From the National-Bourgeoisie to the Dependency Interpretation of Latin America

by
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In the 1960s and 1970s Latin America experienced a series of modernizing military coups and the shift of its intellectuals from a nationalist to an associated-dependency interpretation of their societies and economies. In the 1950s two groups of public intellectuals, organized around the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Santiago, Chile, and the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, had pioneered thinking about Latin American societies and economies (including Brazil's) from a nationalist standpoint. The idea of a national bourgeoisie was key to this interpretation. The Cuban Revolution, the economic crisis of the 1960s, and the military coups in the Southern Cone, however, opened the way for criticism of these ideas from a new perspective—that of dependency. By rejecting the possibility of a national bourgeoisie, two versions of the dependency interpretation (the "associated" and the "overexploitation") also rejected the possibility of a national-development strategy. Only a third version, the "national-dependent" interpretation, asserted the need for and the possibility of a national bourgeoisie and a national strategy. Yet, it was the associated-dependency interpretation that was dominant in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, and this may explain the subordination of Latin America to the Washington consensus since the late 1980s and the ensuing low rates of growth.

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The late 1960s will be remembered in the intellectual history of Latin America as the time of a major transition from nationalism, which viewed economic development as an outcome of a national and capitalist revolution and the adoption of a national development strategy, to the associated-dependency interpretation of Latin American societies and economies, which rejected the possibility of a national bourgeoisie and, consequently, of truly independent nations in the region, asserted that economic development was in any case guaranteed by the dynamic character of capitalism and investments by multinational corporations, and focused attention on social justice and democracy.

In the 1950s, the public intellectuals at the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies—ISEB) in Rio de Janeiro, reflecting upon the industrial and national revolutions that had been under way since 1930, had devised a "national-bourgeoisie interpretation" of Brazil and Latin America.[1] At the same time, the structuralist development economists of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had outlined a critique of the law of comparative advantage, thereby

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laying the economic foundations of the policy of industrialization in which the state, its public bureaucracy, and industrial capitalists played an active role. These two intellectual groups lived in a social and political environment that since the Great Depression of the 1930s had been critical of economic liberalism. Their economists contributed to this critique by depicting conventional economics as an instrument that promoted the interests of the rich countries—the United States and the United Kingdom in particular—that did not favor the industrialization of the region. Consequently, they assigned responsibility for the region's underdevelopment not only to the mercantilist colonization of Latin America through plantations (in contrast to the United States, where settlers came mainly to populate the new lands rather than to achieve mercantilist profits) but also to the imperial center's active interest in keeping developing countries exporters of primary goods. Their theories and policy proposals, combined with the ideas of the larger group of pioneers of development economics that emerged after the end of World War II, provided theoretical support for the substantial economic growth that characterized most Latin American countries between 1930 and 1980.

These intellectuals were somewhat left-wing, but they adopted reformist ideas. They assumed that the industrial revolution was being led by a political coalition of the national industrial bourgeoisie, the public bureaucracy, and the industrial working class—a class agreement that gained strength with the 1930s crisis of the imperial center and its associates in the region, the landowning oligarchy and the mercantilist bourgeoisie. Yet the 1959 Cuban Revolution opened the way for the radicalization of the Latin American left, the response to which was a series of military coups in the Southern Cone with the support of the now united local bourgeoisies and of the United States. This prompted new groups of left-wing Latin American intellectuals to argue, in the framework of the dependency interpretation, that a national bourgeoisie in the region was an illusion—that local elites were inherently dependent, unable to lead a classical national capitalist revolution. To the extent that this argument was politically successful during the 1960s and 1970s, it was instrumental in weakening the concept of the nation in Latin America for the next 20 years without strengthening—on the contrary, weakening—the left-wing political parties in the region. Only in the 2000s did the Latin America nationalist and left-oriented political parties and political leaders reemerge as political forces.

To understand the clash of ideas among Latin American left-wing or progressive intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century, one must consider that in the 1950s and 1960s all were critical of modernization theory—a sociological approach that originated in the United States—but were divided into left-wing nationalists, who were fundamentally concerned with economic development, and socialists, who prioritized social justice. Before the military coups in the region, nationalist ideas and the national-bourgeoisie interpretation were dominant among left-wing intellectuals. After the 1964 coup in Brazil, the military and the industrialists remained nationalist and developmentalist, while intellectuals inspired by the dependency interpretation assumed that economic development was assured, abandoned nationalism, and engaged in the struggle for social justice and democracy.

Socialists and, more generally, left-wing intellectuals concerned with social justice find it difficult to support economic nationalism as a means to achieve economic development because this support implies an agreement among

classes that somehow ends up legitimizing capitalism. Yet experience shows that there can be no economic development in the absence of a national development strategy (Bresser-Pereira, 2009) and that such a strategy necessarily involves some kind of agreement among the social classes. The alternative is that the state bureaucracy takes control of the industrial revolution, as happened in Japan in the nineteenth century and in Russia and China in the twentieth. In the latter two cases it did so in the name of socialism but eventually contributed to the national and capitalist revolutions in those countries. In Latin America, where social inequality is deep, it has been particularly difficult to put together a development-oriented class coalition. Yet, when such a nationalist class coalition was achieved, as broadly happened between 1950 and 1980, rates of growth were high (income per capita grew at an average of 3 percent a year), while between 1990 and 2006, under the Washington consensus, growth per capita averaged 1.6 percent a year.

In this paper, I examine how the nationalist and developmentalist ideas that emanated from the ISEB and the ECLAC in the 1950s to explain and legitimize industrialization came under fire from the dependency interpretation when a major economic and political crisis erupted in the Southern Cone countries in the 1960s and how these ideas eventually had the unexpected consequence of making the Latin American countries more vulnerable to imperialism. In the first section, I describe the three groups of public intellectuals that are relevant for the purposes of this paper: those of the ISEB, those of the ECLAC, and those of the São Paulo Sociology School. In the second section, I examine the ISEB's and the ECLAC's conceptions of development and underdevelopment and their national-bourgeoisie interpretation of Latin America. In the third and fourth sections I discuss the concept of a national bourgeoisie and the corresponding national-developmentalist strategy and partially refute the national-bourgeoisie interpretation. In the fifth section I focus on the dependency interpretation (or dependency theory, as it is more usually called), examining its three versions: capitalist-overexploitation, associated-dependency, and national-dependent.

INSTITUTIONS OF PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

The ISEB was a group of intellectuals with various roots and specialties who, in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s, developed a cohesive and comprehensive view of Brazil and its industrialization. With the publication of *Estudio económico de América Latina 1949,* the ECLAC became the wellspring of Latin American structuralist economic thinking (see ECLAC, 1949; Prebisch, 1949). The two institutions formed their comprehensive, mutually consistent views at the same time. In the following decade, however, after the crisis of the 1960s and the military coups in the Southern Cone, the national-bourgeoisie interpretation of Brazil that was put forward by the ISEB and the national-developmentalist strategy proposed by both the ISEB and the ECLAC came under harsh and effective criticism from Brazilian sociologists gathered at the University of São Paulo. Although the São Paulo School purported to be a purely academic institution and the founder of "scientific sociology" in Brazil, its main intellectuals, along with those at the ECLAC and the ISEB, ended up being public intellectuals actively devoted to influencing public policy.

The files of the ECLAC included two main figures of twentieth-century economic thinking: Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado. Other relevant ECLAC economists were Aníbal Pinto, Osvaldo Sunkel, and Maria da Conceição Tavares. The main intellectuals at the ISEB were the philosophers Álvaro Vieira Pinto, Roland Corbisier, and Michel Debrun, the sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, the economist Ignácio Rangel, the historian Nelson Werneck Sodré, and the political scientists Hélio Jaguaribe and Cândido Mendes de Almeida. Their ideas, which were more political than economic in nature (although in Rangel they had a remarkable economist among them), were complemented at the economic level by the ECLAC's structuralist thinking. The ISEB was formed simultaneously with the ECLAC, in the late 1940s, had its peak between 1952 and 1958, suffered its first crisis in that year, and was dissolved after the military coup in 1964. The ECLAC continued to exist as an agency of the United Nations, but in this paper I refer exclusively to the ideas it formulated between the late 1940s and the early 1960s.

Both groups were nationalist in economic rather than ethnic terms; they believed that a strong nation was essential to build a strong nation-state and to achieve economic development. Both subscribed to a mild version of the so-called imperialist theory of underdevelopment—the theory that explains underdevelopment mainly as the result of the nineteenth-century formal or informal subordination of a given precapitalist or, in the case of Latin America, mercantile-capitalist society to the industrial and imperial nation-states of Europe and North America.[2] Although the contributions of the two groups are equivalent, the ECLAC's ideas had greater repercussions in the region, and when they were eclipsed by the dependency interpretation they were not so harshly criticized as the ISEB's interpretation was in Brazil. Economists from the ECLAC and the ISEB believed that economic development was synonymous with industrialization and should be the outcome of a national development strategy—a strategy that the ISEB baptized as "national developmentalism." To legitimize this belief, the ECLAC presented its classical critique of the law of comparative advantage and argued that state intervention was required to promote industrialization. Industrialization was a condition for growth because value added per capita is greater in manufacturing industries, which require more skilled labor than agriculture or mining. Despite the predictions of international trade theory, the increase in productivity in the countries of the center resulted not only in lower prices but also in an increase in wages proportional to productivity gains. But whereas this outcome was ensured in industrial countries by organized labor, it failed to materialize in developing ones; hence the thesis that there was a secular tendency toward the deterioration of the terms of trade for developing countries that would be compensated for only by an industrialization strategy.

The ISEB dominated the Brazilian intellectual scene in the 1950s. After a lag of about 10 years, the Department of Sociology of the University of São Paulo formed the São Paulo School of Sociology under the leadership of Florestan Fernandes. In the 1950s social scientists focused on sociological theory and on transposing scientific social research methods to Brazil. After the 1959 Cuban Revolution, however, left-wing and Marxist ideas became increasingly dominant in this school of thought. Its members' main concerns were the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society and the analysis of social exclusion, gender,

and social class. In its struggle to gain a monopoly over legitimized sociological knowledge in Brazil (Bourdieu, 1983 [1976]), it soon adopted a strongly critical stance toward the ISEB, focusing its attack on the national-bourgeoisie thesis. In contrast to the ISEB, it did not take the national issue as central. While the ISEB and the ECLAC advocated a national-bourgeoisie interpretation of Brazil and their view of economic growth was closely tied to the idea of building up the nation and defining a national development strategy, the São Paulo School devised the associated-dependency interpretation. While ISEB intellectuals regarded Getúlio Vargas's industrialization-oriented political pact as the achievement of the national and capitalist revolution and viewed his populism as an early expression of the people's participation in politics, the São Paulo School was critical of Vargas's economic nationalism and political populism.[3] While the ISEB group, although equipped with a significant theoretical background, was located within the state apparatus rather than in academia and was not concerned with empirical research but acted, rather, as a group of high-level public intellectuals, the São Paulo sociologists were a product of the university and claimed that their work was purely academic or scientific. The ISEB intellectuals were nationalists who adopted a historicist method and espoused a dualistic view of history. According to Norma Côrtes (2003: 27–31), whereas this group envisaged the possibility of class alliances and was concerned with imperialism, the São Paulo School adopted a cosmopolitan, antidualistic viewpoint, emphasized class struggle, rejected the possibility of national pacts, and was not interested in criticizing the imperialistic relationship between developed and underdeveloped countries. This does not mean that the São Paulo School was a homogeneous group. Quite the opposite: independent thinking abounded, and there were theoretical conflicts of all sorts. Yet its members shared a general approach to sociology as a science and to the main social and economic characteristics of Brazilian society and Latin American societies generally. Gilberto Freyre was the initial target of criticism by the São Paulo School of Sociology. The second was to be the ISEB, beginning with a famous debate between Florestan Fernandes and Alberto Guerreiro Ramos.[4] The first comprehensive effort by the São Paulo–based group to outline its view of Brazil in direct competition with the Rio de Janeiro–based group was Fernando Henrique Cardoso's 1964 book on Brazil's industrial entrepreneurs, which aimed at demonstrating that the country had no national bourgeoisie.[5]

DEVELOPMENT AS A CAPITALIST AND NATIONAL REVOLUTION

The ISEB and the ECLAC were both critical of economic liberalism. For their intellectuals, economic development in countries that at the moment of the industrial revolution were colonies or semicolonies could be accomplished only through economic planning. Only in this way would these countries be able to complete their national capitalist revolutions. According to this approach, economic development was a process of capital accumulation and incorporation of technical progress that increased wages and living standards—an integrated process of economic, social, and political development in which the strategic players were innovative industrial entrepreneurs. If we exclude the statist

experiment in Soviet Union and China, this process made sense only in the framework of a capitalist revolution and the establishment of a nation-state that ensured a safe domestic market for industrial production. The state that emerged from this major social change was supposed to coordinate the national development strategy by means of the legal system, regulated markets, and the bureaucratic apparatus.

The notion that the capitalist revolution in each country involved an industrial revolution and a national revolution—the latter here understood as the historical processes that led to the formation of the modern nation-state—was at the foundation of the ISEB's thinking. The modern state that emerged from this revolution would be an instrument of collective action that, coupled with the nation, would form the modern nation-state, guarantee a large domestic market, and formulate a national development strategy. In the case of the underdeveloped countries that experienced capitalist and national revolutions in the 1950s, the ISEB and the ECLAC pointed out that Latin American society no longer displayed a simple bipolar organization based upon a dominant oligarchy and a rural mass but was developing an urban working class and a new ruling class in the form of the industrial bourgeoisie and the new public bureaucracy. Osvaldo Sunkel (1969: 251) argued that this differentiation enabled alliances of these groups with popular sectors to promote economic development, pointing out that the ideological cornerstones of these alliances would be nationalism and popular organization and participation. Yet he also pointed to the dependency and alienation of the middle classes concerned with replicating the consumer patterns of the center, thus revealing their own contradictory character and the difficulty of carrying through a national development process. In addition, the ISEB and the ECLAC intellectuals assumed the existence of "infant industries" in the region that needed to be protected and therefore were pessimists with regard to the possibility of Latin American countries' exporting manufactured goods; industrialization was to take place through import substitution. According to Octavio Rodrigues (1981: 20), who examined the ECLAC's ideas in several essays, the state was to lead society in overcoming the "three tendencies deemed inherent in peripheral industrialization: structural unemployment, foreign imbalance, and deterioration of the terms of trade."[6] It could not be limited to establishing the institutional conditions for investment; it also had to create the economic conditions necessary for profitable investment. Economic development always involved a national development strategy or, as Celso Furtado used to say, the transference of the decision center to within the country.

In the industrial revolution, political power is concentrated mainly in the hands of the industrial entrepreneurs and of the state's elected and unelected top bureaucracy; wage earners play a supporting role, albeit one of increasing importance as democracy advances. At the same time, while in the capitalist revolution the relationship between capital and labor is marked by conflict, in the national revolution what is important is rallying around the nation and a national project involving industrialists, the public bureaucracy, and the working class. Based on this dialectic perspective, both historical and normative, the ISEB's thinking was essentially nationalistic or patriotic. Nationalism or patriotism is the ideology of the formation of the national state and the view that each government should defend the interests of national labor, capital, and knowledge.

Many distortions arise when nationalism is radicalized and becomes an ethnic ideology rather than an economic one. In the Latin American context, nationalism does not mean a rejection of what is foreign, nor does it correspond to Ernest Gellner's (1983) concept of the "correspondence of the nation with the nation-state"; it is the ideology legitimizing the formation of the nation-state, requiring national governments to protect national labor, national capital, and national knowledge and to assume responsibility for collective decisions instead of submitting to foreign powers. Nationalism is a prerequisite for national development. Gellner's concept of nationalism is based primarily on the European experience; it is inadequate for Latin America because there have been states in the region since the early nineteenth century but the corresponding nations are weak, incomplete, and dependent. In the 1950s, nationalists in developing countries adopted the theory of imperialism to explain underdevelopment; they explained it not only in terms of lack of capital, lack of business entrepreneurs, and lack of institutions (as modernization theory did) but also in terms of exploitation by developed countries and the dual character of the resulting societies. They criticized what Friedrich List had identified in the first half of the nineteenth century as "kicking away the ladder" (List, 1999 [1846]; Chang, 2002). Only the most radical commentators argued that economic development in the countries of the center was mainly due to the exploitation of the periphery, but nationalists agreed that the interests of the rich countries did not coincide with those of developing countries.

The ISEB and the ECLAC adopted a moderate nationalist or patriotic position. Latin American countries were not expected to be more nationalist than developed countries had been and still were. Yet, in contrast to the rich countries, including the United States after its Revolutionary War, underdeveloped countries had to face formal or informal foreign domination. Thus, according to Celso Furtado, underdevelopment was not just a lag or a stage in development but the consequence of the periphery's political subordination to the center. Both ISEB and ECLAC intellectuals were moderate left-wingers, concerned with the inequality prevailing in Latin America and supportive of workers' social movements, but the nationalist ideology prevailed over the socialist. Their greater goal—economic development or industrialization—required a state as the instrument of collective action. For the ISEB, particularly, the national revolution—that is, the formation of the national state—had to occur by means of a class alliance that, although involving real internal conflict, was a real alliance between capital and labor, an alliance that would not prevent conflict but would prevail when competition with other national states was the issue. The ISEB's nationalism was shaped along the lines of the patriotic Bismarckian model, which emerged after nationalism combined with the state intervention that characterized the catching up of "backward" central countries such as Germany in the second part of the nineteenth century (Jaguaribe, 1958; 1962).

THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE AND NEW HISTORICAL FACTS

The issue of the national bourgeoisie was crucial to the ISEB's interpretation (Jaguaribe, 1955; 1956). In the 1950s, the ISEB identified industrialization, which had accelerated since 1930, with the Brazilian National Revolution. It argued

that, under the aegis of Getúlio Vargas, a national-populist political coalition had been formed that brought together the industrial bourgeoisie, the workers, the public bureaucracy, and segments of the old oligarchy (those that were in the business of import substitution, such as the cattle ranchers in Rio Grande do Sul) to fight against imperialism and the agro-exporting oligarchy, principally the coffee planters. In this necessarily simplified political scheme, the ISEB's intellectuals identified a leading role to be played by industrial entrepreneurs or the "national bourgeoisie"—assuming that they shared basic nationalistic views about industrialization, national revolution, and growth. They knew that the Brazilian bourgeoisie did not always match this model, but the model was consistent with the actors' real interests and empirically observable. The ECLAC aligned itself with the ISEB in this respect, though giving it less emphasis (Rodrigues, 1981: 22–23).

In the 1950s it made reasonable sense to speak of a national bourgeoisie, but the 1964 military coup put an end to the national-developmentalist alliance stitched together by Vargas. The severe political crisis at the beginning of the 1960s and the 1964 coup were consequences of several new historical facts that changed the political framework and rendered the Vargas alliance obsolete. These facts included the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the flow of foreign capital into national industries, the consolidation of industrialization during the Juscelino Kubitschek administration (1956–1960), and the drop in coffee prices, which substantially reduced the income transferred from coffee exporters to manufacturing industry. All of these, and especially the Cuban Revolution, which led the Brazilian left to dream of a socialist revolution, contributed to the 1964 collapse of the national-developmentalist political pact (Bresser-Pereira, 1963; 1984a [1968]). In consequence, the national-bourgeoisie interpretation of Brazil and Latin America generally, which presupposed the participation of urban workers in the political coalition, ceased to make sense in that it assumed an internal division within the ruling class and an association of the industrial bourgeoisie with workers and the public bureaucracy.

The São Paulo School of Sociology did not take these new historical facts into consideration. For these intellectuals the national-bourgeoisie interpretation had been mistaken even before the new historical facts made it infeasible. Instead of acknowledging, on the one hand, the facts that changed the political picture and, on the other, the contradictory nature of the bourgeoisie in dependent countries (ambivalently shifting from autonomy to dependency), the São Paulo sociologists believed that the dependent character of the bourgeoisie was permanent and intrinsic. Moreover, they did not realize that the alliance with the United States for purposes of the coup was temporary and incomplete. Working on the assumption that an industrial bourgeoisie committed to the national interest was impossible and pointing to the involvement of entrepreneurs in the military coup of 1964, the sociologists denied the possibility of a national bourgeoisie (although, contradictorily, they often did admit the existence of Vargas's national-developmentalist pact). After the 1964 coup, while the São Paulo School repudiated the national-bourgeoisie interpretation of Brazil shared by the ISEB and the Communist Party (which adopted the ISEB's approach at its 1958 national congress [Brandão, 1997]), it blamed this interpretation and its authors for the coup itself.[7] Daniel Pécaut (1989: 101, 106) offers a vivid summary of this critique and comments that while

the ISEB intellectuals "manifested the powerful sentiment of an 'intelligentsia' that had as vocation to lead the transition to a Brazil that was the owner of its destiny . . . the Paulista intellectuals treated the ISEB with haughty and suspicious scorn."

The São Paulo School's critique of the ISEB's claim that the Brazilian industrialists were a national bourgeoisie committed to industrialization was apparently "confirmed" by this bourgeoisie's support of the 1964 military coup. At the same time, the critical posture of the Paulista sociologists toward the authoritarian regime and their leaning to the left and Marxist studies, combined with the fact that the military had extinguished the ISEB and with the claim that they spoke on behalf of science while the ISEB intellectuals were "contaminated" by politics, led the São Paulo School to a full "academic victory." The left wing's natural resentment of the military coup contributed to this outcome. After the coup, in the second half of the 1960s, this school—now leaning toward Marxism—participated actively in the development of a new interpretation of Brazil and Latin America, the dependency interpretation. It dominated Brazilian social science for a long time; it is only recently that a revision of its role in the intellectual history of Brazil and Latin America has begun.[8]

The ECLAC, although it shared most of the ISEB's ideas, was spared criticism, perhaps because its analysis was economic rather than political and, probably, because it would not serve the interests of the new interpretation to put the ECLAC side by side with the ISEB; it was more interesting to make the UN body adhere to the new views.[9] After the 1966 paper by Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment" (the founding document of the dependency interpretation), the left also criticized the national-bourgeoisie interpretation along the same lines as the São Paulo School of Sociology. Yet, the ECLAC was not included in the indictment that was directed to the ISEB and to the communist parties in the region. A sort of unspoken agreement was formed between the new theorists of dependency and the ECLAC so as to minimize conflict and expand cooperation between them. From this perspective the new ideas would mean not a rejection of the ECLAC's views but just an additional sociological contribution to thinking on center-periphery relations. In fact, the ECLAC surrendered to the new ideas, and, from this moment on, its golden age was over.

THE DEPENDENCY INTERPRETATION

In the intellectual history of Latin America, few topics have been addressed more confusingly and inaccurately than "dependency theory." First, it was not a theory or a strategy of development but a sociological and political interpretation of Latin America that competed successfully against the national-bourgeoisie interpretation. Second, it was not in fact critical of imperialism as it appeared to be but, in one version, suggested an association with rich countries. Emerging after the military coups in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, the dependency interpretation was a sociological analysis of the dependent form of capitalism that manifested itself in Latin America, generally associated with Marxism because its founder, Andre Gunder Frank, and one of its main representatives in Latin America, Ruy Mauro Marini, were prominent Marxist economists.

According to the latter, writing more than 20 years after the dependency interpretation was formulated, this interpretation was a response to the crisis of developmentalism in the early 1960s and "the outcome of struggles within the left," specifically between the communists, who had adopted the thesis of the democratic-bourgeois revolution, and the noncommunist left, which usually originated in populist movements (Marini, 1992: 85–86). Frank and Marini emphasized the exploitation of the periphery by the developed center, but, as Ronald H. Chilcote (1982: 14) has pointed out, "dependency theory has not provided us with any new theory of imperialism." Its main concern was to show the responsibility for development of the dependent local elites, including the industrial ones. Thus, it fundamentally rejected the national-bourgeoisie interpretation. While the ISEB's and the ECLAC's interpretation assumed the possibility of existence of a national bourgeoisie in the Latin American countries and gave it a crucial role in the construction of the Latin American nations and in the leadership of economic development, the dependency interpretation was characterized by the radical denial of the possibility that such a bourgeoisie could exist.

The term "dependency" as applied to the periphery is a counterpart of the term "imperialism" as applied to the center, and this has led many to believe that the imperialist and dependency approaches to explaining economic backwardness are equivalent. Gabriel Palma (1978), for instance, who wrote a well-known survey of dependency, did not understand this difference; he did not distinguish the national-bourgeoisie interpretation (which was an expression of the broader imperialist interpretation) from the dependency interpretation. In fact, the national-bourgeoisie interpretation was close to the imperialist one, while the dependency interpretation differed from both in two major respects. First, it argued that the cause of the economic backwardness of underdeveloped countries lay not only in exploitation by the imperial center but also, if not mainly, in the local elites' inability to be national, to think and to act in terms of national interests. While the national-bourgeoisie interpretation assumed that a national industrial bourgeoisie was emerging in opposition to the old Latin American elites, partly feudal and patriarchal, partly mercantile, the dependency interpretation denied any kind of societal dualism and therefore rejected the core internal conflict that characterized the ruling class in developing countries.

Frank (1966; 1969) denied this hypothesis and the whole idea of autonomous development on the periphery of capitalism. He argued that the national-bourgeoisie interpretation was a version of the sociological theory of modernization adopted by sociologists mainly in the United States. In fact, most supporters of the dependency interpretation, following the historian Caio Prado Jr. (1956 [1945]; 1966), claimed, against all the evidence, that industrial entrepreneurs were descendents of the first colonizers and not of recent immigrants and that the Latin American bourgeoisie had always been mercantile in character (in Brazil, a coffee planters' mercantile bourgeoisie) and incapable of introducing technical innovation or defining a national development strategy. I say "against all the evidence" because, principally in Brazil, it is today well established that industrial entrepreneurs came from immigrant families rather than coffee planters' families (Bresser-Pereira, 1964). At the same time, the associated-dependency version claimed that the theory of imperialism was mistaken in

arguing that the center was opposed to industrialization, given that multinationals had been investing in industrial plants in the region since the 1950s. According to this version, multinationals and international financial capitals did not oppose industrial development but set perverse conditions for it by promoting income concentration from the middle class upward and encouraging authoritarianism. Yet, it called for an association with multinationals because foreign savings (current account deficits financed by multinationals' direct investment and by foreign loans) were a prerequisite for economic growth in Latin America.[10]

Second, the dependency interpretation differed from the theory of imperialism (and therefore from the national-bourgeoisie interpretation) because the former was originally a Marxist theory while the latter was not; as was true of the national-bourgeoisie interpretation, it might be adopted by Marxists but was not intrinsically Marxist.[11] As a result, while the national-bourgeoisie interpretation focused on national exploitation, the dependency interpretation emphasized the exploitation of classes far more than the exploitation of nations. For Cardoso (1980c [1977]: 97), who is insistent in this respect, the essential trait of the dependency interpretation is not the study of imperialism 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 not surprising, therefore, that this theory had so much resonance in the United States, whose left-wing intellectuals saw it as something new and attractive in that it criticized capitalism but did not blame their country for Latin America's problems.

One of the sources of the dependency interpretation was the criticism of Celso Furtado's works of the second half of the 1960s. Consistently with the ECLAC view, Furtado argued that Latin America was moving toward stagnation because of the use of labor-intensive technology in manufacturing industry and the income concentration it caused. The critique of this view was originally outlined in the book by Cardoso and Faletto (1979 [1969]) and fully developed in two economic studies (Bresser-Pereira, 1984b [1970]; Tavares and Serra, 1972 [1971]) that explained why, after a major economic crisis in the early 1960s, Latin American economies started growing rapidly again (in Brazil, there was the 1968–1973 "economic miracle") by concentrating income in the middle and upper classes and making this increase in inequality consistent with aggregate demand by the production of luxury goods.[12]

Usually, the dependency interpretation is divided into two versions—the original overexploitation version and the associated-dependency version. I suggest a third, which I call the "national-dependent interpretation."[13] The first interpretation adopts a consistent but eventually utopian reasoning. Given the assumed impossibility of a national bourgeoisie in Latin America, workers had no choice but to strive for socialist revolution. It was, therefore, close to the theory of imperialism because it clearly acknowledged the existence of imperialism, but at the same time it radically criticized the national-bourgeoisie interpretation for denying any possibility of national development in the framework of underdeveloped capitalism. For Frank, Latin America had always been capitalist (albeit mercantile capitalist), and it was incorrect to claim that it had been experiencing a bourgeois national revolution since the 1930s. European colonization had been purely

mercantile, implementing only a primary-exports growth model in the region. Therefore capitalism and imperialism were the very causes of underdevelopment, to the point that the continent's least-developed areas were those that were experiencing major commodity-exporting booms. Along the same lines, Marini developed the overexploitation interpretation, acknowledging that, for some period of time, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat had had common interests that "led the vanguard of the petit bourgeoisie on to reformism and the policy of class cooperation," but "the military intervention of 1964 dealt a death blow to the reformists" (1969: 151). The national-bourgeoisie interpretation, therefore, was identified with the reformism that Marini admitted was valid for a while. Reformism failed because development in Brazil was based essentially on the overexploitation of workers, as seen in the below-subsistence wages paid to them and their long shifts and heavy workloads. Exploitation was a normal characteristic of capitalist economies that was heightened in dependent or peripheral countries and transformed into overexploitation as workers were subjected not only to the local dependent bourgeoisie but also to the imperial center. Theotônio dos Santos (1967; 1970; 1973) argued that the only alternatives for Brazil and Latin America generally were socialism and fascism (the latter identified with the military coups). His assessment was not limited to this point, and, along with Marini, he provided an important radical and critical contribution to the understanding of the Latin American underdeveloped, dependent, and authoritarian state. At the dependency level, he identified three historical forms: (1) colonial commercial exporting dependency, (2) financial-industrial dependency, consolidated in the late nineteenth century, and (3) post–World War II technological-industrial dependency, involving multinationals (Santos, 1970: 55). This latter type of dependency gave rise to a kind of "unequal and combined" development marked by deep inequalities arising from the overexploitation of the workforce.

The associated-dependency version sprang directly from the São Paulo School and was also Marxist in origin, although after it was formulated most of its proponents abandoned Marxism.[14] Its analysis was an immediate reaction to the military coups that began in the Southern Cone in 1964 and a reflection on the "economic miracle" that began in Brazil in 1968. The heavy industrial investments made at that time brought about another stage in import-substitution industrialization and at the same time appeared to be the underlying cause of a new political pact that united the state's technocrats with industrial entrepreneurs and multinationals and radically excluded workers. As a consequence, the new development model that emerged after 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 the associated-dependency interpretation, whose founding work was the essay by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (1979 [1969]). This book, followed by a series of further writings by Cardoso, merits many readings. For a long time the distinction was not clear to me between this version of the dependency interpretation and the "national-dependent" alternative, which always made more sense to me in that it preserved the idea of a national bourgeoisie but considered this bourgeoisie ambivalent and contradictory—sometimes associated with the nation and sometimes subordinated to the elites of the rich countries.[15]

Associated dependency can be summarized—with all the risks implied in a summary—in a simple idea: that when Latin American countries have no national bourgeoisie, they have no alternative but to associate themselves with the dominant system and take advantage of the loopholes it provides for their development. According to its supporters, a prerequisite for economic growth in these countries was the inflow of foreign savings, given that they supposedly lacked the resources to finance their own development. Ignoring the fact that industrial multinational corporations were simply capturing the domestic markets that had been closed to their exports and the fact that growth between 1930 and 1960 had been fundamentally financed by domestic savings, the associated-dependency interpretation viewed the participation of multinational corporations in industrialization as a condition for further growth. The fact that this participation had begun in the 1950s was taken as a de facto refutation of the national-bourgeoisie interpretation. Drawing upon their skills as sociological and political analysts, Cardoso and Faletto showed how social classes fought and mingled with each other in the power struggle set in a dependency framework and went beyond this in claiming the impossibility of the existence of national elites and in arguing for the need for foreign savings to finance growth. At that time, there were already studies and evidence refuting the first claim; a theoretical critique of the second claim was still lacking.[16]

The third version of the dependency interpretation is the national-dependent interpretation associated with Celso Furtado and Osvaldo Sunkel. I include myself in this view of Latin American development and underdevelopment. It lies close to the national-bourgeoisie interpretation; in fact it is critical of it only with regard to the new historical facts referred to earlier (the Cuban Revolution and the political radicalization that for some time united the manufacturing industry with the conservative or neoliberal segments of the bourgeoisie). In other words, it originated in the self-criticism of those who in the 1950s were optimistic enough about development in Latin America to identify themselves with the interpretations and proposals of the ISEB and the ECLAC. The acknowledgment and analysis of the new historical facts that led to the collapse of the national political coalition of industrialists and urban workers around the industrialization project are central to this interpretation. The intellectuals that I see as sharing the national-dependent interpretation clearly understood that the political and economic crisis of the 1960s was caused by a series of new historical facts that demanded a new interpretation but that these facts did not justify either abandoning the critique of imperialism, as in the associated- dependency interpretation, or asserting the absolute impossibility of a national bourgeoisie, as in both the overexploitation and the associated-dependency interpretations. This national-dependent interpretation recognized the dependent character of Latin American elites and for that reason may be considered part of the dependency interpretation, but because it treated this dependency as relative and contradictory it may also be viewed as an independent interpretation. It acknowledged that local elites tended to be alienated and cosmopolitan but emphasized the contradiction between the objective interests of the rich countries and those of middle-income countries such as Brazil. The term "national-dependent" that I use to identify it is a deliberate oxymoron: its two terms, joined by a hyphen, are in opposition to one another. The local capitalist or bourgeois class in Latin

America is often divided between, on the one hand, a mercantile and financial group associated with the rich countries and, on the other hand, an industrial bourgeoisie that experiences a constant contradiction between its desire to identify itself with the nation, with its policies for increasing profits and propping up capital accumulation, and the temptation to ally itself with the business elites of the countries of the center.

In the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisies in Europe and the United States were liberal and nationalist: the two ideologies were contradictory but instrumental in building strong nations endowed with large domestic markets and colonies in Asia and Africa. The case of Latin America was different, since its countries won independence from Spain and Portugal with the support of Britain and therefore did not fight a real war of independence. Only when the countries of the center experienced crisis, first with the Great Depression and then with World War II, did the opportunity for a national revolution in the region emerge. Yet in the second half of the twentieth century it was not surprising that the Latin American elites, faced with what they thought was a communist threat, reestablished their traditional association with international capitalism. Advocates of the overexploitation and associated-dependency interpretations wrongly believed that this meant that the Latin American industrial bourgeoisie had abandoned the idea of building a nation. Actually, particularly in Brazil, the business elites and the top public bureaucracy continued to be nationalist under the 1964–1984 military regime and to adopt a national developmentalist strategy. Yet, in contrast to Vargas's national developmentalism, which opened up some room for the working class, the military regime excluded the workers and the left intellectuals. Deploring the military coups of the period and attracted by the positive ideas of democracy and social justice that accompanied the associated-dependency interpretation, Latin American intellectuals became alienated from the idea of the nation and believed that improved standards of living, democracy, and greater social equality could be achieved without a national strategy. In many ways they were more alienated than the industrial bourgeoisie that they criticized. It is true that for many the subordinated character of associated dependency was not clear, even though Cardoso explicitly used the term in his works and even included it in one of his titles (Cardoso 1973 [1971]).

For all three versions of the dependency interpretation, the local elites were dependent on the elites in rich countries—on their standards of consumption and on their ideas. But whereas for the overexploitation version economic and social development was impossible in this framework and for the associated-dependency version it was possible only by accepting subordination to the center, for the national-dependent interpretation development was possible whenever the elites were guided by the national interest instead of by imperial recommendations and pressures—in other words, whenever national factors prevailed over dependent ones in defining policies and reforms. Only this view explains the national development experienced by Brazil and Mexico in particular between 1930 and 1980. The international ideological pressures that promote alienation are powerful. In certain cases, such as during the cold war, in addition to these pressures there was capitalist solidarity in the face of the communist (actually techno-bureaucratic) threat. But the interests of industrial entrepreneurs in domestic markets and the support they expected from their states in

international competition were strong arguments in favor of a nationalist approach. Therefore, they were characterized by an essential ambivalence: they were national and alienated, cosmopolitan and committed to the idea of a nation.

Instead, for the national-dependent interpretation, the more advanced Latin American countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica, had been successful in completing their capitalist revolutions, had a large middle class, and could and were expected to be democratic. The new authoritarianism was not a natural phase of economic development but the consequence of the collapse in the early 1960s of the national-bourgeois political pact in the face of the communist threat. Thus, authoritarianism was not "necessary" or inherent in economic development but the outcome of the ideological conflict in the region between capitalism and communism that characterized the cold war. Thus, in Brazil, after 1977 it became clear that the collapse of the authoritarian techno-bureaucratic–capitalist political pact and the return to democracy were under way when businessmen ceased to fear communism. In fact, as a reaction to the suite of authoritarian measures implemented by President Ernesto Geisel under the name of the "April package" in 1977, Brazilian entrepreneurs began to undo their alliance with the military and eventually led a new popular-democratic political coalition side by side with workers, left-wing intellectuals, and members of the middle classes (Bresser-Pereira, 1978; 1984d). Its objectives were the pursuit of redemocratization, the reduction of social inequalities, and the resumption of economic growth, which had stalled in 1980 in the midst of a major foreign-debt crisis. In the 1980s most Latin American countries turned to democracy principally because their business elites had ceased to fear communism but also because the United States, which likewise no longer feared communism, had ceased to support the military regimes in the region. The democratic transition took place, and the new democracies tended to consolidate. Yet the new democratic political coalitions failed to restore the high rates of growth that characterized Latin America between 1930 and 1980, while at the same time the dynamic Asian countries continued to grow and to catch up. There are many reasons for this outcome, but one that should not be overlooked is that intellectuals overestimated the dependency of local elites and the power of rich countries.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the three versions of the dependency interpretation, besides being distinguished from one another with regard to the possibility of national elites' overcoming their national alienation, also differ in terms of the two fundamental ideological divisions that have characterized the modern world: left versus right and nationalism versus cosmopolitism. The overexploitation interpretation was radically left-leaning; although denying the possibility of the construction of a nation on the periphery of capitalism, it was critical of imperialism, clearly rejecting any association with it. In turn, the associated-dependency interpretation was moderately left-wing and cosmopolitan. Finally, the national-dependent interpretation was moderately left-wing but clearly nationalist: despite acknowledging the ambivalence of the bourgeoisie and the political elites, it deemed it

possible for them to display nationalist political behavior. At the same time, while the associated-dependency interpretation had no criteria for objecting to a foreign strategy imposed on the nation (which explains why Latin America was so vulnerable to the Washington consensus), the national-dependent interpretation assumed that in a world characterized by competition among nation-states, economic development could be achieved only with a national strategy. Rich countries had become rich because, in contrast to those of Latin American countries, their citizens had no doubt about the government's duty to defend national labor, knowledge, and capital (Bresser-Pereira, 2008).

In the 1950s nationalist Latin American intellectuals at the ECLAC and the ISEB criticized imperialism, formulated the national-bourgeoisie interpretation, and devised a national-developmentalist strategy that was successful in promoting economic growth. For the ISEB, development was a historical process that implied a capitalist revolution through industrialization and a national revolution that enabled the country to formulate a national development strategy. In it, the presence of a national instead of an alienated bourgeoisie was a necessary condition. After the Cuban Revolution, the first great economic crisis experienced by the import-substitution model, and the political crisis marked by ideological radicalization that ended in military coups in Brazil (in 1964), Argentina (in 1967), Uruguay (in 1968), and Chile (in 1973), the national-developmentalist strategy became an object of criticism within the left itself. In the early 1960s, the São Paulo School of Sociology began to criticize the ISEB's ideas and to deny the possibility of national elites. By the end of that decade, the dependency interpretation, which rejected the possibility of a national revolution and the formation of strong nation-states in the region, had emerged. This interpretation was to generate three versions, of which only the national-dependent one recognized that economic development depended on the capacity of the Latin American industrial bourgeoisie to become associated with the state bureaucracy and the working class in each country, although it was well aware of the ambivalent and contradictory character of the Brazilian elites. Yet it was not the national-dependent interpretation but the associated-dependency interpretation that was dominant among Latin American intellectuals between the 1970s and the 1990s. In this period Latin American left-wing intellectuals and politicians concentrated their attention on the problems of democracy and social justice—problems that were really pressing—but, as a perverse tradeoff, converted from nationalism to cosmopolitanism, they lost their concept of the nation. Since the generation that adopted these ideas in the 1970s came to political power in the 1990s, the Latin American countries experienced low rates of growth compared either with those of the 1930–1980 period, in which a national-development strategy was in place, or with those of the fast-growing Asian countries, which preserved the idea of the nation despite neoliberal and globalist hegemony.

NOTES

1. This national-bourgeoisie interpretation became dominant in the 1950s. It superseded the previously dominant interpretation, the agrarian or primary-goods vocation interpretation, which rejected the possibility and the necessity of industrialization in the region (Bresser-Pereira, 1984c).

2. As a UN body, the ECLAC does not use the term "imperialism" but speaks instead of "center" and "periphery."

3. Vargas was a political populist in that he was able to establish a direct relation with the masses without the intermediation of ideological political parties (which actually did not exist in Brazil), but he was not an economic populist—a politician who spends more than the state's revenues permit.

4. This debate took place at the Second Congress of the Latin American Sociological Society, held in Rio de Janeiro July 10–17, 1953 (see Ramos, 1954; Arruda, 2001: 237–241).

5. In this book, Cardoso offered an early criticism of the ISEB's ideas (1964: 81–82). This criticism was later radicalized by two representatives of the São Paulo School of Sociology, Caio Navarro de Toledo (1977) and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978), while Francisco de Oliveira (1972) criticized Celso Furtado's and the ECLAC's structuralist and dualist concept of underdevelopment. Alzira Alves Abreu (1975) required intellectual independence to write in Paris a competent Ph.D. dissertation about the ISEB in the 1970s. According to her personal deposition, the topic was regarded by her friends from São Paulo as inappropriate unless the goal was to criticize the ISEB fiercely. Divided after 1958 and dissolved and persecuted by the military regime for being left-leaning in 1964, the ISEB intellectuals were also the victims of mistaken and resentful criticism from the intellectual Brazilian left.

6. In a recent paper, Octavio Rodrigues notes that three industrialization models can be found in Latin America: liberal industrialization, national-populist industrialization, and state-developmentalist industrialization, as illustrated by Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, respectively. He shows that the industrial bourgeoisie played a key role in the second and third forms (Rodrigues, 2005: 178–82). The ECLAC was the source of inspiration for the second and third models, which, for the purposes of this paper, I combine in what I call the national-developmentalist model.

7. Being much older, Caio Prado Jr., the famous Brazilian Marxist and communist historian, was not a member of the São Paulo School of Sociology, but he lent it unexpected support with his essay *A revolução brasileira* (1966), which was as remarkable as it was mistaken.

8. Norma Côrtes quotes from Jaguaribe (1979: 102) a sentence that makes reference to me: "Almost all studies of the ISEB—with the important exception of Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira . . . —have come from a new generation of intellectuals, usually through doctoral theses, 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." A sign of this revision is Toledo (2005).

9. See, for example, Cardoso's (1980b [1977]) general assessment of the ECLAC, which is more supportive than critical, and his statement (1980a [1972]: 65) 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 ECLAC school, criticized it *sine ira ac studio* [without anger and without partiality]."

10. This paper is not a survey of the dependency interpretation. On that subject, see Chilcote (1981: 298–312).

11. The theory of imperialism was initially developed by Hobson, who was not a Marxist, and later embraced by Lenin. The dependency interpretation, in both its overexploitation and its associated-dependency versions, is clearly Marxist in origin.

12. The classical study of dependency by Ruy Mauro Marini, *Dialectics of Dependency* (1973), adopts this approach while using a rigorous Marxist method to explain dependency.

13. In his comprehensive survey of dependency, Gabriel Palma (1978) also identifies three versions and, correctly, associates two founders of the ECLAC's structuralist development theory (Celso Furtado and Osvaldo Sunkel) with the third version.

14. The great exception was Florestan Fernandes. When he founded the school he was not a Marxist, but he became one in the 1960s and, as often happens to republican intellectuals as they grow older, moved to the left in the 1970s in identifying himself with the overexploitation dependency interpretation.

15. In "Six Interpretations on the Brazilian Social Formation" (Bresser-Pereira, 1984c), I identified a "functional capitalist" interpretation that corresponds to associated-dependency interpretation here. Mistakenly, I linked Cardoso not with that interpretation but with the "new dependency interpretation," the one that I am here calling the "national-dependent."

16. Asian countries, which often developed with current-account surpluses, clearly illustrate this mistake. Cardoso, who was president of Brazil from 1995 to 2002, adopted the policy of growth with foreign savings but failed to increase investment and growth rates. This fact inspired my empirical and theoretical critique of the policy, which usually involves a high rate of substitution of foreign for domestic savings (Bresser-Pereira, 2004). For a pioneering work on this substitution see Jedlicki (1988).

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