

Addressing Neoliberalism: Origins, Expansion and Challenges



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*Al Professor Joan Pubill, per la seva gran ajuda i orientació,
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i a l'Eric, pel suport constant i incondicional.*

RESUM

Aquest treball planteja una anàlisi de la genealogia del neoliberalisme des de diferents dimensions i no només com a doctrina econòmica. Per fer-ho, s'analitzen les continuïtats i discontinuïtats amb la cultura liberal clàssica, revisant la seva relació amb la sociabilitat i la cultura burgesa, juntament amb els canvis demogràfics i el comerç global com a motor de canvi. A part, es revisa la construcció de la cultura política neoliberal de la mà de *think tanks* com l'Escola de Chicago o la *Mont Pèlerin Society* i l'arribada de les polítiques neoliberals a les institucions. Es presenta com aquesta disciplina configura les subjectivitats individuals, les pràctiques socials i les formes de vida contemporànies i quines son les seves eines per no deixar espai a cap altra alternativa. Un dels eixos d'aquest apartat es centra en el discurs de la transparència i la seva evolució com a eina de control i moralització de la vida pública i privada. Aquesta identificació de l'origen de la cultura neoliberal, la seva evolució i els seus mecanismes de control, permeten aprofundir en una lectura crítica de l'actual configuració política.

Paraules clau: neoliberalisme, cultura política, subjectivitat, mercat i individualisme.

ABSTRACT

This work proposes an analysis of the genealogy of neoliberalism from different dimensions and not only as an economic doctrine. To do so, the continuities and discontinuities with classical liberal culture are analyzed, reviewing their relationship with sociability and bourgeois culture, along with demographic changes and global trade as a driver of change. In addition, the construction of neoliberal political culture is reviewed by think tanks such as the Chicago School or the Mont Pèlerin Society and the arrival of neoliberal policies to the institutions. It presents how this discipline configures individual subjectivities, social practices and contemporary ways of life and what are its tools to leave no room for any other alternative. One of the axes of this section focuses on the discourse of transparency and its evolution as a tool for control and moralization of public and private life. This identification of the origin of neoliberal culture, its evolution and its control mechanisms, allow us to deepen a critical reading of the current political configuration.

Keywords: neoliberalism, political culture, subjectivity, market and individualism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This work is based on the need to understand neoliberalism not as a simple economic doctrine or an option of government, but as a total regime of meaning that has penetrated deeply into all dimensions of contemporary life: from global economic structures to everyday habits, the configuration of the subject, social relations and forms of political sociability. Neoliberalism has established itself as the cultural and political framework that defines the common sense of our time, often presenting itself as inevitable and irreplaceable.

The study of neoliberalism is essential to be able to understand not only the material and structural consequences that persist in the current world, but also to understand how it has been legitimized and what have been its mechanisms to perpetuate itself by the hand of different cultural and political structures. In this context, readings such as those of Mark Fisher, Fredric Jameson or David Harvey were a starting point of this work. Their thinking allows us to identify that the impact of neoliberalism is not only seen in its policies, but in its ability to model the subjective reality of individuals, imposing a world view based on the inevitability of the market and the impossibility of proposing any alternative.

As Fisher (2016) states, this system has imposed a worldview based on its business logic in which areas such as health, education and politics are governed by market criteria and have become valuable market goods. This issue is not just symbolic, it is part of a process that seeks to weaken the collective capacity to question or transform the established order. It is in this context when consumption becomes the most important tool: it transforms art and other forms of counterculture into products, reducing its emancipatory potential. Rather than representing an act of freedom, the act of consumption serves as a tool for control that reduces what Fredric Jameson (2020) describes as “critical distance”. Historical spaces outside capitalism, such as culture, have now been absorbed and resignified to deactivate its critical potential to convert critical thinking in a market-based collective imagination, limiting the capacity to imagine alternatives.

The aim is to build a genealogy of neoliberalism in order to identify the processes that have allowed its establishment as a naturalized way of governing and inhabiting the world. This also involves studying the role of think tanks, the Chicago School, the Mount Pèlerin Society and other spaces of ideological production, but also understanding how these ideas have been

translated into concrete political practices and how they have shaped the political culture of citizens through mechanisms of socialization and morality. That is why it is essential too, to review its continuities and discontinuities with classical liberalism and its functioning through the study of the origins of liberalism, its political culture and the direct influence of bourgeois morality on its construction. Therefore, it is important to analyze the origin of these structures by taking on historical facts and historiographical debates but also in their mutations and their consolidation by the hand of key figures such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Hayek or Ayn Rand.

In this sense, political culture occupies a central place in the work, analyzing the idea of an individual who holds himself, who competes in a free market and who considers freedom as an absence of state interference, and how it has become the nucleus of a new neoliberal subjectivity. To understand this process, different historical moments are presented from classical liberalism, the exhaustion of the Keynesian model and the conservative reaction of the period 1970-1980, to the cultural and political hegemony that neoliberalism has managed to exercise to this day. Therefore, the work proposes a critical reading of the present as an attempt to understand contemporary power structures and political culture as a tool to forge them and to be able to create new ones that allow us to imagine other alternatives. Observing its historical evolution through this critical view, it is how the meaning of politics can be recovered as a collective practice and not as a procedure within a market that reduces the individual to the consumer and the rights and democratic participation to a tool for the functioning of the economy.

2. THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION: THE GENESIS OF LIBERALISM

2.1. Revolution and rights: the birth of a new political consciousness

In order to understand the continuities and discontinuities between classical liberalism and neoliberalism, these doctrines must be situated within the context of the social, economic, and political events that influenced their formulation and transformation. Far from being a radical rupture, neoliberalism takes some of the premises of classical liberalism at the same time it recognizes its limitations. Liberalism was born as a critique of absolutism with the aim of limiting state power and guaranteeing individual freedom within a constitution that protects the natural rights of men. Classical liberalism had to face some changes like the mutations of the capitalist system, the twentieth century changes and the crisis of the keynesian model that led to the reinterpretation of the model and ended up with a more radicalized interpretation: neoliberalism.

Europe had experienced a time of disasters during the 17th century, giving way to the time of recovery that meant the 18th century, although this was not free of challenges either. The most developed countries then were France, Holland and Britain.¹ Britain had gone through several challenges in the 17th century and had the inheritance of what had meant the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. Classical liberalism was initially manifested during the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The Glorious Revolution (1688-1689) is considered the first modern revolution not only because of its political impact, but also because of its popular, violent, divisive and not exclusively elitist character. In this sense, the protagonism of the popular masses was a very distinctive element, setting a pattern for modern revolutions. The Revolution was not simply a dynastic change or a conservative episode led by the aristocracy, as it has often been compared to the American and French revolutions, nor was it merely a reaction to the policies of James II; it was, in fact, a project to fundamentally reshape the political and social structure of the English state. It was a conflict between two forms of modernisation, with liberals favouring religious toleration, a manufacturing economy and more participatory politics. It is worth noting that the liberalism of this period was not anti-authoritarian, but advocated an interventionist and representative state. The Glorious Revolution not only unleashed internal changes such as the war against France, the creation of the Bank of England and the passing of

¹ FONTANA, Josep. "Capitalismo y democracia 1756-1848: como empezó este engaño". Barcelona. Editorial Crítica, 2021.. p.9

the Toleration Act of 1689, widely supported by the English episcopate, but also became a revolutionary model for Europe. A distinctive element was the protagonism of the popular masses, setting a pattern for modern revolutions.²

A key element in the shaping of liberalism was the invention of political rights: the idea that individuals have the right to participate in public and political life as a human right. The consolidation of liberalism cannot be dissociated from this formation of political rights. This historical process began in the second half of the 18th century and represents a break with the idea of political participation subordinated to the estates' privilege. Between 1689 and 1776, the rights that were considered an individual privilege of a specific sector of citizenship, became natural and universal rights. The first institutional examples of this universalization of rights are the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789.³ The universalisation of human rights, however, was not free from inconsistencies. Declarations of rights systematically excluded women, slaves, non-owners and various religious or racial groups. Therefore, these rights were particularly partial in their application. The political subject was only the white man capable of being aware of his rights and of exercising them, that is, an educated and wealthy man.

The French Revolution marked a point of elevation of these rights by placing in the center a political subject that, in reality, did not correspond to the reality of French society and, therefore, that at the same time represented the clash with social reality. This caused the universalization of rights to become more of an ideal of how society should function than a reality. Hunt (2007) develops the reasons why the construction of the right subject is not only legal but also cultural. It was essential to build an imaginary where individuals became aware of their rights and those of all other citizens. The author points out the role of reading as a cultural practice that favored this construction and awareness.⁴ This type of cultural practices found specific spaces to disseminate and politicize spaces of socialization, attributing to the normalization and integration of rights in popular society. Apart from the lack of inclusivity in this term, one cannot lose sight, either, of the fact that this subject of law was directly constructed within the logics of emerging capitalism. Individual freedom began to be understood as a quality that depended on private

² PINCUS, Steven. "1688: The First Modern Revolution". New Haven. *Yale University Press*, 2009. p. 26

³ HUNT, Lynn, "Inventing Human Rights: A History", New York, *W.W. Norton & Co.*, 2007. p. 21

⁴ HUNT, Lynn (2007), op. cit.: p. 29

property and the economic capacity to be autonomous.⁵ As Ishay (2004) points out, capitalism reinforced this association between freedom and property, generating a liberal discourse of rights that favored a very economic vision of freedom. This alliance between political liberalism and economic liberalism will end up being fundamental to understanding the drift towards neoliberalism, where freedom is no longer understood as collective participation in public affairs, but as the individual capacity to compete, stand out and accumulate resources.

In Holland, on the other hand, one of the key elements for economic development was the creation of the Wisselbank of Amsterdam in 1609, a public exchange bank that offered 100% coverage over deposits and avoided monetary speculation. This institution, controlled by the Amsterdam City Council, stabilized the financial system and became a model that anticipated modern central banks.⁶ At the same time, the foundation of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602 marked a before and after in economic history becoming the first modern corporation with negotiable shares, dual governance structure and long-term investment strategy. This ability to organize a global business efficiently, without relying on immediate dividends, ensured sustained growth and European commercial hegemony for nearly two centuries.⁷ The creation of the Bank van Lening in 1614 also contributed to this, allowing credit to be channelled without compromising monetary stability, a lesson many other countries would not learn until after the 2008 crisis.⁸ The two factors of growth that these three most developed countries have in common are, firstly, the business bourgeoisie involved in international trade and the work of the peasants and craftsmanship as a process of internal growth. Thus an alliance was established between economic power and state structures that shaped capitalism as an emerging system.⁹

2.2. Demography and commerce as motors of change

The first major change was demographic growth. At the beginning of the 18th century the population was higher than it had been two hundred years before. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the annual growth rates were barely 2%, but it is difficult to understand this

⁵ ISHAY, Micheline R., "The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era", Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004. p. 69

⁶ PRAK, Maarten., LUITEN VAN ZANDEN, Jan. "Pioneers of capitalism. The Netherlands 1000-1800." New Jersey. *Princeton University Press*, 2023. pp.119-122

⁷ PRAK, Maarten., LUITEN VAN ZANDEN, Jan. (2023). op. cit.: pp. 123-127

⁸ PRAK, Maarten., Luiten van Zanden, J. (2023). op. cit.: p. 121

⁹ FONTANA, Josep (2021). op. cit.: p. 9-11

demographic decrease since it was developed irregularly chronologically and regionally. Counting that there is more information about 18th century demographics and that, therefore, it can be seen how demographic growth was more regular and uninterrupted during the 18th century and that continued to grow during the 19th century.¹⁰ This growth, which in cases such as Great Britain accounted for 70% and in cases such as France accounted for 32%, continued, as has been mentioned, until the 19th century for various reasons. This demographic growth was made possible thanks to the decline in mortality and was accompanied by the internal growth generated by the farmers and artisans.

After the sustained population growth in the following years, another process was generated that anticipated the Industrial Revolution, which the historian Jan de Vries defined as the Industrial Revolution (*The Industrious Revolution*, 2008). First of all, the role of consumer desire and the domestic economy as a factor of change must be taken into account. Due to these advances, a change was generated in the desire for consumption of individuals I within the organization of work within European households between 1650 and 1850.¹¹ His study is based on the relationship of market economy and family-based households. Families from countries such as England and the Netherlands, especially those living in urban areas, began to work more intensively to be able to consume more market goods, such as textiles, ceramics, soap, spices or sugar. This reorganization, from below, although by the hand of sufficiently wealthy families, of labor, meant an increase in aggregate demand, favoring the expansion of the internal and global market and represented an innovation in everyday life habits as in the Dutch Republic of the 17th century, where material culture became unprecedented.¹² This new consumer culture, focused on domestic comfort, also generated other changes such as strengthening female and child participation in productive activities giving them a focused role in the market. Therefore, this precedent for the Industrial Revolution shows not only that it was a technological advance but that it generated profound social changes and laid a foundation for the innovations that would come later hand in hand with industrial capitalism.¹³

¹⁰ W. FINN, Michael. "The European demographic system 1500-1820 (The Johns Hopkins Symposia in Comparative History)." Baltimore. *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 1981. pp. 80-81

¹¹ DE VRIES, Jan. "The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present." Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2008. P. 10

¹² DE VRIES, Jan (2008). op. cit.: Pp. 53-56

¹³ DE VRIES, Jan (2008). op. cit.: Pp. 60-62

In places like France, an “Enlightenment” of artisans was produced, a project with a great political background that implied that it was the artists who decided on the social role of the arts, not the servants. This type of process contributed to technological progress from below that was accompanied by new progress such as the removal of the fallow with the introduction of rotations. Thus, as Adam Smith assured in *The Wealth of Nations*, the increase in productivity coming from division of labor and specialization contributed directly to progress, e.g. arms production in Britain.¹⁴ One of the key elements of this progress was the formation of a global market. Commercial globalization, which spread from America to the Indian Ocean, was led by European powers through companies such as the Dutch VOC or the British East India Company, which established commercial networks, fortresses and colonies, becoming the commercial arms of states, as seen in the example of English arms production, which served to articulate colonial domination along with its commercial purposes.

Another fact that marks a turning point is the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), which Churchill described as the First World War. The conflict allowed Britain to consolidate its naval and commercial hegemony, especially as a result of the conquests in India and the Caribbean.¹⁵ This naval dominance served to expand trade routes and ensure control over global exchanges. Products such as sugar, coffee or cotton, obtained in the colonies through slave labour, transformed European consumption habits and provided enormous benefits to the metropolitan economies: Sugar alone represented 25% of the value of global trafficking.¹⁶ This dynamic consolidated an economy based on colonial exploitation and the production of goods for an expanding global market. This system allowed the accumulation of capital in the hands of European commercial and aristocratic elites.¹⁷ This series of transformations ended with the Industrial Revolution in England which, as Fontana argues in his book *Capitalismo y democracia 1756-1848: cómo empezó este engaño*. (2021) is based on the appropriation by capitalism and the State of the advances of the peasants and artisans contributing to the belief that this revolution had arisen thanks to the combination of machinery and entrepreneurship. Therefore, this implies seeing the Industrial Revolution not as a starting point but as the final moment of this process of transformation: a moment in which mechanization takes advantage of the

¹⁴ FONTANA, Josep (2021). op. cit.: pp. 25-26

¹⁵ FONTANA, Josep (2021). op. cit.: . pp. 12-13

¹⁶ FONTANA, Josep (2021). op. cit.: . p. 17

¹⁷ W. FINN, Michael (1981).op. cit.: pp. 96-100

previous accumulation of capital, the reorganization of domestic work, growing demand and global expansion. The Industrious Revolution created a favorable framework for this type of productive modernity, which would not have been possible without the previous action and transformation which got later institutionalized. These processes can be explained through demographic and commercial variables, but none of these can be explained without taking into account the political culture that legitimizes and sustains them. This economic development goes hand in hand with liberal political culture and develops it in these terms.

2.3. Bourgeois political culture and socialisation

The concept of political culture was defined by Almond and Verba in *The Civic Culture* (1963) and refers to the political orientations, attitudes and values shared by the citizens of a society.¹⁸ The way in which individuals perceive the political system, institutions, actors, etc. is not only rational but emotional and subjective. Therefore, political culture as such is neither an ideology nor fixed, but is the set of individual perspectives within a society and, therefore, are variable. On the other hand, Almond and Verba structure political culture within three orientation dimensions: cognitive, which refers to knowledge and beliefs about the political system; affective, which refers to the set of feelings and identifications with symbols, institutions or political actors; and evaluative, which refers to value judgments about the legitimacy or effectiveness of the system. These orientations may be aimed at different political objects: the system in general, inputs (such as parties and media) and outputs (administration, bureaucracy), as well as the perception of one's own role as a citizen. They also make a differentiation of different types of political culture, dividing them into: parochial, which is usually typical of societies where citizens have no knowledge or interest in politics; of subjects, where citizens recognize the political system but play a passive role; and of participants, typical of mature liberal democracies where individuals are aware of the system in which they live and are actively involved.¹⁹

This is where the concept of sociability comes in, the key to understanding how political culture is formed through the processes of political socialisation. At first, many studies reduced this concept to children's experiences and within the family, understanding it, together with

¹⁸ ALMOND, Gabriel, A., VERBA, S. "The civic culture. Political attitudes and democracy in five nations." New Jersey. *Princeton University Press*, 1963 P. 13

¹⁹ ALMOND, Gabriel, A., VERBA, S. (1963). op. cit.: pp. 16-17

childhood, as in the space where a reproduction of patterns of authority was generated. Almond and Verba break with this idea and defend that political socialization is a continuous process that takes place throughout the periods of the individual's life, including childhood, later socialization, adolescence and post-socialization experiences as adults.²⁰ In environments such as the family, school, work or associations, it is where the experiences of authority that give rise to the concept of *subjective political competence*, which refers to the feeling that the individual can participate and influence the political system. This sensation derives from these experiences in relation to authority in the aforementioned environments, and defines that a self-confident citizen is more likely to get involved in the political system to enter into political discussions.²¹ This process of formation of political competition, in the context of the creation of liberalism, was not limited only to domestic and educational spaces, but also found other spaces such as the circles of French bourgeois sociability that emerged from the nineteenth century. Politics began to appear and form part of private spaces when, theoretically, it was not part of it. Politics uses the structures of sociability and vice versa.²² This politicization of sociability occurred in circles of men, especially of the urban middle classes, politicized who had been created as clubs or societies of friendship, conversation or reading. Individuals actively participating in these circles were more likely to perceive themselves as political agents capable of influencing the public sphere.²³

The anti-liberal powers automatically mistrusted it. Circles of this kind were impenetrable and had become an informal space of politicization, contrary to what was the sociability of the mundane as the theatre was considered and, therefore, were subjected to restless surveillance by governments, since they posed a danger to the status quo. During the Restoration, parliamentary groups were meetings of deputies that were produced under forms of general sociability, which was of the Parisian high society. Benjamin Constant criticized the lack of seriousness that was imposed hand in hand with the counterrevolutionary danger. The political concentration of the upper-class liberal youth also developed in this way, in forms of mundane sociability that gave the framework to what was political. It is sociability that gives the political framework, the only thing that changes is the framework. Another example of cpm sociability models politics are the

²⁰ ALMOND, Gabriel, A., VERBA, S. (1963). op. cit.: p.250

²¹ ALMOND, Gabriel, A., VERBA, S. (1963). op.cit.: p.239

²² AGULHON, Maurice (2013). "El círculo burgués. La sociabilidad en Francia. 1810-1848." Buenos Aires. *Siglo XXI*. p. 123

²³ AGULHON, Maurice (2013) op. cit.: p. 119

groups of youth, lower classes and leftists, who came together in the 1920s in cafes and dinners where ideological discussions were mixed with other playful activities that allowed the creation of a collective political identity, both in this case and in those of bourgeois circles that, beyond their associative function, these circles played a fundamental role in the dissemination of practices and symbols. Therefore, sociability within these circles shaped the political content that belonged to them, leaving room for institutions for debate and political creation in a coffeehouse, a house or a restaurant. All these facts relate to a left, radical or liberal opposition. The cafe-circle is defined as horizontal and egalitarian and, therefore, tends to the left while the mundane socialization is defined as vertical and hierarchical. The bourgeois liberal ideas found a great ally in these “sociability cells” of all the “friends” with the same constitutional opinion, since it allowed them to weave an ideological network within the private sphere that ended up making them a bridge to the public sphere.²⁴

A direct relationship cannot be established between the emergence of this new sociability and the immediate development of a modern political democracy. In any case, a significant relationship can be assumed between these two dimensions: firstly, the new structured sociability in bourgeois associative life; secondly, the delay initially driven by the liberal left and later by the republican forces, which ended up capturing the majority support of the middle classes.²⁵ This connection was not linear but oscillated ideologically, being closely linked to the emergence and predominance of such associations where man (the individual) became aware of his own political subjectivity and shared his opinions. Bourgeois morality projected values of its own within this strategy and their imaginary was not neutral, but implied an implicit social hierarchy in which the individual who was worthy of participating in politics was, by definition, a rich and/or capable man. Here we can find a discontinuity with neoliberalism, which does not require that economic success is always linked to collective political responsibility, but rather to individual triumph and competitive efficiency.

The cultural influence from figures like Ayn Rand was not limited to ideological diffusion, it also influenced the creation of strong structures to consolidate the neoliberal thought. It influenced different think tanks like the Chicago School or, as a clear example; the foundation of the “Atlas Foundation for Economic Research” in 1981, which took its name from Rand’s novel *Atlas*

²⁴ AGULHON, Maurice (2013) op. cit.: p. 127-128

²⁵ AGULHON, Maurice (2013) op. cit.: p. 132

Shrugged (1957). This novel became a tool for the diffusion of ideas like private property defense and rational individuality. The objective of this foundation was to coordinate and finance a global net of neoliberal think tanks especially outside Europe and the US to promote organisations like Hernando de Soto al Perú.²⁶

Rand built an ethic based on “virtuous selfishness” that identified happiness with the individual achievement of one’s own values and not with collectivity. His philosophy was based on the rejection of altruism and the exaltation of the productive individual seen as a hero capable of deciding his own destiny against social mediocrity.²⁷ In this context, freedom is not a collective right but a consequence of individual economic autonomy, and the market becomes the ultimate guarantor of freedom. Thus, the original civic liberalism is transformed into a political culture focused on the “self-made man”, where only the efficient individual is worthy of freedom.

Therefore, these circles and cafes, not only reflected these political opinions, but allowed them to have a place to be heard and modeled and channeled them, at the same time, influencing the configuration of sociability and modern political projects.

3. TOWARDS ANOTHER SYSTEM: NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBERALISM

3.1. From decline to reinvention: the intellectual foundations of neoliberalism

Industrialisation, urbanisation and the growth of the urban proletariat provoked the arrival of social, economic and political demands that liberalism was unable or unwilling to address effectively, and even more so with the arrival of new movements and ideologies that sidelined liberal parties in many countries. Liberalism had to transform itself and incorporate elements from other political thoughts, giving rise to new forms that accepted the extension of political rights, social reforms and, in some cases, greater intervention in the economy to democratic liberalism and social liberalism. However, this attempt at renewal was not enough to stop the advance of the illiberal political projects that dominated the ‘short twentieth century’ (1914-1989). Another determining factor in the demise of liberalism was that once the foundations of the rule of law, equality before the law and basic freedoms were established, many of its achievements were taken for granted, while its limitations made it vulnerable to

²⁶ MIROWSKI, Philip, PLEHWE, Dieter. "The road from Mont Pèlerin. The making of the neoliberal thought collective." London, *Cambridge University Press*, 2009. p. 396

²⁷ BUENO OCHOCA, Luis. *Ayn Rand y su oda al egoísmo racional*. AFORISMOS, n.º 4, 2021. Universidad de Comillas, 2021. p. 91-113

criticism from emerging forces. Nevertheless, some of its principles survived and served as the basis for the subsequent reconstruction of liberal democracies; it did not disappear, but was reconfigured to cope with contemporary changes.²⁸

This evolution takes us to the starting point of neoliberalism, although it cannot yet be called such. Progressive tendencies grew in Europe from 1929. The “laissez-faire” of liberalism was already unsustainable. After the First World War, all States had to allocate a large number of resources and interventions to control the state economy. They had to establish controls on the production and distribution of goods and the regulation of work. Not only that, but civil life was also in a particularly delicate state. Society had just come out of a war and they wanted to return to a disordered and chaotic civil life in which war veterans no longer fit in. They do not find themselves in the world they return to.

According to Harvey, and to contribute to this idea, the neoliberal turn occurred for these reasons and to protect capitalism and domestic peace. It must be borne in mind that it was not only the Crash of 29 but that the global context was also defined by the experiences prior to the Great War: the rise of fascism, the Russian Revolution of 1917, the evolution of Italian fascism and German nazism, the dictatorships era in Europe (Primo de Rivera in Spain, Horthy in Hungary, Pilskudi in Polonia...). In Eastern Europe, representative regimes had only opened a brief space between absolutism and totalitarianism.²⁹ Communism continued to shake Europe and the United States, and therefore, threatened the political elites. For these reasons, Harvey defines neoliberalism as the restoration of the power of the economic elites as a solution to the faltering of their power in the global context.³⁰

The Austrian School plays an important role in the development of neoliberalism understood as the restoration of elite power in this post-WWI context. Although its impact was felt later with the creation of the Mont Pelerin Society, the Lippman Colloquium could be considered a starting point in this process, leaving an essential legacy for understanding what would later come. Figures particularly relevant to the development of neoliberal thought participated: Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Raymond Aron, Jacques Rueff, Alexander Rüstow... These thinkers gained space and force in front of the collapse of the keynesian policies and also did their ideas

²⁸ SANTIRSO, Manuel. "El liberalismo: Una herencia disputada" Madrid. *Ediciones Cátedra*, 2014. p. 251

²⁹ SANTIRSO, Manuel. (2014). op. cit.: p. 245

³⁰ HARVEY, David "A Brief History of Neoliberalism" Oxford. *Oxford University Press*, 2007 p. 16

of free market that had been previously ignored. From 1974, figures like Hayek and Friedman, pierced with the Nobel Prize for economics, neoliberalism initiated an intellectual offensive that took fully place in the 80s.³¹

This Colloquium consisted of a series of conferences in Paris during 26 and 30 August 1938. The aim of these conferences was to find a way out of the stagnation of liberalism with the restoration of the market and to prevent the new ideologies of the 20th century from endangering freedom. At that time, neoliberals identified themselves with a new way of understanding the relationship between market, State, politics and economy.³²

Years later, in 1947, Hayek founded the Mont Pèlerin Society based on the idea that Western values were in danger. It must be taken into account that at that time the USSR was no longer simply a military threat, but a very powerful ideological alternative, with a model of accelerated industrialization, especially in peripheral countries and where communist parties had more voice, such as France and Italy. The long-term purpose of this think-tank was to influence the electorate so that its ideological basis, which would be the basis of neoliberalism, would spread. Unlike classical liberalism, they sought to reduce the presence of the State as much as possible. They were aware that it should not disappear but that its function should be redirected so that it only served to guarantee the functioning of the market; nothing more. This strategy is explained through another basic point of this ideology: economic freedom is above political freedom. If the market remains impersonal and self-regulated, the individual can develop his subjectivity in freedom and counting on the well-being that the market provides: freedom is maintained if there is a free market.³³

To establish these foundations, one must try to penetrate the thinking of citizens. According to George Stigler, one of the first steps was to capture the attention of the elites, connecting with their interests and making them see that neoliberal ideology represented their own interests and that, therefore, it was in their interest to protect them against the threats of collectivism. This is where what Harvey calls “the construction of consent” is introduced, an idea that we will recover and accompany the definition of neoliberalism throughout the thesis. Consensus must be

³¹ HOBBSBAWM, Eric. (1995). op. cit.: p. 511

³² ESCALANTE GONZALBO, Fernando. "Historia mínima del neoliberalismo". *El Colegio de México*. México, 2015. p. 17

³³ ESCALANTE GONZALBO, Fernando. op. cit.: (2015) P.26

imposed through democratic means, that is, through think tanks, such as the Mont Pèlerin Society, and a specifically chosen audience to get the message across; in the case of neoliberalism, privileged university students related to the elite, as will be seen later with the Chicago Boys. Harvey relates this idea to Gramsci's concept of "common sense". Common sense is constructed out of cultural socialization through regional and national traditions. This makes it an easy tool to mobilize people by masking other realities. It is "a button that elites can press to open the door to masses to justify almost anything" (Harvey, 2005).

3.2. A fertile ground for neoliberal political culture

The decade of the 1960s was a time that generated many consequences that would be noticed and uncovered in the following years. As Tony Judt explains, post-war Europe was marked by a demographic explosion. States managed to cope with the task of providing for the new generations, but the main problem was how to educate them. Education had always been a privilege of the upper classes.³⁴

The fact that distinguished this new generation born after the Second World War was the expansion and expansion of education towards sectors of different economic levels. The parents of these young people had not enjoyed this privilege. This generational difference was what opened the way for the social revolution of the 60s and generated concerns and new challenges such as the expansion of universities, which did not enjoy their own resources and had been dependent on the State, which had also been in charge of all the post-war reconstruction expenses. The system was advancing at a forced pace in the middle of a great generational gap. However, as will be seen throughout the explanation, in 1968 the majority of Europeans were still not students, but they enjoyed a culture of their own, common to young people. What Judt calls "narcissistic indulgence" (Judt, 2006), it translates into a completely transformed commerce in places like the United Kingdom, based, as Marcuse affirmed, on the search for satisfaction through consumption and abandoning the discourse that was based on the economic exploitation of the proletariat, displacing real needs from the center and only leaving space for consumption and leaving aside the economic question as such. These events were accentuated by the fall of Stalinist communism in 1956. The world was divided and each part was facing different types of transformations. As Judt calls it, the Third World was immersed in turmoil on all sides, the

³⁴ JUDT, Tony. "Postguerra: Una Historia de Europa desde 1945". Madrid. *Taurus*, 2006. p. 721

Second World, that is, the communist side, was stable although it would not last long and, finally, the First World, the West, was pending and immersed in conflicts such as the Vietnam War, which occupied complete attention.

The 1968 revolts and the demands they demanded no longer revolved, as mentioned, around the economic agenda, but focused almost exclusively on the political agenda. The demands required, in short, an increase in wages, an improvement in hierarchical worker-manager relations and claimed and demanded a change in their feeling of exclusion in decision-making, they felt displaced and sought to be part of the change that Europe was undergoing with differences within each specific case but following a common line defined by the aforementioned demands. The Paris revolt was particularly attractive as an example since it had all the elements of a traditional French revolt, led by the children of the Parisian bourgeoisie and without violence and, in part, without much theoretical foundation. The revolts were also useful for the governments in power and to define their discourse towards the new changes and social demands that, according to them, threatened their State. De Gaulle and Pompidou took advantage, precisely with this discourse, to establish the idea that the country was threatened by a communist coup d'état, accelerating the process and, as a counter-revolt, bringing forward the elections.³⁵

During the following years, the extra-parliamentary left, following the line of demands spread throughout Europe, managed to penetrate university circles, increasing the dimensions of the demands and their discourse. On the other hand, the Soviet Bloc was at a crucial moment. The de-Stalinization of 1956 generated a stimulation of demand that opened the doors to new transformations and openness to the world but also allowed us to verify that the reforms and demands continued to be achieved only under the orders and directives of the Party, which continued to have Moscow as its center, as could be seen with the Hungarian Uprising.

Until 1964 and under the leadership of Trushchov, different demands and standards were met that contributed to the creation of this "embryonic Welfare State" (Judt, 2006) which was established, to some extent, later. Fixed wages were achieved, restrictions on labor mobility were stopped, a national pension plan and maternity leave were granted. The peripheral countries did not have a very different evolution from those that have been mentioned so far. After the Chinese

³⁵ JUDT, Tony (2006). op. cit.: p. 753

Revolution of 1950, the Korean War, the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the still latent Vietnam War, it was clear that it was necessary to find an intermediate option to accelerate the growth of these countries that were in the midst of a crisis of the import substitution industrialization model.

The peripheral world seemed to be taking a left turn in the midst of this instability. In Asia, shortly after, the victory of the communist guerrillas in Vietnam and Cambodia will be declared; in Africa, the decolonization of Angola and Mozambique will be completed and governments aligned with the Soviet Union will be established. In Latin America, which will later be marked by the coups that will come, we find the Allende government in Chile, which will shortly after be the laboratory of neoliberalism, and a significant number of guerrillas who begin to take up arms to fight with armed struggle. The Middle East, on the other hand, concludes the decade with the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, establishing its power in the region.³⁶

It is in these years and, as its discourse developed, that we can see that neoliberalism tends to express itself as a populist movement. It emerges thanks to the conservative environment and the profound political transformations of an ideal context to apply this discourse and ceases to be merely a discourse thanks to this social and political climate.³⁷ It offers itself as the “lawyer of the petty bourgeoisie”, offering them the demands they have been demanding during these years: promoting individual and market freedom, ending egalitarianism and ending corporatism. Neoliberalism offered the following logic: if the individual behaves rationally, that is, according to the principles of rationality of the theory, the invisible hand of the market would be responsible for giving them everything they needed to optimize their well-being.

The 1970s generated a global change and accentuated all these crises and tensions. Hobsbawm, on the other hand, remarks that the real distinctive thing about the 70s was not that capitalism stopped working but that it had become uncontrollable and that the instruments that had been helping to stabilize the economy, as the coordinated estatal policies did not work anymore. National state lost its control over global economic processes.³⁸ One of the most important events that the 1960s left behind was the establishment of individuality as a predominant tendency. The

³⁶ ESCALANTE GONZALBO, Fernando. (2015). op. cit.: p.68

³⁷ ALVATER, Elmar. *El nada discreto encanto de la contrarrevolución neoliberal*. Revista Mexicana de Sociología, 44(3), 865, 1982. p. 5

³⁸ HOBBSAWM, Eric (1995). op. cit.: p. 510

movements mentioned in those years had an essentially individualistic aspect and all agreed that the State was the enemy, since it was the most visible face of the system.

The path is being forged for the full arrival of neoliberalism, which had already been building for some years. National state lost its control over global economic processes. On the other hand, there is a clear affinity between the youth radicalism of the revolts and neoliberalism and what it developed next. Neoliberalism is presented and perceived as a revolutionary and a protest movement against the State, although it actually has an essentially conservative program. The 1960s are the perfect setting to begin to establish neoliberal ideals, such as individuality and meritocracy, taking advantage of the anti-political rhetoric that emerges from modern societies. Neoliberalism is sold as the way to escape from bureaucrats who seek to control the lives and subjectivities of individuals. Its line of argument is presented as transparent and accessible to anyone.³⁹

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEOLIBERALISM

4.1. Neoliberalism as a geopolitical project

After its ideological development and its consolidation as an hegemonic discourse, neoliberalism expanded geographically from the beginning of the 70s, adapting to new national contexts. This process was not homogeneous or lineal and it was marked by continuities and discontinuities, historical particularities and economic and social changing conditions. As it will be shown in this part of the paper, the differences between countries were important to understand its development. In Latin America, neoliberalism was born as an authoritarian response to the economic crisis of each country, in the US and UK it was consolidated by the application of reforms in excuse of economic efficiency by leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margareth Thatcher.

As Fontana explains in his book *Por el bien del imperio. Una historia del mundo desde 1945*. (2011), the Limits to Growth report, commissioned by the Club of Rome, warned about the unsustainability of industrial population growth rates and natural resource use. When the industrialised economies went into oil price shock because of the Yom Kippur war, these

³⁹ ESCALANTE GONZALBO, Fernando. (2015). op. cit.: P.76

suspicions were confirmed.⁴⁰ The financial power was concentrated in the hands of the oil-producing states, such as Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, which benefited from the dependency of industrialized countries to raise oil prices. This rise was driven by the failure of negotiations with the major Western oil companies, known as the “Seven Sisters”, to whom the producer countries demanded higher prices to compensate for the losses caused by the depreciation of the U.S. dollar after Nixon ended its convertibility.

Consequently, the US was not in a good place. They were planning on an active invasion of those countries, under military pressure and threats, the Saudi agreed to recycle all of their petrodollars through the New York investment banks, which were focused on lending capital to foreign governments, which required the liberalization of international credit and financial markets, strategy that the US government began to actively promote.⁴¹ Although oil imports resumed after the end of the conflict, prices not only did not fall, but continued to rise after the second oil shock of 1979, triggered by the Iranian revolution. This kept prices high until the mid-1980s. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the global economic crisis was not caused only by the rise in oil prices. In fact, the first signs of economic difficulties were already evident in the spring of 1973, months before the first major increase in oil prices. Thus, the rise in oil prices acted as an aggravating factor in a latent crisis that was already underway as a result of the international monetary disorder caused by the collapse of the Bretton Woods system (1971). The result of this crisis was a global inflationary wave that lasted from 1974 onwards with rates reaching 12% in the United States and 23% in Japan. The inflation also came with a drastic rise in interest rates that led to a generalised crisis that was accentuated, also, by high unemployment and stagflation. This crisis put an end to the trust and confidence that was built during the glorious decades (1945-1973) marked by a huge economic growth⁴².

The first immediate consequence of the crisis was a 10% decline in global industrial production, leading to millions of redundancies in Western Europe and the United States. These years were characterised by strong social unrest, with European trade unions mobilised to defend workers' rights, which succeeded in postponing for a time the neoliberal reforms that were beginning to be implemented in the United States and Britain. In these two countries, the context of the crisis was

⁴⁰FONTANA, Josep. Por el bien del imperio: una historia del mundo desde 1945. Barcelona. *Pasado y presente*, 2011. P. 417

⁴¹ HARVEY, David (2007). op. cit.: p. 36

⁴² FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: p. 417

used by employers and conservative political sectors to launch an offensive against trade unions and to begin to dismantle the welfare state, limit state intervention in the economy and push for market liberalisation. In Western Europe, the historical presence of a strong social solidarity base and a still vigorous labour movement helped to partially cushion the more extreme effects of the crisis.

4.2. The British laboratory: Thatcherism and the war against solidarity

The UK in the 1970s was a perfect scenario for the development of Thatcherism. Most states believed there was no need to change their policies in response to the crisis, as there was a general belief that in a year or two things would return to normal, which proved them wrong later on.⁴³ The February 1974 elections benefited from a well-organised working class. The Labour Party, which had a high number of militants, won four more seats than the Conservatives, managing to reach government, even though the latter surpassed them in number of votes. The following year, the clear effects of the globally synchronised capitalist recession began to be felt. The political and economic crisis, the ideological struggle between the Conservatives and the workers, and the issue of race within the British social crisis created the perfect context to generate social fragmentation.

The Conservatives took advantage of this opportunity to organise the harassment towards the ‘red threat’, which was the miners' protest, and to fragment the working class and create the crisis of the British left-wing sector.⁴⁴ The defeat of the miners was not only a union defeat, it was the final liquidation of class consciousness that had been built through the construction of networks of solidarity during the socialism decades. The working class was hit by the economic crisis and Thatcher's neoliberal project that not only wanted to transform the economic model but also sought to disarticulate the historical subject that sought to resist it, that is, the working class.⁴⁵ Britain in the 1970s was a country without any viable capitalist solution and with no political foundation for a socialist strategy. The crisis had major consequences not only materially but also ideologically, which, combined, led society to become increasingly obsessed

⁴³ HOBBSAWM, Eric. "The Age of Extremes. 1914-1991". London *Abacus*, 1995. P. 408

⁴⁴ HALL, Stuart. "El largo camino de la renovación: El thatcherismo y la crisis de la izquierda" Madrid. *Lengua de Trapo*, 2016. P.52

⁴⁵ HOBBSAWM, Eric (1995). op. cit.: p.517

with the idea of a conspiracy against the British way of life. This new obsession and public concern were constantly fuelled by the press and public opinion, which adopted a very specific and authoritarian stance through this moral panic, allowing them to justify their actions. This conspiracy, as Hall calls it, helped to generalize forms of repressive control that aimed, even if not directly, to break the chains of solidarity opposing conservative ways of life and struggle. This was especially significant in a context where socialism was one of the major public concerns, managing to push public opinion towards the right, with a discourse centred on individualism, reinforced by the impotence and inability to implement conventional economic policies.⁴⁶ As Hall explains, the regression of capitalism towards petit-bourgeois ideology during a period of economic stagnation is one of the defining features of the exceptional balance in which the capitalist state was maintained during the 1970s and throughout the period analysed in this part of the research.⁴⁷ The 1970s were nothing more than the crisis of reconstruction of capitalist states, in an attempt at deep reform amid a crisis of political legitimacy and following the reconstruction of states that had lost their economic power after the Second World War, which, in cases like Britain, resulted in an incomplete transition.⁴⁸

The crisis in the organization of the labor movement influenced the incorporation of the working classes into the administration, causing even more division and directly affecting the expansion of class consciousness. Moreover, the conscious cohesion of the working class reached its peak towards the end of the Second World War, but was progressively weakened in the following decades. As Hobsbawm explains, this process was marked by the profound transformation of working-class life in the developed countries, thanks to sustained economic growth, full employment and the emergence of a mass consumer society. This directly affected the historical working-class solidarity and fragmented the social base that had sustained labour movements until then. This fragmentation generated new internal divisions within the working class itself, fuelling a perceived separation between ‘respectable’ workers and those dependent on the welfare state, which had significant political consequences, especially in the British context. This division made some workers sympathize with the right and conservative politics and their discourse that appealed directly to their problems while denouncing the system’s abuse.

⁴⁶ HOBBSBAWM, Eric (1995). op. cit.: p. 409

⁴⁷ HALL, Stuart (2016). op. cit.: p.65

⁴⁸ HOBBSBAWM, Eric (1995). op. cit.: p. 408

The ideologies built around the key themes of post-capitalism give way to the organized ideologies around the issues of unity and national interest, therefore, the crisis of the labor movement gave way to discourses such as Thatcherism, which served even more to this fragmentation.⁴⁹ The 70s left marks and fears that opened the way for the counterrevolution hand in hand with the changes that were caused. Political power became business power and, consequently, actors such as the trade unions began to be perceived as enemies, giving way to the era of affirmation of the individual, religious values and sentimentalism.⁵⁰

This is well illustrated in cases such as those in Britain. When Margareth Thatcher won the May 1979 election, the context of polarization became even more accentuated. This new government attacked all forms of social solidarity, fostering a discourse based on individuality, meritocracy and rejection of state intervention. Neoliberal policies dismantled part of the post-war social democratic consensus, weakening the public sector and privatizing essential services for the population. To understand Thatcherism, however, it is necessary to look back a few years and review the internal tensions of the Conservative Party since 1945 caused by the lack of post-war consensus.⁵¹ Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party in 1975, right after the first oil crisis and in the midst of the start of the economic recession that would last for many more years. Their ideology was based on the criticism that many conservatives from the postwar period directed to the welfare state, nationalization and economic intervention. These criticisms did not disappear despite the fact that the party adapted to the consensus driven by figures such as Enoch Powell or Keith Joseph contributed to recovering a free market agenda that was gaining strength.⁵²

Thatcherism is characterized by its willingness to “remove the borders of the State” to prioritize individual property, the private sector, the reduction of direct taxes and the limitation of the power of the trade unions, one of its clearest “enemies” since they represented the organization of the working class and were part of the basis of the “progressive consensus”.⁵³ This criticism was not a simple one, it had a strong historical basis that was based on the criticism of the party

⁴⁹ HALL, Stuart (2016). op. cit.: p.52

⁵⁰ FONTANA, Josep (2011) op. cit.: p.446

⁵¹ GREEN, E. H. H. *Thatcherism: An Historical Perspective*. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 9, 17–42. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1999. p. 19

⁵² GREEN, E. H. H. (1999). op. cit.: pp.25-26

⁵³ GREEN, E. H. H. (1999). op. cit.: pp.18-19

to those who negatively interpreted the capitalism of the 1930s and who claimed that decade as a model of self-sufficiency. This and the dissatisfaction of the conservative political environment with the politics of consensus are what define the origins of Thatcherism. The 1960s followed in the line of the other countries mentioned above with the adaptation of the conservatives to the welfare state, the weight of the public sector and the protests of the second half of the decade. As in other states, the turning point occurred in the period 1970-1974 with the government of Edward Heath. Although his government began with a liberal market discourse, he had to reverse the economic difficulties and the global crisis. This ratification was perceived as a betrayal of the conservative bases, creating the perfect scenario for the arrival of Thatcherism. With the defeat of 1974, Thatcher, with Keith Joseph and Geoffrey Howe, became a key figure in the anti-establishment movement that was generated looking for a reorientation of the Conservative Party.⁵⁴ Thatcher presented a firm discourse, with a well-constructed rhetoric that was perfectly in tune with the state of crisis and the demands of the conservative bases.⁵⁵

Thatcher's coming to power generated clear changes in international relations, establishing a neoliberal model of relationship between the great powers. States such as the United States or Chile maintained a close relationship with Britain. The latter, under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, had a particular interest in Thatcherism as a tool to counteract its international isolation caused by all the crimes committed by the regime. This was done by approaching personalities of the Thatcher government such as Alan Walters, his advisor, who admired the economic reforms applied in Chile. The regime also established links with the Bow Group, a conservative think tank that influenced the renewal of the Conservative Party's economic program.⁵⁶ The two governments collaborated for their own benefit in generating and spreading a neoliberal and anti-communist discourse that served both countries to establish convinced social bases and cooperated, too, in the Falklands War, which became, in a way, the axis that united them for cooperation.

Beginning in 1984, the British government began to distance itself from Pinochet's regime, having received Labour criticism and having suffered the effects of leaks of documents that

⁵⁴ TURNER, Rachel S. (2008). op. cit.: p.96

⁵⁵ GREEN, E. H. H. (1999). op. cit.: pp. 37

⁵⁶ SANTORNI, Alessandro., SÁNCHEZ, Sebastián. . *Los "amigos de Chile": el régimen de Pinochet y la Gran Bretaña de Thatcher (1979 -1988)*. Rev. Hist., N° 29, vol. 1, Enero-Junio 2022: 401-428 ISSN 0717-8832. pp. 413-414

evidenced military collaboration with Chile, which endangered confidence in the government in human rights matters. Under pressure from the United States and Europe as a whole, Thatcherism and conservatism were forced to limit their support for the Chilean dictatorship.⁵⁷

After the intervention in the Falklands War, Thatcher began his direct battle against the workers, specifically against the National Union of Mineworkers. The miners' strike began in 1984 after the closure of several mines located throughout the State. Thatcher made sure that there was no room for such resistance and opposition and resisted without any limit. These were some of his most outstanding actions, but he initiated others such as the cultural campaign that aimed to transform education, imposing unified programs that did not leave room for the progressive history of the country and that explained it only from the conservative point of view and managed to erase a memory that did not favor them. Once again, suppressing any space of opposition, collective memory and community with the clear idea of his speech of October 31, 1987: there is no society as such, only individuals; men, women and families. This approach was really useful in justifying its refusal as a state to intervene in public life.⁵⁸ She considered that statal intervention was not only economically inefficient but also a moral degradation. She denounced that the social benefits had created a culture of dependence that discouraged the work and favoured idleness and cheating.⁵⁹ Another of the key contributions of Thatcherism was the creation of the concept “entrepreneurial society”, a model that fostered the distinction between economy, associated with the autonomous individual and the market and politics, seen as bureaucratic interference. Thatcher promoted privatisation as a central tool for decentralising the state, promoting competition and “freeing” individuals from institutional restrictions.⁶⁰

4.3. Geographical expansion: the global export of the neoliberal model

The recession of the 80-81 in the United States was defined by the decisive change that was marked by two concepts: relocation and the “great divergence”. This concept was created by Paul Krugman and it refers to the stage of increasing inequality that would lead to the collapse of the welfare state and other factors such as the weakening of trade unions, the liberalisation of business activity and the impoverishment of the working population. (Fontana, 2011, p.486)

⁵⁷ SANTORNI, Alessandro., SÁNCHEZ, Sebastián. (2022). op. cit.: pp. 415-418

⁵⁸ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: p. 482

⁵⁹ TURNER, Rachel S. (2008). op. cit.: p. 155-156

⁶⁰ TURNER, Rachel S. (2008). op. cit.: p. 130-131

The 70s in the United States had been marked by the defeat of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal with the resignation of Nixon and the economic crisis defined by unemployment and inflation all accompanied by the policy of détente with the Soviet Union. The presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) was marked by all these challenges in a context of uncertainty and general disenchantment. Carter was perceived as a weak leader and unable to cope with the crisis context, causing Ronald Reagan to be perceived as the ideal leader for crisis management. Reagan won the elections in 1980, hand in hand with populist speeches and quotes from personalities such as Thomas Paine and Roosevelt to accompany his proposals as “the new American revolution”.⁶¹

He turned to different sectors to acquire support such as the Christian right or the white and racist vote in the south, using speeches aligned with the conservative ideology that criticized and took advantage of the crisis to exploit his speech, blaming Carter for the weak position of the United States for having “lost” Nicaragua and Iran. This speech was very useful in putting forward your proposals. He promised to reduce government spending again, although he promised to maintain a high defense budget, and lower taxes under the slogan “The government is not the solution to our problems, the government is the problem.” which perfectly illustrates the logic of neoliberal speeches by personalities such as Reagan and Thatcher. Contrary to what he promised, this program triggered public debt. During the Falklands conflict, despite internal pressures to maintain impartiality, Reagan opted to covertly support Margaret Thatcher. He did so against the opinion of his own UN representative (Jeane Kirkpatrick) and the Secretary of State (Shultz), providing tactical assistance and intelligence to the UK. He concealed the support publicly, but was clearly placed alongside his ideological ally.⁶²

At a global level, 1983 marked a critical turning point in the Cold War, becoming, according to Doug Rossinow, the time of greatest risk of nuclear war since the Cuban missile crisis. Fontana 455 Reagan refused to continue with disarmament negotiations, combining belligerent rhetoric and convinced that the negotiations only served to consolidate the Soviet Union as a power. In March 1983, influenced by physicist Edward Teller, he publicly presented the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), popularly known as the “Star wars”, a project to intercept missiles through space

⁶¹ FONTANA, Josep (2011) op. cit.: p. 450

⁶² FONTANA, Josep (2011) op. cit.: p. 452

lasers. This directly fueled Soviet fear and malaise in Europe, while the United States increasingly adopted more provocative international policies: military exercises such as Able Archer 83 simulated a nuclear attack and were perceived by the USSR as a real prelude to aggression, which almost triggered a reaction through armed conflict. The KAL 007 flight incident, shot down by the Soviets, and Reagan's response, showed to what extent the "communist evil" story was built to justify this escalation and the corresponding hate speech. At this point, Reagan understood that the risk of war was not only part of a discourse strategy, but that the Soviets perceived it as a real threat. Meanwhile, in her allied state, Britain, Margaret Thatcher commissioned the development of a strategic forecasting study (Wintex-Cimex 83), in which a scenario of Soviet attack was simulated in the UK, regarding the possibility of a nuclear war during Reagan's management, showing that fear of war was a widespread fact, not just a paranoia of the Russians.

It is at this moment that the change in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union occurs, betting on a rapprochement between both powers. Anyway, the most significant of this approach apart from the improvement of relationships. Massive rearmament multiplied the public debt by 2.5 during Reagan's presidency and not only that, but the paranoid view against the international communist threat caused not only expenses to be incurred in relation to the USSR; but the country focused on maintaining an aggressive policy covered up with interventions in Central America, Libya, supporting Israel and others such as Pol Pot. These actions generated national and global tensions accompanied by the emergence of other movements that caused even more tension, such as jihadism.⁶³

In other estates, the impact of the crisis was very uneven. The evolution of GDP per capita in the period 1973-1992, compared to the growth rates of the years 1950-1973, fell drastically in Africa, in Southern and Eastern Europe, including the socialist countries, as well as in Latin America, which was particularly hard hit. The only notable exception was Asia, where economic dynamism was maintained, mainly thanks to China's accelerated growth, despite stagnation of the Japanese economy. In China, the death of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in 1976 ushered in a new era of power struggle, culminating in the rise of Deng Xiaoping. He relaunched the four modernisations programme with the support of political and social sectors who had been

⁶³ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: P. 458

marginalised during the Cultural Revolution.⁶⁴ Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, China initiated economic reforms that were based on the adoption of Western technology, the sending of students abroad and the gradual introduction of market mechanisms within a political structure that remained authoritarian. China thus opted for a unique path of transformation that sought to improve the living conditions of the population through economic reform but without opening the door to political democratic reforms. The result in China has been the construction of a hybrid model: a market economy that increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements, such as global competition, foreign investment and labour flexibilisation, but all under strong authoritarian and centralised control by the Chinese Communist Party. This model supports the classical liberal idea that the market economy inevitably leads to democracy. As Harvey points out, the coincidence in time between China's reforms and the neoliberal turn in countries such as the UK and the US is almost a “conjunctural coincidence” of great historical significance. Elsewhere, such as in Chile, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, it has already been shown that authoritarian regimes can successfully implement market economies and neoliberal policies. This confirms that capitalism does not necessarily need a democratic political system to function, and that the market and authoritarianism can be compatible.

The neoliberal Chilean model was inspired by the ideas of an economists' group called *Chicago Boys*, which defined themselves as apolitical but had ties with the right wing. They considered themselves the representatives of modern economic science with the objective of transforming the Chilean political structures from 1938 until then. This group first started in 1956 when the University of Chicago and the Catholic University of Santiago, with the support of the Ford foundation, signed an agreement for young Chilean economics students to study monetarism in the United States. This theory defended the minimal intervention of the State in the economy excepted in those things which referred to the control of monetary policies, in line with the ideas of the Mount Pelérin Society. The idea, which had been radical for years after the New Deal, was developed by Milton Friedman in the 1940s and, under his leadership, the University of Chicago established itself as the intellectual epicentre of free market thinking in the US and was later implemented in Chile by the Chicago Boys during the Pinochet's dictatorship in 1973, which was supported by the CIA. The context in which this transformation took place was complex: after the coup, the political parties were dissolved and power was left in the hands of the military,

⁶⁴ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: P. 418

who presented themselves as guarantors of order and protectors of national interests. However, they lacked political experience and a clear government project, especially in a scenario of deep economic crisis. This was seen as an opportunity by the Chicago Boys to positionate their economic programme and redefine the basis of the Chilean model by the neoliberal principles in a context in which the authoritarian made them easier to apply.⁶⁵

This set of global transformations signalled the end of a historical stage marked by sustained growth and opened a new cycle dominated by economic uncertainty, social conflicts and the restructuring of the international economic model, which would eventually lead to the hegemony of neoliberal policies from the 1980s onwards. The spread of monetarist and neoliberal economies spread globally, directly impacting popular ideology. Keynesianism had already disappeared from organizations such as the IMF or World Bank since 1982 and, in the late 1980s, most American university economic departments served to train economists around the world in tune with the neoliberal agenda.⁶⁶

The Cold War ended in 1989, which led to the opening of a new cycle of geopolitical, economic and ideological domination. With the end of the Soviet bloc, a vacuum was generated within the ideological spectrum that gave way to neoliberal capitalism being able to establish itself in a hegemonic way without being limited by another power as the Soviet Union had been. Authors such as Francis Fukuyama soon proclaimed “the end of history” giving way to the beginning of a stage of peace and stability under Western values even though this peace ended up proving to be untrue. The Balkan wars, the conflicts in Central Africa and the American interventions in the Middle East showed that the conflicts had not disappeared but had been reconfigured in geostrategic, religious or identity key, as Samuel Huntington would anticipate with the term “clash of civilizations”.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union under Gorbachov's power was immersed in an economic and political crisis that the mandate was trying to resolve, with the intention of establishing a short-lived economy and greater democratic participation through the reforms of perestroika and

⁶⁵ BARRIENTOS ORANDINI, Nicolás., ARAYA-CASTILLO, Luis., VERGARA MALDONADO, Luis. Felipe., YÁÑEZ JARA, Víctor., PÉNNANEN ARIAS, Carmen., ARMIJOS, Juan Carlos. . *Evolución del modelo neoliberal en Chile: Implicancias para su actual implementación*. ARANDU-UTIC – Revista Científica Internacional, 8(1), 189–204, 2021. . pp. 192-193

⁶⁶ HARVEY, David (2007). op. cit.: p. 102

⁶⁷ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: p. 485

glasnost. The failure of these reforms ended in precipitating the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the form of food shortages, the fall in production and popular opposition. The situation worsened with the rise of Boris Yeltsin, who capitalised on unrest with a nationalist discourse and led the effective disintegration of the Union in December 1991. From that moment on, Russia became a laboratory of neoliberalism, where Western advisors applied shock therapy based on massive privatizations, price liberalisation and deregulation leading to effects such as falling GDP, impoverishment of the population... In the Central Asian republics, the Soviet collapse created a good scenario for the establishment of authoritarian regimes with inherited power structures and control of resources by local elites. This disappearance of the Soviet bloc not only meant this collapse in the strict sense, but it is a clear example of how neoliberalism consolidated itself as a hegemonic world order without any geopolitical limit, becoming an almost universal norm.⁶⁸

In this context of the decomposition of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic became a paradigmatic case. With Erich Honecker as head of government and his rejection of any political reform, the situation intensified with the arrival of the crisis by mass migrations to the East after Hungary and Austria opened their borders and seemed to culminate in the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. This fall was not the result of the popular uprising, but was the result of the systemic crisis. Then, the reunification of Germany was carried out under the conditions of the Federal Republic, causing the country to remain completely under the neoliberal hegemonic model, consequently characterized by a wave of privatizations, the dismantling of public production and with strong social effects. Therefore, it is another clear example of how the socialist collapse did not offer economic alternatives but meant a direct incorporation into the structures of neoliberal capitalism and market economy and leaving other consequences as the ideal scenario for the consolidation of authoritarian regimes in the Central Asian republics, many of which maintained the power structures inherited from communism but, again, adapted to a new logic of neoliberal control.⁶⁹

Therefore, the geographical expansion of neoliberalism became the regime of global governance, conditioning the national agendas of many states and defining global trade rules, limiting the capacity for intervention in the economy and increasing inequalities while suppressing social

⁶⁸ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: p. 482

⁶⁹ FONTANA, Josep (2011). op. cit.: P. 490

protection, establishing all these characteristics as values directly aimed at the individual, not society as a whole. These intentions were unified under the Washington Consensus of the mid-1990s, where bi-taric and American models were defined as the answer to global problems by exerting pressure on Japan and Europe to finish establishing neoliberal policies. Therefore, concepts such as the *great divergence*, by Paul Krugman and mentioned above, help to name these symptoms and the consequent inequalities. During Clinton's and later Blair's mandates, Harvey (2005) considers that the role of neoliberalism was consolidated in a deeper and more structural way. The creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was the culmination of this institutional establishment, although the establishment of NAFTA and the prior signing of the Maastricht agreements in Europe also represented institutional adjustments with this intention. From a programmatic perspective, the WTO set neoliberal standards and norms for interaction in the global economy. However, its main objective was to open the world as much as possible to unrestricted capital flows, with the exception of protecting so-called "national interests". This opening was fundamental to sustaining the financial power capacity of the United States, as well as Europe and Japan, to extract economic tribute from the rest of the world.⁷⁰

5. REVOLUTIONARY REFORMS: THE RADICALIZATION OF LIBERAL PUBLICITY AND NEOLIBERAL TRANSPARENCY

5.1. Transparency and liberation: historiography of the 18th and 19th centuries

Recovering one of Margaret Thatcher's most emblematic phrases: "There is no such thing as society", we can define the individualistic current of neoliberalism. On the other hand, however, it also allows us to understand how the neoliberal model has managed to transform the standards of public responsibility, transparency and accountability, concepts that are understood as tools to limit state intervention and protect individual freedom above all else.

The intention of this section is to define the real function of transparency in neoliberal democracies. In this sense, it is essential to take into account the analysis of the historicity of transparency, analyzing it as a dynamic and indeterminate ideal and taking into account its proximity to other concepts such as advertising, without meaning the same, and how these

⁷⁰ HARVEY, David (2007). op. cit.: P. 102

concepts as a whole have influenced the construction of the modern public sphere.⁷¹ The beginning of transparency is marked at the beginning of modernity with the French Enlightenment and the German *Aufklärung*. This point represents the break with the ancient world, where religious control and absolutism is left behind, reason is given way as a criterion of truth and order and the individual is presented as an autonomous agent. Transparency, although not in the form we know it now, appears hand in hand with this autonomy as a necessity to establish control mechanisms against the secrets of absolutist power.

Before the arrival of romanticism in the late 18th century, personalities such as Rosseau developed their own visions of this break with the ancient world. Rosseau denounces the damages caused by modernity in the sense that it has eliminated the original mythical unity, a fact that, according to him, would only be recovered with the return of the initial innocence of the human being, which at that time could only be achieved with transparency as a central social mechanism in the relationship between the individual and himself and with his human environment.

After interpretations such as those of Rosseau came interpretations of romantic anarchism, giving way to reflections by thinkers such as Saint-Simon and Proudhon, who, although they did not use the word transparency to propose their theories, updated the definition. The first, Saint-Simon, proposed a society that should be able to overcome hierarchical structures to create a society where the flow of information, energy and production would be distributed organically and where the role of politics would be merely technical and functional, without a government that could corrupt these relationships and impose its interests. Proudhon reviews this type of model and radicalizes it by proposing a mutualistic model in which direct relations and communication between producers and consumers would be established without the need for intermediaries that, he insisted, directly broke social confidence in this exchange. If such relationships were established, there would be no need, either, for capital, thus freeing relations

⁷¹ MONIER, Frédéric., TOLEDANO, Lluís Ferran, PUBILL, Joan., & RUBÍ CASALS, María Gemma. (Eds.) "Las sombras de la transparencia: Secreto, corrupción y "estado profundo" en la España contemporánea." Barcelona. *Editorial Comares*, 2022. p. 13

between individuals and allowing them to cooperate in a more practical type of transparency, without corruption.⁷²

With regard to classical liberalism, the separation of powers is recognized as a mechanism to preserve and protect the private sphere from the interferences of power, generating the necessary distance between both spheres. His proposal presents a rigid constitution with complementary control mechanisms that help limit power and guarantee individual freedoms, in line with what neoliberalism will also end up developing and which will be explained later in this section. Liberalism, on the other hand, also advocated advertising, and its differences with transparency, as an absolute moral ideal. As Pierre Rosanvallon develops, it is shown that liberal advertising is instrumental and not moral, that is, it does not seek an exhibition in relation to what is ethical and what is not, but seeks an institutional control that serves to legitimize and justify institutional decisions without questioning them, through advertising to maintain the liberal order, but not to give power to citizens or to generate any type of transformation.⁷³

5.2. Transparency as a neoliberal instrument: control and coercion

Later, during the Second World War, the demand for political participation and citizen control intensified due to the need for more transparency and the importance of secrecy in the construction of states in the international context marked by war. Secret is treated as a citizen issue that increases conspiracy and is generated by the neoliberal hijacking of transparency, as mentioned in Clare Birchall's contributions to *Secret Studies*. Norberto Bobbio warned that the problem is not so much the lack of information but the limits of what can enter into public debate. Therefore, democratic power does not directly oppose secrecy, it manages it according to the institutional and political criteria convenient to itself. In this way, what is apparently transparent can reproduce subtle forms of control and inequality, contributing to a crisis of systemic trust in institutions, increasing conspiracy, as mentioned, and political disaffection.⁷⁴ Consequently, with this perception of transparency and secrecy, accountability becomes a responsibility to the law and not to society. Neoliberalism rejects institutional mechanisms that

⁷² MEUWLY, Olivier. "Between Anarchism and Liberalism. The first Debates on the Idea of a Transparent Society." En ENGELS, Jens Ivo., & MONIER, Frédéric. (Eds.). *History of Transparency in Politics and Society*. Göttingen. V&R unipress, 2020 Pp. 21-34.. p. 28

⁷³ MEUWLY, Olivier. (2020). op. cit.: P. 31

⁷⁴ MONIER, Frédéric., TOLEDANO, Lluís Ferran, PUBILL, Joan., & RUBÍ CASALS, María Gemma. (Eds.). (2022). op. cit.: p. 14

would allow more direct social supervision such as citizen participation because, according to this logic, they could lead to political distortions of the functioning of the market.⁷⁵

It must be taken into account, however, that the secret must be able to be managed in measure, since it is not always sustainable. If power is totally invisible, citizens distrust it, if it is completely visible, it can be ineffective and lose authority, since it often needs to have invisible spaces to function as a tool of power in a modern democracy. This duality between secrecy and transparency is not new. In the 19th century, in Britain, there was a division between the ideal of individual privacy and the application of control technologies never implemented before, such as the post system, the franchise and the telegraph, which demanded new forms of state intervention and surveillance. Therefore, transparency and secrecy do not have to be opposite terms, but are often used as complementary.⁷⁶

According to what has been stated, therefore, transparency, instead of being used as a democratizing tool, becomes a technique of legitimation of neoliberalism as a response to the crisis of mistrust. In fact, during the 2008 crisis, transparency was considered the instrument that would restore confidence in the relationship between society and politics.⁷⁷ This shows that neoliberal institutions promote apparent transparency, which does not really transform the actual accountability mechanisms, but, as Byung-Chul Han states, the imperative of transparency is what makes everything suspicious. Today, a constant exposure of everything that makes up the public sphere and the private sphere is required, but not for direct interest in the facts but because everything that is not presented as transparent, is perceived as suspicious or irregular. In fact, Han defines transparency as a postmodern dogma. This implies that transparency is taken for granted and that its effects impact directly on society, making it transform into a “society of the present”, where the past and the present lose relevance. The direct consequence of this is the culture of optimism and immediacy. It is taken for granted that everything will be visible, accessible and positive, therefore, having access to everything and taking everything for granted, it is not necessary to delve into anything. The culture of optimism deactivates any critical

⁷⁵ TURNER, Rachel S. . (2008). "Neo-liberal ideology. History, concepts and policies". *Edimburgh University Press*. op. cit.: p. 176

⁷⁶ MONIER, Frédéric., TOLEDANO, Lluís Ferran, PUBILL, Joan., & RUBÍ CASALS, María Gemma. (Eds.). (2022). op. cit.: p. 16

⁷⁷ MEUWLY, Olivier. (2020). op. cit.: p. 22

reflection on any structural issue, and eliminates the distance between individuals and their human environment, which is what gives them depth, leaving the individual without space for reflection, that is, without a private sphere. In addition, this disappearance of depth is justified by neoliberalism by a supposed equality, artificial, which is based on meritocracy, the idea that everyone can achieve everything, that everyone has access to everything, because everything is immediate and accessible.⁷⁸

Neoliberalism takes advantage of and uses this logic by presenting it as democratic and transparent, but uses it as an element of control, therefore, transforming transparency into a tool of coercion. This dynamic is directly related to the idea that we have mentioned above, developed by Harvey, “construction of consent”. One of the keys to neoliberal hegemony is its ability to obtain social consent without explicitly resorting to obvious forms of repression. It is presented with a very concrete image that is accepted by the public through this consent that is nothing more than a construct that is created through the reorganization of common sense with a rhetoric of individual freedom and economic efficiency that have as a tool the naturalization of inequality as an inevitable and insurmountable fact. This can also be related to what Hall presents in his book *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* on the crisis of political legitimacy. Hall states that in times of crisis of legitimacy of neoliberal democracies, they cannot detach themselves from what he calls “the specific character of social hegemony.”. When consensus mechanisms are exhausted and the state ceases to be able to guarantee stability, there is a tendency to resort to more coercive measures of governance that respond to a growing polarization of social forces. This process is justified by appealing to a crisis narrative that generates collective anxiety and the feeling of loss of social direction. In this context, the reactionary pole of the class and ideological struggle materializes, contributing to the creation of a sense of order and stability through speeches in which it is proclaimed to act in the name of a supposed “silent majority”, which refers to the moderate sectors of society. Therefore, the State is legitimized through these forms of authoritarian populism, where social criticism is reduced to a threat to “central” values and any expression of dissent is criminalized while transparency is proclaimed as a tool to legitimize this coercion. Instead of strengthening popular

⁷⁸ MEUWLY, Olivier. (2020). op. cit.: P. 23

sovereignty, transparency serves to keep neoliberal hegemony in crisis, in a scenario marked by disaffection and depoliticization of the masses.⁷⁹

At the institutional level, neoliberalism has developed a constitutional model that reinforces these control dynamics directly. Hayek states that it is necessary to limit the will of the people in order to preserve the rule of law and democratic values. Its constitutional state was based on reducing the oppressive bureaucratic government and preserving the rule of law, limiting public goods and with the excuse of maintaining collective security.⁸⁰ Indeed, one of the fundamental pillars of Hayek's thinking is the "rule of law" as an essential condition for freedom, in which all institutions must submit to general and impersonal rules.⁸¹ Hayek explicitly rejects the democratic model as a source of legitimacy if it does not operate under a strong legal system. This conception derives from the inspiration of the model of the liberal rule of law (Rechtsstaat) which considers that the function of law is not so much to guarantee social justice but to avoid public participation in the market order.⁸² Therefore, transparency is not related to the access of citizens to decision making, but to the clarity of the rules and the legal predictability that allows economic actors to operate safely. It therefore considers the liberal constitution as a tool for preserving this democracy and has individual freedom as an essential condition for this democratic governance.

Therefore, knowing this, one can check what was claimed; that the neoliberal constitution is only a tool for economic actors to be able to operate with total security based on their particular interests under the discourse of transparency and accountability that is what endorses them for the creation of popular consensus. Under the guise of transparency and neutrality, neoliberal institutions operate as agents of conservation and protection of the political system and economic interests. This constitutional scenario connects directly with the discourse of transparency as a form of popular coercion. The proclamation of constant transparency transforms both the public and private spheres and everything that is not exposed falls under the eye of suspicion, a fact that

⁷⁹ HALL, Stuart. (2016). op. cit.: P.68

⁸⁰ TURNER, Rachel S. . (2008). op. cit.: P. 182

⁸¹ TURNER, Rachel S. . (2008). op. cit.: P. 168

⁸² TURNER, Rachel S. . (2008).op.cit.: P. 172

neoliberalism takes advantage of to strengthen its constitutional control under the argument of democracy.

Therefore, what claims to be an instrument for accountability becomes a mechanism of control and coercion that justifies, at the same time, this institutional authoritarianism while not seeking to channel popular sovereignty, but to protect economic freedom through impersonal government structures. Neoliberals reject almost all models of Western democracies, particularly models of the American liberal constitution, as they consider that they have failed to protect individual freedom and contributed to eroding the rule of law. In this sense, the problem is not the forms of government that exist as such, but the fact that no democratic system has managed to bring political power to the law. Neoliberalism therefore proposes a transformation of the constitutionality of states; redefining the role of the state as guarantor of the minimum legal conditions for the functioning of the market. The neoliberal defense of the strict separation of powers, the supremacy of private law and the restriction of politics to pre-established limits responds to a very specific vision of how society should be organized inspired by models such as the constitution of Athens, Roman private law and the model of the German Rechtsstaat of the 19th century. However, the difficulties in implementing this system cannot be ignored. To achieve this type of state, Buchanan presents as a method a “constitutional mentality”, which serves as a predisposition of political acts to accept structural self-limitations that subordinate their decisions to liberal economic principles. The non-liberal project therefore aims to redefine policy in order to guarantee, under all circumstances, economic freedom and the protection of individual freedom⁸³.

⁸³ TURNER, Rachel S. . (2008). op. cit.: P. 188

6. CONCLUSIONS

Reviewing the origins of liberalism, its historical, political and social continuities and discontinuities, its evolution and resignification towards neoliberalism, it has been possible to draw a timeline following certain geographical spaces in order to identify the emergence, expansion and all the challenges of neoliberalism.

Through the identification of liberal political culture and its relationship with bourgeois morality, it has been possible to distinguish the traits that later traced part of the characteristics of neoliberalism and the traits that led to a theoretical break between both political cultures. The construction of the two, as has been seen, has been woven through a series of networks that, in one way or another, have provided the necessary support for their development. Historical events such as the crises of capitalism with the end of Keynesianism, the oil crisis of the 1970s, the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union or the crisis of 2008, together with the consequent social crises, have proved to be an ideal terrain for the establishment of neoliberalism. Not only that, but personalities such as Hayek, Friedman, Ayn Rand, etc. have been essential for ideological construction, in relation to organizations such as Mount Perlerin Society and Chicago School, which would then be institutionalized through political personalities such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

On the other hand, it has been possible to identify the challenges of neoliberalism and how it has managed them. Through the historical analysis of the concept of transparency and accountability and the reaction that these concepts have generated to the citizenship during different times, it has been possible to verify how the neoliberal model has been able to transform the standards of responsibility to resignify these concepts as tools to limit state intervention and protect individual freedom. Concepts such as constitutionality have also been reviewed, analyzing how this concept has been used by neoliberalism as a guarantee to be able to act on the basis of the particular interests of individuals under the banner of transparency and accountability, managing to create consensus and political support.

The aim of the paperwork was to make a critical analysis of this phenomenon as a contemporary power structure and as a predominant political culture in today's world. Having revisited its historical evolution in relation to its construction and its challenges through its development, it has been possible to carry out this critical analysis, identifying neoliberalism as a phenomenon that is rooted in very deep historical concepts and transformations that have ended up conquering the spaces of the public sphere, and the private sphere, directly affecting the subjectivity of individuals and transforming concepts of governance and constitutionality such as transparency and the accountability to create the basis to establish itself through the popular consensus extracted from these transformations.

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