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## **The Latin American Experience with Development: Social Sciences, Policies and the Making of a Global Order, 1944-1973**

Economic Development was the most important intellectual and policy enterprise of Latin American social scientists in the postwar period. Since they defined underdevelopment not as a stage in a process of capital accumulation but rather as a relation to the world economy, the reconstruction of the global order offered an unrivaled opportunity for development. As producers of primary products, Latin American economies had endured extreme vulnerability to global shocks hindering sustained capital accumulation. Through industrialization and the consequent expansion of the internal market, regional economists and policymakers hoped to redress the imbalance. Yet, as the industrialization process unfolded, the external dependence seemed to deepen. Thus, social scientists faced the challenge, both in theory and in practice, of explaining and overcoming the limits of the development model the region had embarked on.

By focusing on the national sway of foreign aid and expertise, scholars have situated development initiatives in the so-called Third World as nuanced versions of more traditional forms of imperial domination. Instead, my dissertation addresses how development initiatives emerging in the Global South recast the relation between imperial and global processes, as development economics was becoming an international field of knowledge and expertise. Through development, social scientists rendered a picture of Latin America that went beyond its geographical boundaries and cultural heritage. This, in turn, required new kinds of knowledge and institutions that only social scientists strategically positioned between the local and the global could provide. My dissertation deals precisely with the endeavors of Latin American social scientists in producing knowledge, policies, and institutions in this context. Bringing about development went hand in hand with reimagining the region and its relation to the global order. Far from reproducing global North theories or subverting them altogether, they grounded development theories and policies in their own observations and experiences, tweaking the development strategy to evolving global conditions.

My dissertation examines the endeavors of Latin American social scientists in the production of knowledge, theory, and policies about the region's economic development during the postwar period. In particular, it focuses on a network of economists and policymakers in Brazil, Chile, and Colombia whose nexus was the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America. Throughout the Bretton Woods era, Latin American experts produced concepts like center-periphery, external vulnerability, and dependency in an attempt to come to terms with development amidst the global expansion of American capitalism. Such concepts highlighted the region's unequal relation to the world economy and how it had fostered, and yet could also hinder, the adopted development strategy. My dissertation makes extensive use of documentation found at private and public, personal and institutional, national and international archives located in Santiago, Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bogota, Washington DC, New York, and Geneva, as well as published documents such as economic surveys, academic journals, conference proceedings, and press reports. This archival research mimics the movements of the transnational actors as they shaped the political economy of development in the region. With the generous support of the History Project and the Institute for New

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Economic Thinking, I was able to undertake the Brazilian portion of this transnational research project.

In Brazil, I consulted public archives, private collections, and some personal repositories. Documents of the Conselho de Desenvolvimento, Conselho Federal de Comércio Exterior and Conselho Nacional de Economia found at the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro were particularly useful for explaining how social scientific concepts reach the public sphere and frame technical discussions about controversial issues like foreign exchange regimes or control of inflation. In addition, correspondence between staff at international organizations and the Brazilian government found at the Itamaraty Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives in Rio and Brasilia, helped remedy some of the limitations imposed by the lack of an institutional archive of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America. These documents offered insight about the influence of social scientific activities and concepts in international cooperation initiatives. They also revealed the political and economic stakes of knowledge-producing activities and the leading role of regional social scientists in spearheading international development initiatives such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Alliance for Progress. These will allow me to question the received narrative about development as the postwar enterprise of the Global North and offered an alternative history of global processes from a regional perspective.

Despite the richness of the public archives, my project has benefited extremely from private, personal archives such as those of Roberto Campos and Eugenio Gudín at the Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação da Fundação Getúlio Vargas (CPDOC-FGV) in Rio de Janeiro, and of sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso at the Institute named after him, in São Paulo. In one of my dissertation chapters, for instance, I follow the trajectory of Roberto Campos as he advocated for devaluation and the elimination of multiple exchange rates as a means to promote exports and solve the problem of recurrent balance of payments crises that deepened with the end of the Korean War. Because of his advocacy against state intervention in export markets and his later participation in the right-wing military dictatorship, Campos is commonly regarded as a forerunner of market liberalization and neoliberalism. By focusing on the questions and dilemmas transpiring in correspondence with economists and policymakers like Eugenio Gudín and Raul Prebisch, I illustrate how despite advocating for export promotion as a development strategy, he, like other regional economists, partook of a framework that conceptualized import-substitution industrialization (ISI) –traditionally regarded as an inward-looking development strategy- not in opposition, but rather in relation to, global market integration. Though based on the expansion of the internal market, Latin American development strategy was made contingent on the region's connection to the world economy. By mobilizing the concept of *capacity to import*, even if advocating for contrasting policy initiatives, I argue, regional economists and policymakers captured the problem of reconciling national development with world market integration and monetary stability, two pillars of the postwar global order.

As regional economists experimented with both macroeconomic and structural policies to tweak the ISI development strategy to the changing conditions of the international political economy, they began to re-imagine ISI and detect the limits of the American-led economic order. By the mid 1960s, these economists were concerned with

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the problem of “stagnation.” The deceleration in the rate of growth, the inability of the economy to absorb the growing labor force generating what they called a “marginal” population, and the lack of dynamism in the agricultural sector, prompted them to reconsider the potential of the model in bringing about development. Whereas economists were concerned with the problem of “stagnation,” sociologists were thinking about social change. The industrialization process the region had embarked on had resulted in the emergence of new social groups and realignment of alliances in the power structure underpinning the state. Sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso straddled these two conflicting positions. By combining documentation from institutional archives in Santiago with the sociologist’s personal documentation at the Insituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso, I was able to establish how in his attempt at providing an explanation to the malaise that some paradoxically called stagnation and others transformation, resulted in the advancement of dependency theory, an innovative and paradigmatic approach to interpret the region’s economic development. In the process, Cardoso situated his colleagues, the social scientists with whom he was debating as part of the development model and therefore, hinted at the responsibility of the regional intelligentsia in producing a model that was not delivering autonomy although it was fostering development.

Though these are all preliminary observations and interpretations based on a yearlong archival research endeavor, these would not have been possible without the support of the History Project and the Institute for New Economic Thinking. I hope I am able to contribute in the future to this vibrant intellectual community.