

## **FROM ECLAC AND ISEB TO DEPENDENCY THEORY**

Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira

**Abstract.** In the 1950s, two groups organized around ECLAC, in Santiago, Chile, and ISEB, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, innovated the thinking on Latin American and Brazilian societies and economies. ECLAC mainly criticized the law of comparative advantages and its underlying imperialist views; ISEB focused on conceiving the national-developmental ideology for economic growth. The idea of a national bourgeoisie was key in both approaches. The Cuban revolution, the economic crisis of the 1960s, and the military coups in the South Cone, however, made room for criticism of these ideas by dependency theory. By rejecting the possibility of a national bourgeoisie, dependency theory that had developed from this criticism also rejected the possibility of proceeding with the national revolution that was essential to economic growth.

In the 1950s, ISEB intellectuals, reflecting upon the industrial and national revolution process that had been under way since 1930, conceived the national-bourgeois or national-developmental interpretation of Brazil and Latin America. At the same time, ECLAC intellectuals outlined a criticism of the law of comparative advantages, laying the economic groundwork for the policy of industrialization with active state involvement and formulating the structuralist theory of inflation.<sup>1</sup> These two intellectual groups lived in a social and political context that, ever since the Great Depression of the 1930s, had doubted liberalism and mounted ideological criticism against it, depicting it as an instrument on behalf of more developed countries — the UK and the US in particular — and laying odds on national states playing a leading role in the pursuit of economic development. As such, they assigned responsibility for the region's underdevelopment not only to a lag due to the merchant colonization of Latin America, but also to the imperial center's interest in keeping developing countries as producers of primary goods, understanding that development should be the fruit of a national strategy designed with the involvement of national bourgeoisie and state technicians. Their theories provided theoretical support for the great development

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<sup>1</sup> For this reason, ECLAC economists are often referred to as 'structuralists'. Besides, however, they were developmentalists, as were ISEB's intellectuals.

processes that marked Latin America between 1930 and 1980. In the 1960s and early '70s, however, a series of military coups in South Cone nations led left-wing Latin-American intellectuals to argue that the existence of a national bourgeoisie was impossible and to develop, in line with this assumption, a theory of associated dependency, which weakened the concept of nation in Latin America.

To understand the clashes of ideas among Latin-American left-wing or progressive intellectuals during the 20th Century, one must consider two important ideological oppositions that have marked the world since the 19th Century: on the one hand, order Vs. social justice; on the other, nation Vs. cosmopolis. In the first case, the priority for conservatives or members of the right wing will be order, the primacy of Law regardless of whether the Law is fair or not, while progressives, or members of the left wing, will be willing to jeopardize order, first in the name of liberty (political liberals and democrats), and, later in the name of social justice (socialists, or leftists). As for the latter opposition, nationalists will uphold the idea of nation as a massive association of individuals around common values and a common fate, and the correspondence of this nation with the state to form the modern nation-state — the fundamental historical requirement for economic development. Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, deny the legitimacy or try to reduce the importance of the idea of nation or Nation-state.

As we will see in this paper dedicated to intellectual history, the conflict between these two basic ideological oppositions has dominated Brazilian and Latin-America thinking. Those concerned mostly with social justice are hard put to defend the idea of development, as it implies an agreement among classes that ends up legitimizing capitalism. Likewise, one can hardly be a radical socialist and defend development, as there cannot be development in the absence of a national development strategy, and such a strategy must always involve some kind of agreement among classes. In Latin America in particular, where social injustice is deep, this is a central difficulty. In this paper, I examine these issues from the nationalist and developmentalist ideas ISEB and ECLAC put forth in the 1950s and face them off against dependency theory, with particular emphasis on its associated dependency version. In the first section, I describe the three groups of intellectuals that are relevant for the purposes of this paper: ISEB's, ECLAC's and those of the 'São Paulo sociology school', which served as base for associated dependency theory. In the second section, I examine the idea of national-developmentalism and, more specifically, the concept of development according to ISEB and ECLAC as, on one hand, capitalist revolution and national revolution and, on the other hand, the overcoming of duality. In the third and fourth sections I discuss the concept of nationalism and the issue of the 'national bourgeoisie', as well as point out new historical facts that partly overcome the Isebian and Eclacine view. I will focus on dependency theory in the fifth section, examining its three versions: the theory of capitalist over-exploitation, associated dependency theory, and theory of national-dependency, which I subscribe to because it is, in essence, a continuation and a self-criticism of the national-developmental theory.

## Public intellectual institutions

The Higher Education Institute of Brazilian Studies (“Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros” — ISEB) was a group of intellectuals with various roots and specialties that, in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s, developed a cohesive and comprehensive view of Brazil and its industrialization and development process. The United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) would become, from 1949, the wellspring of Latin-American structuralist economic thinking. I do not provide a summary of the thinking of either ECLAC or ISEB, but, rather, a personal interpretation, particularly in the case of ISEB. The comprehensive views of both institutions are contemporary, reaching their acme in the 1950s, and mutually coherent. In the next decade, however, after the crisis of the 1960s, the military coups, and resumed growth from the beginning of that decade, the national-developmental view held by ECLAC and, above all, by ISEB would endure harsh criticism by Brazilian sociologists gathered in the University of São Paulo, originally under the leadership of Florestan Fernandes. It is the birth of the São Paulo school of sociology. ISEB, ECLAC and the São Paulo school of sociology were institutions that gathered public intellectuals; although the latter purported to be a purely academic institution, it was ISEB that could be most accurately described as such.<sup>2</sup>

The files of ECLAC were to include two giants of the 20th Century’s economic thinking: its second executive director and main manager would be Raul Prebisch, with whom Celso Furtado soon became associated.<sup>3</sup> Other relevant ECLAC economists were Aníbal Pinto, Oswaldo Sunkel and Maria da Conceição Tavares. The main intellectuals at ISEB were philosophers Álvaro Vieira Pinto, Roland Corbisier and Michel Debrun, sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, economists Ignácio Rangel, Rômulo de Almeida and Ewaldo Correia Lima, historian Nelson Werneck Sodré, and political scientists Hélio Jaguaribe and Cândido Mendes de Almeida. Their ideas, which were more political than economic in nature,<sup>4</sup> were complemented at the economic level by ECLAC’s structuralist thinking. The ISEB group was formed simultaneously with ECLAC’s, in the late 1940s, had its high moment between 1952 and 1958, found itself in crisis in that year, and was dissolved by the military coup in 1964. ECLAC would continue to exist; bear in mind, though, that wherever I refer to its thinking, I mean the thinking formulated between the late 1940s and early ‘60s, as their thinking lost its unity after that.

Both groups subscribed to the ‘theory of imperialism’ — the theory that explains underdevelopment as mainly the result of imperialist acts of the power located at the ‘center’ in their efforts to keep countries in the ‘periphery’ as exporters of agricultural goods and raw materials.<sup>5</sup> Although the two groups’ intellectual contributions are equivalent, the ideas of the

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term ‘public intellectuals’ as per Russell Jacoby, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> The founding paper on ECLAC’s approach is Prebisch (1949). It corresponds to the introduction to *Estudio Económico de América Latina 1949*, that counted with the participation of Furtado. Prebisch’s paper was originally published in Brazil, in Portuguese, in *Revista Brasileira de Economia*, at Celso Furtado’s initiative.

<sup>4</sup> Although they did have a remarkable economist among them, Ignácio Rangel.

<sup>5</sup> As a U.N. body, ECLAC does not use the term ‘imperialism’, resorting, instead, to ‘center’ and ‘periphery’.

UN body had greater repercussion than ISEB's and were not as harshly criticized as the group of Brazilian intellectuals. Economists at ECLAC make a similar assumption to ISEB's: development should be the product of a national industrialization strategy. Legitimizing this assumption, however, required a criticism of the law of comparative advantages, showing that, contrary to what this law or orthodox economic theory assumed, its application did not allow productivity gains had through industrialization in central countries revert into lower prices from which developing countries might benefit. In industrial countries, value-added is greater because industry requires more skilled labor than agriculture and mining. Add to this the fact that instead of what foreign trade theory predicted, wage increases in central countries did not result in lower prices only, but also in wage increases in proportion with productivity gains because of organized labor, while the same failed to occur in developing countries. Hence the thesis that there was a secular trend towards deteriorating terms of exchange.

ISEB prevailed over the Brazilian intellectual scene in the 1950s. With a lag of about 10 years, the Social Sciences Department of the University of São Paulo formed the São Paulo school of sociology, initially under Florestan Fernandes and later under Fernando Henrique Cardoso as well. This school, soon to adopt an academically and politically critical stance before ISEB, had a very different role in the interpretation of Brazilian and Latin-American development. Although the sociologists gathered under the banner of the University of São Paulo's Social Sciences Department do not adopt a socialist position at first, being more concerned with studying international sociological theory and in transposing scientific social research method to Brazil, with the political radicalization in Latin America in the early 1960s they will be essentially left-wing thinkers, and Marxist at that until the late 1970s. Their main concerns would be the issue of social outcasts, income distribution, and gender and social class analysis. Unlike ISEB, the national issue is not central for the São Paulo school of sociology. While the interpretation advocated by ISEB and ECLAC was the national-developmental interpretation of Brazil, and their view of economic growth was closely tied with the idea of national revolution, the São Paulo school was closer to one of the three versions of dependency theory: the associated dependency version.<sup>6</sup> While ISEB intellectuals regard Getulio Vargas's populist pact as a model for capitalist and national revolution in peripheral countries and view populism as an early expression of the people and, therefore, of democracy, the São Paulo school of sociology assigns a negative connotation to Vargas's populism. While the ISEB group, although equipped with significant theoretical background, was located within the state's apparatus rather than in academia and was not concerned with empirical research, acting, rather, as a group of universalistic public intellectuals, São Paulo sociologists were a par excellence product of the university and laid claim to a purely

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<sup>6</sup> In a previous work (Bresser-Pereira, 1982) I distinguished the functional-capitalist interpretation of the 'new dependency theory' that would name both Fernando Henrique Cardoso's interpretation and my own, as they both showed that multinationals could contribute to industrialization, but caused income distribution distortions and an authoritarian policy. Today, better aware of Cardoso's denial of the possibility of a national bourgeoisie — with which I never agreed —, it seems more appropriate to set my position apart from this. In fact, Cardoso's position was the same as the functional-capitalist interpretation, connected with the São Paulo school of sociology, while mine maintained its ties with the original views of ISEB and ECLAC, as this paper shows.

academic or scientific character.<sup>7</sup> While, according to Norma Côrtes (2003: 27-31), ISEB was a nationalist, historicist group with a dualistic view of history that assumed the possibility of alliances among classes and was concerned with national development hindered by imperialism, the São Paulo school adopted a cosmopolitan, anti-dualistic viewpoint, emphasized class struggle — that is, the left Vs. right dichotomy —, rejected the possibility of national pacts and was not interested in criticizing the imperial relations between developed and underdeveloped countries. This summary analysis is not to say, however, that the São Paulo school of sociology was homogeneous as a group. Quite the opposite, independent thinking abounded and there were theoretical conflicts of all sorts. Gilberto Freyre was the initial target of criticism by São Paulo sociology.<sup>8</sup> The second was to be ISEB, beginning with a famous debate between Florestan Fernandes and Guerreiro Ramos. The first comprehensive effort by the São Paulo-based group, outlining their view of Brazil and in direct competition with its Rio de Janeiro-based counterpart, would be Fernando Henrique Cardoso's (1964) book on entrepreneurs and economic development.<sup>9</sup>

## **Development as capitalist and national revolution**

ISEB and CEPAL were both critical of economic liberalism which only became prevalent in Europe and the United States after nationalism had allowed them to build their national States. For intellectuals in both groups, development for countries that were then underdeveloped might only be accomplished as the fruit of planning and strategy, with the state as main player. Given the presence of imperialism, it would be impossible for those countries to develop without completing their capitalist revolution through national revolution, leading to the formation of the national state. In such a theoretical context, development is a process of accumulation of capital and incorporation of technical advances through which the population's standards of living improve sustainably, but also the process by means of which a country carries out its capitalist and national revolution. As for Marx, it was an integral process of economic, social and political development. As for Schumpeter, its players were entrepreneurs, implying not just increased per capita income, but structural changes in the economy and the society. But this entire process only made sense within the framework of the

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<sup>7</sup> The early empirical research will be concerned with racial discrimination, beginning with the pioneering works of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1962) and Florestan Fernandes (1965).

<sup>8</sup> See, in connection with this criticism, in addition to the lengthy production from São Paulo, Joaquim Falcão's essay "A Luta pelo Trono: Gilberto Freyre versus a USP" (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso provided an early criticism of ISEB's ideas (1964: 81-82). This criticism is later radicalized by two representatives of the São Paulo school, Caio Navarro de Toledo, ISEB, *Fábrica de Ideologias* (1974) and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, "O Tempo das Ilusões" (1978), while Francisco de Oliveira, "Economia Brasileira: Crítica à Razão Dualista" (1972) mainly criticized Celso Furtado's structuralism. Alzira Alves Abreu (1975) required much intellectual independence to defend, in Paris, a competent thesis about ISEB. According to her deposition, the topic was regarded by her friends from São Paulo as inappropriate, unless the goal was to radically criticize the group's thinking. Dissolved and persecuted by the military for being left-leaning, ISEB was the victim of mistaken and resentful criticism in the left itself.

capitalist or bourgeois revolution, giving rise to a class intent on accumulating capital and on innovating, and within the context of the formation of a modern nation-state with two roles: on the one hand, to act as the safe domestic market required for industrialization<sup>10</sup> and, on the other, to coordinate the national development strategy by means of the state's apparatus and institutions.<sup>11</sup>

The notion of two-tiered capitalist revolution — commercial revolution and industrial revolution — was at the foundation of ISEB's thinking. It is with the passage from merchant to industrial capitalism that the two essential traits of economic development — capitalist accumulation and the systematic incorporation of technical advances — materialize, bringing about sustainable growth of income per inhabitant and improved standards of living. However, based on the analysis of ISEB and ECLAC, as well as on the history of Europe, one can see that for the transition between the capitalist and the industrial revolutions to be completed, a third revolution is required — the national revolution that gives birth to the modern nation-state, that is, establishes the domestic market required by industrial development and creates the collective action instrument to enable formulating and implementing a development strategy.

In the case of the underdeveloped countries where the capitalist and national revolution process was in full swing in the 1950s, ISEB and ECLAC pointed out, firstly, that since the acceleration of industrial development in the 1930s, Latin-American society no longer displayed a simple bipolar organization based upon a dominant oligarchy and a rural mass, and was undergoing a differentiation process that gave rise to the modern bourgeois and bureaucratic middle-classes that had a key role to play as leaders for development. In 1967, Oswaldo Sunkel, one of the most significant representatives of ECLAC thinking, argued that this differentiation enabled possible alliances of these groups with popular sectors to promote economic development, pointing out that “these alliances would have their ideological cornerstones on nationalism and on popular organization and participation”. He also pointed out, however, the dependency and alienation of these middle classes, concerned with replicating the center's consumer habits, revealing their own contradictory character and trouble carrying through a national development process.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, intellectuals in both groups realized that the state, through its politicians and technicians, was playing a strategic role in development and saw this in a positive light. The state should, above all, protect the infant domestic industry against foreign competition, reserving the domestic market for the country's industries — hence the thesis that development should occur via imports substitution. In broader terms for ECLAC, the state should lead society in overcoming the “three trends deemed inherent to peripheral industrialization: structural unemployment,

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<sup>10</sup> The bourgeoisie was able to bring about commercial revolution based essentially an long-distance, foreign trade, but required a safe domestic market to promote an industrial revolution.

<sup>11</sup> Each State government will use two main kinds of institution to promote development: relatively permanent laws, beginning with the assurance of property, and temporary public policies in reflection of the strategy at each historic moment.

<sup>12</sup> Sunkel, (1967[1969]: 251). This essay is featured in a book, Andrés Bianchi et al. (1969) that gathers papers by the leading ECLAC economists. Recently, Ricardo Bielschowsky, ed. (2000) put together a more comprehensive book with the same goal.

foreign disequilibrium and deteriorating terms of exchange”.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, development is planning as well as strategy. The state cannot be limited to establishing institutional conditions for businessmen to invest. It must also create the required economic conditions. For ISEB in particular, economic development always involves a national revolution — or, as Celso Furtado used to say ‘transfer of decision centers to within the country.’ In a broader sense, it involves capitalist revolution. This is what enables the association between industrial entrepreneurs, the par excellence agents of development, and the government’s politicians and technicians, to who befalls coordination of the process.

Given this view of development as the outcome of a national strategy, the capitalist revolution must be a national revolution as well – of a revolution that gives rise to a modern state. With the appearance of the state, society acquires the instrument it needs to promote economic development. In both the capitalist and the industrial revolutions, political power is concentrated mainly in the hands of entrepreneurs and of the state’s bureaucrats and politicians that represent them, leaving wage-earners with a supporting role — albeit one that grows in importance as democracy advances. On the other hand, while in capitalist revolution the relationship between capital and labor is marked by conflict, in a national revolution the branding phenomenon is an association around a nation project designed by entrepreneurs — the owners of the capital and of the capacity to innovate —, by the public and private techno-bureaucracy — provider of technical and organizational know-how —, and by workers. Based on this dialectic perspective, at once historical and normative, and emphasizing the association between the bourgeoisie and the state’s technicians, ISEB’s thinking is nationalistic or patriotic in essence.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the nationalism displayed by developing countries that, since the end of WWII, consider reducing their lag as compared to wealthy countries, is not a rejection of what is foreign, and not even a correspondence of the nation the nation-state,<sup>15</sup> but the ideology of forming a nation-state, a prerequisite for national development. In developing countries, nationalists in general, among which ISEB was probably the most significant intellectual group in Latin America, besides advocating the need for a national development strategy, adopt the theory of imperialism. That is, they charge underdevelopment not only to internal factors, but also to exploitation by developed countries, and/or to their strategy of neutralizing the competitive capacity of medium income developing

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<sup>13</sup> Octavio Rodrigues (1981): 20. In a recent paper, this analysis of Eclacine thinking notes that three industrialization models can be found in Latin America: liberal industrialization, national-populist industrialization, and state-developmental industrialization, as illustrated by Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, respectively, and shows that industrial bourgeoisie played a key role in the second and third forms (Rodrigues, 2004: 178-182). ECLAC was a source of inspiration for the second and third models which, for the purposes of this paper, I define as the national-developmental model.

<sup>14</sup> Nationalism and patriotism are here synonyms. They are defined as the ideology of the formation of the national state, and the view that each administration is supposed to defend the interests of national labor, capital and knowledge. The fact that there are many distortions of nationalism is not ignored.

<sup>15</sup> Ernest Gellner (1983), with European nationalism foremost in mind, defined nationalism as an ideology aimed at this correspondence. For Latin America this definition is incomplete because Latin Americans have a state since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but their respective nations are weak, incomplete, dependent.

countries by giving advice or exerting pressure: in other words, doing what Friederich List had identified in the first half of the 19th Century as 'kicking away the ladder'.<sup>16</sup> Only the most radical argue that there cannot be development for all and that development of the center is due mainly to the exploitation of the periphery, but all nationalists agree that the interests of wealthy countries cannot be identified with those of economically backwards countries, particularly those of the medium income developing countries that compete with the wealthy countries with the advantage of their cheap labor.

ISEB and, above all, ECLAC, held moderate nationalist or patriotic positions. Brazil or Latin-American countries were not expected to be more nationalist than developed countries had been and still are. But unlike the rich countries, including the United States after the Independency War, which did not have to face the issue of formal or informal foreign domination, developing countries had. Thus ISEB and ECLAC underdevelopment developed theories in which imperialism played a major role. Underdevelopment, according to several authors and chief among them Furtado, was not just lag, or a stage in development, but a consequence of the relationship between the center and the periphery. The theory of unequal exchange is the accurate economic explanation of how rich countries keep productivity gains to themselves, how they make sure that the added worth of labor in their countries is not shared with consumers of industrial products in developing economies as assumed by the theory of foreign trade. Both ISEB and ECLAC were moderately left-wing because they are concerned with the inequality that prevailed in Latin America, and were clearly nationalistic because their greater goal was development using the state as an instrument of collective action. For ISEB in particular, it was clear that the formation of the national state had to occur by means of an alliance, whether dialectical or contradictory, but a real alliance nonetheless, between capital and labor. An alliance or *esprit de corps* manifested in the competition with other national states. ISEB's nationalism was modeled after the patriotic, Bismarckian, nationalism of the great developed capitalist countries that were only able to develop because they formed nation-states capable of heading a development project (Jaguaribe, 1957, 1962).

We can conclude the notion of development held by ISEB and ECLAC as follows: it is the process of accumulating capital, incorporating technical advances and raising the standards of living of a country's population that begins with a capitalist and national revolution; it is the process of sustained income growth for the inhabitants of a country, under the strategic leadership of the national state and with national entrepreneurs as main agents. Development is national because it takes place within the framework of each national state, under the aegis of institutions defined and backed by the state. This definition clearly depicts the importance of institutions.

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<sup>16</sup> Friedrich List (1846 [1999]). Ha-Joon Chang wrote a remarkable book giving modern evidence of this thesis: *Kicking away the Ladder* (2002).



## National bourgeoisie and new historical facts

The issue of the national bourgeoisie is crucial to ISEB's ideas.<sup>17</sup> In the 1950s, ISEB identified industrialization, which had picked up speed since 1930, with the Brazilian National Revolution, and argued that then, under the aegis of Getulio Vargas, a national-popular political pact had been formed, gathering the industrial bourgeoisie, the workers, the state technicians and portions of the old oligarchy (the one that was in the business of substituting imports, such as the beef ranchers in Rio Grande do Sul) to fight against imperialism and the agro-exporting oligarchy. In this necessarily simplified political scheme, ISEB intellectuals identified a leading role to be played by industrial entrepreneurs, or the 'national bourgeoisie' – assuming that it shared basic nationalistic views about industrialization, national revolution and growth.<sup>18</sup> They knew that Brazilian bourgeoisie did not always match the model, but this model was consistent with the actors' real interests and could be empirically observable. ECLAC aligned with ISEB in this respect, although giving less emphasis to it.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1950s it made reasonable sense to speak of a national bourgeoisie. But, with the political crisis of the early 1960s, the picture changes. Since the 1959 Cuban revolution, and the defeat of the national-developmental forces in the Brazilian 1960 presidential elections, it was clear to me that the political model ISEB had conceived has been overcome by a set of new historical facts. These facts took place in the 1950s and caused the split of the national alliance between the center-left and the industrial entrepreneurs, and led the capitalist class to join together against the communist threat. These facts included the Cuban revolution, in 1959, in the context of the cold war, the new participation starting in the 1950s of multinational companies in the industrialization process, the consolidation of industrialization during the Kubitschek administration (1955-60), and the end of the massive transfer of income from coffee exporters to the industrial sector eliminating a cause for conflict within the capitalist class.<sup>20</sup> Yet, the São Paulo school of sociology endorsed a very different analysis of the military coup of 1964. Instead of acknowledging the contradictory nature of the bourgeoisie in dependent countries and the fact that the alliance with the United States after the coup was temporary or incomplete, they understood that the non-national character of the bourgeoisie was permanent and intrinsic to its dependent character. Based on Cardoso's research on the political action of entrepreneurs, mentioned earlier, and on the involvement of entrepreneurs in the military coup of 1964, they denied the possibility of existence of a national bourgeoisie, although they did admit, in apparent contradiction, the existence of Vargas's national-developmental pact. After the 1964 coup, while the São Paulo group

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<sup>17</sup> All of its members point out this aspect. See, in particular, Jaguaribe (1955, 1956), Mendes de Almeida (1963).

<sup>18</sup> Note that Vargas was a populist only from the political viewpoint. Unlike Juan Perón, with whom he is often compared, he was never an economic populist, having kept state finances in balance, controlled public spending and the maintaining national State's equilibrium, preventing excessive foreign indebtedness.

<sup>19</sup> See Octavio Rodriguez (1981: 22-23).

<sup>20</sup> I analyzed the new historical facts that changed the structure of Brazilian politics in "O empresário industrial e a revolução brasileira" (Bresser-Pereira, 1963); and in "Political development, and the crisis of the populist alliance" (Bresser-Pereira (1968[1984]: chapter 4).

exorcised the national-bourgeois interpretation of Brazil that ISEB and the Communist Party had shared, it blamed this interpretation and their authors for the coup itself: the responsible for the coup within the left had been them.<sup>21</sup> The ‘academic victory’ of the São Paulo school had been complete, not only because its intellectuals spoke on behalf of science, but also because they took advantage of left-wing and democratic intellectuals’ natural resentment of the military coup, and because ISEB’s the political model (which had been adopted by the Brazilian Communist Party in 1958)<sup>22</sup> was understood as a betrayal of workers and of the socialist ideal.<sup>23</sup> As a result of this view, there still persists among Brazilian intellectuals a rather biased view of the great contribution ISEB intellectuals made to understanding Brazilian reality.<sup>24</sup>

ECLAC, on the other hand, despite the fact that it shared most of ISEB’s ideas, was spared criticism, perhaps because its analysis was economic rather than political and, probably, because including ECLAC in the debate did not serve the interests of either the agents or targets of criticism.<sup>25</sup> A kind of unspoken agreement got formed between the new theorists of dependency and the ECLAC bureaucracy to minimize conflict and expand agreements. From this perspective, the new theses sponsored by dependency theory would not imply overcoming ECLAC, but a sociological contribution to the thinking concerned with the center-periphery relations in line with the ECLAC’s economic stance. This, however, is not how I perceive the issue. ECLAC itself became involved with the new ideas and decided to embrace them. Thus, we had a classical example of cooptation. But we must acknowledge that, as it was the case with ISEB, the 1950s were ECLAC’s golden years. In that decade, the two institutions provided an original economic analysis of the obstacles development faced in

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<sup>21</sup> Being much older than the group, Caio Prado Jr. was not a member, but lent it unexpected support with his essay *A Revolução Brasileira* (1966), which was as remarkable as it was mistaken. I have identified Caio Prado Jr., which prevailed with the São Paulo school of sociology in the 1960s, with the ‘functional-capitalist interpretation’. See Bresser-Pereira, “Six interpretations of the Brazilian social formation” (1982 [1973]).

<sup>22</sup> See Gildo Marçal Brandão (1997).

<sup>23</sup> This victory, and the São Paulo school of sociology’s strategy of identifying ISEB’s ideas with those sponsored by populism will be celebrated, for example, by a remarkable member of the São Paulo school of sociology, Emilia Viotti da Costa (1978: 178), who wrote: “The populist crisis culminating in the military coup of 1964 set social analysts in a new direction. The ‘dependency’ model replaced the ‘dualist’ one.”

<sup>24</sup> In this respect, Norma Côrtes quotes from Jaguaribe (1979: 102) a sentence that makes reference to me: “almost all studies on ISEB — with important exception of Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira... — have come from a new generation of intellectuals, usually through doctoral these, that lack... sufficient understanding of Brazil’s circumstances between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. These critics are led, unawares, into generational polemics conditioned by the attitude of young academics...” When Jaguaribe speaks of ‘generational polemics’, he is suggesting that the main intellectuals of the São Paulo school of sociology belonged to a later generation than ISEB’s intellectuals.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Cardoso’s (1977a [1980]) general assessment of ECLAC. His attitude is more supportive than critical. Or, yet, in another paper (1972 [1980]: 65), his statement to the effect that “dependency studies stood as a kind of self-critique fueled by the ardor of those who, without ever having been with the Eclacine school, criticized it *sine ira ac studio*”.

Brazil and Latin America, a development project, and a sociological analysis of how to achieve development at the political level. Then came decline.<sup>26</sup>

## Dependency theory

In the intellectual history of Latin America, few topics have been addressed more confusingly and inaccurately as dependency theory. Most of those that discuss it merely confuse it with the theory of imperialism, which it is critical of, particularly in its assumption of the possibility of national revolution in peripheral countries with the active involvement of the many national elites, beginning with then national bourgeoisie. Emerging after the military coups and the association of the bourgeoisie with the military and the United States (as facilitator of the coups in question), dependency theory stood mainly as a criticism of the dependent form of capitalism that manifested itself in Latin America. It did not deny exploitation of the periphery by the developed center, but pointed out that this exploitation could not be charged solely to the dominators: the elites in dominated countries, revealing their dependency of or subordination to central elites, became associated with them. Therefore, while the theory of imperialism, particularly in the version that ISEB proposed in Brazil, assumed the possibility of a national bourgeoisie and gave it a crucial role in the affirmation of developing nations, dependency theory was characterized by the denial of the possibility that such a bourgeoisie could exist. The term ‘dependency’ as applied to the periphery is a counterpart to the term ‘imperialism’ as applied to the center. This has led many to believe that the two theories are equivalent. In fact, dependency theory only exists, and was only novel, because it stood against the theory of imperialism in two ways. First, by arguing that the cause of underdeveloped countries’ economic lag lies not only in exploitation by the imperial center, but also — if not mainly — in the local elites’ (the bourgeoisie’s in particular) inability to be national, to think and act in terms of the national interests, and specifically of industrialization. While the national-developmental interpretation assumed that a national industrial bourgeoisie was rising, in opposition to the old Latin-American elites, partly feudal and patriarchal, partly mercantile, Gunder Frank radically denied this hypothesis. He argued that the national-developmental interpretation was a version of the theory of modernization adopted by conservative sociologists, mainly in the United States. In fact, most of the advocates of dependency theory claim that Latin-American countries had always been bourgeois, but (after Caio Prado Jr. in this respect) further hold that the bourgeoisie had always been a merchant bourgeoisie, dependent upon the center, incapable of bringing about national revolution.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, dependency theory in its associated and national-dependent versions (but not the version of capitalist over exploitation), put forward that the theory of imperialism was mistaken in its argument that the center was opposed to industrialization. So much so that multinationals had been investing in industrial plants in the region since the 1950s. According to it, multinationals and international financial capital do not prevent economic development, but set perverse conditions for it, by promoting income

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<sup>26</sup> In the 1970s and ’80s Fernando Fajnzylber, made a significant effort to renew ECLAC’s thinking, but his early death and unfavorable international circumstances prevented achieving significant results.

<sup>27</sup> Prado Jr. (1945, 1966).

concentration from the middle-class upwards, encouraging authoritarianism and, in the case of the national-dependent approach to development, by favoring an appreciated foreign exchange rate. The associated dependency version goes a step further and argues that the involvement of multinationals and of foreign loans in development, bringing foreign savings with them, is a prerequisite for development in Latin America. In sum, dependency theory in general and particularly its associated version which became dominant in Latin America, stands apart from the theory of imperialism. It charges underdevelopment more to local dependent elites that are incapable of being national than (in many ways) to the imperial center's ability to create obstacles to the periphery's development. Finally, in order to provide a clear distinction between dependency theory and the theory of imperialism, note that the former, unlike the latter, is originally a Marxist theory.<sup>28</sup> As a result, dependency theory emphasizes the exploitation of classes far more than the exploitation of nations. Cardoso (1977b[1980]: 97) is clear and insistent in this respect. For him, the essential trait of dependency theory is not the study of international relations, although these must not be forgotten, but the analysis of social classes in dependent capitalism: "we were interested in the 'movement', in class struggles, in redefining interests, in the alliances that sustain structures and, at the same time, create perspectives of change." It is no surprise, therefore, that this theory had so much repercussion in the United States, whose intellectuals saw it for something new and attractive.

Dependency theory has one of its wellsprings in the criticism of the works Celso Furtado published in the second half of the 1960s. Consistently with ECLAC, he argued that Latin America was moving towards stagnation due to the use of labor-intensive technology and to the income concentration it caused. Criticism of this view is outlined in the book by Cardoso and Falleto that is the fundamental text of the associated dependency theory, and fully realized in two economics studies: (Bresser-Pereira, 1970; Conceição Tavares and José Serra, 1971). These papers lie at the foundation of dependency theory's economic view,<sup>29</sup> although we must point out that André Gunder Frank was its founder and main formulator, particularly as regards the version of capitalist overexploitation.<sup>30</sup>

Dependency theory divides itself into three versions: the original, Marxist, theory; associated dependency theory; and national-dependent theory. The first interpretation adopts a linear reasoning, quite typical of Marxists that see itself as orthodox. Given the assumed impossibility of a national bourgeoisie, workers, or the left wing, had no choice other than striving for socialist revolution. It was, therefore, close to the theory of imperialism because it clearly acknowledged that imperialism existed, but, at the same time, was a radical criticism

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<sup>28</sup> The theory of imperialism was initially developed by Hobson, who was no Marxist. It was later embraced by Lenin. On the other hand, the theory of independence, both in its capitalist overexploitation and its associated dependency versions, is clearly Marxist in origin. Cardoso (1980[1972]) is emphatic on this matter: "The idea of dependency is defined in the theoretical domain of the Marxist theory of capitalism".

<sup>29</sup> Bresser-Pereira, 1970; Maria da Conceição Tavares and José Serra (1972[1971]).

<sup>30</sup> Gunder Frank was an outstanding German Marxist economist who had in-depth contact with Latin America. His main works are the classic article, "Development of Underdevelopment" (1966), and a series of books starting with *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1969).

of the national-developmental version of the theory of imperialism because it denied any possibility of national reaction within the framework of capitalism and with a national industrial bourgeoisie at the helm. This version's main theoretical basis lies in the works by Gunder Frank referenced earlier. For Gunder Frank, Latin America was always capitalist, albeit merchant capitalist, and was not having its bourgeois national revolution since the 1930s. Spanish and Portuguese colonization had been purely mercantile and, therefore, capitalist but ignoring technological progress and productivity increase: it just implemented a primary goods exporting model in the region. As such, capitalism and imperialism would be the very causes of underdevelopment, so much so that the continent's least developed areas were those that enjoyed a major commodities exporting period. Along the same lines, Ruy Mauro Marini develops the "theory of overexploitation", acknowledging that, for a period, there were common interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, having "led the vanguard of the petit-bourgeois on to reformism and the policy of class cooperation,"<sup>31</sup> but "the military intervention of 1964 dealt a death blow to the reformist." The national-bourgeois interpretation, therefore, identifies with reformism, even though it was admittedly valid for a while. Reformism failed because development in Brazil was seated essentially on the overexploitation of workers, defined by the fact that workers were paid wages beneath what they needed for subsistence, in addition to enduring extended work shifts and work loads. Such overexploitation would be a normal trend in capitalist countries, and heightened in dependent or peripheral ones, as they are subject to the imperialism of central capitalist countries and deprived of a portion of added worth as a result of the unequal exchange of goods in the foreign market. In consistent terms, Theotônio dos Santos clearly argues (including in the title of one of his books), that the alternatives for Brazil and Latin America lie in socialism or fascism (the later identified with the military coups).<sup>32</sup> His assessment is not limited to this respect and, as with Ruy Mauro Marini, provides an important and radical and critical contribution to the Latin-American and Brazilian model, at once underdeveloped, dependent and authoritarian. At the dependency level, Theotônio dos Santos identifies three historical forms: (1) colonial, commercial exporting dependency, (2) financial-industrial dependency, consolidated in the late 19th Century, and (3) the technological-industrial dependency of post World War II, carried out by multinationals.<sup>33</sup> This latter type of dependency gives rise to a kind of "unequal and combined" development, inasmuch as development is marked by deep inequalities arising from the overexploitation of the workforce.

The associated dependency version springs directly from the São Paulo school of sociology and is also Marxist in its origins, but not orthodox. Its analysis is at once a reaction to the military coup in the South Cone beginning in 1964 and a reflection on the 'economic miracle' that begins in Brazil in 1968. The heavy industrial investments made at the time brought about another stage in exports-substitution industrialization, while at the same time appearing to be the underlying cause of a new political pact that now joined the state's technocrats with industrial entrepreneurs and multinationals, and radically excluded workers.

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<sup>31</sup> Ruy Mauro Marini, *Subdesarrollo Revolución*, 1969, p. 151.

<sup>32</sup> Theotônio dos Santos, "El Nuevo Caracter de la Dependencia" (1967); *Dependencia y Cambio Social* (1970); *Socialismo o Facismo — el Nuevo Caracter de la Dependencia y el Dilema Latinoamericano* (1973).

<sup>33</sup> Theotônio dos Santos, "Dependencia y Cambio...", op. cit., p. 55.

As a consequence, the new development model that arises since the mid-1960s, the dependent and associated development model, was authoritarian at the political level and income-concentrating at the economic level. These circumstances provided the groundwork for associated dependency theory, whose founding work is the essay Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto publish in Chile in 1969, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.<sup>34</sup> This book, followed by a series of further writings by the first author, is very rich and allows many readings. For a long time the distinction between this version and a third one, the ‘national-dependent theory’ was not clear to me.<sup>35</sup> While associated dependency says that, given the fact that there is no national-bourgeoisie in Latin-America, there is no alternative in order to grow but to become associated with the dominant system and take advantages of the loopholes it provides, the national-dependent theory asserts that elites in Latin America are ambiguous, dependent and national depending the moment and the circumstance, and, so, there is the possibility of a national strategy of growth. The associated dependency theory had in common with the theory of capitalist overexploitation the assumption of the impossibility of a bourgeoisie, or, more broadly, of national elites; but it gave more emphasis to the possibility of development within the framework of dependency. In fact, according to its advocates, a prerequisite for development in these countries was the influx of foreign savings, as the opportunities for autonomous development via imports substitution had become exhausted. This collaboration was already under way in the 1950s, when multinationals started to invest in Latin-American industry. This did away with the criticism of the theory of imperialism according to which imperial powers opposed industrialization in developing countries. Taking advantage of his remarkable skill as a sociological and political analyst, Cardoso and Faletto showed, better than anyone else, how social classes fought and mingled with each other in the power struggle set in a dependency framework, but went too far in the thesis of the impossibility of national elites and lacked the theoretical or empirical background for his thesis of foreign savings as a requirement for development in peripheral countries.<sup>36</sup>

The national-dependent theory version, despite points in common with associated dependency theory, distinguishes itself by denying the latter’s main assumption: that existence of a national bourgeoisie — or, more broadly, of national elites — is impossible. It concurs with the criticism of the theory of imperialism that charges underdevelopment fully to dominant countries, acknowledging that, locally, elites tend to be alienated and cosmopolitan and, therefore, co-culprits. But it emphasizes the contradiction between the interests of wealthy countries and medium-development countries such as Brazil. The term ‘national-dependent’ is an oxymoron as the two terms — purposefully joined by a hyphen — are in opposition to one another. The local businessmen, the state bureaucracy and intellectuals in Latin America experience a process of permanent contradiction between their tendency to identify with the formation of the national state and the temptation to ally themselves with central countries. In the 19th Century, the bourgeoisies in Europe and the United States were national, standing against socialist cosmopolitanism. Their development, as a result, could be national without being dependent. In the second half of the 20th Century, however, faced with the communist threat, there was a naturally stronger association between local bourgeoisies

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<sup>34</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1969 [1979]).

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>36</sup> Asian countries, which often developed with current account surpluses, clearly illustrate the mistake in this as a prerequisite for development.

and international capitalism. This fact alone, however, could not lead to conclude that the hypothesis of building a nation in Brazil and in other developing countries had been discarded, as did the overwhelming majority of left-wing intellectuals in Brazil and Latin America since 1964, resentful of military coups and fascinated by associated dependency theory — which was appealing for its leftist nature. Still, its associative or dependent character was not very clear, even though Cardoso used the term explicitly in his works, and even included it in one of his titles.<sup>37</sup>

For all three dependency theory schools, the local elites had a tendency to become associated with imperialism. But while development is impossible in the view of the imperialist overexploitation version, and only possible in subordination or association with the center for the associated dependency version,<sup>38</sup> from the national-dependent standpoint, national development is possible because there is the ever-present possibility of entrepreneurs and intellectuals joining with workers and governmental technicians around national issues and a national strategy. The international ideological pressures that promote alienation are powerful. In certain cases, as during the Cold War, in addition to these pressures there was a fundamental capitalist solidarity in face of the threat of Soviet statism, but, at the same time, a real identification of businessmen and professional middle-classes (particularly in the public sector) with the domestic market and the very concept of a nation. Therefore, an essential ambiguity exists not only within the bourgeoisie, but within each and every national elite in Latin America. They are at once national and alienated, at once committed to the idea of a nation and cosmopolitan. This third version of dependency theory lies closer to the national-developmental theory. It was originated rather from self-criticism than of just rejection of the previous interpretation. The acknowledgement and analysis of the new historical facts that occurred in the 1950s and led to the collapse of the national agreement on industrialization lies at the foundation of this self-criticism – a partial and internal criticism of the theory upheld by ISEB and ECLAC. The main representative of this line of thought was Celso Furtado, who had a clear understanding that the crisis of the 1960s required new interpretations of Brazil. For him, however, dependency theory only made sense within the framework of a broader imperial system.

ISEB and ECLAC were little concerned with the issue of democracy. It was only in the early 1970s, faced with military juntas, that Latin-American intellectuals put the problem front and center. The explanation for Latin-American authoritarianism that had the greatest repercussion in Latin America was essentially formulated by Guillermo O'Donnell as part of associated dependency theory. Given the support military administrations had from the United States, foreign domination and authoritarianism were clearly tied together at the time. In much the same way as Cardoso argued that economic growth would require foreign savings, Guillermo O'Donnell suggested that authoritarianism was inherent to the 'a more in-depth

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<sup>37</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Associated Dependent Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications" (1971 [1979]).

<sup>38</sup> As noted by Niemeyer Almeida Filho (2004: 35, 38), "Cardoso and Faletto define dependency as a circumstance under which capital accumulation and expansion cannot find their essential components within the system." Furthermore, this view (which is similar, in this case, with the radical dependency theory) regards "dependency as an unchangeable trait of certain economies."

accumulation process', that is, the adoption of capital-intensive technologies by heavy and capital goods industries that was happening at the time.<sup>39</sup> Thus, authoritarianism was an unpredicted consequence of the capital-intensive investments that multinationals and the state-owned enterprises were making in Latin America.

Differently, for the national-dependent theory income concentration and authoritarianism were the result of the collapse of the national-popular pact of the 1950s, of the ensuing political void, and of the military's ability to formulate a post-1964 authoritarian-modernizing political pact, but the ensuing authoritarianism was in no way deemed 'necessary'. It was not the result of structural conditioning, as those authors assumed, but of a confluence of then-prevalent political forces. The confirmation of this analysis and not of the associated dependency theory came soon. In 1977, when the authoritarian-modernizing political pact was collapsing, a political alliance between the bourgeoisie and the democratic and popular forces began to be established, opening room for the transition to democracy.<sup>40</sup> In fact, in 1977, in reaction to the suite of authoritarian measures president Geisel implemented under the name of 'April's package', the Brazilian entrepreneurs began to undo their alliance with the military, and eventually led a new popular-democratic national political front which participated workers, left-wing intellectuals and the middle-classes. The objectives were the pursuit of re-democratization and, in a second moment, the resumption of economic growth which had stalled in 1980. This pact, economically coherent with the national-developmental ideory, would succeed in bringing through the democratic transition in Brazil – what effectively happened in 1984-85.<sup>41</sup> Finally, while national-dependent theory sees Vargas' heritage in a positive light, with him as the political leader of Brazilian industrialization, associated dependency view tends to reject Vargas and his national-developmental views and policies.

## Conclusion

In sum, the three dependency theory streams, besides standing apart from one another in connection with the possibility of national elites' overcoming their alienation, also differ in terms of the two fundamental ideological divides that have characterized the modern world: left Vs. right, and nationalism Vs. cosmopolitanism. The capitalist overexploitation view is radically left-leaning and relatively cosmopolitan: it denounces imperialism, but denies the possibility of a national agreement of the classes. The associated dependency view, in turn, is moderately left-wing and clearly cosmopolitan. Finally, the national-dependent stream is moderately left-wing and clearly nationalistic or

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<sup>39</sup> O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (1973).

<sup>40</sup> Bresser-Pereira, *O Colapso de uma Aliança de Classes* (1978) and "The dialectic of redemocratization and 'abertura'" (1984).

<sup>41</sup> Yet, this pact subsequently collapsed with the failure of 1986's Cruzado Plan, in which the main participants of the pact, particularly the industrial entrepreneurs had put a lot of hopes. The Cruzado Plan was led by a nationalist industrial entrepreneur, Dilson Funaro, who was the Finance Minister at the time. In his staff were some of the more well-known national-developmental economists in Brazil.



patriotic: despite acknowledging its ambiguity, it deems the existence of national elites possible. On the other hand, it assumes that development can only be achieved based on a national strategy: countries that are developed today have attained this status because they had and still have a clear concept of nation and because their citizens have no doubt of the government's duty to defend national labor and capital.

In the 1950s, the ECLAC, chiefly in the economic field, and ISEB, more politically, but with mutual juxtaposition of ideas, criticized the imperialism of the period and developed the national-developmental strategy and ideology. For ISEB, development is a historic process that implies a capitalist revolution through industrialization and a national revolution that enables the country to formulate a national development strategy. In it, the presence of a national bourgeoisie was a key assumption for there to be a principle of solidarity that gathered classes around the idea of a nation, notwithstanding the natural conflicts between them. But after the Cuban revolution of 1959, the first great economic crisis endured by the imports substitution model, triggered in 1960, and the political crisis marked by ideological radicalization that ended up in military coups in Brazil (1964), Argentina (1967), Uruguay (1968) and Chile (1973), the national-developmental model becomes the object of crisis within the left itself. In the early 1960s, the São Paulo school of sociology, established in the University of São Paulo, begins criticizing ISEB's ideas and denying the possibility of national elites. By the end of that decade, dependency theory arises, distinguished from the theory of imperialism for assigning partial responsibility to alienated local elites, for not standing up for national interests. This theory would generate three streams: that of capitalist overexploitation, that of associated dependency, and that of the new dependency, or national-dependent. Only the latter accepts the possibility of national elites, including a national bourgeoisie, even though it acknowledges that such elites must be ambiguous and contradictory, given the weight of American ideological hegemony.

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