</sup> Gramsci, 1985 a: 63, 71, and 83.

- a the relative number
- b its place in the economic structure
- c form of conscience
- d level of organization
- e grade of strategic preparation
- f alliances
- g political-military resources
- h economic resources
- i judicial resources

We will now see what each one consists of: ⇒

### 1 INDICATORS FOR THE ECONOMIC FIELD (national, regional, or local)

It supposes an **analysis of the process of the accumulation of capital.**

In general terms, it requires an **analysis of the actual situation of the process of:**

- √ Production
- √ Distribution and
- √ Consumption of goods

And of the most important contradictions that are found in this process.

⇒ With this analysis one can proceed to the diagnostic of the disposition of **ECONOMIC FORCES**

#### **a Fundamental factions of capital in the economic aspect:**

Who are the principal capitalists? What corporations control in the different branches and sectors? What is the importance of these corporations in the process of accumulation? What are its relationships with other capital at the national-international level?

All of these questions refer more to the typically structural aspect, but they are required to investigate:

What is the current situation of these corporations? (Products, sales, financing, technology, wage earners, utilities). Locate the corporations in their relating (percent of corporations in relation to others) in different aspects. What is the situation of the corporate guild? What conflicts are there between the different corporations and factions? What contradictions are there between factions of capital/state and factions of capital/popular sectors?

#### **b Fundamental popular sectors in the economic aspect:**

How many workers are there? What enterprises sell their labor force? What are their actual life conditions: real salary, employment-unemployment, health, education? Situation of the trade organization? Inter-trade conflicts? How many *campesinos* are there? What type of *campesinos*? What kind of land ownership? What and how much do they produce? What are their actual life conditions? Situation of sector organization? Inter-sector conflicts? Contradictions between popular sectors/capital factions; popular sectors/state?

### **c Political economy:**

What sectors are favored by the political economy? Which ones does it harm and why? What are the fundamental elements? What variations are there in the political economy? What type of contradiction is established between popular sectors/state, factions of capital/state, in this political economy?

## **2 INDICATORS FOR THE FIELDS OF HEGEMONY/DOMINATION**

**Here is supposed an analysis of the social formation in these aspects.**

We have shown that the **confrontation of forces** is found between **COLLECTIVE ACTORS**.

For the analysis of these fields of the **domination-hegemony** an **identification founded on the principal groups, organizations or blocks that confront each other is required**.

Given this identification, at least hypothetically, one can proceed to the coyuntural analysis of the following indicators for **COLLECTIVE ACTOR**:

- a) the relative number
- b) its place in the economic structure
- c) form of consciousness
- d) level of organization
- e) grade of strategic preparation
- f) alliances
- g) political-military resources
- h) economic resources
- i) judicial resources

Basically we retake them from **ARROYO**.<sup>78</sup> These indicators are one more of the little developed aspects of coyuntural analysis despite its importance.

### **a The relative number**

A irreplaceable resource in the **POLITICAL STRUGGLE** is **QUANTITY**:

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<sup>78</sup> Arroyo, 1977: 19-21.

The **LARGER** the **QUANTITY**  
of **people bound together** ⇒ the **GREATER THE FORCE** of an  
organization or **BLOCK**

Every organization that seeks **social leadership** looks to conquer the confidence of the largest part of the population.

However, the **number** is only one aspect. The case of a **casual multitude** can arise, as we would see in **Gramsci**: the conjunction of a **force (multitude)** with a **weakness (casual)**.

To realize at least partially, the different **qualities of groupings of numbers**, we propose **3 subdivisions**:

Militants: subjects active participants  
Active in the daily life of the organization and in the definition of its STRATEGY.

For an electoral organization, the militants are those that promote the vote of others.

Sympathizers: potentially militant subjects  
Their participation in the organization is still limited, they coincide in general terms with the STRATEGY, but they are not active creators in the daily life.

For an electoral organization they are those that permanently vote for it.

The Mobilized: subjects that occasionally participate

They participate in some of the organization's actions but they do not totally agree with the STRATEGY; among them are found doubtful elements that oscillate between sympathy and apathy, between support and conformism.

In some special circumstances or amid a lot of great general political activity, they tend to become more mobilized.

We could show that:

The **GREATER NUMBER** of militants ⇒ The **GREATER** the **RESOURCES** for the  
construction of **HEGEMONY**

The **FEWER NUMBER** of militants ⇒ The **FEWER** the **ACTIVISTS** of **CONSENSUS**

On the other extreme:

The GREATER NUMBER of mobilized ⇒ The GREATER the OCCASIONAL FORCE and with a strong RECURRENCE to the EBB

It is important to be able to situate these numbers in their relativity: in percentages of the population and in comparison to other organizations.

For these situations, electoral analyzes are of great usefulness but they could tend to be completed with studies of the “quality” of the vote (militants, sympathizers and mobilized).

Examples:

There are:

- votes of the caudillo: “this is the leader”
- punishment votes: “to see if the next time I’ll be fulfilled.”
- traditional votes: “here, we always vote for...”
- bought votes: “I’ll give you and you’ll give me...”
- coactioned votes: “if you don’t vote for me, I will not give you...”
- alienated votes: “there are no errors, it is the only one, the best”
- stolen votes: “two plus two equals three”
- alternate votes: “it’s now the other guy’s turn”
- tactical votes: “together we’ll destroy the enemy”
- cultural votes: “s/he’s of my land”
- fearful votes: “better a known evil than an unknown good”
- opportunistic votes: “I will achieve...”
- There is...abstaining

### **b Place in the Economic Structure**

The militants, sympathizers and mobilized have a place in the social economic structure.

These “places” of the accumulation of capital:

Do not have the same strategic importance

Some are in neuralgic points and others less weighty

That’s why a place is a resource and provides one more element of force.

The consequence is: that if the number of those bound belong to a fundamental structural place, they will have greater force.

Example

The militants can have a majority of mini landowning *campesinos* or workers of the most important industrial branches of the country; or medium-sized entrepreneurs. But it does not involve the falling, then, into a workerism at all costs. There are cases in which, to continue with the example, the mini landowners of a strategic petroleum region have an additional force.

### c Form of Consciousness

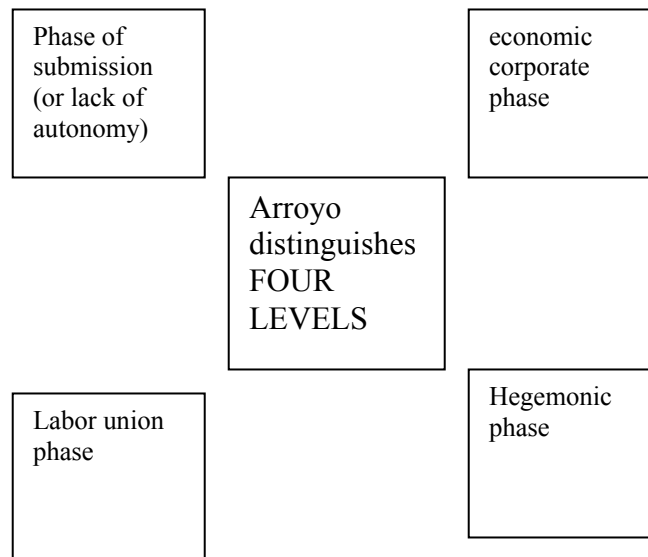
The clarity in terms of the INTERESTS that are attempted to defend and the IDEOLOGICAL HOMOGENEITY of those bound to it.

We can very schematically demonstrate this with Gramsci.<sup>79</sup>

### 4 Levels of Consciousness

- \* The economic corporate ---- (the simple trade union unity)
- \* The general class, but only economic ---- (merely vindictive)
- \* The class' political consciousness ---- (that comes to establish itself even as community of interests with other subordinate groups)
- \* The extreme individualism <sup>80</sup> ---- (we propose to add before this one)

The analysis of the FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS is one of the least developed aspects for coyuntural analysis. We present here only a schematic that even the presentation of a hypothesis would imply a much wider work. The advances in psychosocial and psychoanalytical studies can be of great use.

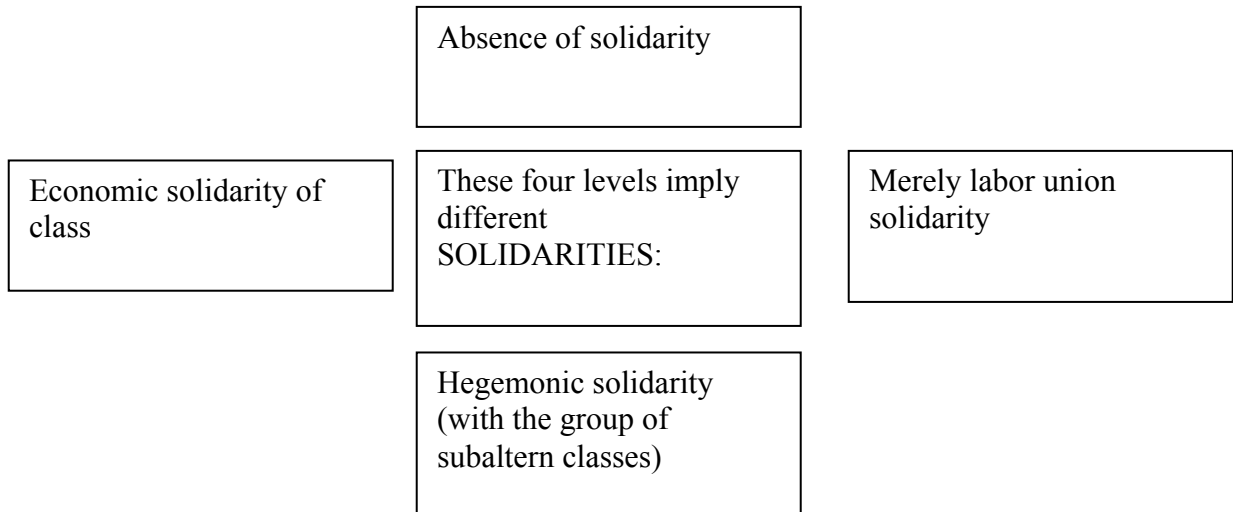


<sup>79</sup> Gramsci, 1975 a: 71-72.

<sup>80</sup> Arroyo, 1977: 20.



In light of the competition for the offer of a labor force, situations can arise in which some people ideologically identified with other social actors do not even arrive at trade union consciousness.



Each one of these goes on assuming and surpassing the one before, in such a way that a disposition to a hegemonic solidarity implies a greater resource in the POLITICAL STRUGGLE than that only in the labor union solidarity.

This is an aspect difficult to measure: How do you measure levels of consciousness?

Without resolving the problem totally, we propose a road to the solution:

Through the demand that raises an organization or block and through the struggles<sup>81</sup>, the levels of consciousness can be detected in those that it moves.

We should especially provide ourselves with nominalism, above all in reference to the valorization of “party” consciousness.

The fact of belonging to a political party does not automatically signify the phase of hegemonic consciousness.

They impede analyzing which ones are the LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS of those in coalition:

Party Centeredism

Party Patriotism

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<sup>81</sup> Ver ibidem: 20.

The exclusive valorization of organizing form of the political party, in detriment the other forms of social organization (“only the party organization is authentically Revolutionary”)

The over valuing of the organization to which it belongs. We could extend the expression and speak of PATRIOTISM of the movement, of the union, the cooperative, etc.

These valorizations are accentuated in the conception of one partyism/mono partyism to the death:

In the political proposal that tries to unify into one single authority every social movement, every organization, and every group.

Only, to indicate the extreme, we show that a BLOCK that relies on:

a great number of militants (many of them from fundamental structural places)

a homogenous consciousness (solid).

will have :  
a MULTIPLICATION OF FORCES!  
(it does not suffice to use the mathematical sum).

Three separate individuals do not develop the same FORCE (we can identify their forces as A, B and C, together D):

that is,  $A + B + C$  is not equal to D

The FORCE that the reunited 3 develop implies an additional element (multiplication, we call it here as unification, in such a way that  $A \times B \times C = D$ ).

**d Level of organization**

The political confrontation is the geographic and sector reach of the group, organization or block.

There can be  
Organizations with reach:  
Local regional national  
Or with preferential presence in the field:  
Rural urban rural and urban

Or with presence in strategic geopolitical zones (we have already spoken of the economic, we add here the political).

#### EXAMPLE

A solid, regional organization (suggest the name) and only in the rural sector, will have influence, to that which has consolidated nationally, in the rural and urban sectors, and in the strategic geopolitical zones (like borders, the central zone in which the political and the greater part of the industry are found). If besides this last one, it relies on militants its forces are further multiplied.

#### **e level of strategic preparation**

It becomes concrete in 2 interrelated elements: the clarity of strategy and tactics and the ability of the leadership that implements them.

We refer to “ABILITY” as:

The capacity developed by an organization to place itself in the SOCIAL and POLITICAL struggle, in the CONFRONTATIONS of FORCES, and in the circumstances of each moment, to accumulate STRENGTH effectively, before the considered PRINCIPAL ENEMY.

This implies a coherent relation between:

Particular Tactics

and

General Strategy

Continuing with the extreme ideal case that we have been showing throughout:

A BLOCK with a great POTENTIAL would be that which has the RESOURCE of excellent STRATEGIC PREPARATION, besides a national presence and in the principal regions of the country and with HEGEMONIC CONSCIOUSNESS in a wide group of militants.

#### **f alliances**

To form alliances, in the strict sense, is:

To accumulate RESOURCES to achieve the objective that is sought, through the concurrence of different ALLIED FORCES.

We can say that politics, among other questions, is the art of forming ALLIANCES.

ACTORS do not only develop in political struggles; they live a continuous game of ALLIANCES in order to advance on the road indicated by STRATEGY and to confront the PRINCIPAL ADVERSARY.

When an ALLIANCE is formed the RESOURCES of those ALLIED are interwoven to achieve an OBJECTIVE. A BLOCK is formed based on them with the HEGEMONY of a sector.

We include the distinction between:  
STRATEGIC ALLIANCES and TACTICAL ALLIANCES

Let's look at each one of them:

They coincide in the final objective proposed in the STRATEGY.

Strategic Alliances  
(the organizations)

They can have differences in the nature by which it is sought to arrive at it or in the characterizations or elaborated analyzes in the period or in the forms of action that are considered most appropriate for the coyuntura.

They are companeros in struggle over the long run and tend to unify their forces in a more solid manner; they can even become one organization easily.

They do not coincide in STRATEGY (not in the objective nor in the means)

Tactical Alliances  
(the organizations)

Circumstantially they have the same objective in the short term.

They are a daily resource in the political struggle and companeros in struggle over the short term.

They generally imply short duration and weakness in the coalition.

The Politics of Alliances:

They do not happen through the art of magic (with everything and that the coincidence of objectives truly occurs).

It implies work in analysis, conviction, and pacts.

They are a labor of hegemony.

It requires an analysis of possible allies: their strategies, their forms of action, their social influence, their composition, and, in general, their STRENGTHS.

It presupposes the clarity in the coincidence in the strategic and tactical objectives.

It presupposes the capacity to show how necessary the alliance is (to generate CONSENSUS among the members of the organization proper as well as others).

Alliances confront each other at 2 Extremes:

### SECTARIANISM

Absence of a politics of solid, agile and effective coalitions. Because of the fear of “contamination”, of other strategies or of being absorbed by other organizations, the sectarians lose a fundamental nature to ACCUMULATE FORCES and easily confuse SECONDARY ADVERSARIES with the FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION.

### OPPORTUNISM

Politics of undifferentiated alliances without taking into account the STRATEGY, without analyzing the capabilities of the allies and on many occasions without it mattering allying itself with PRINCIPAL ADVERSARIES in detriment to the pacts with important STRATEGIC ALLIES.

So, a BLOCK with a politics of consolidated and able alliances and with the elements of forces that we have already mentioned, will prepare important RESOURCES for POLITICAL STRUGGLE. It will not mean a simple sum, but a MULTIPLICATION OF FORCES.

### g. POLITICAL-MILITARY RESOURCES<sup>82</sup>

Some propose that this indicator only should be studied in the final situations of open and generalized confrontation, but the correlation of forces demands its permanent consideration.

It does not involve postulating a militaristic strategy at all costs, in the style of the provocative or naïve groups that promote useless or irresponsible confrontations.<sup>83</sup>

The objective is to take into account, in the characterization of forces, this indicator.

Gramsci distinguishes 2 levels in this analysis:

TECHNICAL MILITARY                      and                      the POLITICAL MILITARY<sup>84</sup>

#### Technical Military

Is the measurement of military resources in the strict sense.

In the analysis of the state:

#### **measurement**

The level of development of military technology, type of arms, quantity of police and military in its diverse bodies, paramilitary groups, effective action (legal and illegal) of repressive bodies.

#### **resources**

In the point of view of opposition, the possibilities of repression are asked for.

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<sup>82</sup> Gramsci, 1975 a: 73-74; Arroyo, 1977: 23-24; Gallardo, 1988: 113-114; Lopez, 1979: 54-55.

<sup>83</sup> Arroyo, 1977: 22.

<sup>84</sup> Gramsci, 1975 a: 73-74.

At this level the distinction between ACTUAL RESOURCES and POTENTIAL RESOURCES is fundamental for the coyuntura.

If we only propose the analysis from the potential (coercive-military forces on which the state depends structurally and the factions of capital that have semi-militarized bodies) and as if always current at every conjuncture, it would fall into political defeatism: there is nothing to do before such a powerful enemy.

But these coercive forces do not act at every moment.

The key to conjunction is to measure which resources are being utilized effectively and which will be used feasibly.

#### POLITICAL-MILITARY

The political actions that possess the “virtue to determine reflections of military character.”<sup>85</sup>

Militaristic strategists easily forget this element. They prefer to underline the technical-military from the popular opposition and they lose the ability to generate consensus.

They forget, then, RESOURCES of enormous effectiveness like, for example:

§ the insurgent and counterinsurgent role of the victimized civil population by the armed confrontation (displaced)

§ the dispersion of the dominant military force in all a great territory and on occasion, unknown

§ the taking advantage of the correlation of forces at the international level

§ the personalities with special moral weight that impose themselves and balance public opinion

§ a broad politics of alliances that imposes a dissuasion of the use of state military force

§ the denunciation in diverse forums and international media communication (underestimating electronic media)

§ massive resistance

§ civil disobedience

Continually cases of sectors arise that have a technical-military level extremely developed (potential force for the coyuntura), but with great weaknesses in the political-military field.

Example: national & international

When the delegitimization of the use of repressive forces is achieved like the Mexican army before the EZLN.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibidem: 73.

A resource –political-military superiority–<sup>86</sup> is conquered in this way, that can be fundamental for the significant displacement of the correlation of forces: the repressive potential force is not actualized.

Gramsci proposes that:

Politics should be “superior to the military part”<sup>87</sup>; that the “destruction” of the enemy is the “dissolution of its links as an organic mass.”<sup>88</sup>

## **h. Economic Resources**

The groups, organizations, parties or blocks have a potential differentiated to the financial level.

This potential favors ⇒

The mobilization of personnel

The use of mass media

The publication of books, magazines, or videos etc.

that can have full-time professionals

In this case, we should be attentive to the mechanisms and suppose that:

The economic resources of one class, for example, the bourgeoisie, are directly from the organizations that defend their interests.

The latter can have access to those (the former), but not necessarily.

A concrete analysis (another necessary redundancy) is needed that identifies the RESOURCES of an organization: ⇒

Those in which it effectively counts

Those that it utilizes in the coyuntura

Example:

The financial (powerful) of the PRI through its intimate relation with the State and its apparatuses and the quantity of full time personnel that it counts on through the secretary's and the corporatized organizations, favors it in the electoral conjunctures.

Generally, here is found one of the weaknesses of the organized popular sectors, conditional by its place in the social structure: its bases work with a fixed schedule or they dedicate the majority of their to time to subsistence labor; with difficulty they have important surpluses for the party or organizational “quotas”.

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<sup>86</sup> Arroyo 1977: 21.

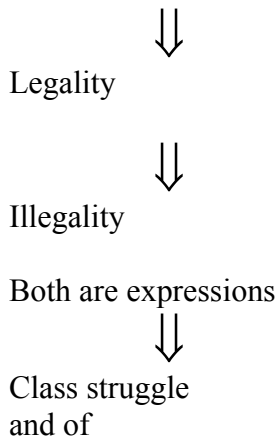
<sup>87</sup> Gramsci, 1975a: 91.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*: 172.

But they can partially replace these weaknesses, with creativity and with massive support. Consensus also has its face of popular financing.

i. Legal resources

The struggle develops in the framework of an established legality, although it is not restricted to it.



Control by social sector<sup>89</sup>

This double characterization grants differentiated LEGAL RESOURCES to the different sectors in struggle.

What is demanded then, for political struggle and analysis of the correlation of forces, is the study and permanent identification of these resources.

In diverse occasions, the following idea is privileged:

Legality is only the expression of control by a social class  $\Rightarrow$  and therefore, It is considered that it is not feasible that popular or oppositional sectors can use legal resources.

It prevents them from taking elements of strength into account.

In synthesis, we propose the consideration [recognition] of these resources in the correlation of forces.

THE RELATIVE NUMBER (MILITANTS, SYMPATHIZERS, MOBILIZED)  
+THE PLACE IN THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE  
+FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS (INDIVIDUAL, PROFESSIONAL, CLASS, HEGEMONIC)

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<sup>89</sup> Gimenez, 1981: 83.



- +LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION (GEOGRAPHIC & SECTOR REACH)
- +LEVEL STRATEGIC PREPARATION (STRATEGY, TACTICS & ABILITY OF LEADERSHIP)
- +ALLIANCES (STRATEGIC & TACTICAL)
- +POLITICAL-MILITARY RESOURCES (TECHNICAL & POLITICAL)
- +ECONOMIC RESOURCES
- +LEGAL RESOURCES

### Questions

1. Explain in your own words what you understood of each one of the indicators of the economic field and of hegemony-domination.
2. What would you add to or change of these indicators?
3. What other indicators do you consider to be important to take into account?
4. Are peaceful struggles (hunger strike, civil disobedience, marches, demonstrations, non-cooperation, etc.) the only measures to modify the correlation of forces and generate change?
5. Would you agree that these “peaceful struggles” are only “contestations [?] to “state power” and its decisions and that they do not generate proposals of historic projects?
6. Do you think that every struggle for power is violent (not necessarily physical)?
7. Do you think that physical violence understood as harm to another is inherent to man[kind]? Is it a socio-historical product?
8. The resource of “dialogue” can resolve all the contradictions, conflicts, interests, necessities, desires, and distinct values?
9. Within the vocabulary of human rights and “education for peace,” can we find another concept different from “non-violence,” “enemy,” etc., but in a positive sense?
10. Does the “contradiction” imply that there are “irreconcilable interests” that would not be resolved by means of “dialogue” and “negotiation”? Is only winning or losing the solution?

### F. Proposals of Forms of Comparison of Forces: Correlation

After having presented some theoretical proposals around the concept of the CORRELATION OF FORCES, the criteria for its analysis and the indicators of forces, we will express a possible technique to determine said correlation.

We suppose the objective is to

characterize                      anticipate                      favor  
the significant displacements of forces. To do that we will tackle the following elements:

1. Correlation of Forces
2. Projects
3. Resources

4. Opportunities and Threats
5. Tactic and Strategy
6. Evaluation
7. Second Analysis

Let's look at them one at a time:

### 1. Correlation of Forces

- a. Begin with the former [earlier] CORRELATION OF FORCES (include the characterization of principal actors).
- b. If there is no previous analysis you can begin with a hypothetical presentation (it will help to compare the analyzed conjuncture).

### 2. Projects

- a. identify the PROJECTS<sup>90</sup> that articulate the BLOCKS OF PRINCIPAL ACTORS or protagonists (in the period being studied).
- b. characterize the ACTUAL and POTENTIAL FORCES OF EACH BLOCK (mentioned indicators: disposition and movements of the economic forces and of the fields of hegemony/domination).

We will identify by PROJECT:

the explicit and intentionally structured programs

the conjunction of implicit and unintentional interests materialized in the actions that implicitly articulate a strategy and tactics

If it is difficult to identify the BLOCKS, the principal “fields of confrontation”<sup>91</sup> or conflicts can be shown that are established and how they are generated around those distinct BLOCKS.

It is important to work with all the mentioned indicators in order to overcome unilateral analysis (excessive optimism or paralyzing pessimism).

### 3. Resources

- a. compare the CURRENT and POTENTIAL RESOURCES from within each BLOCK.
- b. Establish the RELATIVITY OF POWERS (that are confronted in the period).

Objective ⇒ the TENDENCY OF FORCES ⇒ (direction toward what indicates a correlation of forces)

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<sup>90</sup> Zarco, 1988: 98. Gallardo, 1988: 80.

<sup>91</sup> Souza, s/f: 36.

A symmetry

Relative Equilibrium

It implies the presence of a CURRENT RELATION and its possibilities to remain in the future.

To guard against:

#### OPTIMISM

(overestimation of the force itself, without its context)  
the analysis in the comparison with other forces

#### PESSIMISM

(underestimation of the force itself, without its context)  
Detect the significant movements of force in comparison with the earlier period.

The significance will be “measured” in relation to the GENERAL STRATEGY presented and should not be able to lose the necessary objectivity.

Be guided by the STRATEGY to measure the significance:

Is to critically establish the parameters from the point of view of the analyst.

#### 4. Opportunities and Threats

- a. characterize in the circumstances of the period which are the opportunities that are opened in the conjunctural (to accumulate more FORCE in the sense of the STRATEGY of the BLOCK).
- b. Characterize WHICH ARE THE PRINCIPAL THREATS (what impedes the accumulation of FORCES or what signifies the accumulation of forces of the ADVERSARIES).

This in the context of the confrontation of strategies and of the analyzed tendencies. This group will permit the identifying, at the CONJUNCTURAL MOMENT, among other characterizations, as the period of:

- crisis of the hegemonic sector or the subaltern blocks
- hegemonic solidification or of the subaltern sectors
- incrementation[?] of the coercion facing consensus
- consensual moment and reduction of repression
- economic crisis and the worsening of “objective conditions”
- economic peak of the dominant sectors
- explosive combination of economic crisis and hegemonic crisis
- political-military crisis

#### 5. Tactics and Strategy

- a. propose TACTICS and/or STRATEGIES to MODIFY the CORRELATION OF FORCES in the sense favorable to the DEFENDED STRATEGY.

## 6. Evaluation

- a. evaluate the ANALYSIS BASED on the PRACTICAL RESULTS of the proposed TACTICS and STRATEGIES.

## 7. Second Analysis

- a. initiate the ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING PERIOD.

In summary, we propose the following schema of the COMPARISON OF FORCES:

Begin with the earlier correlation of forces →

Identify the principal projects of the analyzed period→

Characterize the current and potential forces of each block→

Compare these resources in each block→

Establish the tendency of forces and detect the significant movement of forces→

Determine the opportunities and threats of each block→

Characterize the Conjuncture in relation to the struggle of domination/hegemony→

Present proposal to modify the correlation of forces in the sense favorable to the defended strategy→

Evaluate the analysis based on the results→

It does not imply a linear sequence, independent of the order these would be the elements to take into account.

### Questions

1. Explain in your own words each one of the 7 proposed methodological steps.
2. What comments, contributions, changes, suggestions would you make to these elements?
3. Do you have another methodological proposal?
4. Come up with an exercise of conjunctural analysis applying these or other elements (you can follow the line of examples that you have been applying throughout the Notebook.)