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Dependency Theory: developments and contributions to international relations

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Vitor Lengruber, researcher, Catholic University of Petrópolis (Brazil)
For correspondence: 25685-100, Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Petrópolis, Rua Barão do Amazonas, 124

E-mail: vitor.lengruber@gmail.com

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→ Abstract

A number of scholars have recently pointed out that International Relations (IR) is a discipline mostly formulated from the modern European political experience and philosophical developments, although it proposes to address international issues. Various critics point to the Eurocentric nature of IR theory (IRT), or argue that Europe's modern history cannot properly elucidate the past and the present of non-Western regions. In an attempt to turn IR into a truly international discipline, scholars from non-Western regions have provided their own local contributions (e.g. concepts, historical experiences, philosophies, etc.). This intellectual movement also aims to offer a better explanation of their respective regions. Although Latin America's Dependency Theory is not widely recognized as a proper IRT itself, this paper argues that it may contribute to it. The article is divided into three sections. The first section elaborates two criticisms of the Eurocentric approach to International Relations and its theories. The second briefly presents the thinking of the Dependencistas (Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, Ruy Marini, and Samir Amin, although the latter is French-Egyptian), as well as that of the ECLA. And the third argues that Dependency Theory might contribute to IRT in three ways: (1) by acknowledging that problems, and thus interests, are not homogeneously universal, it emphasizes the need of local solutions for local problems; (2) it is sensitive to non-traditional actors, such as multinational companies and domestic economic groups; (3) it understands the international arena as hierarchically constituted by a core-periphery rivalry.



→ Keywords

Latin America, Dependency Theory, International Relations theory, dependency, Core-Periphery

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Introduction¹

Several scholars have pointed out recently that International Relations (IR) is a discipline mostly formulated from the modern European political experience and philosophical developments, although it proposes to address international issues. Various critics, including Amitav Acharya, Barry Buzan and others, point to the Eurocentric feature of IR theory (IRT), while others such as David Kang argue that Europe's modern history cannot properly elucidate the past and the present of non-Western regions. In an attempt to turn IR into a truly international discipline, scholars from non-Western regions, including India, China, and the Islamic world, have provided their own potential local contributions (e.g. concepts, historical experiences, philosophies, etc.). This intellectual movement also aims to offer a better explanation of their respective regions. From this viewpoint, the objective of this paper is to demonstrate that Latin America's Dependency Theory may also offer contributions to IR theory. The article is thus divided into three sections. The first elaborates two criticisms of the Eurocentric nature of International Relations and its theories. I argue first that mainstream IR approaches are incapable of properly explaining international phenomena outside the West (e.g. East Asia, Africa, and Latin America), and, second, that mainstream IRT denies non-Western actors the possibility of agency. The second section briefly presents the thinking of the Dependencistas, as well as that of the ECLA: Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto; Ruy Marini; and Samir Amin. The paper uses Amin's conclusions to demonstrate that Dependency Theory is not homogeneous, but is rather composed of different theoretical perspectives. Although the hypothesis itself is similar. The last section argues that Dependency Theory could contribute to IRT in three ways: (1) acknowledging that problems, and thus interests, are not homogeneously universal, it emphasizes the need of local solutions for local problems; (2) it is sensitive to non-traditional actors, such as multinational companies and domestic economic groups; (3) it understands the international arena as hierarchically constituted by a core-periphery rivalry.

Eurocentrism and International Relations

This section references a number of researchers who have been actively engaged in the discussion to construct two major arguments on the Eurocentric character of International Relations. The official history of International Relations (IR) can trace its origins to 1919, when the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics was established at Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom. The Chair aimed to investigate the causes of war and peace in order to avoid conflicts similar to that of the First World War (1914–1918). Since then, the so-called Great Debates have developed the discipline throughout the decades. The First Great Debate took

1 I began this research during my time on the BRICS Educational Internship Program at the Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU), Russia, under the coordination of Dr. Andrei Kozinets. It is currently being developed within the Research Group on Decolonial Thought and Southern Epistemologies (GEPDES-UCP), part of the International Relations programme at Catholic University of Petrópolis and is coordinated by Dr. Tiago Sales. The arguments presented here represent the preliminary findings of my research.

place between Idealists (e.g. Woodrow Wilson and Norman Angell) and Realists (e.g. Edward Carr and Hans Morgenthau). The Second Great Debate emerged during in the 1950s and 1960s and was characterized by methodological discussions. It revolved mostly around the Anglo-Saxon community: while the English School defended the historiographical tradition, American scholars advocated for the use of rigid and classificatory methods, similar to those used in the natural sciences, in the new discipline. The Third Great Debate is known as the inter-paradigm debate. The discussions centered around three different perspectives: Realism (e.g. Kenneth Waltz), Liberalism (e.g. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye), and Marxism (e.g. Ellen Wood and Immanuel Wallerstein). The Last Great Debate, characterized by epistemological discussions between positivists and post-positivists, is known as the philosophical expansion of the discipline, since new approaches challenged the traditional ways of developing IR theory. The brief contextualization of IR's own history and evolution demonstrates that it is mostly a Western discipline.¹ That said, two problems arise.

First, introducing a set of theoretical abstractions drawn from the philosophical and historical experience of Western Europe, and later the United States, International Relations has become a discipline that proposes to explain international phenomena, although it is not truly based on international experience.² Realism, for example, emphasizes the chaotic political experience present in the writings of classical European authors such as Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes to explain why different unities would supposedly behave similarly throughout history.³ There are three crucial elements to understand IR's standard Realism: (i) the nature of the international system; (ii) power politics; (iii) the balance of power mechanism. Realism diagnoses the international arena as an anarchic structure. In other words, unlike the domestic realm of nation-states, the international system is characterized by the absence of a Leviathan responsible for managing the interaction among states. This kind of international system would result in the imperative for power accumulation. Since each state could not trust one another completely due to the absence of an international Leviathan, the best strategy to ensure its own survival would be through the pursuit of power. The national interests of states are thus defined in terms of power. Therefore, in an environment where the unities calculate their movements based on the same rationality, the international system would be organized by the logic of the balance of power. Given that the states would act in such a way as to maximize their gain of relative power, the dynamics of world politics would be settled by A's need to ally with B against C, depending on the position they occupy in the international distribution of power. Thus, the balance of power is both a particular set of the international system and a strategy to preserve it.⁴

However, when applied to non-Western regions, Realism is incapable of properly addressing two issues. First, defining national interests in terms of power politics ignores the fact that both national interests and theoretical discourses are regionalized. For Africa, it may be about marginalization; for Latin America dependency and for Asia growth.⁵ For example, in several moments of its history, Brazil's foreign policy was guided by national interests defined in terms of economic modernization and development, rather than power.⁶ Post-apartheid South Africa, especially in the 1990s, conducted its foreign relations with the aim of modifying its international image and challenging the discourse of African marginality.⁷ The case of Bolivia is also significant. In 2014, the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a document

1 Acharya and Buzan 2019.

2 See Rob Walker 1993, 16: IR theories "can be understood as expressions of the *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana* in which they have largely been constructed."

3 See Thucydide 2009; Machiavelli 2005; Hobbes 1968.

4 Morgenthau 1960; Waltz 1979.

5 Acharya 2011.

6 Cervo and Bueno 2002; Vigevari and Cepaluni 2009.

7 Bizzo and Lengruher 2020; Mandela 1993; Van Wyk 2004.

listing the achievements of its foreign policy since 2006. The document declared that Bolivian “foreign policy is the reflection of the thought and culture of the original peasant population and of the indigenous peoples that constitute the historical subject of the Democratic and Cultural Revolution and is also their modest contribution to the construction of a different world. The fundamental principle of Bolivia’s foreign policy is *Vivir Bien* [Living Well], which in international relations means establishing relationships of complementarity, balance, cooperation, and solidarity among all the states and peoples of the world, in the perspective of overcoming the alienation of the human being in his individual and collective condition, but also of overcoming the alienation of nature as the source of all forms of life.”¹ Second, proposing a theoretical approach built on the modern Westphalian system of constant balancing between European politically centralized actors (e.g. the Thirty Years’ War, the Concert of Europe, etc.) disregards interactions, orders, and systems that are not based on power considerations.² David Kang and Liam Kelley, for instance, explain why Realism is incapable of understanding the stable political dynamics that prevailed in East Asia for over 600 years.³ Rather than military or economic calculations, “cultural explanations account for the remarkable stability of the East Asian international order” between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries.⁴ Put differently, in East Asia, status, not relative power, defined an actor’s place in the system. Another example is given by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook: the Amarna system, “the first international system known to us.”⁵ Rodolfo Ragionieri also notes that, “the Amarna Age represents an exciting challenge for the scholar of international relations (IR) because it opens a window on the formation of the first significant, extended international society in the history of humankind. This process took place in a political, ideological, and economic environment totally different from that which favored the expansion of the states of Christian Europe into our present global international society.”⁶

Although these critics seem to belong to a distant past, they are not. Karen Smith, for example, demonstrates how the universalized European-derived conception of the International defined by interactions among sovereign nation-states aware of the inside–outside division is inadequate to understand the African “international” relationship. Instead, she argues, IR scholars should rely on the philosophy of Ubuntu, a world view from the Nguni language family, which comprises the Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, and Ndebele peoples in Southern Africa, to have a better comprehension of the political dynamics in Africa, especially those involving South Africa.⁷ Smith claims that Ubuntu could also contribute to IR by offering an alternative approach towards the friend–enemy and inside–outside dichotomy, as well as the notion of

1 “La Revolución Democrática y Cultural y su Política Exterior: Memoria 2006–2013,” Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, accessed October 6, 2020, <https://www.cancilleria.gob.bo/webmre/node/1242>. In original Spanish (p. 58): “La política exterior es el reflejo del pensamiento y la cultura de la población campesina originaria y de los pueblos indígenas que constituyen el sujeto histórico de la Revolución Democrática y Cultural y es también su modesto aporte a la construcción de un mundo diferente. El principio fundamental de la política exterior de Bolivia es el *Vivir Bien*, que en materia de relaciones internacionales significa establecer relaciones de complementariedad, equilibrio, cooperación y solidaridad entre todos los estados y pueblos del mundo, en la perspectiva de alcanzar la superación la enajenación del ser humano en su condición individual y colectiva, pero también de superar la enajenación de la naturaleza como fuente de todas las formas de vida. *Vivir Bien* es un proyecto civilizador que implica armonía entre todas las formas de vida, un proyecto alternativo al capitalismo como forma enajenante de la sociedad y la naturaleza.”

2 Buzan and Little 1994, 2010.

3 Kang 2012, 2018; Kelley 2005.

4 Kang 2012, XIII.

5 Cohen and Westbrook 2000, 4. The Amarna system was a complex of interactions between Babylonia, Egypt, Mittani, Assyria, Hatti, and other minor independent states in the 14th century BC.

6 Ragionieri 2000, 42.

7 Although the translation of Ubuntu to other languages is difficult, one may understand its meaning as “people are people through other people”. Variants of it also exist in other sub-Saharan African languages, such as the Sotho, Pedi and Tswana.

human rights and the role of peace-keeping missions.¹ On the pivot to Asia, scholars have frequently affirmed that “the theoretical perspectives of neorealism and liberal institutionalism that have dominated the field of international relations for decades are not adequate to explain Russian foreign policy.”² They have thus pointed to Eurasianism and the civilizational dimension of Russia’s foreign policy as an alternative approach to understanding the country.³ Nonetheless, unlike the theoretical proposals developed in Asia and Africa based on native worldviews or historical experiences, the same is hardly possible in Latin America due to its different colonial experience.⁴ America was “the foundational continent of colonialism, and therefore of modernity;” it was “the first test laboratory for racism in the service of colonialism.”⁵ The eradication of the culture and identity of the native American peoples and the African diaspora by a violent colonial encounter that began in the early 16th century has made it difficult to access these potential contributions.⁶ This may be explained by Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridism, “a mode of appropriation and of resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring.”⁷ Although researchers could rely on indigenous movements such as the Mexican Zapatismo, or Afro-American cultural communities such as Brazil’s quilombos to access such knowledge, this could explain why Latin America is represented in IR by Dependency Theory instead of a more abstract approach like China’s Tianxia.⁸

Second, IRT often denies the possibility of agency to non-Western actors. In 1979, Kenneth Waltz wrote that it would be “ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica.”⁹ These words, however, are not relics of the past. As Amitav Acharya, Arlene Tickner, and Andrei Tsygankov, amongst others, have demonstrated, even nowadays IR is unwilling to accept epistemologies, ideas, and narratives from non-Western actors. That is, rather than contributing to a discipline proposed to address international questions, the non-Western world is perceived as the laboratory where the knowledge produced in the West is applied.¹⁰ Ronald Chipaike and Matarutse Knowledge, for example, argue that, “Africa is apparently only useful for generating sensationalised reports of human suffering, not for contributing to any serious discussion of world politics.”¹¹ But Acharya explains that, “the origins of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm, usually attributed to a Canadian-proposed commission, cannot be understood without its African context and advocacy.” Similarly, “the ideas of human development and human security were pioneered by South Asian development economists: Mahbub ul Haq of Pakistan and Amartya Sen of India.”¹²

One major problem may be highlighted as a result: denying agency to non-Western actors makes International Relations a discipline which marginalizes non-Western concerns.

1 Smith 2012. See also: Ngcoya 2015.

2 Kanet 2012, 397. See also: Leichtova 2014; Sergounin 2009.

3 Lengruher 2020; Shkaratan 2015; Solovyev 2004; Tsygankov 2016, 2017.

4 For Asian contributions to IR theories, see: Acharya 2011; Behera 2010; Chong 2010; Inoguchi 2009; Andrei Kozinets, “Non-Western Approaches in International Relations Theory: Review of Chinese and Indian Experience” (PhD diss., Far Eastern Federal University, 2018) [In Russian]. For African contributions, see: Amin 1990; Grovogui 2006; Mazrui 1977; Schoeman 2009; Ofuho 2009.

5 Ballestrin 2013, 110. In original Portuguese: “o continente fundacional do colonialismo, e, portanto, da modernidade; [...] primeiro laboratório de teste para o racismo a serviço do colonialismo.”

Here, the use of America, instead of Latin America, is intentional as the latter is a recent concept conceived outside the region known as Latin America – although the countries that are part of it assume a Latin American identity. The concept was created in the second half of the 19th century by Napoleon III, the nephew of Napoleon I, as a strategy to implement a pan-Latin political project.

6 Beier 2002; Gilroy 1993.

7 Bhabha 1994, 120.

8 See: Acharya 2019; Bruyneel 2007; Coulthard 2014; Do Nascimento 1980, 1989; Lander 2005; Mignolo 2011.

9 Waltz 1979, 72.

10 Acharya 2014; Ticker 2003 (b); Tsygankov 2008.

11 Chipaike and Knowledge 2018, 2.

12 Acharya 2014, 6.

The problem of race and racism is a great example. As indicated by scholars, “IR was born in the age of empire, and for the first few decades of its history it was explicitly occupied with questions of colonial administration and the justification of racial supremacy.”¹ It is no coincidence that the original title of the popular journal *Foreign Affairs* was *Journal of Race Development*, demonstrating what early IR was about. Although IR scholars started to develop approaches more sensitive to those questions at the end of the 20th century, in the 1920s W.E.B. Du Bois was already conscious of this dynamic. Du Bois argued that race and racism were the fundamental organizing principles of world politics, asserting that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea.”² Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda, and Robbie Shilliam published an important volume recently demonstrating that “the problem of the twenty-first century is equally the problem of the colour line.” Racist practices still are “the *modus operandi* of international relations.”³ For instance, in June 2020, after pressure from African states following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, called for joint international actions to combat racism, demonstrating that it is an international matter, and not an issue restricted to national boundaries or disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology or Political Science.⁴ When non-Western actors are able to exercise agency in IR, there is an excessive focus on policy-related research, although Carlos Escudé and Mohammed Ayooob's theoretical contributions may be mentioned. As Tickner and Blaney explain, “much of non-core IR tends to be descriptions of local or regional events and problems instead of theory (or conceptualization of the world).” The ECLA itself was created in the late 1940s to address the problem of underdevelopment.⁵

This section presented two critiques of the Eurocentric nature of International Relations. First, it argued that theoretical frameworks in IR propose to understand international phenomena, although they are based on the Western philosophical and historical experience. Especially in Realism, such limitations have resulted in analytical blindness to the possibility of heterogeneous national interests and political interactions which are not anchored to power considerations. Second, it argued that IRT denies the possibility of agency to non-Western actors, resulting in the marginalization of non-Western concerns. The next section presents the origins and developments of Dependency Theory.

Dependency Theory: Origins and Developments

Dependency Theory, which is part of the Marxist tradition, is considered the first Latin American approach to development and international insertion. Its main representatives are Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Theotônio dos Santos, Ruy Marini and Samir Amin, although the latter is French-Egyptian. Dependency Theory aims to understand why some countries, especially those in Latin America, have not achieved the same level of development as other regions, for instance Western Europe. In other words, what can explain the general underdevelopment of Latin American, Asian and African countries? Grounded on theoretical and empirical research, the central hypothesis is that this underdevelopment is the result of historical economic

1 Bhambra et al., 2020.

2 Du Bois 2007, 15. See also: Du Bois 1925, 1935, 1938.

3 Anievas et al. 2015, 10. See also: Chin 2009; Le Melle 2009.

4 “Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 17 June 2020,” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25968&LangID=E>.

5 Ayooob 1998, 2003; Escudé 1992, 1995; Tickner and Blaney 2012, 8; Tickner 2009; Schoeman 2009.

relations. That is, underdevelopment is the product of economic dynamics exercised by the central capitalist economies that restrict the choices of peripheral countries and hold them back from pursuing autonomous development. In this perspective, peripheral countries are supposed to assume a submissive and dependent role under global capitalism and the international division of labor.¹

It is worth mentioning that Dependency Theory does not constitute a unique and homogeneous school of thought. Rather, it is a theoretical body with several ramifications. The first discussions and investigations were conducted within the scope of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, established in 1948, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), established in 1964, in an intellectual movement which were to a large extent a reaction to the recommendations made by Modernization Theory.² The ideas elaborated by Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado were soon criticized by Enzo Faletto and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who called for a sociological approach in their 1969 book *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.³ Later on, Ruy Marini and Samir Amin provided a revolutionary reading of Faletto and Cardoso's critiques.⁴ José Hage categorizes Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Faletto's thinking as *reformist* and Marini's as *revolutionary*.⁵ Although the historical developments of Dependency Theory are far more complex, such categorization could be assumed for didactic purposes.

Before proceeding to the reformist thinking, we should first briefly analyze the discussions made within the ECLA. As we have already mentioned, the ECLA emerged at a time when Modernization Theory was being widely contested by intellectuals. Modernization Theory stated that underdeveloped countries were unable to reach a high level of development due to specific domestic processes and features hampering their transition to modernity. That is, the only way for these countries to thrive would be to incorporate modern Western values, institutions, and practices.⁶ In an attempt to offer an alternative explanation and solution to underdevelopment, the ECLA, under the administration of Raúl Prebisch, demonstrated that the expansion of capitalism around the world in the 19th century, the subsequent construction of the international division of labor, and the insertion of Latin American nations in this system have produced asymmetrical relations between the core and peripheral economies. According to the ECLA, the changes in the relative price of manufactured and primary products tend to benefit the producers of the former and prejudice the producers of the latter in the long term. As a result, Latin America would inevitably import industrialized products from the United States and export commodities to Western Europe. This diagnosis led the ECLA to propose the adoption of import substitution industrialization policies. "Industrialization is not an end in itself, but the principal means at the disposal of those countries of obtaining a share of the benefits of technical progress and of progressively raising the standard of living of the masses."⁷ In this perspective, the industrialization and the consequent development of an autonomous capitalism would allow Latin America to alter its position in the international division of labor and overcome the underdevelopment.

Although this policy was widely adopted by Latin American countries such as Brazil and Mexico in the 1950s, the gap between central and peripheral economies, as

1 Viotti and Kauppi 2012.

2 Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1978.

3 Cardoso and Faletto 1979.

4 Amin 1977, 1990; Marini 1991.

5 Hage 2013.

6 Tickner 2003 (a). For critics towards the notion of modernity, see: Jones 2015.

7 "The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems," United Nations, accessed October 14, 2020, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/29973/002_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; Furtado 1965.

well as social inequalities, sectoral imbalances, and dependence on foreign investments, remained.¹ In this scenario, Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Falletto published a book underlining the importance of analyzing social and political aspects, yet assuming that underdevelopment is a product of capitalist expansion and the economies of these countries becoming part of this system according to their productive apparatuses. For Cardoso and Falletto, the different stages of development among nations are determined by domestic and international factors: “analysis is complete only when the economic and the social have their reciprocal determinations defined at the internal and external levels.”² In the external dimension, the authors point to the international division of labor, which would reflect the economic and political domination of the core-periphery structure as the source of Latin American underdevelopment and dependency. But internal factors, especially class relations, would also play a crucial role. Emphasizing the historical relationship between dependent societies and the global capitalist system, Cardoso and Falletto identified the existence of strategic coalitions and shared interests between economic and political elites in the core and the periphery and assigned the responsibility for constructing dependent relationships to such dynamics. In other words, (under)development is the result of a social process. As such, underdevelopment would not only be caused by the international core; it would also depend on how the periphery conducts a concentrator development strategy. The solution proposed was to reorganize the political and social relations of domestic groups and their interactions with groups from the core and take advantage of economic opportunities through an alliance between national capital, international capital, and the state. That is, dependent nations could accommodate themselves in the capitalist system in an attempt to reap certain benefits and achieve some degree of development, although it would still be dependent on the core.³

As Tickner demonstrates, one of the central hypotheses defended by Cardoso and Falletto is that the social, economic, and political evolution of Latin American countries varied depending on whether export-oriented growth was characterized by national control or by foreign-controlled enclave economies. These “two types of insertion into the global economy, which were characterized by distinct dominant class configurations, led to diverse possibilities in terms of the nature of the state, the structure of class domination, the incorporation of the middle and popular classes, and respective levels and types of national development. Capitalism acquired concrete manifestations in distinct national contexts, depending upon the ways in which local, class, and state interests were historically constituted and articulated.”⁴ Decades later, Cardoso would say: “Instead of a homogenous periphery we sought out different forms of interrelation that linked developing countries with the central economies. Some were ‘enclave type’ economies, whose growth was dependent on foreign investment in mineral extraction or food production; others were already semi-industrialised economies, with relatively strong domestic markets. On top of that, in some countries, domestic capital accumulation made possible the formation of a ‘national’ bourgeoisie while in others, foreign capital was predominant; very often local and foreign entrepreneurs formed an intertwined production chain.”⁵

In turn, Ruy Marini attaches a revolutionary character to the critiques made by Cardoso and Falletto. When explaining Marini’s thinking, Hage states that Latin America’s subordinate position is due to the American and European imperialist attacks throughout the region’s history. Even identifying industrialization processes, Marini argues that there

1 Bulmer-Thomas 2003.

2 Cardoso and Falletto 1979, 28.

3 See also: Cardoso 1972.

4 Tickner 2003 (a), 328.

5 Cardoso 2017, 16.

are tensions between nationalism and capital import. Therefore, industrialism would not burst with imperial logic since the latter could integrate itself with the former by transferring capital or outdated technologies. In other words, Latin America would still import machinery and capital in an unequal trade. Marini explains: "Latin American industrialization thus corresponds to a new international division of labor, in which the lower stages of industrial production are transferred to dependent countries (note that the steel industry, which was a distinctive sign of classical industrial economics, has become generalized to such a degree that countries such as Brazil already export steel), reserving the most advanced stages (such as the production of computers and the heavy electronic industry in general, the exploitation of new sources of energy, such as the one with nuclear origin, etc.) and the monopoly of the corresponding technology for the imperialist centers."¹ Thus, only initiatives which adopt international violence as a strategy, as occurred in Cuba, Algeria, and China, could burst the dependency logic. This would be the role of revolutionary wars.²

Samir Amin should also be mentioned here. For Amin, the dependent state is a mechanism of domination by the national and international bourgeoisie. In this perspective, the external pressure put on the elites on the periphery to exploit the population and export economic surpluses to the core would inevitably lead to a national and socialist revolution. After this diagnosis, the author argues that peripheral underdevelopment is the result of the exploitation of the peripheral proletariat by the bourgeoisie in the core. In other words, Amin is describing an international class struggle expressed in the inter-state struggle. Amin concludes that the periphery's integration into the capitalist system is responsible for its underdevelopment and the increasing economic gap between the core and the periphery. Therefore, the author proposes a delinking strategy; that is, the disconnection from the capitalist international division of labor and the adoption of an autonomous development project. "Amin's idea of delinking is not synonymous with autarky, but refers to a project that aims to compel the system to adjust to peripheral needs, rather than adjusting to align with the needs of the core."³

This section presented the contributions of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, Ruy Marini, and Samir Amin, as well as the ECLA's early proposals, although many more authors have participated in and contributed to the development of Dependency Theory. Considering their respective proposals, these authors may be categorized as reformists or revolutionaries, as demonstrated by Hage. Since Cardoso and Faletto acknowledge the possibility of development within the condition of dependency, they are classified as reformists. Marini and Amin, on the other hand, propose a break with the (imperial) condition of dependency through the use of force. Therefore, both approaches may be classified as revolutionary. In the next section, we will justify why non-Western perspectives are important to International Relations and give an overview of the main criticisms of Dependency Theory that expose its internal ramifications (e.g. the reformist versus the revolutionary approach). This will help us demonstrate how this perspective on development may contribute to IR theories.

1 Marini 1991, 43. In original Spanish: "La industrialización latinoamericana corresponde así a una nueva división internacional del trabajo, en cuyo marco se transfieren a los países dependientes etapas inferiores de la producción industrial (obsérvese que la siderurgia, que correspondía a un signo distintivo de la economía industrial clásica, se ha generalizado al punto de que países como Brasil ya exportan acero), reservándose a los centros imperialistas las etapas más avanzadas (como la producción de computadoras y la industria electrónica pesada en general, la explotación de nuevas fuentes de energía, como la de origen nuclear, etc.) y el monopolio de la tecnología correspondiente."

2 Hage 2013.

3 Amin 1977, 1990; Kvangraven 2017, IX.

Potential Contributions to IRT

Marcelo Medeiros, Israel Barnabé, Rodrigo Albuquerque, and Rafael Lima performed a content analysis of articles published in 35 journals in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Uruguay, and Venezuela between January 2006 and December 2014. As they explain, "due to (1) the scarcity of strictly IR journals in those countries (only Brazil, Colombia and Chile have exclusive publications), (2) the fact that IR researchers publish in journals from different fields regularly, and (3) the interdisciplinarity that characterizes this area of study," the scope of the study was enlarged "to include journals from IR-related fields, such as Political Science, Sociology, History, Economics, Anthropology and Law."¹ According to the research, the theories predominantly used in these articles were: Liberalism (31.22%), Realism (26.92%), Constructivism (12.80%), Post-Modernism/Post-Colonialism (11.92%), Marxism (11.62%), Critical Theory (10.09%), English School (9.79%) and Feminism (4.17%). The authors also isolated Dependency Theory from Marxism, and concluded that its importance has declined over the years: "the fact that in total it was present in only 184 articles from a total of 424 Marxist ones indicates that, even within this theoretical frame, Dependency Theory is not a dominant approach."² As part of the Marxist tradition, an approach already marginalized in IR studies, Dependency Theory has few adherents in the region where it was developed. Nevertheless, Dependency Theory could offer at least three contributions to IRT and the analysis of global politics.

First, the main concern of Dependency Theory is the issue of underdevelopment. That is, it is concerned with a regional problem, although, as we have demonstrated, it has international roots. And it affects the lives of millions of Latin Americans – not to mention people in other peripheral regions – on a daily basis. Topics that are typically discussed include the international economic structure, the role played by international economic and financial organizations, autonomy, unequal trade, the hegemony of the capitalist core, the distribution of economic surplus, the exploitation of national resources, etc. In other words, Dependency Theory demonstrates (and it is quite different from Modernization Theory in this regard) that, since problems and challenges are historically and regionally defined, their solutions should also be regionally determined, taking each particular experience and condition into account. Bolivia is again a good example here. As we mentioned earlier, *Vivir Bien* was the central principle of Bolivian foreign policy during the Evo Morales administration. In addition to prioritizing the representation of indigenous communities, the *Vivir Bien* principle exemplifies Bolivia's main concerns and foreign policy objectives: "*Vivir Bien* is a civilizing project that implies harmony between all forms of life, an alternative project to capitalism as an alienating form of society and nature."³ The country did not see the neoliberal practices that widely advertised as the answer to underdevelopment in the 2000s as the solution to its problems. Rather, Bolivia adopted a development program characterized by public control and the expansion of social assistance projects.⁴

Second, Dependency Theory appears sensible to non-traditional actors, such as international organizations, domestic political and economic groups, social classes, etc. Thus, it is capable of identifying the dynamics involving those actors. For instance, a number of studies have been conducted that demonstrate the influence of

1 Medeiros et al., 2016, 7.

2 Ibid., 13.

3 "La Revolución Democrática y Cultural." In original Spanish (p. 58): "*Vivir Bien* es un proyecto civilizador que implica armonía entre todas las formas de vida, un proyecto alternativo al capitalismo como forma enajenante de la sociedad y la naturaleza."

4 Filho et al. 2010.

certain domestic groups (i.e., the economic elite) in defining Brazil's foreign policy.¹ Similarly, international organizations (including the World Bank) have manipulated economic data to undermine the international credibility of peripheral countries such as Chile during the socialist administrations of Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010 and 2014–2018).² In Africa, the role of multinational companies in ensuring that peripheral countries remain dependent on the core has been discussed ever since the days of Kwame Nkrumah, who denounced the use of foreign capital "for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world."³

Third, Dependency Theory diagnoses the international arena as a system divided between a center and a periphery. In other words, the international system is not characterized by horizontal interactions, but rather by a vertical dynamic. Dependency Theory thus exposes the imperative for peripheral nations to break away from this condition through reforms or revolutions and achieve autonomous development. For example, during the negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in the late 1990s and early 2000s, many of the discussions revolved around the advantages that developed countries, mainly the United States and Canada, would obtain at the expense of Latin America. In this perspective, the Brazilian diplomat Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães identified the FTAA as "a far-reaching American strategic operation with long-term political, economic and military objectives."⁴ In the economic sphere, Guimarães argued that Washington's main instrument would be to exert pressure on Latin American countries to adopt neoliberal policies (a move that would weaken underdeveloped states due to the deregulation of their economies) and accept a hemispheric commercial and financial liberalization. He went on to say that, "the American economic objective is to establish a unique economic territory in the Americas, with free movement of goods, services and capital, but without free movement of labor, especially that of less qualified workers, and gradually adopt the dollar as a hemispheric currency, whose issue and circulation would be under exclusive American control."⁵ The FTAA never got off the ground due to opposition from many Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Venezuela. Later on, Latin American and Caribbean regional economic integration projects (which excluded the United States and Canada) would be adopted in an attempt to develop the region from within. One of them is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which aims to be a forum for development cooperation and political consultation.⁶

The objective of this paper was to outline potential contributions that Latin America's Dependency Theory could offer to IRT. To achieve this, the first section criticized the Eurocentric character of IRT and demonstrated the importance of opening the discipline to other perspectives, experiences and approaches, while the second briefly presented the central hypothesis shared by Dependencistas and the arguments constructed Cardoso and Faletto; Marini; and Samir Amin. The last section argued that the Dependency Theory may

1 Carvalho 2003; Oliveira 2003; Oliveira and Onuki 2007.

2 Rocio Montes, "Banco Mundial Admite que Manipulou Dados sobre o Chile contra o Governo de Bachelet," *El País*, January 14, 2018, https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/01/14/economia/1515899491_574904.html.

3 Nkrumah 1966, X. See also: Adar and Ajulu 2002; Oluwaniyi 2018; Otusanya 2011; Zeleza 2003.

4 Guimarães 2001, 119.

5 *Ibid.*, 120.

6 "Comunidade dos Estados Latino-Americanos e Caribenhos – CELAC," Ministério da Educação e Cultura do Brasil, accessed October 18, 2020, <http://portal.mec.gov.br/component/content/article?id=20742:comunidade-dos-estados-latino-americanos-e-caribenhos-celac>; Silva and Silveira 2012.

contribute to IRT in three ways: first, acknowledging that problems, and thus interests, are not homogeneously universal, it emphasizes the need of local solutions for local problems; second, it is sensitive to non-traditional actors, such as multinational companies and domestic economic groups; and third, it understands the international arena as hierarchically constituted by a core-periphery rivalry. However, the conclusions we have drawn here are not immune to criticism. If our aim is to explore exactly what Dependency Theory has to offer IRT in terms of providing a better understanding the world, farther inter and intra-disciplinary discussions are required.

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Теория зависимости: ее разработка и вклад в международные отношения

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Витор Ленгрубер, исследователь, Католический университет
Петрополиса (Бразилия)
Для корреспонденции: 25685-100, Бразилия, Рио-де-Жанейро, Петрополис,
ул. Барао до Амазонас, 124

E-mail: vitor.lengruber@gmail.com

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→ Аннотация

Ряд ученых в своих последних исследованиях отмечают, что международные отношения – это дисциплина, в основном, сформировавшаяся на основе современного европейского политического опыта и философских воззрений, хотя она предлагает решать международные проблемы. Различные критики указывают на евроцентрический характер теории МО или утверждают, что современная история Европы не может должным образом осветить прошлое и настоящее незападных регионов. Пытаясь превратить МО в дисциплину международного значения, ученые из незападных регионов внесли свой определенный вклад в ее развитие. Это научное направление также стремится предложить более корректное объяснение ситуации, сложившейся в соответствующих регионах. Хотя латиноамериканская теория зависимости не получила широкого признания в качестве полноценной теории МО, в этой статье автор утверждает, что она может внести добавочное знание в эту теорию. Статья разделена на три раздела. В первом разделе излагаются два критических подхода к европоцентризму в международных отношениях и его теориям. Во втором кратко представлены взгляды исследователей, работающих в данном направлении (т.н. *Dependentistas* – Фернандо Энрике Кардозу и Энцо Фалетто, Руй Марини и Самир Амин, хотя последний и является французом египетского происхождения), а также позиция Экономической комиссии ООН по странам Латинской Америки и Карибского бассейна. В третьем разделе автор доказывает, что теория зависимости может способствовать развитию теории МО

трем способами: (1) признавая, что проблемы и, следовательно, интересы не являются универсальными, она подчеркивает необходимость локальных решений локальных проблем; (2) она позволяет уделить дополнительное внимание нетрадиционным участникам, таким как транснациональные компании и внутригосударственным экономическим/ финансовым группам; (3) она оценивает международную арену в качестве иерархического образования, порожденного соперничеством по линии центр-периферия.

→ Ключевые слова

Латинская Америка, теория зависимости, теория международных отношений, зависимость, ядро-периферия

Конфликт интересов: Автор заявляет об отсутствии потенциального конфликта интересов.

Artículo de investigación

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Teoría de la dependencia: desarrollos y contribuciones de las Relaciones Internacionales

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Vitor Lengruber, Investigador de la Universidad Católica de Petrópolis (Brasil) E-mail: vitor.lengruber@gmail.com
Para la correspondencia: 25685-100, Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Petrópolis, calle Barão do Amazonas, 124

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→ Resumen

Actualmente varios investigadores han señalado que las Relaciones Internacionales (RRII) es una disciplina formulada principalmente a partir de la experiencia política europea moderna y los desarrollos filosóficos, sin embargo, se propone abordar asuntos internacionales. Varios críticos señalan que la naturaleza eurocéntrica de la Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales (TRI), dentro de la historia de Europa, no puede dilucidar adecuadamente el pasado y el presente de las

regiones no occidentales. En un intento de convertir las RRll en una disciplina netamente internacional, los especialistas de las regiones no occidentales han proporcionado sus propias definiciones locales (por ejemplo, conceptos, experiencias históricas, filosofías, etc.). Asimismo, se tiene como objetivo dar una mejor explicación de cada región. Aunque la Teoría de la dependencia de América Latina no es ampliamente reconocida como una TIR propia, este artículo argumenta que puede contribuir a ella. El artículo se divide en tres secciones. La primera sección desarrolla dos críticas al enfoque eurocéntrico de las RRll y sus teorías. La segunda presenta brevemente el pensamiento de los dependentistas (Fernando Henrique Cardoso y Enzo Faletto, Ruy Marini, y Samir Amin, aunque el último dependentista es franco-egipcio), así como CEPAL. Y la tercera argumenta que la Teoría de la dependencia podría contribuir a la TIR de tres maneras: (1) al reconocer que los problemas, y los intereses, no son homogéneamente universales, enfatizando la necesidad de dar soluciones locales para los problemas locales; (2) susceptibilidad a los actores no tradicionales, como las empresas multinacionales y los grupos económicos nacionales; (3) entendimiento del escenario internacional y constituido jerárquicamente por una rivalidad de la estructura centro-periferia.

→ Palabras clave

América Latina, Teoría de la Dependencia, Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales, dependencia, Estructura centro-periferia

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