

Reconstructing Regional Relationships, or the New Bases for Rebuilding Spheres of Influence

Chérifa Chaour

The other spaces of postcommunism, outside the countries of the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe

It is understandable that, since the fall of the Berlin wall, researchers interested in the social and political upheavals brought about by this phase of history should have concentrated their attentions on what had been the immediate sphere of influence of the Soviet centre of power. However we are within our rights today to ask why our understanding of the structural (economic and social) transformations in what is conveniently called the 'post-communist' period and space, and of post-bipolarisation regional relationships, should be confined to that region of the world corresponding to the ex-USSR and the Eastern countries.¹

Clearly other governments in other countries were seduced by the communist project as an alternative to the capitalist model. Its effects on them went deeper than mere influence, particularly where their economies were concerned, to a greater or lesser extent transforming and directing the social organisation of these fringe zones of communist influence. Today all those countries that adopted the communist model of development, however imperfectly, find themselves in a similar situation.

Certain countries of the southern Mediterranean, having chosen, at some time in their history, to participate in the 'socialist economy', have been faced, as violently and dramatically as in ex-Yugoslavia, with a dual phenomenon:

- the recovery/reconstruction of cultural identity, political affiliation and geopolitical re/positioning. Thus we see the manifestation of, on the one hand, a trend for nationalist demands and, on the other for the recognition of a religious culture that transcends national feeling and seeks to create a geo-political space on the basis of religious ideology,
- the governments of these countries have fully integrated themselves into a global movement towards full participation in the 'market economy' and, like the countries of the former Eastern bloc, are looking for the best way to 'privatise' economic enterprises, to 'decollectivise' or 'denationalise' agricultural production and to open out towards the exterior.²

They have embarked on a similar process of 'transition', imposed by the current triumph of liberal, pro-capitalist discourse: transition of the communist countries, of the socialist economies, transition towards the market economy, towards democracy.³

As a result, what is happening in the countries of the former Eastern bloc and the ex-USSR provides a laboratory and a reference point for the other countries which, to a greater or lesser extent, adopted the socialist economic model. However the phenomena of economic and political mutations or manifestations of identity cannot be regarded as totally specific to that region. What is specific and influences behaviour is the history and culture of each country and each region.

The reconstruction of regional relationships

The age of bipolarity saw divisions both in ideological terms and in the opposition between two modes of social organisation, and thus two models for management of the economic sphere, each claiming to perform better and to be more capable of bringing about the greatest well-being for all. Of course this bipolarity had strong, fundamental effects on the ideological engagement and social and economic policies of other 'spaces' on the planet during part of the 20th century. The relationships between countries resulted partially, but not solely, from this historical conjuncture. The principle of domination by one project or the other, and consequently of the expansion of the 'spheres of influence', could be explained by this bipolar opposition. (One could even advance the hypothesis that the continuation of the colonial and imperial spheres of influence were only possible because of their role in the context of bipolarity).

Like the United States and other peripheral powers, the USSR sought to build and consolidate its sphere of influence. The most important and successful in the period of bipolarisation was above all that of the 'Eastern bloc countries'. This name is in itself significant in relation to the war of influences. Before the communist era, these countries were 'the east' of Europe. During the communist era they were the 'west' of the communist bloc; however, in Western Europe, they were still geographically classified in the East (in relation to the West), yet regarded as part of the communist world. Since their detachment from the communist bloc some of them have once more become countries of 'Eastern Europe'. This East is now contained within a unified space known as the 'CEEC',⁴ which is however divided into two spaces, the Central European countries and those of Eastern Europe, both of which are included in the acronym 'CEEC': This reflects a particular representation of this regained European space. We have the return of the 'more European' son, and the one that 'is less so', because it has a plural identity, is further south, less developed, has a plurality of religions and, all in all, is in some sense too hybrid. It was too impregnated with eastern, and thus not western, culture. This space of post-communism, declared 'eastern' by western Europe, in fact posed other problems besides those of economic transition and the great ideological question of the shift to the 'western' conception of democracy.

It should be said that in these regions the question of minorities is particularly pressing. This must surely give rise to a different construction of space.

Space is a very shifting notion for these countries, battered as they have been by the history of ideological struggles and above all by the conflict between the expansionist powers. They are representative of the modern history of expanding spheres of influence.

It was these countries that were the stakes in the wars and tacit agreements over spheres of influence between the European kingdoms and empires. They bore the brunt

of the accords that followed the two world wars (which took place in Europe between European countries). Their long membership of the communist world is fundamentally linked to their geographical position, which made them frontier zones. To some extent they were the intermediate space between the USSR and the West, coveted by the expansionist ambitions of Nazi Germany and those of the communist USSR.

We do not need reminding of the comparatively late American intervention in the Second World War. This was more of a race to prevent the communists arriving first on the scene as the liberators, and thus conquerors, of a Europe at war against Hitler's fascism, than involvement to uphold principles of freedom and human rights, although the latter were enshrined in the American constitution. In this case the principles of the American Constitution allowed the justification to American citizens of military intervention on the side of their ideological enemies in order to put a stop to the expansion of fascist and totalitarian power. Yet the end of the second great world war of Europe ended with the Yalta Accord. This agreement (between fundamentally different systems that nevertheless had to coordinate their efforts as 'allies' and at the same time reach agreement on geopolitical partition) was, among other things, but above all, a division of the world between spheres of influence and, fundamentally, between the two winners of the Second World War, the USSR and the United States. The Yalta accord prefigured the allocation of zones of influence for almost half a century. The meeting (conference) in Malta of the so-called 'free' countries, winners of the trial of strength between 'communism' and 'liberalism'⁵ opened the new era of the reconstruction of regional relationships.

But, like the United States, and against its will but due to the domino effect, the USSR also allowed the colonial metropolises to maintain their traditional relationships with those colonised countries with whom it was now establishing a relationship.

Many of these countries later went through the revolution of decolonisation and put more of their trust in the benefits of socialism, without however blindly entering the communist camp. They became the 'non-aligned' countries, demanding a new economic order and playing the card 'of the still-possible choice' between membership of the communist world and being part of the so-called free world of the West after the Second World War. The political position of the non-aligned countries only made sense in the context of bipolarisation. Many of them had chosen to 'develop' according to the socialist model.⁶

To say that the end of the ideological and politico-economic bipolarisation of our planet requires us to find new bases on which to reconstruct and safeguard the system of 'spheres of influence' is in itself an even more provocative position, which runs counter to the official discourse of the European institutions, the WTO⁷ and all the intellectuals in the service⁸ of the World Bank.

The end of bipolarity has destroyed the framework within which regional relationships had hitherto operated.

What happened and is happening in the ex-countries of the Eastern bloc and the countries of the ex-USSR does not only affect those countries that were behind the 'Berlin wall'. The Berlin wall represented a bipolar world. Its fall has undermined the entire construction of global geopolitics. This historic upheaval has also challenged the ideological convictions that shaped the divisions between the political parties of Western Europe. The developing countries, which had played the 'non-alignment' card during the period

of bipolarisation, have been stripped of their reference points for geopolitical identification based on group membership by the symbolism of the fall of the Berlin wall. To some extent these countries were as much on the fringes of the communist empire as on those of the western countries which called themselves the 'free world' in contrast to the communist sphere. However an abruptly imposed unipolarity has destroyed this balance.

The international structure of the post-war, cold war period was framed by two super-powers, the liberal, capitalist United States and the communist, antiliberal USSR, with its state-run economy. These two tendencies were projected into every continent: in the Americas they were split between the North and Central and Latin America; in Asia Japan and China each exerted an influence over part of the continent; in Europe the two tendencies coexisted (liberal governments alternated with socialist ones and there were communist parties, perfectly reflecting an image of real political democracy); in Africa the influence of both the United States and the USSR could be seen at work, alongside strong influences from Europe. This created a real ideological, political and economic patchwork, the colour of some elements changing according to those of European governments. We should also recall the competition between the United States and the USSR for influence over the Mediterranean. Europe was in there too of course. But Europe was not a military power and influence is not exerted through politics and economics alone, but primarily via the military umbrella, particularly when there are vital economic issues at stake (energy, minerals), or when a country occupies a geographically strategic position. The only two military powers of the cold war were the United States and the USSR.

However things were not really so simple: the concept of influence conceals a greater complexity. Influence may be cultural; it can be exerted through historical links (the countries of an empire, colonies, United States aid for the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War; traditional preferential agreements such as those between Europe and the countries to the south of the Mediterranean). It may be exerted in a relationship of dependency (bilateral or regional trade agreements that ultimately orientate the structure of production). It can manifest itself in a movement towards regional integration, such as that of the EEC, or in the more radical form of the USSR, or in the relationship of domination between the East European countries and the communist bloc.

Without going into a detailed description of the construction of the different regional zones in which the influence of a central pole was felt, let us recall that, until the end of bipolarisation, there was a consensual acceptance of the coexistence of all these forms. Among the GATT member countries such regional groupings, including the EEC (later to become the European Community, and then the European Union), which were built on a basis of preferential treatment, contradicted the multilateral principle of the GATT itself (any concession granted to one or several contracting parties of the GATT should be granted to all the other contracting parties). Yet their existence was tolerated. This tolerance by the GATT was enshrined in article 24, clarified by article 28. Its significance is simply that those countries deciding on a relationship of exchange which is incompatible with the principle of Most Favoured Nation (non-discrimination of exchange conditions between contracting parties of the GATT) must enter into negotiations with any party or parties that are not signatories to that agreement who believe that they have been prejudiced by it. The negotiation aims to compensate for such prejudice through a different concession.

The 1980s saw the development of regional economic groupings alongside the drive towards globalisation and the negotiations of the Uruguay Round, which dealt with domains that had hitherto been spared by the liberalisation advocated by the GATT (agriculture, services and the protection of intellectual property).

However everything was still functioning within the framework of bipolarisation and without disturbing the traditional structure of regional relationships.

Following the explosion of the Soviet bloc, the entire world found itself with a sole superpower. The discourse of liberalism, which was already dominant in the World Bank, the IMF and the Uruguay Round, took over, advocating the only surviving, and thus the winning (according to this discourse) model of the market economy, free exchange and globalisation.

It is not the aim of this article to consider the criticisms of these notions and the theories underlying them. Our aim here is to see whether the new situation of unipolarity has changed regional relationships. We shall assess whether this situation, and the movement towards the multilateral liberalisation of economies and trade driven by the last round of the GATT, have brought about the collapse of the paradigm defining spheres of influence, whether they have simply weakened the role of regional agreements, or whether the economically dominant poles need to find new formulae to maintain continuity in spheres of influence.

Spheres of influence: permanence and collapse

The end of the bipolar world brought with it three important phenomena for the rebuilding of the structure of international relations (political and economic relations).

1) The acceleration of two parallel movements: that of the process known as globalisation and that of the movement known as regional integration, which takes different forms and is found at different levels (regional groupings, associations, agreements on larger or smaller free trade zones, customs unions, expansion . . .)

2) An enlarged and more entrenched European infrastructure, and the reinforcement of its economic and political weight on the international scene, both with and against the United States, sole surviving superpower from the period of bipolarity.

3) The acceleration of the negotiations of the Uruguay Round, its conclusion and the creation of the WTO, to which the governments of most of the world's countries belong (including some former communist or pro-Soviet countries).

So there is, on the one hand, a proliferation of forms of regional groupings and, on the other, an international organisation whose guiding principles are the multilateralisation of exchange, the liberalisation of economies and transparency. These rules can be imposed on all member countries.

One of the questions posed at the WTO is precisely that of regional groupings. These have proliferated to such an extent that every member of the WTO was also involved in one or several regional (or even bilateral) agreements: article 24 of the GATT authorised

the infringement of the principle of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) on which the principle of multilateralisation was based.

However as they had been concluded and had functioned until then, these agreements (tolerated by the GATT) were incompatible with the philosophy of the WTO and the dynamic of liberalisation that it sought to impose.

What the GATT offered was a *modification of the conditions* according to which a regional agreement could be concluded, and this solution was accepted. Article 24 of the GATT was thus modified and became article 28 of the WTO.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 of this article set out these conditions, in particular the suppression of barriers to trade for 'substantially all the trade between the constituent territories of the union', and the adoption by all member states of a 'common customs tariff' and, more generally, of a common trade policy. These notions were open to interpretation (how can we precisely define 'substantially'? The same thing arises with the calculation of the compensation that completes the legal mechanism [article 28]).

Let us take the strategy of the European community as an example. Before the Uruguay Round, European regionalisation was arranged through historical preferential agreements, bilateral preference in the context of the GSP (generalised system of preferences for developing countries) and the expansion and deepening of European integration (with transitional stages: associative agreements or customs unions).

However, after the signing of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, such discriminatory trade relationships clearly represented an evolution towards privileged relations that ran counter to the dynamic of multilateral liberalisation advocated by the WTO. This raised the question of their compatibility with this process of liberalisation, in relation both to the philosophy of the WTO and to their place in the structuring of trade and the role they might have. Europe adapted its regional, integrationist policy to make its agreements compatible with WTO rules.

The philosophy of the WTO and its conception of the role of regional agreements at the WTO

The WTO seeks to direct its members' trade policies towards the greatest possible liberalisation and, in the first instance, its mission is to watch over the implementation of the agreement of the Uruguay Round. In particular this means ensuring that all national policies touching on the domain covered by the agreement are compatible with the framework it has outlined (thus, reforms in agricultural policy must be compatible with the orientations of the WTO and even anticipate its orientation). Similarly, all bilateral or regional agreements must fit into the framework of multilateral liberalisation, reinforcing rather than evading it.

This means:

- reinforcing free trade tendencies implementing adjustments and reforms,
- supporting trade reform, and hence macro-economic reform,
- assisting progress at the level of multilateral trade and the integration of economies through the harmonisation of regulations (standards, investments, competition, environmental protection).

Thus we can identify three levels or scales of trade liberalisation: national, regional and global.

Most of the developed countries have embarked on a national programme of adjustment and reform in line with the development of the GATT negotiations. Most countries of the Eastern bloc have become countries 'in transition towards the market economy'. They have liberalised far more and implemented reform far earlier.⁹ However they all retain some protectionist practices.

In order to move towards its aims in accordance with its philosophy, the WTO has at its disposal the trade policy review body and the dispute settlement body.

The dispute settlement body (DSB) consists of special panels for settling differences and an appeal mechanism. It was already in existence under the GATT. The procedure has been modified to make it more efficient, reducing the length of time required to examine conflicts, and to enable DSB judgements to be implemented. Litigants are bound by a calendar for the different stages of the procedure, and the DSB authorises the plaintiff to apply sanctions in compensation for any prejudice suffered should the loser fail to implement the recommendations of the appeal body or to establish mutually satisfactory compensation with the plaintiff, after a defined period.

Thus the DSB would seem to be the guarantor of international law. No member of the WTO can now take unilateral measures. However, the DSB judges a situation according to its compatibility with the existing agreements. There is thus a reservation: international law is determined primarily by the rules of the different agreements, and not by the referee who puts them into practice. Another influential factor is the weight of each member country on the General Council. For example, most of the experts and economists invited come from the industrialised countries.

The trade policy review body (TPRB) would seem to be a crucial tool in the accomplishment of the WTO's work and clearly reflects its philosophy. It encourages interaction between internal reform and trade in terms of the growing reduction of protectionism: '*reducing the barriers to exports [. . .] taking account of comparative advantages*'.¹⁰ For member states this means combining external and internal liberalisation.

The WTO's philosophy is expressed in the TPRB's five proposals for institutional reform:

a) *the establishment of a general long-term framework for trade policy.*

This means trade liberalisation, with time allowed for adjustment in the economic sectors.

b) *the absence of exemptions that might lead to serious loss of control or backward movement.*

This means avoiding any return to protectionism and mechanisms encouraging 'stand-still' policies. All advances in trade barrier reduction must be consolidated.

c) *Closing the loopholes that enable different forms of protection to be implemented:*

This means preventing the replacement of one form of protection by another. Exceptions such as safeguarding, anti-dumping and compensatory measures may be used only in urgent cases and must disappear in the long term with the progress of liberalisation and reform.

They must not take over the role of tariff and non-tariff barriers that have been abolished.

d) *the establishment of a transparent framework for the development and monitoring of trade policy.*

Weakening the pressure of protectionist lobbies from the different sectors by encouraging the formation of opposing pressure groups which benefit from liberalisation: *'It is necessary to inform and educate the public about the social costs of protection.'* For the WTO the general interest is best served by general, continuous and irreversible liberalisation.

e) *Complementarity of the pro-liberalisation measures adopted at the national, regional and multilateral levels.*

Measures taken by member states on an independent basis (national policies) and the processes of regional integration are encouraged as long as they comply with the framework of long-term liberalisation provided by the WTO rules.

The WTO believes that *'adherence to regional agreements may help to support the dynamic of reform.'*

In the mind of the WTO the phenomenon of regionalisation is acceptable only if it supports the multilateral process. However such regional agreements can work in this direction only if they themselves are supported and directed by the rules imposed by the WTO.

In his speech to the 2nd Ministerial Conference of the WTO, which was also celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the 'multilateral system', Renato Ruggiero, Director General of the GATT posed the fundamental question and stated the aims of the WTO:

The celebrations of the 50th anniversary are also taking place in a time of rapid expansion of regional trading systems. More than 90 preferential regional agreements are currently in place, and over three quarters of them entered into force in the last four years. More than a third of these agreements involve the European Community. Their contribution to the promotion of liberalisation cannot be called into question. And yet the logic of regionalism makes less economic sense in an era of globalization . . . [. . .] it is in no one's economic interest to have a fragmented system with fragmented rules and even a fragmented dispute settlement system.

Heads of State and Government have already agreed to free trade in the Pacific, free trade in the Americas, free trade in Europe and between Europe and the Mediterranean. Now there is the prospect of creating new free trade areas between Europe and the nations of sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and there is the possibility of free trade across the Atlantic. These numerous initiatives are planned to come into full effect within the next twenty years.

[. . .] we have to better define what kind of a future we want. Do we want a world which is based on non-discrimination, which is rules-based and global in coverage? Or do we want a very different world, fragmented into a few huge regional trading areas, with different rules and which are based – by definition – on discrimination among trading partners?

The implications of this choice go far beyond the trade system.

To avoid a dangerous ambiguity about the future of the world economy and to maintain a mutually supportive relationship between present and future regional areas and the multilateral system, we need to clarify our own vision [. . .] to reinforce beyond any doubt that our ultimate goal remains the establishment of a rule-based global system of free trade [. . .].¹¹

It seems clear that both the reform proposals of the trade policy review body since the first year of the WTO's activity and the speech by the Director General of the GATT reflect the philosophy of the WTO. The logic of the reform proposals (and the general philosophy arising out of them) signifies a desire to close the debate conducted during

the Uruguay Round, while opening the way to questions concerning the application of the agreements negotiated and the undertakings of the institution's member countries.

In the first place regional agreements, like bilateral agreements, are usually drawn up and concluded according to a different logic from that of the WTO. They represent a tendency to evade the multilateralisation of trade and concessions. Faced with their proliferation the WTO proposes to integrate them into its liberalisation process by incorporating them and imposing the supremacy of its own rules.

Secondly, the WTO is a supranational institution, but it is not a super-state. It was established and is constituted by sovereign states. The agreements to be implemented are agreements negotiated by states. So are the regional agreements. Leaving aside the European Union, some of these agreements, such as association agreements in the framework of the Barcelona process, the agreements between the EU and Mexico, or the EU and Chile, are more similar to bilateral agreements. The renewal of the agreement with the ACP countries and the signing of the EU–Mercosur agreement each involve two groups of countries and are visibly more similar to regional accords. The European Union on the one hand and Mercosur on the other are themselves regional agreements.¹²

Yet these agreements were signed after the WTO began its activities. This was possible because their aim was the establishment of a free trade zone (FTZ); in other words they complied with the conditions laid out in articles 24 and 28. They differed from the preferential agreements of the GATT generation by re-establishing reciprocity and giving access to hitherto protected markets in certain products. It was this process, moving towards the free exchange required by the principles and rules of the WTO (and also those of the World Bank and the IMF for developing countries), which made it possible to renew the bilateral and regional agreements within a system intended to be multilateral.

*

If the states make the WTO, its rules and the agreements it has to enforce, what is the reason for the regional agreements? The countries that were not members of the GATT are beating at the door of the WTO. Does this mean that they have accepted that they must undertake to adopt the WTO's liberal principles? Particularly since the agreement of the Uruguay Round defined the conditions and pace of liberalisation in their economies and external trade. If, in addition, regional agreements must continually refer to the constraints of the WTO regulatory framework, if agriculture, that exceptional domain, must in the short term become an economic sector like all the others, what or who benefits from the regional agreements? Are these agreements a rampart against the uniformisation of trade relations and the homogenisation of national economic policies? Or are they, on the other hand, stages in liberalisation, indispensable to counter the protectionist impulses of societies? Did one state within NAFTA and Mercosur, in Africa and the Mediterranean, have to act as the locomotive pulling the train of economic 'globalisation'? Or is it quite simply because the states have interests outside the economic sphere, which the WTO is not capable of dealing with (it has neither the legitimacy nor the means, nor has it been delegated by the states to do so)? For example, are the FTZs a strategic tool for Europe, enabling it to conform to the rules of the WTO while competing with the United States to maintain its role in its traditional zones of influence (ACP, Mediterranean countries) and to position itself, in contrast to the United States, as a partner of the countries targeted by the United States itself (in Latin America:

Chile, Mexico, Mercosur; and in the Mediterranean, Egypt, the Maghreb, Syria, the islands . . .)?

It is legitimate to question the usefulness of preferential agreements faced with the size of the reductions of tariff barriers. Similarly one might question the usefulness of regional agreements in the context of the rules established by the Uruguay Round agreement, which are supposed to be enforced by the WTO bodies in every country that wishes to be a member of that institution.

In posing all these questions we conclude with an opening. The topic has not been exhausted. However it is possible to imagine that free trade does not dispense the great economic powers from competition: quite the reverse. It does not reduce the political stakes and does not slow down the rise of claims of identity. The post-communist period requires a new way of analysing regional relationships, which has yet to be devised.

If the countries of the ex-Eastern bloc, the Russian fringes and Russia in particular constitute the best terrain for analysing the mutations of the 'post-communist spaces', this region, where communism held sway, is still no more than a sure reference point for understanding the global upheavals of the post-bipolarisation period. It still remains true that the 'post-communist spaces' can objectively be extended to regions outside the ex-USSR which, in different forms, have been influenced by and linked to the communist Soviet empire. If such an approach no longer seems justified, what do we do with China and Cuba? In that case how can we explain the interest among the great western powers in the particular case of the slow progress of liberalisation in China or the spectacular reversal of India's economic policies in favour of liberalism? Can we not say that, if 'bipolarity' provided the framework for regional relationships before the fall of the Soviet regime, today the WTO appears as the new setting in which other forms of regional economic and political relationships can be forged.

Chérifa Chaour
CNRS/LADYSS

Translated from the French by Trista Selous

Notes

1. These notions in themselves have given rise to contradictory debates. Both these debates and the contradictions that they emphasise reflect our lack of distance from the too-recent period of after-bipolarisation'. However we must embark on the next phase of questioning the meaning and significance of terms such as 'transition' and the 'reconstruction of identities', notions of democratisation and more precisely that of the 'postcommunist spaces' (for example, can we say that Algeria or Egypt were communist? Can we say that China or Cuba are no longer communist? . . .). The questions presented in this article must be seen as tools for awakening critical thinking.
2. The globalisation movement necessarily goes hand in hand with a strong sense of identification and roots.
3. This notion was presented on a plate by the politicians. It has been appropriated by researchers, who carry it at arm's length, without questioning its meaning. Very few of those I have read or heard have seemed to stop or hesitate when they use this term. On the contrary, this convenient notion, used everywhere by everyone, provided them with a comfortable support on which to elaborate their discourse. I have the impression that this notion of transition, though fundamentally historical, was accepted without demerit and was now being used simply to 'link' and to provide a support for arguments that were themselves scientific.
In 1989 or 1990, I might perhaps have used the term transition in a convenient way, without paying it any particular attention, because at that time a word was needed to refer to a phenomenon that had

suddenly appeared. Today this term requires clarification in the context of a scientific approach, outside the determinism in which it has been enclosed.

4. Central and East European countries. This is the current name of the ex-Eastern bloc countries.
5. The inverted commas signify that neither side implemented the model they were proposing.
6. Economically speaking, and from the point of view of freedoms, this model is no more convincing than that of the market economy recommended by the World Bank during the 1980s and 90s. However it remains hard to say whether, on the social level, in other words the level of general well-being (the principle of universal access to education, culture, music, scientific research, without discrimination on grounds of sex, skin colour or racial or geographical origins . . .), it did not bring about development in a positive direction . . . But that is another debate.
7. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was created on 15 April 1994 by the Marrakech Accord, which completed the Uruguay round of negotiations (86–94). This was the last cycle of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). The WTO effectively began functioning in January 1995. Since then it has replaced the GATT (for more detail see my doctoral thesis: *Le libre échange dans l'agriculture: entre le mythe et la pratique ou l'Uruguay round, de la norme libre-échangiste à la réalité interventionniste*).
8. Originally the WB and the IMF were precisely supposed to *exert their influence* to bring to fruition a plan for economic development and monetary stability. The WTO agreements represent a desire to influence the rules governing international exchange and the modalities of the organisation of production and trade.
9. The implementation of reform was influenced far more by the loans and financial help these countries (of the Eastern bloc) received, and which they could no longer do without, than by any preoccupation with harmonising the progress of their reforms with that of their participation in the GATT. It was the results of their reforms that were consolidated by the GATT.
10. Annual Report of the WTO, 1996.
11. Extract from the speech given in Washington on 4 March 1998 by the Director General of the WTO, at the Brookings forum on *'The Global Trading System: a GATT 50th Anniversary Forum'* WTO NEWS: 1998 PRESS RELEASES: PRESS/94 4 March 1998 http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres98_e/pr94_e.htm
12. As we cannot cite every agreement, we mention these as examples.