



Revista Katálysis

ISSN: 1982-0259

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Serviço Social e Curso de Graduação em Serviço Social da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

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Imperialismo, revolução e contrarrevolução na América Latina
Revista Katálysis, vol. 26, no. 3, 2023, September-December, pp. 369-371
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Serviço Social e Curso de Graduação em Serviço Social da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0259.2023.e95598>

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EDITORIAL

Imperialism, revolution and counter-revolution in Latin America

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After enduring the negative impacts of state terrorism, theoretical dogmatism, and academic neoliberalism, the Marxist Theory of Dependency (TMD) has been gaining traction as a theoretical framework embraced by various authors within the Brazilian *intelligentsia*, particularly in the field of Social Work. In the current climate, the *Katálysis* Journal is dedicating a volume to explore the class struggle in Latin America within the context of imperialist relations and dependency. The approach, pioneered by Ruy Mauro Marini, Vânia Bambilra, and Theotonio dos Santos, continues to demonstrate its relevance and critical methodology.

This robustness can be attributed to the incorporation of historical materialism and its essential concepts, including totality, historicity, contradiction, mediation, levels of abstraction, and determination. However, it also embraces what István Mészáros termed as a radical methodological openness when approaching historical development. This approach involves recognizing the potentialities embedded in each moment without reducing the historical process to a predetermined direction or 'necessary logic'. By doing so, it avoids the risk of overlooking important material dimensions and contradictions that, although not fully developed, are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of social reality. Explanations that rigidly adhere to a fixed structural perspective at any given moment can lead to an arbitrary simplification of the complexities of human action. Therefore, it is vital to consider latent elements present in social relations as an integral part of the analysis. This approach allows us to grasp the contradictions that create opportunities for emancipatory processes while also acknowledging the persistence of structures of exploitation and domination.

Viewing Latin America through the lens of these insights requires recognizing it as an open ontological totality. To achieve this understanding, it is essential to untangle the determinants that shape, arrange, and drive social relations across the continent. As the universal becomes universalized through particularization, the particular not only expresses the universal but also manifests itself uniquely in different times and spaces, giving rise to new historical developments. This dynamic process allows for the real to open itself to transformation or modified reaffirmation.

The TMD aimed to embrace this radical historical openness through its examination of the uneven development between imperialism and dependency. By exploring the additional tendencies in the value law that characterize dependent economic-social formations within the capitalist mode of production, TMD sought to shed light on the intricacies of these systems. In this issue of *Katálysis*, readers will encounter various relations categorized by Ruy Mauro Marini, such as the super-exploitation of labor, the counterinsurgency state, and the dependent state, which offer valuable explanations for current realities.



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Moreover, the study of transfers of value, splits in the phases of the capital cycle, and the pattern of capital reproduction also contributes to understanding the structures and tendencies that shape our societies. Without grasping these elements, our comprehension of the dynamics and complexities of Latin American societies would be limited. The concept of dependency, which was incorporated into Marxism by Theotonio dos Santos, has become a widely explored category to characterize Latin America. Vânia Bambirra further revealed how Brazil is an integral and inseparable part of the Latin American reality, challenging the prevalent emphasis on Iberian connections in the intellectual discourse of the Empire and the Republic. Additionally, TMD showed that this shared reality goes beyond the legacy of colonialism, as industrialization under the influence of a monopolized world market has led to a dependent capitalist development for the entire region.

As a branch of Marxism, the TMD faces the challenge of understanding and analyzing the contemporary trends of capitalism, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the significant transformations occurring in value chains. TMD remains attentive to the implications of these processes for the Latin American reality, as it continues to grapple with the evolving character of dependency. Furthermore, it delves into the new forms of labor that have emerged under the current crisis of capitalism. It examines the impacts not only within Latin America, where renewed instances of super-exploitation are observed, but also on a global scale where wages are decreasing in relation to the value of labor. These changes in the labor landscape are intertwined with processes such as capitalist racism and patriarchy, further complicating the dynamics of social inequality and exploitation. The role of states is also a crucial aspect of dependency studies, challenging the neoliberal discourse that downplays their significance. TMD recognizes the increasingly decisive role of states in ensuring the reproduction of capital's fetishized sociability, and the violent mechanisms of domination that come into play.

The impact of the TMD on Brazilian Social Work has been truly stimulating, as it has encouraged a renewed critical perspective. Inspired by the contributions of TMD, studies in this field have sought to incorporate new determinations into the analysis of the social question, approaching it from a totality viewpoint that considers the unity of class, gender, and race/ethnicity. This unitary perspective recognizes the importance of historical openness and uneven development in understanding the complexities of social issues in our societies. One significant area of investigation within Brazilian Social Work is the questioning of the periodization of the social question in Brazil. Researchers have delved into landmark works that shed light on various aspects, such as the relations of super-exploitation of the working class and their implications to structural racism. These studies analyze how these interconnected factors create conditions conducive to contemporary slavery and contribute to issues like the increase in domestic child labor. Furthermore, Brazilian Social Work has engaged in fruitful dialogues with the theory of social reproduction and the work of Heleieth Saffioti, advancing the field's understanding of societal structures and dynamics. The concept of the dependent state and its relationship with financialization has also been a topic of investigation, leading to a deeper exploration of how these factors impact the debates surrounding social policies within the country's social formations.

Indeed, the influence of the TMD extends beyond Social Work and permeates various important research fields in Brazil. Some of these fields include the political economy of health, legal studies, and economic history, among others. In the field of health, studies have been conducted to understand how dependency relations affect access to healthcare and the realization of health rights. Renowned reference centers such as the Joaquim Venâncio Polytechnic School of Health of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ) and the Institute of Social Medicine of the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) have been at the forefront of this research, providing valuable insights into the complexities of health inequalities in the country. In the legal field, the concept of dependency has been utilized to explain the poor and near to zero realization of rights and access to justice. Economic history has also seen significant contributions from the study of dependency. Research on the Brazilian economy, particularly during the period of the military-corporate dictatorship's economic "miracle," has revealed alternative narratives that challenge previously held assumptions. Moreover, the development of dependency research has been enriched by incorporating new structural determinants, such as land rent, into the analysis. The examples provided only scratch the surface of the breadth and depth of the impact of the TMD on Brazilian research.

It is crucial for Social Work to consider the relations of super-exploitation of the labor force to comprehend the determinants of the social question and the class struggle in Latin America. When the conditions of social reproduction for the entire working class are systematically violated, regardless of their active or inactive status in the labor force, it becomes essential to analyze how the boundaries between labor and social assistance are established and modified in the context of dependent capitalism. Additionally, the meaning and content of social policy and the role of the Social Worker must be critically examined to uphold the ethical-political commitment of Brazilian Social Work. These are significant issues that deserve the attention of social workers. The TMD offers a vital approach on Latin America, partly due to its incorporation of radical historical openness and the law of uneven development as the foundations of the critical method. It is hoped that the reality that prompted the resurgence of Marxist studies on dependence can inspire theory to facilitate the desired emancipatory transformation for the betterment of the peoples of 'nuestra' America. Brazilian social work has much to contribute in this regard.

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