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Jaimes Acevedo, Juana Marcela

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Lines of thought from Latin America, the precursors of thought on underdevelopment

Juana Marcela Jaimes Acevedo ^a

^a Autonomous University of Puebla, Mexico.

Email: juana.jaimes@alumno.buap.mx

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Abstract

This article reviews the leading exponents of Latin American thought on underdevelopment, emphasizing their importance amid the dominant theories being systematically proposed worldwide. It also highlights their transcendence in generating a vernacular line of thought on the region's development in relation to the patterns of capitalist power established as the structural basis on which the unequal course of Latin America has been perpetuated. Thus, the objective is to retake their theoretical approaches, proposing that we can find cues in their analytical suggestions that contribute to the forced exercise of thinking from a Latin American point of view and move towards other alternatives for the future.

Keywords: Latin American thought; underdevelopment; inequality; political economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

When discussing development problems, a fundamental question that must be raised and that often gets left aside is thinking about development from the perspective of Latin America. As Bautista (2014) affirms, original lines of thought, which focus on the need to think from non-Western points of view, emerge in the present context of the reality in which we live. This enables the possibility to learn and act in relation to the humanity we are a part of.

Based on this first idea, it is important to clarify the use of the term Latin America, which in this article is not used to designate a homogeneous and uniform group, but on the contrary, as Bolívar Echeverría (2011) points out, it refers to societies and populations¹ that internally have diverse behavioral customs, contexts and logics, which make it difficult to establish the existence of a single Latin American identity, but which have found in that same plurality a condition of unity in itself² vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Therefore, when we talk about Latin America (LA), we are referring to a plurality of societies, which, by affirming their unity, affirm their otherness and difference as a life-affirming characteristic, but which, as a group, based on the Western paradigm, has wanted to be seen and treated as an undifferentiated whole.

This article aims to carry out a historical review of the theoretical texts written by leading authors in the field of Latin American economic thought in order to emphasize their importance amid the development paradigms, highlighting their value in generating a vernacular line of thought which was able to understand that the proposal of these discourses was the reproduction of specific patterns of power that would lay the foundations for backwardness and inequality in the Latin American region. On this basis, we hypothesize that in order to analyze the current reality of Latin America, we need to return to the origins of Latin American economic thought since the sources of social, political and economic action can be found therein, allowing us to envisage alternative potentialities for the region.

Pursuant to the foregoing, this article is organized as follows: first, a contextualization of development economics is provided, which includes critical Latin American approaches under development since before the second half of the twentieth century, mainly by José Martí and José Carlos Mariátegui; second, the initial formulations that would mark the bases of Western development discourse are established, based on authors such as Lewis, Rostow and Myrdal; third, a theoretical review is made of the Latin American response from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the creators of the area, and of other authors relevant to the region; concluding with the final considerations, in which it is argued that the precursors of Latin American thinking on underdevelopment and international imbalance are fundamental since their approaches, contributions and cues contribute to the essential exercise of thinking in Latin America in order to conceive other possible futures.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The world has been analyzed, interpreted and directed from a Eurocentric perspective, where the knowledge constructed from the dominant centers cancels out any reason or experience. In turn, this process has been framed in the rhetoric of a modernity that has cemented the capitalist civilization project, which conceives the world as a container for accumulating workforce and resources in the pursuit of progress.

A dominant paradigm that has gradually been inserted is the idea of development because since the eighteenth century, with the classical lines of thought of economics, sources of progress and the economic evolution of nations in different stages were already being analyzed (Smith). Furthermore, an underlying concern for growth would be detected and references to regions considered barbaric, backward, savage or primitive would be found, which were even referred to in the writings of Marx and Engels (Guillén, 2018).

It is in this context that it can be understood that, later in the nineteenth century, Latin American critical opinions emerged, including that of José Martí, a Cuban politician and poet, who for his time, had extraordinary clarity regarding the reality of the continent, being the first to point out that there was a marked difference in the "start-up of the two Americas" and prophesying the "oppressive nature" which evidenced the disdain of the United States (Marinello, 2005).

Marinello (2005) describes Martí's work with great emotion, explaining how he understood the inequality that hung over the continent, referring to "rapacious majorities" and "miserable minorities" in a scenario of economic relations between the two Americas, which represented an instrument of subordination to prevent the free development of Our America. This was mainly based on a mixture of anti-imperialism, Latin Americanism³ and Cuban nationalism, epistemological points of view that led him to move away from Europe and generate an independent line of thought, which would vindicate his region of origin.

In addition to Martí, at the beginning of the 20th century, another critic who focused on the issue of development was José Carlos Mariátegui, a Peruvian journalist and writer, one of the first to speak out on the exploitation of indigenous communities in Latin America, recognizing the historical importance of the conquest in the development of the region's economy and its subsequent insertion into the global economy. His life experiences in Peru and abroad (rapprochement to Marxism) allowed him to analyze the economic evolution from the colonial economy to the agrarian economy,⁴ which predominated in the first decades of the century (economic structures still maintained in Latin America today). These analyses highlighted the internal inequalities between the different groups of cohabitants and between which there was an increasing inequality gap, allowing him to warn of the existing imbalance between national economies on an international level.

Mariátegui was a fundamental influence in Latin American theoretical debates concerning two essential issues; *i*) he was a pioneer in the description of economies of a dependent nature, which through local intermediaries (oligarchies, landowners, military) prevented subsistence and underdevelopment; and *ii*) he represented an essential basis for the introduction of Marxism in Latin America, since his observations overcame the recurrent dogmatism of the time, incorporating into his line of thought a conception of Marxism as a "method of historical interpretation and action" (Quijano, 2007).

These authors valued the exercise of thinking based on one's own contexts. They represented a subversion to the prevailing line of thought of the time, which was increasingly turning towards static thinking, shifting interest towards the problems of resource allocation and trade theory and directing analyses towards the large capitalist economies, focusing almost exclusively on business cycles and the stagnation that could affect them (Guillén, 2018).

A path that intensified after World War II and that would be fully established in point 4 of Truman's speech (1949), a moment that was clearly marked by the need to reconfigure world order and which occurs as a result of the circumscription of countries in specific categories on a global level, such as developed or underdeveloped.⁵

This duality would be the starting point for the establishment of development economics. This sub-discipline sought to analyze the strategies that drove the economic growth of first-world countries and to determine the possible obstacles preventing them from achieving solid and constant progress, establishing general economic models in which the gross domestic product (GDP) was consolidated as an indicator of development and the well-being of people and societies was determined by the development of a nation.

3. INITIAL FORMULATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

The beginning of development theories⁶ was linked to dualism, which referred to the coexistence of heterogeneous economic and social structures on a global level, a line that would mark the bases of the development discourse in the mid-twentieth century and which would be established based on specific approaches. One of the first approaches would be that of Lewis (1960), who proposed the existence of a traditional subsistence and a modern capitalist sector, in which development occurred from the unlimited supply of existing labor in one sector, which would end up being absorbed by the other, based on the transfer of resources and people (Guillén, 2018). This view, which had many critics, was one of the first theoretical proposals to synthesize the duality established on a global level in a joint explanation.

A second approach would be that of Rostow (1960) since, as a result of his views, the international debate would begin to revolve around two central questions: How to grow? And what are the obstacles to growth? He proposed that development revolves around stages in which countries follow ascending linearity, within which it is possible to place any society according to its economic dimensions.⁷ One of his main intentions was, on the one hand, to try to demonstrate that it was possible to stimulate the growth of recently decolonized countries and that they would join the path of modernization, and on the other, to establish that progress could not be achieved in any other way, and much less, through communism, which was above all an impediment to development⁸ (Guillén, 2018).

A third approach, which would prove to be very relevant, would be that of Myrdal (1967), who established that the problems of development and underdevelopment referred explicitly to a social phenomenon that involved vicious circles, theorizing that success and failure follow a cumulative process in both directions, and if this is not regulated, it leads to an increase in inequalities. Thus, he proposes the distinction of two specific effects. This whirlpool effect refers to the fact that wealth attracts wealth and, in that same movement, engenders poverty, and the propagation effect, which allows the spread from the centers of expansion, causing virtuous circles that oppose the vicious circles, which lead to stagnation and underdevelopment (Guillén, 2018).

Guillén (2018) also explains that authors such as these, who promoted the line in development economics in the mid-twentieth century, mostly considered multidisciplinary analyses constituted as authentic branches of economic science. This would change in the seventies, eighties and nineties, when the issue of underdevelopment would begin to be set aside, above all, from a multidisciplinary point of view, considering that rather than new branches of economic analysis, what was needed were economic models that adapted to macro and microeconomic issues.

Although these initial analyses of development constituted an improvement in terms of existing economic studies (previous and current), their approaches were developed from Eurocentric perspectives, which made any academic contribution from the Third World invisible and where development was contemplated as a positive effect, which does not have any type of complexity, with ideas that do not perceive social conflicts and where there is no space to think that there is a structural connection between development and underdevelopment (Guillén, 2018).

4. LATIN AMERICAN THINKING ON DEVELOPMENT

Based on this construction on development, the capacity of these economic formulations and theories to explain the phenomena of the reality of underdeveloped countries is questioned. The main criticisms were then directed to the problems of distribution and growth that generated inequity and poverty, to the limitations of GDP as an indicator, to the limitation of natural resources and the deterioration of the environment. Inconsistencies that marked the failure of development or what Unceta (2014) calls bad development, a global systemic failure.

Development, as its strategists had conceived it at the end of World War II, resulted in a phenomenon capable of impoverishing people and societies, generating losses (of capacities, identity, natural resources), restricting rights and freedoms, and provoking new imbalances and inequalities [...] This model had contributed to consolidate a world system based on deep disparities [...] and on a balance of power clearly favorable to the so-called developed countries (Unceta, 2014, pp. 55 and 56).

This failure led to the need for different, alternative approaches, and above all, for Latin America, it represented the need to develop its own policies and explanations of its conditions. It meant that the region found itself, for the first time facing uncertainty and questioning its history and the direction it should take. At this moment, the theoretical currents presented below mark a fundamental turning point.

The ECLAC line of thought

ECLAC's line of thought is defined by three main stages,⁹ although undoubtedly its boom period and one that marked a determining moment of identity and idiosyncrasy was the first, starting in the 1950s with Prebisch, Furtado, Noyola and Pinto, who occupy "a pre-eminent place in the formation and development of structuralist development thinking, [and appear as] the main Latin American contribution, if not the only one, to economic science" (Guillén, 2017, p. 157).

As stated by Sunkel (2000), this era marks an initial contribution that is fundamental for the development of ECLAC's thinking and incorporates an "overview of the Latin American region that contributed to the construction of a unified Latin American economic discourse" (p. 34).

At this time, Prebisch¹⁰ (1986) highlighted the main problems for the development of Latin America beyond the initial metropolitan formulations, emphasizing that the international division of labor implied a global segmentation between a periphery producing raw materials and food and an industrial center receiving all the advantages of development. This basis established discrepancies between the forces of capitalization, imbalance and marked differences in standards of living.

Prebisch understood that there was a problem in the generation of knowledge, in which the theoretical production of the great industrial centers was not compatible with the facts and experiences of the region, and that there was a need for its own line of thinking aimed at reducing imbalance and extracting the necessary elements to promote economic development.

It is not surprising, then, that in the studies that tend to be published on the economy of Latin American countries, the criteria or special experience of the great centers of the global economy often prevails. We can hardly expect to find solutions that directly concern us from them. It is therefore essential to clearly present the case of the Latin American countries so that their interests, aspirations and possibilities, while of course considering their specific differences and modalities, may be adequately integrated into general formulas for international economic cooperation (Prebisch, 1986, pp. 479 and 480).

Prebisch's contributions (1986) also included an analysis of the change in the main cyclical center (from England to the United States), where the protectionist measures taken to establish a more closed economy generated a problem of availability of foreign trade and a deterioration in the terms of trade, in response to which a countercyclical proposal was proposed in terms of imports/exports.

Based on this theoretical approach, special attention is paid to industrialization, foreign investment and foreign trade as sources of external strangulation of Latin America's development. Still, at the same time, it is explained that these elements can be strategically directed towards an objective for regional and national development to achieve growth and, therefore, increase the quality of life of Latin American societies.

Prebisch represented an important change in Latin American thinking and although his neoclassical influences meant that initially he did not pay sufficient attention to inequality and disparity in income distribution,¹¹ he represented a first step towards beginning to take the focus away from economic development and how it had been approached up to that point.

Likewise, the Commission's thinking on development was primarily constructed by Celso Furtado, seeking to overcome the perspective in terms of "explaining the behavior of the productive system that emerged as a result of industrial civilization" (ECLAC, 1980, p. 9), broadening its field of study to understand it as a global process involving the following:

Transformation of society at the level of the means, but also of the ends; the process of accumulation and expansion of productive capacity, but also of appropriation of the social product and configuration of that product; social division of labor and cooperation, but also social stratification and domination; introduction of new products and diversification of consumption, but also destruction of values and suppression of creative capacity (Furtado, 1983, p. 9).

Furtado (1983) perceived how in the global vision of development a sort of civilizing manifest destiny of Europe was evident, which also proposed an optimistic vision of history and modernity, in which the accumulation of wealth was marked by a promise of greater welfare; but which in the background constituted a series of structures of social domination in which everything was seen from its trade value in a process of commodification of life.

Furtado (1983) emphasized the problems of development-underdevelopment, warning about the predatory actions of capitalist economic processes, where an increase in productivity results in a degradation of the quality of life for the most vulnerable countries; the State acts as a privileged instrument of controlled accumulation; and technical progress is oriented to satisfy only the privileges of minorities.

He also affirmed that the study of domination and labor relations systems reveals the incredible complexity of the social structures of underdeveloped countries, which bring with them marginalization and concentration of wealth and income (Furtado, 1980).

In his opinion, the approach led by Prebisch would serve to understand that underdevelopment is a structural conformation of the global economic system and not an evolutionary phase to be overcome by following the "path taken" by the industrial centers.

Furthermore, Noyola would be a pioneer in contributing to the ECLAC's structuralist thinking by locating "the origin of the external imbalance in the very process of growth under the impulse of import substitution industrialization, and not only in the deterioration of the terms of trade that stemmed from the international division of labor" (Guillén, 2017, p. 160).

Noyola (1956) presented a methodological proposal for studying inflation, understanding it as "the result of real imbalances which manifest themselves in the form of increases in the general level of prices. This real dimension of the inflationary process is much more perceptible in underdeveloped countries than in industrial countries" (Noyola, 1956, p. 162). In his theoretical contribution, an emphasis on the distributive question of inflation can be observed and, as a result, inflation is presented as a matter of class struggle, a struggle for redistribution. "The ideas presented by Noyola in 1956 formed the basis on which the structuralist analyses of inflation such as that of Osvaldo Sunkel and Aníbal Pinto were later developed, which made it possible to confront monetarist fund monetarism" (Guillén, 2018, pp. 211 and 212).

Finally, it is worth highlighting the work of Aníbal Pinto at the ECLAC in the seventies, renewing the concept of structural heterogeneity. He spoke of the concentration of the fruits of technical progress and its demonstration through the distribution of income between classes and between regions, explaining that the productive structure of the region was divided into: *i)* primitive, referring to productivity and income levels similar or lower than those of the colonial and pre-Columbian economy; *ii)* the modern pole, which includes service, industrial and export activities that are performed with productivity levels similar to those classified as average in developed economies; and *iii)* the intermediate, with average productivity in the social system (Guillén, 2018). "According to Pinto, industrialization did not eliminate structural heterogeneity, it only modified its form perpetuating underdevelopment despite economic growth" (Guillén, 2018, p. 215).

Guillén (2018) explains that the work of the ECLAC¹² was an attempt to free itself from external ideas, seizing from the central economists the monopoly of the explanation of the world, with the inexorable conviction of becoming intellectually independent and "to take part in the debate about the economic course that the world had to take after putting behind it the greatest war in the history of mankind" (Guillén, 2018, p. 192).

In its first stage, the ECLAC's line of thought went beyond economic discourse; it was instead a Latin American epistemological proposal that sought to account for the unbalanced conditions that maintained the region in underdevelopment, setting a precedent: thinking from and for Latin America.

The Dependency Line of Thought

In the 1960s, in parallel to the work being carried out by ECLAC, the theory of dependency was formulated, with, in particular, disciplinary ideas of a sociological and Marxist nature. The dependency theses represented "a critical effort to understand the limitations of a development initiated in a historical period in which the world economy was already constituted under the dominance of huge economic groups and powerful imperialist forces" (Dos Santos, 2002, p. 5).

Dos Santos (2002) takes up Blomström and Hettne (1990) to identify in general terms the main antecedents of this theoretical approach: *i)* the need to criticize Eurocentric development theories, which included the nationalist positions of "Euro-American imperialism" and the neoclassical economic principles of Prebisch and ECLAC; *ii)* the debates between classical Marxism and neo-Marxism that drove a renewed Latin American debate on underdevelopment, among which the works of Baran and Sweezy (1982) stand out.

In this context, it was understood that dependent capitalism in Latin America faced a significant structural crisis. It was necessary to seek new directions away from the traditional theoretical frameworks, in which the discussion of underdevelopment only revolved around the absence of development (understood merely as economic growth), and backwardness was explained based on the existing obstacles to achieving modernization and a full state of development (Dos Santos, 2002).

According to Bambirra (1978), the crisis (economic, political, social and cultural) not only undermined the notions of the communist parties that considered the alliance of the exploited classes with the national and progressive bourgeoisie to achieve "nationalist, democratic, anti-oligarchic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist governments", but also the fundamental assumptions on which ECLAC theory was based, which were considered developmentalist.¹³

The critique of the dependency theory suggests that the aim of ECLAC was for Latin America to follow a development model copied from the developed countries, eliminating "the socio-political and cultural obstacles to development that were embedded in the so-called 'traditional societies'" (Bambirra, 1978).

The basic assumption that development is in the interest of all (without asking, by the way, what kind of development is in the interest of each class) provided the critical premise for an ideology of development. This ideology was already being promoted in Latin America through the best expressions of populist nationalism (Bambirra, 1978, p. 17).

Overcoming the possible contradictions of the aforementioned approaches, after ECLAC, dependency theorists continued on the path of constructing Latin American thought, which seeks to explain the existing imbalances on an international level and which implied a situation of inequality and underdevelopment for the countries of the region.

One of the most prominent authors is Marini (1991), with his ideas on the dialectic of dependence, who argues that Latin America's relations with the capitalist centers are located in an international labor structure that determines the course of development in the region and establishes dependence among nations.

He also argues that Latin America has played a vital role in the development of capitalism, referring to its capacity to create a global food supply, an inescapable condition for its insertion in the international capitalist economy and that beyond this, the region's participation in the worldwide market

contributes to the shift in the axis of accumulation of the industrial economy from the production of absolute surplus value to that of relative surplus value (Marini, 1991).

[...] that accumulation depends more on the increase in the productive capacity of labor than simply on the exploitation of the worker. However, the development of Latin American production, which allows the region to contribute to this qualitative change in the central countries, will be fundamentally based on greater worker exploitation. This contradictory element of Latin American dependence determines the relations of production in the capitalist system as a whole, which should attract our attention (Marini, 1991, p. 4).

According to Marini (1991), the secret of unequal relations was that the nations that are harmed by unequal trade do not seek to correct the imbalance between prices and the value of exports but try to compensate for the losses through a "super-exploitation" of the worker, which involves intensification of labor, prolongation of the working day and undervalued remuneration.

Moreover, based on Marxist ideology, we have Gunder Frank (1969), one of the most recognized authors of this current, for whom underdevelopment in a dependent society cannot be understood if it is not seen as the product of a bourgeois policy and a class structure that respond to and are determined by dependence on the colonialist and imperialist metropolises.

Some of the ideas proposed by Gunder Frank (1969) include understanding the conquest as a situation that placed Latin America in a position of subordination and colonial and neocolonial economic dependence with respect to the global system; and that this relationship of dependence determines direct class interests for the dominant sector of the bourgeoisie, who use the State as an instrument to generate policies of underdevelopment (economic, social, political, cultural) that worsen what he calls the development of underdevelopment.

This author created two of the terms that are still used to a large extent to describe and discuss the situation of the countries in the region: lumpen-bourgeoisie,¹⁴ as a class and active instrument of industry and foreign trade, interested in maintaining the process of "miserable underdevelopment", or lumpen-development, as he referred to the situation and reality of the region at that time (Gunder Frank, 1969).

Among the theoreticians with a significantly sociological perspective are Cardoso and Faletto (1969), who stated that the economic analyses of previous years had allowed Latin America to believe in unrealistic expectations¹⁵ and, for this reason, it was necessary to carry out integrated investigations that explained development as a social process, but that went beyond the partial and reduced studies that had been carried out up to that time, and that only generated erroneous conceptions of reality.

In their opinion, it was fundamental to analyze how the economies of underdeveloped countries "were historically linked to the global market and how the internal social groups that defined the international relations inherent to underdevelopment were constituted" (Guillén, 2018, p. 216).

Contrary to the difficulty that the dependency theory had to "impose itself as the dominant paradigm", there is no doubt that it had a far-reaching impact in LA on several theoretical perspectives (including ECLAC), as Guillén (2018) points out. "The idea of commercial, financial, technological and cultural dependence began to be found regularly in the approaches of Furtado, Sunkel and Prebisch forming a third structuralist variant of the theory" (Guillén, 2018, pp. 217 and 218).

The reciprocal criticism and analysis between the ECLAC and dependency approaches benefited and enriched a Latin American emancipatory line of thought that questioned the elements that determined the inequity and inequality of internal and external relations in the region, reinforcing the condition of underdevelopment and which, up to now, have marked the horizon of action for academic circles in Latin America.

Other relevant currents in the region

First of all, we must highlight the importance of Gino Germani's proposals. Born in Italy and with his childhood and youth marked by the growing fascism in Europe, he moved to Argentina at 23 (from 1934 to 1946), which defined his intellectual perspective and made him a fundamental pioneer of sociology in Latin America.

Germani (1962) proposes a structural analysis of politics and society during transition periods.¹⁶ This is based on understanding how the cultural and social dimensions form a unit, which is modified by the asynchronous nature of change, implying a division of society.

Thus, concepts such as global society or nation-state can be understood in terms of structure, which implies a perception of the sociocultural world as a set of interrelated parts (susceptible to differentiated analysis) that are mutually dependent and, therefore, reciprocally affected (Germani, 1962).

His approach includes the importance of integrating analytical elements such as actor, situation and regulatory framework, as part of the study of social action that influences the structure and refer to prescriptive or elective measures within a typology of action, which is proposed for the analysis of development (Germani, 1962).

In the 1970s, Octavio Ianni, a Brazilian sociologist, presented his work on populism in Latin America, in which he referred to one of the region's characteristic political phenomena of the 20th century.

Ianni (1975) stated that most studies on populism are based on two assumptions that are illadvised for the real Latin American context: *i)* that it is a political phenomenon that occurs within a broader process of modernization in Latin American societies; *ii)* that it results from the inability to achieve a representative democracy, i.e., capitalist-based, according to the European or North American model.

For Ianni (1975) in particular, it was essential to analyze the historical conditions responsible for the development of populist movements and governments (within an international context of capitalist relations) and how they transform social structures.

The author highlights several important points: he emphasizes that although there may be parallels and similarities due to a joint structural, historical development, it is necessary to identify the significant elements of each country's experience. He carries out an analysis of the cases of populism in

Russia and the United States, which define specific guidelines to understand the Latin American phenomenon better, and he inferred that populism should be brought up in the debate on important elements such as modernization, democracy, developmentalism and capitalism (Ianni, 1975).

Finally, it is important to mention the importance of the Cuban Revolution, a transcendental moment in the history of Latin America, which served as an intellectual and transformational incubator and shaped various processes in the development of Latin American thought. Over and above criticisms that can be made of its predecessors and the actual historical experience, it is important to remember that, because of the countless experiences and lessons learned, in this case, we recall some of the words of Fidel Castro that still resonate strongly today and mention sections of the *Second Declaration of Havana*, which are worth remembering and analyzing in light of our current reality.

The subjective conditions of each country (i.e., the factor of awareness, organization, leadership) can accelerate or delay the revolution according to its greater or lesser degree of development, but sooner or later, in each historical epoch, when the objective conditions reach maturity, awareness is acquired, organization is achieved, leadership emerges and the revolution takes place (Castro, 1962, p. 30).

The people of America freed themselves from Spanish colonialism [...] but did not free themselves from exploitation. [...] Latin Americans, in one way or another, remained slaves and the nations' minimal hopes succumbed under the oligarchies' power and the flood of foreign capital. This has been the truth of America, in one way or another, with one or another nuance. Today Latin America lies under an imperialism much fiercer, more powerful and more ruthless than the Spanish colonial empire (Castro, 1962, p. 34).

The Organization of American States (OAS) was unmasked for what it is; a ministry of Yankee colonies, a military alliance, an apparatus of repression against the Latin American peoples' freedom movement (Castro, 1962, p. 49).

Latin Americans believe that the only thing incompatible with the destiny of Latin America is misery, feudal exploitation, illiteracy, hunger wages, unemployment, the policy of repression against the masses of workers, peasants and students, discrimination against women, blacks, Indians, mestizos, the oppression of the oligarchies, the plundering of their wealth by the oligarchies, the plundering of their wealth by the Yankee monopolies, the moral asphyxiation of their intellectuals and artists, the ruin of their small producers by foreign competition, economic underdevelopment, towns without roads, without hospitals, without housing, without schools, without industries, submission to imperialism, the renunciation of national sovereignty and the betrayal of the fatherland (Castro, 1962, p. 53).

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The economic theories of development laid the foundations for what is understood as progress through unidirectional models, which render invisible the specific rhythm of each nation as a society and its own limits, as the need emerges to debate and recognize alternative approaches, which also provide an explanation from autonomous points of view regarding their conditions.

History shows that development as conceived from the Eurocentric perspective of social sciences only increased inequality gaps and imbalance between Latin America and other nations of the world, aggravating regional and internal problems in each country, giving rise to the need for a Latin American way of thinking.

Important predecessors of the Latin American current and their theoretical corpus, which influenced the economic sphere and, subsequently, different disciplinary areas, have been taken up in an attempt to understand how they observed global systemic behavior from their own perspective and generated a basis of thought to build theories of development/underdevelopment in the region, analyzing the patterns of capitalist power (mainly) as the structural basis for the reproduction of internal and external imbalances in Latin America.

These forerunners of economic thought in Latin America paved the way for rediscovery and theoretical emancipation in the midst of a global environment that sought to establish a new world order. They tried to open up a space for possibilities and to engender a process of social emancipation through the enrichment of the analysis of reality at a crucial time in history, which will certainly remain engraved in history.

The concepts discussed in this article are understood above all as a paradigmatic rupture, a restoration of the Latin American historical awareness and a revealing effort regarding the conditions that have determined its position in the world. They are understood as postures that must be revisited, above all, in terms of their epistemological construction, to reopen a new path for the construction of thought from Latin America, which goes beyond the polarities and segmentations existing at present and resumes a reflection of the structural problems that maintain the region in a position of vulnerability on a global level and on an internal level in each country.

We must highlight the value given by these authors to multiculturalism, land, freedom and equity as indispensable elements for a dignified life. Going back to the origins of Latin American counter-hegemonic thought can be fundamental for finding clues and contributions to social action. The retrieval of these currents of thought and authors, whether to vindicate, compliment or criticize, is extremely significant in the current scenario, for a world that cannot be understood except through the historical chains it drags behind it and which is desperately in need of a change in course.

We are currently experiencing a moment of major crisis and transition. Social uprisings in the region are increasingly frequent and violent. We are facing a dispute that is tantamount to live or die, but this struggle needs the support of academic circles, of the centers of thought. There is a pressing need to transform reality from its foundations, but revolutionary action must go hand in hand with the theoretical production that accompanies Latin America on a path of rediscovery, awareness and determination.

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¹ This refers to countries from Central and South America and the Caribbean islands.

² This author believes that this unity is mainly due to two fundamental factors: i) mestizo coexistence, the main strategy for the reconstruction and reproduction of one's own social identity after the conquest, as a form of intervention in and opening up to the other; and ii) the implementation of different historical projects as a result of capitalist modernity, which have not been sufficient to sustain a complete fusion.

³ In contrast to Pan-Americanism where the United States predominated.

⁴ Mariátegui primarily highlights the agricultural nature of Peru, which maintains a semi-feudal system with large estates (due to the expropriation of land and the exploitation of workers and peasants) which are directed by foreign capitalism, leading to a predominance of promising crops for the agro-export economy (Mariátegui, 1928). To this day, this situation, which was similar throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and has left heartbreaking traces in the region, continues to be one of the main political, economic and social problems.

⁵ In this respect, it is also extremely important that after the war, "a large number of remaining colonized countries in the African and Asian continents claimed their independence [...] the governments of the newly independent countries sought to accelerate their development and requested collaboration from economists from the United Kingdom and the United States" (Guillén, 2018, p. 36).

⁶ Within the academic and theoretical processes of the field of economics, it would be Keynes who would exert an indirect influence and help establish a rupture in monoeconomics, which allowed the pioneers of development, to establish the bases of a new paradigm, determining notions of competition, performance or surplus labor force, as categories that would be fully integrated into the dominant economic theoretical corpus (Guillén, 2018).

⁷ His approach follows the logic that from the basic existence of a traditional society, the necessary conditions can be met to generate an initial economic impetus, which allows obstacles to be overcome, thus creating a state of permanent and sustained growth. This will allow it to become a modern society which over time and based on its economic results will find a place in the international system, which will generate an era of high consumption (Rostow, 1960).

⁸ It is worth mentioning that Rostow served as presidential advisor to several American governments and presented his ideas in the context of the Cold War when in the political and academic field, there was an intense rivalry between Americans and Soviets to establish the dominant paradigm.

⁹ The first, from its founding in 1948 until the 1960s; the second begins with the crises of the 1970s and 1980s; and finally, the current period.

¹⁰ Raúl Prebisch served as Executive Secretary of the ECLAC between 1950 and 1963, which is why most texts on the Commission explain that he was the leader of that school of thought.

¹¹ He believed that the reduction in disparity would be an effect of economic growth that would be achieved over time.

¹² Allusion is made to a group of economists who would make up what Furtado called "the ECLAC order of development", headed by Raúl Prebisch, and in addition to Celso Furtado and Juan Noyola, included Aníbal Pinto, Jorge Ahumada, Osvaldo Sunkel, Víctor Urquidí, among others (Guillén, 2018).

¹³ Dependency theory criticizes ECLAC's proposals, considered as corresponding to the interests of the Latin American national industrial bourgeoisie, in an exercise of analysis and questioning that they deemed necessary (Bambirra, 1978).

¹⁴ Frank (1969) explains that he uses the term lumpen bourgeoisie because of the inability to replace it with a different one and in response to the use of the word bourgeoisie and that, for him, it cannot be applied to the reality of Latin America and the Caribbean, since it refers to specific social processes in different geo-cultural contexts.

¹⁵ That development depended primarily on the capacity of each country to make the economic policy decisions required in a given situation, and that in this sense, it was only necessary to strengthen and modernize the State to achieve effective development policies (Cardoso and Faletto, 1969).

¹⁶ During the time he lived in both Italy and Argentina, Germani witnessed times of significant turbulence and political and social upheaval, which shaped the objectives of his work.