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Contemporary Latin American thinking on International Relations: theoretical, conceptual and methodological contributions

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Abstract

This article analyses recent productions of Latin American thinking on international affairs. The reviewed cases and examples are interrelated, for they are explanatory and interpretative abstractions of processes and practices in the international field, characterized by a description of formulations, concepts and methodological contributions. The common feature of these dimensions is the will of their formulators to explain their national and regional political realities from their own perspectives. Recent contributions offer potential for generalizations from national cases. They account for new realities that may impact on the international and regional system of international affairs.

Keywords: Latin American thinking; International relations; Latin American theories of International Relations.

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Introduction

The term International Relations expresses a concern about the subject of ‘International Affairs’ in general, including economic and international insertion, and foreign policy. As pointed out, “the terms *International Relations* and *International Studies* refer to the academic discipline which studies foreign affairs and major issues of the international system in political, economic, legal and diplomatic fields: the role of states, international organizations, NGOs, and multinational companies” (Wikipedia 2016). Of such issues, foreign policy is regarded as

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one of its most precise concerns or goals, although it is conceptually more specific and restricted than international relations.

Foreign policy is understood as public policies of states, addressed to the international stage, in order to promote or modify conditions to enable security and economic well-being. For countries such as ours, this means providing development policies. In the opinion of Tomassini (1987), Russell (1990; 1992), Bernal-Meza (2005; 2013) and Amado Cervo (2001; 2008), foreign policy thrives on valuing historical elements, interests and images which reflect the ideas of its formulators and decision makers about the world and themselves, and express what they aspire to do. Identifying the ideas, perceptions and images expressed both in the speech and/or in the formulation of foreign policy, or projected through this latter, helps us to understand why nations do what they do in foreign policy, integration, regionalism and international negotiations.

Latin American authors, such as Muñoz (1986), Bernal-Meza, Cervo (2001; 2008), Velázquez (2007), Simonoff (2012) and Velosa (2013), have highlighted the importance of understanding ideas from the leader's perspective – about how to face the world –, and the formulation of foreign policies in Latin American countries.

The methodology used in this paper is based on the identification and descriptions we have found from contemporary Latin American authors about their own countries or third countries. In some cases the reasoning of some presidents has also been considered, especially in countries with presidential systems under strong leadership, in which the president's world-views have underpinned the formulation of international thinking, either on foreign policy or international integration in general, which includes regionalism, integration and economic and political alliances.

Furthermore, the construction of a Latin American line of thought for international affairs has also been influenced by – and depended upon – foreign (mainly Anglo-Saxon) theoretical and methodological reflections. Authors from within and outside the region note that this is an issue to any policy-making initiative that aims at a more autonomous international insertion (Bergsten, 1973). As noted by Tickner et. al. (2012, 6), “the predominance of the American Academy in international relations is manifested in many ways, from the number of lecturers, the number of doctoral programs offered, the number of doctoral students and thesis, the number of university presses and scholarly journals, to the predominance of epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches made in USA among different academic communities around the world”. According to the author, the ways to interpret world politics has revolved around a series of analytical frameworks, concepts and categories developed mainly in the United States, and to a lesser extent, in Great Britain. The statement of Kenneth Waltz (1979, 72) that it “would be absurd to build a theory of international relations based in countries such as Malaysia and Costa Rica” confirms the relatively marginal place that the rest of the world has held in this discipline, since, as the author suggests, “a general theory of international politics must necessarily be based on the great powers” (Tickner et. al. 2012, 6).

These arguments underscore the hegemonic vision of international affairs focused on the interests of the great powers. Getting rid of the tutelage of power means needing to see the world from our own perspectives. It is not an absurd to construct a theoretical, methodological or conceptual framework to support external policies whose purpose is not the struggle for world power, but to overcome underdevelopment and dependence. Another purpose of such independent policies of international insertion is to meet the challenges imposed on them by global power. This view has been the substrate of an important part of the recent Latin American thinking on international affairs.

Although the number of authors – both academics and diplomats – concerned about how to deal with international affairs is limited, three main lines of discussion among them are evident. The first one discusses whether it makes any sense to have an *own thinking* in order to interpret reality and the nature of international insertion from our particular perspectives. The second one discusses the appropriateness of applying theories that are produced by the epistemic thinking of the “North” to the interpretation of the international system and to the analysis of foreign policy, given its higher level of sophistication. Finally, the third line discusses whether the theory produced in the core countries should be replaced by *concepts* developed by Latin American epistemology, according to the idea that they would better explain the nature of our foreign relations. This work reflects on the first and third of these lines of discussion, analysing the most recent intellectual production.

The background to the discussion on an own thinking

In addressing the history of the concern for the development of an own thinking, in the sense of seeing the world from our particular perspectives, the most fruitful path in the tradition of Latin American international studies should be highlighted: the *political economy* approach, which was originated in the thinking of Prebisch and ECLAC. It questioned the alleged appraisal and universal dimension of classical and neoclassical theories of international trade, contrasting to them the theory of deteriorating terms of trade.

Prebisch brought forth systemic-structural thinking and provided the basis for world-system theories, further developed by Wallerstein and Arrighi, by applying his vision of political economy in the construction of a core-periphery model. The antithetic relationship between development and underdevelopment, implicit in such construction, gave birth to three lines of concern in Latin American thinking: the modelling of a systemic structure (core-periphery), the interpretation of development and underdevelopment as simultaneous historical and structurally related processes, and the proposals to overcome the condition of underdevelopment (Bernal-Meza 2014, 36). Raúl Prebisch, C. Furtado, F. Herrera, O. Sunkel, H. Jaguaribe, A. Ferrer, T. Dos Santos, J.C. Puig. L. Tomassini, G. Fonseca, to mention a few, supported interpretations of international relations from our own perspectives: semi-peripheral and peripheral nations,

dependent and subordinate to successive hegemonic cycles, nations in which a small part of its intellectuals, scholars and diplomats, aimed to lay the foundation for policies and strategies of autonomy and development.

Far too little attention is paid to the importance of the ideological position held by Prebisch in rejecting the claim of “universality” attached to the line of thought produced in the “North”.

From these reflections, lines of further discussion on theoretical approaches to international relations can be explained – the first one raised by Tomassini (1992), who noted that *development* should be the main concern of this reflection. This line of thought, based on *structuralism* (Prebisch-ECLAC), upheld the political economy approach to address the analysis of international relations. This interpretation is projected to the present day as one of the major theoretical approaches¹ of international studies. Its foundation is supported on the idea that political economy explains more accurately the structural characteristics of relations among developing societies and the international system.

Own thinking, theoretical formulations and concepts in international relations of contemporary Latin America

The role of theory, as a methodological heuristic tool, has been overvalued in recent decades due to the influence of American intellectual production.

Although some of our scholars have appreciated the American contribution to the study of international relations (*e.g.* Tomassini 1989), in recent years there has been an interesting discussion between those, on the one hand, who consider that the use of theoretical and methodological tools from Anglo-Saxon schools and lines of thought is right and positive, and those, in the other hand, who consider that theoretical, epistemological, conceptual and methodological tools produced in Latin America should be used.

In Argentina, the academy – represented mainly by the Argentinean Association of History of International Relations, in which socio-historical, structuralist political economy, and autonomic lines of interpretation participate –, and, in Brazil, the so-called “School of Brasilia”, with a predominance of history, mainly under the intellectual leadership of Amado Cervo – are the main representatives of the second group, in which influences of the English and French schools of international relations are also observed².

Among the main criticisms directed at followers of Anglo-Saxon theories is that US theory –for example, realism and idealism (with their “neos”) – replace the historical investigation of the facts with prescriptions and foundations of the theory (Bernal-Meza 1994a; 2005). These criticisms are based both on the work of Prebisch (1950), who questioned the alleged

1 Including the historical-structural and socio-historical ones.

2 These influences are observed in authors such as M. Rapoport, R. Bernal-Meza, A. Cervo, J. Saraiva and others; in which both groups academically interact and intersect among themselves.

universal validity of classical and neoclassical economic thinking, and on the interpretation of Puig (1984), for whom there was no theory produced by the "North" that would result in a reliable approach to the reality of the international system nor would effectively serve the prescriptive purposes of medium and small states in order to achieve more autonomous forms of international insertion (Bernal-Meza 1994, 176).

The authors who followed this line subsequently argued that the theory produced in intellectual scenarios outside the region merely reproduced the dominant ideology when interpreting the international relations of Latin America. Therefore, an analysis of the international insertion and foreign policy from our own interpretations was needed, meaning the rejection of theories developed in the core, and the implementation of *concepts* that would enable substantiate and explain foreign policy, as pointed out by Bernal-Meza (2005) and Cervo (2008; 2008a).

In a certain sense, these critics shared the point of view of the Canadian theorist Robert Cox (1981; 2014), who pointed out that the theory is always set for someone and for some purpose; that all theories have their own perspective and that they result from certain position in time and space, specifically a political and social time and space, because the world is seen from a definable viewpoint in terms of nation or social class, of domination and subordination, of power, both increasing or declining.

This is the idea which Cervo (2008, 8) has followed in order to substitute theories of international relations for *concepts*. The search for an own international insertion model is the reason that motivates certain epistemic communities to formulate their exclusive lines of thought, because the particular thinking helps these communities to develop an idea for their ruling classes of the role they want to play in the world (Cervo 2008, 3).

As noted by several authors (Ferrer 1994 and 2005; Bandeira 1995; Fonseca 1998; Bernal-Meza 2005; Guimarães 2005; Gullo 2008; Heredia 2009; Rapoport 2011 and 2014; Rapoport and Madrid 2011; Simonoff 2012; Pinheiro and Milani 2012; Saraiva 2010 and 2013; Saraiva 2015, and others), the work carried out in order to observe the world from our own perspectives meets explanatory, interpretative and evaluative demands, but it has no aspiration to globality, for it can only explain and interpret reality from a local or regional point of view. This interpretation questions the universalist aspiration of theories produced by US intelligence, which favours the perspective of hegemony.

The following pages address the recent South American contributions to international affairs, produced from 2005 until the present day.³

However, two national cases should be considered, despite their differences from the preceding line of argument. They are those of Mexico and Colombia, which abandoned or replaced their foreign policy based on their own views for American theoretical formulations.

Mexico is an example of the abandonment of principles and foundations of indigenous foreign policy as a result of the alignment with US foreign policy agenda since mid-1990s (Rubio

3 For the previous period, refer to Bernal-Meza (1994; 2005; 2013) and Devés Valdés (2003; 2004; 2013).

and Kaufman 2004; Covarrubias 2009; Bernal-Meza 2009). Among such principles that have had an influence on other countries in the region are the "Estrada Doctrine", which holds the principle of *non-intervention* (Ojeda 2001; Covarrubias 2009; González Uresti 2007) and for many years was an essential reference for foreign policy (Covarrubias 2009), and the paradigm of *medium power* (Pérez Llana 1975; González 1984; Bernal-Meza 2009).

Colombia currently bases its foreign policy vision on the self-image of being one of the four "secondary powers" of the South American subsystem, whose paradigm is *soft balancing*. This is understood as a strategic option for the secondary powers relation with the regional power in regions with low levels of conflict, in which the rivalry is replaced by competitive patterns. The alignment of Colombia's foreign policy with that of the United States, can be explained by the effect of *bandwagoning* (Flemes 2013). However, for authors such as Ardila et. al. (2002), Ardila (2012) and Betancourt (2012), the paradigm of *respice polum*⁴ – has not been abandoned by the Colombian decision makers. Thus, the option for policies of *bandwagoning* remains valid.

Nonetheless, despite its American epistemic origin, *soft balancing* can be considered part of the contemporary conceptual *acquis* of international relations of several Latin American countries, part of the pillars for building the emerging global governance structures (Pastrana and Betancourt 2014). In Brazilian foreign policy it would hold examples of political praxis such as "South-South diplomacy" (Flemes 2010; Amorim 2010; Ricúpero 2010; Pastrana and Vera 2013) and "multilateralism of reciprocity" (Cervo 2008).

Theoretical formulations, reformulations and new contributions

This section presents some contributions and provides an overview of how the world is understood from each of these contributions.

Autonomy: concept, methodological tool and strategy – Argentinean and Brazilian outlooks

A term which links *theory*⁵ and *concepts*⁶ in Latin American international relations is the notion of *autonomy*.

H. Muñoz (1987), in a study about dominant issues and approaches in Latin American foreign policy, pointed out that *autonomy* was one of the three fundamental issues he had found

⁴ For an overview about *Respice Pollum*, cfr. Bernal-Meza (2005; 2013).

⁵ According to Tomassini (1989, 56), the theory is the highest level of generalization, whose role is to present a correct interpretation of the structure of contemporary international reality, enabling the identification of the main trends.

⁶ In the words of Cervo (2008, 13), "The set of concepts articulated between themselves and with the knowledge area of international relations, approaches theory to the extent that it performs two functions that were historically attributed to the discipline: the explanatory and evaluative. It differs from theory, insofar as it limits the scope of international relations of a given country".

in international studies in the region, which also interrelate with the other two: the need to promote development and the relations with the United States.

The concern for autonomy was developed by H. Jaguaribe (1970; 1979), who related it to situations of dependence and hegemony. Based upon the analysis and categories of Jaguaribe, Puig (1980) made *autonomy* the very core of his “Doctrine of Autonomy”.

Puig understood the autonomy of a State as “the maximum capacity of own decision that can be achieved, taking into account the objective constraints of the real world”, against which it was necessary to accumulate power, because “all autonomist project requires mobilizing resources of power”.

Afterwards, the theoretical debate on autonomy was abandoned as a result of the dominance of neoliberal thinking, which hegemonized reflection, both on the formulation of policies and on its theoretical analysis, during the 1980s and part of the 90s. Cervo identified that stage as “the dance of the paradigms” (2002, 455-462); *i.e.* adaptation to global order, when the neoliberal ideological supremacy made it lose its course of foreign policy guidelines; generating confusing, contradictory directions, and the coexistence of different paradigms of international relations and foreign policy in the same national formulation. This occurred, for example, in Brazil.

The concept of *autonomy* was identified as “cost”. According to Escudé (1992, 45), autonomy should be reconceptualised in terms of capacity and relative costs of confrontation with the hegemonic power. *Autonomy* is no longer the ability to have an own decision – as Puig interpreted it –, but the relative cost of exercising the ability of confrontation, which was implied by such interpretation of autonomy.

Concerns regarding the autonomy of foreign policy, however, returned with the crisis of late twentieth century. Thereafter, the conceptualizations of *autonomy* have been pretty diverse. “Classical” and also “liberal” interpretations have emerged.

Argentina and Brazil were the predominant scenarios in this new period of debates about its conceptualization. Some of them returned to the classical view of Puig; while others took up the line of alignment with the hegemon, formulated by Escudé. Since then, according to Simonoff (2012), in the course of the history of the Argentine contemporary international relations, at least four different theoretical conceptualizations can be identified, three of them being from an eminently political analysis – the one of Puig (Puig (1980; 1984), or “classic”; the one of Escudé (1992; 1995) or “Nineties”; the one of Russell and Tokatlián (2002; 2010), of neoliberal inspiration or “relationalist” –, and the last being from a socio-historical inspiration, the one of Rapoport (2009). All conceptualizations that have been analysed and commented, for example, Puig, by Bernal-Meza (1994; 2005; 2013) Simonoff (2015) and Rivarola (2015). Some others have been analytically synthesized and criticized, for instance, Escudé, by Bernal-Meza (1994; 2005), Simonoff (2012) and Míguez (2013), as well as Russell and Tokatlián of 2002, critiqued by Bernal-Meza (2005) and the subsequent reprocessing of 2010, criticized by Míguez (2013), ending with the conceptualization of Rapoport, with which the foreign policy of the governments of Nestor and Cristina Kirchner were identified, associating the social-economic

approach to the concept of *heterodox autonomy* (Bologna 2010, 44-45; Simonoff 2012, 123; Anzelini 2013, 317). In Brazil, those discussions focused on “autonomy for integration or participation” and “autonomy for diversification”.

What elements have differentiated these different contemporary perspectives? The fundamental criticism of Puig’s traditional autonomist thinking, exposed by the neoconservative vision of Escudé, is that it led to the international isolation of Argentina and to an unnecessary conflict with the hegemonic power. Escudé rejected freedom of decision or international action, considering it primitive, and arguing that the concept had been handled without a full awareness of the difference between the degree of autonomy a state has and the actual use of it (Escudé 1992, 126 and 137). According to Simonoff (2015, 129), it was an approach that assumed a political order of unipolar characteristics, and economic and financial orders defined by globalization, with an ideology that ranged between political neoconservatism and economic neoliberalism. In Brazil, J. Saraiva (2015), claimed, for the same period, the importance of *decisional autonomy* or *decision-making autonomy*.

The second branch of autonomous thinking was the one of neoliberal inspiration or relationalist, represented by R. Russell and J. G. Tokatlián, which sought to set itself up as an alternative to neoconservative autonomism (Simonoff 2015). The purpose of its formulators was to resignify the concept, based on the new world circumstances (contemporary globalization and the end of the Cold War), and those of the Southern Cone (democratization and integration), which entangled the traditional meaning of autonomy as an objective national interest.

In 2010 Russell and Tokatlián rewrote these ideas and emphasized that the “negative” or “oppositional” character of the traditional definitions of autonomy had become obsolete in the face of the transformations in the international system. Due to this, autonomy is no longer defined by the power of a country to isolate and control processes and external events, but rather by its power to participate and effectively influence world affairs, especially in international organizations and regimes of all types (Russell and Tokatlián 2010, 136-137). This interpretation is in line with what was pointed out previously, by Gerson Fonseca (1998), in Brazil, about *autonomy for participation* or *integration*.

In terms of political praxis, in Argentina, *autonomy* has been identified as independence (Puig), distance and confrontation with the United States (Kirchner administrations), but also as the need to come closer to the power (Escudé, Russell, Russell and Tokatlián).

The concept of autonomy as a methodological tool for analysing foreign policy: the Brazilian epistemic thinking

Gerson Fonseca drew attention to a double critical movement when it came to bringing the theoretical hypotheses to (interpret) the Brazilian reality. In his work (1998), he raised the dichotomy between the concepts of “autonomy through distance” for characterizing the country’s international behaviour in much of the period of the Cold War and “autonomy

through participation” related to the subsequent period. Since then, Fonseca’s thesis enabled us to understand the changes in Brazilian foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War, from the dichotomy between *distance* and *commitment*.

While Jaguaribe and Puig’s concept of autonomy has a clear definition, in contemporary Brazilian thinking, the term has evolved from the policy agenda in the early 60s (during the Quadros-Goulart presidencies) to the security agenda, with the creation of the South American Defence Council, under the framework of Unasur.

According to Vigevani and Ramanzini (2015), the concept of autonomy is related to the increase of the scope for action or state choices, taking into account the perception of the conditions of the domestic and international system within a given period. Therefore, it is a relative notion, which depends on the internal and external context, in which foreign policy is being made. “In addition, autonomy is, by definition, always a matter of degree; this aspect is particularly important in discussions about regional integration, which by definition will involve some degree of relativisation of autonomy” (idem, 193). However, there is also a decisional perspective of autonomy which, according to J. Saraiva (2015), would differentiate the autonomic visions of Spanish-speaking South American countries from those of Brazil.

Analysing the Brazilian visions of autonomy, Lessa et. al. (2010, 334) indicated that one of the most quoted categorizations was that proposed by Gelson Fonseca, which pointed the dichotomy between the concepts of autonomy through distance, partly used during the Cold War, and autonomy through participation, associated with the subsequent international order. The then Foreign Minister Lampreia coined the term “autonomy through integration” to characterize the F.H. Cardoso government policy, in contrast to the previous vision, which he considered isolationist. According to the author, at the Academy of international relations, the diplomatic discourse on distance and participation found its explanatory consistency in the Works of Valladão (2005), Pinheiro (2004), Soares de Lima (2003), Villa (2006), Vigevani and Oliveira (2007), and Vigevani, Oliveira and Cintra (2003).

Autonomy as a strategy

It was in the text “*Alguns aspectos da política externa brasileira contemporânea*” that Gelson Fonseca Jr. (1998, 353-374) formulated the concepts of autonomy through participation and autonomy through distance. According to Lessa et.al (2010), the text sought to clarify the basis of Brazilian foreign policy, and how it captured the complexity of the country’s society and served its interests. In practice, “autonomy through integration” would be replaced by “autonomy through diversification” under the government of Lula da Silva.

Some authors, such as Mercadante (2013), refer to “autonomy through participation” as “*autonomy through integration*”.

This is a location of foreign policy right in the North-South axis, focused on bilateral relations with the only superpower, on the treatment of *new subjects* and on making international commitments in line with that recommended by standards of the new world order and globalization, which took place under the guidance of a minimal –or “normal”– state⁷.

This would end up rewarding the country with a greater integration into global trade flows, increased power of FDI attraction and a more dynamic and robust regional and international role, which might even result in an admission to the Security Council of the UN. But none of this happened and “autonomy through integration” did not produce a greater integration neither a greater autonomy (Mercadante 2013, 339).

“Autonomous developmentalists” south-south visions

In Brazil, according to Vigevani and Cepaluni (2007, 283), “autonomy through diversification” emphasizes on South-South cooperation in order to seek a better balance with the North by making the necessary adjustments, having a greater international role, consolidating necessary changes in the foreign policy agenda, and making the country adhere to international principles and standards. All this is done through South-South and regional alliances and agreements with non-traditional partners, such as China, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and so forth, because they are believed to reduce asymmetries in foreign relations with powerful countries, and increase national bargaining power. According to the authors, the idea of “autonomy through diversification” aims at making adjustments and changes in the foreign policy agenda inspired by the idea of “autonomy through distance”, in a recent scenario in which the strategy of “autonomy through participation” has gained preponderance (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007, 295).

In the view of the authors, diversification means not only the search for alternatives in relations with other states, but it also implies an ability to intervene in matters involving (economic, financial and security) immediate interests.

According to Colombian authors such as Pastrana and Vera (2013), multilateralism was sought with a preference for South-South relations (which would be the measure of their degree of “autonomy”): contribution to the creation of international coalitions of powers that are considered similar (regional, medium or emerging powers), and associations that might limit the risks of the capitalism crisis further spreading from the core, such as the G-20. It’s been a multilateralism with demonstrations of *soft-balancing* and a “soft power” which has not aspired to become a military-strategic power of nuclear nature.

⁷ According to the definition given by Cervo to the neoliberal experience of Argentina under Carlos Menem president. (cfr. Cervo 2001).

Conceptual differences can be noted in the interpretation of autonomy, as a praxis of contemporary Brazilian foreign policy, under the governments of Cardoso and Lula da Silva –as G. Fonseca, Vigevani and Cepaluni, Lampreia, Mercadante et al. point out. Nevertheless, according to J. Saraiva (2015, 239), although Brazilian thinking applied to international insertion has not been uniform, the concepts of autonomy were not so different in the two presidential terms, and that was noticed in the absence of contrasts between the idea of “autonomy through participation” and the subsequent idea of a “logistical State” by Cervo.

According to J. Saraiva, the Brazilian vision of the idea of decisional autonomy invokes national power and international environment, contextualizes and ties the notion of decisional autonomy to structures and junctures of international relations at each historical moment. This perspective pushes the Brazilian interpretation away from the notion of autonomy as a confrontation given to the concept of decisional autonomy in other South American interpretations. As pointed by J. Saraiva (2015, 228), herein lies a significant difference between autonomist thinking and praxis in Spanish-speaking South American countries, with regard to the historical practice of Brazil.

The ideas of *autonomy* and *universalism* may be considered the structuring keys to Brazilian thinking in international relations and foreign policy. The second concept, evolving later into a *selective universalism* (Lessa 1998), provided alternatives for obtaining inputs for development and has had some significance for Brazil as a “leading actor”. It allowed the country to act as a *global player*, whilst the *selective* quality allows renewing that “universalism” in the light of new scenarios and systemic changes, and also to determine the main axes of global action.

Identifying autonomy as the leeway a country has in its relations with other states in their international activities, and outlining autonomy as “decision-making” capacity, the latter acts as the historical pattern pinpointing the continuity of the foreign policy (Saraiva 2015, 221). These concepts, both autonomy and universalism, sustain the historical belief of society that the country should hold a *special place* in the international arena. However, there is no homogeneous view to define that belief operationally, in terms of diplomatic action.

Miriam Gomes Saraiva (2010 and 2013) has identified and defined two lines of thinking about how to operationalize that *special place* in the world which belongs to Brazil: the “pragmatic institutionalists” and the “autonomists”. These two streams, with different views on the dynamics of international order, national interests and the best strategy to achieve the goals of autonomy and economic growth (Saraiva 2013, 65), are methodological and conceptual contributions that help explain continuity and change in foreign policy. Each one of these two proposed lines of thinking is most influential in a particular historical period.

According to the author, the pragmatic institutionalists – also inaccurately referred to as “liberals” – comprise a line of thinking and action in Itamaraty, which was strengthened and consolidated during the F.H. Cardoso administration. In the economic field, this trend was favourable to a conditioned liberalization process. They prioritize Brazilian support to international regimes as part of a pragmatic strategy, which does not mean an “alliance” with

industrialized countries, but seeing the regulation of international relations as a favourable scenario to Brazilian economic development. They advocate a new outlook of the concepts of sovereignty and autonomy, where global values must be defended by all. This line of thinking led to the most significant turning point in foreign policy: the adoption of the concept of “shared sovereignty”, different from the classical concept of sovereignty; a vision that identified a world marked by a concert of countries with a homogeneous speech in defence of universal values, along with the trend to the formation of regimes to ensure them.

This shift has also meant a modification on the concept of autonomy: the idea of an “autonomy through integration”. Moreover, pragmatic institutionalists advocate the establishment of a Brazilian leadership in South America, guided by self-restraint, and based on the ideas of democratic stability and infrastructure development (Saraiva 2010 and 2013).

Meanwhile, the “autonomists”, adherents to developmentalist thinking and advocates of universalism in foreign policy, have concerns of a more political-strategic nature regarding the North/South confrontation, and seek a rapprochement with other “emerging” countries, which would have common characteristics with Brazil. Regarding South America, they advocate a project in order to build the Brazilian leadership in the region, and are influenced by heavyweight national thinkers who identify Brazil as the most important country “south of Equator”, the one that is able to influence others due to its special attributes, such as population, geography and economy (Saraiva 2010). True to its epistemic origin, the autonomists are advocates of developmentalist thinking and identify integration as a means of access to external markets, and as an element conducive to opening up new perspectives for projecting Brazilian industries abroad. They also have boosted South-South cooperation with other emerging countries of continental dimensions, such as IBSA and BRICS. In summary, as Saraiva (2013) points out, this line of thinking gave more relevance to beliefs which sought more directly, and were based on shorter-term strategies, both the strengthening of autonomy and multilateralism, and the projection of the country as a global player on the international stage.

Venezuela: the Founding Insubordination

In 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela issued a document summarizing the doctrine and the theoretical framework which supported the country's foreign policy thereafter (Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2012). According to press reports, Venezuela adopted the conceptual categories of Marcelo Gullo (El País 2014). It was stated that strategic foreign policy initiatives are conceived as a key element that would allow Venezuela to achieve what Gullo (2008) calls “threshold power”; that is, a stage of development that allows a state to overcome the peripheral and, therefore, the subordinate status.

According to Gullo, the international system basically consists of hegemonic power structures which encompass subordinating and subordinated states. When the latter reach the *threshold of power* they can become subordinating states, as long as their industrial development and the

creation of elites and political cadres is accompanied by a serious reflection about the ideological subordination derived from the hegemonic power structures. This reflection must become the “founding insubordination”, *i.e.*, an emancipatory attitude towards mainstream thinking. Only if this happens, the country in question will no longer be peripheral (2008, 13-14). In itself, the *ideological insubordination* is the first phase of the emancipation process expressed by the Bolivarian Revolution.

Gullo's formulation – *founding insubordination* – has three lines of theoretical basis, which also converge with the views of the “Bolivarian Revolution”, and the update of Bolívar's thinking. These lines are: *structuralist thinking*⁸; the conceptual affiliation of the formulation of policies and foreign policy discourse to the epistemology of *Latin American structuralism*; and the subscription of the formulation to *realist* thinking about power, for there is a *Hobbesian* vision of the world.

Thus, the formulation matches the fundamental idea underlying Chávez' international alliance building: that “power has been and remains the necessary condition for tempering, neutralizing or avoiding political subordination and economic exploitation. (...); power is the *sine qua non* to ensure security and neutralize greed” (Gullo 2008, 25). The conceptualization of the *founding insubordination* itself refers to the willingness to fight against the dominant power⁹, thus matching the political discourse.

Chile: the Liberal Political Economy approach

Since neoliberal reforms – trade liberalization, privatizations, withdrawal of the state from social agendas and deregulation of labour and financial markets – have started in Chile, in 1975, there is a praxis of foreign policy sustained in what would later be formulated as an *open regionalism* by CEPAL (1992; 1994).

The prevailing approach to international relations in Chile since the return to democracy up to the present day is, in my opinion, the *liberal political economy* (Bernal-Meza 2015), whose organizing principle is the paradigm of *open regionalism*. Despite its origins in the epistemic community of CEPAL, in practice, open regionalism corresponds to the ideology of neoliberalism, which added *pragmatism* and *upgrade* to the classical interpretation of the previous regionalism – of structuralist roots. The paradigm of *open regionalism* sought to conciliate unilateral policies of trade liberalization and opening with a liberal idea of “globalization”, this being a theorization about the liberalization process that was taking place in the international economic relations of different Latin American countries (van Klaveren 1997; Bernal-Meza 2005 and 2009).

8 The document from the Ministry refers at various points to concepts and categories from *structuralist* views and from approaches of *dependency*, such as core and periphery, subordinated or peripheral states.

9 This is based on three assumptions: 1) states on the periphery of the structure of world power can change their status from “objects” to “subjects” of international politics only through a process of *founding insubordination*; 2) at the origin of power of the states, there is usually a *state impulse*, which is what causes the chain reaction of all (the) elements that potentially make up the power of a state; 3) all successful emancipatory processes were the result of an appropriate combination of an attitude of ideological insubordination towards the hegemonic thinking and an effective state impulse (Gullo 2010, 21).

In the view of Chilean academics who accompanied the reformulation of the insertion model within the framework of democratic transition, the most open character, “integrating to the world” – expressed by the open regionalism – was apparent not only in the economic sphere, but also in political issues such as human rights, disarmament and environment. This was a borrowed conception from the mechanisms of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in which a revitalization and launching of new forms of cooperation in many diverse areas, such as infrastructure development, energy, technological development, physical integration and conciliation on foreign policy was accompanied (van Klaveren 1997; 1997a). Clearly, the new Latin American regionalism became a paradigm of both economic and political openness – though an *updated* one. *Open regionalism* was introduced as the new international economic integration strategy, providing the basis for the new characteristics of integration agreements, which were also fed by political experiences in the creation of institutionalized political forums for cooperation and international negotiation (from “Contadora” to “Grupo de Río”). These forums were the result of the new presidential diplomacy, and, in the economic field, of coincidences between different countries in the implementation of opening, liberalization and economic deregulation programs. Hence, the concept became supportive for external policies (Bernal-Meza 2009), and underpinned Chile's choice for non-preferential partners, which would derive from free-trade agreements. This view upheld political and economic ties with similar states, which are not necessarily those of the region.

Therefore, Chilean open regionalism conveys the opening of the market economy, with a bias of *realism* and a subordinated *pragmatism*, which allows the identification of where the “natural” partners of the country are. Thus, from the beginning of the *Concertación* (Concertation) governments, foreign policy has a predominant approach of *liberal political economy*, in which an optimistic vision of *globalization* – accompanied by the regionalization of a world economy in blocks – and *open regionalism* intertwine to decisively influence the course of international insertion. The unification of the world market is seen as a consequence of globalization and as a reality of the new global context.

Such endorsement clearly showed a choice for an approach that, in the understanding of liberal political economy of international relations, believed in globalization, in dominant trends in the world economy that would carry out the open (or liberal) economies project. Certainly there was a pragmatic understanding in assuming such strategy, seeking to take advantage of the new scenario created by globalization (Maira 2007); but this would be supplementary to the vision of political economy which supported the insertion. The governments of this period (1990-2015) have been idealist in their views of the international order dominated by liberal political economy, but also very realist when considering Latin America – and South American – integration possible. Based on the “liberal political economy” approach, Chile did not promote regional alliances conducive to moderate the hegemonic power, nor did it aspire to participate through natural alliances – those “similar” within its own region – in international *management*. It did so through “multilateralism” with partners from different continents, with different capacities and different histories and traditions; a strategy that did not entail risks (Bernal-Meza 2015).

Concepts in international affairs

Amado Cervo (2008, 2008a) joins the theoretical debate with a critical argumentation about the validity of external theories in international affairs to interpret reality in our region, against which the author favours the elaboration and re-elaboration of Latin American concepts (Cervo 2003, 5). Cervo has argued that theories generate distrust because the roots they are based on link them to specific interests of certain societies (2008, 10). He has said that “the theory of International Relations, a discipline that was already considered American, has spread in study centres throughout the world.” (Cervo 2008, 8). Consequently, the author calls for exchanging foreign theories for our own concepts; he confronts both, “through a hypothesis according to which concepts and theories have different roles in the field of studies on International Relations”.

The next step consists in affirming that “the universal explanatory scope of theories is forged in contrast to the concepts” which “expose the national or regional roots upon which they are based and refuse to be invested with explanatory global reach.” This line of argumentation suggests “reducing the role of theories and enhancing the role of concepts, either in the sense of producing understanding, or in the sense of subsidizing decision-making processes in International Relations”. Furthermore, this argument “jeopardizes the prestige of theories of International Relations in education programs, advocating for a research on the concepts produced in a particular country or a particular set of countries.” He points out that “insofar as they promote such specific factors, they discard interests, values and behaviour patterns of other societies”. The proposed task, therefore, could be conceptualized as a work for eidetic studies in Latin America: “The Brazilian experience provides the observation basis for data collection. The systematization of Brazilian concepts, applied to the international insertion of the country” (Cervo 2008, 13)¹⁰, is thus a contribution to the theoretical-methodological approach to the study of international relations in our region.

Hegemonic power structures

Other concepts of realist content, are the *Hegemonic power structures*, formulated by Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (2005), which relate to the “big peripheral states”, and the *regional power*, formulated by María Regina Soares de Lima (2005), in this case, a concept addressed towards groupings such as IBAS or BRICS. Guimarães (idem, 25), introduces the concept of “hegemonic power structures” to describe the scenario and the international dynamics in which “big peripheral states” (such as China, India and Brazil) operate and are organized around hegemonic structures of political and economic power; structures that are the outcome of a historical process and that favour those countries that integrate them, and whose main purpose is their own perpetuation. This concept is preferable to that of *hegemonic state* because it avoids discussing the existence or

¹⁰ For a summary, see Eduardo Devés (2013).

not, in the post-Cold War world, of a hegemonic power – the United States – and also avoids determining whether the world is unipolar or multipolar; whether there is a condominium or not. “The concept of hegemonic structures is more flexible and includes links of interest and law, international organizations, multiple public and private players, the possibility of new participants and the permanent development of standards of conduct, but at the core of those structures there is always national States” (Guimarães 2005, 28-29).

Regional power

The concept of *regional power*, (Lima 2005), different from that of “medium power” used above, refers to a particular category of countries with international profiles which are driven towards groupings. According to its formulator, these countries have that profile based on two different international identities. The first one refers to the world of politics and can be called *system-affecting state*, according to the definition of Keohane (1969). This category includes those countries that, despite having relatively limited resources and capacities (compared to the powers), but having a determining international profile, value multilateral arenas and collective action among similar countries, in order to exercise some extent of meta-power and influence international outcomes. The second identity, referred to as the global economy, is the “major emerging market”. This category was coined by the *US Trade Representative*, and refers to the large periphery countries that implemented the economic reforms from the Washington Consensus: privatizations, trade liberalization, deregulation of the economy and state reform¹¹. In this identity, credibility and macroeconomic stability are two highly valued currencies in the globalized world, and international initiatives are designed as mechanisms for “encapsulating” domestic reforms (Lima 2005, 25).

According to Lima, four elements are required to be a “regional power”¹²: a dimension of physical capacity (being in a global ranking), a dimension of recognition by neighbours, a dimension of willingness to take on a regional role, and a dimension of leadership (cooperative).

Multilateralism of reciprocity

“Multilateralism of reciprocity” emerged as a praxis of foreign policy under the government of President Lula da Silva.

Cervo (2008) theorized about the concept, noting that it was extrapolated from trade and security, and spread out to all domains of international relations. According to the author's interpretation (Cervo 2008a, 497), it is a concept elaborated by Brazilian diplomacy which involves two assumptions: the existence of rules to put the international order together – without

11 These countries would be India, Indonesia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Poland, Russia, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

12 Conversation with the author; Rio de Janeiro, April 7, 2014.

which the disparity of power would prevail for the benefit of the great powers –, and the joint development of those rules, in order to ensure reciprocity of effects, so that the interests of some are not carried out at the expense of others. The author suggests that Brazil acts in multilateral forums with a spirit of reciprocity; meaning that it is not a Brazilian unilateral action, but rather that concessions granted by the country must be reciprocal.

The concept consists in seeking genuine interdependence in international economic relations, increasing the share of foreign trade in GDP, playing a significant role in international security, getting reciprocal effects on environmental regimes, and achieving a system with reciprocity on health and human rights.

As Vigevani and Cepaluni (2007) noted, the concept was associated with “autonomy through diversification” to emphasize South-South cooperation. Thus, the concepts were used to support the praxis in international relations.

Big peripheral States

Although the analysis of Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães is in an earlier text (1999), the application or identification of the category is given with the praxis of the BRICS, grouping through which the international dimension of Brazil is projected. Big peripheral states are those underdeveloped countries with large populations and large territory, where industrial structures and significant internal markets were established.

For the author, big states on the periphery of the international system have significant differences both as societies and states, which would explain in part their reciprocal isolation, characterized by a fragility of their political and economic ties. The other reason for such isolation and fragility lies in their close relations with certain countries, resulting from the evolution of the international system, driven by the dynamics of its core. Despite their differences, these big states are positioned in a special category when they are compared with the states comprising the core of the system. That category of countries, to which Brazil belongs and which is called “large peripheral states”, faces an international scenario coming from an historical process, which is organized around “hegemonic power structures” whose core is made up of the “core states” (Guimarães 2005, 15-16).

According to this interpretation, the international scenario, in which the big peripheral states are included, is characterized by the simultaneous and interactive presence of five main transformation processes: the acceleration of scientific and technological progress; sovereignty and territorial reorganization; the reorganization of the productive system; the concentration of technological, economic, military and political power; and the reintegration of territories into the capitalist system (Guimarães 2005, 43). The final strategic goals of the big peripheral states would be participating in these hegemonic structures in a sovereign and unsubordinated way, or promoting a reduction on their level of vulnerability against the action of those structures (idem, 157). The struggle for the construction of a *multipolar world* must prevail in the strategy

to reduce external vulnerability of any big peripheral state, including Brazil. The struggle for multipolarity broadens the Brazilian spectrum of possibilities for building specific alliances, in order to reduce the effects of a concentration of power that every day increases the gap between states and societies, and portends a future of violence which comes from preserving the privileges derived from such concentration (idem, 178).

The reformulation of the Foreign Policy agenda from a non state-centered view: actors and subjects

The “new issues” on the agenda and their projection

What many theorists of international relations pointed out in the 1970s and 1980s about the multiplication of actors and agendas in international affairs (Keohane and Nye 1977), and that L. Tomassini (1982) lucidly noted in Latin America, currently encompasses a wide range of issues – environment, human rights, internationalization of education, health, culture, and so forth – which entails an increasingly dense and institutionalized plurality of actors, now involved in countless international affairs (Pinheiro and Milani 2012, 15).

As a result of their analytical study, Pinheiro and Milani argue that there is – at least in the Brazilian Academy of international relations – a different view on foreign policy, distant from the hegemony of *realist* thinking.

It is possible to talk about a new configuration of the decisional arena of Brazilian foreign policy, whose experience can be transferred as a theoretical knowledge and professional training to other countries. A plurality of actors and agendas of foreign policy challenges the monopoly of the diplomatic action of foreign ministries, and stems from the fact that both domestic and international order leave several open spaces for political action. As these authors point out, “plurality ends up challenging our analytical ability to locate with absolute precision the institutional par excellence place and agent of decision on foreign policy” (Pinheiro and Milani 2012, 331).

If we admit that there is a plurality of external actions reflected in these various agendas, which are put into practice by actors and different government agencies, the existence of a plurality of foreign policy is derived, which is precisely their claim.

As a different view on foreign policy, the theoretical perspective proposed by Pinheiro and Milani breaks the association of foreign policy with the hardest versions of the theoretical school of realism, and extends the notion of “national interest” to the participation of other actors in society.

There are two aspects on which the thematic expansion of the foreign policy agenda influences greatly. One refers to the dimensions of South-South cooperation, to the extent that it incorporates areas that project a vision of peaceful international relations and is not involved in agendas related to global military and strategic security. From this perspective, a non-realist

view of international relations is valued. The other aspect relates to the expansion of the dynamics of some agendas which allow involving more national actors in the praxis of foreign policy. Indeed, alongside new topics (health, education, culture, and so on) which are hereby incorporated; *paradiplomacy* action is expanded, as the external praxis of subnational actors.

New state-centered instruments: Reformulations of Logistical State and Plurinational State

Since there is a close relationship between the ideal type of state, the characteristics of international insertion and the formulation and practice of foreign policy (Bernal-Meza 2000; 2003; 2010), the reformulation of the state implies diplomatic agendas and political practices other than those of traditional Westphalian inter-state system.

Logistical State

“Logistical State” is a concept, developed and used as an analytical category in international studies. It was developed by Amado Cervo in order to interpret the international relations of Brazil. It may also be applied to other experiences, such as Chile (Bernal-Meza 2015), a country in which the basic characteristics of the model have taken place¹³.

The starting point is “paradigmatic analysis method, which takes the empirical basis of observation provided by experience as a starting point, and then ascends to the concept, the abstract level that organizes matter and gives it organic intelligibility” (Cervo 2015, 164).

As in other reflections which aims at observing the world from our own perspectives, Cervo uses the empirical basis of Brazilian experience (just as Prebisch and CEPAL did with the theory of declining terms of trade and import substitution industrialization in the region), to theorize about the experience. The system of ideas represented by the logistical paradigm provide strategic guidance for the dynamics of Brazil in international arenas, and bases its expansion in terms of influence and involves a set of ideas shared by the leading sectors about the roles of the state structure. In this regard, the state “plays the role of support and legitimacy of the initiatives of other economic and social actors” (Cervo 2008; 2008a), and involves a number of tasks that enables it to become a (mainly economic, but also political) launch pad for public and private actors in the country.

Following the “developmentalist” and “neoliberal” historical paradigms (Cervo 2013), according to the author, a new paradigm for post-neoliberal era was created in Brazil: this is the Logistical State, which involves thinking, national purpose, an own interpretation of the interests and lines of force of external action (Cervo 2014, 164).

13 Among them, the role of the private sector in the dynamics of economic growth and wealth creation; the internationalization of the economy, the internationalization of large companies of domestic private capital, the role of foreign policy and in building a favourable international environment for domestic economic operators by means of international negotiations that, in the Chilean case, have taken place through the negotiation of many free trade agreements, an so forth.

Albeit it seeks to overcome the serious deviations of the two preceding paradigms (developmentalist and neoliberal), the logistical paradigm has been deeply influenced by both. From the first one, it keeps the industrial vocation; from the second, a concertation between state and society, which allows one to verify a redistribution of power and responsibilities between both actors, and an articulation of domestic and external levels by means of the decisional autonomy of the state. It aims to overcome asymmetries between nations by raising national conditions to the level of advanced countries; transferring to societies the responsibilities of the previous “entrepreneurial state”, addressing now the task of backing society in the fulfillment of their interests. Its component of foreign policy, in the field of international economic relations, aims at reducing technological and financial dependence, promoting productive innovation, and other initiatives to reduce external vulnerability. Domestically, it seeks to strengthen the national structural economic core in order to boost its internationalization (Cervo 2008). *Logistical* state sees the international system as a power game, a struggle among the most powerful players in the system. It prioritizes South-South alliances and signs trade agreements based on mutually beneficial reciprocal relations, under conditions of symmetrical interdependence.

Two dimensions of this approach can be identified: a) as a series of perceptions about recent transformations in the international system and on the role of Brazil on the world stage and; b) as a group of policies that guide the strategy of domestic development and international relations. As a whole, the paradigm allows to interpret the transition process towards the twenty-first century which happened in Brazil under the governments of Lula da Silva that moved from regional integration to globality. As Bernal-Meza and Bizzozero point out (2014), Brazil went from regional to the world by building an emerging power of global reach and involvement.

Bolivia: Plurinational State, native-indigenous-rural autonomies and diplomacy of the peoples – new concepts in international relations

According to Cervo’s interpretation (2008, 1), we define Plurinational State, native-indigenous-rural autonomies and diplomacy of the peoples as “concepts in international relations”¹⁴.

All three terms are drawn from historical knowledge of recent political experience of Bolivia. Following Cervo’s argumentation, they give birth to different concepts (in the sense that they are different from those in other regions and countries) which are explanatory of the evolution of political thinking and, thus, become an example of a country that seeks its own model of international insertion; a country that makes its own idea of the role to play in the world.

Cervo defines ideal types of state as the main agents of international relations¹⁵.

14 Let’s remember that, for Cervo (2008) “A set of concepts, intertwined by the function of understanding the object of a particular study in the field of human sciences, leads in our opinion, to the theory”.

15 In the history of international relations in Brazil, Cervo identifies four paradigms, which use the state as a permanent reference: liberal-conservative, developmentalist, normal or neoliberal and logistics (cfr. Cervo 2008, 67-90).

Defining the ideal type of Bolivian State as expressed in its Constitution (2009) – that is, as “Plurinational State” –, refers to a concept that leads to the latest paradigm of international relations in Latin America.

Plurinational State

This concept represents the Refoundation of the Bolivian State, which is expressed in a plurinationality of nations, the autonomy of regions, departments and territories of nations and indigenous-native-rural peoples. They are the expression of a different conception of the traditional state, disaggregating the power of the Leviathan, and projecting an institutionality (the exercise of autonomy and control of natural resources), a political practice, and a conception of power – which is distributed among their nations –, which should modify the customary form of relationship between territorial units recognized as sovereign in the international system (Bernal-Meza 2015a, 620).

The Political Constitution of the State (2009), Article 1, states that “Bolivia is a Social Unitarian State of Community Plurinational Law which is free, independent, sovereign, democratic, intercultural, decentralized and with several autonomies”. According to Albo (2008, 109), “this is the only instance in which the state is called “Unitarian”, except on the title dedicated to *international relations*.” This characteristic of the Bolivian Plurinational State makes it quite different from the immediate regional political environment, starting with all its neighbours, since autonomies actually have an international projection through rights over territories and resources.

The plurinational state is a new way to understand and exercise autonomy and rights of indigenous and regional communities, whose dynamics of international relations differs from the traditional inter-state diplomatic practice, because it incorporates new dimensions (in terms of domestic law) while amending the interpretation that so far was recognized as an international practice to national regions (provinces, states, municipalities) of countries through the “paradiplomacy”.

Through the Constitution, rural native indigenous peoples now have the right to exclusive use and exploitation of renewable natural resources in their territory. This is because the negotiation, signing and ratification of international treaties – under the Constitution – must be managed with “respect for the rights of rural native indigenous peoples”; and this principle empowers the holders of those rights.

Constitutional principles grant the autonomies some rights that other countries, including federal countries (such as Brazil, Argentina or Mexico) retain for themselves, namely, the sovereign control of natural resources belongs to the central state. The combination of this autonomy with the regionalization process which has also been recognized by the Constitution has generated a new political scenario whose international expression cannot be the traditional state diplomacy, neither the international representation of the Bolivian unitary state, for they

symbolize the whole and belong to the plurinational state. But *paradiplomacy* can exercise that representation.

Rural-native-indigenous autonomies and paradiplomacy

The Constitution recognizes four types of autonomies: departmental, regional, municipal and rural-native-indigenous. These autonomies are opposed: on the one hand there is the departmental, referring to political and geographical divisions; on the other hand, there is the *indigenous*.

In both autonomies, the central aspect of their entity are the rights to natural resources in the territory in question, or on which their autonomy rules. But the fundamental eidetic-ideological element of this new institutional framework was the *indigenous autonomy*, closely linked to the principle of *self-determination*.

This is not the classic interpretation of “self-determination”, in the Manifest of Wilson (League of Nations and United Nations) expressed in the establishment of national States in Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean; but the self-determination of native indigenous peoples who never had the status (or recognition) of “nations”. This new interpretation of “autonomies” requires a different interpretation of *paradiplomacy*, because the Bolivian version of this practice can take actions of high politics, related to the management and external or international negotiation for the exploitation or use of lands and natural resources of their own spaces of autonomy.

Paradiplomacy breaks up with the classical distinction between domestic policy and foreign policy of the States.¹⁶ Both the action of foreign involvement of subnational units and regions, as well as paradiplomacy, reflect changing conceptions on theory and practice in relation to the traditionally dominant State-centric vision. (Bernal-Meza 2015a, 622)

Diplomacy of Peoples

Additionally to these two practices of international political relations – the classic Westphalian diplomacy and the most recent paradiplomacy – a new modality has been added of relationship between diverse national actors in the inter-State level of Latin American scenario, which may well exemplify the coexistence with the previous types. This is what Evo Morales has defined as *diplomacy of peoples*, which he proposed in the Hemispheric Summit of Mar del Plata in November 2005.

16 Maira says (2010, 18): “here we have not faced the distortion that experts such as Michael Francisco Aldecoa and Keating call “protodiplomacy”; *i.e.*, attempts to carry out an international activity by a sub-national actor who seeks to be the germ of a process of secession (of the kind openly proposed in Québec by the Parti Québécois or more subtly by the autonomous governments of the Basque Country and Catalonia in Spain). According to Maira (2010, 18), in various Latin American countries, the use of proto-diplomacy (or paradiplomacy) has varying degrees of development, but is always based on the recognition of national unity and a leading role in international relations by the Heads of State and the foreign ministries of each country; adding that the degree of advancement of paradiplomacy vary widely from one country to another.” This is where the new scenario in Bolivia breaks with the vision that was had so far.

Vargas (2013, 1), states that:

[...] like other proposals of leftist governments in Latin America, such as Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua, the idea was framed in the need to manage a democratic revolution which would try to change the state and society in every area where there was a clash between the interests of the majority and the interests of the elites, historically in power. Thus academic and political debates about new concepts emerged, such as “living well” or “good life”¹⁷, the logic of the Treaty of Commerce of the Peoples¹⁸ or “diplomacy of the peoples” which were part of the new parameters of the new public administration, radically different from the logic that preceded the abovementioned governments.

The difference of this diplomacy, compared to traditional, lies in the fact that diplomacy of peoples is driven from the governmental authority; so the government and the plurinational state would be tied, in the international field, through (Westphalian) diplomacy and diplomacy of the peoples. On the other hand, autonomies would do it via *paradiplomacy*, yet may also do so via diplomacy of peoples, since, in its conception, it also refers to the relations of peoples with peoples and other relationships between similar actors.

This interpretation of diplomacy was embodied in the foundations of the foreign policy of the plurinational state¹⁹. It is noted there that it is based on five pillars: 1) diplomacy of peoples, which seek to listen, dialogue and work for all; put the interests of the nation before those of a sector, and put the principles of life before the logic of the market; 2) effective exercise of sovereignty, which builds and develops the coordinating ability of the state and contributes to plan new models of change for an international harmonious coexistence; 3) cultural diversity, which includes peaceful coexistence, respect between peoples and practice of cultural diversity of different identities, multiple codes, beliefs, expressions and values of those who inhabit the planet Earth, is the core of the culture of life which native peoples and indigenous people of Bolivia promote; 4) harmony with nature, which seeks to give rise to a comprehensive, diverse and inclusive development in harmony, as the only alternative of life on planet Earth; 5) reduction and overcoming of asymmetries, seeking complementarity and solidarity rather than a competitiveness and reciprocity that assume the misconception that all nations and regions are equal.

Morales would claim that diplomacy of peoples was a “rather public, but diplomacy of the people, not a state to state diplomacy” and that now it would influence on state to state, nation to nation diplomacy. The diplomacy of peoples is the approach of indigenous peoples

17 The idea of “living well” is collected from the preamble of the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and is also found in several of its articles. Ecuador has established in its Constitution the idea of “good life”. Quotation from Vargas.

18 The Treaty of Commerce of the Peoples is an instrument, which was introduced in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA-TCP). Quotation from Vargas.

19 Contained in the National Development Plan “Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva y Democrática para Vivir Bien: Lineamientos Estratégicos, 2006–2011” (2007 174), approved by Supreme Decree No. 29272, dated September 12, 2007.

to indigenous peoples; businessman to businessman; armed forces to armed forces; politicians to politicians²⁰. Later the concept would be used by the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Ministry of People's Power for Foreign Affairs 2007). This situation marks the start of its international conceptual projection.

New methodological elements for the interpretation of the positioning of medium countries: Chile and the "Double asymmetry"

According to the formulator of double asymmetry (Ross 2012), the concept refers to differences of power set forth in relationships of domination and subordination, which international politics has incorporated into its analytical *acquis*. Following the structuralist and neo-structuralist line, with Marxist and non-Marxist authors, including the works of Lenin, Prebisch, school of CEPAL and Wallerstein, Ross (2012, 860) raises the idea that the asymmetry would be structured between rich and poor countries in a relationship full of political-economic evaluations, where rich countries (North and / or core) would hold that position due to its ability to overpower those who are poorer and therefore weaker (also located in the South and / or on the periphery).

This interpretation has been described and applied by its author to interpret Chile's foreign policy, which, as a result of a significant economic growth occurred in recent decades that transformed the country from a small one to a medium-sized one, is pulled by two forces identified by Ross as a double asymmetry.

This double asymmetry is the simultaneous relationship which Chile has with both the major economies of the world and those whose relative power is clearly lesser than Chilean (especially neighbouring northern countries, such as Peru and Bolivia).

According to this interpretation, the upwards asymmetry (United States, European Union, Japan, and so forth) has resulted in economic benefits (thanks to free trade agreements), while downwards asymmetry has turned into relationships continuously moving forward and back.

The first asymmetry notes that Chile has managed to establish a pragmatic (neorealist) relationship, paying particular attention to its international insertion through unilateral, bilateral and multilateral opening modalities, which reinforced Chilean economic growth via exports and FDI.

The second asymmetry, where Chile emerges as the strongest country and others act as the weaker states, presents aspects of greater difficulty, since the interdependence here is complex, for it is subject to multiple variables and tinged with an ideological interpretation in which several of the neighbouring countries of Chile assume the historical role of "victims", being actors located at the "South" or the "periphery" of the relationship (Ross 2012, 862-863).

20 As Fernando Cabrera compiled in an interview with Evo Morales for Radio Nederland in December 2006. Available at <http://www.alterinfos.org/spip.php?article733>.

Even though the author did not note it specifically, double asymmetry – particularly “upwards” asymmetry, *i.e.* the link with developed countries – is instrumentally related to the *liberal political economy* described above, since the asymmetry with developed countries is the result of a political option for the relations with developed capitalist states, identified as “natural trading partners” of the country.

Conclusion

Recent Latin American contributions, reported here, have the ability to generalize and extrapolate from national examples.

Abstract formulations such as “autonomy” (in its different meanings and interpretations), “founding insubordination,” “liberal political economy approach” and “hegemonic power structures”; as well as concepts such as “logistical state” and “Plurinational state”, and methodological elements such as the “double asymmetry” or instrumental elements as “diplomacy of peoples”, are inspired by national examples or cases. They allow us to understand how international affairs are designed from epistemology or from theoretical and practical view of some countries. Yet both situations, which are useful for explaining specific national realities, can also be used to understand other realities beyond the cases which have inspired those reflections.

The repertoire of formulations, concepts and methodological contributions highlights the effort of epistemic and academic communities of international relations in the region to generate original theoretical, conceptual and methodological tools to interpret their own reality, which show a higher stage of progress after those identified by Bernal-Meza (1994; 2005; 2013) and Devés Valdés (2003; 2004), in the years 1950-1990.

During the period from 1950-1960, Latin American interpretations regarding international affairs were based on historical approaches, such as “diplomatic histories” or international law (Muñoz 1987; Puig 1984). Many modalities of analysis and interpretation were so misleading, unarticulated and partial, that their identification as theoretical formulations should be called into question (Van Kalveren 1984, 46-47). They were rather “a repertoire of myths, such as non-intervention, anti-imperialism, non-alignment, Third-Worldism, or Latin American integration” (Tomassini 1987, 126) with very distorted and simplistic images of international relations (Russell 1992, 9). The “legalistic” interpretations regarding the international system were based upon a normative perspective, which left aside the examination of social reality and justice (Puig 1980). The exception was the political economy approach of international relations, which was originated with the formulation of *core-periphery* model by Prebisch and CEPAL.

From these points of view, recent contributions gathered here have more elaborate and abstract conceptual, epistemological and descriptive levels; thus having a higher degree of generalization. It can be noticed, for example, a line of continuity between the doctrine of Autonomy (Puig, Jaguaribe) and formulations such as “large peripheral states” (Guimaraes),

which describes a category of systemic level through which states included in it can increase its regional and international influence capacity, or the “founding insubordination” (Gullo), which suggests a way to increase autonomy and power from peripheral positions.

Also in this period, concepts such as “multilateralism of reciprocity” (Cervo), which have been extrapolated from the epistemology of international trade to security and other international thematic agendas, have been developed; as well as “hegemonic power structures” (Guimarães) and “regional power” (Lima), which describe and position states according to the layout in the structure of world power; and also the “logistical state” (Cervo), the “plurinational state” of Bolivia and the “open regionalism” that allow prescriptive policy formulations in international affairs (Bernal-Meza 2013, 2015).

Some formulations have reached a high degree of generalization, as understood by Tomassini (1989), whilst *concepts* are explanatory of the evolution of political thinking and allow policymakers to have some idea of what must be done in international affairs. Hence they can be seen as contributions to replace theories and be useful to understand and explain realities beyond the national cases that inspired them.

Current (doctrinal, conceptual, methodological) formulations are more elaborated and abstract, allowing higher levels of generalization, and meet a stage of the international system in which Latin American countries have raised their concern about international affairs and intensified their involvement in them.

These formulations are the result of intellectual abstractions of academics, diplomats or politicians (presidents in the Bolivian case), developed on the basis of monitoring political praxis. In other cases, they are (still) at the level of proposals for prescribing policies. Even in the words of a president, they express what he is innovating in international affairs, for which names are being assigned, concepts are being defined, and analytical categories are being established.

Conceptual contributions in the post-Cold War and globalization systemic context should be highlighted; particularly those that refer to contemporary systemic structures, such as “hegemonic power structures”, “logistical state” and “plurinational state”, which are added to the upgrade of other doctrines, such as that of “autonomy”, and conceptualizations as that of “regional power”.

The closeness between the doctrine of autonomy and the concepts of “large peripheral states” and “founding insubordination” may be concluded, because the latter two express autonomic aspirations; either linked or by building alliances of power, which is the explanation Puig and Jaguaribe gave to justify the integration of Latin and South American countries. It is also noted that *autonomy* has significantly influenced subsequent theoretical and conceptual formulations.

In the recent evolution of the South American thinking in international relations, lines which apparently are at odds with each other are also recognized, such as “liberal political economy”, which nevertheless still express a “decisional autonomy” in seeking preferential partners beyond South American regionalism, and which explain Chilean foreign policy and dynamics such as that generated by the Pacific Alliance (Bernal-Meza 2015b).

All these formulations, concepts and categories have been used in recent years to support and base some of the foreign policies of the region and their respective international insertions.

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