

RAFAEL ALEXANDRE MOREIRA MELLO

**UNDERSTANDING AGENCY WITHIN SYSTEMIC DEPENDENCY:
ANTONIO GRAMSCI AND RUY MAURO MARINI CONVERSE**

**BRASÍLIA
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INSTITUTO DE RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS
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Doctoral thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor in International Relations in the line of research on International and Comparative Politics of the Graduate Program in International Relations of the University of Brasília.

Supervisor: Roberto Goulart Menezes

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To the working classes. May they unite.

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ENTENDENDO AGÊNCIA DENTRO DA DEPENDÊNCIA SISTÊMICA: ANTÔNIO GRAMSCI E RUY MAURO MARINI CONVERSAM

RESUMO

Esta tese tem como objetivo a articulação entre a Teoria Marxista da Dependência (TMD) e a Teoria Crítica Gramsciana (TCG) no âmbito das Relações Internacionais em busca de uma síntese teórica para analisar a agência do Estado dependente conceituado como potência emergente. A hipótese principal é a de que as categorias da TMD que se referem às relações de forças econômicas, juntamente com os conceitos da TCG no âmbito das relações de poder político, fornecerão um poder explicativo mais robusto à análise dos caminhos trilhados por tais potências médias. Para tal empreendimento, desenvolve-se um diálogo historicizado entre os teóricos Antônio Gramsci e Ruy Mauro Marini para a construção dessa articulação. O trabalho parte da premissa-base de que a articulação entre os quadros analíticos requer uma compreensão mais robusta dos ritmos de pensamento de seus interlocutores. Com o fim da articulação, a tese está composta por duas partes que reúnem cinco capítulos, mais a introdução e a conclusão. A primeira parte contextualiza as perspectivas teóricas de Gramsci e Marini dentro de um debate da história e da política do conhecimento. O primeiro capítulo questiona o porquê de sermos levados a uma leitura e uma interpretação errôneas de ambos. O segundo adentra nas imposições e constrangimentos intelectuais postos pelo empirismo ou modo de pensar positivista e contextualiza essa questão dentro de uma discussão metateórica mais ampla e que traz importantes categorias metacientíficas. A segunda parte objetiva a construção do diálogo entre ambos, apoiado na história e política do conhecimento desenvolvido anteriormente, e busca apontar as consonâncias e dissonâncias que delimitariam e formariam a articulação. O terceiro capítulo inicia o diálogo priorizando as motivações políticas e intelectuais dos teóricos como base de seus ritmos de pensamento, conectando o nível político e o intelectual por meio da preocupação da relação entre agência e estrutura. O quarto leva o diálogo para o nível analítico de seus respectivos quadros teóricos, primeiro em um marco mais abstrato para, em seguida, adentrar nas especificidades do mundo subdesenvolvido e periférico. O quinto e último capítulo, por sua vez, aprofunda o debate ao focar nas categorias tidas como as mais relevantes para se pensar e analisar a agência de potências emergentes entre a dependência, o subimperialismo, e a revolução, a saber: as guerras de posição e movimento; consenso, coerção e cesarismo; e a “hegemonia restrita e dependente”. Apresenta-se, assim, elementos para uma análise do Estado brasileiro durante os governos de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) e Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) e os governos posteriores de Michel Temer (2016-2018) e Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022). O objetivo é apresentar pontos de aterrissagem da síntese em potencial, mirando a agência do Estado brasileiro no sistema global e observando (a) a tentativa de construção de um bloco histórico regional durante os governos do Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), (b) o esvaziamento posterior desse bloco histórico regional e (c) as tentativas de novas construções durante os governos Temer e Bolsonaro. Com isso, pode-se analisar o papel dos governos do PT no desenrolar dos governos ultraliberais e reacionários dos governos posteriores.

Palavras-chave: Subimperialismo. Revolução passiva. Potências emergentes. Dependência. Articulação teórica.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to articulate the Marxist Theory of Dependency (MTD) and Gramscian Critical Theory (GCT) in the field of International Relations in search of a theoretical synthesis to analyze the agency of the dependent state conceptualized as an emerging power. The main hypothesis is that the categories of MTD that refer to economic power relations, together with the concepts of the GCT in the context of political power relations, will provide more robust explanatory power to the analysis of the paths taken by middle powers. To this end, a historicized dialogue is developed between the theorists Antonio Gramsci and Ruy Mauro Marini to build this articulation. The thesis starts from the basic premise that the articulation between the analytical frameworks requires a more robust understanding of their rhythms of thought. With this articulation in mind, the thesis is composed of two parts that together comprise five chapters, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The first part contextualizes Gramsci's and Marini's theoretical perspectives within a discussion on the history and the politics of knowledge. The first chapter questions why we are led to a misreading and misunderstanding of both authors. The second delves into the intellectual impositions and constraints put forth by empiricism (or the positivist way of thinking) and contextualizes this issue within a broader metatheoretical discussion that includes important meta-scientific categories. The second part aims to build a dialogue between the two, based on the previous discussion, and seeks to point out the consonances and dissonances that would delimit and form the articulation. The third chapter begins the dialogue by prioritizing the political and intellectual motivations of the theorists as the basis for their rhythms of thought, connecting the political and intellectual levels through a concern with the relationship between agency and structure. The fourth takes the dialogue to the analytical level of their respective theoretical frameworks, first in a more abstract framework and then delving into the specificities of their thinking on the underdeveloped and peripheral world. The fifth and final chapter, in turn, deepens the debate by focusing on the categories considered most relevant for thinking about and analyzing the agency of emerging powers between dependence, sub-imperialism, and revolution, namely: the wars of position and maneuver; consensus, coercion, and Caesarism; and "dependent restricted hegemony". It thus presents elements for an analysis of the Brazilian state during the governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and the subsequent governments of Michel Temer (2016-2018) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022). The aim is to present landing points for the potential synthesis, looking at the agency of the Brazilian state in the global system and observing (a) the attempt to build a historic regional bloc during the Workers' Party (PT) administrations, (b) the subsequent undoing of this historic regional bloc, and (c) the attempts at new constructions during the Temer and Bolsonaro governments. With this, one can analyze the role of the PT governments in the development of the ultraliberal and reactionary governments of subsequent administrations.

Keywords: Sub-imperialism. Passive revolution. Emerging powers. Dependency. Theoretical articulation.

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1. Introduction: The Research Problem as a Political Problem

The underlying problem that drives me in my research and intellectual formation is the historical need to overcome dependency and underdevelopment, but from a perspective that does not involve sustaining the exploitation of other peoples. This last point, in particular, delimits my focus within the critique of left-wing governments, especially among the so-called “emerging” ones. Those who depend on the people to be able to compete for power, and thus propose a national project, are ethically and morally sustained by an obligation to seek the transformation of such an unequal and dehumanizing system. Although criticizing the right is no less necessary, the left’s moral commitment to the oppressed requires us to be more critical of left-wing governments and movements, not less, in the name of supporting one or another leader who claims (and perhaps believes) to represent the interests of workers in all their plurality. There are few historical windows open to us to seek systemic transformations, and in the face of such misery, every mistake made is even more costly. Therefore, being critical requires, first and foremost, the development of the capacity for self-critique. This means recognizing the decisions made in the political sphere—that is, the agency of leftist social forces—and rejecting apologetic determinisms of those actions that reinforce the structures that cement the system. And, to recognize agency, the intellectual cannot claim that a certain path was *the only possible path*, thus justifying the non-confrontation of power structures.

Within this problem, this thesis does not only critique Brazil’s last left-wing administrations (Lula and Rousseff) in terms of their international insertion, but also the two that followed (Temer and Bolsonaro). There are two main motivations behind this decision. Firstly, to have a point of comparison in terms of international performance and positioning. Secondly, to understand how an agent’s actions in one historical period (the Lula and Rousseff governments) influence subsequent developments (the Temer and Bolsonaro governments). In other words, what would have been the costs (or consequences) of the actions and confrontations, on the one hand, and the lack of action and confrontation, on the other, in previous governments, which would have directed events later on? I pose these questions inspired by a point made by Robert W. Cox (COX, 1981, p. 138) (1981, p. 138) in an attempt to explain the relationship between the different spheres of activity, which he exemplifies by saying that Stalinism arose in part as a response to the sense of threat arising from a hostile world order. In other words, the West’s own hostility supported the strengthening of

Stalinism as a political force inside the Soviet Union. In the search for a multifaceted understanding and explanation of a phenomenon - here the rise of an authoritarian leader - it is also necessary to question how this can be an unexpected result of actions (among other factors) by the antagonistic camp (the imperialist countries of the West, in this case). Bringing this back to the research I am conducting, it is worth investigating which movements of the (Workers' Party) PT governments may have contributed to the emergence of Bolsonarism as a mass political and social movement.

This question is related to the philosophical/metatheoretical approach of critical realism. Although I do not engage with metatheoretical or philosophical issues with the appropriate engagement within International Relations (IR), this level underpins any and all theoretical and analytical constructions, whether we recognize this relationship or not. Margaret Archer (1995) argues that the internal consistency of a practical theory depends on cohesion between the ontological, methodological, and theoretical levels, without a unilateral determinism between them. According to Colin Wight and Jonathan Joseph (2010), *Critical Realism or Scientific Realism* engages at the level of philosophical critique to confront the assumptions of different contemporary IR theories. In this sense, they emphasize the importance of correctly conceiving the relationship between agency and structure if we want to identify how agents should act to transform structures.

If we understand, furthermore, that the structural limits of capitalism as a global system make it impossible to universalize minimum conditions of well-being, and that these limitations are even more severe in the Global South, as it is on the periphery of the system, we can confront agency *within* systemic conditions (that which does not confront the system) as ways out that are doomed to reproduction/maintenance. Transformation, on the other hand, would require agency moving outwards, beyond the conditions imposed by the already constituted structure.

What characterizes the agent is the capacity to develop self-awareness, reflexivity, intentionality, cognition, and emotionality. However, agents act with awareness only at the level of practices, and the effects of this usually fall into the unconscious or unintended reproduction of deeper social structures (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 20-1). Returning to the subject of the thesis: if the political strategies of a left-wing government in the (semi)periphery do not fully understand the deeper social structures, and therefore do not develop them properly, good intentions are unlikely to lead to a path other than the reproduction of dependency and underdevelopment.

With this, we can return to the more concrete question: in what way could the agency of the PT governments have collaborated (in theory at an unconscious and unintentional level of the

deeper structures) to the deepening of dependency and the emergence of Bolsonarism? The central hypothesis is that this collaboration occurred by taking a path that did not understand the real structural issues of dependent capitalism. The left-wing path taken by these governments did not come about to any great extent because of conservative and liberal forces that sought, at different times and to different degrees, to undermine the PT project. The connection between its interests and international capital was also a determining factor, as was imperialist interventionism at different social levels. But perhaps the biggest reason for the shipwreck was the choice of a leaky ship, if we look at the composition of the historical bloc or sailing with a compass made in the North and pointing North.

For this reason, I argue that we will only find a way out not only with a theoretical instrument that questions and criticizes the perspectives for solving problems (i.e. the ways within the system), but one that aims to understand the particularities of our economic and social formation. In my work, I propose that the Marxist Theory of Dependency (MTD) presents us with a strong theoretical and metatheoretical framework for seeking to understand the deep structures and, with this, seek the path of transformation.

I also propose the (meta)theoretical articulation of MTD and Gramscian Critical Theory (GCT), firstly because I see important compatibilities, but mainly because of the complementary contributions of one to the other. While MTD develops significant contributions to an ontology of the world system and the functioning of global and dependent capitalism, with its own categories to help with concrete analysis, Gramsci and many Gramscians present some fundamental epistemological questions, as well as delving deeper into the analytical framework for understanding and explaining political phenomena.

With regard to overcoming dependency and underdevelopment as a path to transformation, MTD defends that the socialist revolution as the only alternative—despite many reformist tendencies in much neo-Gramscian studies, I coincide with those who also read Gramsci as a revolutionary. The Gramscian framework helps us, additionally, to think about alternatives based on its analytical development of the relationship between political society and civil society, and the building of consensus against the use of coercion, in order to understand the relationships between the different social forces in a society. Consensus-building is based on the ethical and moral leadership of a social group, in which subordinate groups come to believe that this leadership is in the interests of society as a whole. And the moment of hegemony presents harmony between the

structure and the superstructure, because the economic capacity of the hegemonic group is able to sustain the discourse and relations at the political level. Passive revolution, on the other hand, takes place at a time when the construction of a new consensus, which would replace the old one, does not confront the underlying power structures of society. With changes that are more superficial than structural, we have the appearance of change while the real remains intact.

To trace the possible articulation of the two approaches is to propose how the problematics of one informs the other. It requires understanding what the structural-superstructural and ontological contributions of MTD imply for (neo)Gramscian thinking; and what the structural-superstructural and epistemological contributions of GCT imply for Marxist-dependantist thinking. With this, I develop elements for grasping why the strategy chosen by the PT governments did not work, and how this led to the strengthening of the right-wing path.

I present a hypothesis around the concept of hegemony that is somewhat controversial because it contrasts sharply with its use in Brazil and Latin America more generally. I hold that it is not possible to build a hegemony within dependent capitalism, while many authors apply the concept to different Latin American realities. I understand that the weight of consensus is of such importance for us to understand what Gramsci meant by hegemony that the level of state and social violence (coercion) practiced against subaltern groups (which are also greater in relation to the rest of the population, if we compare them to industrialized countries) in the (semi)periphery of the dependent situation is such that it escapes what the concept of hegemony encompasses. We can therefore only speak of an adjectivized hegemony, either a restricted or dependent-restricted hegemony, within the structure of dependent capitalism. The importance of the concept therefore lies in understanding the relationship between 1) consensus and coercion, 2) the level of structure and superstructure, and 3) the levels of consciousness reached by different social groups (considering, in this first moment, Gramsci's contribution of the three levels of the political moment: the economic-corporate, solidarity and hegemony).

Poulantzas' conceptualization is often used to delimit the relationship between the bourgeois fractions in Brazilian capitalism based on the concept of the power bloc. A significant difference between this concept and that of the historical bloc is precisely the absence, in the former, of the ideological factor entering the consciousness of the different agents. Alliances are formed based on the economic structure, as in the understanding of the historical bloc, but there is an absence of ethical and moral elements in the hegemonic leadership. In this sense, the Poulantzian

concept may be more useful, since the system of alliances would be more compatible with the reality of dependent capitalism, where there is a lack of deep (not just tactical) conviction about the ethical and moral leadership of one faction over the others. However, the absence of the ethical-moral element denies its analytical importance. It also denies the importance of levels of consciousness in understanding the extent to which certain ideological elements are internalized in social consciousness.

I start from the understanding that it is possible for there to be broad-based ethical-moral leadership, and therefore hegemony, in central countries or even at international level, and that its absence can be observed in dependent countries. It is therefore important to find out what can be learned from this difference. And what this might tell us about the possibilities of overcoming dependency and underdevelopment. Perhaps only a hegemony with ethical and moral leadership, which, in the quest to break away from generalized over-exploitation, guides us out of the capitalist system, could really achieve an overcoming. In this sense, the way out via class alliances would need to be confronted, and even more so if this leadership has as its main social force a bourgeois fraction, especially those closely linked to foreign capital.

Although former president Lula rose from a strong social and labor base, his government did not represent a workers' government. Looking at it from a Poulantzian perspective, the hegemonic fraction in the ruling bloc was not a fraction of the working class, but a bourgeois one linked to international capital. Without implying an intellectual connection between Lula and the Communist Party of the mid-20th century, which defended the need for a bourgeois revolution and the formation of a national bourgeoisie in Brazil, we can draw some parallels between Lula's conciliation policy and neodevelopmentist strategy and the communist thinking of the time. Both, to a certain extent, supported the need to develop greater autonomy for the bourgeois forces, a hegemonic project led by bourgeois fractions that would unite the different social forces in Brazil. Based on the critique of critical realism, we could argue that the underlying problem with the strategy was a lack of understanding of the real structural possibilities offered by the capitalist system. Because even if the Brazilian state were capable of sustaining an ethical and moral leadership in favor of a new social pact that sought to overcome the prevailing dependency and subalternity, overcoming dependency within capitalism necessarily entails the country becoming imperialist.

Hence the strength of the concept of sub-imperialism to describe and explain the phenomenon of an emerging country vying for a new position within the system (as opposed to vying for a new position against the system). The export of capital to (and consequent appropriation of value from) peripheral countries helps to ease the balance of payments for the state and fuels the accumulation of capital in the sub-imperialist country. There is therefore an attempt to mitigate (rather than break with) the internal contradictions of dependency, but by exporting contradictions to other peripheral societies. This, then, brings us back to the political problem of a commitment not to contribute to the exploitation of other peoples.

1.1 Organization of the thesis.

In order to develop this articulation—in view of constructing a *preliminary* synthesis—I found it important to question and comprehend why this dialogue between MTD and GCT has not been done before, especially given Gramsci’s widespread dissemination in Latin America. However, as I was conducting my research, I arrived at the conclusion that this discussion would represent more than an initial groundwork for my research. Given the diversity in interpretations that scholars have developed of both Antonio Gramsci and Ruy Mauro Marini, my first decision was to conduct a critical reading of my own so that any articulation developed would be based on a more honest and rigorous understanding of the texts. Given that a philological study is a commitment that surpasses the time available for writing a thesis, I decided to compliment my own readings with *philologists* of Gramsci and Marini—that is, not merely those who have read either of their works, but who have conducted close readings of the theorists and studied them *beyond the text*. In addition to reading Gramsci extensively, I have also depended much on Adam David Morton’s, Álvaro Bianchi’s, and Giuseppe Cospito’s interpretations. For Marini, I have complemented his texts with the readings by Adrián Sotelo-Valencia, Carlos Eduardo Martins, Jaime Osorio Urbina, Mathias Seibel Luce. There were other philologists, of course, as well as additional non-philological texts that complemented this research. My initial goal, then, was to delimit their *rhythms of thought*—a tool that would allow me to go beyond their initial contributions to analyze not other temporally and geographically delimited contexts, but also to construct a basis for articulating their *rhythms*.

The thesis is organized into two parts. The first two chapters comprise a discussion on the general context needed for beginning the dialogue around Gramsci's and Marini's rhythms of thought. As mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, I arrived at the conclusion that I needed to engage with the historical development of their ideas, most especially in Latin America. What was initially intended to be groundwork became my first chapter after this Introduction, "The Politics of Knowledge. Or why we are led to misread and misunderstand". As I began to better grasp what a deeper contextualization implied, I became more convinced that the intellectual disputes around their productions was in itself political. Beyond the importance of the political nature of the history of ideas, or even the politics of knowledge itself, this discussion holds importance for this thesis for two reasons. First, because praxis is the center of critical theory, and here we are speaking about the political praxis of knowledge dissemination. And second, because this discussion would also be necessary to grasp and outline their rhythms of thought—there is, here, a dual movement: one is the analytical action of contrasting the (mis)interpretation disseminated with its political effect; and another is the analytical action of contrasting the rhythms with the former relation of (mis)interpretation disseminated-political effect.

The following chapter "How to Read and Study Beyond Empiricism's Intellectual Constraints" is a continuation of the object of the first. Although it is valid for its dialogue with and critique of empiricism, there are other substantiating principles that justified this discussion. The first and most obvious is that it provides a continuation of the study of Gramsci's and Marini's rhythms—that is, these two intellectuals were particularly interested in critiquing positivist social science and, even more so, that positivism that creeps into Marxism. In addition to helping us grasp the contexts of their writings, it also provides further evidence on how and why the two have been misread and misunderstood. Thus, while the previous chapter outlines the politics of knowledge within and outside their contributions, this chapter is concerned with the analytical-philosophical errors as important elements in academicist misreadings and engages with different meta-scientific categories for ordering knowledge production. I propose, then, that empiricism/positivism is more than a philosophy, epistemology, or methodology. It can be conceptualized as well as a meta-cognition—that is, something that *frames* one's mode of thinking and, due to empiricism's particular limitations, the empiricist meta-cognition makes the comprehension of non-positivist perspectives much more difficult.

It must be noted that I did not complete as thorough a reading of authors such as Carlos Nelson Coutinho and Fernando Cardoso as I did of Gramsci and Marini—opening this thesis up to possible claims of conducting its own misreadings. This shortcoming is justified by the objective of the thesis centered on grasping Gramsci’s and Marini’s leitmotifs and not Coutinho’s or Cardoso. I do not, therefore, claim to provide a rigorous account of these authors’ perspectives—nor would it be necessary for the purposes here presented. I have relied largely on critiques presented by Marxist scholars of their works.

Part II is comprised of three chapters, organized around: initiating the dialogue; establishing the dialogue; and deepening the dialogue. The chapter “Initiating the Dialogue: Conceptual framework through agency and structures” presents what I am calling the *crucial intellectual problem* of the theorists as related to their *crucial political problem*. I am concerned with addressing their rhythms at the motivational level—grasping what is driving their intellectual work, within the broader contexts detailed in the previous chapters, in a unity of theory and praxis, where the political is the foundational motivation. I frame the discussion on motivations and crucial problems within the broader agency-structure problem. Although the philosophical and sociological aspects are themselves interesting, there is an underlying political concern in grasping the relation between agency and structure, and one which underscores their Gramsci’s and Marini’s main intellectual and political concerns. In addition to surveying possible compatibilities and complementarities between their motivations, I also draw a focus to their contributions around the hierarchical ordering of the world capitalist system.

The chapter “Establishing the Dialogue: In search of a synthesis and Brazil’s international insertion” begins with the premise that Marini implicitly adopts an approach similar to Gramsci’s Analysis of Situations. While I do avoid claims of a perfect match, I organized this chapter by framing it around this discussion. In other words, the first sections each correspond to one of Gramsci’s three moments but focused on their contributions for understanding and analyzing dependent capitalism. This chapter, then, offers a discussion of their categories and concepts already framed within parameters for dialogue, and takes brief landings into the concrete. The last section focuses specifically on a first move towards synthesizing perspectives on underdevelopment, passive revolution, and sub-imperialism.

The final chapter before the Conclusion, titled “Deepening the Dialogue: Brazil between dependency, sub-imperialism, and revolution” develops a more thorough discussion on the

interaction of the three categories, with renewed interest in the theorists' rhythms and some provisional propositions of what each might think of the other's contributions. While this is not a fully analytical chapter, more time is spent at the concrete level of analysis to demonstrate the ways in which a synthesis would be applied, but also to provide a clearer conception of the importance of the dialectical relation between the philosophical, the theoretical, and the political.

PART I: Politics of Knowledge as Political and Intellectual Context

2. The Politics of Knowledge. Or why we are led to misread and misunderstand.

There are a number of reasons to turn to the history of ideas as a resource to determine the best methodological approach to examining varied theoretical and conceptual works, especially when these belong to a different time and space from that of the investigating scholar. The need for scientific and philosophical rigor in examining texts—to achieve a minimally correct understanding—is perhaps the most obvious (although insufficiently so for academia to take this seriously¹). A second reason is exemplified in several works of the two authors I am engaging with, Ruy Mauro Marini and Antonio Gramsci: the debates they participated in regarding the correct reading of Karl Marx’s oeuvre and, in Marini’s case, of his own work. Reading a theorist (in)correctly has implications on how one applies their epistemo-methodological approach in concrete analyses; as well as on *the validity of one’s critique*. In a sense, this represents two possible inquiries: what did said theorist really say and what does their meta-theoretical approach entail? And the third reason, as many scholars have pointed out, Gramsci *actually provided his readers with “instructions” on how to read* his work². I argue below that Marini did as well, in an atemporal parallel to Gramsci in their sociologies of knowledge and woven into their analytical/theoretical works; but, in Marini’s case, such “instructions” were additionally provided in his responses to critiques received on his works. Given the posthumous publication of Gramsci’s prison works, the critiques he could receive on his mature (i.e. prison) writings were limited to letters from those close to him.

However, before turning to the intellectual grounding for looking to the history of ideas, I will first discuss *why this matters beyond* the academic realm of intellectual debate; that is, how it leaks into the political realm of the *politics of knowledge*—or, more specifically, the *politics of the history of ideas*—affecting class consciousness, agency and the struggle for emancipation. This *politics of intellectual disputes* substantiates the practice of politics, but not within the liberal understanding of a competition of ideas, a depoliticized conceptualization in which an idea or theory’s validity will be demonstrated if it proves its effectiveness (i.e., if those movements that

¹ Sclofsky and Funk (2018) develop an important contribution for grasping the dogmatic exclusion and misreading of Marxism in US-American International Relations and Comparative Politics.

² See Morton (2007).

defend a specific theory fail in their political struggle, it must be because the theory undergirding its actions was incorrect³)—a sort of praxis falsifiability. Along with proving effectiveness, their endurance is a second liberal premise for judging a theory’s strength (for some, if a theory does not maintain a high level of interest, it must be the result of a collective rationality that led to it being discarded).

The politics of knowledge (or of intellectual disputes) here considers how the pursuit of power and influence de-intellectualizes the debate; how the political pursuit undermines the intellectual exchange of ideas. The importance of such a *dirty politics* of knowledge showcases a necessary intertextual step for this dissertation. It is necessary in the context of their works as well as in epistemological boundaries set by both authors, which ties the value of theorizing to its impact on praxis. In other words, we cannot understand (and should not analyze) academic actions separately from the political-economic context, or from the realm of class struggle. And, in our case, understanding this will help us not only understand our authors, but also their ways of thinking.

If we tap into Robert Cox’s well-known axiom that “theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose” (1981, p. 128, italics in original.), we can ask for whom Gramsci and Marini wrote and for what purpose(s). We will make a preliminary assumption (to be developed further below) that they both wrote *for* the working class *with the purpose of* contributing to the struggle to end exploitation through the creation of a socialist society. However, *how* they are read will affect the ability of their texts to reach and contribute to the movements they purport to support. There are two particular types of what I shall call “purposeful misreadings”—pertinent to this study and that have shown up in the literature on the political-intellectual history of their works. I am referring to these purposeful misreadings as misuses, for their usefulness in guiding readings in different directions from those intended by their authors. It is worth prefacing, however, that by “purposeful” I do not mean that such scholars were necessarily *conscious* or fully aware that they were misleading readers. And by this I am pointing to the understanding that our actions may have unconscious motivations, oftentimes political in nature, through which people may convince themselves that their (mis)reading is correct or that misrepresentations may be morally defensible.

³ We will see this being used against those theories vindicating revolution in Latin America, by figures such as Carlos Nelson Coutinho.

However, distinguishing the precise moments of cognitive dissonance—that in which the ideas being presented do not align with their values or beliefs—in misreadings is a complex task not to be attempted here. It is worth mentioning, however, that Marini recognized in a few of his contemporaries an inclination to disregard, *a priori*, revolutionary or radical intellectual positions (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 53); not because their rationality or logical thinking would have pointed to the logical fallacies of such, but rather due to impediments of an emotional or political order kept them from considering such possibilities cognitively.

In the following subsections, the discussion will consider how the misuse of theorists can occur through their depiction in either a positive or negative light, with the intention of guiding the misreading of their works in a particular direction.

2.1 Reading Gramsci. But for what purpose?

The first of these misuses (of a purposeful misreading) develops from a positive framing of the theorist in an attempt to attach their prestige, authority and popular imagery to the agenda of a particular movement, party or other political organization. The political context in which *The Prison Notebooks* were produced imposed limitations on the access to Gramsci's writings; and it was only thanks to Gramsci's sister-in-law, Tatiana Schucht, and the then-leader of the Italian Communist Party (PC'I), Palmiro Togliatti, that Gramsci's prison writings came to daylight (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 21). Togliatti, however, has been accused of instrumentalizing Gramsci's thought, that is, of using it for purposes not that of the original author (THOMAS, 2009, p. 106 footnote). The postwar PC'I, under Togliatti's leadership, would have used Gramsci's authority to promote a reformist party platform (GERMAIN; KENNY, 1998, p. 13). For Giuseppe Vacca (1991, p. 657), "[t]here is no doubt that he [Togliatti] had regulated the dissemination of Gramsci's thought according to the compatibilities he himself established between the politics of the 'new party' and his being part of the international communist movement."⁴

⁴ Original: "Non v'è dubbio che egli [Togliatti] abbia regolato la diffusione del pensiero di Gramsci in base alle compatibilità che egli stesso stabiliva fra la politica del 'partito nuovo' e il suo esser parte del movimento comunista internazionale."

This instrumentalization would have manifested in the organization of the first edition of the *Prison Notebooks*. The reorganization the notebooks into a *thematic* edition, by Togliatti/the PC'I, “poses immense problems because it dissolves the historicity of its construction and severs the links between Gramscian reasoning and the deep entanglement of questions”⁵ (DIAS, 1996, p. 109). In addition, the exclusion of compromising passages and the inclusion of additional introductions that would guide the reader toward a particular conceptualization of the text. The end effect was that Gramsci was painted, for some, either as more Leninist than he actually (BUTTIGIEG, 2011, p. 41), or even as Stalinist and in line with the Communist International (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 22, 203).⁶ It was Togliatti who, after all, shared sympathies with and defended the adoption of Stalinist theses. Despite knowledge of Gramsci’s divergent positions (BIANCHI, 2020, p. xi, 201, 204), “[...] Togliatti obscured and diminished Gramsci’s break with the procedures and political line of the Communist International, already announced in 1926, and with the line of the Italian CP itself in 1930”⁷ (DIAS, 1996, p. 109).

The initial tight control and limited access to primary sources (Gramsci’s notebooks and letters) circumvented any possibility to question the organization of this first, thematic edition. It was only possible to critically engage Togliatti’s initial edition of Gramsci’s work after access to the notebooks was granted. In 1975, Valentino Gerratana published the critical edition.

This first misuse arguably undergirded later intellectual developments that drove Gramscian scholars in directions different from those of the original author. According to Bianchi (2020, p. 268),

The Gramsci of Togliatti, the one who was under the ‘invincible banner of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin’, gave way to that of Eurocommunism which was then supplanted by post-communism which, in turn, seems to have been succeeded by post-modernism. The prisoner was the same; only his jailers changed.

⁵ Original: “[...] coloca imensos problemas por liquidar a historicidade da sua construção e cortar os liames do raciocínio gramsciano e o profundo embricamento das questões.”

⁶ Buttigieg (2011, p. 41) has argued, however, that the extent of the maleficence attributed to the instrumentalization of Gramsci’s work has been gravely exaggerated.

⁷ Original: “[...] Togliatti ocultou e minimizou a ruptura gramsciana com os procedimentos e a linha política da Internacional, já anunciada em 1926, e com a linha do próprio PC da Itália, em 1930.”

These misdirections have included the conclusion, by scholars such as Norberto Bobbio, that Gramsci would have broken with Marxism altogether (GERMAIN; KENNY, 1998, p. 9), situating him into a liberal or post-liberal approach (MORTON, 2003, p. 120, 2007, p. 51).

Adam Morton (2007, p. 73–74)—in a critique against the *austere historicist* approach to engaging Gramsci—points to a political source of such misreadings, and observes how these scholars present “an attachment to liberal principles of political theory rather than developing a historical materialist critique of capitalism and a stress on political transformation.” This goes beyond merely misreading Gramsci. By bringing in “liberal–reformist assumptions and commitments [...] that do not flow from radical concerns about emancipatory change” (MORTON, 2007, p. 74), many scholars (including not only the austere historicists) develop works on Gramsci that (mis)guide readers to certain directions that are politically convenient for their agendas. In other words, the choice of *how to read* is also a political one.

2.2 Reading Marini. Or, not reading Marini?

A second form of misuse is based on the negative and intellectually dishonest representation of the author and their work. The political objective would be to discredit⁸ the political implications of the propositions at hand and, at the same time, to guide the debate in a different direction. As with the prior misuse, the political context of the military dictatorship in Brazil provided the parameters for how dependency thinking, in general, and Marini’s particular contributions would develop in the Brazilian social sciences.

The political exile of many Latin American scholars—first in Chile, then in Mexico after Pinochet’s 1973 coup—set the stage for a new era in Latin American critical thought. Scholars of critical thought were pushed into shared spaces where linguistic differences would disappear, and creative and original debates emerge. There were, however, two moments, broadly speaking, in this intellectual flourishing: that of free exchange of ideas in democratic regimes; and a second, nationally differentiated, in which dictatorial regimes persecuted left-leaning intellectuals and, often times, authoritatively redirected institutional and intellectual developments. It is this history

⁸ See Cardoso (1974, 1976); Serra and Cardoso (1978).

of authoritarian political and institutional redirection of intellectual development that is of interest at this first moment. The actual battle of ideas, while of equal or greater value, takes a backseat for now.

It was in a place of exile where, through what has been dubbed a “false polemic” between Ruy Mauro Marini and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the misuse of the former’s contributions began.⁹ They attended the 20th Latin American Congress in Sociology, held in Santiago, Chile, in 1972. A vast literature claims that Cardoso, in his exposition, inverted arguments that Marini had presented. Although Marini was presenting the completed version of *Dialectics of Dependency*, then published in the *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (RLCS)*, Cardoso’s critique was based on the previous version published in *Sociedad y Desarrollo*,¹⁰ and largely dependent on that first version’s still missing section on the industrialization process¹¹—thus, falsely polemicalizing a problem that had already been corrected in Marini’s work. This might have been an oversight at that first moment, and one must consider that Marini has also been charged with misunderstanding Cardoso’s arguments (KAY, 1989, p. 168). However, Cardoso continued citing that incomplete version of the essay in later works¹² and did not amend his exposition even though Marini had provided clarification (KAY, 1989, p. 169). Serra and Cardoso (1978) would also attribute positions to Marini that he had long critiqued (DOS SANTOS, 1997, p. 10–11). While the specific arguments and positions have extreme relevance for how the debates developed and for the substantive aspects of their contributions, this moment of looking at the *politics* of knowledge is more concerned with *how* these texts were used and misused.

This took greater proportions, in part, due to the lack of rigor of the many intellectuals who, despite having easier access to the complete version of *Dialectics of Dependency*, and despite the extremely difficult access to the incomplete *Sociedad y Desarrollo* version (published by the

⁹ It is relevant to mention, however, that there were other polemics involving Marini’s works that go beyond the debates with Cardoso and his group. And, while I mainly present the negative repercussions in Brazil and in the Anglosphere, these debates had their own dynamics in other Latin American countries. For a more thorough look into the “confusions” around Marini’s works, see Osorio (1984), Martins (2019, especially Chapters 5 and 6), and Katz (2020).

¹⁰ Prado (2020, p. 148) highlighted Cardoso’s citation of the previous manuscript: Rui Mauro Marini, “Dialéctica de la dependencia: la economía exportadora”, *Sociedad y Desarrollo*, CESO, vol. I, n. 1, Santiago, marzo de 1972.

¹¹ This was a false polemic precisely because Marini was now bringing that which he was criticized for ignoring.

¹² See, for example, Cardoso (1974, 1975, 1976). While these are reworked versions of the same text, the dissemination of these republications in Spanish and Portuguese, without an update that reflects the progression of the discussion or even the updated references, is itself an important datum. So is the fact that these were published in Chile and Brazil during their respective dictatorial regimes.

University of Chile's Center of Socio-Economic Studies - CESO) after the military coup in Chile, the incomplete and difficult-to-access version would be subsequently cited in Brazilian academia much more frequently than the Mexican journal essay (PRADO, 2020, p. 148). The particularities of the Brazilian context—exemplified in the citations of the hard-to-access instead of the easily accessible version—provide the framework of how such misrepresentation developed.

It is important to note that Cardoso went into exile just as Marini (and many others) did. Not less important is Cardoso's return shortly before the infamous AI-5 was installed, which forcibly retired him from his teaching position and revoked his political rights (FUNDAÇÃO FHC, [s.d.]). However, in this period of increased repression and height of the dictatorship, Cardoso was still able to publish several articles in Brazil through the research center Cebrap (Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning) (PRADO, 2020, p. 146), which he founded with the support of other scholars (FUNDAÇÃO FHC, [s.d.]) and with financing from the Ford Foundation (MARTINS, 2013, p. 30–31). While the publication of books written by Vânia Bambirra, Theotônio dos Santos and Ruy Mauro Marini were disallowed due to censorship, Cardoso's journal publications would be republished in several book editions during the dictatorship.

The prime example of the political character of Cardoso's misreading and his institutional strength *vis-à-vis* the Marxist *dependentistas* was in what became known as the debate between Marini, on one side, and Cardoso and Serra, on the other. The political nature of the different editorial choices in Mexico and Brazil regarding the publication of the debate is evidenced. The Mexican *RLCS* published Serra and Cardoso's critique along with Marini's response; while Cardoso's Cebrap only published the translated version of the former, ignoring Marini's already published response, thus allowing Serra and Cardoso the final word in the Brazilian context (PRADO, 2020, p. 145–146, 151–152).¹³

These developments cemented the generalized context which fomented the diffusion and subsequent assimilation of Cardoso's version of the state of the debate on dependency, to be used as the primary source presented to students and activists seeking to understand the dependency debate in Brazil (PRADO, 2020, p. 146–152). A prime example is the role played by members of the influential University of Campinas school, who also ignored larger contributions, reproducing

¹³ For further analyses on the Marini-Cardoso debate, see Kay (1989, p. 164–170) and Latimer (2022a, p. 66–78).

Cardoso's storyline within their narrative as they constructed their own theoretical proposals (PRADO, 2020, p. 153–154).

The acritical adoption of this narrative has, additionally, fomented the negative depiction of Marini's perspective beyond the Brazilian context. Without presenting the debates nor naming *and* citing those with differing perspectives, many in the Anglosphere have presented the debate in a manner that either favors Cardoso's approach or conflates the different approaches into one unrecognizable and unapproachable conceptual mess. Although a more systematic bibliographic analysis is needed to determine the full extent of such reductive and acritical presentations, and perhaps a process tracing that better examines their roots¹⁴, some anecdotes give us a surface glimpse of the effects of non-rigorous reiterations.

One example within the field of Political Science/International Relations is found in the journal *International Organization's* special edition, discussed in some detail in the following chapter. Another example can be seen through different juxtapositions between a supposed debt owed to Cardoso and Faletto, as their book would have represented a “turning point” away from “the deterministic formulations of orthodox dependency theory” (HELLER; RUESCHEMEYER; SNYDER, 2009, p. 288–289). In a form of epistemic violence, such narratives place labels without recognizing the importance of introducing neither the actual names of the approaches nor their authors. This disallows interrogation by not clarifying what is meant by “orthodox dependency theory” (whether they are referring to a particular approach or a conflated version of different approaches); and by not permitting readers access to references so they can check such claims themselves, i.e., whether these approaches are, in fact, “deterministic”.

It is not difficult to praise efforts towards reviving the theoretical contributions of a Third World theorist, as was the case in the nine-article dossier organized around Cardoso and Faletto's alleged contributions in a 2009 edition of *Studies in Comparative International Development* (HELLER; RUESCHEMEYER; SNYDER, 2009). However, a troubling aspect of such a dossier—that focuses on a single theorist's contribution—is that it invariably either conflates the amalgam of contributions from the debates themselves or dismisses these in reductive and, therefore, acritical

¹⁴ In an earlier work (MELLO, 2022), I note how Robert W. Cox's seems to conflate Andre Gunder Frank's particular approach to dependency with that of MTD. Although Gunder Frank does participate in and contribute to MTD's formulations, there are differences significant enough to merit not categorizing his work within Marini, Bamberra and Dos Santos's MTD.

introductory expositions that lack in rigor. The collective character of intellectual debates and their role in the development of ideas are ignored. Similarly, Ingrid Kvangraven (2021, p. 77) points to what she understands as a “misrepresentation of the tradition” in which “the common focus on individual theorists” leads Global North scholars to “mistakenly take[them] as spokespersons for ‘the theory’ as a whole.” Thus, when foreign audiences adopt ideas found in the oeuvre of a more widely translated author (the focus of such a dossier), it is not uncommon to note how some ideas may have been erroneously attributed to him even when those are not originally his.

Anglophone authors often follow the political narratives created around such debates. In the second possibility of the “troublesome aspect” above, “other” contributions are labeled, for example, as “Romantically voluntaristic visions of transformative rupture and ‘structural pessimist’ rejections of the possibility of progressive change,” while Cardoso and Faletto are praised for “Transcending [the others’] sterile dichotomy” (EVANS, 2009, p. 319–320). In this dossier, in the instances when the divergencies were recognized, only a single piece mentioned these *others* in non-deprecating terms, albeit in not more than a few lines, but nonetheless providing the reader with bibliographic references to the debate for further reading (MUNCK, 2009, p. 340, see especially footnote 3).

Partially due to the support of the Ford Foundation, as expressed above, Cardoso has had a stronger (physical and ideational) presence in Western academic institutions, and his works have been more widely translated into English and disseminated in the West. But the positive reception of Cardoso and Faletto’s dependency approach by academics in the United States—and to the exclusion of other variants of dependency thinking—can also be partially attributed to the fact that, while it criticizes capitalism, it does not place blame on their country for the problems of Latin America (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2010, p. 33–34). Without delegitimizing its positive attributes, the approach was also attractive because it does not cause the type of cognitive dissonance attributable to nationalist sentiments—in this case, the particularities of American exceptionalism as an ideology and the US-American academic’s difficulty in having their heartland criticized. What should have caused greater alarm among English-speaking academics was the unverified adoption of Cardoso’s narrative and critique regarding Marini’s seminal essay. Whereas Cardoso’s responses to Marini’s *Dialectics of Dependency* were published in English soon after their original versions, Marini’s essay itself has only just been translated and published in English by Amanda

Latimer and Jaime Osorio (MARINI, 2022a). This, perhaps, might also be attributable to a cognitive dissonance that needed to automatically discount the more radical perspectives.

Beyond those who praise Cardoso's dependency approach, we also encounter other instances in which there is a generalized conflation of dependency thinking; that is, those who ignore not only theoretical but also different onto-epistemological and methodological foundations (KVANGRAVEN, 2021, p. 77; MELLO, 2022, p. 3). This "conflation-oriented" group of scholars tend to ignore the works of Marini and Bamberger, often citing one or two works by dos Santos and Gunder Frank in an undifferentiated fashion from Cardoso, Falletto, Prebisch and other non-dependency theorists. As exemplified by Munck's work above, Antunes de Oliveira and Kvangraven (2023, p. 10) argue that the most rigorous Anglophone critiques have come from Spanish-reading decolonial authors. Ramón Grosfoguel has been recognized as offering a more historically and intellectually accurate take on the development/dependency debates in Latin America, avoiding the different conflationary tendencies and mistakes of Global North scholars.

Although not within disciplinary IR, a second notable exception are some leftist scholarly journals that published not only more ample perspectives within dependency, but also included several conjunctural analyses developed by Marini and MTD. Among these were *Monthly Review*, the short-lived, Toronto-based journal *Two-Thirds*, *Contemporary Marxism* (now *Social Justice*), *NACLA's Report on the Americas*, and *Latin American Perspectives* (LAP) (LATIMER, 2022a, p. 76). In addition to *Monthly Review's* recent publication of Marini's *Dialectics of Dependency*, which came with additional chapters by Osorio and Latimer, Brill has been publishing important translations of contemporary *dependentistas*. LAP was inaugurated in 1974 with the publication of an issue dedicated to a reassessment of dependency theory (CHILCOTE, 1974, 2022, p. 63). In addition to different interventions within the dependency debate throughout, the journal has recently dedicated two issues to the dossier: "Reassessing Development: Past and Present Marxist Theories of Dependency and Periphery Debates" (CHILCOTE; SALÉM VASCONCELOS, 2022; SALÉM VASCONCELOS; CHILCOTE, 2022).

2.3 Reading Gramsci in Latin America

The extent to which misreadings of Gramsci carried over to (mis)uses of Gramsci in Latin America speaks directly to the development of the debates in the region, as well as to the reception

of Gramscian arguments by MTD scholars. The problematic could also be posited in other terms: how *accurate* is the reading of Gramsci that has been disseminated in Latin America? Returning to Morton (2007, p. 49) to clarify my point, “any contemporary usage of Gramsci’s frame of reference has to be cognizant of wider issues embedded within the history of ideas”. We must ask: were these wider issues an active element in the developments that led to the introduction, production, and dissemination of Gramsci-inspired research in Latin America? When analyzing the participation of Gramscian theory in Latin American social thought, we can inquire into whether “a ‘true’ or ‘real’ Gramsci” has been revealed, and whether the reading was “based on a self-reflexive purpose [or] a representative interpretation” (MORTON, 2007, p. 49).

Although I will not discuss the Latin American Neo-Gramscian (LANG) literature and its particularities comprehensively, as it does not fall within the scope of this thesis, considerations relevant to the problematic under scrutiny will be brought periodically. The issue is important up to the point of asking why I am having Marini converse with Gramsci and not Latin American Gramscian scholars. The latter option would be favorable from the standpoint that such intellectuals were already investigating similar or the same objects of analysis as Marini, working within the same spatio-temporal context. We would, however, have to assume that the analytical framework they were applying was “true” to Gramsci’s thought.

There are two main reasons why this would be a less meaningful endeavor. First, because Marini already had direct contact with Latin American Gramscian scholars; and one must consider that, while he had the opportunity to construct the dialogue I am proposing, he did not pursue it. The reasons that neither side was very interested in a more invigorating exchange could be an object of another study (although I will comment on this briefly)¹⁵. The second, not unrelated, reason for focusing on Gramsci and not a Latin American Gramscian scholar is because, having already presented a lack of intellectual convergence between MTD and the LANG, I am proposing

¹⁵ This is not to suggest that there was no interaction or debate. On the contrary, the Permanent Internal Seminar*—organized by the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, in UNAM’s Center of Latin American Studies, held between 1993 and 1995—brought and realized the opportunity for a more robust engagement, albeit in a moment of theoretical decline in which neoliberalism hegemonized Latin American scholarship. The series of seminars resulted in the publication of the four-volume work *Teoría Social Latinoamericana* and the three-volume *Teoría Social Latinoamericana: Textos Escogidos*. The first is a thematic organization of the works presented in the Seminar, while the latter is a compendium of the original texts that the first collection discusses.

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that there would be greater points of intersections in the direct dialogue between Marini and Gramsci. So, why build bridges between an original theorist and an interpreter of a second theorist if we can seek to place the two original theorists side by side?

2.31 *The context in which Latin-American Neo-Gramscianism emerges*

The historico-political context in which Gramsci's translated works were first introduced and a Neo-Gramscian tradition instituted in the region has been brought to bear in different Latin American reconstructions of its intellectual history. A first notable phenomenon that molded the parameters was the defeat of the revolutionary left in South America¹⁶, starting with the 1964 coup in Brazil but cemented by the series of coups between 1973 and 1985. The second marker was the emergence in Western Europe of Eurocommunism, an expression of the a politico-ideological crisis in the European Left (SOTELO VALENCIA, 2005, p. 101). “[P]lagiarized from Togliatti’s ‘Italian way to socialism,’ [it is what] allowed for the Communist Party of Italy’s to maintain its organic and political force”¹⁷ (DOS SANTOS, 2020a, p. 362) and, subsequently, exert its influence over Latin American thought and social-political movements.

In the series of coups, the 1973 defeat of Chile’s Popular Unity government was especially impactful. This moment not only represented the ebbing of Latin American revolutionary movements (CUEVA, 2008a, p. 190), but it also ignited a debate in the Latin American Left on the difficulties inherent in a process of revolutionary transformations that *maintains itself within an institutional framework* (OSORIO, 1994, p. 31). The question posed, therefore, centered on why the democratic path to socialism in Chile had not survived. A greater part of the Latin American Left had argued that not taking every possible step to take hold of real power was a consistent mistake, while Eurocommunists and Latin American Neo-Gramscians made propositions that emphasized the need to center strategy around democracy within the prevalent institutionality

¹⁶ The 1979 revolutionary victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the revolution-building processes that were taking place in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Maurice Bishop’s Granada would provide an inspiration for many against the counter-revolutionary developments in South America (CUEVA, 2008a).

¹⁷ Original: “[...] plagada de la “vía italiana al socialismo” de Palmiro Togliatti, que posibilitó el mantenimiento de la fuerza orgánica y política del Partido Comunista Italiano [...]”

(CUEVA, 2008a, p. 193), in a context in which a violent coup had broken with the democratic process.

These developments were particularly troubling to the revolutionary Left, who considered that “in a moment that required greater resilience in combatting an ever more pretentious and aggressive imperialism,¹⁸ (CUEVA, 2008a, p. 184), LANG—inspired by Eurocommunism’s Gramscianism—brought theoretical confusion and the ideological disarming of the sectors of the Latin American Left. The prestige that was attached to Gramsci’s name, as well as the hypervalorization of anything European in our context of intellectual-cultural dependency, contributed to the impact of the proposals in these circles. The proponents’ assertion that this represented a “democratic path to socialism,” in the context of right-wing dictatorships in which so many clamored for democracy, also had a meaningful impact (CUEVA, 2008a, p. 193–194).

In the economic realm, remnants of the “Brazilian miracle,” along with the income gains from petroleum production in Venezuela and Mexico, seemed to speak to possibilities for a social-democratic welfare state within the prevailing order (CUEVA, 2008a, p. 193–194); that is, a possible improvement of living standards within dependent capitalism. These growth spurts would, however, be ephemeral, made possible by the greater crisis of overproduction of capital in center countries and the necessity to find new venues to realize that surplus capital. Foreign capital found investment opportunities—a way out of their overproduction crisis—in Latin America, now submitted to the dictatorial regimes. The ephemeral economic growth experienced by these economies—soon to be decapitalized in the 1980s (MARINI, 2022a; SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 54)—provided a false illusion of stability.

Latin American Marxism experienced a moment of respite in 1979, following the success of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the (then still largely ignored) victory of Grenada’s Revolution, led by Maurice Bishop’s New Jewel Movement. Marking the 20th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, revolutionary processes were also taking place in El Salvador and Nicaragua. This coincided, however, with a strong right-wing shift in power within the West. Changes that began already under Carter’s presidency in 1979 were further consolidated under Reagan’s two-term regime in the USA; not to mention Margaret Thatcher’s victory in the United Kingdom. The

¹⁸ Original: “[...] en el momento en que mayor firmeza requeríamos para combatir un imperialismo cada vez más prepotente y agresivo”.

socialist/labor parties, in this organic movement of the time, also underwent a reorientation toward the right—this shift expressed not only an anti-Sovietism or anti-communism, but also an anti-Third-Worldism. It is in the context of this crisis, one of the European Left and the rise of neoliberal right-wing, that Eurocommunism emerges; and in which it is “conceiv[ed] as a conservative alternative to the ‘Chilean path’” (CUEVA, 2008a, p. 192–193).

Contextualizing the emergence of LANG, within this process, Marini asserts that:

[it] is the product of a singular contradiction: having as its origin the critique of ideology and of the organizations that hegemonized the so-called ‘Chilean path toward socialism,’ of a Leninist variety, it takes from the process precisely that which it has as most peculiar, that is, the notion that the struggle for power does not pass through, but rather culminates in the conquest of the state. Authors such as José Aricó, Juan Carlos Portantiero, Emilio de Ipola, Carlos Pereyra and, especially, Carlos Nelson Coutinho were determined to hypervalorize the political struggle of the Left within the legal framework in force, a task that was difficult at first, given the appeal that armed struggle enjoyed at that time, but which was facilitated after the historical defeat of the revolutionary Left in the Southern Cone¹⁹ (MARINI, 1995, p. 39–40).

The importance of this historiographical approach, which necessitates placing theoretical and intellectual discussions within the socio-political contexts in which they emerged, is two-fold: to understand the developments in the politics of knowledge (the primary object of this chapter); and to gain further insights into Marini’s—and his larger Marxist-dependency group’s—rhythm of thought (one of the primary objects of this dissertation).

2.32 Gramsci arrives in Brazil. Or Coutinho’s Gramsci.

The first, thematic edition that was introduced to the Italian readership, that of Togliatti, was also the one translated into Spanish and, later, Portuguese. There would be no way around adopting the same problems brought by the original edition, mentioned above, in these first translations; and they introduced additional problems that came with translating which, in the

¹⁹ Original: “[...] es producto de una singular contradicción: teniendo como origen la crítica de la ideología y las organizaciones que hegemonizaron la llamada ‘vía chilena al socialismo’, de corte leninista, toma de dicho proceso lo que le es más peculiar, es decir, la noción de que la lucha por poder no pasa, sino que culminar con la conquista del Estado. Autores como José Aricó, Juan Carlos Portantiero, Emilio de Ipola, Carlos Pereyra y Carlos Nelson Coutinho, principalmente, se empeñaron en hipervalorizar la lucha política de la izquierda en el marco de la legalidad vigente, tarea que se presentaba difícil, al principio, dada la mística que revestía entonces la lucha armada, pero que fue facilitada tras la derrota histórica de la izquierda revolucionaria de Cono Sur.”

Brazilian version, included suppression of the prefaces, most notably that which explained the edition was a *reconstruction that did not follow the original order of the text*. And while the following Spanish editions published a thematic edition as well as Gerratana's critical edition, the Brazilian editors and publishers decided against it and in favor of a mixed mode: one which still omitted Gramsci's "A Texts"²⁰ and maintained the thematic (non-chronological) ordering of the text. This would have a negative impact on the possibilities of the philological study of Gramsci's works (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 27–31) and, therefore, on the possibility to critique the Brazilian interpretations of Gramsci.

For Edmundo Fernandes Dias (1996), less generous than Bianchi (2020) in his critique of Coutinho's edition, who recognized its didactic function, the Brazilian edition suffered from an even deeper, historiographical problem. In addition to those that Togliatti's original thematic edition brought to the study of Gramsci and his *Prison Notebooks*, the Brazilian context was that of

[...] immense ignorance, not only of the life and struggles of the Italian revolutionary but, above all, the brutal gulf between the history of the international communist movement and the way in which the Brazilian Communist Party, like almost all the CPs, dealt with these problems and its historiography.²¹ (DIAS, 1996, p. 110)

Not only was there a lack of historical knowledge, but the manner in which the CPs commonly approached history was itself problematic.

Labeled "operation Gramsci" by Coutinho, this introduction was all the more problematic because Gramsci's role as a communist strategist and political theorist were de-emphasized and refocused around his writings on intellectuals and culture (DIAS, 1996, p. 111). Coutinho (2012, p. 166) explains that these promoters of Gramsci had "one clear goal: to introduce Gramsci to the Brazilian reader mainly as a philosopher and literary critic, in whose work the strictly political

²⁰ In a philological organization of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Gerratana categorized the texts into the categories of "A texts", "B texts" and "C texts". "A" texts are earlier versions that were later modified; the "C texts" are those modified versions of the "A texts". And the "B texts" are those that did not undergo any modification within the *Notebooks*. This distinction is important to demonstrate Gramsci's own attempt at bringing greater clarity to his ideas and even of his evolving conceptualizations within the period of incarceration. In other words, there is value in reflecting on and understanding how these modifications reflect Gramsci's pattern of thought.

²¹ Original: "[...] o imenso desconhecimento, não apenas da vida e das lutas do revolucionário italiano mas, e principalmente, o brutal abismo entre a história do movimento comunista internacional e a forma pela qual o Partido Comunista Brasileiro, como aliás de quase todos os PCs, tratava esses problemas e a sua historiografia."

dimension was secondary.” Not recognizing a problem in this introduction of a de-politicized Gramsci, Coutinho (2012, p. 166–167, 169) recognized that the political-theoretical dimension would only appear later in the mid-1970s, in what he would call the “second cycle of Gramsci’s reception in Brazil.” It is, however, precisely this second Gramsci that the Latin American critical Left would come to criticize.

We could excuse the absence of Dias from Coutinho’s account of Gramsci’s reception in Brazil given that his contributions could be included in, perhaps, a third cycle of Gramsci’s reception. However, Coutinho (2012, p. 173) does extend the second cycle up into the publication of the cited book, in 1999, a few years after Dias et al.’s (1996) publication of *The Other Gramsci*; and the 2012 English translation used here has, as stated in the copyright section, been revised and augmented. While Coutinho felt it relevant to include in his work “liberal thinkers [who] attempted to void his reflections of their true content,” perhaps his exclusion of Dias has to do with the fact that Coutinho believes himself to be included in that group, which juxtaposes the liberals and, thus, values Gramsci’s “socialist and revolutionary stance.” Speaking of Dias’s contributions to Gramscian studies in Brazil, Bianchi (2021, cap. 10, emphasis added) asserts:

With this radicalization of Gramscian thought, concepts that had not been valued until now in Brazilian studies, such as organic crisis and Fordism, came to occupy a new place, opening the door to studying political crises and possible responses to them from a strongly anti-determinist perspective. *If Antonio Gramsci's thought can inspire revolutionary politics today, this is largely due to the theoretical and political movement that Edmundo carried out.*²²

The deconstruction process that Gramsci seemed to go in Brazil, thus, seems to be rooted in Coutinho’s own mental (de-)structuring. This Gramsci had, contrary to Coutinho’s desire and understanding, become emptied of the revolutionary fervor through a negation of his wholeness: the parceling of his conceptual tools and the misguided and de-politicized historiographical introduction of his work.

²² Original: “Com essa radicalização do pensamento gramsciano, conceitos pouco valorizados até o momento nos estudos brasileiros, como crise orgânica e fordismo, passaram a ocupar um novo lugar, abrindo as portas para se estudar, a partir de Gramsci, as crises políticas e as respostas possíveis a elas com uma perspectiva fortemente antideterminista. Se o pensamento de Antonio Gramsci pode hoje inspirar uma política revolucionária isso se deve, em grande medida, àquele movimento teórico e político que Edmundo realizou.”

2.33 *The other Gramsci*

The Marxist dependentistas, as noted above, brought serious critiques against Neo-Gramscianism as it developed in Latin America. There was, however, a persistent feeling that this school misrepresented the spirit of Antonio Gramsci's contributions. Marini (1995, p. 39), characterizing LANG as "the discovery and a particular reading of the works of Antonio Gramsci"²³, recognized this dissonance. Osorio (1984, p. PDF 25) defended that "the ample diffusion of [Gramsci's] works was accompanied by a true mutilation of his reflections, in which the spirit of the search for revolutionary paths for the West were separated from revolutionary practice."²⁴ Varied political interests would have informed the ways that Gramsci's works would be ordered, a phenomenon within a larger tendency shared between Gramsci and other great Marxist thinkers—Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Marx himself (OSORIO, 1995, p. 269).

Defending his doctoral thesis²⁵ in 1984, in a reflection on the development of Gramscian studies in Brazil in the context of its downturn, Edmundo Fernandes Dias inaugurated a search for *another Gramsci*. A precursor to how Gramscian studies would develop in Brazil, Dias rejected what he perceived to be the separation of the text from its context and author's context—the predominant "structural reading" method inherited from the French schools and that characterized Coutinho's approach to Gramscian studies—in favor of "treating the text as a historical event" (BIANCHI, 2021, cap. 10).

In a diachronic parallel with MTD's and Cueva's earlier critiques—but not necessarily having read them given the Brazilian dictatorship's greater censorship of the more critical authors—Dias confirmed their hypothesis: that the Gramsci disseminated by Carlos Nelson Coutinho and the Brazilian CP was not only inspired by Eurocommunism (BIANCHI, 2021, cap. 10), but could also be traced back to Togliatti's Gramsci (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 268; DOS SANTOS, 2020a, p. 362). The approach to this *other Gramsci*, considered more closely below, would take

²³ Original: "[...] el descubrimiento y una lectura particular de la obra de Antonio Gramsci".

²⁴ Original: "[...] la amplia difusión de sus trabajos ha sido acompañada de una verdadera mutilación de su reflexión, en donde se ha separado el espíritu de una búsqueda de las vías de la revolución para Occidente y de su práctica revolucionaria."

²⁵ This doctoral thesis would only be published in book form in 2000, under the title *Gramsci in Turin (Gramsci em Turim)* (BIANCHI, 2021, cap. 10).

twenty years to consolidate in Brazil, and had its greatest expression in the 1996 collection that Dias organized—*The Other Gramsci (O Outro Gramsci)* (BIANCHI, 2021, cap. 10), a year before Marini passed away.

We can, thus, point to a two-pronged disencounter between Dias (and his other Gramsci) and the earlier leftist critics of LANG (and its *particular reading* of Gramsci, or Togliatti's Gramsci). The disencounter was both temporal and spatial. Temporal in the sense that Dias entered the scene at a moment in which these debates had reached a certain maturity; and, considering the standard time it takes for an intellectual's work to reach the wider epistemic community, these ideas take even longer to impact the works of others, as provided by Bianchi's aforementioned assertion that Dias's approach would have consolidated only twenty years after he defended his doctoral dissertation. There is also a spatial element to it, artificially consolidated through the dictatorship's greater censorship of the anti-capitalist intellectuals and Brazilian academia's instrumentalization of this forcibly reduced space. Unless Dias not only travelled abroad but spent the considerable amount of time necessary to have an impactful exposure to MDT, developing contacts with the relevant groups and literature, his contact with Marini would have been, at best, minimal; and, at worst, reducible to what we might call "Cardoso's Marini" (in a parallel with Togliatti's Gramsci), a discussion developed in the next subsection. A dive into Dias's trajectory and works would, admittedly, be necessary to verify these assumptions, a step that does not fall into the scope of this doctoral thesis.

Recognizing this disencounter provides us with the opportunity to contribute organically to the relevant Latin American debates, most especially that regarding the need for revolution to overcome dependency and underdevelopment. This other, revolutionary Gramsci was theoretically incompatible with the reform-minded one Coutinho (and LANG) had presented, and antagonistic to the neo-reformist one the more moderate wing of the Worker's Party had appropriated for their political project (BIANCHI, 2021, cap. 10, emphasis added):

In his effort to reclaim Gramsci as a revolutionary thinker, Edmundo [Dias] shed new light on the concept of hegemony, which in his texts came to mean the affirmation of a *new rationality*, the *foundation of a different form of civilization*

that would be *based on a political break with the previous social and political order*.²⁶

Bianchi's reading of this other, revolutionary Gramsci presents us with a preliminary compatibility with Osorio's (1984, p. PDF 25) notion that the Sardinian Marxist's work brought a "the spirit of the search for revolutionary paths" and with Marini's (1995) inkling that there was another possible Gramsci, different from Coutinho's reformist one.

In this sense, Cardoso's work appears to share a significant similarity—and, thus, a point of compatibility—with LANG in the strategic conclusions drawn from his thought. According to Dos Santos (2020b, p. 1066, emphasis added),

Since 1974, [...] Cardoso *accepted the irreversibility of dependent development and the possibility of making it compatible with representative democracy*. From this point on, according to Cardoso, *the democratic task became a central objective against an authoritarian state*, supported above all by a 'state bourgeoisie' that supported its corporatist and authoritarian character. According to him, *the enemies of democracy would not be, therefore, international capital and its monopolistic policy*, capturing and expropriating the resources generated in our countries. *The real enemies would be corporatism and a conservative bureaucratic bourgeoisie* which, among other things, limited the country's capacity for international negotiation within a new level of dependence generated by technological progress and by the new international division of labor that emerged in the 1970s as a result of the relocation of world industry.²⁷

Dos Santos's observation of this post-1974 Cardoso mirrors Cueva's (2008a) reading of LANG, in which democratic development would necessarily have to work within the prevailing systemic framework. In other words, a reformist struggle for democracy and against authoritarianism should replace revolutionary goals.

²⁶ Original: "No esforço para resgatar Gramsci como um pensador revolucionário, Edmundo jogou uma nova luz sobre o conceito de hegemonia, que em seus textos passou a significar a afirmação de uma nova racionalidade, fundamento de uma forma civilizacional diversa que teria como pressuposto uma ruptura política com a ordem social e política precedente."

²⁷ Original: "Desde 1974, [...] Cardoso aceptó la irreversibilidad del desarrollo dependiente y la posibilidad de compatibilizarlo con la democracia representativa. A partir de ahí, según Cardoso, la tarea democrática se convertía en un objetivo central contra un Estado autoritario, apoyado sobre todo en una "burguesía de Estado" que sustentaba el carácter corporativo y autoritario del mismo. Según él, los enemigos de la democracia no serían, por lo tanto, el capital internacional y su política monopolista, captadora y expropiadora de los recursos generados en nuestros países. Los verdaderos enemigos serían el corporativismo y una burguesía burocrática conservadora que, entre otras cosas, limitó la capacidad de negociación internacional del país dentro de un nuevo nivel de dependencia generado por el avance tecnológico y por la nueva división internacional del trabajo que se esbozó en la década del setenta, como resultado de la reubicación de la industria mundial."

2.4 Reading the Broader Latin American Context. Confronting dependency through reform or revolution

That narrative-creating process—that ignored the richness of the debates and only brought Bambirra, dos Santos, and Marini sparingly, in often decontextualized misreadings of their arguments (PRADO; CASTELO, 2013, p. 13)—was part of a larger movement in the politics of knowledge in mid-twentieth century Latin America. While we must be cautious not to overemphasize the role of foreign agency, the manner in which the international interacted with the domestic should not be disregarded. The weaving of a web of domestic and international relations began in the United States through public and private funding of Latin American studies program. Through this “university-government-foundation nexus,” and in the context of the euphoria generated in Latin America following Cuba’s successful revolution, the US government sponsored institutional expansion of Latin American studies within US universities—from an initial 29 programs in the 1950s to over 100 by the end of the 1960s. The Ford Foundation led all others in the use of private and public funds and came to exercise exceptional influence over different Latin American studies program, leading to changes away from those elements more critical of US imperialism. Stanford University’s critical Latin American studies program, as one of a few major centers, represents a case in point, seeing a change of leadership and the termination of the interdisciplinary program in Hispanic studies and the journal *Hispanic American Review*.

Looking at Latin America, we can attempt to see how that US nexus found fertile, structural ground as well as conservative and authoritarian social forces in Latin America that were eager to join the web. In an analysis that complements Chilcote’s (1985, 2014), Paulo Ravecca (2019, p. 3) argues that “The ideological changes within social sciences at large, and in political science more specifically, are related [...] to a complex set of changes that includes the political defeat of the left, the effects of the 1970s’ right-wing dictatorships, and the regional hegemony of the US.” A greater and more complex university-government-foundation nexus emerged, with more or less autonomous national nexuses that were part of a larger system based in the United States and molded by the twin foundations of US imperial interests and the Cold War threat of communist liberation.

In the countries where right-wing dictatorships took hold, the repression of left-leaning social sciences varied from persecution without further institution-building interventions and those more assertive participations that would shape the new building blocks of the disciplinary infrastructure (RAVECCA, 2019, p. 9, see especially chapters 2 and 3). Noted by Marini, Raúl Prebisch's (1986, p. 161 apud MARINI, 1992a, p. 108) reading of the phenomenon contextualizes it within US imperialism:

When those in the United States saw the danger that our ideas represented for their consecrated truths and they were unsuccessful in merging CEPAL with equivalent services of the OAS, they undertook in the fifties a systematic action to counteract us and chose Santiago de Chile, CEPAL's headquarters, to develop their campaign, which was extended to all of Latin America, by sending professors free of charge or by generously granting scholarships. The launching base was neoclassicism; economic liberalism in Argentina and other countries has not been of spontaneous generation.²⁸

As we will cover ahead, far from understanding this external influence as a primary determinant, *its interaction with domestic factors*—the South American dictatorships and local academia—is where the relevance of US actions lies.

According to Jaime Osorio, the extent to which the Southern Cone military dictatorships' objective of refounding their societies in social, political, and economic terms—through which they would endeavor to transform the parameters for action and the forms in which social forces related to each other—was successful is up for debate. However, “it is true that the establishment of the military dictatorships provided for a radical transformation in the conditions under which the social sciences would develop”²⁹ (OSORIO, 1994, p. 29). Present and future research projects were interrupted, academic working groups disbanded, and the largely benign relationship between intellectuals and their societies broken (OSORIO, 1994, p. 29).

In Brazil, state-funding during the dictatorship saw the expansion of universities and research centers; and, in line with the greater influence of foreign capital, the increased

²⁸ Original: “Cuando en Estados Unidos vieron el peligro que nuestras ideas representaban para sus verdades consagradas y no lograron la fusión de la CEPAL con los servicios similares de la OEA, emprendieron en los años cincuenta una acción sistemática para contrarrestarnos y eligieron Santiago de Chile, sede de la CEPAL, para desenvolver su campaña, que se extendió a toda la América Latina, mediante el envío gratuito de profesores o el otorgamiento generoso de becas. La base de lanzamiento fue el neoclasicismo; el liberalismo económico en la Argentina y otros países no ha sido de generación espontánea.”

²⁹ Original: “[...] lo cierto es que el establecimiento de las dictaduras militares propició una modificación radical en las condiciones de desarrollo de las ciencias sociales”.

participation of the Ford Foundation in funding research centers aligned with its ideology and scholars' graduate studies in the United States and Europe (CHILCOTE, 1985, p. 113, 117–18; LOPES; NICOLINI; CARVALHO, 2022, p. 4; MARTINS, 2013, p. 30–31).

While it is true that the Brazilian dictatorship repressed those who criticized their rule (LOPES; NICOLINI; CARVALHO, 2022, p. 5), as did those others in Latin America, the intellectuals working in Western-funded research centers were provided greater flexibility, different from the tight control the government held over the universities (CHILCOTE, 1985, p. 113). The increased tolerance, however, cannot be understood merely through such associations.

In Marini's (2012a, p. 105, emphasis added) analysis, "The closed environment suffocating the country proved fruitful to *those who could come and go freely, monopolizing and personalizing ideas that flourished in the intellectual life of the region*³⁰, adjusting them to the *limits set out by the dictatorship*."³¹ As Latimer (2022a, p. 93) points out, "Marini uncompromisingly condemned left intellectuals who had been co-opted into silence and conformity, including those who had once opposed the system." Seeing the co-opted left's agency in the process, Marini (2012a, p. 105) argues that the dictatorship's "cultural policy" would have been "less successful had more and more intellectuals not been co-opted by the system, including those who were situated in opposition to the regime."³² An analytical line is drawn, therefore, between the action of opposing the regime, on the one hand, and that of opposing the system. And even the co-opted left's so-called "opposition to the regime" was conditioned by, and molded within, what the dictatorship deemed tolerable.

Their first movements, although possibly bearing the characteristics of self-defense and solidarity, would have transformed into "an irresistible vocation for corporativism, complicity, and

³⁰ The previously cited dossier celebrating Cardoso and Faletto's *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, organized by Heller, Rueschemeyer and Snyder (2009), is, as discussed above, a consequence of such a movement in which Cardoso and Faletto would have monopolized and personalized ideas that belonged, in reality, to "the intellectual life of the region."

³¹ Note on translation. I used Latimer's (2022a, p. 93) translation with one minor adjustment: I replaced "profitable" with "fruitful" for the Portuguese "proveitoso". While the endeavor did indeed prove to be profitable, I did not see this emphasis placed in Marini's text.

³² Original: "menos exitosa si el sistema no hubiera cooptado tantos intelectuales, inclusive aquellos que se encontraban en oposición al régimen."

a desire to exclude all those—whatever their political orientation—who threatened the people and groups that benefitted from this process.”³³ Marini (2012a, p. 105) continues:

In this context, the majority of the Brazilian left collaborated, in a more or less conscious way, with official policy, closing off the road to the diffusion of issues that had spurred the Latin American left in the 1970s, marked by political processes of great transcendence and ending in a victorious popular revolution.³⁴

This Brazilian left, thus, adopted a counter-revolutionary stance that provided intellectual support to the dictatorship’s 1964 counter-revolutionary coup.

The period in Brazilian history (1946-1964) that had predated the military coup has been described as representative of the construction of a national project that purported to be popular and progressive (CHILCOTE, 1985, p. 114). Marini observed such movements throughout the continent. Within a philosophical tradition that grasps intellectual thought not as developing out from within itself, but rather as part of societal occurrences (MARINI, 1995, p. 41), Marini (2015a, p. 243–44) argued that this period saw the emergence of an intellectual movement in which Latin American scholars attempt to establish an original and independent tradition in the region’s theorization.

The period that followed, starting in Brazil in 1964, in Chile in 1973, and so on, saw the dismantling of this process, in which the cultural base of academia was altered within a context of an expanded presence of foreign capital in society and a general frame of dependency (CHILCOTE, 1985, p. 114). The balance sought in the relations between the Brazilian bourgeoisie, the technocratic-military dictatorship, foreign capital, and Western imperialist powers points us to differentiating between two general categories of intellectuals. On one side are those who embrace

[a] commitment with society: to study it in order to propose objectives and instruments capable of improving it and making it a happier place; to negate the role of a mere agent of those groups that submit the majorities to exploitation and oppression, in order to assume, decisively, the side of such majorities.

³³ Original: “una vocación irresistible para el corporativismo, la complicidad y el deseo de exclusión de todo aquello—cualquiera que fuera su connotación política— que amenazara el poder de las personas y grupos beneficiarios de ese proceso.”

³⁴ Original: “En este contexto, la mayoría de la intelectualidad brasileña de izquierda colaboró, de manera más o menos consciente, con la política oficial, cerrando el camino para la difusión de los temas que agitaron a la izquierda latinoamericana en la década de 1970, marcada por procesos políticos de gran trascendencia y concluida con una revolución popular victoriosa.”

Here, Marini is referring to the different revolutionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean of the 1970s and the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution.

To do this implies a commitment to economic development oriented toward satisfying the material and spiritual needs of our peoples, to democracy, inasmuch as it is a regime capable of assuring the full realization of their humanity³⁵ (MARINI, 2015a, p. 245, translated by author).

On the other, we find those who

[...] are compromised by the system through the university and other state institutions. [These intellectuals] clearly identify with the dominant bourgeoisie, and their output in the form of ideas and knowledge tends to be shaped by the bourgeois ideals of the emerging capitalist society. In the present stage, their inclination is change within an evolving capitalist accumulation. Whether they are inspired by positivist or Marxist perspectives, they tend to pursue gradual change and reform. Socialism is often upheld as an alternative, but usually in the social democratic form represented by the European experience (CHILCOTE, 1985, p. 118–19).

From this differentiation, we are better poised to understand why the Brazilian dictatorship tolerated the work of research centers and scholars who were funded by foreign capital and/or worked within the limits set by the dictatorship (such as Cebrap and Cardoso, but also Coutinho), while it completely shut others out (e.g., the Marxist *dependentistas*). The differentiated levels of (in)tolerance that the dictatorship demonstrated is of utmost relevance; and it must be understood alongside the fact that the Ford Foundation was allowed to have such an active role in Brazilian academic life, despite (in what seems to be, at first glance, a contradictory stance) the foundation's alleged objective to "promote democracy" and its support for (some of) those who spoke against authoritarianism in Latin America.

The thornier issue for the Latin American dictatorships, therefore, must have been something other than the call for democracy or the criticism of authoritarian rule in itself. So, while there was a generalized repression and cultural control over academic life, the chokehold was greater over those who defended change not *within* the capitalist system, but who sought an agenda that prioritized the needs of their societies over an alignment with the United States and greater integration with foreign capital and its interests. Returning to Osorio (1994) and Ravecca (2019), we can arrive at the understanding that it was not the hunger for power that motivated the dictators,

³⁵ Original: "[...] un compromiso con la sociedad: el de estudiarla para proponerle metas e instrumentos capaces de hacerla mejor y más feliz. ello le plantea negarse a ser un mero agente de los grupos que someten las mayorías a la explotación y la opresión, para asumir decididamente el partido de esas mayorías. Hacerlo implica comprometerse con un desarrollo económico orientado a satisfacer las necesidades materiales y espirituales de nuestros pueblos, y a la democracia, en tanto que régimen capaz de asegurarles la realización plena de su humanidad."

but rather the authoritarian and brutal proclaimed right to reorder society and its path in their desired orientation.

This brings us back to the question of political implications of theoretical. By arguing in favor of what he called “associated-dependent development”—a concept and model that sees possibilities for development when local capitalist forces align themselves with foreign capital/multinational corporations (PALESTINI, 2021, p. 187)—Cardoso’s intellectual-political proposal has implications that would lead to (and did, in his presidency (DOS SANTOS, 1998)) the political acceptance of a subordinate role for dependent countries. Other proposals share with this model a reformist approach, and similar studies can be conducted on the flexibility granted by the dictatorship for them to publish and disseminate their work in Brazil.

2.41 “Professionalized” IR: The liberal-mainstream narrative in Brazil

The two types of misuse, therefore, speak directly to the politics of knowledge, in its production, dissemination and narration. The telling of intellectual stories have occurred in narratives of self-avowed objectivity that obscure *the political* behind the story-telling. These mainstream narratives become “disciplinary common sense,” (RAVECCA, 2019, p. 2) further substantiated by a lack of rigorous reading, the acritical adoption of narratives, and disengagement,³⁶ even when we are speaking of what the general consensus holds to be the most important, or even the only genuinely Latin American theoretical contribution to International Relations (HERZ, 2002, p. 16–17; LESSA, 2005, p. 3).

Much Brazilian IR literature recognizes the singularity that dependency theory presented but does not go beyond that. Although they point to the role that the Ford Foundation played in westernizing Brazilian academia, this influence shows up as bearing little analytical relevance, and seems to simply be a concomitant occurrence alongside the dictatorship’s censorship and repression of the social sciences—that is, the dictatorship and foreign capital appear more as descriptive factors outside of a much needed political analysis of the process of this institutionalization (see LOPES; NICOLINI; CARVALHO, 2022). Others point to the need to

³⁶ For a discussion on the pervasiveness of the misreading of and disengagement with Marxism in US International Relations and Political Science, see (SCLOFSKY; FUNK, 2018).

bring Latin American Thought to IR teaching, recognizing the “vicious cycle of intellectual dependency which limits the development of the discipline” (BARASUOL; SILVA, 2016, p. 2), but recognizing without analyzing the politics of exclusion behind how IR has been constructed since its (re)foundation under the dictators and throughout the liberal-passified redemocratization process. This is not to downplay the importance of empirically demonstrating the high degree of colonization that Latin American IR, in general, suffers; and the sidelining of Latin American social thought in IR teaching (2% of the theory curricula) and IR research (3-9%) in Brazil (BARASUOL; SILVA, 2016). What is lacking is a discussion on the Politics of IR in Brazil/Latin America, or of the politics of the region’s intellectual history.

In this sense, Ravecca’s analysis of Latin American Political Science draws an obvious parallel to the current stage of Brazilian/Latin American IR:

In the continent that hosted liberation theology, dependency theory, critical pedagogy, and local expressions of socialist thought, the advancement of mainstream forms of social science did imply significant shifts in writing and thinking. The mainstream PS narrative today describes this shift as a process of modernization and improvement, since social scientists would have moved from “activism” to “serious science,” “rightly” embracing the principle of academic neutrality (RAVECCA, 2019, p. 5).

Along the lines argued by Ravecca, different authors, after recognizing the importance of the Brazilian state’s investment, under dictatorial rule, in research and the establishment of foundations such as FUNAG (Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão), provide a description of the emergence and expansion of Brazilian IR, politically void not only of the general impact of the violent exclusions, but that also lack the precision of the targets and the cognate motivations.

Sotelo Valencia’s (2017, p. 38) remarks speak to some of these exclusions, which have remained largely unquestioned:

Criticisms of the [Marxist theory of dependency] were often poorly formulated, tending to ignore (deliberately or otherwise) the epistemological level of mid-1960s political debate in Latin America, which it entered seeking to explain backwardness, dependency and underdevelopment and the paths to transformation and liberation.

The context of “the silence imposed by the military dictatorship and the institutionalized nature of intellectual and media censorship” provides part of the explanation (SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017, p. 38). But the lack of rigor in the criticisms—as well as their endurance—have much to do with

the political agency of those intellectuals who were allowed to maintain their spaces. We can see that,

in Marini's case his 20 year exile has meant that only recently is his work being read again in Brazilian universities, and even then in the face of opposition from the dominant tendencies and even from the left in those [universities] such as Sao Paulo [University] and Unicamp. Not only the institutions themselves but also the majority of teaching staff are still very resistant to the idea of engaging with Marini's work, and it is often the same story throughout the rest of Latin America (SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017, p. 38–39).

Placing Marini within Ravecca's (2019, p. 5) critique of mainstream political (or social) science, one can conclude that his "activism" belonged to that moment *before* the social sciences had "embrac[ed] the principle of academic neutrality" and moved on to practice "serious science." The aforementioned tendency among some scholars to discard, *a priori*, radical thought (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 53) thus found fertile ground: first in the academic expansion under the dictatorship's guidance; and second, under the now "mature" and "professionalized" university. Without a revolutionary break from the dictatorship itself, Brazil's *transition to democracy* was also framed by the dictators' stewards.

Written in 1990, Marini's (2012a, p. 104–5) call for "the analysis of the dictatorship's cultural policy, which had been initiated through the [Brazil's Ministry of Education]-USAID accords, and the consequences thereof, must still be undertaken"³⁷ still stands. This call needs to be read in the backdrop of what has been described as the consolidation of a more professionalized IR in Brazil, the field's move to "absorb some international standards," and how "IR thus has consolidated as a professional specialty in Brazil" (LOPES; NICOLINI; CARVALHO, 2022, p. 7–8).

Although he is referencing the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO – Latin American Council of Social Sciences), Ravecca's (2019, p. 108) assertion can easily be extended to Brazilian social sciences and IR:

[...] the emphasis on the [private research centers'] contribution to the professionalization of research and the defense of democracy conceals the fact that the dictatorship pushed scholars toward a neoliberal model of management, which has had ideological implications. Furthermore, the embrace of objectivity and of liberalism can be conceptualized as epistemological and political shifts in the

³⁷ Original: "El análisis de la política cultural de la dictadura, iniciada con los acuerdos MEC-USAID, y de sus consecuencias aún está por ser hecho [...]."

direction of producing a conformist academic community that perceives itself as non-ideological.

Those, like Marini, who put a spotlight on the connections between the co-opted and conformist character of the academic community and the dictatorial interventionism put in doubt this comfortable self-perception of ideological neutrality. It is, therefore, not surprising that Marini, in the words of Theotônio dos Santos (2016, p. 14), was the “victim of a systematic boycott in Brazil.”

Having discussed the implications that the lack of rigor has had on intellectual developments around the works of our two authors, the next chapter will bring Gramsci’s and Marini’s contributions on *how to read*. Different from previous works that have discussed each theorist’s rhythm of thought, this and the next chapter look to the same problem but framed around the nexus between the relevant political-historiographic and socio-political contexts, on the one hand, and their intellectual proposals, on the other. In other words, how can these contexts, when read against their works, help us capture their rhythms of thought?

3. How to Read and Study Beyond Empiricism's Intellectual Constraints

“Who knows if this programme of conceptual excavation may also be one that puts an end to the conceptual slavery and imprisonment of Gramsci's [and Marini's] thinking in the theoretical and political structures of common sense?”
—Álvaro Bianchi (2020, p. 3)

A discussion on *how to read* and *how to study* Gramsci and Marini, at least a reading and study that seeks to comprehend their thoughts, must consider their particular approaches to such a matter. Discerning their approaches to reading is one of the primary objectives of this chapter, as it will aid us in better comprehending their theoretical contributions and, from there, help us frame their rhythms of thought. However, there is also a broader contribution to be made by this discussion to the social sciences in general, and International Relations, in particular: how to develop a more rigorous scientific study of ideas, their histories, and, from there, their applicability and explanatory strength to concrete situations.

In an attempt at a novel approach—one that does not replicate previous works' contributions to a philological study of Gramsci's oeuvre (BIANCHI, 2020; COSPITO, 2016; COUTINHO, 2012; MORTON, 2007; RAMOS, 2013; THOMAS, 2009)—this chapter presents Gramsci's and Marini's attempts at course correction within the debates in which they were immersed, by contextualizing their contributions to epistemological debates within Marxism, but also within the wider social sciences. The normative concerns and philosophical underpinnings of their thoughts will aid us in understanding how they read Marx, in particular; but also, how they argued we should read texts in a more general sense. I then discuss the positivist roots and empiricist grounding within the wider social sciences, including that of those *Marxists who got it wrong*.

I frame this chapter around the central problem that grounded their rhythms of thought. Different philologists agree that, for Gramsci, Marxism's central problem was that of the structure-superstructure relation. For Marini, I contend, it was the relation between the domestic and the international.

3.1 How to Read and Study. Or, a preliminary section on methods.

In the political-intellectual controversies within the PC'I and the Communist International, Gramsci criticized the readings that the left had been doing of Marx and insisted on the necessity for us to change *how we read*. The misreadings and misinterpretations were leading the working class and its intellectuals to faulty methods and, thus, faulty analyses, tactics, and strategies. A *vulgar Marxism* emerged—note, not from Marx but from subsequent Marxist scholars—through which the victory of the working class was held as incontrovertible. Capitalism's ever-growing contradictions would, as if mechanically, lead to the collapse of the system and foster in socialism. While Gramsci (1971) recognized that the language of inevitability can play a role in mobilizing labor, it also constrains the analysis necessary for strategizing. A reductionist Marxism was born, in which economic structures superseded any and all developments at the superstructural level. Umbilically connected to the role that theory holds in the philosophy of praxis, bad theory will not be able to positively inform praxis.

Three decades later and an ocean apart, Marini immersed himself in the development-dependency debates, positioning himself against the paradigms that dominated different circles: W. W. Rostow's (1961) modernization theory, prominent in the United States and Europe; the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (CEPAL) structuralism; and the Communist Parties' dogmatic Marxism (MARINI, 2012a). While Cardoso and Faletto's Weberian theory of dependency would have been born in response to CEPAL's developmentalist theory (MARTINS, 2019, p. 211), Marini (2012a, p. 60) defends that "dependency theory has its roots in the conceptions that the *new left*—especially in Brazil, although its political development was greater in Cuba, Venezuela, and Peru—elaborated, in order to confront the ideologies of the Communist parties."³⁸ Epistemologically speaking, Marini was concerned with the historical necessity to adopt and apply a theory that would be capable of unveiling and demystifying the underlying structures that undergirded the shackles of dependency and underdevelopment. Contributing to Marini's line of argumentation, Bambirra (2019) affirmed that what was needed was not a new theory of development, but one of dependency.

³⁸ Original: "[...] la teoría de la dependencia como un subproducto y alternativa académica a la teoría desarrollista de la cepal, ella tiene sus raíces en las concepciones que la nueva izquierda —particularmente en Brasil, aunque su desarrollo político fuera mayor en Cuba, Venezuela y Perú— elaboró para hacer frente a la ideología de los partidos comunistas."

Marini had an epistemological stance similar to Gramsci's on the role of and need for an honest intellectual engagement—not disconnected from the axiological tenet of the purpose of theory, that it should bear the commitment with society to seek to meet its material and spiritual needs. In one of his writings on the origins and trajectory of Latin American Sociology, Marini affirmed: “Only through solidarity, the permanent search for truly social values that can be shared by all, and the relentless struggle against inequality and injustice, will we finally be able to achieve it.”³⁹ Taken as the central concern behind his work—the need to help the masses achieve human dignity—we can better grasp two of his major epistemo-methodological critiques within the Latin American debates around development and dependency. The first centered on the need to cleanse Marxism of its Eurocentric roots; and second, on the need to veer away from non-rigorous eclecticism in the conduct of science.

As both Gramsci and Marini returned to Marx to conduct rigorous readings and study, in order to engage his work in the contemporary debates of their times, so too must one seek to complete such in-depth readings of authors with whom they want to engage. In such a move, Bianchi (2020, p. 3), contextualizing the development and maturity of Gramscian studies in Italy, points to its moment of decline as the moment in which “a more rigorous methodological approach became possible in the treatment of the text and sources”; and, paraphrasing Guido Liguori, affirms that “the actual contextualisation of the thought of the Sardinian Marxist would permit a ‘conceptual excavation’ capable of identifying the multiple sources of its reflection as well as its place in history.” Bianchi alludes to the role that this can have in demystifying what we could call the dirty politics of knowledge. Appropriating his subsequent question, and reformulating it for the purposes of our discussion, I can extend it to both authors of this thesis: “Who knows if this programme of conceptual excavation may also be one that puts an end to the conceptual slavery and imprisonment of Gramsci's [and Marini's] thinking in the theoretical and political structures of common sense?” (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 3).

The “more rigorous methodological approach” that Bianchi speaks of is the philological study of the author's oeuvre and any additional primary sources that would help us capture their rhythm of thought. The background of this philological resurgence was the “common sense”

³⁹ Original: “Sólo el esfuerzo solidario, la búsqueda permanente de valores realmente sociales, susceptibles de ser compartidos por todos, y la lucha sin tregua contra la desigualdad y la injusticia, nos permitiría finalmente alcanzarla.”

misreadings discussed in the previous chapter. While *the manner in which* Gramsci's texts were translated into English, Spanish, and Portuguese (important for my discussion), the way in which these translations were (mis)organized, and the lack of full translations of other Gramscian primary sources were at issue for Gramscian scholars, the problem of "representative texts" was perhaps even greater for the Marxist Dependency trio—Bambirra, dos Santos, and Marini—most particularly for the English-reading audience, given the dual problem of even fewer translations and the phenomenon of conflation of dependency thinking into one broader, undistinguishable blob of a dependency thought.

The next subsections bring forth relevant underlying epistemological currents that have led readers to focus on representation over oeuvre. Before continuing the discussion of why we need to read beyond "representative" texts, we will make some short considerations around why we do not already do so. In other words, it is relevant to contextualize this call for change within the broader dominant scientific practices.

3.2 Reading Beyond "Representative" Texts: Distinguishing meta-scientific units

"All of this shows that the discussion is misplaced and the terms of the debate need to be defined more precisely" (MARINI, 2013a, p. 37).⁴⁰ Although written for a different context, Marini's words fit well for the a critique against a positivist reading of dependency thinking.

Mathias Luce, although in a discussion specific to Marini's category of sub-imperialism⁴¹, provides an important element for grasping the meta-cognitive nature of the misreadings: "Lack of theoretical clarity for understanding this totality and its essence causes confusion about Marini's category [sub-imperialism] not only among rival theoreticians who praise the Brazilian bourgeoisie but also other critics, including contemporary Marxist ones." We could rewrite these words to be specific Marini's theory of dependency or Gramsci's theory of hegemony without risk of mischaracterizing these two perspectives.

⁴⁰ Original: "Tudo isso mostra que a discussão se encontra mal colocada e é necessário definir com mais precisão os termos do debate."

⁴¹ This is covered in Chapters 5 and 6.

What is at stake, then, seems to be a preponderance of a general *positivist rhythm of thought*, which has difficulty in grasping the totality, or “the problem of ‘whole’ and ‘parts’” in which the whole is “more than the summation of the parts”, as Yurdusev (1993, p. 83) put it. Although this may seem simple enough, a first point to make is that this comprehension is not internalized adequately for many positivist or positivist-inspired readers. Second, the notions of totality and dialectics are antagonistic to positivism. While positivism *can* encapsulate certain notions of structure not explicitly reducible to agency (the parts), it does so incoherently (ARCHER, 1995). In other words, you cannot simplify totality or dialectics. Additionally, it is important to note that Luce’s use of “essence” is closer to the use of *rhythm of thought* brought here than to the critique against *essentialism* that is brought in post-colonial writings.

A discussion of what I am calling the *positivist rhythm of thought*, however, is not in the purview of this thesis—as it is a topic to be developed much more extensively. I will, though, develop two critiques that are directly relevant here, framed around meta-scientific confusion.

3.21 *The first positivist meta-scientific confusion: The empirically corroborated law*

Among the so-called Great Debates within International Relations, the 1980s *Third Great Debate* between positivists and post-positivists was part of a greater movement within the Western social sciences (LAPID, 1989, p. 237). What Yosef Lapid (1989, p. 239) considered to be a “new philosophy of science”—apparently ignoring the importance of other already existing non-positivist philosophies of science, e.g. historical-dialectical materialism—confronted positivism in three principal, interrelated thematic areas: “the preoccupation with meta-scientific units (paradigmatism), the concern with underlying premises and assumptions (perspectivism), and the drift towards methodological pluralism (relativism)”. In dealing with paradigmaticism, Lapid (1989, p. 239) writes:

Post-positivism has wrought a notable change in the understanding and choice of proper units of analysis in the study of scientific development. In sharp contrast to the positivist choice of the empirically corroborated law or generalization as the fundamental unit of scientific achievement, the new philosophy of science insists that only relatively long-lived, large-scale, and multi-tiered constructs—such as ‘paradigms’ (Kuhn, 1962), ‘research-programmes’ (Lakatos, 1970), ‘research traditions’ (Laudan, 1984), ‘super-theories’ (Gutting, 1980), ‘global theories’ (Hooker, 1987), and ‘weltanschauungen’ [sic] (Wisdom, 1987)—should qualify as basic knowledge-producing, knowledge-accumulating, and knowledge-

conserving units. For theories do not come to us separately; hence they should not be handled as self-contained entities.

Considering different *paradigm* standpoints, I affirm that dependency theory has often been critiqued within a positivist meta-scientific reading. Such a standpoint would have provided positivist scholars the epistemological clearance to extract their preferred meta-scientific unit, the “empirically corroborated law or generalization”, from what I contend to be their preferred data set: the single text. There are two mistakes that can be drawn from such a positivist reading and noted in the positivist critiques. The first, that the “empirically corroborated law or generalization” is found where none was developed. For example, although Marini sought to uncover the *laws* of dependent capitalism, he did so under spatial and temporal limitations not found in positivism: he did not seek to mechanically apply these to other dependent socio-economic formations—because a historical study of a region’s socio-economic relations must necessarily precede the application of any theory; and these laws are temporally restricted to the capitalist mode of production, with further variations corresponding to capitalism’s different stages and, within these, to microstructural/conjunctural phenomena—in other words, the timelessness of positivist laws is not present.

On this point we can turn to the observation that the law-like empirical regularities that much of the social sciences, as well as International Relations, holds as *the* (positivist) scientific standard—based on the Humean concept of causation—is often conflated with other, non-positivist accounts (KURKI, 2008; WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010). The “empirically corroborated law or generalization” that Lapid (1989) refers to is the model of causal analysis based on specific readings of David Hume’s writings. As Milja Kurki (2008, p. 7) observes,

[...] this discourse has led IR approaches [...] to adopt certain (regularity-)deterministic and mechanistic assumptions about causation, to associate the idea of causal analysis solely with the ‘empiricist-positivist’ idea of science, and to accept certain reductionist tendencies in analysis of causal forces in the study of world politics.

The dominance of the Humean model in the social sciences, alongside the lack of detailed attention to the philosophy of science, has fostered a conflation of the different conceptions of causation in favor of the positivist model. A case in point is the Marxist current of thought:

Marx, and the Marxist tradition, are sometimes seen as ‘positivist’ because of the repeated references to ‘laws’ of social life in Marx’s work. Certainly some

Marxists have been advocates of a positivist language of laws and some have adopted sophisticated positivist philosophical premises (KURKI, 2008, p. 84–85).

Contrary to this dominant depiction, “Marx’s original conceptions of laws are very different from those of positivists and are in many ways closer to the intentionalist logic of explanation of the anti-positivist philosophers” (KURKI, 2008, p. 85). Similarly, Colin Wight and Jonathan Joseph (2010, p. 3) argue that many Marxists are drawn to a “non-positivist study of the social world that emphasises unobservable and materially embedded social structures and processes as opposed to the law-like empirical regularities foregrounded under a positivist account”, bringing them closer into the critical realist philosophy of science.

Much positivist argumentation levelled against dependency thinking—bracketing the fact that this anti-dependency stance was against its non-rigorous, conflated Frankensteinian form⁴²—has been premised around the Popperian criterium of falsifiability. James Caporaso organized a special number for the journal *International Organization* in 1978, in which the methodological objective was “to move the discussion of dependence and dependency closer to a rigorous empirical assessment” (CAPORASO, 1978a).⁴³ He argued that “the ideas are assessed for the most part with *illustrative rather than systematic evidence*. [...] Transforming the *methodological orientation from the development of illustrations to verification* poses many difficulties in terms of developing *adequate empirical tests*” (CAPORASO, 1978a, emphasis added). Dependency theorists would clearly not disagree with the need for systematic evidence in scientific inquiry, as is apparent in Marini’s analyses and methodological arguments. However, the definition of terms is left unproblematized in this special edition, with the exception of Raymond Duvall’s (1978) contribution.

While the first, four-article section takes on broader questions of concepts, methods, and epistemologies, the second, five-article section presents empirical analyses of dependence and dependency. It is telling that the entirety of the latter shares the empiricist scientific foundation, that they are “tied together by the methodological conviction that it is possible to assess empirically

⁴² The Latin American dependency theorists cited are Cardoso, Osvaldo Sunkel, Enzo Faletto, and Theotônio dos Santos.

⁴³ It is important to note that Caporaso conflates “empirical” with “empiricist,” in disregard to non-empiricist methods of empirical assessment.

(and to falsify) propositions by confronting them with evidence” (CAPORASO, 1978b, p. 5). The editor of the special edition goes on:

Certainly there will be disagreement as to whether dependency theory can be empirically evaluated, at least at this stage of development. The tension generated between the more cautious approach of Duvall and the more sanguine inclinations of the contributors to Part II is mirrored by an even deeper skepticism of rigorous empirical tests by dependencia theorists themselves. It is easy to see how the controversy might escalate along a number of lines with positivists arguing that if dependency theory is not testable, it is worthless (at least as theory) and dependencia theorists retorting that theory-testing is not limited to quantitative statistical assessments and that ideas are also confirmed or disconfirmed by the success or failure of political practice (CAPORASO, 1978b, p. 5).

What is surprising is how Caporaso, as editor, recognizes the epistemological controversy around empiricist testing but disregards any potential validity of such claims and fails to provide a reasonable justification for doing so. Short of the necessary scientific rigor that scholarly work requires, he also fails to justify the lack of (non-empiricist) empirical contributions from other epistemological traditions, namely dependency, to this section.

Duvall (1978), on the other hand, highlights the existence of different scholarly traditions that work on dependency, each with their own “scholarly language.” The first tradition, responsible for developing the *term* dependency, refers to the dependency theorists, largely situated in Latin America and other parts of the Third World. The second tradition is made up of North American scholars who have provided “an unfortunate and misleading representation” (DUVALL, 1978, p. 58) of the theory. As Caporaso (1978b, p. 7) points out, Duvall focuses on how the “differences between dependency theorists and positivist social scientists as deeply paradigmatic, separated by different basic conceptual views of the world, different languages, and different epistemological foundations.” For Duvall (1978, p. 56), dependency theorists use dependency not as an analytical concept, but rather “to establish the general context to which knowledge claims apply.” He argues that this use of the term dependency is meaningful for scientific endeavors

[...] because its connotation of context, of referential frame, is quite clear and unambiguous. In particular, dependence refers to a context of differentially or asymmetrically structured reflections of the processes of capitalist production and reproduction at the international level. A situation so characterized is a situation of dependence [sic]. The knowledge claims which constitute dependencia theory are about aspects of such situations. Thus, in the dependencia tradition dependence [sic] is meaningful primarily in delimiting quite clearly the context of theory; in general, it is not meant to be meaningful as an empirical concept within that theory (i.e., appearing in knowledge claims as a variable property of relationships or countries) (DUVALL, 1978, p. 57–58).

The largely universal North American use of the term dependency, on the other hand, (mis)represents it rather as “nothing more than a variable property of countries or of relationships among countries” (DUVALL, 1978, p. 59)—meaning that if “[...] dependencia theory is *about* dependence [sic], that dependence [sic] must, then, be a central concept *in* the theory, and finally then, that a systematic test of the theory rests on an adequate measurement of that central concept” (DUVALL, 1978, p. 63 emphasis in original). For the so-called “rigorous” empiricists, the variable property must necessarily be measurable. Then, while they can be “distinguished by a commitment to precise measurement criteria,” they, nonetheless,

[...] have generally been guilty of ignoring that degree of precision of meaning which is provided by dependencia theorists for the concept of dependence [sic]. Instead, they have started with more common-sensical meanings of the term, and have given the impression that measurement rules developed in accord with those meanings are all that matter” (DUVALL, 1978, p. 59).

Perhaps the point of departure of the problem in the positivist North American (mis)interpretation, therefore, lies in their ignorance, conscious or not, of the importance of what A. Nuri Yurdusev (1993) came to call the levels of analysis problem. As stated above, the “philosophical level” is rhetorically acknowledged as contentious but, in the end, the acknowledgement is bracketed and empiricism held as *the* scientific foundation; and the “theoretical level” is subsumed to the “practical-analytical level” in a unilateral relation in which “method” and its limitations are also left unquestioned. “Rigorous” empiricism, therefore, hierarchizes the levels of analysis in which validation is verticalized and unilateral.

Here, then, what they call “dependency theory” is unidirectionally evaluated against a particular “practical-analytical level”, the positivist methodological framework, itself based on an unproblematized “philosophical level”. Unidirectionality is important because it does not allow for the problematization of the philosophical and methodological empiricism that have been preselected as tenets for evaluating theoretical worthiness. This, in turn, makes the exercise of extricating dependency theory’s own philosophical and methodological bases unnecessary.

Extricating the formulation of what dependency theory is and what it is not itself also becomes an unnecessary exercise. In trying to grasp why positivist social scientists do not find a problem with cherry-picking key works of key authors, to then jumble them up together and call them “dependency theory”, it may be helpful to turn to their understanding of what a theory should be. For Kenneth Waltz (1979, p. 6), “Theories explain laws” and “[t]he urge to explain [...] is

produced [...] by the desire to control, or at least to know if control is possible, rather than merely to predict. Prediction follows from knowledge of the regularity of associations embodied in laws.” In addition to the role of observable regularities (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010) in the “empirically corroborated law or generalization” (LAPID, 1989, p. 239) within the Humean concept of causality (KURKI, 2008), discussed above, “[t]o cope with difficulty, simplification is required” (WALTZ, 1979, p. 10).

When testing what they understand to be “dependency theory”, these authors “imply that the dependence [sic] which they measure is the dependence [sic] that is central and primary to dependency theory. But it is not” (DUVALL, 1978, p. 60). For example, for Patrick McGowan and Dale Smith (1978, p. 179, emphasis added): “Dependency refers to an asymmetrical structure of control relations wherein a controller, such as a state [...] *regularly and hence predictably*, changes or maintains the behavior of a controllee, such as another state [...].” In a later edition of *International Organization*, James C. W. Ahiakpor (AHIAKPOR, 1985, p. 535) reduces dependency theory to “a set of ideas with a strong potential for influencing policy actions in the Third World” before moving on to “test” the theory by pointing to the inability of the Ghanaian government’s policy’s to improve the welfare of the population in the short 1982-1983 period.

There is, therefore, a qualitative difference in how positivists read dependency literature, where the process of simplification of *theory* is traversed to the conflation of an entire *current of thought, program of research, or school of thought*, depending on how one organizes the different versions of not those who theorized dependency, but who utilize it as an analytical concept or *general context* (DUVALL, 1978) or *synoptic term* (CAPORASO, 1978c). What they failed to recognize, therefore, is that in their “testing” of “dependency theory”, these various “rigorous empiricists” were, in fact, testing *their own* conceptions of dependency. Thus, the special edition’s call for scrutinizing “what the most fruitful avenues for the creation of a dialogue between dependency and non-dependency theorists are” (CAPORASO, 1978b, p. 5) falls short of its objective. The call is especially appalling considering the methodology-centered articles’ (Part II of the special edition) disconnect from Part I’s move to “counsel a cautious, deliberate approach to testing dependency theory” (CAPORASO, 1978c, p. 5).

It is important to note that, in addition to these presumptively cautious steps, Caporaso does recognize marked meta-theoretical differences in the dependency framework: the conceptual rejection of the unified state as an actor; the structural versus individualistic understanding of the

global system; and the composition of the global system as comprising not entire countries, but parts of them unequally (CAPORASO, 1978c, p. 24, 1978b, p. 2). Although he recognizes that there are “practical obstacles” to “quantitatively express[...] and statistically manipulate[...]” (CAPORASO, 1978b, p. 3) dependency as a phenomenon, namely differentiated spatial and temporal considerations, Caporaso believes it can be done.

In a tone similar to Yurdusev’s (1993), Margaret Archer (1995) argues that *practical social theory* needs to present internal consistency in its link with its *social ontology* and *methodology*. That is to say that the ontology that grounds a theory and the methodology utilized must be consistent.⁴⁴ Thus, when dependency theory is inserted in an empiricist social ontology and methodology, and “tested” against those, it is not surprising that it “fails” in its internal consistency. Thus, even though the special edition’s Part I discusses the three categories in Archer’s tripartite link, Part II disavows the centrality of this relation. This is not to say that every empirical analysis (both empiricist and non-empiricist) must embark on philosophical or meta-theoretical discussion. As Yurdusev (1993, p. 79) reminds us,

[a]n analysis, or study, does not have to follow and involve respectively these three levels. It may be done at one of them and thus it may be called philosophical, or theoretical, or practical analysis. If a researcher operates at the third level without combining the second and first ones, he assumes them, or, to put it in another way, he [sic] implicitly relies on some philosophical and theoretical constructions done by others before he conducts his empirical-practical researches.

There would not be a problem, therefore, if Part II *had built on* the discussion developed in Part I, where Caporaso (1978c, p. 43) held that “[o]ur impulses to quantify and test are so strong that we often miss nuance and complexity, which I am afraid we have already done in our premature efforts to test dependency theory.” Again, Caporaso acknowledges the existence of the philosophical level, but does not seem to recognize the political ramifications in this sociology of knowledge:

I suspect there will be great controversy at this first stage and that severe disagreement will exist between those who want to move dependency theory in the direction of verifiable theory along positivist lines and those who see it as an interpretive device. At this juncture, different scholars may have to part company and go different ways (CAPORASO, 1978c, p. 43).

⁴⁴ Although this might seem obvious at a first glance, Archer (1995) demonstrates the lack of internal consistency in much positivist social theorizing.

The “controversy”, in fact, is nonexistent in dominant scholarly circles (including the journal in which the special issue was published) if the dominant (positivist) social science itself does not open itself up to be problematized. In other words, even if one part of the edition *allowed for the acknowledgement* (versus the *problematization*) of “severe disagreement” at the meta-theoretical level, the second part treated it as a non-issue. The journal itself, in this sense, served the purpose of “proving” the failure of “dependency theory”. Considering Caporaso’s protagonism in organizing the special edition against the failure of problematizing the methodological second part, we may be inclined to read the presence of cognitive dissonance in his editorial work. Although Caporaso’s (1978b, p. 5) stated intent was to search for “the most fruitful avenues for the creation of dialogue,” he might have, instead, helped to neutralize the little space dependency thinking was opening up by privileging the unrefuted positivist reading of dependency thinking’s failure.

3.22 *The second positivist meta-scientific confusion: The representative text*

The second mistake that can be drawn from a positivist reading, that the positivist fetishistic drive for parsimonious theory transformed the single, “representative” text into a meta-analytical unit—i.e., *the* standard unit, in practice, for analyzing a theorist’s thought. This is not to say that empiricists will be satisfied with reading a single text when trying to discern a theory’s contribution, but rather that there is a general lack of concern with establishing the overall meta-theoretical and theoretical framework that ground that thought (a term used conceptually and interchangeably with *thinking*); and, beyond that, a lack of acknowledgment (or complete ignorance) of *rhythm of thought* as a relevant analytical category for analyzing social theory.

In the 1978 *International Organization* special edition on dependency, we can observe a select number of dependency authors, namely (in order of works cited from most to least): Fernando H. Cardoso, Theotônio dos Santos, Osvaldo Sunkel, and André Gunder Frank. It is important to note that Caporaso (1978c, p. 14, footnote 2) does acknowledge his own linguistic limitation that leads him to only consider works published in English, German, and French (to analyze a theoretical tradition largely established in Spanish-speaking Latin America). The severity of this limitation, however, should have required contemplation beyond a footnote, as he only has linguistic access to a small portion of the literature which, by considering the lack of diversity in authorship alone, cannot, by any measurement, be considered representative of the larger debate.

In addition to an in-text discussion on the smallness of the literature-sample, this point would need to be reiterated throughout the text to make certain the reader is not left with the impression that the dependency debate is well represented.

While he recognizes the limitation rhetorically, he fails to apply an understanding of this limitation to his analysis. A case in point is his emphatic but misguided observation that “the connections among many of the important concepts are logically, rather than empirically, supplied” (CAPORASO, 1978c, p. 20). Here, Caporaso makes the assumption that abstraction was the first step in the development of dependency theory. He does not consider that empirical analyses might have preceded theoretical formulation; that these steps might have been taken in the works that he failed to read, which I sustain below is precisely the path that Marini took. Caporaso’s assertion could perhaps hold, however, within the conflation that he seems to make between *empirical* and *empiricist*. The connections drawn between concepts in dependency thinking are certainly not *empiricistically* supplied, nor could they be because empiricist epistemology does not ground it.

Although Caporaso may have observed, in the few works that he analyzed, that the “important concepts *are* logically [...] supplied” there, his own assumption is “logical, rather than empirical,” as he seems to believe these few texts are representative of the overall dependency oeuvre (not even only of the individual authors); that the elements required for grasping a theory should be present in such representative texts. It is in this sense that, although he mentions it, the recognition of this limitation is superficial as it is not reflected in his analysis.

However, even if we bracket the smallness of this literature-sample based on linguistic limitations, there is an absence in his review of other works, including Marini’s English-language publications (MARINI, 1965, 1972a) and the significant amount of works published on the dependency debate in the English-language journal *Latin American Perspectives*⁴⁵. It is illuminating that a scholarly journal dedicated to the subject matter of this special issue was not consulted. But it is in line with Duvall’s (1978, p. 59) abovementioned observation, that they have

⁴⁵ Most notable is the inaugural, ten-article 1974 issue dedicated to the dependency debate. Additionally, the journal published an additional nine articles with “dependency” or “dependence” in its title, after that first edition through the end of 1977, the year before Caporaso organized the *International Organization* special edition. Among the articles in this edition, Duvall is the only author to cite an article from *Latin American Perspectives*, namely Chilcote’s (1974) “Dependency: A critical synthesis of the literature”.

ignored the “degree of precision of meaning which *is* provided by the dependencia theorists” in favor of “more common-sensical meanings of the term.”

Similarly, others have sliced apart the works of Marx in such a way as to divide his work into two mutually exclusive categories: a deterministic Marx of *Capital* and a respectable, more agency-centered Marx of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. Bianchi (2020, p. 103) brings: “It is not uncommon for authors today to still promote a separation between the historical texts of Marx and the so-called methodological texts, or programmatic texts, converting him now into a philosopher, a historian, or a political activist.” One repercussion of this positivist separation is that different authors, including Gramsci and Marini alike, are often read either as not partaking in the Marxist tradition or research program, or as belonging to this shattered Marxism.

3.23 Paradigms and the meta-scientific unit: Where does dependency fit?

As we investigate epistemological *miscategorizations*, confluences, and meta-scientific units, clarity is needed around which theories we group together, the standards we use for such groupings, and how we are to demarcate overlaps between groupings. The relevance of such demarcations has to do with developing a better understanding of a scholar’s thought.

Returning to Lapid’s paradigmatic proposals, there are two main paradigmatic proposals I confront: the dependency and the Marxist research programs. The intellectual environment in which a scholar’s thought develops, along with its socio-political characteristics, will frame that thought process, thus providing us with important instruments for capturing the rhythm of thought. However, what some have called the dependency school or research program bears relevant meta-scientific differences from the Marxist research program.

The sociopolitical context of 1950s Latin America is a good starting point for understanding the dependency debate and, with that, the convergences and divergences within it. The period in which dependency arose as an important theme was one of “an extraordinarily complex political experience, where conflicts and frustrations abounded, but also moments of expectations and

hopes”⁴⁶ (FALETTO, 1998, p. 113). These revolved around democratization, economic change, and the incorporation of larger segments of their populations in social and political processes of participation. Faletto (1998) explains how the studies in dependency were first grouped within the Theory of Development, but, distinguishing themselves,

[... they] contested approaches that had been very much in vogue up to that time. What the dependency theorists argued was that economic options were far from being neutral and that they had clear political significance; that they could benefit some and negatively affect others. In short, the problem of development was a problem of power, but if sometimes it was not so difficult to define the nature of existing power, it was more complicated to define the character of possible power, and here the clash erupted among the *dependentistas* themselves⁴⁷ (FALETTO, 1998, p. 113).

Since this context has already been, albeit briefly, reviewed in the previous chapter, here we can move on to defining some of their convergences:

Like CEPAL, dependency theory stems from the notion of capitalism as a world system; however, unlike CEPAL, it does not see development and underdevelopment as stages in a continuum: rather, they are seen as distinct and opposing realities, even though they are structurally linked. Underdevelopment is not a stage that precedes development, it is a product of the development of world capitalism; in this sense, it corresponds to a specific form of capitalism, which is determined by the development of capitalism itself⁴⁸ (MARINI, 1992a, p. 88).

Blomström and Hettne (1984, p. 5–6) pointed to four characteristics that a majority of *dependentistas* shared:

[1] Underdevelopment is intimately connected with the expansion of the industrialized capitalist countries.

⁴⁶ Original: “Vemos entonces que, el tema de la dependencia surge, en medio de una experiencia política extraordinariamente compleja, en donde abundan conflictos y frustraciones, pero también momentos de expectativas y esperanzas.”

⁴⁷ Original: “[...] eran polémicos con planteamientos que hasta ese entonces habían estado muy en boga. Lo que los dependentistas plantearon, era que, las opciones económicas distaban mucho de ser neutrales y que tenían claro significado político; que podían beneficiar a algunos y afectar negativamente a otros. En suma, el problema del desarrollo era un problema de poder, pero, si a veces no era tan difícil definir el rasgo del poder existente, más complicado era definir el carácter del poder posible, y aquí, a menudo, la pugna se instaló al interior de los propios *dependentistas*.”

⁴⁸ Original: “Como a CEPAL, a teoria da dependência parte da noção do capitalismo como um sistema mundial; mas, diferentemente da Cepal, não considera o desenvolvimento e o subdesenvolvimento como etapas de um continuum: eles serão vistos, antes, como realidades distintas e contrapostas, ainda que estruturalmente vinculadas. O subdesenvolvimento não é uma etapa que precede o desenvolvimento, ele é um produto do desenvolvimento do capitalismo mundial; neste sentido, ele corresponde a uma forma específica de capitalismo, que se apura em função do próprio desenvolvimento do capitalismo.”

[2] Development and underdevelopment are different aspects of the same universal process.

[3] Underdevelopment cannot be considered as the original condition in an evolutionary process.

[4] Dependency is, however, not only an external phenomenon but is also manifested in different ways in the internal (social, ideological and political) structure.

However, it is important to highlight here that their common ground—first in rejecting the Theory of Development, then in shared *notions* of dependency and the relations between underdevelopment and development—would soon be overshadowed by their disagreements on “the character of possible power” and the concomitant metatheoretical, theoretical, and methodological differences.

3.231 Distinguishing the variants of the dependency tradition

Different efforts have been made—and ignored by Anglophone IR—in distinguishing the variants within the dependency tradition. One effort is based on the *character of the possible*, which led theorists to insist on either the reformist or the revolutionary path, in which Cardoso’s group represented the former and Marini’s the latter (CHILCOTE, 2018; KAY, 1989). A second effort has been based on their classification based on the broader research tradition in which they are seen as being a part.

Although these two efforts have been separately analytically, they are not disconnected. Less controversial has been the classification based on reformism/revolution. The point of no consensus is on whether Marini should be classified within orthodox Marxism (MARINI, 2022a; SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990) or neo-Marxism (BLOMSTRÖM; HETTNE, 1984). Even more controversial is Cardoso’s designation, although there seems to be more consensus on his work’s eclecticism. While earlier analysis had placed Cardoso in the orthodox Marxist realm (BLOMSTRÖM; HETTNE, 1984), Marini underscored the eclecticism in Cardoso’s work that incorporated Marxist, functionalist-developmental, and structuralist elements (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990). Nildo Ourique’s (1995) was the first to characterize Cardoso’s work as Weberian (FRANKLIN, 2016), and was followed by Carlos Eduardo Martins (2019), Niemeyer Almeida Filho (2013), Marisa Amaral (2012), and others.

Rodrigo Franklin (2016) counters the claims of this designation, arguing that there are weak indications of Weberian elements in Cardoso’s work and that the Marxist influence is much more

apparent. Pointing to the temporal coincidence between the Weberian characterization and Cardoso's neoliberal presidency (1995-2002), Franklin (2016) suggests that this move may be a politically motivated reaction to Cardoso's neoliberalism. What Franklin seems to ignore, as he does not reference it, however, is the temporal constraint between Ourique's dissertation defense and his ability to evaluate the Cardoso presidency still in its first year. This is complicated even further by the analysis that Cardoso's first years in office presented neodevelopmentalism, a term first coined by Marini in his 1978 response to Cardoso and Serra, which would only succumb to neoliberalism after the 1998 crisis and the collapse of the Real Plan's first phase (ANTUNES DE OLIVEIRA, 2022, p. 38). Although connections between Cardoso-scholar and Cardoso-politician should not be forced, the forced disconnection, as employed by Franklin (2016), also empties analysis of much needed contextualization for framing the scholar's rhythm of thought.

To evaluate Franklin's critiques of the assertions Cardoso's Weberian tendencies against those who made the proposal would veer this work too far from its intended purposes. It is sufficient to underscore Franklin's (FRANKLIN, 2016, p. 205–14) own defense of Cardoso's "eclectic Marxism":

What we can conclude from our discussion is that, regardless of reservations about his theoretical rigor, his apprehension of dialectics and the categories of Marxism, his political positions and, above all, his actions as president of Brazil, it must be acknowledged that Fernando Henrique Cardoso's theory of dependency is affiliated with Marxist thought. Of course, this does not imply agreement with his theory, but it simply means that evaluations and internal criticisms of it should be made with the paradigm founded by Karl Marx as the main reference.⁴⁹

The first point that stands out is how Franklin highlights several of the same points that Marini brought to argue that such differences herald the need to not group such divergent perspectives together. Second, that Cardoso's approach is "affiliated with Marxist thought" is not the contentious issue. Franklin provides substantial evidence of this affiliation, including the employment of the dialectic method and different important Marxist categories. At issue, then, is

⁴⁹ Original: "O que podemos concluir de nossa exposição é que, por mais que se façam ressalvas quanto ao seu rigor teórico, à sua apreensão da dialética e das categorias do marxismo, às suas posições políticas e, principalmente, à sua atuação como presidente do Brasil, deve-se reconhecer que a teoria da dependência de Fernando Henrique Cardoso se filia ao pensamento marxista. É óbvio que isso não implica concordar com sua teoria, mas significa simplesmente que as avaliações e críticas internas a ela dirigidas devem ser feitas tendo como principal referência o paradigma fundado por Karl Marx."

on what constitutes Marxism and, more specifically, if Marxism can be reduced to a depoliticized method and maintain its identity. It is noteworthy that Franklin brings key quotes from interviews with Cardoso in which he stresses that disconnect:

[...] my education was very strongly influenced by Marx. In this sense, I talk to Roberto [Schwarz] from time to time... He's totally Marxist, or wants to be; I don't want to be that much of a Marxist, but I am. The foundation of my vision of the world, my vision of capitalism, is that... Now, I'm not politically Marxist.⁵⁰

Cardoso sees himself as an unwilling Marxist, but not a Marxist politically. This demonstrates a disconnect in his Cardoso's rhythm of thought between theory and praxis, between the manners in which theory informs practice. And it is precisely due to the connection between theory and praxis that other scholars could see a direct line between Cardoso's scholarship, academic service, and his presidency (ANTUNES DE OLIVEIRA, 2022; DOS SANTOS, 1998; MARINI, 2012a).

Also problematic—and ignored by Franklin and others who follow Cardoso's dependency—are manners in which his approach veers away from Marxism. Bianchi (2010) argues (a) that theoretical and empirical dimensions of Marxist research are not well articulated in Cardoso's work; (b) that his decision to not *theorize* dependency allows him to avoid the direct application of categories from the Marxist theory of capitalism to the concept of dependency—thus allowing him to avoid the fundamental issues in the process of dependency altogether; and (c) that his adoption of a Ricardian conception of world trade, based on comparative advantages, is incongruent with Marxism—which would warrant a reevaluation of Blomström and Hettne's (1984) assertions regarding the shared notions around the world system. Agustín Cueva (2008b, p. 95–6) argues that Cardoso and Faletto's Achilles's heel is their analysis of class and class struggle, precisely one of the areas which is argued to best supports their Marxist credentials. For Cueva, there is an exaggerated focus on the agency of the oligarchies, the bourgeoisie, and (to a lesser degree) the middle classes. The proletariat's absence in what is supposed to be a Marxist analysis on dependency is problematic, to the say the least.

⁵⁰ Original: “[...] minha formação foi muito forte mente influenciada por Marx. Nesse sentido, de vez em quando converso com o Roberto [Schwarz]... Ele é totalmente marxista, ou quer ser; eu não quero ser marxista tanto assim, mas sou. O fundamento da minha visão do mundo, minha visão do capitalismo, é aquele... Agora, eu não sou política mente marxista.”

3.232 Beyond differences: An emphasis on commonalities

Ingrid Kvangraven (2021) joins others in their previous attempts at defining a dependency school. One of her concerns is with questioning the conflation of the different dependency theories, through what has become a common practice of attributing to individual theorists the role of “spokespersons for ‘the theory’ as a whole.” She argues that, “[g]iven the misrepresentation of the tradition, [...] it is essential to develop a new framework for understanding dependency *theory* if we are to evaluate its relevance and preserve its strengths” (KVANGRAVEN, 2021, p. 77, emphasis added). A caveat to be made is on how the literature speaks of both “dependency theory” and “dependency theories,” often interchangeably, a seeming ambiguity for those unaccustomed to the practice. When speaking of the initial development of dependency *theory*, Marini contextualizes it: “[a]s a structured current of thought, dependency theory took shape in the mid-1960s, based on a series of works written or published between 1964 and 1967, which gave rise to an extremely rich discussion within the Latin American intelligentsia”⁵¹ (MARINI, 1992a, p. 88). He describes it as a “somewhat eclectic *school of thought* that incorporated Marxist, functional-developmental, and structuralist instruments”⁵² (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 54 emphasis added). That initial theory would expand:

At the beginning of the 1970s, dependency *theory* was already central to the intellectual debate in Latin America and began to spread its influence towards the major North American and European centers of thought. At this point, however, the divergences that would mark *its further development* began to emerge. The main reason is that, originally linked to the theory of imperialism, *the new current* moves towards assimilating Marx to its analysis⁵³ (MARINI, 1992a, p. 90).

Dependency theory, then, is both a *specific theory* and *different theories* that belong to the same *school of thought*, or, as Marini (1994) would suggest, more of a current of thought than a school

⁵¹ Original: “Como corrente estruturada de pensamento, a teoria da dependência se configura a meados dos anos sessenta, a partir de um conjunto de trabalhos elaborados ou publicados entre 1964 e 1967, os quais dão lugar, no seio da intelectualidade latino-americana, a uma discussão extremamente rica.”

⁵² Original: “[...] corriente de pensamiento un tanto ecléctico que incorporaba instrumentos marxistas, funcional desarrollistas y estructuralistas.”

⁵³ Original: “A principios dos anos setenta, a teoria da dependência centraliza já o debate intelectual na América Latina e começa a irradiar sua influência aos grandes centros de pensamento norte-americanos e europeus. A essa altura, porém, começam a esboçar-se as divergências que marcariam seu desenvolvimento ulterior. A razão principal está em que, vinculada originariamente à teoria do imperialismo, a nova corrente avança no sentido de assimilar Marx à sua análise.”

per se. Perhaps that absence of contextualization of the term by English readers may have contributed to their process of conflating dependency theory(ies) into one.

Emphasizing the “common ground that can be identified across the competing dependency theories,” Kvangraven (2021, p. 77)—also switching from an initial use of dependency theory to dependency theories—points to how “little effort has been directed towards identifying the common core of the family of theories.” Thus, in contrast to previous efforts at categorizing dependency theories by their differences, she seeks to identify what the different approaches have in common and does so beyond the Latin American tradition. Kvangraven’s intent is to frame dependency studies within a Lakatosian paradigm. It is important to note that the text allows us to veer away from Lakatos’s empiricist/neo-Popperian incompatibility with the overall dependency paradigm, making, I would argue, a more heuristic use of his formulation in as far as it provides a substantive, analytical contribution for categorizing the *research program*. Kvangraven (2021, p. 80) finds insightful Lakatos’s “research programme [as] collections of interrelated theories that have common hypotheses that form a ‘hard core’ [which] establishes a methodology for scientific investigation.” As in the Lakatosian research program, there “is a ‘soft core’ or protective belt” that surrounds the hard core and is made up of “falsifiable [*sic*] auxiliary hypotheses, that handle some of the hanging threads derived from the hypotheses established in the core.” Although we can temporarily bracket the need to problematize the adoption of Lakatos’s epistemologically incompatible *neo-positivist*/neo-Popperian paradigm for analyzing a *non-positivist* family of theories, this issue should not be easily dismissed. Interestingly, although Kvangraven (2021, p. 80, 82) highlights the presence of “the falsifiable auxiliary hypotheses” as part of the Lakatosian program, she later disqualifies Popperian falsifiability by pointing out that, “[i]n terms of method, dependency research’s emphasis on global, dynamic and interactive analysis goes against the idea of isolating specific variables for hypothesis testing.”

For Kvangraven (2021), the hard core of the dependency research program consists of capitalist development’s polarizing tendency, closely associated with domestic structures of production, and external constraints present in dependent/peripheral development. The auxiliary hypotheses are those that do not negate the core if more easily refuted (i.e., in contrast to “falsifiable”).

Marini had positioned himself within the then emerging debate on how to best denominate the school or “current of thought” in ways that counter Kvangraven’s proposal of such a broad dependency research program. According to Marini (1994, p. 9):

Different elements conspire against the convenience of speaking of a general scientific theory, based on defined assumptions and tending toward a truly shared vision of its object of study, namely: the different degrees of adhesion that its members manifest towards Marxism; the diverse traditions of intellectual formation that they present; the variety of their research topics; the greater or lesser radicality of their approaches. In reality, more than a theory, we have a central theme of analysis: Latin America and a basic focus common to those who have dealt with it, factors that do not even constitute a school, and do not justify, in my opinion, being considered as anything other than a movement of ideas, an intellectual current.⁵⁴

For Marini, then, denominating a common dependency research program, as Kvangraven (2021) does, not only between the different dependency authors but also those who do not identify with the “intellectual current” may be problematic. What the North American scholars largely call dependency theory is, for Marini, a shared “central theme of analysis”, a “movement of ideas”, or an “intellectual current” that does not go beyond a common “basic focus” on dependency and Latin America.

Caporaso (1978c, p. 22), while recognizing that the “the dependency literature emerged as part of an internal Latin American dialogue, or at best a Latin American-Caribbean dialogue,” also notes “the reluctance of dependency scholars to take the term dependency out of its historical context and elevate it to the status of an abstract concept” (CAPORASO, 1978c, p. 22). Similarly, Kvangraven takes issues with such a regional limitation by those who have sought to define the dependency school. She argues that the theoretical core of the dependency approach—consisting of a shared hypothesis on the tendency of capitalist development to be polarizing and foci on domestic structures of production and on external constraints, and they share a methodological approach centered on global historical analyses—also encompasses Canadian staple theory,

⁵⁴ Original: Los distintos grados de adhesión que sus miembros manifiestan hacia el marxismo, las diversas tradiciones de formación intelectual que presentan, la variedad de sus temas de investigación, la mayor o menor radicalidad de sus planteamientos, todo ello conspira en contra de la conveniencia de hablar de una teoría científica general, basada em supuestos definidos y tendiente a una visión realmente compartida de su objeto de estudio. En realidad, más que una teoría, tenemos a un tema central de análisis: América Latina y un enfoque básico común a los que se han ocupado de él, factores que no llegan siquiera a constituir una escuela, y no justifican, a mi modo de ver, que se le considere sino un movimiento de ideas, una corriente intelectual

colonial drain theory, theories of imperialism, and theories of subordinate financialization (KVANGRAVEN, 2021).

In either case, what cannot be disregarded is the regional historical-intellectual context of the dependency debate. The cited reluctance on the part of (at least some) dependency scholars can be attributed to the need for methodological rigor that means to avoid the errors of Eurocentrism—that is, the avoidance of what we might call a “Latin-Amerocentrism” of sorts, which would dogmatically apply categories extricated from the Latin American historical experience to other regions of the Third World. In regard to Kvangraven’s proposition, we have to tread lightly so as not to lose the contextual grounding of theory in demarcating such a broad research program. Lapid’s proposed new meta-scientific unit—to replace the positivist empirically-corroborated law—makes a relevant, albeit reiterated, argument: “only relatively long-lived, large-scale, and multi-tiered constructs [...] should qualify as basic knowledge-producing, knowledge-accumulating, and knowledge-conserving units. For theories do not come to us separately; hence they should not be handled as self-contained entities” (LAPID, 1989, p. 239). These criteria might allow for the configuration of a regionally limited dependency research program, considering specifically the context-specific dialogue that, to make use of Lapid’s terms, produced, accumulated, and conserved knowledge. Extra-regional scholars, such as Samir Amin, could be included insofar as they participated in the debate, given that Latin American and Caribbean scholars extended the reach of the conversation to conferences in Africa (ANTUNES DE OLIVEIRA; KVANGRAVEN, 2023) and other of the international left (RIVAS HERRERA, 2012, p. 35). Others who could be included are the North American and European Marxists with whom there was rich engagement, exemplified by *Latin American Perspective*’s first edition (CHILCOTE, 1974) and *Monthly Review*’s openness to publish Marini (1965, 1972a). These might, however, best be grouped within the broader Marxist research program, in which these two journals would represent a point of intersection.

Those often-cited influencers, those who offered up “pre-theory” elements that supported such an “intellectual current,” albeit essential for the subsequent development of the dependency debate, however, should not be included. Among these, Karl Marx is argued to have set the basis for how capitalism generates underdevelopment with his works on Ireland and India; Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky for attributing the growing polarization at the international scale to imperialism; and Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, followed by Samir Amin and

Ernest Mandel, developed important studies to understand the center-periphery relation within the Marxist camp (KATZ, 2020, especially Part I).⁵⁵

There might, then, be validity in grouping the Latin American dependency intellectual current together, considering that each dependency theory and approach is a product of the collective debate. There is also validity in grouping those that share theoretical core assumptions and the global historical analytical method, for it centers their shared strengths in a move to “defin[e] or defend[...] the programme as a holistic and systematic approach to development” (KVANGRAVEN, 2021, p. 100). Both of these propositions hold importance in the politics of knowledge that has, since the 1980s, marginalized dependency thinking despite its enduring explanatory strength. Following the lead of dependency authors, as argued in the previous chapter, Kvangraven (2021, p. 101), draws on “Lakatos’ and Kuhn’ observations that science does not necessarily move forward based on an objective measure of what the best scientific programme or paradigm is” to argue that the critiques leveled against the dependency program are best attributed to a political process of marginalization.

However, we must tread lightly and consciously in the meta-scientific groupings that we create and in how we classify the. Given Kvangraven’s (2021, p. 80–81; 88–89) own recognition that many of those authors she included in her proposed dependency research program actually reject dependency theory, even if only aspects of it, along with the not irrelevant geo-historical context of the dependency debate, the “dependency” label seems to obscure more than contribute. This is especially relevant given Bambirra’s analysis of the debate, in which she posited that much of what was referred to as dependency theory did not theorize dependency at all – but rather development. So, Marini, Dos Santos, and Bambirra’s contribution would not be a new development theory, but a theory of dependency (BAMBIRRA, 2019, p. 38). It is also questionable if the different theories that Kvangraven brings together can be considered a unit in the absence of dialogue and exchange between the different traditions. Thus, perhaps we can group them together, we have to rethink, conceptually, how to do so outside the *research program* or *school*.

⁵⁵ In sharp contrast to different works on the intellectual history on the dependency debate, Albert Hirschman shamelessly attributes to himself this legacy. While he considers Cardoso and Sunkel to be the founding fathers of dependency theory, he alleges to be “the frequently unacknowledged founding grandfather, on the strength of [his] book *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (1945)” (HIRSCHMAN, 1978, p. 45).

Recapping the elements that Marini (1994, p. 9) brought for grouping contributions together within a single theory or school, it would be necessary to go beyond Blomström and Hettne's basic shared aspects regarding the understanding of underdevelopment and its relation to development within a global capitalist system. Marini argues for the need for *defined assumption* and a *truly shared vision of its object of study*. Although Marini's and Cardoso's groups may share assumptions at a more superficial level, about which Dos Santos (2020b, p. 1057–8) has only limited reservations⁵⁶, there are important theoretical divergences that point to a not-so-neat shared ontology of the world capitalist system. Providing more definitive parameters, Marini's points to four elements: the *degrees of adhesion to Marxism*; the *diverse traditions of intellectual formation*; the *variety of research topics*; and the *greater or lesser radicality of their approaches*. To be grouped together into a *school* or *research program*, in Marini's thought, these shared attributes are necessary because they are what enable the different scholars to build on each other's work.

3.233 Marxism as a research program

Following Marini's criteria for grouping perspectives together, it would be problematic to classify Marxism as a research program without drawing some reservations. Some of these reasons have been touched on above and other will be further elaborated below, but it suffices to say that there are controversies around what research should be considered Marxist—a dispute around how Marx should be read and what constitutes the historical-materialist tradition. Marini (2022a) argues against both *eclectic Marxism* and *dogmatic Marxism* and in favor of what he considers *orthodox Marxism*; Gramsci (1971) against *vulgar Marxism* and in favor of the *philosophy of praxis*. Robert Cox (1981) takes a stance against *structural Marxism* and defends *critical Marxism* but generally prefers to not partake in this dispute for Marxism and insists, instead, on classifying himself within the historical materialist tradition (COX, 1996; SCHECHTER, 2002). The dispute for Marx and Marxism is epistemo-methodo-theoretical as much as it is political. Against a mainstream depiction

⁵⁶ Dos Santos questions Blomström and Hettne's presentation of the orthodox Marxist and neo-Marxist debate, in which they would have missed many nuances within the MTD approach. His disagreement, therefore, lies in their descriptions of what they classify as the three or four currents within the dependency school, but not in their grouping the perspectives together within a single school. However, although Dos Santos does not take issue with the grouping itself, his observation that they ignore the many nuances brings him closer to Marini's critique.

of a virtually religious dispute on who has conducted the best exegesis of Marx—where a supposedly sacred status is afforded to the supposedly prophet-like theorist—the scientific basis of the conversation is precisely on how to best advance scientifically; and the political basis is concerned with the relation between theory and praxis (largely discussed in the previous chapter): the practical consequences of the politics directed by theory.

Part of this debate is around *which* Marx we are referring to, whether the young or the mature Marx, the Marx of *Capital* or the Marx of *The 18th Brumaire.*, or even whether there even is more than one Marx. Cospito (2016, p. 21) notes that Gramsci draws his mark within a unified conception of Marx, in which he argues that Marx’s concrete political and historical works need to be read in addition to his more didactic works (i.e. *Capital* and *Preface to A Critique of Political Economy*).

It is paradigmatic how Heller et. al. (2009), in their presentation of dependency theory, subscribe Cardoso to the legacy of such a Marx fragmented between *The 18th Brumaire* and *Capital*, exemplifying Bianchi’s (2020) critique of such a fragmented reading. In a parallel important for our discussion, Kvangraven (2021) argues that Heller et al.’s understanding of the dependency program “misses the radical essence of dependency theory” by “focus[ing] on specific principles of dependency or peripherality” (KVANGRAVEN, 2021, p. 80) and “because they take a more descriptive approach to understanding economic organization and do not explicitly theorize about the polarizing tendencies of capitalism” (KVANGRAVEN, 2021, p. 83). As we shall see below, Gramsci only recognizes one Marx.

By reading Heller et al. (2009) against the critique levelled against those who butcher Marx into pieces, we can better grasp the fragmentation of Gramsci and Marini. In Latin America, neo-Gramscians arguably found in Gramsci “the opportunity to leave Marxism without renouncing the socialist ideal”⁵⁷ (RAJCHENBERG, 1995, p. 283). Osorio (1984) observes in these writings an attempt to oppose Gramsci to Lenin that undermines the latter’s legitimacy without substantiating such a position. For him, however, the move is to disarticulate Marxism from Leninism so as to social-democratize Marxism through reformist assumptions on politics and the state. Marini is fragmented through the implementation, in Brazil, of Cardoso’s reading of Marini. Similarly,

⁵⁷ Original: “[...] la oportunidad para salir del marxismo sin renunciar al ideal socialista.”

Cardoso is held up in different ways through processes of fragmentation, such as done by Heller et al. (2009) and Franklin (2016), but which is consistent with Cardoso's own rhythm.

In one of his pre-prison writings, i.e., before his mature phase but consistent with the future development of his thought, Gramsci (1994, p. 54) wrote:

Are we Marxists? Is there such a thing as a Marxist? Stupidity, thou alone art immortal. The question will probably be taken up again in the next few days, as the centenary of his birth is coming up, and rivers of ink and inanity will flow in answer. Empty chatter and pointless hair-splitting are part of the inalienable heritage of humanity. Marx did not write some neat little doctrine; he is not some Messiah who left us a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives and absolute, unchallengeable norms, lying outside the categories of time and space. His only categorical imperative, his only norm: "Workers of the world, unite!" Recognizing this duty to organize and join forces should therefore be what distinguishes Marxists from non-Marxists. Too much and too little: who, in this case, would *not* be a Marxist?

We can extract two important elements from this short passage that speak directly to this debate. The first is a certain disdain for those overly concerned with the placing of definitive boundaries of what should be considered Marxism. Read against the backdrop of his own future critiques of reductionist and vulgar Marxism, as well as his own writings on historicization, we can grasp that Gramsci does not defend a Marxist relativism, where anything goes. However, given that Marx should be challenged, a strict bordering up of the research program (my word, not Gramsci's) would restrict the creativity and reflection necessary to further develop theory. This does not imply, however, that Gramsci's approach allowed for limitless interpretations of a text nor that they are all equally valid (MORTON, 2007, p. 60).

The second point, however, is that Gramsci does defend that there is one overarching requirement for classifying oneself as a Marxist: the acceptance of Marx's "only category imperative, his only norm: 'Workers of the world, unite!'"—the imperative to embrace the duty towards political action. So, "who would *not* be a Marxist?" Cardoso would not.

3.3 Reading Beyond "Representative" Texts: Focusing on oeuvre versus single texts

In *Questions of Method*, Gramsci (1971, p. 382; Q16§2) tells us how to begin the study of a scholar's "conception of the world":

If one wishes to study the birth of a conception of the world which has never been systematically expounded by its founder (and one furthermore whose essential

coherence is to be sought not in each individual writing or series of writings but in the whole development of the multiform intellectual work in which the elements of the conception are implicit) some preliminary detailed philological work has to be done. This has to be carried out with the most scrupulous accuracy, scientific honesty and intellectual loyalty and without any preconceptions, apriorism or *parti pris*.

To put this in the context of our discussion thus far, there are two broader elements to be highlighted. First, Gramsci distinguishes among three possible meta-scientific unit for the study of a scholar's *conception of the world*: each of his/her individual writing; their series of writings; and the *whole development of the multiform work*. I have argued thus far that the *individual writing* is the positivist/empiricist scholar's preferred unit and that a scholar who writes on someone else's thought should tread lightly if they have not embarked on the *series of writings*. Gramsci, however, insists that a further step needs to be taken: engage with the *multiform intellectual work* and seek to grasp the scholar's totality. And it is precisely in these *other* forms that we may grasp "the elements of the conception [which] are implicit": in other non-academic writings, such as those for newspapers, for social movements or political parties, on culture, etc.; but also the general context of their writings; that is, an understanding of the intellectual and political debates in which their contributions were made.

Speaking first of the *series of writings* and returning to his reading of a unified Marx in the previous subsection, Gramsci (1996, p. 173–4; Q7§24) affirmed:

An analysis of these works allows one to get a better grasp of Marx's historical method, integrating, illuminating, and interpreting the theoretical affirmations scattered throughout his work. It will make one aware of the many real precautions Marx introduces into his concrete researches, precautions that could have no place in the general works.

Cospito (2016, p. 21) and Bianchi (2020, p. 104) both integrate this quote into their exposition of the problem—of how a fractured reading of Marx had allowed for a reductionist (mis)interpretation of his methodology in which political and ideological fluctuations were reduced to manifestations of the structures. Also important is Bianchi's (2020, p. 103) move to contextualize this tendency in contemporary interpretations of Marx, demonstrating the continued relevance of the approach: "It is not uncommon for authors today to still promote a separation between the historical texts of Marx and the so-called methodological texts, or programmatic texts, converting him now into a philosopher, a historian, or a political activist."

The second element that Gramsci brings for the study of a scholar's conception of the world is the character of the philological study: detailed, scrupulously accurate, scientifically honest, and intellectually loyal, and checked for preconceptions, assumptions, and prejudices. Duvall's (1978, p. 59) observation on how empiricist scholars read dependency theory, discussed above, provides a representative counter-example, that they have ignored the "degree of precision of meaning which *is* provided by the dependencia theorists" in favor of "more common-sensical meanings of the term." It is, therefore, not only necessary to *read* the *multiform intellectual works*, but one needs to conduct a thorough study of them so as not to be stuck in the "more common-sensical meanings of the term[s]" within the text.

Morton explains the importance of developing an immanent reading for achieving Gramsci's absolute historicism:

Rather than attempting to uphold a representative interpretation of texts, based on revealing an essential meaning, the reader instead acknowledges their fragmentary and open nature. As a result, a reading in favour of a particular purpose can be developed, which concentrates on the relationship between author, text and context, and which adheres to exegetical rigour and accuracy, whilst acknowledging that certain elements are immanent in the text and need to be related to the changing 'concrete terrain of history' (Gramsci 1971: 450, Q11§28).

We need, therefore, to (a) grasp the author-text-context relation; (b) adhere to exegetical rigor and accuracy; (c) grasp the immanent elements within the text; and (d) relate them to changing, concrete history. By acknowledging the "fragmentary and open nature" of the multiform intellectual works, we can also grasp the "distinctively dialectical way of thinking that develops [in Gramsci's writing], not in a linear fashion, but as a 'network' or 'web' with a coherence established through 'multiple branchings out', rather than sequentially" (MORTON, 2007, p. 64).

In a philological study, one must distinguish the more transient elements from the permanent ones; between those that were his/her own, or that which might belong to someone who influenced the author in question.⁵⁸ In this process, the researcher must reconstruct the author's biography so as to cover both practical and intellectual activity. Additionally, one must create a catalogue that includes even the minor works of the author, organized both chronologically and so

⁵⁸ This specific point is the one referenced above, in which Global North scholars often overemphasize the contributions of one, preferred, Global South scholar and attribute to *him* those ideas that originated with others, or that may even be shared among a group of scholars (i.e., as Heller et al. (2009) do with Cardoso).

as to distinguish the different periods of intellectual formation. “Search for the *Leitmotiv*, for the rhythm of the thought as it develops, should be more important than that for single casual affirmations and isolated aphorisms” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 383–384, Q16§2). Gramsci (1971, p. 403, Q11§65) exemplifies, in the following text, his ideas around dialectical thinking and the importance of operationalizing the search for the rhythm of thought as expressed through dialectical thinking between texts:

It can be that a great personality expresses the more fecund aspects of his [sic] thought not in the section which, or so it would appear from the point of view of external classification, ought to be the most logical, but elsewhere, in a part which apparently could be judged extraneous. A man of politics writes about philosophy: it could be that his “true” philosophy should be looked for rather in his writings on politics. In every personality there is one dominant and predominant activity: it is here that his thought must be looked for, in a form that is more often than not implicit and at times even in contradiction with what is professedly expressed. Admittedly such a criterion of historical judgment contains many dangers of dilettantism and it is necessary to be very cautious in applying it, but that does not deprive it of its capacity to generate truth.

Positivist thinking, on the other hand, appears to assume a logical unity of a person’s thought, to be found not across texts, but within the single text. That said, the elements for this operation to analyze dialectical thinking are found fragmented throughout Gramsci’s works as well, for which we rely on Gramscian philologists, but which does not exempt us from applying the necessary caution advised.

Grasping the leitmotiv, in this sense, is also an operation antithetical to the mechanical application of ideas or concepts. It is also contrary to *austere historicism*, which draws boundaries of applicability to a scholar’s ideas to their immediate context. There is general agreement on the need to relate a scholar’s ideas to their context, but such ideas are not reducible to it. *Absolute historicism*, on the other hand, recognizes a dialectical unity between past and present, how past ideas and philosophies transcend social context and impact the present—but which requires empirical investigation to establish such transcendence for specific ideas and philosophies. The political realities of the present, then, can better be understood by analyzing the past (MORTON, 2007, p. 58–80).

Amid calls to historicize Gramsci, Morton (2007) criticizes Germain and Kenny (1998) and Cox (1983) for not defining what it means to historicize a thinker, maintaining but a vague notion of flexibility in the application of his ideas to other contexts. This has allowed for such thinkers to remain “attach[ed] to liberal principles of political theory rather than developing a historical

materialist critique of capitalism and a stress on political transformation” and the permanence of “liberal reformist assumptions and commitments [...] that do not flow from radical concerns about emancipatory change” (MORTON, 2007, p. 73–4). Contextualizing this critique within the politics of knowledge discussed in the previous chapter, we could argue that such acritical flexibility has also been present in much Latin American neo-Gramscianism.

Once a thinker has been historicized, i.e. understood within their broader context, the scholar can attempt to grasp their rhythm of thought—the move is to internalize the thinker’s method or *way of thinking* versus applying their concepts outright. This does not mean, however, that the thinker can be transposed to just any context. In Gramscian absolute historicism, then, “any analysis of present social conditions, based on a [specific scholar’s] way of thinking, should retain an active engagement both with and against” (MORTON, 2007, p. 88–9).

3.31 *Beyond Gramsci’s representative texts*

In practice, and what may seem counterintuitive in how he wrote given how he proposed we should read and study, the chronological organization of Gramsci’s notebooks is relatively a much more difficult feat. Having worked on several notebooks at the same time, one cannot put a definitive chronological order on them. Gerratana’s critical edition, however, takes us a step forward in distinguishing between the “A texts”, “B texts”, and “C texts”—in which “C texts” are rewritten versions of the original “A texts” and “B texts” are ones that did not change. This allowed later philologists to more easily study the evolution of Gramsci’s thought (BUTTIGIEG, 2011; COSPITO, 2016). More contemporary philologists have been advancing in determining closer chronologies of his publications.

Given the particularity of the context of Gramsci’s prison writings, we have both an advantage and disadvantage relative to studying other authors. The disadvantage, already touched on above, is that Gramsci never provided the final drafts of those works. And those “works printed not under the direct responsibility of the author, but posthumously by others” should be distinguished from “works published under the direct responsibility of the author” since the author will not have had the opportunity to reorganize, rephrase, or even reconsider their ideas (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 384). However, and here is the advantage: if one is cautious and knows to treat the unpublished works not as a finished mental process but as a map and puzzle, then the

philologist finds access to a different moment of that process. Gramscian philologists were able to grasp motivations behind the alterations Gramsci made between the drafts: the “A texts” and the “C texts”. Many changes would reflect a fine tuning of expression, intended to augment precision and meaning; but also represented an evolution of his thought (COSPITO, 2016), a process of continual reflection as Gramsci extirpated remnants of positivism present in his own intellectual development. In Table 1, Cospito (2016, p. 31), having placed his comments in brackets, demonstrates the process of comparison to be taken when analyzing two different versions of texts, here, those that speak to the relations between structure and superstructure.

Table 1: Summary of Comparison of “A texts” and “C texts”

<p>A: <i>Relations between structure and superstructures</i>. This is the crucial problem of historical materialism, in my view [<i>theoretical view</i>]</p>	<p>C: It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in the history of a particular period are to be correctly analyzed, and the relation between them determined [<i>practical-operational view</i>]</p>
<p>A: When studying a structure one must distinguish the permanent from the occasional [<i>opposition</i>]</p>	<p>C: In studying a structure, it is necessary to distinguish organic movements (relatively permanent) from movements which may be termed ‘conjunctural’ (and which appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental) [<i>distinction</i>]</p>
<p>A: One should recall Engels’s statement ... that the economy is ‘in the final analysis’ the mainspring of history [i.e., it is the <i>ultimate cause</i>]</p>	<p>C: Engels’s statement too should be recalled, that the economy is only the mainspring of history ‘in the last analysis’ [i.e., it represents <i>only one</i> of the factors]</p>

Source: Reproduced from Cospito (2016, p. 31)

The column on the right brings the revised versions of the earlier texts, shown on the left column. In Cospito's first example (first row), the change denotes a concern with going beyond presenting a mere theoretical argument, now by providing the necessary "practical-operational" element that links theory to praxis, which, for Gramsci, was the objective of Marx's philosophy of praxis. The second example shows a move away from the dichotomic view, which poses a clearcut and neat separation ("opposition") between analytical categories (the permanent and occasional structures), into one of "distinction" that, more messily, allows for their interaction through muddy borders. And lastly, the example showcases not only his further evolution away from vulgar Marxism's economicism, but also his different reading of Engels himself.

In his *The Rhythm of Thought in Gramsci*, Cospito's (2016, p. 3) first working hypotheses was that, in Gramsci's prison writings, "the problem of the relation between structure and superstructures, as well as most (if not all) of the 'crucial problems' of Gramscian thought, underwent a complex and non-linear evolution", which he divided into six different phases. Considering that "still today the study of the linguistic-stylistic structure of Gramsci's prose is completely neglected" (MATT 2008 apud COSPITO, 2016, p. 4), the changes seen throughout the phases "represent the original expression of the theoretical and historical-political developments then under way, and of Gramsci's rethinking in this regard ... This microcosm of changes reflect significant thoughts in the 'mind' of Gramsci in the first half of the 1930s" (CILIBERTO 1982 apud COSPITO, 2016, p. 4). Speaking to the fifth phase (1932-1933: "the 'inertia of the Old Formulations'"), in reference to Notebooks 10, 11 and 13, Cospito illustrates the relevance of his philological work:

At a later moment Gramsci probably recovered the key text he had dedicated to the relationship between structure and superstructure in Notebook 4, § 38, transcribing it in Notebook 13, *Notes on the politics of Machiavelli*, §§17–18 (SPN 177–85; 158–67). As the ideological and temporal distance gradually increased with respect to his previous formulations, Gramsci found himself caught between the physical impossibility of completely reworking them and his conservative attitude toward his work (to the extent that, throughout the *Notebooks*, the passages he rejected could be counted on the fingers of one hand while those in the a texts are crossed out so as to remain legible). These factors, along perhaps with reasons of internal symmetry (no note from the first series of *Materialism and Idealism* remained as a single draft, unlike the two subsequent ones, where there was an abundance of passages that remained as a single version, in part due to his worsening health and the emergence of new interests), led him to transcribe these formulations basically unchanged. Therefore all those small indications (for himself and future readers) of a distancing from what he was transcribing should be taken note of: in addition to even minimal, apparently

insignificant changes, we find the introduction of adverbs and other dubitative forms, the increased use of inverted commas, parentheses, and so on.

Cospito's focus is on grasping the evolution of Gramsci's thought on what was for him the main problem that Marxist theory faced: the relation between structure and superstructure. It is worth noting the importance of contextualizing his thinking within the evolution of Gramsci's social and political context. It allows for sturdier assumption, without ignoring the need for caution.

3.32 *Beyond Marini's representative texts*

In a complementary vein, Adrián Sotelo Valencia, recognizing the centrality of *Dialectics of Dependency* within Marini's oeuvre—and the need to read it in order to understand both author and his work—defends that “to understand either[,] one also needs to look at the full breadth of his writings, which appeared in a range of different newspapers, magazines, reports, books and other formats” (SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017, p. 19). And this is necessary in part because “Marini's writings were always logically and dialectically articulated with each another [sic] by the original and fundamental concepts he developed in *Dialéctica de la dependencia*.” He goes on to say that “*this articulation should be at the heart of any attempt to continue developing Marini's thought as part of the more general effort to develop Marxism in the 21st Century as the only perspective and methodology which is critical of capitalism in all its forms*” (SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017, p. 37, italics in original). Here, there are two important pieces of information that we need to grasp for this approach to the history of ideas: first, that the logical and dialectical articulation at work in the different pieces of Marini's oeuvre is a necessary step in grasping the *leitmotif* of his work; and second, that this same articulation also applies to the (non-dogmatic and non-eclectic) Marxism with which MTD identifies. Just as Bianchi (2020, p. 103) saw Gramsci's operation as an attempt to fuse the different texts, to “affirm a non-economical reading of Marx's methodological texts [...] through the mediation of his historical texts”, we can also critique claims that Marini is reductionist by applying the same operation: reading his methodological texts mediated by his historical ones.

Patricio Rivas (2012, p. 11)—in a move not dissimilar from Gramsci (1971, p. 403, Q11§65) who claimed that the “most fecund aspects” of one's thought can be found not where others would expect—alludes to Marini's dialectical thinking:

In reference to the most relevant features in the scientific thought of Ruy Mauro Marini, which was always situated at a high categorical level of abstraction, since what he analyzed was the nature and phenomena of dependence, it is in his more political writings that he penetrates into specific national realities.⁵⁹

This can suggest why some readers have incorrectly interpreted Marini as being economicist or overly abstractive.

As we try to grasp Marini's rhythm of thought, it is helpful that our author would customarily provide aspects of his epistemo-methodological thinking in the beginning of his texts. A meta-cognitive aspect of his *leitmotiv* shows in his preoccupation with highlighting such points from the start. He took the conscious step of providing his readers with some meta-theoretical elements necessary for the comprehension of what would follow, which should not be dissociated from the vigorousness that characterized the highly contentious debates of his time. In addition to this meta-cognitive aspect, the elements themselves provide us with other aspects of his *leitmotiv*.

In one of his earlier articles, he begins "Subdesarrollo y Revolución en América Latina" by providing some required epistemological and methodological caveats for those reading it:

The history of Latin American underdevelopment is the history of the development of world capitalism. Its study is indispensable for anyone wishing to understand the situation currently facing this system and its prospects. Conversely, only a sound understanding of the evolution and mechanisms that characterize the world capitalist economy can provide an adequate framework for locating and analyzing the problems of Latin America (MARINI, 1968, p. introduction).

With this, he emphasizes the epistemo-methodological significance of different elements for the analytical framework he is developing: the centrality of history to social-scientific analysis; the relation between the internal, regional, and the international; and the dialectics between world capitalism's history ("evolution") and its specific laws ("mechanisms"). By co-emphasizing evolution and mechanisms, Marini showcases an early predisposition against mechanismism – in other words, against any mechanical laws of capitalism that would be moving the strings of history.

Marini then sets this above his own analysis: "The simplifications in which, due to its natural limitation, this work incurs, should not make the reader forget this fundamental premise"

⁵⁹ Original: Aludiendo a los rasgos más relevantes en el pensamiento científico de Ruy Mauro Marini, que siempre se situó en un alto nivel categorial de abstracción, ya que lo que analizaba era la naturaleza y los fenómenos de la dependencia, va a ser en sus escritos más políticos que se compenetra en realidades nacionales específicas.

(MARINI, 1968, p. introduction). We can gather, then, that a single text cannot by itself reach the level of complexity needed to analyze the problems of Latin America, which supports Sotelo Valencia's claim regarding the logical and dialectical unity of Marini's writings, and which leads the reader away from the positivist's preferred meta-scientific unit—the single text.

Marini (2022b, p. 113–115) reserves space in the opening pages of *Dialectics of Dependency* to remark on further epistemological boundaries of his approach, discussed below. He would have a similar concern in the 1974 *Preface to the 5th edition* to the collection of articles that goes by the same name as the above-cited article, *Underdevelopment and Revolution* (MARINI, 2013a).

What differentiates this last moment is that, by this point, Cardoso's misrepresentations and attempts at disfiguring Marini's contributions were well underway. The pages of the *Preface* bring important meta-theoretical considerations as Marini responds to the polemics *vis-à-vis* the consequences of the 1964 military coup that were raised in response to this book. The *Preface* then goes on to discuss the state of Latin American social sciences, with a focus on analytical mistakes for explaining the region's then current phenomena. Marini's first move is to argue against the methodological error of overemphasizing external factors in explaining Latin American political phenomena. The example brought is the popular thesis “that the Brazilian military regime was simply an effect of the action of this *deus ex-machina* represented for some by US imperialism.”⁶⁰ Marini's political-methodological stance draws similarities to Gramsci's critique of vulgar Marxism:

It is not for the sake of imperialism that this kind of analysis should be criticized, but in view of the possibilities for Latin America's exploited masses to pave the way for their own liberation. The consequences of the well-known graphic symbol that places the evil Uncle Sam manipulating his puppets can be nothing more than an outraged, tears-inducing denunciation for political analysis and the strategy of struggle (MARINI, 2013a, p. 27).⁶¹

⁶⁰ Original: “aquela de que o regime militar brasileiro era um simples efeito da ação desse *deus ex-machina* representado para alguns pelo imperialismo estadunidense.”

⁶¹ Original: “Não é em prol do imperialismo que se deve criticar esse tipo de análise, mas em função das possibilidades das massas exploradas da América Latina abrirem caminho à própria libertação. As consequências do conhecido símbolo gráfico que coloca o malvado Tio Sam manipulando suas marionetes não podem ser mais que denúncia lacrimosa indignada para a análise política e a estratégia de luta.”

While Gramsci had pointed to the role of determinism in motivating the subaltern classes by guaranteeing victory, Marini highlights how blaming the external imperialist incites strong emotions. After drawing us away from the vulgar Marxism's enticing appeal, Marini then reiterates the importance of the internal/domestic factor's central analytical and political importance: "In order to fight imperialism, it is essential to understand that we are not dealing with a factor external to Latin American national society; on the contrary, this factor forms the soil in which this society takes root and constitutes an element that permeates it in all its aspects"⁶² (MARINI, 2013a, p. 27–28). Marini and Gramsci, then, both attributed a primary importance to rigorous analyses that do not give way to convenient or simple appeals.

A few critics have read Marini *as if* he were adopting a positivist methodo-epistemology. Mentioned above without much detail, Cardoso's critiques showcased the use of a positivist lens in reading Marini. Similarly, the US-American adherents to Cardoso's narrative also branded MTD, pejoratively⁶³ labeled "orthodox dependency theory", as "deterministic" (HELLER; RUESCHEMEYER; SNYDER, 2009, p. 288–289).

Starting from a broader conception of Marxism, Marini, in *Dialectics of Dependency*, remarks on two common deviations that Marxists have committed when investigating Latin American dependency: (a) "substituting the concrete fact for the abstract concept" and (b) "adulterating the concept in the name of a reality unwilling to accept its pure formulation" (MARINI, 2022b, p. 113–114). Speaking to the former, Marini criticizes those:

[...] so-called orthodox Marxist studies in which the dynamic of the processes under study is poured into a formal mold incapable of reconstructing it at the level of exposition; and in which the relation between the concrete and the abstract is broken, giving rise to empirical descriptions that run parallel to the theoretical discourse without merging with it (MARINI, 2022b, p. 114).

⁶² Original: "Para lutar contra o imperialismo é indispensável entender que não se trata de um fator externo à sociedade nacional latino-americana, mas, pelo contrário, forma o terreno no qual esta sociedade finca suas raízes e constitui um elemento que a permeia em todos seus aspectos."

⁶³ It is important to note that, while it seems to be more commonplace for US-Americans to use the adjective "orthodox" in a pejorative sense, to denote dogmatism, MTD adopts a conceptualization that figures orthodoxy with a critical adoption of the Marxist approach. In the initial pages of *Dialectics of Dependency*, in the first section discussed above, Marini plays with that first conceptualization before redefining it, distinguishing orthodoxy from dogmatism.

This group of Marxists—the “so-called” orthodox, whom Marini later refers to as “dogmatic Marxists” to distinguish them from what he understands to be orthodox Marxism—have inverted the relation between the concrete and the abstract, in which the latter is given epistemological precedence over the former.

It is worth noting that Gramsci (1971, p. 389–92, Q16§9) similarly critiqued “so-called orthodox Marxism;” and, well aligned with Marini’s understanding, defends that the concept of orthodoxy:

[...] needs to be renewed and brought back to its authentic origins. Orthodoxy is not to be looked for in this or that adherent of the philosophy of praxis, or in this or that tendency connected with currents extraneous to the original doctrine, but in the fundamental concept that the philosophy of praxis is “sufficient unto itself”, that it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world, a total philosophy and theory of natural science, and not only that but everything that is needed to give life to an integral practical organisation of society, that is, to become a total integral civilisation. This concept of orthodoxy, thus renewed, helps to give a better definition of the attribute “revolutionary” which is applied with such facility to various conceptions of the world, theories or philosophies (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 462, Q11§27).

For Gramsci and Marini alike, then, orthodoxy in Marxism refers to the understanding that the philosophy of praxis contains the fundamental elements necessary for theorization; it need not, therefore, be fundamentally surpassed. That is why neither should be read as “neo-Marxist” or “post-Marxist”.

In elucidating MTD’s approach, Osorio (2012a) highlights the heuristic role of the different levels of analysis in Marxism, incorporated in the Marxist dependency framework, varying between a high degree of abstraction and the more concrete levels. “Thus, the greatest abstraction is *strongly historical, insofar as it points to the essence of those relations and processes*” (OSORIO, 2012a, italics in original). Historicity is understood as that which distinguishes Marxist abstraction from Weberian ideal types., the latter being ahistorical. The author continues:

[...] at lower levels of abstraction, these relations and processes become more complex and start to present new historical characteristics, because their essence is expressed in new and diverse forms and particularities. Capital appears as many capitals; labor, as many workers; value appears as prices; surplus value, as profit. The greater the concreteness, the more varied reality becomes and, due to the

dominant fetishization, with a high capacity to hide the social relations that constitute it (OSORIO, 2012a, p. 38).⁶⁴

Marxist abstraction, when employed as a heuristic device, unravels the totality in an attempt to understand it, so one can then, in the end, bring the different elements together in an integral theorization with explanatory power. One does not begin, however, from the abstraction. We must start first at concrete, historical development in order to form abstractions at the theoretical level, and then keep returning to the concrete level to perform concrete analyses and, with this, be able to establish whether the theory at hand bears explanatory strength.

After a brief review of the analytical works that form *Underdevelopment and Revolution*, Marini ends that first paragraph of the *Preface* by stating that “It was on [the basis of the analytical works] that I was later able to suggest a global theoretical explanation of Latin American dependency”⁶⁵ (MARINI, 2013a, p. 27), referring here to the *Dialectics of Dependency*. In doing so, Marini asserts that historical analysis should precede theory formation, since the concrete situation of the former must necessarily inform the abstractions of the latter, further evidencing Sotelo Valencia’s affirmation on the logical and dialectical articulation of Marini’s works.

This first common deviation (dogmatism) that Marini (2022b) critiques is in reference to those who put forth an analysis—and the political strategy that it bore—based on a Eurocentric, stagist reading of Marx. Since they read Marx as defending that a society must necessarily pass from a feudal state to a capitalist one before a socialist revolution could be constructed, these dogmatic Marxists, Marini argued, attempted to make Latin American reality fit this abstraction by interpreting it as “semifeudal”, not recognizing that Latin America had already been incorporated into the capitalist world system from its inception (MARINI, 2013b; OSORIO, 2022). This dominant position, dominant within the Left in general and the Communist Party in particular, defended the necessity of a bourgeois revolution. Only after a society had fully developed its capitalist capacity, argued the PCs, could they transition to a socialist mode of production.

⁶⁴ Original: “[...] em níveis de menor abstração, tais relações e processos vão se tornando mais complexos e passam a apresentar novas características históricas, porque sua essência se expressa sob novas e diversas formas e particularidades. O capital se apresenta como muitos capitais; o trabalho, como muitos trabalhadores; o valor se apresenta como preços; a mais-valia, como lucro. Quanto maior a concretude, mais variada se torna a realidade e, devido à fetichização dominante, com uma elevada capacidade de ocultar as relações sociais que a constituem.”

⁶⁵ Original: “Foi sobre esta base que posteriormente pude sugerir uma explicação teórica global da dependência latino-americana.”

Criticizing these dogmatic formulations, albeit without using the term *Eurocentrism*, Marini clarifies what he understands as orthodoxy: “Conceptual and methodological rigor: this is what Marxist orthodoxy ultimately comes down to. Any limitation to the process of investigation derived therefrom no longer has anything to do with orthodoxy, but only with dogmatism” (MARINI, 2022b, p. 115). Additionally, his models of analysis “allude to an open Marxism that must recurrently put its instruments to the test” (RIVAS HERRERA, 2012, p. 26)

The second type of deviation mentioned is conceptual adulteration, which Marini (2022b) equates with eclecticism. This error is the attempt to adapt an exogenous concept to a theoretical framework that is incompatible with it. An intended enrichment of Marxism would result in a study that lacks conceptual and methodological rigor (MARINI, 2022b).

This preoccupation with eclecticism is in line with some critical realism’s work on the need for internal consistency between theory and its metatheoretical elements (MELLO, 2022). Margaret Archer (1995) posits that a practical social theory needs to be harmonious with its explanatory methodology and its social ontology. This is based on the understanding that the adopted social ontology grounds the theory in question and affects the methodology to be used. Additionally, methodology also has a regulatory role in the development of theory, as it will guide the analyst in a certain direction and away from others. The problem with eclecticism, therefore, is that it does not check for consistency. The social scientist would first need to verify if the alien concept presents onto-methodological and, I argue, epistemological consistency with the theory at hand. Archer, then, might point to the lack of concern in the endeavor to verify the methodological and ontological compatibilities between the concept, on the one hand, and the theoretical framework, on the other.

Franklin (2016, p. 206), in affirming the plausibility of Cardoso’s Marxist eclecticism, points out that Marini also appropriates ideas from non-Marxist sources, namely CEPAL’s “deterioration of terms of trade” to develop his concept of “unequal exchange”. However, Marini takes issue with eclecticism not because he opposes consideration of thoughtful ideas from other traditions, but with the appropriation of ideas without adequate mediation, that is, when that mediation is even possible. Marini did work with CEPAL’s insights about the deterioration of the terms of trade as a phenomenon in center-periphery relations, but he did so from within historical materialism.

Marini’s reflection speaks to how neglect for conceptual and methodological rigor deviates, in these two different directions, from the fundamentals of historical materialism: that theory needs

to reflect reality, and that concepts and categories need to be in line with the epistemology and ontology that underpin the theory. This dual critique is further understood when framed within the larger intellectual context of the time. As mentioned above, dependency theory, broadly defined, was first formulated in the 1960s. In this period, however, it presents a level of eclecticism that:

[...] exhausts its explanatory capacity and opens a new path for its development, which would be the development of the Marxist theory of dependency. That is, eliminating those functional-developmental, structuralist, etc., residues that had been mixed in its development and hindering its progress (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 54).⁶⁶

While the critique against Marxist eclecticism spoke to the work around dependency done until then (most notably Cardoso and Faletto (1979)), the critique against dogmatism was in reference to the PC's semi-feudalism thesis (their dogmatic attempt at inserting Latin American reality into the concepts extricated from the European experience). Much debate, then, ensues on what constitutes Marxist research and its epistemological and methodological tenets. Not to be reduced to a competition on the best exegesis of a supposed religious reading of Marx, the philosophical-theoretical debate was an intellectually enriching venture that cannot be adequately represented here. Marini's position, however, is being made clear.

A final point that should be highlighted is the notion of totality from which Marxism starts, also directing our focus to MTD and claims of economicism.

The procedures of separating and dividing, inherent in the process of fragmentation, bring with them, at the same time, a loss of understanding of the unifying activity present in life in society, that which gives meaning to the multiple processes, which are thus presented in a dispersed, disconnected manner. [...] In the midst of the dispersion in vogue, returning to totality, in order to account for the unifying activity, seems to be an epistemological requirement of the utmost importance. It is in the midst of that unity that specialization acquires a new and fruitful meaning (OSORIO, 2012a, p. 37–38).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Original: “[...] ella va agotando su capacidad explicativa y abre un camino nuevo para su desarrollo que sería el desarrollo de la teoría marxista de la dependencia. O sea, eliminando esos residuos funcional-desarrollistas, estructuralistas, etcétera, que habían estado mezclados en su desarrollo y dificultando su avance.”

⁶⁷ Original: “[...] como um tornado derruba, absorve, faz girar e eleva pelos ares todas as relações que encontra em seu caminho, reorganizando-as e deixando nelas sua marca. De acordo com Marx (2011), “em todas as formas de sociedade, é uma determinada produção e suas correspondentes relações que estabelecem a posição e a influência das demais produções e suas respectivas relações. É uma iluminação universal em que todas as demais cores estão imersas e que as modifica em sua particularidade”.

With this epistemological delimitation, Osorio (2012a) presents the logic of capital as the unifying activity of our time, offering elements to grasp the mode of production's enabling and constraining forces as the central axis of the structure, which:

[...] like a tornado, it knocks down, absorbs, spins around and lifts into the air all the relations it encounters, reorganizing them and leaving its mark on them. According to Marx (2011), 'in all forms of society, it is a particular production and its corresponding relations that establish the position and influence of other productions and their respective relations. It is a universal illumination in which all other colors are immersed and which modifies them in their particularity' (OSORIO, 2012a, p. 37).

The third point, then, is to conceptualize historical materialism as concerned with the totality of social relations—and, therefore, with non-reductionist interdisciplinarity. The debate within the dependency tradition can be reframed within the larger epistemo-methodological issue of totality—how to conduct science that embraces totality in the domestic-international relation as well as the where/how the different disciplines fit.

The previous chapter dove into the politics of knowledge around the appropriations and interpretations of Gramsci and Marini, in Latin America and beyond. The political dimension of the practices of reading, appropriating, interpreting, and diffusing one's interpretations need consideration in varied situations, especially in those where the battle of ideas is most intense. Having contextualized our theorists production and their diffusion within the politics of knowledge, I discussed meta-cognitive reasons behind misreadings and the importance of adopting a more rigorous approach to reading, appropriating, and interpreting.

Their broader contributions, as well as that of Gramscian and Marinista philologists, were brought to discuss a more rigorous approach to the practice of reading, interpreting, and appropriating. Although I have been presenting the elements for establishing Gramsci's and Marini's rhythms of thought since the first chapter, I provided a brief of exposition of Gramscian absolute historicism and the importance of grasping the leitmotiv in this one. In other words, I have been developing a two-level discussion: the more pointed contributions on the specific topics at different points of the thesis; and a suspended discussion that encompasses the two chapters to start developing and presenting our authors' rhythms of thought.

The next chapter will delve deeper into their *leitmotivs* by discussing their motivations and their conceptual and methodological frameworks. While I have often alluded to points of dialogue

between Marini and Gramsci, also have left that in suspension until now, the following chapter will seat them one in front of the other, with coffee in hand.

PART II: Constructing the Dialogue

4. Initiating the Dialogue: Conceptual framework through agency and structures

This chapter aims to develop an initial dialogue between Gramsci and Marini and represents the first greater contribution of the thesis. The objective of the previous two chapters was to set the parameters for this dialogue by bringing: elements of each of our theorists' conceptual frameworks, their rhythms of thought, the contexts in which the development of their thoughts were inserted, the intellectual justification for why this matters politically, and the political justification of why this matters intellectually.

The motivation is to explore the ways in which their concepts and categories—explored through the standpoint of the agency-structure problem—speak to their understanding of how political outcomes are determined. In other words, I defend that (1) their conceptual frameworks possess a particular stance in the agency-structure debate; and that (2) capturing this stance is necessary (2.1) for capturing their rhythms of thought and (2.2) for applying their analytical frameworks to concrete political situations. The agency-structure problem, then, is not merely a sociological or philosophical issue for Marini and Gramsci—it is essential for political praxis.

I frame this agency-structure standpoint within each theorist's proposed problem: Gramsci and the structure-superstructure dilemma and the microstructure-mesostructure-macrostructure dilemma; Marini and the domestic-international dilemma and the microstructure-mesostructure-macrostructure dilemma; and make heuristic use of the critical realist philosophy of science to contextualize important metatheoretical elements.

The first section begins by framing the research design for discussing the political and intellectual motivations of our authors. I am bringing critical realism as a heuristic aid in developing the discussion, as it provides a common ground to compare their respective perspectives.

The second and third sections go into the theorists' political and intellectual motivations—Gramsci is followed by Marini—as important aspects of their leitmotifs—which is perhaps the most important motivator for the two to converse—which would include their commitments to the working class and revolutionary change, and their intellectual critiques of the development of Marxist thought. This is followed by some methodological elements for establishing the dialogue, including a brief discussion on the critical realist philosophical stance.

The fourth section is framed goes deeper into the internal-external or domestic-international nexus in the thought of our two theorists; while the fifth and final section complements the previous one by focusing on contributions to thinking about subordination, dependency, and hierarchy in the international capitalist system.

4.1 First Steps: Framing their leitmotifs

I have previously defended, here and elsewhere (MELLO, 2022), that it is necessary to ascertain meta-theoretical compatibility between different theoretical traditions before attempting to construct bridges between them. This compatibility would have to be read the ontological, epistemological, and methodological levels, in order to assure that the meta-grounding of the theoretical level is sturdy enough for bridge-building between different traditions. Beyond the recognition that (1) the practical-analytical level of analysis is substantiated on (2) the theoretical level, which is, in turn, grounded on (3) the philosophical level (YURDUSEV, 1993), my argument is premised on the critical realist understanding that the levels need to check each other, in a multidirectional relation⁶⁸ (ARCHER, 1995). And even though the philosophical level guides theory formation and methodology, critical realism (CR) takes a step further defending that the *practice* of social science takes precedence over the *philosophy* of social science. That is, without determining a unilateral relation in which philosophy has no impact on the practice of science, “[i]f the practice of science conflicts with the philosophy, then it is the philosophy that will need to be amended” (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 5). This is consistent with historical materialism’s fundamental premise that we must arrive at the abstract from the concrete (OSORIO, 2012a), providing the latter precedence in theoretical formation.

Philosophy of science, thus, provides a parameter for establishing a dialogue between theories of different traditions. While this must not necessarily be done with the philosophy of science that I am employing, heuristically, CR is the most fitting for our theorists. We could also establish this dialogue with historical materialism as its philosophical parameter—which I also do throughout this thesis—but the highly contested nature of Marxist philosophy, and its varied and

⁶⁸ Archer (1995) works with somewhat different levels: ontology, methodology, and practical social theory. These differences notwithstanding, the exercise of relating levels of analysis.

conflicting interpretations, puts CR in a unique position for setting parameters. Different scholars have defended that, while CR is not the same as or reducible to Marxism, the latter is one (among others) that can be easily categorized as critical realist (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010); others have defended that, although this is true, Marxism finds the best fit among contenders (JOSEPH, 2007); that Marxism is richest when it includes the principles of CR (YALVAÇ, 2010), perhaps alluding to the positivist versions of Marxism; or that CR and Marxism both have much to gain from each other (BROWN; FLEETWOOD; ROBERTS, 2004). Sean Creaven (2007) has taken the step of proposing a synthesis between both—emergentist Marxism.

Creaven justifies this dialogue on several meta-theoretical grounds, arguing they “have a crucial and mutually complementary contribution to make to critical philosophy, the social sciences, to emancipatory politics, and therefore to each other” (CREAVEN, 2007, p. 1). He provides a brief overview of how each can positively contribute to the other, but I will focus on CR’s potential contributions given the heuristic role this discussion has here:

First, critical realism/dialectical critical realism provides a powerful and fully worked-out alternative to the unpalatable alternatives of empiricism and conventionalism in the philosophy of social science. [... Second, it] furnishes a social ontology [...], which is capable of resolving some of the central dilemmas of sociological theory—such as the relations between structure and agency, subject and object, voluntarism and determinism, and individual and society. All of this is of obvious benefit to Marxism, for the simple reason that it is indispensable to the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences more generally.

Third, Bhaskar’s dialectical critical realism system presents a rich array of dialectical concepts and methods which have real practical utility in the analysis of social systems. This is advantageous to Marxism (and to any critical social theory), because the operational parts of Bhaskar’s realist dialectics both add increased analytical power to materialist dialectics, and also help to clarify its methods. Finally, [... it] substantiates an understanding of social science as an inherently *prescriptive* discipline, such that the facts of the matter (social relations or social institutions or social practices) are logically supportive of ethical and political judgements about what should be done about them. This too is important to Marxism. For this too has always (rightly) taken it as given that value-neutrality in social science is impossible and undesirable, and that the role of social science is not simply *explanatory* (to determine ‘what is’ and why), but also *evaluative* (to derive judgements of ‘what ought’ from ‘what is’). Like Bhaskarian moral realism, Marxism sees its role as being to rationally determine whether or not and how the objects of social science are beneficial or detrimental to human interests, and to formulate (on the basis of this evaluative science) the appropriate political methods and strategies to maximize human freedoms (CREAVEN, 2007, p. 1–2, emphasis in original).

The dialogue between critical realism and Marxism does not necessarily have to be seen as one that aims to *enrich* Marxism, unless we are speaking of Marxisms or versions of Marxism. In the

sense that both Gramsci and Marini made their critiques of what we can label as misreadings of Marx, at least according to them, we could consider Creaven's understanding of CR's contributions to Marxism at that same level: as critiques against those who have developed a positivist, vulgar, dogmatic, or eclectic Marxism. In this sense, CR can serve as a mode for checking *versions* of Marxism that otherwise are acritically taken as partaking in historical materialism.

4.11 Critical Realism as methodological tool for the dialogue

The heuristic use of CR as a parameter, then, would be justified considering the previously discussed misreadings of Marxism and MTD and the politics of knowledge in which the debates occurred, some more misguided than others. The first contribution that Creaven brings is that CR offers an alternative to empiricism—a level treated less directly by Marini than Gramsci. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, this level of analysis is necessary to comprehend the reasons behind many of the mainstream misreadings of Marxism and the dependency tradition—as they have been read or developed as belonging to the empiricist/positivist tradition; and have often been dismissed for not doing a good job of following empiricist principles.

Creaven's suggested second contribution, the social ontology that solves the central sociological problems—notably in the agency-structure or voluntarism-determinism relations—are more easily relatable to Gramsci's and Marini's contributions, which will be developed further below. CR's dialectical concepts and methods are third contribution—the former in regard to the concept of *emergentism* and *morphogenesis*; and the latter in reference to analytical levels of structure and their relation to agency.

The fourth contribution is the *prescriptive, explanatory, and evaluative* characterization of social science. This touches on the understanding of the *political* role that science has and its responsibilities to human emancipation, speaking directly to the motivations that grounded our theorists to their political and intellectual work. I will speak, below, of the *crucial political problem* and the *crucial intellectual problem* of our theorists.

At this moment, we are concerned with the second and third contributions: the social ontology for the agency-structure relation and the concepts and methods introduced by CR. My motivation in focusing on this discussion is twofold. First, because the contributions of our

theorists (Gramsci and Marini) cannot be disconnected from the agency-structure problem; and the second reason has to do with why the agency-structure is so important to them: “[w]hat is at stake in the contest of social ontologies is the manner in which the human world is reproduced in thought and action. It is as much a political issue as a theoretical one; and it is, in every sense, vital” (RUPERT, 1995, p. 14). Colin Wight and Jonathan Joseph (2010, p. 25) make a similar claim in their critique of the dominant/positivist IR theories, and they drive more into the root of our inquiry:

In relation to North–South questions, as with relations of explanation in general, we might say that the exploited have an interest in knowledge that the exploiters do not have. Wrong social theories simply do not have the ability to explain real structures, social processes and contradictions. Thus to truly tackle issues like the North–South divide is to already engage in a partisan form of politics. From here, we might go to the matter of social transformation. The structure–agency question poses the possibility of transformation and it is the task of the social theorist to identify such things as what is possible, what is not possible, who has the power to transform and what obstacles need to be faced.

A first relevant point considers the politics and geography of knowledge, in that the exploiters of the North have an interest in developing theories that do not expose reality or enable transformation. As we have seen, there are also social groups within the South that hold shared interest in maintaining exploitation and exploitative relations. The second point considers the role of the intellectual and how she poses the agency-structure problem to theorize the possibility of transformation, but within an emancipatory critique that aims to contribute to political praxis.

As we shall see, the *political* problem of the agency-structure relation has its greater complexity unraveled in Gramsci’s and Marini’s thoughts. It is more correct to speak of structures, *multiple structures*, or *analytical levels of structure*, which have considerations in both time and space. The time aspect refers to *how long* certain structures have been around, which is of ontological and methodological importance for comprehending how humans and their social groups come to reify certain structures, how they interact with structures, believing they speak to the *natural order of things*, especially when we are referring to those most deeply embedded.

Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton (2001) present a useful schematization of analytical levels of structure based on the level of embeddedness in, I argue, social consciousness. Although they develop this scheme based on their reading of Gramsci, they sustain much of their argumentation on critical realist philosophy. It is for the latter reason that this is discussed here and not in the next section on Gramsci. In this schematization, the most deeply embedded are the

macrostructures, which are those that have been around the longest and matter the most since they “provide the overall framework of action during a particular historical period” (BIELER; MORTON, 2001, p. 10), encompassing different modes of production (e.g. capitalism) and interstate systems (e.g. the Westphalian state-system). They are the most difficult to transform because they sustain the other levels of structure and also because deeper levels of embeddedness also corresponds to lower levels of consciousness regarding its historical subjectivity—in other words, its generalized shared intersubjectivity translates into it being grasped as *humanly objective* (BIELER; MORTON, 2001).

Those structures that have been around for an intermediate length of time (viz. decades) and are, then, less embedded, are the *mesostructures*, which encompass the large transformations that occur within each macrostructure. These have traditionally been presented in terms of *periodizations*. Economic mesostructures, then, include the different phases of the capitalist mode of production (e.g. competitive, monopolistic, monopolistic-financial) and may overlap and present breaks in time with the political mesostructures, such as the different world orders (e.g. *Pax Britannica*, the interwar period, *Pax Americana*).

The conjunctural movements are, in this formulation, the *microstructures*, specifying the structures of day-to-day interaction (BIELER; MORTON, 2001, p. 20, 26). Microstructures can easily be conflated with agency, but the *practices* of agents are different from the *immediate social relations* as they are lived in the concrete moment. As we will see below, microstructures can be of a political and/or an economic nature—a distinction that can be comprehended in a materialist-dialectical instead of in an empiricist-dichotomic manner. The empiricist-dichotomic distinction separates the economic and the political into separate ontological spheres; whereas the materialist-dialectical separates them *analytically* only within an ontology that combines them in a totality.

In addition to the time factor, there is also a space or geographic factor that needs to be considered. Following Yurdusev’s (1993) differentiation between levels of analysis (i.e., the philosophical, the theoretical, and the practical-analytical) and units of analysis (the individual, the social group/state, and the international), this second factor speaks to differentiating structures *by unit* and *between units*. For example, while we might refer to monopolistic-financial phase of capitalism as pertaining to the *international unit* of analysis, we can also consider regional units that speak to the patterns of capital reproduction (FILGUEIRAS, 2021, 2018; OSORIO, 2012b), those that speak to phases of dependency (DOS SANTOS, 1970; PAULANI, 2022), or to phases

of imperialism (BARAN; SWEEZY, 1966; CALLINICOS, 2009; FOSTER; MCCHESENEY, 2012)—if we aim to focus on the developments within imperialist states without conflating the specific occurrences of these powerful states with the world. Mesostructures can present, then, both temporal and geographic differentiations. However, while there might be a mesostructure that refers to a phase of Latin American dependency, it cannot be dissociated from the larger mesostructure of capitalist development; and relations might also be traced to phases of imperialist development or rivalry. Although there might be overlap between phases of dependency—and these need to be determined empirically for the different dependent regions—and phases of imperialism, as their relation is dialectical and not mechanical, it is not likely that they will show strict temporal similarity.

Let us temporarily bracket this schematization to bring agency back in. Presenting aspects of the critical realist perspective on structures and agency, Wight and Joseph (2010, p. 20–1, emphasis added) asserted:

[S]tructures and agents have distinct properties and powers and [...] social structures are deeper and prior to the social activities that they govern *as well as the conceptions that agents may have of this activity*. One way to look [a]t this is to focus on the way that *while structures may depend upon human actions for their reproduction, these actions are already conditioned by the structures in a way of which the actors are seldom aware*. It is accepted that agents act consciously, but their *awareness is connected to the practices that they engage in rather than the deeper structures that these practices tend to reproduce*. The model proposed here, then, is that *agents act consciously within (positioned) practices*, but that *the effect of this is generally the unconscious or unintended reproduction of deeper social structures that the agent is largely unaware of*. Agents may believe that they are acting within a particular context—like earning a living, getting married or generating development aid—but the consequences may well be to contribute to the reproduction of a wider set of structural relations—various aspects of the capitalist system, to put it crudely—beyond any intention that the agent may have.

Agents are, in other words, largely aware of actions or practices at the *micro level*, but do not have the same degree of consciousness regarding how their agency at that first level affects the meso and macro levels of structure.

A scientific realist ontology should therefore insist on the irreducibility of structure to human actions or intersubjective relations. *While social structures may depend on human activity for their reproduction, this reproduction is normally the unconscious rather than intentional product of such activity*. Societies pre-exist the human agents who live in them and structures have prior causal power over agents. It is the prior existence of structures and their relatively enduring nature that provide the very conditions within which agents may act. This has the *effect*

of defining and limiting the parameters of this activity. (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 21)

They begin by speaking to the *deeper structures* and to the well-known Marxist maxim that demonstrates the different time intervals between structures and agency—that “[m]en [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past” (MARX, 1978, p. 595). However, the more significant contribution relates to the differentiation between *consciousness of practices* and *consciousness of deep social structures*. Reproduction tends to be the norm because there is a lack of consciousness of how practices reproduce the deeper social structures. They continue:

However, this caution about the role of agents is important if we are to correctly understand precisely what powers agents do have. Since structures are the reproduced outcome of human activity then a possibility does exist for agential activity to go beyond mere reproduction and engage in transformation. Such a transformation or development needs to be carefully located within the structural conditions, but it nevertheless exists. Under particular conditions or in particular circumstances agents may act consciously to change or transform these conditions, albeit within structural limits. This points to four important factors—context, position, limitations and possibilities (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 20–1).

Jonathan Joseph provides an example of what we can understand as *levels of consciousness* as they relate to levels of structure and to activity that transforms or reproduces:

a worker may consciously act to make a product. However, the unintended consequence of such action is to produce profit and to contribute to the reproduction of the capital–wage–labour relation. A mild transformation of this situation would involve struggling for higher wages. A more radical transformation would affect the structural relationship itself, questioning the whole basis of capital–labour relations. More radical transformational activity would seek to transcend this situation altogether, questioning not just the level of wages, but the production process itself (JOSEPH, 2002, p. 9–10).

That is, for agency to lead to transformation, social groups must consciously direct their practices to transform the deep structures. Having developed consciousness of practices, deep structures, and their relation, social groups seeking transformation must then factor in *context* and the *positions* of the relevant social groups in order to consider *limitations* and *possibilities*.

Margaret Archer develops *morphogenesis* as an approach within critical realism for relating agency and structure. In a very insightful explanation, she explains how CR comprehends the relation between agency and structure:

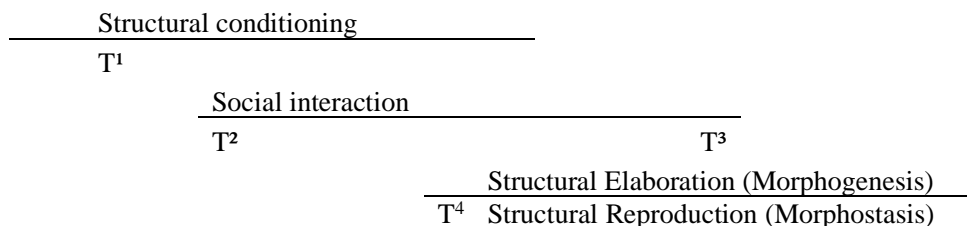
When discussing ‘structure’ and ‘agency’, I am talking about a relationship between two aspects of social life which, however intimately they are intertwined (as in our individual experiences of, say, marriage), are *none the less analytically distinct*. Few would disagree with this characterization of social reality as Janus-faced: indeed, *too many have concluded too quickly that the task is therefore how to look at both faces of the same medallion at once*. It is precisely this methodological notion of trying to peer at the two simultaneously which is resisted here, for the basic reason that they are *neither co-extensive nor co-variant through time* [...] (ARCHER, 1995, p. 65–6, emphasis added).

Following this logic, Archer proposes *analytical dualism* for methodologically working the relation between agency and structure. It presupposes (a) the pre-existence of each category since they have properties that cannot be reduced to the other, (b) relative autonomy, and (c) a causal influence in the relationship between the two factors.

This *emergentist ontology* directs its gaze towards the processes through which one shapes and reshapes the other *over time*. Agency and structure are distinguishable in that they occupy and operate across different time intervals, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. Temporal separability, therefore, makes it possible to specify the agents whose activities would have shaped a given structure.

Archer’s (1995) morphogenetic approach interests us in its demonstration, through its two propositions, of temporal separability in the interaction between agent and structure: (1) conditioning structure pre-dates the actions that transform it; and (2) the structural elaboration post-dates them. The morphogenetic/static cycle comprises three phases, or four specific moments (also of analytical value, referred to in Figure 1 as T¹, T², T³, and T⁴), starting with a *given*⁶⁹ structure that would have conditioned the present agents (T¹).

Figure 1: The three phases of the morphogenetic/morphostatic cycle



Source: Archer (1995)

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that it is possible to speak of a *given* structure only in relation to those who are living/have lived it at a given moment, since this given structure would have gone through a process of past elaboration—it would have been *made*—by agents in the past.

There is temporal resistance of the structure in that it conditions the context of action. A conditional influence would be the division of society into social groups with antagonistic interests; antagonistic because some are interested in maintaining and others in changing the property in question. It is necessary to know, however, whether these structural influences extend (1) because they resist collective pressure, (2) because they represent the interests of those in power or (3) because they are psychologically supported by the population, since not all institutional regularities are the result of deep sedimentation. This distinction makes it possible to assess possibilities for transformation and question *when* they might occur (ARCHER, 1995, 1982). However, it must be noted that the effectiveness of practices (in the sphere of social interactions) depends on level of consciousness of deeper structures; and while they may lead to changes in the meso level may lead to morphostasis instead of morphogenesis in the macro level.

In the interaction phase (moments T^2 to T^3 , marking the beginning and end of the phase)—which takes place in a pre-established context—agency exerts both a temporal and a directional influence. The end of previous structural influences can be accelerated, decelerated, or prevented through (1) popular commitment and (2) lack of enthusiasm, ability or will. Agents can, even considering the previous conditioning, exert a directional influence on cultural definitions that will substantially affect the structural elaboration (moment T^4). Here, we need to understand the way in which literacy is defined (ARCHER, 1982, 1995).

Beyond the eradication of a previous structural property (such as illiteracy), assuming the effectiveness of actions in social interaction (moments T^2 - T^3), the transformation produced at moment T^4 would open up a whole range of new social possibilities, some of which would have already begun to manifest themselves between moments T^2 and T^4 . This cycle of structural elaboration, however, also represents the beginning of a new morphogenetic cycle, as it presents a new set of conditioning influences on the next phase of interaction, and these could be constraining or facilitating. The T^4 would therefore represent the new T^1 (ARCHER, 1995, 1982). The Morphogenetic Approach develops a methodology that makes it possible to understand and explain not only transformation, but also continuity, since the process described above can lead to reproduction rather than transformation, in what Walter Buckley (1968 apud ARCHER, 1982) calls morphostasis. While morphogenesis refers to the processes that tend to elaborate or change the form, structure or state of a system, morphostasis refers to the processes that influence its preservation or maintenance (ARCHER, 1982). The morphogenetic approach “permits a focus on

both agency and structure and promotes the analysis of their dialectical interplay over time. Its central assumptions of analytical dualism, furthermore, makes it possible to investigate when different degrees of determinism and voluntarism might prevail” (BIELER; MORTON, 2001, p. 9).

In sum, bringing critical realism to our conversation is to provide a philosophy of science framing for a dialogue between leitmotivs. It will be intertwined with absolute historicism in that it will allow us to historicize our theorists’ approaches, but also to go beyond their contributions to think our contemporary world. There is an importance in understanding their contributions and applicability—and how they can travel—beyond their original temporal and geographic contexts.

The next sections will discuss the motivations of our two theorists—first Gramsci then Marin—in a discussion that seeks to establish what for them was the *crucial political problem* and the *crucial intellectual problem* for Marxism. The previous chapters have already provided important elements regarding their commitment to creating a better, class-less society, one that does not exploit the working class.

The connection between political pursuits and intellectual engagement is understood here as substantiating the motivation of our theorists. I speak of motivation as that which drives their passion and which substantiates their political and intellectual work. The motivation, in this sense, is an intrinsic component of each of their rhythms of thought. In addition to helping us grasp their rhythms, grasping their motivation is also essential for establishing a dialogue between them. Given its substantiating character, a shared, complementary, or similar motivation can function as a guiding principle that links their respective political and intellectual pursuits, an element that can be referred back to in moments of contention.

4.2 Gramsci’s Intellectual and Political Motivations: Praxis meets the structure-superstructure relation

Giuseppe Cospito (2016) brings an insight into Gramsci’s thought evolution that is pertinent to this discussion on motivations. In discussing the non-linear evolution of Gramsci’s work on the relation between structure and superstructure, he argues that the Sardinian Marxist would have developed “a deeper investigation of Marx and Lenin’s historical work, which was schematised in terms of a *shift from the letter to the spirit of the texts* of the two fathers of historical

materialism” (COSPITO, 2016, p. 5, emphasis added). The move to grasp the *spirit of the text* should, I argue, involve not only its *intellectual* element, but principally its underlying political content—“underlying” in the sense that the intellectual pursuit is grounded, first and foremost, in the political pursuit.

From the debates that Gramsci leveled against vulgar Marxism, he drew what he believed to be the most “crucial problem for historical materialism” (GRAMSCI, 1996, p. 177; Q4§38): the relations between structure and superstructure—which he would eventually reformulate in terms of the “analysis of situations: relations of force” in Notebook 13, much of which is a second draft of the cited Notebook 4 (COSPITO, 2016, p. xi). The general context, both political and intellectual, was what Gramsci deemed to be the Second International’s economistic misreading of Marxism. In the Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx famously wrote:

The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. [...] No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. (MARX, 2010, p. 262–3).

As Gramsci returned to these principles in Notebook 4 (and then reworked in Notebook 13), different Gramscian scholars have underscored its importance by contextualizing it within the debates of the Second International (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 121; COSPITO, 2016, p. 12–13; SCHWARZMANTEL, 2015, p. 236; THOMAS, 2009, p. 96–7). Those scholars affiliated with the dominant stance in the Second International developed an economistic reading of these passages and, subsequently, developed an economistic interpretation of the structure-superstructure problem (COSPITO, 2016, p. 12–13). This meant that “[i]deas and forms of consciousness were seen as mere epiphenomena, determined mechanistically by the economic base of society, thus

devaluing the role of ideas and indeed of human will and consciousness, and hence of political initiative, in social and political change” (SCHWARZMANTEL, 2015, p. 236).

Years before his imprisonment, during his time in Turin, Gramsci had already begun advocating for a non-economistic reading of Marxism. Anne Showstack Sassoon (2019, p. 52) notes his disquiet in his early writing:

In a passage whose implications for the need for a new understanding of Marxism would only be developed in prison, Gramsci wrote that the PSI “has none of the theoretical and practical discipline that would enable it to keep in close contact with national and international proletarian conditions in order to master them, to control events and not be overwhelmed and crushed by them”.

His work in the newly founded *Ordine Nuovo* (1919)—alongside Angelo Tasca, Palmiro Togliatti, and Umberto Terracini, advocating for the factory council movement—directed his political thought towards the need to develop the theoretical and practical tools required for the working class to intervene politically within the realm of what was concretely possible (SASSOON, 2019, p. 31, 52). Sassoon presents Gramsci’s early antagonism with dogmatic, which had at its root the Sardinian Marxist’s crucial *political* problem: “It was not a question of copying the Russian experience schematically but of trying to learn from that experience as well as others in order to provide the solution to a crucial problem: the organisation and preparation of the working class for the historical task confronting it” (SASSOON, 2019, p. 32). Gramsci’s concern from the very beginning was, then, with the disconnect between the misguided theoretical formulations of the party and its misguided practical activities with the working class—the lack of “theoretical and practical discipline.”

This first formulation, in Notebook 4, on relations between structure and superstructure reframes the problematic as between the “occasional” (conjunctural)—an analytical category attributed to the political sphere useful for assessing individuals and political groups—and the “permanent” (organic/structural), which is analytically attributable to the sociohistorical sphere and to be used for assessing large social groupings (GRAMSCI, 1996, p. 177, Q4§38). In explaining the importance of this distinction for historical analysis, Gramsci⁷⁰ writes:

When an historical period comes to be studied, the great importance of this distinction becomes clear. A crisis occurs, sometimes lasting for decades. This

⁷⁰ Compare with the “A” text in Gramsci (1996, p. 177, Q4§38).

exceptional duration means that incurable structural contradictions have revealed themselves (reached maturity), and that, despite this, the political forces which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts (since no social formation will ever admit that it has been superseded) form the terrain of the “conjunctural”, and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 178, Q13§17).

And Gramsci ties it back to Marx’s guiding principle:

These forces seek to demonstrate that the necessary and sufficient conditions already exist to make possible, and hence imperative, the accomplishment of certain historical tasks (imperative, because any falling short before an historical duty increases the necessary disorder, and prepares more serious catastrophes). (The demonstration in the last analysis only succeeds and is “true” if it becomes a new reality, if the forces of opposition triumph; in the immediate, it is developed in a series of ideological, religious, philosophical, political, and juridical polemics, whose concreteness can be estimated by the extent to which they are convincing, and shift the previously existing disposition of social forces.) (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 178, Q13§17).

Agency appears as “political forces positively working to preserve the structure” in “insistent and persistent efforts” that “form the terrain of the ‘occasional,’” i.e., the conjunctural or microstructural level. Sassoon (2019, p. 183) clarifies this further: “The political struggle, then, takes place on the *terrain* of the occasional and finds expression in a series of political, ideological, religious and philosophical polemics.” For Gramsci (1971, p. 137, Q13§10):

The problem will therefore be that of establishing the dialectical position of political activity (and of the corresponding science) as a particular level of the superstructure. One might say, as a first schematic approximation, that political activity is precisely the first moment or first level; the moment in which the superstructure is still in the unmediated phase of mere wishful affirmation, confused and still at an elementary stage.

This elementary level is the microstructure, at this moment considered merely as political activity—we will see, later on, the proposal of considering *economic* microstructures as well.

Although Gramsci first framed this problem as relations between superstructure and structure (occasional and permanent in Q4§38; but conjunctural and organic movements in the “C” texts of Q13§17), he was, in effect, speaking to the relation between agency and the *multiple levels of structure*. Sassoon (2019, p. 183) posits that:

An organic crisis is a “given” from the point of view of a single moment of the class struggle but at the same time it is a “product” of the long-term class struggle. For Gramsci the organic crisis refers both to the whole historical period when the revolution is actual, that is, has a real basis in the period of imperialism, and to the determinant moment. This latter is on the terrain of the political. Unless the

relationship between these two dimensions is understood, the space within which the party operates cannot be comprehended.

The crucial *intellectual* problem of Marxism, then, has to do with *analytically* differentiating the levels of structure, to account for their temporal-conscious aspects (how long these social relations last; and how conscious society is of its historically subjective character) and, not less important, the place where *agency* occurs. We can adapt Archer's explanation of the analytical distinction, cited above, to grasp what it means to *analytically* differentiate multiple levels of structure and agency: "When discussing '[multiple levels of] structure' and 'agency', I am talking about a relationship between [different] aspects of social life which, however intimately they are intertwined (as in our individual experiences of, say, marriage), are none the less analytically distinct" (ARCHER, 1995, p. 65–6). In other words, micro, meso, and macrostructures are also intimately intertwined in our social lives, but the analytical distinction allows us to conduct more rigorous historical and political analysis.

That "common error in historical analysis" (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 178, Q13§17, 1996, p. 177–8; Q4§38) can also be presented in terms of "excessive economism" and "excessive ideologism". This can be conceptualized within the traditional agency-structure debate, in which *excessive economism* refers to overemphasizing *mechanical* or *structural causes* (structuralism); and *excessive ideologism* overemphasizes the *voluntaristic* or *individualistic causation* (individualism). Different from other literature that speaks of either agency or structure being epiphenomenal to the other, Gramsci speaks of *excessiveness* to consider the disregard for one or the other analytical category. This can also be read in terms of "fatalistic and mechanistic conception of history" and the "formalistic, crude and superficial voluntarism" (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 224).

Referring, then, to the ruptured relation between agency and levels of structure in these misguided analyses, Gramsci (1971, p. 178, Q13§17) writes: "The dialectical nexus between the two categories of movement, and therefore of research, is hard to establish precisely." Gramsci implies, here, that the relation, insofar as it is dialectical, is one in which neither agency nor structure holds methodological precedence. And in the discussion of the first *frequent error*, we saw that there is one analytical level of relation between agency and the occasional (conjuncture or microstructure); and a second relation between that relation and the permanent (organic or mesostructure/macrostructure). The error of excessiveness is, then, an error of reductionism.

Although this touches the agency-structure relation, it also speaks to the error of privileging either the economic or the ideological and political sphere. Bianchi (2020, p. 141) explains:

The denunciation of economism and automatism entailed the rejection of a fatalistic view of history, much in vogue at the time, which derived the revolutionary crisis directly from the economic crisis. Such derivation tended to approximate the different times of politics and economy and ended up diluting the superstructure in the structure. Gramsci's conception was antagonistic and tended to stress the discordance of these times.

Gramsci wants to inquire into the possibilities of action within a given structure. More precisely, he is “[m]indful of the setbacks that could prevent the outbreak of political crisis or modulate it” (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 141) and is concerned with grasping what actions would be necessary to bring about revolutionary change, which is what frames the question on how to treat this problem theoretically and analytically.

Consistent with his development of the philosophy of praxis, and with what has been said about critical realism, Gramsci privileges the concrete: “These methodological criteria can acquire their full significance only if they are applied to the analysis of concrete historical studies” (GRAMSCI, 1996, p. 178; Q4§38). And more:

the most important observation [...is] that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves [...], but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity, or initiative of will. They reveal the points of least resistance, at which the force of will can be most fruitfully applied; they suggest immediate tactical operations; they indicate how a campaign of political agitation may best be launched, what language will best be understood by the masses, etc (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 185, Q13§17).

This demonstrates the importance of that first discussion by expounding the moment in which it *acquires full significance*: methodological discussions (as well as philosophical ones) hold import insofar as they can facilitate *concrete analysis*, and as we saw earlier, specifically ones that can pave the way for solving the crucial *political* problem.

4.3 Marini's Intellectual and Political Motivation: Praxis meets the internal-external relation

Marini also followed the progressions of intellectual debates of his temporal and regional context—ranging from the broader racist and liberal European heritage of Latin American

intellectuality⁷¹ alongside which developed the regional “reflexive and imitative thought” to contributions on more contemporary developments⁷² and the debates around development and dependency and to greater incursions into debates on the boundaries of Marxism. Two threads wove these concerns together: a concern with the development of original, autochthonous perspectives; and that, among these, a theory would emerge that would be capable to inform praxis so as to liberate the people of Latin America from shackles of imperialism and capitalism.

Within this larger frame, I argue that the *crucial intellectual problem* for Marini (and for much Latin American intellectual debate) was on the relation(s) between the internal and external, or the domestic, the regional, and the international. Against the assertion by different scholars that MTD was a response to one or another theoretical-political stance, it was, in fact, a unified response against several different perspectives.⁷³ According to Marini (2012a, p. 60), a *New Left* was developing to respond first and foremost to the CP’s defense of the bourgeois revolution—a position developed on the basis of the thesis that Latin America was semifeudal. The Eurocentrism of the CP’s dogmatic Marxist approach was discussed in the previous chapter. A correlative problem is that it negates the originality of the internal/domestic and is unable to grasp the complexity of the dialectical relations between the domestic, the regional, and the international. The CP perspective, while not even considering that Latin America might not be following the same stages of development as Europe, framed an approach consistent with methodological nationalism, in which capitalism was not viewed as a complex system and the dialectical relation between the domestic and the international was analytically broken. They did not consider that Latin America might have an original and differentiated relation with the global capitalist system.

Marini, Bambirra, and dos Santos, however, were also responding to CEPAL’s Latin American structuralism, to Rostow’s modernization theory, and to Cardoso’s dependency

⁷¹ See Marini (1972b, 2012b, 2015a)

⁷² See Marini (1992a, 1995)

⁷³ Grosfoguel ascertains that: “The dependency school waged a political and theoretical struggle on three fronts: against the neodevelopmentalist ideology of Cepal, against the orthodox Marxism of the Latin American Communist parties, and against the modernization theory of U.S. academic.” Bracketing the already discussed problem of considering these perspectives as comprising a school, we can argue that MTD and Cardoso’s eclectic dependency approach each waged a struggle on four fronts, considering their own conflictive relation with each other. The number of fronts increased in the next decades with the emergence of endogenism, Latin American neo-Gramscianism, and neoliberalism. (For a thorough exposition of the debates, see MARINI, 1992a, 1995; MARTINS, 2019; SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990).

approach. As stated above, the priority was to respond to the CP, politically and intellectually, as it held the dominant position within the Latin American left. Marini, Bambirra, and dos Santos formed, along with others, the Marxist Revolutionary Organization – Workers’ Politics (POLOP) to challenge the CP’s influence over the different sectors of the working class (LATIMER, 2022a; SEABRA, 2020; WASSERMAN, 2022)—specifically “to reformulate what capitalism was in Brazil and prepare a strategy and a program (CHILCOTE, 2014, p. 185).

Modernization theory emerged out of the United States, defending a stagist conception of development. Marini saw it, however, as an ideological tool with a very clear, even if less conscious, political role:

The theories of development so in vogue in the United States and in European centers were revealed to me as what they really were: an instrument of mystification and domestication of the oppressed peoples of the Third World and a weapon with which imperialism sought to confront the problems created in the postwar period by decolonization (MARINI, 2012a, p. 57–8).⁷⁴

His notion of *mystification* refers to the ideological function of covering up the deep structures of the system by presenting erroneous explanations that seek to justify and naturalize the extant social relations. Modernization theory presented different stages that a country had to go through in order to achieve development. However, it was grounded on the primary assumption that today’s developed economies had once been underdeveloped. André Gunder Frank (1970) would demystify this by convincingly arguing that industrialized economies were never *underdeveloped*; but were rather *undeveloped*. There is a conceptual difference, then, between being underdeveloped and undeveloped, which we will see more of below. They presented the clearest methodological nationalism and individualism, as the international and world structures had no bearing on development outcomes.

CEPAL presents the first serious regional counterbalance to modernization theory. However, like the CP, CEPAL also had a weak dialectical conception of the internal-external relation within capitalism. It was within CEPAL that that the center-periphery conceptualization first emerged and, from there, the notion of *deteriorating terms of trade*. They worked to dispel the theory of comparative advantage and world free trade economics by demonstrating that specializing in primary goods leaves the periphery’s economies at a disadvantage because there is

⁷⁴ Translated by Latimer (2022a, p. 32).

a tendency for the price of manufactured goods to increase vis-à-vis the price of primary goods. Their prescribed remedy was state intervention to promote industrialization alongside regional integration to create a more robust regional market. This provided theoretical foundation for the different industrialization policies that were being implemented since the 1930s amid supply bottleneck consequences of WWII, and the subsequent implementation of import substitution industrialization (ISI). Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado were CEPAL's two leading intellectuals promoting a move away from export-led growth and its primary sector economy. The signing of the 1960 Treaty of Montevideo that created the Latin American Free Trade Association, and its 1980 successor, the Latin American Integration Association, were also important for the consolidation of industrialization in the region. CEPAL structuralism was also rooted in methodological nationalism, or perhaps even a methodological regionalism of sorts, as it had no conceptualization of a world capitalist system. By *system*, I mean a larger structure that is more than its individual parts and in which these parts have a dialectical relation.

Bambirra (2019) unveiled CEPAL's methodological individualism through an analysis of the voluntaristic tendencies in the commission's reports. She argued that lack of success in industrialization was systematically placed on the shoulders of incorrect policy orientations, without regard to structural factors. Marini (2022a, p. 121–9) would further develop CEPAL's notion of *deteriorating terms of trade* to form MTD's concept of *unequal exchange*. This conception focused on how the market pricing of goods based on exchange value (the pricing set by market mechanisms) allowed for the transfer of the *surplus value* through trade. In other words, the *real value* of goods is determined by the labor input needed to produce that good, and the value of labor is determined by the average necessary hours for the production of what an average worker needs for their family's reproduction. The *use value* of a good, in contrast, is determined by the average amount of labor hours needed to produce that good. The exchange value, however, privileges capital-intensive production by remunerating it at levels disproportionate to how much surplus labor was put into it. In other words, the surplus labor put into the more labor-intensive production processes is appropriated by the more capital-intensive process through unequal exchange—the pricing of products in terms not contingent upon their actual value.

Marini presents epistemological and methodological elements for analyzing the deterioration in the terms of trade, positioning himself against neoclassical economics and “simplistic explanations”:

It is thus worth investigating the reasons for this phenomenon [of the deterioration of the terms of trade], as well as the reasons why it did not become a disincentive to Latin America's incorporation into the international economy.

The first step in answering this question is to discard *simplistic explanations* that *refuse to see anything other than the results of the law of supply and demand*. Although competition clearly plays a decisive role in determining prices, it does not explain why, on the side of supply, it expands in an accelerated way regardless of whether the terms of trade are deteriorating. Nor can the phenomenon be properly explained if we limit ourselves to the empirical observation that market laws have been distorted at the international level due to diplomatic and military pressure on the part of the industrial nations. (MARINI, 2022a, p. 125, emphasis added).

It is worth noting that the *law of supply and demand* is often characterized as *natural* or as a *given* in the functioning of world market. Marini is, here, dealing with a *deep structure* of the global capitalist mode of production, and the simplistic explanations that hold it as an unquestioned assumption. The common explanations are, then, that prices of primary goods are low *because* these economies are producing an excess of products (supply is higher and thus causes the price to fall); or that industrial countries are forcing low prices through diplomatic and military means. For Marini (2022a, p. 125–6, emphasis added), however, these explanations indirectly sustain the deep structures by ideologically obscuring the real structures:

This reasoning, although based on real facts, *inverts the order of explanation*, and fails to recognize that behind the use of extra-economic pressure is an economic base that makes it possible. Both kinds of explanation, therefore, *help to conceal the nature of the phenomena* under study, and give rise to illusions about the real nature of international capitalist exploitation.

It is not because the non-industrial nations were abused that they have become economically weak; it is because they were weak that they were abused. Nor is it because they produced more than they should have that their trading position deteriorated; rather, it was the deterioration in trade that forced them to produce on a larger scale. To refuse to see things in this way is to *mystify the international capitalist economy*; it is to *make people believe that that economy could be different from what it really is*. Ultimately, *this leads to a call for equitable trade relations between nations, when what is at issue is the need to abolish international economic relations based on exchange value*.

There is, then, no possibility of *improving* international economic relations among nations and reaching *equitable trade relations* within the international capitalist economy. CEPAL, then, offers solutions that do not deal with the real problem: trade relations based on exchange value.

Cardoso and Faletto (1979) were the first dependency thinkers to present a robust critique of the CEPAL school. It is worth noting once again, however, that CEPAL's structuralism would be conflated with the dependency school within the Anglophone literature. And the failure of the

ISI policies in achieving their goal of industrialization and development would be used against dependency theory as allegedly empirical evidence against it (see the previous chapter), even though, “[b]y contrast to the *cepalistas*, the *dependentistas* criticized the import substitution industrialization model and the role of the national bourgeois” (GROSFOGUEL, 1997, p. 497). What many US scholars have misunderstood is that CEPAL presented a theory of development, not a theory of dependency.

As discussed earlier, both approaches to dependency (Cardoso’s eclectic and Marini’s Marxist versions) shared certain notions of the world capitalist system. A reader of Cardoso will surely point to differences in his and Marini’s approach, but different scholars (also mentioned earlier) have argued that these were largely false polemics as they were based on Cardoso’s misrepresentations of Marini’s work. At issue at this moment is their different conceptions of the relation between the internal and the external. The first point is that both authors defended the need to prioritize the internal element in an analysis of its dialectical relation to the world system. They both agreed that autonomous capitalist development was an impossibility for Latin American dependent states due to this internal-external relation.

There were significant differences in their (a) conceptualization of the conjuncture-structure relation and (b) the *functioning* of the capitalist system in its different geographies. For Cardoso, there could be no *laws of dependent capitalism* since *dependent capitalism* is not a different mode of production. He argued that there could only be general laws for the capitalist mode of production; and, for this reason, there could be no *theory* of dependency and one could only speak of *situations of dependency*. Cardoso’s onto-methodology, then, left no space for larger structures of dependency and developed a myopic focus on concrete analysis (the conjunctural moment). Marini, on the other hand, defended that Latin American dependent capitalism was *sui generis*, meaning that there were important inherent differences in how capitalism developed in the center and periphery. The laws of dependent capitalism, for Marini, include the *transfer of surplus value* from the periphery to the center and the *super-exploitation of labor* (to be discussed further below). However, it is not that dependent capitalism should be conceptualized as a different mode of production, as Cardoso suggested in his misreading of Marini. One can understand that the world capitalist system itself encompasses the laws of dependent capitalism and center capitalism.

4.31 *Emphasizing agency or providing it precedence within systemic dependency?*

For us to grasp Marini's conception of the relations between internal and external structures, and those relations with agency, it is necessary to do some work on analyzing the dialectical relation between his different works (RIVAS HERRERA, 2012; SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017), as discussed in the previous chapter. In addition to presenting *methodological arguments* for the primacy of the internal (such as in MARINI, 2013a), his analyses also prioritize the internal relations but within a perspective of the international.

More specifically, Marini intersects the agency of the internal social forces at the microstructural level (the day-to-day relations of cooperation and confrontation), while also bringing external social forces (e.g. foreign government officials and foreign capital) to the interaction. His abstract conceptions are present in these analyses, but only theoretically developed to a greater extent in *Dialectics of Dependency*. Without a dialectical reading of Marini's oeuvre, i.e. one that goes beyond the *representative text*, it is not difficult to fathom why someone might read a high level of determinism or structuralism (i.e., the denial of agency) in Marini's theoretical work.

Samuel Knafo (2010) develops an extremely relevant discussion on the methodological absence of agency in much critical theory (Marxist and non-Marxist alike) and which can contribute to our dialogue. Knafo argues that a "radical emphasis on agency" is a necessary methodological principal if we are to avoid the reification inherent in positivism that critical theory attempted but ultimately failed to escape. It is not difficult to agree with Knafo in his assertion that the interplay between agents is key to avoiding methodological determinism, that we need to go beyond a mere recognition that agency "is always constitutive of social dynamics" (KNAFO, 2010, p. 509).

The point of contention that is relevant for our discussion comes earlier, when Knafo (2010, p. 508) states:

The key misunderstanding in this debate is the belief that we need to overcome the agent/structure dualism. The scholars who have attempted to do so have been forced to shift the focus away from methodology and towards ontology (Wight 2006). By contrast, I argue that the problem is not the dualism itself, as is often believed. There is simply no way around this incompatibility of structural power and agency. One can seek to make this relationship as dialectical as possible, but there will always be a choice to be made even if it is a reluctant one. It is necessary to recognize this in order to clarify what is stake in this methodological debate.

Once it is accepted that it is impossible to have it both ways, one can finally decide which of these two sides should be privileged.

Against Knafo's insistence on the emphasis on agency as a methodological and epistemological imperative, I disagree that a choice between either agency or structure must be made—for to choose one is to ignore the other. Parting from the assumption that a choice needs to be made, Knafo argues that the process of social construction will be clouded by a structuralist reading and social reality, then, reified. A focus on the constraining and conditioning force of structures “often leads critical theorists to focus on those agents who are constrained by structures” and for Knafo (2010, p. 504), “for every agent who is constrained, there is always another who is empowered.” He suggests, therefore, that one need not focus on the constrained working class, but may focus, instead, on those who are not, in his perspective, constrained: the capitalist class. Interestingly, Knafo mirrors an aspect of Cardoso and Faletto's (1979) methodology which was heavily criticized. According to Cueva (2008b), their Achilles heel is the analysis of classes and their struggles, in which the main protagonists are the oligarchies, the bourgeoisies, and, to a lesser extent, the middle classes. The popular sectors, when they appear, are amorphous and manipulated.

A first error that comes out of a focus away from constraints, then, is that specific social forces are virtually erased, or deemed irrelevant. This is problematic considering the *crucial political problem* of our theorists, as those who need to be organized become analytically—and, therefore, politically—irrelevant. Additionally, this is also unnecessary, as Marini (2013c, 2019a) demonstrates throughout his analyses of class struggle in Brazil and Chile.

A second error that arises is in his limited comprehension of the causal influence that structures have on agency. Alex Callinicos draws this class of limitation to Marx's (1978, p. 595) celebrated and above-cited passage on how “Men make history,” which carried the “fundamental flaw [...] conceiv[ing] the role of structure as essentially negative, as simply a constraint on action” (CALLINICOS, 1988, p. 9). Knafo, then, ignored the *structural capacity* afforded to agents, which refers to “any capacity which derives from an agent's position within the relations of production” (CALLINICOS, 1988, p. 87); or even the structure's capacity to generate and mold the agents themselves (WENDT, 1987; WIGHT, 2006). This is in line with Gramsci's (1971, p. 5) understanding of agency's (the social group and its intellectuals') origins in structure's generative capacity:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.

It is specifically the structures of world economic production, then, that hold the generative capacity.

While Knafo has most likely not read Marini's major analytical works, not yet translated to English, our theorist's focus on *agency within class struggle* provides an important alternative to Knafo's (2010) preference for focusing on those with power. Marini presents the analytical centrality of class struggle (the political microstructure) in a response to Serra and Cardoso (1978):

Now, any Marxist knows, with Marx and Engels, that the history of humanity is the history of class struggle and, with Lenin, that class struggle is the only terrain in which a Marxist moves with firmness. However, this does not mean that class struggle is *self-explanatory* or, if you will, that it is the *Deux ex machina* that explains everything. Rather, for a Marxist the task always lies on the level of abstract as well as concrete analysis, in knowing what it is that explains class struggle, and this necessarily refers to the examination of the material conditions in which it takes place. These conditions—which are grasped through concepts and are governed by objective laws and tendencies—generate contradictions, which are far from being “economic parameters” that “the political game makes move in one direction or another”. The class struggle is *the synthesis* of the conditions in which men make their existence, and is, for this very reason, governed by laws that determine its development. This is why the relationship between theory and practice constitutes the axis of Marxist dialectics (MARINI, 2015b, p. 180, emphasis in original).⁷⁵

Analytical centrality or primacy, then, cannot be mistaken with reductionism to the microstructural level. There is a dialectical relation between “the level of the abstract as well as concrete analysis.” In this passage, Marini is critiquing Serra and Cardoso's sociologism—which I am calling

⁷⁵ Original: “Ahora bien: cualquier marxista sabe, con Marx y Engels, que la historia de la humanidad es la historia de la lucha de clases y, con Lenin, que la lucha de clases es el único terreno en que un marxista se mueve con firmeza. Sin embargo, esto no quiere decir que la lucha de clases se explique *por sí misma* o, si se quiere, que sea el *Deux ex machina* que permite explicarlo todo. Más bien, para un marxista la tarea reside siempre en el plano del análisis abstracto como en el del concreto, en conocer qué es lo que explica la lucha de clases, y esto remite, necesariamente, al examen de las condiciones materiales en que ella se da. Esas condiciones—que se captan mediante conceptos y se rigen por leyes y tendencias objetivas—generan contradicciones, que no son, ni mucho menos, ‘parámetros económicos’ que ‘el juego político hace moverse en una o otra dirección’. La lucha de clases es *la síntesis* de las condiciones en que los hombres hacen su existencia, y se encuentra, por esto mismo, regida por leyes que determinan su desarrollo. Es por lo que la relación entre teoría y práctica constituye el eje de la dialéctica marxista.”

microstructural or conjunctural reductionism—in which a *microstructuralist* conception allows for the “political game” (micro level) to move the “economic parameters” (meso level). This is different from a voluntarist approach because it recognizes the political game as a microstructure that limits and constrains—in other words, there is a dialectical relation between agency and microstructure. But, using Gramsci’s earlier prison conceptualization, the *occasional* is privileged over the *permanent*.

A second point worth further elaboration concerns the dialectical relation between the different levels of structure. Marini’s use of the concept *contradictions*—which signals that which is generated by the extant material conditions—then refocuses class conflict beyond a mere struggle for power, as the contradictions are inextricable from the *conditions* and *laws* of capitalist development (the meso and macrostructures, respectively). Although Cardoso and Serra do not dismiss the relevance of contradictions within capitalism, they do not allow for concrete contradictions particular to Latin American society (MARINI, 2015b, p. 225), as they do not accept that there are laws specific to dependent capitalism (CARDOSO, 1972; SERRA; CARDOSO, 1978).

Serra and Cardoso (1978) allege that Marini’s approach is economicist—or meso level reductionism—but the problem is that they do not develop the dialectical relation between the two levels methodologically. Their reading of the relation provides ontological and methodological precedence to the political-micro level, in which:

[...] they maintain that the economy is nothing but the framework in which the political struggle is exercised, which corresponds to an autonomous sphere where the options and consequent decisions can only be explained by the action of the very forces that act there. The unity of analysis that turns politics, to put it as Lenin does, into “the concentrated expression of the economy” is thus broken, and the fundamental methodological assumption of Marxism, which Marx himself set out so precisely in his “Prologue of 1859” is abandoned: “the mode of production of material life determines [*bedingen*] the process of social, political and spiritual life in general”. Reduced to itself, the political struggle is thus deprived of any solid explanatory basis (MARINI, 2015b, p. 224).⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Original: “[...] sostienen que la economía no es sino el marco en que se ejerce la lucha política, la cual corresponde a una esfera autónoma donde las opciones y consecuentes decisiones sólo se explican por la acción de las fuerzas mismas que allí actúan. Se rompe, de este modo, la unidad de análisis que convierte a la política, para decirlo con Lenin, en “la expresión concentrada de la economía” y se abandona el supuesto metodológico fundamental del marxismo, que el propio Marx expuso con tanta precisión en su “Prólogo de 1859”: “el modo de producción de la vida material determina [*bedingen*] el proceso de la vida social, política y espiritual en general”. Reducida a sí misma, la lucha política se ve así desprovista de toda base explicativa sólida.”

It is important to note that Marini's use of "autonomous" does not correspond to how critical realist literature employ the notion of autonomy (e.g. in ARCHER, 1995). This passage uses "autonomous" in a manner that corresponds to the provision of methodological precedence to one of the levels of structure, in which the privileged sphere (the political/micro or the economic/meso-macro) would not be affected by the other.

Marini elaborates on his reading of Marxist methodology:

In maintaining that history is the history of the class struggle, Marx did not limit himself to describing class struggle: he strove to distinguish the modes of production that constitute its foundation and devoted his entire life to the study of the laws of the capitalist mode of production, in order to *arm the proletariat*—theoretically, ideologically and politically—in *its class struggle* against the bourgeoisie. *He built a conceptual apparatus* to explain the class struggle that is exercised in *that* mode of production; thus, for example, the concept of the value of labor power is the key to the analysis of the class struggle between workers and capitalists, on the economic level, in which the former fight for a wage that respects that value, and the latter understand that "the *gratitude* of the worker is a *limit* in the mathematical sense, which can never be reached, although it can be approached"; but this concept does not serve to explain class struggle in a slave-owning society, nor in a feudal society, to which it can only be applied by extension, since it is a category typical of a mode of production based on the free wage-worker [...] (MARINI, 2015b, p. 180–1, emphasis in original).⁷⁷

As mentioned in previous chapters, such *laws* are not to be understood in a positivist/empiricist understanding of the concept, based on a Humean conceptualization of causality. They carry temporality in that they speak to particular modes of production (macro) and, as expressed in the next passage, neither sphere (the mode of production and its laws or class struggle) is independent from the other.

Let us continue: it is precisely because, in each epoch of humanity, class struggle is governed by specific laws that it becomes necessary to construct the theoretical instruments that allow us to explain its development. Depending on the level of

⁷⁷ Original: "Al sostener que la historia es la historia de la lucha de clases, Marx no se limitó a describir la lucha de clases: se esforzó por distinguir los modos de producción que constituyen su fundamento y dedicó toda su vida al estudio de las leyes del modo de producción capitalista, para armar al proletariado—teórica, ideológica e políticamente—en su lucha de clase contra la burguesía. Construyó un aparato conceptual para explicar la lucha de clases que se ejerce en ese modo de producción; así, por ejemplo, el concepto de valor de la fuerza de trabajo es la clave para el análisis de la lucha de clases entre obreros y capitalistas, en el plano económico, en la cual los primeros pelean por un salario que respete ese valor, y los segundos entienden que 'la gratitud del obrero es un límite en sentido matemático, que nunca puede alcanzarse, aunque sí pueda rondarse'; pero ese concepto no sirve para explicar la lucha de clases en una sociedad esclavista ni tampoco en una sociedad feudal, a las que sólo se puede aplicar por extensión, ya que es una categoría típica de un modo de producción basado en el trabajador asalariado libre."

analysis, more abstract or more concrete, the emphasis shifts to the way in which *the general laws are realized through class struggle* or to the way in which *the class struggle acts on the realization of those laws*. A Marxist knows that one or the other way of approaching the problem is nothing more than that: approaches imposed by the level of analysis, and it is because the class struggle is the expression of contradictions governed by specific laws that it is so necessary never to be satisfied with the description of the *apparent* form of the class struggle, but rather to arm oneself with rigorous concepts that allow us to illuminate its profound determinations (MARINI, 2015b, p. 181–2, emphasis in original).⁷⁸

This excerpt demonstrates the necessity of a dialectical reading of a theorist's oeuvre in Marini's thinking. The question to be considered when analyzing a theorist's thinking should not necessarily be whether a theorist privileges the abstract over the concrete, one level of analysis or another,⁷⁹ especially if we take the single texts as meta-units instead of the oeuvre. Rather, we can consider whether this privileging *changes* in different texts, and how we can comprehend the theorist's thinking in the *oeuvre as unity*.

A dialectical reading of Marini's works allows us to better grasp how he relates, methodologically, the microstructures to the mesostructures and macrostructures. Knafo (2010), in his *radical emphasis on agency*, along with others who adopt the radical historicist approach, overemphasizes the microstructural level—while even running the risk of privileging agency over the microstructures themselves. In other words, a hyperfocus on the capitalist's agency reinforces a voluntarist tendency, where rationality prevails. If we regard meso and macrostructures as secondary—thus effectively discarding them—we cannot distinguish between those that *enable* and *foment* certain paths and possibilities from those that *constrain*. Such a voluntarist focus drives critical scholars to ignore the *perceptions* that capitalists may have regarding what they *believe* that structures permit—as if perceptions of what is possible and impossible were unimportant in decision-making; but also by disconsidering that there are *actual concrete limits* to what can be done. In other words, limits and impossibilities are erased from view.

⁷⁸ Original: “Prosigamos: es precisamente porque, en cada época de la humanidad, la lucha de clases se rige por leyes específicas que se hace necesario construir el instrumental teórico que nos permita explicar su desarrollo. Según el nivel de análisis, más abstracto o más concreto, el énfasis se desplaza hacia la manera como las leyes generales se realizan a través de la lucha de clases o hacia el modo como la lucha de clases actúa sobre la realización de esas leyes. un marxista sabe que una y otra manera de enfocar el problema no es más que eso: enfoques impuestos por el nivel del análisis, y es porque la lucha de clases es la expresión de contradicciones que se rigen por leyes específicas que es tan necesario no contentarse jamás con la descripción de la forma aparental de la lucha de clases, sino más bien armarse de conceptos rigurosos que permitan iluminar sus determinaciones profundas.”

⁷⁹ Note how Marini anticipates Yurdusev's (1993) contributions on the levels of analysis.

Developments such as mass production or Fordism can thus be almost naturalized as necessary steps in the development of capitalism, rather than specific innovations by agents in their attempt to come to terms with their own social reality. For this reason, innovations are too often minimized and presented as the predetermined outcome of an overarching logic. In this way, change is reduced to an inconsequential development; one that, oddly enough, becomes significant only when repackaged as a functional requirement of social reproduction itself. In other words, this structural conception leads us to reduce change to its very opposite: a means for reproducing the status quo (KNAFO, 2010, p. 507).

His dichotomic approach rejects dialectics as a way to relate agency to the different levels of structure. Although his intent is to focus on transformation, that transformation is limited to the microstructural level; and changes at the mesostructure can be nothing more than cumulative changes seen at the micro level.

Lastly, Knafo's (2010) emphasis on radical agency leads him to a focus on dominant forces, as does Cardoso's (CUEVA, 2008b). In addition to the analytical problems discussed, there is the even graver issue related to the *crucial political problem*. He defends that through this approach, "we [can] examine the process of social construction, rather than limiting ourselves to its outcome" (KNAFO, 2010, p. 505). As the working-class forces are de-emphasized to make room for agency of dominant capitalist forces, their approaches become disconnected from the subjugated classes as they will not inform strategies for radical transformations of the permanent aspects of capitalism: class exploitation. Transformations, then, are (again) apparent only at the mesostructural level, and as unilaterally determined by agency in the microstructures. This is particularly detrimental to dependency studies, where the objective (of some) is not only to describe dependency or perhaps analyze how capitalists transform the dependent structures, but principally to provide the subjugated classes with the tools to *overcome* dependency by transforming it at the macro level. This focus away from class struggle and towards the agency of dominant social forces brings, then, what Cox (1981) called a system-maintenance bias.

4.4 The Internal-External/Domestic-International Nexus in Gramsci

The more consolidated neo-Gramscian IR and IPE literature held that Gramsci's thought is largely oriented towards analyzing the national or domestic sphere (COX, 1983; GERMAIN; KENNY, 1998) and, for this reason, IR and IPE scholars would need to *internationalize* his thought (BIELER; BRUFF; MORTON, 2015, p. 138–140). Peter Ives and Nicola Short (2013)

have convincingly demonstrated through textual analysis, however, that the international is prevalent in Gramsci's thought—or, more precisely, in the construction of his central categories. More specifically, they join Adam David Morton (2003, 2007) in his critiques against the moves to “internationalize Gramsci” and Bob Jessop's (2008, p. 105) assertion that Gramsci “typically analysed any particular scale in terms of its connections with other scales.⁸⁰” They point to a dichotomic cognition that misled many in their reading of Gramsci—“the pronounced partition between domestic and international that has largely characterised the social sciences and affected the reception of his work” (IVES; SHORT, 2013, p. 623). Rather, Gramsci's is a “dialectical approach wherein the national and the international are interrelated” (FUSARO, 2019, p. 76).

In one of his explicit contributions for thinking the domestic-international relation, Gramsci elaborates on how the relations of force operate at the different levels:

These levels range from the relations between international forces (one would insert here the notes written on what a great power⁸¹ is, on the combinations of States in hegemonic systems, and hence on the concept of independence and sovereignty as far as small and medium powers are concerned) to the objective relations within society—in other words, the degree of development of productive forces; to relations of political force and those between parties (hegemonic systems within the State); and to immediate (or potentially military) political relations (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 176, Q13§2).⁸²

In addition to highlighting the relation between the international and the internal/domestic, we can also note how Gramsci utilizes the same concept (hegemony) to speak of these different levels (MORTON, 2007, p. 215). Indeed, against the “false premises” that sustained the “persistent deadlock regarding whether Gramsci's concepts have been or can be ‘internationalised’ or ‘translated’ to the international level” (IVES; SHORT, 2013, p. 622), Morton (2007, p. 216) affirmed that “it is entirely possible to argue that the concept of hegemony can sustain explanatory

⁸⁰ Jessop (2008, p. 105) explains the notion of scales in his reading of Gramsci: “*Scale* comprises the nested (and sometimes not so nested) hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size: for example, local, regional, national, continental, and global. Scale is typically the product of social struggles for power and control. Gramsci was extremely sensitive to issues of scale, scalar hierarchies of economic, political, intellectual, and moral power, and their territorial and non-territorial expressions.”

⁸¹ Discussed below.

⁸² Compare to the “A” text version previous written in Q8: “One could start with international relations of force (incorporating the notes concerning the definition of a great power) and then move on to objective relations within society—that is, the degree of development of productive forces—to the relations of force in politics [(or hegemony)] or between political parties and to military relations or, better, to direct political relations.” (GRAMSCI, 2007, p. 259; Q8§38)

power beyond the ‘national’ context in relation to the ‘international’ because this was already how Gramsci developed the concept.”

Gramsci, then, poses the question of precedence (note that “objective relations *within* society” in the previous passage becomes “fundamental social relations” in the following):

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in the social structure, through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field too. Even the geographical position of a national State does not precede but follows (logically) structural changes, although it *also reacts back upon them to a certain extent (to the extent precisely to which superstructures react upon the structure, politics on economics, etc.)* (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 176, Q13§2, added emphasis).

The first lines, which seem to imply an ontological precedence to the national or domestic, must be read against the last. We can grasp that there is no implied ontological precedence, but rather a dialectical relation, in his assertion that the international “also reacts back upon” the fundamental *internal* social relations. Although the language seems to imply that this effect is of a lesser importance, we see that it is not in his affirmation that the international reacts onto the internal *to the same extent that* “superstructures react upon the structure, politics on economics, etc.”—that is, within a non-reductionist ontology and epistemology.

In a different passage, Gramsci raises the internal-international relation to the status of *problem*—something that Marxism has to work out as well and in addition to the crucial problem of the structure-superstructure relation.

The problem which seems to me to need further elaboration is the following: how, according to the philosophy of praxis (as it manifests itself politically) [...] *the international situation should be considered in its national aspect*. In reality, the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is “original” and (in a certain sense) unique: *these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness* if one wishes to dominate them and direct them. To be sure, *the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is “national”*—and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. *Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise* (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 240, Q14§68 emphasis added).

He provides an initial outline of his dialectical grasp of the relation: “how [...] the international should be considered in its national aspect” speaks to its manifestation within the domestic sphere. However, this seems to contrast with his argument—that international relations *follow* fundamental/internal social relations, cited above (Q13§2) and reiterated in this last passage, that the *point of departure is “national”*. These two passages may appear to present

ambiguity, confounded by the secondary literature, regarding whether precedence should be afforded to the domestic/internal or the international (BIELER; BRUFF; MORTON, 2015, p. 138–140; IVES; SHORT, 2013). However, we can bring clarity to this issue if we restate it in dialectical terms. Gramsci’s *point of departure* is “national” in two manners—the political, in that it is at the unit of internal relations (the domestic) that one must seek to dominate and direct first; and the analytical, in that one must emphasize the originality and uniqueness of the domestic and not reduce it to the international. The general context, however, is international—which means that the internal/domestic relations cannot be analyzed without the external factors (i.e., Gramsci’s approach is also against *methodological nationalism* or, here, *international in perspective*). The relation is dialectical because international relations *follow* fundamental/internal social relations (Q13§2) but they should also be understood in their *national impact* (Q14§68).

What is needed, then, is some qualification on how one determines the other. Peter Ives and Nicola Short (2013, p. 623) defend that “Gramsci begins analytically from an ‘international’ context” and they bring additional textual evidence to demonstrate that “Gramsci is quite clear about distinguishing and relating national and international levels of analysis, and the general point is that it is the latter that precedes the former (not vice versa)” (IVES; SHORT, 2013, p. 623, 635). This cannot be confused with *ontological* precedence since, as was explained above, neither the domestic nor the international has sole determining power over the other. The international has precedence in the sense that one must understand *it and its relation* to the domestic beforehand.

4.5 Subordination, Dependency, and Hierarchy

Conveyed above, critical realism provides a relevant footing for constructing a dialogue. A second crucial footing is historical materialism itself, as it is this tradition to which both Gramsci and Marini speak. However, given the consistent theme in their works and in this thesis of historical materialism as a field in open dispute, CR provides us, heuristically, with definitional support.

As described by Wight and Joseph (2010), CR provides philosophical sustenance to theorizing on unequal relations that integrates multiple levels of structures against mainstream IR’s empiricist grounding that obscures exploitative relations.

For Waltz, structural questions are about the arrangements of the parts of a system. In the international system each part is said to be formally the equal of another (ibid., 88).

The effect of this analysis is typical of any number of positivist approaches – that is to say, to naturalise a reified view of the social world (in this case its international system) and to hide the deeper structures of the international system by focusing on recurring relations between formally equal units. This can tell us nothing about the specificity of North–South relations, for example, or the reasons why such relations are exploitative. To do so, we would have to go to the underlying conditions that generate the unequal relations between North and South, something that positivist approaches rule out (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 17).

It is precisely these “deeper structures of the international system” that we turn to now, with a look at Gramsci’s and Marini’s contributions to grasping “the underlying conditions that generate the unequal relations between North and South”.

It is in the continuation of the Q13§2 passage, cited above, that Gramsci introduces us to a notion of differentiation in internal-international relations, in which the degree of impact of the international is dependent on its degree of subordination:

However, international relations react both passively and actively on political relations (of hegemony among the parties). The more the immediate economic life of a nation is subordinated to international relations, the more a particular party will come to represent this situation and to exploit it, with the aim of preventing rival parties gaining the upper hand [...]. From this series of facts one may conclude that often the so-called “foreigner’s party” is not really the one which is commonly so termed, but precisely the most nationalistic party—which, in reality, represents not so much the vital forces of its own country, as that country’s subordination and economic enslavement to the hegemonic nations or to certain of their number (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 176–7, Q13§2).

This can be taken as elements that Gramsci presents for developing an ontology of the world system as hierarchical (against IR’s mainstream anarchy-centered premise). Gramsci provides a key insight into how a social group can take advantage of the subordinated relation to make the most out of it for their own benefit. Gramsci recognizes that a political dispute within a society, then, has an external/international dimension that is greater for subordinated (or dependent, as we shall see) countries.

In the same note, and cited above, Gramsci references “notes written on what a great power is, on the combinations of States in hegemonic systems, and hence on the concept of independence and sovereignty as far as small and medium powers are concerned.” In relating the subordination of smaller or medium *independent states* to other great powers, Gramsci brings perhaps a most

important insight for a conversation with Marini. This compatible footing was also affirmed by Cox (1983, p. 169): “Gramsci has a keen sense of what we would now call dependency.”

Given this point, it is important to underscore that Gramsci is not considered one of the precursors of dependency theory (see KATZ, 2020); and he could not have been, given the lateness of his influence in the region and the incongruency that the reading adopted by the Latin American neo-Gramscians demonstrated vis-à-vis MTD. Gramsci’s ideas on subordination in international relations and the interplay between the internal and international spheres, however, do present much consonance with MTD. Given an initial congruence between their ontological conceptions of the hierarchical nature of the world system and between their methodological assertions on the domestic-international relation, we can begin the conversation between Gramsci and Marini. On this specific theme, the latter had developed his studies further and has, therefore, more to contribute. Gramsci’s contributions for thinking dependency, still embryonic at that point and indeed comparable to the precursors of dependency theory, can gain much from Marini’s more sophisticated conceptual and theoretical development.

In an oft quoted passage, Marini presents important elements for his concept of dependency:

[...] understood as a relation of subordination between formally independent nations, in the framework of which the relations of production of the subordinate nations are modified or re-created to ensure the expanded reproduction of dependency. Thus, the outcome of dependency cannot be anything other than more dependency, and its liquidation necessarily implies eliminating the relations of production it involves (MARINI, 2022b, p. 117).

Alongside the elements brought by Gramsci (viz. subordination of independent states), there are a few aspects worth highlighting in this passage. First is that Marini defines dependency by differentiating it from the colonial moment. While recognizing the existence of continuities between the two, “[t]he difficulty of theoretical analysis lies precisely in capturing this originality and, above all, in discerning the moment in which originality implies a qualitative change” (MARINI, 2022b, p. 117).

The colonial moment is relevant for both thinkers, although they point to different elements in how the European powers were impacted. Marini brings its impact on economic development:

As far as Latin America’s international relations are concerned, if, as we have indicated, it played a significant role in the formation of the world capitalist economy (primarily with its production of precious metals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but above all in the eighteenth century, thanks to the

coincidence between the discovery of Brazilian gold and the English manufacturing boom), it is only in the course of the nineteenth century, and specifically after 1840, that its articulation with that world economy is fully realized.

Gramsci, in contrast, focuses on its political impact:

[...] with the colonial expansion of Europe, all these elements change [the rudimentary State apparatus, civil society, military forces, national armed services, etc. . .]: the internal and international organisational relations of the State become more complex and massive, and the Forty-Eightist formula of the ‘Permanent Revolution’ is expanded and transcended in political science by the formula of ‘civil hegemony’ (Gramsci 2017, p. 243, Q13§7, cited in IVES; SHORT, 2013, p. 635).

For both, colonialism marked a *qualitative change* in international relations and the internal developments of the different societies involved. And although Gramsci recognized a second moment, post-independence (and not necessarily referring to the independence of previously colonized societies, considering especially that Africa and most of Asia remained under colonial rule and the mandate system before his death), he did not work out the differences as thoroughly as Marini.

It is worth noting, however, the role that colonialism had in moving Europe (or the West) in the direction of developing a more complex civil society, less *gelatinous* than the East (or South, I will argue). Marini’s work complements Gramsci’s ideas on the enlarged state in the West by offering some plausible political-economic hypotheses: the importing of cheaper food from underdeveloped countries (a) lowered the value of labor power of European capitalists, (b) allowing them to spend more of their disposable income on manufactured goods, (c) also made cheaper by the import of raw materials for their production (MARINI, 2022b, p. 142–3). The improved *material* conditions of labor in the West, derived directly (but not solely) from their exploitation of the South, then, allowed for subordinate social groups to have their needs satisfied—a necessary step for the achievement of hegemony by the dominant social group. Marini’s rephrasing of his adopted world system ontology, then, is fitting for both authors: “the history of Latin American underdevelopment is the history of the development of the world capitalist system”⁸³ (MARINI, 2013d, p. 47).

⁸³ Original: “A história do subdesenvolvimento latino-americano é a história do desenvolvimento do sistema capitalista mundial.”

A second important aspect of Marini's passage on dependency is how the concept conjugates both temporal and geographic levels of structure. It integrates space in presenting geographic hierarchies—even if not made more explicit in this passage, the text itself presents the greater spatial context. It also brings in the relation between meso and macrostructures: relations of production can undergo transformation (*be modified*) or reproduction (*be re-created*) at the mesostructural level so that *expanded reproduction of dependency* is made possible at the macrostructural level. The significance of this relation cannot be overstated, as it allows us to begin grasping why so many changes can be seen in day-to-day politics (micro level) and across decades (meso level) *without an originality that implies qualitative change* at the deepest level of exploitation—that is, dependency is preserved at the macrolevel, even if there are important changes to how it is expressed in the mesostructure. The question, then, for the *crucial intellectual problem* is: what needs to happen at the micro and meso level to bring about a transformation in the macro level?

The third aspect is Marini's condensed response: to overcome dependency, we need to *eliminate the relations of production it involves*. In an analysis of agency, the underlying question, then, is whether the practices of the agents (at the microstructure level) go in the direction of eliminating dependent relations of production, in maintaining them, or transforming them to allow for its expanded reproduction. The first would direct that society towards transformation at the macrostructural level, and the other two towards maintaining the macrostructure intact. The following chapter will discuss this point further.

5. Establishing the Dialogue: In search of a synthesis and Brazil's international insertion

This chapter takes the initial dialogue between Gramsci and Marini into developing an analytical framework that brings together their methodological concerns and relevant concepts for analyzing the agency of an “emerging” power, Brazil, within a situation of systemic dependency. I discuss how the application of this framework can proceed, with empirical reference points in Brazil from 2003-2022, encompassing the Lula, Dilma, Temer, and Bolsonaro administrations.

The great objective of this thesis is to contribute to the development of a critical analytical framework capable of going beyond what I argue to be the prevalent framework for class analysis that privileges the dichotomic over dialectical way of relating the agencies of opposing social forces. Just as Gramsci (1971, p. 180, Q13§17) noted how “[o]ne often reads in historical narratives the generic expression: ‘relation of forces favourable, or unfavourable, to this or that tendency’”, it is equally common to read historical narratives that reduces class struggle to a struggle for power between conservative and progressive forces. In line with Gramsci’s move to point out the theoretical error in the formulation he addressed, the one I highlight is the erasure of how the progressive forces may end up co-constructing the context for their defeat. The dichotomic, then, focuses on opposing forces within a specific conjuncture, without considering the dialectical relation found between different levels of structure, and how these levels also display a dialectical relation with the agency in question.

Part of what I want to demonstrate is the relation between reformism during progressive governments and the subsequent rise of conservative forces, not merely as a reaction to progressive policies, but as structurally substantiated—both politically and economically—in those progressive governments. Referring to the three phases of Archer’s (1982) morphogenetic approach—(1) structural conditioning, (2) social interaction, and (3) structural elaboration or reproduction (i.e., morphogenesis or morphostasis, respectively—the question thus becomes how a reformist-progressive administration, having undergone (1) structural conditioning, (2) interacted with the relevant social forces and structures in ways that led to (3) either the elaboration of new or reproduction of old structures. These moments of interaction and subsequent morphogenesis or morphostasis represent, then, the immediate structural conditioning of the next cycle of social interaction. To apply this to our case study, we could consider presidencies as specific moments of social interaction in order to reflect on the effects that they had on subsequent

cycles. Similarly, we could consider how the agency within these presidencies—i.e. the transformations or continuities they brought about—led to either continuities (morphostasis) or transformations (morphogenesis) at the meso and macrolevels.

Archer's morphogenetic approach would need to be complexified to allow for the differences between the analytical levels of structure. For instance, the parliamentary coup that ousted President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 can be taken as a moment of social interaction. The scholar needs to grasp how that social interaction was conditioned by (a) the immediate conjuncture (the economically unfavorable international situation, the domestic economic crisis, the role of the fractions of the bourgeoisie in deepening the economic crisis and the concomitant political crisis); but also the relevant factors from (b) the period encompassing her first administration (Dilma's political failure in her confrontation with the fraction of the bourgeoisie in the energy sector; her failed attempt to sustain a lower Selic interest rate; the media's role in forming public opinion in favor of the interests of big capital; and the possible role of *machismo* in how the political forces and the public reacted to her); and those factors from (c) the Lula administrations—including not only the lack of structural reforms (such as breaking the media monopoly in favor of a process of its democratization; agrarian reforms that would diminish the power of the landed elite in favor of peasant families and family farming) that could increase the relative power of the working classes *vis-à-vis* the different fractions of the bourgeoisie, but also movements that actually *increased* the power of the bourgeois fraction *vis-à-vis* not only the popular classes but also state itself. Although I have mentioned micro and meso level elements, more macro level factors would also have to provide substance for the analysis.

It is also important to bring the relevant units of analysis: (a) the individual—Dilma and Temer were no Caesars, lacking the political skill that Lula and Bolsonaro had; (b) the domestic—the different class fractions, social movements, organizations, the media, but also foreign players acting *inside the country*; (c) the region—we can bring the different states in the Gramscian sense of the integral state, which would encompass most of those in *the domestic* of other nations in the region; but also regional organizations, regional associations, translatino corporations, regional power blocs, relevant transnational or multinational corporations, regional offices of foreign actors, regional development banks, etc.; and (d) the international—encompassing extra-regional integral states, international organizations, international and extra-regional associations, groups, and development banks, transnational and multinational corporations, etc. However, a focus on

any other any unit of analysis that does not privilege interactions with the domestic will, as we saw in Marini, necessarily make for a poorer analysis.

5.1 Their Methodologies: The analysis of *dependent* situations

This section develops a proposal for bringing together Gramsci's and Marini's contributions for an *analysis of situations*. Gramsci (1971, p. 180–5, Q13§17) reformulated his conception of the structure-superstructure relation in a manner that delineates the particularities of the different spheres in a methodological construct that goes beyond the abstract and, for him, useless formulation of *favorable* versus *unfavorable* relations of force. The simplification is useless “since it merely repeats twice over the fact which needs to be explained, once as a fact and once as an abstract law and an explanation. The theoretical error consists therefore in making what is a principle of research and interpretation into an ‘historical cause’” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 180, Q13§17). His conception advocates the need to develop distinctions between the degrees or moments of power relations.

5.11 The first moment: Dependency as structure

In Gramsci's analysis of situations, the first degree, that of economic power relations, is more closely linked to structure, since it is “objective [and] independent of human will” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 180) of agents. At its base lies the degree of development of the material forces of production. He goes further by stating that in the analysis of this moment lies the possibility of questioning the viability of current ideologies, whether or not there are the “necessary and sufficient conditions for its transformation” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 181, Q13§17). Marini's *Dialectics of Dependency* is his major contribution for factoring in the first degree: dependency as a relation of social structure that is “objective [and] independent of human will”, where he asserts that “behind the use of extra-economic pressure is an economic base that makes it possible” (MARINI, 2022b, p. 125–6); but also of primary importance is his article on the circuit of capital reproduction in dependent economies (MARINI, 2012c), where he elaborates, theoretically, the different instances in which foreign capital intervenes and bungles up the “tradition” process. There are additional elements beyond the temporal and geographic ones brought in the previous chapter for grasping dependency and underdevelopment.

An important element to analytically integrate the first degree at the international level is Marini's observation that there is a tendency in global capitalism towards *integration* of the systems of production, symbiotically related to the international division of labor and grounded in the "intensification of the monopolistic process" and "of the export of capital" (MARINI, 1965, p. 12). In this sense, Marini anticipated future IR scholars "in capturing the beginning of the process of "internationalization" of domestic markets" (TUSSIE, 2020, p. 98), including Cox's (1981) ideas on the internationalization of production. For Marini (2013a, p. 40), however, integration is "not simply the internationalisation of the domestic market as some authors state" but encompasses "the integration of national with foreign capital or, which is the same, the integration of production systems".⁸⁴

The particularities of Latin American dependency has its roots in not only in European colonialism—as Africa and Asia suffered the same in process in its most abstract conception; but in how Latin America had its genesis in the almost total annihilation of the original societies and the immediate integration of the now *Latin American* societies into world capitalism (—it is due to these specificities that one must be careful before extending observations on the *functioning* of world capitalism and the laws of dependent capitalism to other regions; the historical processes in Asia and Africa would need to be studied rigorously before one could affirm the applicability of MTD to these other regions).

5.111 Underdevelopment in its social and economic dimensions

A first contribution is the notion of underdevelopment represented as the *fracture*⁸⁵ *between production and the needs of that society's population*. This definition, reiterated in different works, connects the structural subordination at the international unit, discussed previously, more precisely to how the underdeveloped economies are organized at the domestic unit. Against the predominant circular definition of underdevelopment—in which a society is underdeveloped because it presents certain socioeconomic indicators, which can then be explained

⁸⁴ Translated by Luce (2015, p. 40).

⁸⁵ I am following Amanda Latimer (2022b, p. 107) in her choice to translate Marini's use of *escisión* as *fracture* instead of "divorce" or "rift", as it better expresses the meaning beyond the word's literal translation.

by the society's underdeveloped status, Marini (1977, 2013c, 2022b) points to the cause of underdevelopment (and, thus, of its socioeconomic indicators) as residing in this fracture. That is, a society is underdeveloped when:

[...] the economic system imposed [...] by big national and foreign capital increasingly exacerbates its monstrous characteristics, among which are the increase in the industrial reserve army—in the form of open or hidden unemployment—and the fracture between the productive structure—geared towards the world market—and the consumption needs of the broad masses (MARINI, 2013a, p. 32–3).⁸⁶

In other words, its economic production does not prioritize the needs of its domestic social groups and processes; the economy is organized, then, to meet the needs and demands, first and foremost, of those *external* to that society.

This fracture was also presented in another dimension:

[...] in contrast to what happens in the central capitalist countries, where economic activity is *subordinated to the existing relationship between the internal rates of surplus value and investment*, in dependent countries the basic economic mechanism comes from the *export-import relationship*, so that even if it is obtained within the economy, the surplus value is realized in the sphere of the external market, through export activity, and translates into income that is applied, for the most part, to imports. The difference between the value of exports and imports, in other words, the *surplus that can be invested*, is therefore *directly affected by factors outside* the national economy (MARINI, 2013d, p. 50–1, added emphasis).⁸⁷

In other words, the central economies have a self-sustaining dynamic and dependent capitalism is rooted in the exogenous nature of the economic dynamics of peripheral countries. Of course, this needs to be read as an abstraction, considering that it speaks to the first degree; and presents, then, varieties in the concrete level. In one level below that, Marini draws a second, *less abstract* differentiation between those “countries in which the main export activity is under the control of

⁸⁶ Original: “[...] o sistema econômico imposto ao Brasil pelo grande capital nacional e estrangeiro agrava cada vez mais suas características monstruosas, entre as quais de destacam o aumento do exército industrial de reserva - sob a forma de desemprego aberto ou oculto - e o divórcio entre a estrutura produtiva - voltada para o mercado mundial - e as necessidades de consumo das amplas massas.”

⁸⁷ Original: “[...] em contraste com o que ocorre nos países capitalistas centrais, onde a atividade econômica está subordinada à relação existente entre as taxas internas de mais-valia e de investimento, nos países dependentes o mecanismo econômico básico provém da relação exportação-importação, de modo que, mesmo que seja obtida no interior da economia, a mais-valia se realiza na esfera do mercado externo, mediante a atividade de exportação, e se traduz em rendas que se aplicam, em sua maior parte, nas importações. A diferença entre o valor das exportações e das importações, ou seja, o excedente passível de ser investido, sofre, portanto, a ação direta de fatores externos à economia nacional.”

the dominant classes [and where] there is a certain autonomy in investment decisions—conditioned, evidently, by the economy’s dependency *vis-à-vis* the world market”, on the one hand, and “the situation of countries in which the main export activity is handled by foreign capitalists”⁸⁸ (MARINI, 2013d, p. 51). In the former, the surplus is generally applied to the most profitable export activity, which supports the tendency towards monocultures. However, there is a tendency for secondary industries geared towards the production of luxury goods for the consumption of the upper classes. The second group of countries, however, will see less surplus available for local capitalists to invest; and since there will be little to no production capability for their consumption needs, much of the surplus that they do have access to will be used for importing such goods (MARINI, 2013d).

5.112 The circuit of capital reproduction in dependent capitalism

Related to the first, Marini brings a contribution to the general comprehension of circuits of capital reproduction. At the most abstract level, Marini (2012c) references the well-known formula of capital reproduction: $M-C...(P)...C'-M'$, wherein a capitalist will use a sum of money-capital (M) to purchase commodities (C), comprised of labor power (L) and means of production (Mp). Labor power is applied to means of production in the process of production (P). This leads to finished products or commodities (C') which then needs to be sold for that capital to be realized in the form of more money (M'). The difference between M' and M is the profit to be made, which is what is required for the expanded reproduction of capital to occur, as that profit made is what is needed for the start of a new circuit of capital reproduction. A first point to be made, according to Marini, is the importance of money-capital (M and M') for the process as necessary for value-creation, as it initiates the circuit and is necessary not only for its finalization, but also for the start of a new circuit. The production phase (P) is not less important, as this is where surplus-value is effectively created. There will not be space here to discuss the works that relate to export of capital and the problems related to surplus capital in imperialist/industrialized

⁸⁸ Original: “[...] países em que a atividade principal de exportação está sob o controle das classes dominantes locais existe uma certa autonomia sobre as relações de investimento—condicionada, evidentemente, pela dependência da economia frente ao mercado mundial” and “[...] a situação dos países em que a principal atividade de exportação se encontra nas mãos de capitalistas estrangeiros.”

states. I will, however, bring Marini's (2012c) contribution is in demonstrating how the circuit of capital reproduction presents significant differences in dependent capitalism.

Marini analyzes the specificities of each phase in dependent capitalism's circuit of capital reproduction: the first circulation phase (C—M), the production phase (P), and second circulation phase (M'—C'). In analyzing the *first circulation phase*, Marini considers three sources of money-capital: (1) private domestic capital or private domestic investment—foreign capital can be counted here if it references domestically produced surplus-value that will be reinvested domestically; (2) public investment—state investment that is not productive, i.e. that does not lead to capital accumulation, is not counted, but the state does potentially hold an important role as it has the (varied) capacity (2.1) to appropriate part of the surplus-value created by private capital, (2.2) to produce surplus-value, and (2.3) appropriate part of the salary of the working class; and (3) foreign capital, which can take the form of (3.1) foreign direct investment (FDI) or (3.2) portfolio investment (PI)—while FDI prevailed over PI between 1945 and the 1960s in Latin America and it continued to grow in the 1970s, PI and financial capital became predominant during this latter period and onward. Financial capital brought a qualitative change as well, related to its form of remuneration, in that now it could charge interest to be taken out of the surplus-value generated by productive capital (MARINI, 2012c).

In addition to its entrance into the dependent economy as money-capital, foreign capital also assumes the form of means of production without necessarily taking the form, first, of money. Thus, while labor is largely national, and some means of production is as well—particularly land, most raw materials, and construction materials—machinery and equipment are often imported (MARINI, 2012c). Although the import of capital goods (means of production) is prevalent in the capitalist system, “[w]hat characterizes the dependent economy is the acute form that this characteristic takes and the fact that it responds to the very structure of its historical process of capital accumulation” (MARINI, 2012c, p. 41).⁸⁹

An insight that cannot be lost to the reader is that foreign capital is, in fact internalized and becomes a prime driver in the economy's capital reproduction (MARINI, 2012c). In addition to

⁸⁹ Original: “O que caracteriza a economia dependente é a forma aguda que essa característica adquire e o fato de que ela responde à própria estrutura de seu processo histórico de acumulação de capital.”

that first circulation phase, there are also impactful inroads that foreign capital makes in the production phase and the second circulation phase.

Marini's theoretical contribution for analyzing the different phases of the circuit of capital reproduction in dependent capitalism counters claims that his theory is *circulationist*, due to his focus on the transfer of value (discussed below). For Marini, analysis should comprehend all phases of the circuit in its entirety:

Trying to separate production from circulation and from the realization of commodities, under the pretext that it is the former that should take precedence in analysis, thus underestimating the role played by the demand for everyday consumer goods in the realization of capital, is not only far from being a Marxist position, but it can also become a useful instrument for condoning the system (MARINI, 2013a, p. 31).⁹⁰

Marini points out the extraordinary role that foreign capital plays in the first circulation phase—sometimes in the form of the money-commodity, as direct or indirect investment, sometimes in the form of concrete means of production—and in the second, production phase, where foreign direct investments obtain extraordinary surplus value through the payment of “wages inferior to the value of labor power.” Both extraordinary profits and super-exploitative wages exacerbate the concentration of capital and the distortion of income distribution.

That, in turn, distorts the realization of capital in the final phase of circulation, fueling the expansion of luxury good production and the transfer of extraordinary profits abroad, in the form of remittances, interest payments on loans, royalties, etc. These particularities set the circuit of capital in dependent economies apart from the experience of classical industrial economies.

5.113 Transfer of surplus-value

If *value* is derived from labor power, then the most labor-intensive production process will generate greater value than the capital-intensive and labor-poor processes. However, pricing is not set based on labor-input (use value) but rather on market mechanisms (exchange value). Then,

⁹⁰ Original: “Pretender separar a produção da circulação e da realização das mercadorias, sob o pretexto de que é a primeira que dever primar na análise, subestimando assim na realização do capital o papel desempenhado pela demanda de bens de consumo corrente, não apenas passa longe de ser uma posição marxista, como também pode se tornar um instrumento útil de apologia ao sistema.”

when a market price is set on a commodity based on the average production cost in a setting of different amounts of labor-input, those companies that produce the largest amount of surplus-value (through higher labor expenses) will receive the same price as the companies that produced below the average surplus-value. In other words, there is an intra-industry transfer of value from companies that produce greater surplus-value to those that produced less due to market mechanisms. The same holds true for inter-industry trade, where the more capital-intensive industries tend to appropriate.

Although this mechanism of transfer of value is evident in the domestic workings of an economy, it is also crucial for understanding *unequal exchange* between economies. *Transfer of surplus-value*⁹¹ occurs from the periphery to the center; but also from the periphery to what Marini called sub-centers (and Wallerstein referred to as semi-periphery) and from the sub-centers to the center (MARINI, 1977). Mediated through unequal exchange, the *levels of organic composition of capital* of different socio-economic formations enter the analysis and bear economic and political dimensions. They speak directly to how much of the mass of surplus-value produced each socio-economic formation is able to appropriate and are associated with different superstructural elements that tend to provide consolidating support to such unequal economic and power relations.

A second type of transfer of value (in addition to unequal exchange) occurs through the remittance of profits, dividends, royalties and interest payments on loans. As mentioned above, once portfolio investments and financial capital gained prominence, the proportion that each type of capital remuneration represented in the total transfer of value changed as well. Transfers through unequal exchange speaks to the *realization* (in economies of lower organic composition of capital) *of commodities produced (C')* in the center's (and sub-center's) circuit of capital reproduction. Transfers of value through profits and dividends refers to the profits in those circuits that either cannot be invested in imperialist societies for reasons of overaccumulation, or due to falling rate of profit and the possibility of *extraordinary profits* in underdeveloped countries. Transfers through interest payments are not as neatly classified, as much of the loans provided to sub-centers and the periphery do not necessarily provide an investment-related function—thus, they may not participate in the circuit of capital reproduction (MARINI, 2012c, 2013a)

⁹¹ I use *transfer of value* and *transfer of surplus-value* interchangeably.

This transfer of value has a double role in the three abstracted positions: for center and sub-center economies, it will generate greater capital accumulation; but for peripheral and the same sub-center economies, it will also cause a loss of capital that would be otherwise necessary to generate the expanded reproduction of capital.

5.114 Super-exploitation of the workforce

Given the outward transfer of surplus-value, capitalists outside of the center had to find new ways to keep the circuit going, to maintain M' —with that positive difference in money-capital output relative to the input. They could either attempt to cease the outward transfer of value altogether (or greatly minimize it), or they would need to *compensate* for that loss of value by extracting a great amount of surplus-value from workers. In this possible schematization of Marini's contributions through the lens of the circuit of capital accumulation, this last element comprises Marini's category of *super-exploitation of labor*⁹² (MARINI, 2015b, 2022a).

Among the possible alternatives, the ruling classes of the dependent countries, according to Marini (2022b), would not have sought to correct the mismatch between the prices and values of commodities in unequal exchange. Faced with structural limitations, Latin American capitalists had to resort to another way of accumulating and reproducing their capital: the super-exploitation of the workforce. Just as in the anecdote we saw earlier about the relationship between stronger and weaker countries, the pressure has fallen on the weakest link in the chain; in this case, on the workers, who will be burdened with the responsibility of replenishing the exogenously appropriated surplus. Additionally, the local economies do not depend on the consumption rates of large sectors of their populations. There is, then, no *economic* incentive for providing these workers with a dignified wage, “[b]ecause circulation is separated from production and takes place basically in the sphere of the external market, the worker's individual consumption does not interfere with the realization of the product, although it does determine the rate of surplus value” (MARINI, 2022b, p. 139).

⁹² Marcelo Carcanholo will reframe the category as *super-exploitation of labor power* as a technical correction, considering that it is labor power, and not labor, which is exploited.

Thus, the category of super-exploitation of the workforce was developed to account for the repercussions of the transfer of surplus and its relations with the accumulation needs of dependent capitalism. The category of relations of production is a good place to start: in a capitalist society, the worker sells his or her labor power to the owner of the means of production, but with sharp differences that can be roughly classified according to the conditions of accumulation in different countries, in which the relation of production is presented as exploitation in central countries, and super-exploitation in peripheral countries.

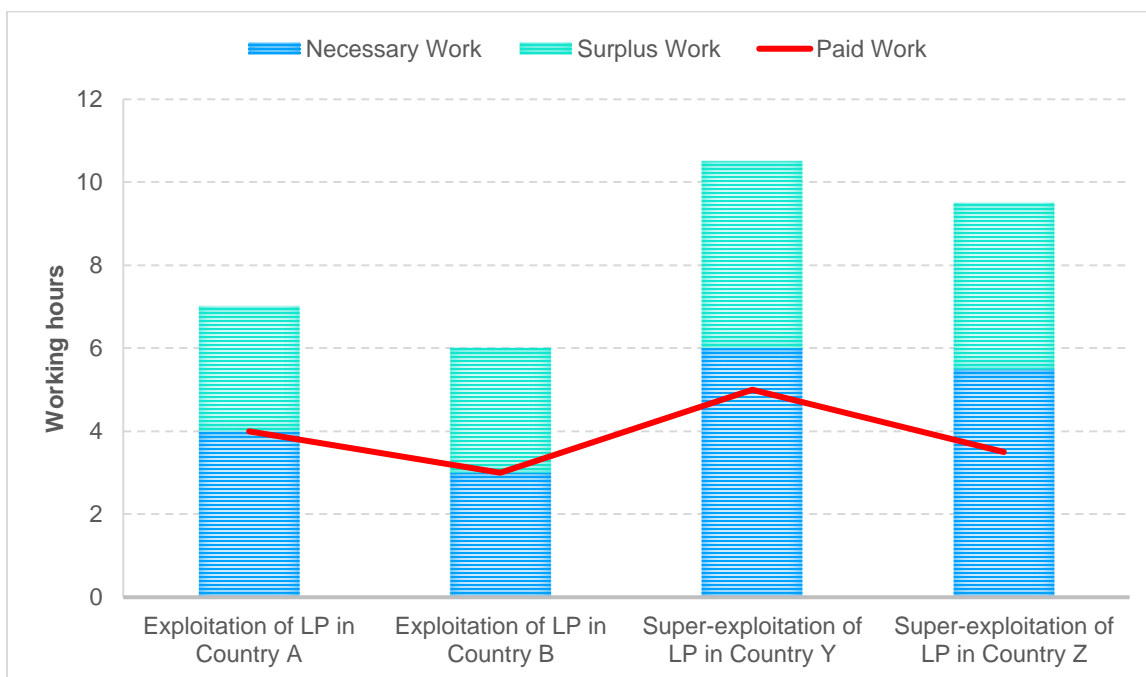
The category of super-exploitation of the workforce expresses a phenomenon that goes beyond the simple idea of *greater* exploitation. It is not intended simply to claim that there is a higher level of exploitation in peripheral countries than in industrialized countries. The concept of super-exploitation emphasizes the surpassing of a critical degree of simple exploitation, differentiating *qualitatively* between the various degrees of exploitation in different industrialized societies. The critical degree is defined by the remuneration of labor *below its value*, that which is socially necessary for the worker to replace his or her strain. What is socially necessary cannot be considered a generic value, as it depends both on what a given society considers necessary at a given historical time, and on the values of the commodities in that society (considering that there can be a mismatch between values and prices).

Figure 2 below presents this understanding of the differences between the categories of exploitation and super-exploitation based on what is socially necessary, showing that different countries have different amounts of work necessary for reproduction. The figures themselves have a demonstrative purpose and are not intended to represent any concrete situation. While the four countries in the figure have varying amounts of hours of necessary work and surplus work, the situation of the worker in country A and country B represents a situation of exploitation compatible with an industrialized economy, with remuneration that covers the socially necessary value for their reproduction; and in countries C and D, there is a situation of super-exploitation, common to underdeveloped countries, where the remuneration to the worker is below the necessary work undertaken by them.

A second difference shown in the figure concerns the high value of the reproduction of labor power in underdeveloped countries C and D compared to the same index in developed countries A and B. This is explained by the observation that the production of both raw materials and food in peripheral countries has been functional to the lowering of the value of the workforce

in industrialized countries (MARINI, 2022b). This dialectic relation center-periphery or North-South expressed by Marini is similar to what some post-colonial and Marxist theorists refer to, although not identically, as (inter)connected or intertwined histories (BHAMBRA, 2010; e.g. BIELER; MORTON, 2018; MORTON, 2007; SUBRAHMANYAM, 1997).

Figure 2: Degrees of exploitation and super-exploitation



Source: Elaborated by author based on Marini (2013b, 2022a).

Marini identified three different mechanisms of super-exploitation in Latin America's dependent capitalism. In addition to the mechanisms of exploitation of labor power—(1) the extension of the work day and (2) the intensification of work—the literature recognizes two more mechanisms of super-exploitation: (3) the partial appropriation of the worker's consumption fund by the capitalist; and (4) the increase in the value of the workforce without a corresponding increase in wages (AMARAL; CARCANHOLO, 2012). While the first two are common in central countries and the latter two would be used sporadically there, while all four would be common in the periphery.

Although the first two mechanisms, extending the working day and intensifying work, are characteristic of production relations in both the center and the periphery, there is a qualitative difference in their expression in underdeveloped countries in terms of the degree of wear and tear

that workers suffer. According to Osorio (2012), the use of the first mechanism in favor of super-exploitation could exceed the limits of the worker and consume, through excessive physical and mental wear and tear, future years of the worker's life.

While extending the working day leads to an increase in absolute surplus value by increasing the time worked, the second mechanism aims to increase the production of surplus value by using greater intensity within the established time. For Osorio (2012), the increase in intensity is accompanied by an increase in productivity. In terms of what an increase in intensity would mean, Osorio (2012) notes that "capital seeks to transform all the 'dead time' in production into times of valorization, speeding up the pace of production, demanding ever greater tasks from the same worker" (p. 57). When exacerbated, increasing the intensity of work, as well as extending the working day, can violate the value of labor power. This is because the increased effort required by this intensification can also reduce the worker's lifespan, affecting their nervous system and/or mental health (OSORIO, 2012).

The value generated from the work necessary for the worker's reproduction constitutes his consumption fund. That said, the third mechanism involves the capitalist converting part of this consumption fund into an accumulation fund. It doesn't therefore concern the creation of surplus value, but rather the conversion of part of the value itself into surplus value. This translates into the payment of wages below the level of what is strictly indispensable, corresponding to the value of the workforce (MARINI, 2011).

The fourth mechanism considers the social-historical nature of the value of labor power. With the development of economic and social formations and changes in the productive forces, there is a tendency for this value to rise, and failure to keep up with wages would lead to an increase in the necessary unpaid work (AMARAL; CARCANHOLO, 2012).

Agency as a category is intertwined with the category of super-exploitation in two senses: both in its genesis and in its subsequent development. Super-exploitation is generated from the power of agency of the local bourgeoisie in choosing this course within the parameters given by the structure, pre-existing in relation to the agents at the time being analyzed. The subsequent development of super-exploitation, i.e. The subsequent development of super-exploitation—i.e. the variations in its intensity and the relative weight of the different mechanisms—takes place within the class struggle, a moment in which the different classes (bourgeoisie, workers, liberal professionals, etc.) seek to shape both the social relations of production through their political

organization and forms of struggle, and in determining the value of the workforce, exemplified by Marini (2013) in the struggle for the appropriation of value, where government policies and demonstrations seek to privilege interests that affect the value of the workforce. In the same vein, Marini (2013) presents the problem of inflation in Brazil in the mid-twentieth century as an inflationary war between the different social classes. As described by the author, Brazilian inflation in the period analyzed represented a struggle for the appropriation of value and was used to take away part of the worker's consumption fund.

Thus, the categories of transfer of surplus and super-exploitation of the workforce would have a double support: the macro-structural support of the capitalist mode of production at world level, and the agential support of the dominant classes. Marini (2022a, p. 139) adds:

As a result, the system's natural tendency will be to exploit the worker's labor power to its very limit, without worrying about creating conditions for him to replenish it, provided that new hands can replace him in the productive process. The tragedy for Latin America's working population is that this assumption was always thoroughly fulfilled: the existence of Indigenous labor reserves (as in Mexico) or of migratory flows derived from the displacement of European labor, spurred by technological progress (as in South America), allowed for a constant increase in the mass of workers up until the beginning of this century.

This is, thus, a situation not easily circumvented within the capitalist system.

In the following subsection, we will work on the category of sub-imperialism as a concrete expression of the agent-structure relationship, based on an economic-social formation that has conquered greater room for maneuver within dependency.

5.12 The second moment: Relations of political forces in dependent capitalism

Gramsci's 1926 essay "Some Aspects of the Southern Question"—on the need to construct a proletarian hegemony in Italy—provides an earlier understanding of what would become the moment of the relations of political forces in his thinking:

The proletariat has itself to adopt this approach for it to become politically effective: that goes without saying. No mass action is possible, if the masses in question are not convinced of the ends they wish to attain and the methods to be applied. The proletariat, in order to become capable as a class of governing, must strip itself of every residue of corporatism, every syndicalist prejudice and incrustation. What does this mean? That, in addition to the need to overcome the distinctions which exist between one trade and another, it is necessary—in order to win the trust and consent of the peasants and of some semi-proletarian urban categories—to overcome certain prejudices and conquer certain forms of egoism

which can and do subsist within the working class as such, even when craft particularism has disappeared. The metal-worker, the joiner, the building-worker, etc., must not only think as proletarians, and no longer as metal-worker, joiner, building-worker, etc.: they must also take a further step. They must think as workers who are members of a class which aims to lead the peasants and intellectuals. Of a class which can win and build socialism only if it is aided and followed by the great majority of these social strata. If this is not achieved, the proletariat does not become the leading class; and these strata (which in Italy represent the majority of the population), remaining under bourgeois leadership, enable the State to resist the proletarian assault and wear it down (GRAMSCI, 1978, p. 448–9).

If this demonstrates that the concept of hegemony may play a positive role in raising proletarian consciousness and constructing the revolution, it is equally important to recognize how it is analytically useful for grasping why the subaltern groups may, more times than not, actively or passively support bourgeois rule.

The second degree, then, refers to the relation of political forces and it considers the level of organization and homogeneity in collective political consciousness achieved. It can be subdivided into three degrees or moments. The lowest and most elementary being the *economic-corporate moment*, it is defined as the moment when the professional group acquires a homogeneous unity, a group consciousness limited to the category, together with the need to organize.

The second moment is that of *solidarity of interests*, in which collective consciousness expands to all the members of the social class and reaches the level of solidarity in interests. Although it is still limited to the economic field, there is already state participation.

The third represents the *hegemonic moment*, when members of a class become aware that the limited corporate interests of their economic class should be transcended to include those of other subordinate groups. Gramsci (1971, p. 181, 182, Q13§17) understands this, as “the most purely political phase, [...] marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures” and this is where the “previously germinated ideologies become ‘party’, come into confrontation and conflict”.

In this *preliminary* moment, when “ideologies become ‘party’”, one manner to conceptualize hegemony is as a *struggle or dispute for hegemonic power* or to analyze the *construction* of hegemony, as defended by Javier Balsa and María Dolores Liaudet (2019). However, what is here being called the *moment of hegemony* is reached when a party or “a single combination” of parties is able:

[...] to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society—bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a “universal” plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups (1971, p. 181–2, Q13§17).

But even though “the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter’s maximum expansion”, it is true that “the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the ‘national’ energies” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 182, Q13§17). I argue, then, that it is important to differentiate the *struggle for hegemony* that represents the movement from the solidarity moment into the hegemonic moment—that is, the struggle as *attempt to achieve* hegemony—from the achievement of hegemony itself.

Part of the literature presents an antagonistic duality between structural hegemony and hegemony as a project, in which the former presents a focus on social structures and the latter on human action. Without positioning himself within the larger philological debate on Gramsci’s hegemony, Jonathan Joseph (2002) highlights the importance of distinguishing “structural aspect of hegemony concerned with social reproduction and an agential aspect that depends upon this, but which represents conscious hegemonic projects and strategies” (JOSEPH, 2002, p. 2). A first aspect to highlight is how Gramsci elaborated the dialectic so as to embrace both understandings—perhaps not in his written works, but certainly in his leitmotiv. And second, this is relevant for analyzing possible disjunctures between “conscious hegemonic projects”—i.e., intentions and motivations of the agents, which generally functions at the levels of practices, as stated before—and “hegemony’s more structural role in securing the cohesion of the social formation”, in an understanding that “the particular hegemonic projects pursued by these groups are not always best suited to” the latter (JOSEPH, 2002, p. 127). This disjuncture, which can also be understood as between agency and deep structures, is particularly important for our discussion on sub-imperialism below.

5.121 Consciousness and the historical bloc

That said, the notion of consciousness is particularly important for the political moment, whether we are speaking of real or false consciousness. Here, we are concerned with how “[t]he

awareness of being part of a particular hegemonic force [i.e. political consciousness] is the first phase of a further and progressive self-consciousness” and its maximum degree expresses the moment when theory and practice come together to result in the “real and complete acquisition of a coherent and unitary conception of the world” (GRAMSCI, 1999, p. 104). Consciousness, then, goes beyond a mere common identity and circumscribes the awareness of shared interests and objectives (GRAMSCI, 2000).

The process of raising collective self-consciousness, however, requires the direction and domination of a hitherto subordinate class (GRAMSCI, 1978). The joining of this subordinate class with others leads to the formation of a historical bloc, where the new ruling and dominant class takes on the problems and interests of the subordinate classes. The process of creating a historical bloc requires an intensive dialogue between leadership and followers, with a prominent role for intellectuals (GRAMSCI, 1978, 2000). Let us return, briefly, to Gramsci’s (1971, p. 5) initial note on the origins of intellectuals:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.

In this regard, it should be noted that although every human being is an intellectual, the *function* of the intellectual is exercised by specific individuals—organic intellectuals. The activity of the intellectual, like that of the worker, is not defined intrinsically, in other words, by the internal characteristics of the activities, but by the work carried out in specific social conditions and relations. It is therefore defined by the needs of the social group vying for leadership, at which point the task arises of creating new organic intellectuals and, at the same time, assimilating and ideologically conquering traditional intellectuals (GRAMSCI, 2000a).

The concept of historical bloc expresses the “unity between nature and spirit (structure and superstructure), unity of opposites and of distincts” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 137). “That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production.” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 366). The constitution of the historical bloc, and the subsequent exercise of hegemony, requires a balance between the consensus of the subordinate classes and domination by the ruling class. Consensus requires, on the one hand, that the ruling class does not disregard the interests and tendencies of the groups it

leads, thus presenting an agenda of a universal nature; and, on the other, that it refuses to use excessive force with those who make up the bloc (GRAMSCI, 2000b).

5.122 Marini in Gramsci's political moment

Marini brings the levels of consciousness of the different classes and class fractions—in closer consonance to Gramsci's political moment in some places than others—and the relationship they have with intellectuals and class organization, in his analytical works. He does not devise his own analytical framework for classifying the levels of consciousness, but his work complements those that differentiate a bourgeois consciousness from a proletarian one—and it is, additionally, in line with the critical realist understanding that “people, although engaging in conscious activity, mostly unconsciously reproduce these structures” (JOSEPH, 2002, p. 9).

Borrowing from Lukácsian terminology, Marini (2013c, p. 163–4) differentiates *possible consciousness* from *real consciousness*:

There is [...] a difference between the theoretical *démarche*, which makes it possible to capture and systematize the basic contradictions of society, and the understanding of these contradictions by the social forces that resent them; using Lukácsian terminology, the *possible* consciousness, which the historical moment makes feasible, does not necessarily coincide with the *real consciousness* of society. Both levels of consciousness find their point of convergence in political practice.

Consciousness, here, is neither a voluntarist nor an economistic outcome, but dependent on historical development and political practice. The “past and present”, to borrow Gramscian terminology, converge in levels of consciousness. In the excerpt, we can also grasp the limitations posed by society's real consciousness, when it does not recognize the real possibilities of political action. But it is in this convergence, necessary for effective change, that we find the role of intellectuals, which Marini sometimes treats as class *representation*, and sometimes as *vanguard*, when dealing with the left-wing movement.

In the following excerpt, Marini demonstrates the disjunction between the Brazilian bourgeoisie's level of consciousness and that of its organic intellectuals and representatives (the technocratic-military cadre that ousted President João Goulart):

The obstacles encountered in implementing the sub-imperialist model were, to a certain extent, unavoidable. If there were differences between the bourgeoisie and the military regime—which in fact there were—this was due, first and foremost, to the fact that the model, although it corresponded to the systematic formulation

of the class interests of the bourgeoisie, emerged from its ideological-political representation—that is: the technocratic-military cadre that took power in 1964. As a class, the bourgeoisie could only have a partial and incomplete awareness of its own interests, much lower than the level of awareness displayed by its representation, so it had to be “convinced” that the model expressed the most appropriate solution to the problems generated by accumulation. To do this, it was necessary to deliver immediate results, and the external obstacles, insofar as they delayed the achievement of these results, caused an initial disconnect between the bourgeois demands and the regime’s general policy.⁹³

Especially worth noting are the intersections expressed—between (a) the levels of structure (micro and meso levels—as the bourgeoisie expected immediacy in benefits), (b) the political and economic dimensions (the ideological-political representation and the materiality of benefits), and (c) the internal and international (the role of external obstacles in realizing internal objectives). Even though the bourgeoisie supported the coup in 1964 (having only partially done so in 1961), the post-coup moment does not express a mechanical adhesion of the class to their apparent representatives.

Related to levels of consciousness is a second possible point of convergence in perspectives, there are several passages⁹⁴ in which Marini (2013b, 2013b, 2019a) places analytical importance in establishing the moments in which either the corporate-economic moment or the solidarity moment reigned, as well as in developing how bourgeois class fraction agency dealt with structural economic barriers in the process.

The last passage demonstrates the *struggle for hegemony* wherein the bourgeois class representation was still needing to convince the bourgeoisie that their *hegemonic project* was in their best interest, but the objective was incomplete and they and the other subordinate classes did not achieve the hegemonic moment. The association of interests remained, at its peak, in the solidarity moment, and never reached a deeper ideological-superstructural level; and, in a second

⁹³ Original: “Os obstáculos encontrados para a implementação do modelo subimperialista eram, até certo ponto, inevitáveis. Se provocamos diferenças entre a burguesia e o regime militar - o que de fato ocorreu -, isso se deve, antes de mais nada, ao fato de que o modelo, apesar de corresponder à formulação sistemática dos interesses de classe da burguesia, surgira de sua representação ideológico-política - ou seja: a equipe tecnocrático-militar que tomou o poder em 1964. Enquanto classe, a burguesia só poderia ter uma consciência parcial e incompleta de seus próprios interesses, muito inferior ao grau de consciência ostentado por sua representação, tendo então que ser “convencida” de que o modelo expressava a solução mais adequada para os problemas gerados pela acumulação. Para isso era necessário apresentar resultados imediatos, e os obstáculos externos, na medida em que atrasavam a obtenção desses resultados, provocaram um afastamento inicial entre as reivindicações burguesas e a política geral do regime.”

⁹⁴ Especially in in “Subdesenvolvimento e Revolução” [Underdevelopment and Revolution] and “A Dialética do Desenvolvimento Capitalista no Brasil” [The Dialectics of Dependent Capitalism in Brazil], but also in his later book *O Reformismo e a Contrarrevolução: Estudos sobre o Chile* [Reformism and Counter-revolution: Studies on Chile].

aspect of the same problem, the historical-bloc-in-creation did not become large enough to encompass a sizeable segment of the population. Two important, and contrasting, indicators of the population's level of support were the anti-communist public demonstrations—the “Marches of the Family with God for Liberty” taken as ideological-political alignment with those who would undertake the coup (MARINI, 2013d, p. 103–5); and the then unpublished report in which the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (Ibope) found that a majority of Brazilians surveyed (in March 1964, the month prior to the coup) supported President Goulart and believed that the structural reforms were necessary and urgent (AMARAL, 2019).

In what we could understand to be the *solidarity moment*, contextualized within the broader economic conjuncture, Marini brings an attempt at constructing an alliance:

[I]t is clear that the truce established between the industrial and agro-export groups during the implementation phase of the Metas Plan resulted in an increase in mutual solidarity, thanks to the influence of foreign capital invested in industry, for whom the growth of export profits mattered much more (MARINI, 2013b, p. 83).⁹⁵

In other words, bourgeois class fractions in Latin American societies will often present antagonistic interests grounded in structural factors specific to dependent societies. Thus, for the solidarity moment to be *in reach*, the economic micro and meso structures must be favorable—at least if it is to endure; that is, the political moment, while not mechanically determined by the economic base, cannot be read as being separated from it.

In another excerpt, Marini points to the importance of the state in consolidating a “fusion of interests”, once again pointing to the place that foreign capital holds: “In practice, the state tends to increase military expenditures, the only effective means of wasteful consumption. This is the reason why the fusion of interests between the military elite and national and foreign capital is permanent and tends to create an increasingly mutual solidarity” (MARINI, 1972a, p. 22). We will see more on this role when discussing sub-imperialism below.

Although I have avoided bringing in Robert W. Cox's contributions to IR Gramscian theory—due especially not only to critiques brought against him but also to his own position of

⁹⁵ Original: “É de fato evidente que a trégua estabelecida entre os grupos industriais e agroexportadores na fase de execução do Plano de Metas ter minou por se traduzir em um aumento da solidariedade mútua, graças à influência do capital estrangeiro investido na indústria, para o qual o crescimento dos lucros da exportação importa muito mais.”

not aspiring to follow anyone else's approach beyond inspiration (SCHECHTER, 2002)—there is a specific contribution that is useful here for differentiating the *struggle for hegemony* from *hegemony achieved*. In his 1981 seminal article, Cox (1981) differentiates two categories of *ideas*: intersubjective ideas and collective images. The former has been greatly criticized by Marxist and Gramscian scholars for its meta-theoretical foundations in hermeneutics (JOSEPH, 2008)—in which the ideational level is disconnected from the material. However, we can draw an imperfect parallel in terms of ideologies that are more deeply embedded (as I have been speaking of thus far) to speak of this level of ideas. When referring to the more deeply embedded ideas of false consciousness, Marini speaks of *mystifications*.

Here, I am mostly concerned with his *collective images*, as it allows us to analytically work. The concept has a more limited scope as it circumscribes the way in which specific social groups see the nature and legitimacy of the prevailing political order. Collective images, thus, are diverse and the study of clashing collective images presents alternatives for the development of the social order, as well as allowing us to question the possible material and institutional bases for the emergence of an alternative structure (COX, 1981). The concept, then, is especially relevant for analyzing the solidarity moments and the *struggle for hegemony* where there are competing hegemonic projects.

In some of his texts, Marini presents and develops various collective images that played an incisive role in the class struggle, many of which were sedimented in doctrines (General Golbery do Couto e Silva's doctrine of loyal bargaining) and in different national projects (the national-developmental, the revolutionary, the sub-imperialist), and expressed in government policies (conciliation policy) and in the bourgeoisie's anti-communist campaign. Faced with this campaign and the radicalization of the demands of the working class, sectors of the middle class would have reacted with panic (MARINI, 2013c, 2019a).

As for ideologies at the more embedded level (intersubjective meanings), although he does not go into much detail in his analysis, Marini presents a statement by Chancellor Leites da Cunha that expresses an effort to suppress the ideological meaning of national security with a technocratic-military collective image:

“The orthodox and rigid conception of national sovereignty [...] was formulated at a time when nations did not combine their responsibilities with an obligation to cooperate with each other in pursuit of common goals.” The chancellor of the Brazilian military government also advocated “strengthening multilateral

instruments to defend the most American political institution—representative democracy”. And [Leitão da Cunha] clarified: “Few have any doubt that the mechanisms provided for in the Charter of the Organization of American States against open aggression or attacks are entirely inadequate for the new situations produced by subversion that transcends national borders” (MARINI, 2013b, p. 119–20).

In a later speech, developing this campaign, Marshal Castelo Branco defended the need to redefine the concept of borders; previously geographically delimited, they should now be seen as *ideological borders*. This reconceptualization, and with it the reaffirmation of the collective technocratic-military image, justified recognizing communist threats in one country as a threat to the entire American continent, consequently emphasizing the right to external intervention, as long as it was internal to the region and the ideology (MARINI, 2013b, p. 120).

A third moment in which Marini (2013b, 2013e, 2013f, 2015b, 2019a, 2022a, 2022c) brings deeply embedded ideological meanings into his analysis is in his critique of dominant and competing ideologies; for example, the neo-developmental ideology that sought to improve the terms of trade without facing the structural limitations presented by the ideological meaning of having *exchange value* as the basis of international economic relations. This ideological meaning would have implications for the economic moment by defining the way of doing trade in an intersubjectivity that is based on the transfer of value. Thus, it is in these and other cases that Marini analytically develops the role of collective images and shared ideological meanings in their relation to class interests and agency as such, albeit in other terms, that is, without using the Coxian nomenclature.

5.123 Historical bloc or power bloc? The role of consciousness

This might be a good moment to contrapose Nicos Poulantzas concept *power bloc* to Gramsci’s *historical bloc*. Both provide analytical value in dependent capitalism. I would propose, however, that they figure best into different *political moments* in Gramsci’s framework, and even into different analytical levels of structure. The power bloc as a concept is very useful in categorizing alliances between class fractions and/or social forces. Although Marini does not utilize the concept, he often makes use of its underlying elements when speaking to the alliances formed by the different class fractions—especially the agro-export sector, the industrial sector, and foreign capital. Power blocs, in this way, are most easily related to the solidarity moment, where

these fractions have understood that there is something to be gained when they align their interests. In both these aspects—the formation of alliances and the solidarity moment—I defend that the power bloc concept is most useful for conjunctural analyses.

The historical bloc, on the other hand, speaks best to the hegemonic moment, when structure and superstructure have formed a unity (beyond an alignment) and a certain class consciousness (whether bourgeois or proletarian) has set in ubiquitously. The historical bloc more often partakes in an organic movement and is likely to remain at the mesostructural level; it cannot be as easily circumscribed within the notion of alliance as this bears a strong conjunctural incidence.

When considering conscious agency and its relation to different levels of structure, we can place the notion of *alliances* within that level of practices, of which agents have immediate awareness. The ideological element in hegemony, however, is best placed in a deeper level of structure—while consciousness may speak to the subordinate groups identification with the interests of the hegemonic group, they are not necessarily conscious of the actual relation they bear with the latter. For example, in US-American hegemony, significant segments of the working class have traditionally believed that their interests and that of the bourgeois classes are aligned. The same happens with large segments of European working classes, but the ideology is much more deeply embedded in the USA, exemplified by the low numbers of unionization. This has been changing, however, since the Great Recession of 2007-2008, demonstrated by great popular support on the left and right for the presidential candidates who successfully campaigned on an “anti-establishment” platform, where “establishment” represents the state-corporate civil society relation.

Although we saw broad popular support for the Workers’ Party (PT) administrations in Brazil (less for Dilma’s first administration than Lula’s two), the support of the middle classes and fractions of the bourgeoisie were still contested; and the broad support that it did garner did not last for decades, as has been seen in the US historical bloc comprised by the unity of the Republican and Democratic Parties.

The marked difference between the two, I argue, is the level of consciousness achieved in the political moment. In the US-American historical bloc, the working and middle classes had achieved a higher level of *false* consciousness; and in PT’s Brazil, there was a power bloc that came together, but fractions were not convinced of the moral and intellectual leadership of the

dominant fraction or the PT bourgeois representation—they were, rather, able to grasp its greater relative power and the shared interests at the conjunctural level.

The analysis that Marini develops is very much in line with Gramsci's (2000b) analytical proposal within the political moment of power relations, demonstrating the errors of the Brazilian left. To demonstrate his thinking in this direction, let us take as an example an analysis by Marini (2013) regarding the errors of the Brazilian left: the proletariat, under the leadership of the PCB, would have had a subordinate position in the class struggle, and the role of class representation, according to Marini (2013), is not to anticipate the masses, nor to direct all their actions. In line with Gramsci (2000a) regarding the role of intellectuals, he argues that their role would be to support the development of class consciousness, to fight alongside them, and to present forms of organization, giving political direction to their movements.

5.124 The political moment intervenes in the economic

In its highest level, “[t]he political struggle of the class and its party is one which is conducted in terms of establishing an alternative hegemony.” In addition to encompassing the economic and strictly political levels, it will leave the solidarity level as the struggle enters the terrain of the intellectual and moral spheres. Sassoon (2019, p. 218) clarifies:

It is not the site of the struggle which makes it political or not. A struggle in the economic arena may be political if it is part of an overall strategy aimed at the establishment of the hegemony of a class, while a class may act within the political arena but in a non-political way. It is the way in which questions are posed, in a ‘universal’ rather than a corporative manner which makes the struggle political or not.

It is within this understanding of political struggle that we should read “the thesis that foreign capital plays a complementary role to domestic investment and therefore contributes to the development of the dependent economy” (MARINI, 2012c, p. 38)⁹⁶. This false consciousness, which Marini often includes in his analyses as *mystification*, is augmented by the different time

⁹⁶ Original: “Tal como colocamos o problema, é evidente que consideramos o capital estrangeiro como um elemento a mais que intervém na formação da massa de capital dinheiro que dá lugar ao processo de acumulação. Isso pode levar à conclusão equivocada de que é certa a tese que sustenta que o capital estrangeiro cumpre um papel complementar ao investimento interno e contribui, portanto, para o desenvolvimento da economia dependente.”

intervals at play. In the concrete situation of imminent economic crisis, the different political players need to resolve the problem of a lack of liquidity, for example. The state representatives need to consider balance of payment obstacles and domestic capitalists need liquidity for their operations. It was in this context that, Marini argues, foreign capital became more enticing to the bourgeoisie and sectors of the state. The influx of foreign capital represented a temporary fix but one that had medium and long-term requirements. Contextualizing this temporal disjunction in 1960s Brazil, Marini wrote:

[...] the inflow of foreign capital slowed down, while, after the investments had matured, the international groups once again put pressure on the balance of payments in order to export their profits. At this time—which was particularly serious due to the downward trend in export prices—Brazil's industrial expansion would be held back in two ways: externally, by the balance of payments crisis—which left no choice but to devalue the currency, making essential imports even more difficult, or to contain the export of profits and expand the international market for Brazilian products—and internally, by the exhaustion of the market for industrial products, which could only be expanded by reforming the agrarian structure (MARINI, 2013b, p. 85–6).⁹⁷

It is important to underscore the power that foreign capital presented—not in directly forcing a certain behavior, but in minimizing, even if temporarily, the contradictions felt within Brazil's economy—it diminished the growing fracture between the interests of the industrial and agribusiness export-oriented sectors.

However, the incoming foreign capital would need, in the future, foreign exchange to exit as remuneration (*transfer of value*), adding another element of future demand for a limited stock of foreign exchange. In the following excerpt, Marini, having provided an economic structure at the meso level that begun in 1930s Brazil, writes:

The governments of Café Filho and Juscelino Kubitschek, which followed the serious political crisis of 1954, [...] the result of a compromise between the dominant classes in conflict, tried to find a formula for a deal that would enable Brazil to overcome the economic crisis without leading to a definitive

⁹⁷ Original: “[...] diminui-se a entrada de capital estrangeiro, ao mesmo tempo em que, passando o período de maturação dos investimentos, os grupos internacionais voltaram a pressionar a balança de pagamentos para exportar seus lucros. Neste momento - grave sobretudo devido à tendência à queda dos preços de exportação - a expansão industrial brasileira se veria contida de duas maneiras: externamente, pela crise da balança de pagamentos - que não deixa outras alternativas que não desvalorizar a moeda, dificultando ainda mais as importações essenciais, ou conter a exportação de lucros e ampliar o mercado internacional para os produtos brasileiros -; e internamente, pelo esgotamento do mercado para os produtos industriais, que só poderia ser ampliado através da reforma da estrutura agrária.”

confrontation between the positions involved. The solution chosen was to open up the Brazilian economy to US capital in order to break the knot created in the foreign exchange sector (MARINI, 2013b, p. 115).⁹⁸

It should be noted that capital controls were greatly debated in Latin America at the time, as there was much concern regarding their possible detrimental effects as these related to imperialism and autonomy. Marini reflects the agency present in these processes well. The disparity between the political and economic moments is more evident when the previous excerpt is read alongside the following one:

The structural crisis of the Brazilian economy, once the palliative effects of the policy of importing foreign currency had ended, exploded into a real industrial crisis that dragged the country into depression. In such a situation, it was inevitable that the social contradictions that had manifested themselves in 1953-54 would re-emerge with much greater force, especially those that pushed the masses of workers and the middle classes in the cities to fight to improve their standard of living (MARINI, 2013b, p. 116).⁹⁹

The easing of capital controls, then, were meant to resolve some immediate political and economic problems; but these had only been delayed and would, in actuality, *add to* the weight of the previous difficulties.

Returning to the above-mentioned thesis regarding the “positive role” that foreign capital supposedly plays in dependent economies, Marini (2012c, p. 38) argues:

While it is clear that foreign capital is integrated *into* and determines *the* capital circuit of the dependent economy and, consequently, its process of capitalist development, we must not lose sight of the fact that it represents a return of capital in relation to what it previously drained from the dependent economy; a return that is, moreover, partial. Thus, it can be seen that in the period between 1960 and 1967, most US direct investment did not go to dependent countries, but 70% went to developed countries, particularly those in Western Europe and Canada. However, during this period when they received only 30% of US investment, the

⁹⁸ Original: “Os governos de Café Filho e Juscelino Kubitschek, que se sucedem à grave crise política de 1954, [...] frutos do compromisso entre as classes dominantes em conflito, tratarão de encontrar uma fórmula de transação que permita superar a crise econômica, sem levar a um confronto definitivo entre as posições implicadas. O recurso escolhido foi abrir a economia brasileira aos capitais estadunidenses, a fim de romper o nó criado no setor cambial.”

⁹⁹ Original: “A crise estrutural da economia brasileira, uma vez terminados os efeitos paliativos da política de importação de divisas, explodiu, assim, em uma verdadeira crise industrial que arrastou o país à depressão. Em tal situação, era inevitável que as contradições sociais que se haviam manifestado nos anos 1953-54 voltassem a se apresentar com muito mais força, sobretudo aquela que impulsionavam as massas operárias e a classe média das cidades para que lutassem por melhorar seu nível de vida.”

dependent countries gave the United States 60% of the total income that the country received from abroad in the form of profits, interest and royalties.¹⁰⁰

Given the perceived benefits, expressed in the short-term, the disconnect between policy and impact often does not find its way into popular consciousness. This is most evident in the regular characterization of period 1968-1973 as the “Brazilian miracle” (MARINI, 2013a, p. 29, 36).

5.13 The third moment: Military forces in dependent capitalism

The relations of military forces represent the third degree of Gramscian theory. The concrete opportunity defines its immediate importance. It is subdivided into two levels: the military or military-technical level, which represents accumulated military-material capacities; and the politico-military level, which refers to the political capacity to determine military reflexes in society. It could be expressed in actions that force the disintegration or dilution of a hegemonic military force (GRAMSCI, 2000b).

Marini develops his analysis in the sense to demonstrate the relation between what Gramsci classifies as the military moment and the dependent conditions found within society. In other words, Marini also deems the military moment as especially crucial, but not untethered from the political and economic moments. For example, he compares the social conditions of the 1961 failed coup to those of the 1964 effective coup. The political moment was particularly evident, as the President garnered more ostentatious support in the former than in the latter. There was a popular outcry in 1961 when the military attempted to transform Brazil into a parliamentary system of government to diminish Goulart’s political power, and the one-million March for the Family in 1964 denounced him (the large popular demonstrations against the Dilma administration in 2016 provide a relevant point for grasping the 2016 coup as well). Additionally, the 1961 failed coup did not count with unanimous support from the bourgeoisie, while the 1964 coup did. The 2016

¹⁰⁰ Original: “Sendo evidente que o capital estrangeiro se integra ao e determina o ciclo do capital da economia dependente e, por conseguinte, seu processo de desenvolvimento capitalista, não se deve perder de vista que ele representa uma restituição de capital em relação ao que drenou anteriormente da economia dependente; restituição que é, além do mais, parcial. Assim, pode-se observar que, no período entre 1960 e 1967, a maior parte do investimento direto norte-americano não se dirigiu aos países dependentes, sendo 70% dele destinados para os países desenvolvidos, particularmente os da Europa Ocidental e o Canadá. Entretanto, nesse período em que receberam apenas 30% do investimento norte-americano, os países dependentes aportaram aos Estados Unidos 60% do total de rendimentos que o país recebeu do exterior na modalidade de lucros, juros e royalties.”

parliamentary coup, however, did not count with unanimous bourgeois support, as the agribusiness representatives (part of the dominant fraction in the power bloc) were split.

In this regard, Marini (2013b, p. 104) wrote:

When, a few days later, the rebellion of the sailors and their fraternization with the workers at the Metalworkers' Union in Rio de Janeiro broke down military discipline and gave the right-wing a pretext to evoke the soviets, Goulart's support mechanism broke down. The military faction gave him to understand that they would no longer support him if he did not dissolve the CGT and liquidate the left-wing organizations. Giving in to the military meant becoming their prisoner, and a prisoner of no value, since Goulart was not unaware that all his political strength rested on the prestige that the unity with the unions gave him. On the other hand, always confident that his victory depended on his military superiority, Goulart had not created the effective conditions for a popular uprising. The behavior of the majority of the left—especially the PCB, with its theory of peaceful revolution and its parliamentary idiocy—had the same effect, disarming the masses.¹⁰¹

From the failed and successful attempts, Marini drew what we can classify as two points of the military moment's analytical connection with the economic and political moments. In other words, there are two necessary conditions for a successful military intervention: (1) it must correspond to an objective situation of crisis (economic) in the society; and (2) it must be inserted in the game of political forces in conflict:

The failed attempt in 1961 clearly expressed that a military intervention could only be successful if: a) it corresponded to an objective situation of crisis in Brazilian society; and b) it was part of the game of conflicting political forces. The support that the military received from the petty bourgeoisie—expressed in the “Family March”, which brought together a million demonstrators in Rio on April 2, 1964—is a clear sign that the action of the armed forces corresponded to an objective social reality. Another confirmation is the unanimous support of the ruling classes (MARINI, 2013b, p. 105).

¹⁰¹ Original: “Quando, dias depois, a rebelião dos marinheiros e sua confraternização com os trabalhadores no Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos, no Rio de Janeiro, quebraram a disciplina militar e deram à direita pretextos para evocar os soviets, o dispositivo de sustentação de Goulart se rompeu. A fração militar deu-lhe a entender que não o seguiria apoiando caso não dissolvesse o CGT e liquidasse as organizações de esquerda. Ceder aos militares significava converter-se em seu prisioneiro, e um prisioneiro sem valor, uma vez que Goulart não ignorava que toda sua força política repousava no prestígio que a união com os sindicatos lhe conferia.

Por outro lado, confiando sempre que sua vitória dependia da superioridade que tivesse em termos militares, Goulart não havia criado as condições efetivas para uma insurreição popular. O comportamento da maioria da esquerda - sobretudo do PCB, com sua teoria da revolução pacífica e seu cretinismo parlamentar - teve o mesmo efeito, desarmando as massas.”

As demonstrated in the first excerpt, the military moment is not solely determined by the economic and political moments, but displays its own political moment, which we can subscribe within Gramsci's politico-military level. A particularly enlightening passage in Gramsci's (1971, p. 183) *Analysis of Situations*, he writes:

The oppressed nation will therefore initially oppose the dominant military force with a force which is only "politico-military", that is to say a form of political action which has the virtue of provoking repercussions of a military character in the sense: 1. that it has the capacity to destroy the war potential of the dominant nation from within; 2. that it compels the dominant military force to thin out and disperse itself over a large territory, thus nullifying a great part of its war potential.

Although he is speaking of military relations between a dominant and an oppressed nation, we can transpose the idea to the domestic context of contested politico-military relations *within* an arm of a country's armed forces. In a dialogue between Gramsci and Marini, there is no reason to believe that Gramsci would not be open to this, given (a) his general openness to criticality as an epistemological principal, but also (b) the value he attributes to considering particularities of circumstance. In the Latin American scenario, given the intercontinental ideology of *ideological frontiers* and communism as a common enemy and the fact that the armed forces were becoming themselves spaces of contestation, it is imperative to have an analytical framework capable of explaining the politico-military *within* the military unit of analysis.

In this sense, Marini brings the rebellion of the sailors (political-microstructure) against the military discipline (political-mesostructure) as a politico-military level that was essential for determining the efficacy of the military moment—not only against the two necessary wider political and economic conditions, but in and of itself as well—for its direct decisiveness as well. In other words, the socialist political organizing that occurs in the second (political) moment must factor in the politico-military level of the military moment as well. One of President Goulart's mistakes was precisely in not standing by the soldiers and sailors in their rebellions against those with higher patents, a group that was more adamant in their anti-communist and pro-US ideology. Similarly, President Allende of Chile moved to disarm the masses when he should have strengthened their politico-military capacity; and compromised by giving General Pinochet more power in his administration (MARINI, 2019b). In both cases, the governments of Brazil and Chile acted to appease the military command; and the consequence was a military coup that led to profound transformations in each country—but transformations of the revolutionary-restoration type, discussed below, which has significant impacts in demobilizing social movements and

restructuring the university's role from a critical commitment to the population to adopting one of predominantly supporting the status quo.

Also important is the domestic-international nexus. A first contribution by Marini, emphasized in different moments but also in his specific analysis of the military coup, argues that “[a]n analysis of the facts clearly shows that those who see Brazil’s current military regime as the result of external action are mistaken”¹⁰² (MARINI, 2013b, p. 103). He conciliates this, however, with the “‘foreign’ character of the military regime” and to the relevance of US foreign influence as a factor in analysis due to its impact in the formation of military forces,

[...] through the work of the US Embassy in Rio and organizations like IBAD, but also through the policy of linking Brazil’s armed forces to the Pentagon’s strategy. The military agreement between the two countries (signed in 1942 and extended in 1954), the standardization of armaments (1955), the creation of continental bodies such as the Inter-American Defense College (1961), the instruction and training missions, all of this gradually created a military elite inclined to approach Brazilian problems from the perspective of the strategic interests of the United States. Through a center of irradiation – the Brazilian War College [Escola Superior de Guerra], to which Castelo Branco and other military leaders of the current regime belonged - theories such as “internal communist aggression” and “revolutionary war”, created by the French in their military campaign in Indochina, were disseminated. The spirit of caste and paternalism that characterizes the Latin American military did the rest, leading the Brazilian armed forces to occupy the power vacuum that had been created (MARINI, 2013b, p. 108–9).¹⁰³

Thus, far from simplistically attributing the puppeteer metaphor of the imperialist hand guiding the internal actions of the peripheral state, Marini analyzes the domestic-international *within* the military moment at the domestic and regional units.

Gramsci (2000b) also reiterates that when a development process does not go through all three stages, there can be an inoperative situation with contradictory results. An opportunity for

¹⁰² Original: “A análise dos fatos mostra claramente que aqueles que veem o atual regime militar do Brasil como o resultado de uma ação externa estão equivocados.”

¹⁰³ Original: “caráter estrangeiro do regime militar” and “através da atuação da Embaixada dos Estados Unidos no Rio e de organismos como o IBAD, mas também através da política de vinculação das forças armadas do Brasil à estratégia do Pentágono. O acordo militar entre os dois países (assinado em 1942 e ampliado em 1954), a padronização dos armamentos (1955), a criação de organismos continentais, como o Colégio Interamericano de Defesa (1961), as missões de instrução e de treinamento, tudo isso criou progressivamente uma elite militar inclinada a enfocar os problemas brasileiros a partir da perspectiva dos interesses estratégicos dos Estados Unidos. Através de um centro de irradiação - a Escola Superior de Guerra, à qual Castelo Branco e outros chefes militares do atual regime pertenceram - foram difundidas teorias como a da “agressão comunista interna” e a da “guerra revolucionária”, criadas pelos franceses em sua campanha militar na Indochina. O espírito de casta e o paternalismo, que caracterizam os militares latino-americanos, fizeram o resto, levando as forças armadas brasileiras a ocupar o vazio de poder que se criara.”

change opened up in the sphere of economic relations, if self-consciousness is not developed in the sphere of political relations, can be lost and result in the former regaining control.

Although the *first moment of social relations* is easily relatable to the economic structure and the *second moment of political relations* to the political superstructure; and some parallel has been drawn tying the former to the *meso and macro structural* levels and the latter to the *micro* level or *conjuncture*, the economic and political cannot be separated so neatly. First, because they have a closer dialectical relation than what that separation might imply. But also, because there are relevant political superstructures at the meso and macro levels, as well as economic structures working at the micro level.

5.2 Underdevelopment: Passive Revolution and Sub-Imperialism

Although bearing significant differences with the concept of underdevelopment, Gramsci's concept of passive revolution is worth introducing here due to similarities it presents for thinking the two theorists' rhythms of thought. First, some potentially jarring differences: underdevelopment is largely an economic concept with political elements and passive revolution might be best characterized as a political concept with economic elements—and thus best situated in the *political moment*. Second: underdevelopment is characterized by an economic-structural imposition at the international level—albeit with internal political agency that sustains it; and passive revolution is developed by internal political forces—but within the larger capitalist context of unequal and uneven development. Following Gramsci's leitmotiv, however, the appropriate manner to consider the relations would be in a dialectical, therefore non-static, fashion. Or, in meta-theoretical terms, without granting ontological precedence to either unit (domestic and international) or moment (political or economic). Thus, in both Gramsci and Marini, the starting point for both should be the international, while analysis focuses *on the domestic* through its connections with the international.

More specifically, passive revolution is a process of political appropriation of state-modernizing tendencies from abroad, where “[k]ey here is the role of the state in displacing social groups in leading a process of renewal” (HESKETH, 2017, p. 399, referencing GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 105–6, Q15§59). It can, thus, also be conceptualized as a dialectic between revolution and restoration, where there is some transformation (revolution)—in the sense of fundamental

reorganization of social relations, but with strong continuities, specifically in the sense of class domination maintained by taking over popular initiatives (HESKETH, 2017).

In addition to the potential for developing further complementarities between the economic and the political, passive revolution or revolution-restoration presents an additional, crucial point of intersection: precisely in the temporal element inherent in the concepts of passive revolution and dependency—i.e., in how they allow us to factor in, analytically, the relation between micro, meso, and macro levels of structure. Gramsci (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 109) writes: “One may apply to the concept of passive revolution (documenting it from the Italian Risorgimento) the interpretative criterion of molecular changes which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes.” Both concepts are helpful, then, for grasping how changes in the microstructure or mesostructure allow for continuity in the meso or macro level, respectively.

A second important similarity is in the concepts usefulness for grasping the disjunctures or fractures within internal or domestic developments following international pressures. In Gramsci’s analysis of the Italian Risorgimento, passive revolution pointed to the lack of an “organic link between urban and rural areas”, or the “important divide between the urban North and the rural South that, far from being overcome, was in fact perpetuated with unification, with a parasitic industrial North exploiting the agrarian South” (HESKETH, 2017, p. 400). MTD speaks, similarly, on the fractures between production in dependent capitalism and the needs of its societies. In both situations, there is a lack of organic connection between the internal elements of each society, concerning the political and economic organization of the societies undergoing a passive revolutions and/or underdevelopment.

Morton’s (2007, p. 99) brings additional elements for considering connections between Gramsci and Marini. He defines passive revolution as “a theory of the survival and reorganisation of state identity through which social relations are reproduced in new forms consonant with capitalist property relations” which is “pivotal in demonstrating how Italian and wider European state formation was shaped by the causal conditioning of ‘the international’”; and, while he points to “developments linked to the French Revolution; social forces associated with Fascism; or the growing dominance of Anglo-Saxon capitalism”, we could bring in other causal elements from the regional and international spheres.

5.21 *Sub-imperialism as historical phenomenon and category*

The new international division of labor (IDL), a phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s, is one of the causal mechanisms of the international that Marini related to the emergence of economic and political *sub-centers* of world capitalist accumulation. The sub-centers occupy an intermediate position between the center and the periphery but have peculiarities that differentiate them from the category of semi-periphery.¹⁰⁴

In the post-World War II period, along with the high liquidity of capital, there was significant transfer of production activities, already outdated by technological advances in the center, to the industrial park of several peripheral countries. In Latin America, this led to a rise in the organic composition of capital to a medium level in certain countries, particularly Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico (LUCE, 2015; MARINI, 1977). However, not all sub-centers would become sub-imperialist regional powers.

Theotônio dos Santos, drawing on Marini's participation in "POLOP's analytical tradition, of which he was one of the main founders," he frames the development of the category within Marini's arguments around "the inevitable capitulation of the Brazilian ruling class to the democratic and nationalist tasks that could make the country's autonomous national development possible." It was through the category of sub-imperialism that Marini

[...] showed that the nascent Brazilian financial capital, which emerged in the midst of a strong dependence on international capital, would have to face the contradiction between its expansionist tendency—in the search for new markets for its investments and products—and its subordinate and dependent condition on international capital.

While aspects of this contradiction can be found in other Latin American socio-economic formations, specifically the sub-centers but also others that export capital, the first specificity here is the strong relation between Brazilian financial capital and international capital. A second specificity is around the notion of expansionist tendency, which will be discussed below.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion on the distinctions between semi-periphery and sub-imperialism, see Seabra and Bueno (2012); on semi-periphery, sub-center, and sub-imperialism, see Luce, (2007; 2011). As no need to develop this differentiation presents itself at the moment, and because there are MTD theorists who use the term semi-periphery, I will treat the latter and the notion of sub-center as synonyms.

A first point to highlight is that the category should not be mischaracterized by simplifying it to signify a mere lesser degree of imperialist practices, as the prefix *sub* may suggest. The category requires a much greater degree of cohesion of elements—designating sub-imperialism as a *totality* “not equal to the sum of its parts” and which “only exists in the dialectic that arises out of the articulation of the historical determinations that constitute its essence” (LUCE, 2015, p. 29). Additionally, some elements are not prevalent in imperialism—and presents, in a Gramscian sense, a unity that cannot be dismantled.

As a phenomenon, sub-imperialism is a viable path, a possibility grounded on the laws of dependent capitalism; and it is, therefore, structured on the super-exploitation of labor power and the transfer of surplus. Given the higher *average organic composition of capital*, this opened the possibility of trying to ameliorate the fracture between production and the realization of value¹⁰⁵ and the general contradictions of dependent capitalism. And, similar to the concept of hegemony, it presents a unity of structure and superstructure. It is also an expression of the relation between agency and structure, in which the phenomenon arises through specific actions in the political moment within particular parameters set in the economic and political moments, expressed in the following citation:

Subimperialism is the perverse expression of a phenomenon resulting from the differentiation of the world economy. It is based on the internationalization of capital, which led to the replacement of a simple division of labor labor—expressed in the center-periphery relationship delineated by CEPAL—by a much more complex system. In that new system, the diffusion of manufacturing, with a higher average, with a higher average organic composition of capital—i.e., the relationship between the means of production and the labor force—gave rise to economic (and political) subcenters that were relatively autonomous, although still subordinate to the global dynamics imposed by the great centers. Like Brazil, countries such as Argentina, Israel, Iran, Iraq, and South Africa have assumed a subimperialist character at particular moments in their recent evolution, while other subcenters, such as Mexico and Venezuela in the case of Latin America have functioned similarly, but to a lesser extent (MARINI, 1992b, p. 41).

Sub-imperialism, then, expresses a moment in which the socio-economic formation has not overcome its dependent status and that, rather than attempting to overcome it, the state is developing a political project that seeks a higher *dependent* position *within* the hierarchical

¹⁰⁵ As Ouriques (1996 apud LUCE, 2011) points out, there is controversy over the diagnosis of a crisis of realization in the Brazilian economy. However, it is not appropriate to go into it here as it is not within the scope of this work.

capitalist system. In this sense, sub-imperialism is as much an economic category as a political one, since it refers to the ordering of a system of power. As imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, sub-imperialism is the highest stage of *dependent* capitalism—one in which that sub-center “establishes a sub-regional division benefiting sub-imperialist capital visible by the appropriation of the surplus value of weaker nations” (LUCE, 2015, p. 31)

In his philological study of Marini’s oeuvre, Mathias Luce (2007, 2011, 2015) systematized the different elements of the category of *sub-imperialism* and of the historical phenomenon. The phenomenon is understood as a combination of seven elements that intertwine the economic and political dimensions as well as the domestic (classes and state), the regional, and the international:

The first is a dependent country’s accession (among which are those of Type A in Vania Bambirra’s typology of dependent industrialization [(BAMBIRRA, 2019)]) to regional sub-centre status in response to global accumulation patterns through its transformation into a sub-centre of heavy industry with a certain domestic level of production and financial capitalist operation.¹⁰⁶ The second element is bourgeois unity through displacing internal contradictions. The third is the formulation of a national sub-imperialist plan while the fourth involves formation of national capitalist trusts that tie the dependent economy to imperialism via state intermediation. The fifth element is the dependent economic condition that not only transfers value to imperialist economies but also appropriates the surplus value of weaker nations (LUCE, 2015, p. 33–4).

In addition to those five, Luce (2015) also presents what I would call the sixth and seventh elements: the dependent state’s relatively autonomous expansionist policy—which Luce (2007, 2011), at other moments, referred to as “regional hegemony” or the establishment of a “regional sub-system of power”); and the logic of antagonistic cooperation in its relations with the dominant imperialism state.

For Luce (2011, 2015), there was a missing link that would sew together the general variables of dependency and the specific ones of sub-imperialism—the notion of the pattern of capital reproduction, first put forward by Marini (1982) and further developed by Osorio (2012a) and others (e.g. RAPOSO; ALMEIDA FILHO; AMARAL, 2022). More specifically, Luce (2011)

¹⁰⁶ This included an intermediate degree of the organic composition of capital, which, for Marini (1977), could be inferred by the index of the manufacturing industry’s participation in the gross domestic product (GDP) of at least 25%. Disregarding Yugoslavia (because it was the only socialist country considered) and the Philippines (because *maquilas* predominated in this segment), only six countries remained among the 92 underdeveloped countries considered in a survey by UNCTAD in the 1960s.

conceives sub-imperialism a possible form that the pattern of capital reproduction can assume. This missing link allows us to bring greater flexibility into an analysis of sub-imperialism within different temporal contexts, considering the changing circumstances, at the meso level, of the IDL and as well as in predominant modes of accumulation.

5.211 The market problem and patterns of capital reproduction

According to Marini (2013g, p. 256), “the axis of the sub-imperialist design is substantiated by the market problem.”¹⁰⁷ The transformations that take place at the level of the international capitalist system bring about the new IDL, which some states have greater or lesser relative capacity to shape and impact. More specific to dependent capitalist countries with an intermediate organic composition of capital is that problem that

[b]oth extraordinary profits and super-exploitative wages exacerbate the concentration of capital and the distortion of income distribution. That, in turn, distorts the realization of capital in the final phase of circulation, fueling the expansion of luxury good production and the transfer of extraordinary profits abroad (LATIMER, 2022a, p. 90–1).

Confronting contradictions of dependent capitalism, Marini focuses on capturing the mechanisms chosen by the state to try resolve the problems of realization. Luce (2011) uncovered what he came to call the tripartite realization schema, in which Marini emphasized a policy orientation which favored the realization of Brazilian capital via (a) the state through a policy of government investments, subsidies, and credits, which allowed for an expansion in the production of luxury consumer goods and the development of a military-industrial complex; (b) the foreign market, which would open up space (now in the dependent countries) for the export of manufactured goods and capital from the sub-center; and (3) domestic consumption of luxury goods by the middle and upper strata of society—to meet the “high” sphere of circulation (MARINI, 2022b, p. 140)—fostered by a more favorable credit policy and regressive redistribution of income.

Luce (2011) argues that the notion of the pattern of capital reproduction is the missing link needed to integrate the different elements and categories of sub-imperialism into a unified

¹⁰⁷ Original: “O eixo do esquema subimperialista está constituído pelo problema do mercado.”

theoretical body. The notion of the pattern of capital reproduction, as affirmed by Osorio (2012a, p. 63, emphasis in original),

[...] emerges to account for the ways in which capital reproduces itself in specific historical periods and in specific geo-territorial spaces, both in the center and in the semi-periphery and periphery, or in regions within each of them, considering the characteristics of its metamorphosis as it passes through the spheres of production and circulation (as money, means of production, labor power, new commodities, increased money), *integrating the process of valorization* (increase in value and money invested) and *its incarnation in specific use values* (pants, radios, cell phones, tanks), as well as the *contradictions* that these processes generate.¹⁰⁸

It represents, then, a *lower level of abstraction* that is able to mediate between higher levels—such as the general hierarchical structure of the international capitalist system, in which sub-imperialism plays a role—and the concrete level.

Filgueiras (2021, p. 40) adds that additional attributes are “closely associated with the bloc in power”, including:

[...] the nature and type of regulation of the capital–labor relationship, the nature of intercapitalist relations, the state’s relationship to the process of accumulation, the process of incorporation of technical progress (the endogenous capacity to generate innovations and whether there is an industrial and technological policy), the method of financing accumulation (public or private and/or external), the structure of ownership and distribution of income and wealth and the content of social policies, the country’s international role, and the types of organization and political representation of the distinct classes and class fractions.

While different authors (FILGUEIRAS, 2021, 2018; OSORIO, 2012a, 2012b; RAPOSO; ALMEIDA FILHO; AMARAL, 2022; SOTELO VALENCIA, 2017, p. 131) have provided valuable contributions to delimiting the specific historical patterns of capital reproduction in Latin America, these are less pertinent to our discussion. The typology, based on an attempt to represent the notion of reproduction pattern more concretely, is intended to represent the IDL within a more focused perspective that integrates geo-territorial spaces and specific historical periods.

¹⁰⁸ Original: “surge para dar conta das formas como o capital se reproduz em períodos históricos específicos e em espaços geoterritoriais determinados, tanto no centro como na semiperiferia e na periferia, ou em regiões no interior de cada um deles, considerando as características de sua metamorfose na passagem pelas esferas da produção e da circulação (como dinheiro, meios de produção, força de trabalho, novas mercadorias, dinheiro incrementado), integrando o processo de valorização (incremento do valor e do dinheiro investido) e sua encarnação em valores de uso específicos (calças, rádios, celulares, tanques de guerra), assim como as contradições que esses processos geram.”

Luce (2011) proposes that sub-imperialism can be conceptualized as a form that the pattern of capital reproduction can take—in which the latter notion can establish an analytical mediation between different levels of analysis, specifically the *circuit of capital reproduction* and *foreign policy*. This mediation is particularly valuable as it aids us in grasping the different configurations that sub-imperialism can take in different periods. More specifically, it helps us evaluate whether the category of sub-imperialism is still applicable at different meso-structural moments—i.e., evaluating whether the category of sub-imperialism—developed through the analysis of Brazilian sub-imperialism under the military dictatorship—remains applicable to a situation grounded on a transformed IDL.

The control over certain spheres of influence that sub-imperialism engenders implies the reproduction of dependency, represented by: the intensification of unequal exchange at the regional level, fostering a *regional division of labor*; the consequent appropriation of surplus from the weaker countries; and the (partial) displacement of internal contradictions of the sub-imperialist socio-economic formation to the countries within its sphere of influence and the consequent mitigation of the effects of dependency but without breaking with it.

5.212 Sub-imperialism as unity in the domestic, regional, and international

The domestic, the regional, and the international need to form a unity, in the Gramscian sense, for the phenomenon of sub-imperialism to emerge. The three elements needed are dialectically intertwined and—for this reason and for its position within dependent capitalism—present a greater level of instability. At the domestic level, there needs to be a unity among the different fractions of the bourgeoisie. They need to have achieved what I propose to be Gramsci's solidarity moment, in which they see, at minimum, an alignment in their economic interests with support of the state. Although a bourgeois unity is not necessary for the state to support the export of capital of local bourgeois fractions, it is essential for the state to be able to construct a sub-imperialist project. With the added emphasis of the increased role of the state in Marini's sub-imperialism and Gramsci's solidarity moment, the domestic situation is needed for the regional and international elements to materialize.

Considering the elements that would offer the conditions to sustain a *relatively autonomous expansionist policy*—identified by Luce (2013)—and my objective of relating structure to

superstructure, I have reorganized them around two axes. In the economic axis, the emergence of sub-imperialism requires: (a) an intermediate degree of organic composition of capital, (b) the formation of national trusts, and (c) the bidirectional transfer of surplus. In the political axis: (a) bourgeois unity, (b) the state's relatively autonomous expansionist policy, and (c) the state's relation of antagonistic cooperation with the dominant imperialist power.

In slight contrast to Marini, Luce (2011) introduced the notion or *regional hegemony* to denote the formation of a sphere of influence within a regional subsystem of power. It would be through this regional hegemony that the state would pursue its *relatively autonomous expansionist policy*. In this move, the author seems to relocate the centrality of the element from the economic to the political.

In reductive readings of Marini, some scholars have claimed that the thesis of Brazilian sub-imperialism is incoherent because there are other dependent capitalist economies that also export capital—and, therefore, also *appropriate surplus-value* from other peripheral economies (which means that the bidirectional transfer of surplus-value is not limited to so-called sub-imperialist formations). It is in this sense that I understand Luce's notion of regional hegemony to contribute best—in its *clarification* that Marini's conception of the relatively autonomous expansionist policy denotes a *regional hierarchy of power*. There cannot be more than one regional hegemonic power within a region, even if the relevant members of the community also possess relative power within the configuration. Marini's and Luce's conceptions, then, implicate this notion that there is one member that has relatively greater power *and* economic conditions and is, thus, able to exert its influence in a way that its neighbors cannot.

In this way, the necessary conditions on the domestic level, through the organization of the domestic bourgeoisie, and the development of a sub-imperialist project, support the fulfilment of certain conditions on the regional and international levels, elements whose connection could be strengthened by a conceptualization of the state. Given the extensiveness of the debate on theory of the state, and more specifically whether or not Marini had a theory (BICHER, 2018; TZEIMAN, 2019a, 2019b), I will not engage this specific literature in this thesis. I would, however, like to touch on a polemic raised regarding the analytical status of the Brazilian bourgeoisie is worth covering.

Tatiana Berringer (2013) takes part in the discussion on the debates around Brazilian imperialism (ZIBECHI, 2012), capital-imperialism (FONTES, 2013), and sub-imperialism,

discussed in a dossier organized by the journal *Crítica Marxista* (BOITO JR., 2013). Although Berringer's intent is to theoretically discredit MTD, I hold that she in fact offers a relevant contribution to thinking about the relationship between the dependent bourgeoisie and dominant imperialism. Before presenting her arguments, the author provides a summation of the Poulantzian typology of bourgeoisies:

The concept of the *internal bourgeoisie* indicates a fraction of the ruling class which, in a dependent social formation, occupies an intermediate position between the *comprador bourgeoisie* and the *national bourgeoisie* [(POULANTZAS, 1978)]. The fraction traditionally known as the *national bourgeoisie*, on the other hand, is the one that has domestic accumulation of capital and organizes itself politically and ideologically allied with the popular classes in an anti-imperialist struggle. [...] The concept of comprador bourgeoisie indicates the bourgeois fraction that has no internal accumulation of its own and tends to behave as a simple intermediary for imperialist interests within a dependent social formation. [The internal bourgeoisie, on the other hand,] is a fraction that has not broken, and is not interested in breaking, its dependency *vis-à-vis* imperialist capital: technological, financial and political dependency (BERRINGER, 2013, p. 125, emphasis added).

Berringer then critiques what she understands to be the disjunction between Marini's conceptualization of the bourgeoisie, in his analysis of sub-imperialism, and the real situation of the Brazilian bourgeoisie.

In her analysis, both theses—Brazilian imperialism and sub-imperialism—would be mistaken, partly because of their supposedly erroneous readings of the degree of autonomy of the Brazilian bourgeoisie. The imperialism thesis, because it is premised upon the existence of a *national bourgeoisie* in Brazil, which conceptualizes the Brazilian bourgeoisie as engaging in a frontal dispute with the US over the economic and political domination of Latin America. She argues that the sub-imperialism thesis, on the other hand, attributes too passive a role to the domestic ruling classes, categorizing them as a *comprador bourgeoisie* that would be nothing more than a “simple intermediary for imperialist interests”, which misrepresents the Brazilian case. Berringer (2013) affirms, contrary to what she understands these other two theses as representing, that the Brazilian bourgeoisie would be better classified as an *internal bourgeoisie*, because,

[...] even if there is an internationalization of Brazilian companies and an increase in exports of national products, the big domestic bourgeoisie remains subject to the imperialist production system and political domination. It is not prepared to confront imperialism as a national bourgeoisie would, nor is it a simple intermediary for imperialist interests (comprador bourgeoisie). It has occasional contradictions with imperialism, because it wants to limit imperialist capital and compete with it, but it does not act in an organized way, guided by its own political

project and the conquest of the regional economy, as Zibechi [(2012)] argues¹⁰⁹ (BERRINGER, 2013, p. 125).¹¹⁰

I hold, however, that the author made an analytical mistake, possibly due to an inaccurate reading of the Marini's and Luce's texts. Although there are specific citations that she brings that can indeed be read as referencing what Poulantzas classified as a *comprador bourgeoisie*, an exegesis of the oeuvre demonstrates that the bourgeoisie in a sub-imperialist socio-economic formation, as presented particularly by Marini, is closer to the concept of *internal bourgeoisie*. Even though based on a misinterpretation of Marini, her critique offers a potential contribution to MTD by proposing the Poulantzian typology for thinking about this element of the sub-imperialist category.

This debate is worth having in order to develop the state-level mediation between the formation of unity at the domestic level, “regional hegemony”, and the relation with the dominant imperialist power at the international level. Part of the reason I do not want to engage at this moment is because, in a contribution to Bichir's ongoing research, it is my understanding that the mediation is not lacking in Marini's work—only that it needs to be further developed.

Focusing now on the international level, Luce (2011) presents a typology to operationalize the different degrees of alignment with the imperialist center, ranging between total alignment and zero alignment: (a) *automatic alignment* (vertical hierarchical integration); (b) *antagonistic cooperation*, or pyramidal hierarchical integration (preferential alignment, with localized confrontation¹¹¹); (c) *antagonistic competition* (direct confrontation on specific issues); (d) and *anti-imperialism* (comprehensive and ideological confrontation).

The concept of antagonistic cooperation was first developed by August Thalheimer to describe the relationship between the imperialist bourgeoisies in the aftermath of the Second World War. Marini (2013) applied it to relations between fractions of the bourgeoisie within a socio-economic formation and between dependent and imperialist economies. This degree of alignment would describe the sub-imperialist state's search for the autonomy necessary to carry out an

¹⁰⁹ Against Berringer's (2013) stance that the Brazilian internal bourgeoisie does not have its own political project, and considering that she is addressing Zibechi's thesis, the author speaks of an *imperialist* project. Perhaps for this reason she does not offer substantial elements to differentiate what would be an imperialist project from a sub-imperialist one. This also needs further attention, keeping in mind how we should relate, analytically, the degree of consciousness with the construction of a sub-imperialist project.

¹¹⁰ Original:

¹¹¹ Compare the delimitation of this category with the definition offered by Berringer (2013) of the internal bourgeoisie.

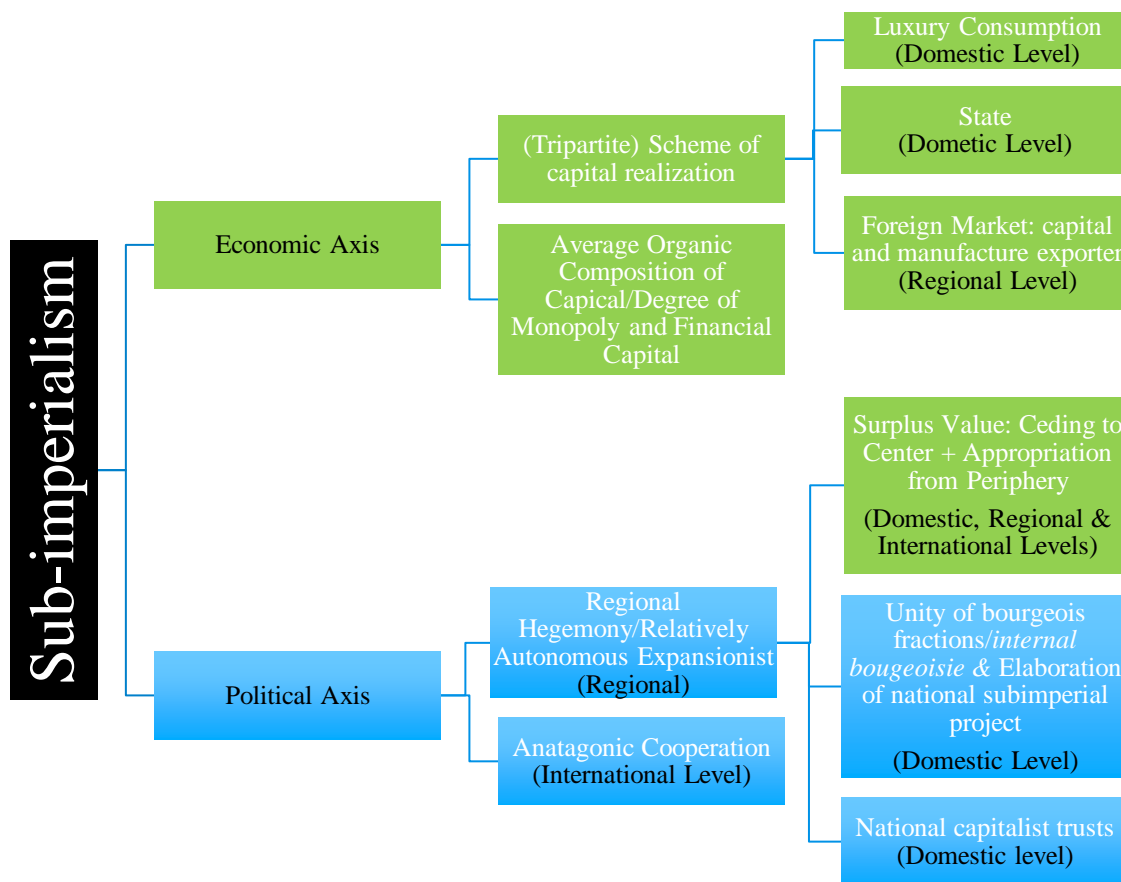
expansionist policy, but without strongly challenging the imperialism of the central states (LUCE, 2011).

In contrast to antagonistic cooperation, it is understood that direct alignment translates into not claiming greater room for maneuver. Antagonistic competition¹¹² (to a lesser degree) and anti-imperialism represent, by definition, a threat that is too frontal (and therefore unacceptable) to the interests of the main imperialist power. Antagonistic cooperation, in turn, translates into not questioning the hegemony of dominant imperialism, i.e., trying to bargain for a better position within the leadership-consent relationship, using localized confrontations among other more direct alignments.

In a representation that tries to express one side of the complexity that is embedded in the sub-imperialism category, showing both the economic and political axes and the different levels of each element, Figure 3 shows the different elements that make up the phenomenon, in accordance with the above. The seven elements are present in the figure, differentiated between economic (green) and political (blue) factors and classified according to their level of analysis.

¹¹² Bugiato and Berringer (2012), against Luce's position, present the Lula administration as having developed something closer to antagonistic competition. Although their critique merits closer examination, I do not agree with them that this disqualifies the analysis as a whole. It would make more sense re-evaluate the possible international relations of a sub-imperialist power, and perhaps consider a certain fluidity at the concrete level that does not need to abide by abstract conceptualizations—but that, nonetheless, do not invalidate the abstraction in its entirety.

Figure 3: Schematic of Sub-Imperialism



Source: Based on Luce (2011, 2015) and Marini (1972a, 1977, 2013c).

It is worth nothing that one must apply a dialectic articulation of historical determinations to Figure 3, so as to develop a focus on transformation and, thus, move away from the static view of sub-imperialism, based on a brief and simplistic reading.

In this sense, the different elements need to be adapted accordingly. The *scheme of capital realization*, for example, may continue to include the foreign market, but its considerations can be made to consider the new *export pattern of productive specialization* (ALMEIDA FILHO; ARAÚJO, 2015; RAPOSO; ALMEIDA FILHO; AMARAL, 2022) in a reevaluation of role of manufacture exports and the renewed role of primary goods in exports; but also the greater weight of finance capital and its relation to the state through the internalization of foreign debt and the role of BNDES in financing the national champions (CARCANHOLO, 2011; FURTADO, 2008). Finally, as mentioned earlier, a consideration of possible fluidity between antagonistic cooperation

and antagonistic competition at the international level to allow for conjunctural adaptations within the general mesostructure.

6. Deepening the Dialogue: Brazil between dependency, sub-imperialism, and revolution

This final chapter aims to further develop a synthesis, perhaps not of the two approaches *per se*, but of their rhythms of thought, to allow us to go beyond Gramsci's and Marini's original contributions. Going beyond Gramsci and Marini, but working with their rhythms of thought, I propose that the *crucial intellectual problem* for Marxism is a combination of theirs, discussed in Chapter 4. The new framing of the crucial intellectual problem is the need to determine the analytical relation between agency and the multiple levels of structure (micro, meso, and macro) in their multiple dimensions (political, economic, cultural, etc.). The crucial intellectual problem is, however, subservient to the crucial political problem, which remains unchanged in its abstract formulation: the need to construct a strategy in which the subaltern classes can lead us into a socialist form of organization, one without exploitation and oppression.

To analytically bring in the multiple levels of structure, it is necessary, as Gramsci puts it, to distinguish the conjunctural from the organic; but also, to relate them through time. This means that we need to grasp how past agency has molded the current structures—how past agency has impacted the micro and meso structures as we find them today, and how these relations (between agencies at different times and structures at different levels) have contributed to either maintaining or transforming the mode of production macro level (i.e. reproducing dependency and the capitalist system or overcoming dependency and capitalism, respectively).

I attempted, in the previous chapters, to establish important points of political, philosophical, and theoretical intersections with their rhythms of thought as my *guiding principle*. There are a few points that have stood out in a potential synthesis to the leitmotifs: intellectual honesty as a precondition for constructive intellectual discussion; the intellectual commitment to critique over a commitment to party; and the dialectical relation that these have with a commitment to the subaltern—i.e. the construction of a proletarian and subaltern hegemony to meet the crucial political problem.

In consideration of this proposed synthesis, delimited in its most general sense regarding science and its political purpose, this chapter presents sub-imperialism as passive revolution by covering the following issues inherent to facing the intellectual and political problem in a country such as Brazil: war of position and war of maneuver; consensus, coercion, and the role of Caesars

in dependent capitalism; and, finally, limited hegemony as a suggested modification as an element of sub-imperialism.

Hegemony as a general theme has appeared in much Latin American literature, in its Leninist, Gramscian, and eclectic varieties, with varying degrees of conceptual rigor. Although part of the literature is inspired by Gramsci's works, it is my understanding that this has been done based on a misinterpretation of the concept itself. An important indicator is the level of violence that has been an integral element of the region's history (HESKETH, 2019).

This does not, however, point to an irrelevance of Gramsci's thought on hegemony. The utility is twofold. The first concerns the *crucial political problem*: the Latin American working class should still attempt to construct a proletarian hegemony towards a socialist horizon. It is the bourgeois hegemony that is impossible within dependent capitalism—not the socialist proletarian hegemony. Given the lack of consideration by organic intellectuals of the deep structures of dependency, it has been commonplace for different social movements and organized social groups within the Left to defend bourgeois hegemonic projects. And the presence of different national projects in Latin America points to the understanding that hegemony has not been reached. In other words, there has been no generalized dependent-capitalist consensus, not even in the broadest of terms, of the direction that the nation should take.

6.1 The Ideological Dimension and Deep Structures in the Sub-Imperialism Debate

Part of the critique leveled against the thesis of Brazilian sub-imperialism under the Lula administrations has been elaborated under considerations that confuse the relation between agency and the different levels of structure. Tiago Nogara, for example, claims that MTD perspectives perceive “opportunistic motives veiled beneath a facade of cooperation” (NOGARA, 2024, p. 287) or “implicitly predatory motivations” in the Lula administration's foreign policy-making, and that such authors demonstrate “hostility towards the diplomatic initiatives of the South American giant” (NOGARA, 2020, p. 507). As delimited earlier, agent consciousness is most often limited “to the practices that they engage in rather than the deeper structures that these practices tend to reproduce” (WIGHT; JOSEPH, 2010, p. 21). In other words, agent motivations do not have to be predatory for their practices to reproduce predatory relations at the different levels of structures. Additionality, while it is not only valid but crucial to recognize that theory and analyses are in their

very nature political, the use of emotionally charged language (e.g. “hostility”) seems to be used to remove rationality from one’s interpretation of said perspective.

Going beyond Marini’s (2013a, p. 27) critique of the depiction of “the evil Uncle Sam manipulating his puppets,” the imagery that comes to mind when I read such language is Oswaldo Guayasamín’s 1970 “Meeting at the Pentagon” series, and how it contrasts to his other paintings of the suffering of people under imperialism’s boot (see Appendix A). While such art has strong cultural foundations and are valued for depicting the deep-seeded emotions of injustice, the sentiments they express are too simplistically carried over to analysis. Nogara’s language, as that of so many others, substantiates a binary worldview that sets the virtuous against evil-doers. It seems, then, that MTD is placing Lula’s progressive administration in the evil-doer camp, depicting Lula as a minor character in a *meeting at the Pentagon* of sorts. Analytical mistakes are often found in “[o]ne’s own baser and more immediate desires and passions” because “they take the place of an objective and impartial analysis—and this happens not as a conscious ‘means’ to stimulate to action, but as self-deception. In this case too the snake bites the snake-charmer—in other words the demagogue is the first victim of his own demagogy” (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 179). The “immediate desires and passions,” in these cases, point to the need to support the progressive administration within the geopolitical goal of confronting imperialism. It becomes a “You’re either with us or against us” move, replicated by the Brazilian left in ways not too dissimilar from George W. Bush’s (2001) post-911 speech.¹¹³ Such leftist critiques oftentimes fall into a geopolitical reductionism of sorts, where what matters in the last instance is the geopolitical confrontation with the dominant imperialist power. This is seen, for example, in the affirmation that “from a political standpoint, one cannot deny that the Brazilian state, albeit in a contradictory way, has been an ally of these governments against US domination in the region”¹¹⁴ (BUGIATO; BERRINGER, 2012, p. 39–40). Similarly, this move promotes a static category of imperialism and understanding of the phenomenon, where “imperialism presupposes the ability to use military force in order to compete over markets and the exploitation of other territories with other imperialist states” (BUGIATO;

¹¹³ The point of comparison is in the binary worldview and its expression being made by the dominant force within the relevant social relations. While Bush is speaking to the states that comprise the international system, aspects of this appeal are heard within the Brazilian left—that if one is not with Lula and Dilma, then he/she is with the rightwing.

¹¹⁴ Original: “[...] do ponto de vista político, não se pode negar que o Estado brasileiro, ainda que de forma contraditória, tem sido um aliado destes governos contra o domínio estadunidense na região.”

BERRINGER, 2012, p. 39)— ignoring, thus, the role that the United States took on after WWII in providing military support to many of its imperialist allies, most notably Germany and Japan.

Others, delimiting specific Brazil's state expansionist policies that support the internationalization of Brazilian multinational corporations, recognize that “of course this is imperialism” but that the investments “have positive effects on the economies of the countries in question, despite the advantages for Brazil (much greater according to critics)”¹¹⁵ (SOUZA, 2010, p. 49, 50). It is worth noting that many Western scholars have also spoken of the “positive effects” that investments from colonial/imperialist powers have had “on the economies of the countries in question”.¹¹⁶

Angelina Matos Souza, although recognizing imperialist aspects of Lula's expansionist foreign policy, affirms that:

[...] we are not arguing that our neighbors should embrace Brazilian expansionism because, in terms of imperialism, Brazil would be better than the others, but it is clear that it is easier to negotiate/bargain with a peripheral country, without much power of imposition (including military), than the other way around.¹¹⁷

Souza recognizes similarities with imperialism but downplays its significance because “Brazil would be better than others.” She then affirms that:

[...] the right thing [for Brazil] to do would be to direct its economic expansionism (if it is to continue in this direction) and its diplomatic policy towards encouraging solidarity and complementarity between Latin American countries, emphasizing integration/cooperation, not exploitation (more driving force and less obstacle).¹¹⁸

The issue, in these perspectives, is not the exploitation of the periphery's labor forces, nor the transfer of value from dependent societies to others. They seem to defend that there is *exploitation*

¹¹⁵ Original: “claro que isto é imperialismo” and “[...] não deixam de ter efeitos positivos para a economia dos países em questões, a despeito das vantagens para o Brasil (bem maiores segundo os críticos).”

¹¹⁶ A notable example in IR/IPE is Susan Strange (1994, p. 72) in her argument that not only was the British Empire not responsible for India's poverty, but they also brought many benefits to the country, such as an expansive railroad system.

¹¹⁷ Original: “[...] não estamos a defender que nossos vizinhos devem abraçar o expansionismo brasileiro porque, em termos de imperialismo, o Brasil seria melhor que os outros, mas é evidente que é mais fácil negociar/barganhar com um país periférico, sem grande poder de imposição (inclusive militar), que o contrário.”

¹¹⁸ Original: “[...] o mais acertado seria orientar o expansionismo econômico (se for para seguir nesta direção) e sua política diplomática no sentido de estimular a solidariedade e complementaridade entre os países latino-americanos, colocando ênfase sobre a integração/cooperação, não sobre a exploração (mais força motriz e menos obstáculo).”

only when there is *domination without consensus*, a perspective that does not seem to fit with these authors' Marxist credentials.

There have, however, been significant changes in the international system that provide an important counterpoint to her simplification:

Indeed, as the world market attains a more developed form, the use of political and military violence to exploit weak nations becomes superfluous, and international exploitation can rely increasingly on the reproduction of economic relations that perpetuate and amplify the backwardness and weakness of those nations (2022b, p. 125).

Exploitation, even when excised of its Marxist elements, cannot be taken as a static concept. Given Marini's and Gramsci's shared meta-theoretical tendency to excise not the Marxist elements, but static ones, this shared element in their letimotivs provides an important ingredient to the dialogue.

6.2 War of Position versus War of Movement: Where does Latin America lie?

The discussion around Brazilian sub-imperialism is one side of the coin, when considering possibilities for agency within systemic dependency. The other side is the socialist revolution. Our intention is to consider how Marini and Gramsci would discuss the issue, but to arrive there I will also touch on how neo-Gramscians have handled the issue in Latin America, but more specifically in Brazil. For this latter point, I will focus on points of intersection between MTD scholars and Álvaro Bianchi, the Brazilian Gramscian philologist I have brought throughout this thesis.

A first point for us to think about is on how to apply Gramsci's concepts to Latin American reality. Morton (2007, p. 150) reminds us that:

As Gramsci himself was also more than aware, the theory he developed is merely a "criterion of interpretation" that "cannot be applied mechanically to ... Italian and European history from the French Revolution throughout the nineteenth century". Danger exists "in making what is a principle of research and interpretation into a 'historical cause'" (Gramsci 1971: 114, Q15§62; 116, Q10II§61; 180, Q13§17)."

Gramsci's epistemo-methodological position bears resemblance to Marini's (2022b) critique against dogmatism—and what I have likened to critiques against Eurocentrism. We can take the Gramscian West/East duality as a "criterion of research" based on the "principle of research and interpretation" of looking for specificity in concrete reality in the process of elaborating abstractions. Bianchi (2020, p. 191) argues that "[t]he notion of the West used in the *Notebooks*

did not indicate a model, a programme or an ideal. It was only meant to express a historical-political situation: the existence of a denser civil society and, contradictorily, of greater obstacles to the socialist revolution.” It should not, then, “be applied mechanically to” other situations.

Carlos Nelson Coutinho (2012, p. 181) did have in mind the need to avoid a static grasp of the West/East metaphor, specifically in trying to grasp how the duality could travel beyond Gramsci’s original geographic conceptions. He posed the question and substantiated its importance firmly:

Now we must answer a fundamental question: is Brazilian society ‘Eastern’ or ‘Western’? In other words, once we accept the idea that the dynamics of ‘Westernisation’ are a potentially universal phenomenon, how mature is this process in the case of Brazil? The answer has far-reaching implications. On the one hand, it is an indispensable condition for a proper Marxist understanding of the Brazilian society of today. On the other, the choice of the right strategy for the Left in its struggles for democracy and socialism depends largely on this answer (COUTINHO, 2012, p. 183).

Perhaps the root of the contention between Marxist dependency theorists and many Latin American neo-Gramscians (LANG), is the designation of Brazil and other countries in Latin America as “Western”—most importantly because it has, as Coutinho claims and MTD would agree, consequences for the “choice of the right strategy for the Left in its struggles for democracy and socialism”. The “westernization” premise is foundational in Coutinho’s (2012) work, as it grounds his understanding on how the proper way to go about constructing a revolutionary process in Brazil is through a war of position. It substantiates LANG’s anti-revolutionary/pro-reformism stance, their defense of institutional order under bourgeois democracy, and their antagonism towards armed struggle.

Centering the issue around the relative strength of Brazilian civil society *vis-à-vis* the state, Coutinho’s answer was that Brazil had achieved a more “Western”—understood by him as the moment when civil society reaches a more “mature” phase of development. There are several points to be made, by Latin Americans considering *the other Gramsci* (discussed in chapter 2) and MTD’s contributions.

According to Bianchi (2020, p. 191), Coutinho elaborated a view of

[...] the war of position as an exclusive strategy in the West, in the ‘modern democratic states’. To conceive of a relation of identity between the densification of civil society and the increase in political participation is only possible when one loses sight of the conflicting character of one’s own civil society.

From Bianchi's affirmation, we could read a certain dogmatism, as understood by Marini (2022b), in Coutinho's analyses, in which the abstract-concrete relation seems to have been turned on its head. Correcting Coutinho's simplistic algebraic formulation, Bianchi (2020, p. 191) affirms:

A more dense and complex civil society can be coexistent with the process of the 'socialization of political participation', but a denser and more complex bourgeois civil society can also mean (and frequently means) the expansion of the private apparatus of control and the pacification of the subaltern classes. There was not, therefore, any positivity inherent in the notion of the West as used by Gramsci.

Bianchi breaks the algebraic formulation, then, by demonstrating that a more complex civil society can also develop great control and pacification mechanisms, antagonistic to broader political participation.

Marini's leitmotiv could be applied, first in questioning why Latin America's concrete reality is being inserted into an abstract conceptualization. Instead, we could be asking what Latin American reality has to contribute to this abstract conceptualization. In other words, perhaps we should consider expanding Gramsci's West-East conception beyond his original ideas to include, perhaps, Latin America as a separate region beyond a simple dichotomy—in this sense, *go beyond* Gramsci himself and apply the *Gramscian way of thinking* to this other reality. Instead of forcing Latin America into the box of either East or West, why not create a third conception that complements this abstraction? The move, then, should not be to try to see where a previously non-analyzed region would fit, but to enrich the abstraction after reflecting on it from a different reality—in this case, to consider the specificities of the state-civil society relation in such regions.

In a complementary fashion, Bianchi points to how Gramsci also considered hybrid cultures, which would be important for conceptualizing the state-civil society duality as related to the war of position/war of maneuver duality.

The presence in America and Latin America of subaltern groups—black and indigenous peoples—whose cultures could not be reduced simply to European culture made research into the political question of intellectuals and the formation of modern national states in the far West more complex. In the *Quaderni*, the emergence of hybrid cultures that paved a different path for an always incomplete modernity, which was also hybrid, was discussed, although not in depth. These aspects have not received much attention in Gramscian studies to date, with a predominantly Eurocentric reading of Americanism. But the possibility of a more nuanced approach, although still contaminated by this Eurocentrism, was already

in the *Quaderni* and remains an important reference for new research (BIANCHI, 2021, p. 168).¹¹⁹

This passage demonstrates the complexity of the discussion of whether Brazil and/or Latin America should be considered “Western”, and it is one that cannot be as easily brushed aside as Coutinho did in providing a simplified definition of “West,” reductive to what became an emptied abstraction of “complex civil society.”

Gramsci’s concern in the West/East duality is with understanding the importance of a civil society, I argue, that has a more *solidified and homogenized ideology*—when a prevalent macro-superstructure has captured most, if not all, organized sectors of a society. We see this:

[...] in the case of the most advanced States, where “civil society” has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic “incursions” of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.). The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare (GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 235).

Beyond Gramsci, Marini might point to another type of social complexity when analyzing underdeveloped socio-economic formations with a higher degree of organic composition of capital: “Economic diversification is [...] accompanied by an ever-increasing complexity in social relations, which firstly sets the domestic market sectors against the foreign market sectors and then, at the core of both sectors, contrasts the social groups that they comprise” (MARINI, 2013b, p. 113)¹²⁰. While we can consider the superstructures of civil society and their similarities to trench warfare in socio-economic formations such as Brazil, such a degree of complexity need not imply homogeneous support of the institutions of the integral state. Instead of a situation in which civil society will stand together and display unity in their trenches, Brazilian civil society can be argued to have its trenches already dug up in a display of disunity. Since hegemony has not been achieved,

¹¹⁹ Original: “A presença na América e na América Latina de grupos subalternos – negros e indígenas – cujas culturas não poderiam ser reduzidas de modo simples à cultura europeia tornavam mais complexa a investigação sobre a questão política dos intelectuais e a formação dos modernos Estados nacionais no extremo Ocidente. Nos *Quaderni* foi tematizada, embora não aprofundada, a emergência de culturas híbridas que pavimentam um caminho diferente para uma modernidade sempre incompleta, também ela híbrida. Esses aspectos não foram até hoje objeto de muita atenção nos estudos gramscianos, predominando uma leitura eurocêntrica do americanismo. Mas a possibilidade de uma abordagem mais matizada, embora ainda contaminada por esse eurocentrismo, já se encontrava nos *Quaderni* e permanece como uma referência importante para novas pesquisas.”

¹²⁰ Original: “A diversificação econômica é acompanhada, portanto, de uma complexidade cada vez maior nas relações sociais, que contrapõe, em primeiro plano, os setores de mercado interno aos de mercado externo e, em seguida, no coração de ambos os setores, contrapõe os grupos sociais que os constituem.”

they find themselves in a permanent war of position. The lack of unity within civil society, then, is what would allow for a war of maneuver.

To provide an illustrative example, we can compare certain developments in US and Brazilian civil societies. The incursions of “critical race theory” in the United States has been met with stiff resistance at the municipal, county, and state levels throughout the country—as the teaching of revisionist accounts of US history that place slavery front and center of the country’s political and economic development (and not as an unhappy chapter that has long been resolved) places the central macro-ideology of US culture—American exceptionalism (and, thus, superiority) in check. While we have been observing a growing polarization in US-American civil society, particularly following the Great Recession of 2007-2008, this polarity has continuously been an integral part of Brazilian culture, where different hegemonic projects compete among each other. In other words, the unity between the war of position and war of maneuver is more easily apparent in Latin American societies than in traditional “Western” ones.

Also crucial, and not considered in the West-East duality as presented by many, is the reflection of the importance that the center-periphery relation has on the development of a more complex civil society. “[T]he West, in the well-known Gramscian metaphor, [refers to] the central capitalist countries” as it has as a reference point “a historical, concrete West, a set of countries that from the end of the previous century underwent a complex process of economic, social and political transformations known as the imperialist phase of capitalism” (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 58). Additionally, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith *war of position* concept bears “two partially conflicting senses”, one of which refers to the West as a particular configuration of the civil society-state relation, discussed up until now. The second refers to the “form of political struggle which alone is possible in periods of relatively stable equilibrium between the fundamental classes, i.e. when frontal attack, or war of manœuvre, is impossible” (HOARE; SMITH, 1971, p. 206). There is, then, a sense of social stability connected to the war of position.

As demonstrated above (in subsection 4.5 Subordination, dependency, and hierarchy), Gramsci’s and Marini’s conceptualizations of the role of imperialism, colonization, and/or dependency in the development of “Western” or center societies. Gramsci pointed to their role in complexifying civil society and the state; while Marini highlighted the economic element in the “complex process of [...] transformations” in the imperialist societies. Their plausibly compatible insights provide much potential complementarity by bringing the dialectical relation between the

economic and the political on the one hand, and the imperialist-domestic, the dependent-domestic, and their international relations, on the other.

More specifically, Marini (2022b) argues that the Global South's contributions to the development of the Global North was not only by way of cheap materials, cheap labor, and the transfer of surplus value to the circuit of capital reproduction in the North; it also contributed directly by lowering the value of Global North labor (i.e. by lowering the cost of food and consumer goods to the working class). The improved living standard was a direct and dialectical result of the exploitative relations at the international level. This, in turn, is crucial for grasping civil society's role as trenches in Western societies (and the concomitant stance against a war of maneuver).

There developed, in Latin America, a preconceived condemnation of armed struggle (OURIQUES, 2013, p. 16), which has often been associated with an *a priori* academicist positioning against radicalism, particularly in anti-revolutionary meta-theoretical positioning (SOTELO VALENCIA, 1990, p. 53). From the epistemological criterium against dogmatism, it is especially problematic how Coutinho and other LANG scholars, but also Cardoso and other dependency thinkers, treat armed struggle from a particularly acritical standpoint. Gramsci would certainly be more open to a discussion on the matter on epistemological grounds; but also due to his critiques against reformist strategies that do not have a revolution in sight.

In thinking about the paths open to Latin America, Gramsci would likely enjoy Marini's writings on armed struggle. A first point to be made is that Marini (2013f, 2013e) defended that the decision around political practice and armed struggle should be determined by conjunctural specificities, not prior theoretical abstractions. Gramsci moved increasingly away from formulaic conceptions of strategy, accompanied by conscious efforts to remove mechanistic conceptualizations from his writing (COSPITO, 2016).

Marini's texts on armed struggle interesting deal with the general ideas associated with the war of position and the war of maneuver. He criticized leftist vanguard groups that would seek armed struggle absent the support of the masses—distinct from LANG theorists who argued for a war of position that sought to impact civil society more generally. In other words, the war of position is also crucial in Marini's thought, but it is not in combatting the trenches of a supposedly formed civil society—since civil society, here, is not consolidated within a hegemonic ideology or project. It is, rather, the organization and elevation of consciousness of the masses that is needed

in this war of position so that they can create their own trenches and have the ability to fight their war of maneuver, if necessary. It is likely to be necessary as those in power will not give it up easily, not even in the name of legality. The Chilean case, for this reason, is held to have represented:

[...] the most radical class confrontation—and, for this reason, the most pedagogical—observed in Latin America. It provides [...] elements to reflect on with greater certainty and better understand how and for what reason reformism, due to the very fact that it shakes bourgeois society to its foundations without daring to destroy it, ends up becoming the antechamber of counter-revolution (MARINI, 2019a, p. 23).

To phrase it meta-theoretical terms, reformism as political action and interaction impacts the structure in ways that lead to morphostasis, or the reproduction of social structures.

Marini (2013e, p. 193) observed “a dichotomy between political work and military work or, in other words, between working for the masses and direct action, which constantly works to the detriment of the former” in how specific leftist groups were working in Brazil. A first level of repercussion is in the development of each group’s consciousness and grasp of real conditions:

By projecting as concrete reality the result of a theoretical perception—the antagonistic contradiction between labor and capital—the left tends to project itself in the future of the political process, in the class war, without worrying about the present tasks that will make this future possible; it thus acts according to its own level of consciousness, and not the level of consciousness of the masses. Considering itself already involved in the revolutionary war, it sets itself the immediate task of leading the exploited classes militarily, but since it does not expect them to intervene in the fight at first, it ends up referencing the problems of the armed struggle to itself and not to the masses. The result is an overestimation of the purely organizational aspects, which leads to an extreme technical improvement of the organizations, whose degree of development is considerably far from that which is being achieved at the level of the masses.¹²¹

¹²¹ Original: “[...] dicotomia entre o trabalho político e o trabalho militar ou, em outros termos, entre o trabalho de massas e a ação direta, que se opera constantemente em detrimento do primeiro.”

“Ao projetar como realidade concreta o resultado de uma percepção teórica - a contradição antagônica entre o trabalho e o capital -, a esquerda tende a se colocar no futuro do processo político, na guerra de classes, sem se preocupar com as tarefas presentes que tornarão esse futuro possível; atua, assim, em função de seu próprio nível de consciência, e não no nível de consciência das massas. Considerando-se já envolvida na guerra revolucionária, erige como tarefa imediata a condução militar das classes exploradas, mas, como não espera que estas intervenham no combate num primeiro momento, acaba por se referenciar a si mesma, e não às massas, os problemas da luta armada. O resultado é a superestimação dos aspectos puramente organizativos, que conduz a um aperfeiçoamento técnico extremado das organizações, cujo grau de desenvolvimento se afasta consideravelmente daquele que vai se alcançando no nível das massas.”

The strategic-practical problem, then, has roots in theoretical misapprehensions in the Gramscian political moment. Here, there is a difficulty in increasing the level of consciousness of what will, theoretically, be the hegemonic group—as the organic intellectuals focus more not only on their own levels of consciousness but end up also embracing the organizational and militant tasks for themselves as well.

It is important, then, to grasp the relation between the wars of position and maneuver and, in the theoretical and practical levels, to comprehend the differentiated agencies of the vanguard and the masses. The war of position via reformist approaches will not suffice; and war of maneuver to the detriment of first establishing and engaging in a war of position *in engaging the masses* is also likely to fail. In keeping with the dialectical relation between abstraction and praxis, “armed struggle should not be identified with this or that form of vanguard action, or even less with this or that sector of the exploited classes” (MARINI, 2013e, p. 201). As a concept and strategic action,

[...] armed struggle corresponds to a general form of the class struggle, one that is affirmed at the stage when the revolutionary classes, after acquiring consciousness and organization through a series of partial combats, decide to go on the offensive and wrest political power from the hands of capital. The role of the vanguard is not to anticipate the masses, nor to try to direct them in all their movements, as if they were hierarchically arranged regiments. The role of the vanguard is to fight alongside the workers, wherever and however they take up the fight, striving to raise their level of consciousness and develop the forms of organization that they themselves find. Above all, its role is to provide the revolutionary classes with a political direction through which the partial struggles that are now taking place can progressively move towards the direct assault on the bourgeoisie’s stronghold.¹²²

In Marini’s conceptualization, then, there is a dialectical relation between vanguard and class, in which the latter holds greater agency but is aided by organic intellectuals. In this sense, proletarian political organizations need to combat dogmatism within their ranks (MARINI, 2013f, p. 225–6).

¹²² Original: “Não existe, de fato, nenhuma razão para identificar a luta armada com esta ou aquela forma de atuação da vanguarda, nem muito menos com este ou aquele setor das classes exploradas. A luta armada corresponde a uma forma geral da luta de classes, aquela que se afirma na etapa em que as classes revolucionárias, após adquirir consciência e organização mediante uma série de combates parciais, decidem passar para a ofensiva e arrancar o poder político das mãos do capital. O papel da vanguarda não é o de se antecipar às massas, nem o de tentar dirigi-las em todos seus movimentos, como se fossem regimentos hierarquicamente dispostos. O papel da vanguarda consiste em lutar ao lado dos trabalhadores, onde e como estes se lançam ao combate, esforçando-se em elevar a nível de consciência e desenvolver as formas de organização que eles mesmos encontram. Antes de tudo, seu papel é o de proporcionar às classes revolucionárias uma direção política através da qual as lutas parciais que agora têm lugar se encaminhem progressivamente para o assalto di reto do bastião da burguesia.”

Revealingly, Marini (2013f, p. 233–4) praised Carlos Mariguella’s “extremely flexible organization, a true federation of groups” and his “great organizational heresy [...] against the monolithic structure of the old PCB and [...] the party as a valid structure for armed struggle in Latin America.” Theoretical flexibility is, then, an important element for theory’s dialectical relation to praxis.

Beyond the problematic that poses the wars of position and maneuver against each other is the problem of power, posed by the incomplete nature of the war of position *even when one’s party has won elections and control of the government*. The three moments remain at play, especially in a situation where *hegemony* has not yet been achieved—that is, commanding a government should not be construed as achieving hegemony. Here, the crucial intellectual problem of not accurately grasping the relation between agencies and the multiple levels of structure remains. In a presentation of Marini’s works on Chile’s reform and the counterrevolution movement, Osorio (2019, p. 18) writes:

The mistakes of confusing coming to power with winning power; the call to start building socialism without having resolved the issue of power; the attempt to regain strength by summoning high-ranking military personnel to form the cabinet, instead of mobilizing popular sectors thirsty to end the domination of capital; and the adherence to legality to the point of accepting that the military invade workers’ neighbourhoods and factory centers in search of weapons are some of the problems addressed by [Marini (2019b)], highlighting the theoretical origins of such mistakes and their negative political consequences.

And, again, the military moment is shown to be decisive, particularly what Gramsci called the politico-military degree in preparing the masses, within the war of position, for the war of movement. When no side has achieved hegemony (and thus thoroughly built up the trenches within civil society), the military moment remains especially critical.

6.3 Consensus, Coercion, and the Role of Caesars

Sassoon (2019, p. 119) understands that “in considering the highest development of a class in terms of its political or hegemonic moment, in no way is development to this stage inevitable according to Gramsci.” That said, the possibility that certain societies may, perhaps, undergo struggles for hegemony but without reaching *hegemony achieved*. As Sassoon (2019, p. 119) reminds us:

The interests of the subordinate groups must have some concrete and not simply ideological weight; otherwise the interests of the dominant class would be merely economic-corporative. The definition of the highest development of a class consists in its ability to represent universal interests. In these [(GRAMSCI, 1971, p. 182)] and other notes Gramsci transforms the notion of politics so that it can comprehend a national-popular dimension. Politics can no longer be reduced, within Gramsci's problematic, to the immediate economic-corporative interests of a class.

The proposal that I put forth, then, is that the political moment in Latin American societies has seen incursions into the hegemonic moment, but “the highest development of a class”—i.e. hegemony—has not been achieved precisely because dominant social forces have not presented the “ability to represent universal interests”.

When considering the applicability of Gramsci's ideas to our region, it is essential to factor the development context in which Gramsci was writing and the relative unevenness that it stands against Latin American underdevelopment, both then and now. The question of applicability is not simply one of whether it is or is not applicable—which has been dealt with throughout this thesis, particularly in sections on historicization—but rather one of *how to go beyond* the original contexts. Or, as we have seen with (what I am considering) Marini's (2022b) critiques against Eurocentrism—that we cannot superimpose an exogenous analytical model on different contexts.

Thus, to go *beyond* Gramsci's context, we need to understand, first and foremost, that, even though there were relevant similarities in Italy's European-peripheral status, it was not a dependent capitalist socio-economic formation. The socio-economic conditions and level of super-exploitation prevalent in Latin America, when both Gramsci and Marini were writing, was quantitatively and qualitatively inferior in our region. For this reason, we cannot regard the highest level of shared consciousness *achieved* in the political moment in Latin America as equivalent to that the highest political moment observed by Gramsci.

Jaime Osorio (1985, p. 6), in his reading of Gramsci, claims that the Sardinian Marxist presents:

[...] a key point, in that the concessions and sacrifices of the dominant sectors can only go so far as “not to affect the essential.”

What does this mean in our region?

That the transfers of value suffered by Latin America—through diverse mechanisms that vary at different historical moments—, as well as the need of internal capital to compensate for such transfers by means of the intensification of the exploitation of the producing classes, imitate the capacity for concessions

that capital can offer and with it the political spaces, since they favor the emergence of demands that “affect the essential”.¹²³

Beyond the abstraction—the theoretical level formulation—lie the levels of violence found in Latin American society. First, institutionalized state violence against, not small minorities as seen in Europe and the United States, but against non-white majorities, considering not only black and indigenous communities, but the highly miscegenated populations of the region. Second, institutionalized state violence, and its *continuous* nature, against leftist social and political movements—while the US, for example, had McCarthyism and repression of the Black Panther Party and now the Black Lives Matter movement, these have tended to be more transitional than what is seen throughout Latin America; and the structural super-exploitation of labor force. And third, what we can call integral state violence—given the symbiosis of the state and bourgeois civil society—in the form of super-exploitation, including not only the appropriation of part of the worker’s consumption fund but also the impact of working conditions on their health and ability to live a dignified and full life.

These three types of coercion are a necessary aspect of dependent capitalism as the transformations needed to win the support of the masses will “affect the essential”—that is, the ability of dependent capitalism to reproduce. The levels of violence cannot be reduced to dependent capitalism, as they interact with other macrostructures of racism and patriarchy, and we must keep in mind that superstructures hold a dialectical relation to structures. However, the structural conditions of dependent capitalism, as the central organizing structure of society, should maintain a primary place in analysis. In other words: the transfer of value and super-exploitation do not allow for the necessary distribution of well-being for consensus to be built; and the underdeveloped society is not organized to meet the needs of its population; nor to adapt to changes in rise in demand.

¹²³ Original: “Gramsci cierra el párrafo antes citado con un señalamiento clave, en cuanto a que las concesiones y sacrificios de los sectores dominantes sólo pueden llegar hasta el punto “de no afectar lo esencial”.

¿Qué significa esto en nuestra región?

Que las transferencias de valor que sufre América Latina —a través de diversos mecanismos que varían en distintos momentos históricos—, así como la necesidad del capital interno de resarcir dichas transferencias mediante la agudización de la explotación de las clases productoras, imitan la capacidad de concesiones que puede ofrecer el capital y con ello los espacios políticos, ya que favorecen el surgimiento de demandas que “afectan lo esencial”.

Although I will not speak to the current situation of the center here, due to space and scope constraints, it is necessary to mention that there seems to be an organic movement in the restructuring of the capitalist system that points to a significant change in the relation between labor and capital in the central countries, or the Global North. Marini (2000) recognized in the 1990s that supe-exploitation seems to have spread to the Global North, no longer as a mere conjunctural phenomenon representing class struggle, but as a structural reordering. Different authors have pointed to this structural change as having its roots in the financialization of capital, most particularly in the United States, which has always had the weakest welfare state of the developed nations. There, the relative distribution of income has been structurally declining in favor of capital since the 1970s. The welfare state in Europe has been evolving as well to become more market-oriented in its services offered to workers (LESSA KERSTENETZKY; PEREIRA GUEDES, 2021). The current “populist” tendencies in Europe and the United States can, thus, be analyzed in view of the worsening economic situation of the workforce and the ramifications in the political moment—i.e., the ability of the dominant class fraction in upholding the support of the subordinate working classes within the historical blocs.

6.31 Analytical Differentiation: The historical bloc versus the power bloc

The question of hegemony, as a concept as much as a phenomenon, is one of a complex dialectical interrelation of elements. It is the unity between structure and superstructure; therefore between political moment and the economic moment, but also between the micro, meso, and macro levels. This unity occurs through the construction of a historical bloc—understood here as longer lasting (reaching the meso level) and having achieved a higher level of shared class consciousness than in Poulantzas’ power bloc. In the historical bloc, a dominant class fraction has made a claim of moral and intellectual leadership over subordinate classes and class fractions and has provided those subordinate groups with real material gain.

The historical bloc also presents unity between consensus and coercion, where the former predominates—but not in the algebraic formulation presented by Coutinho, where the increase of one necessarily points to the decrease of the other. Bianchi (2020, p. 165) elucidates that “dialectic of the unity-distinction that characterises the Gramscian formulation” in the “exercise of hegemony was understood by Gramsci as a combination of coercion and consensus, even in

political regimes in which liberal-democratic forms prevailed”. He points out, then, that “if, in the well-known formula of Notebook 6, hegemony was protected in the classic form of the ‘armour of coercion’, in [other passages, e.g. Q13, §37] it is force that appears protected by hegemony” (BIANCHI, 2020, p. 165).

Thus, consensus and coercion will be present to varying degrees, possibly even increasing together in specific moments. It is important, however, to consider consensus and coercion within Gramsci’s crucial problem—of understanding when they are conjunctural and when they are organic. It is here that MTD has much to offer. Consensus-building has as much a political footing as it has an economic-material one. As I have demonstrated, Gramsci recognized the role of colonialism in the development of a more complex society in Europe. Marini, for his part, recognized the impact of dependency on both hierarchical levels: in the central economies, the transfer of value facilitated the lowering of labor value—i.e., lowering the cost of living and, thus, allowing capitalists to increase their exploitation (appropriation of labor value) without extending their workday; in dependent economies, transformations in the international division of labor (IDL) generated new social groups in the economies that absorbed the lower phases of manufacturing. Thus, the transfer of surplus-value from the periphery to the center facilitates the process of building consensus, i.e. in constructing hegemony, given the role of material gains in garnering the compliance of subordinate groups. The movement is *organic* when it is of a more permanent nature and has, therefore, reached a deeper level of consciousness or adherence by the subordinate groups. In other words, the subordinate working-class fractions accept the moral and ethical leadership of the dominant bourgeois fraction not only because they are benefitting materially from it, but because the *belief* in said leadership has become embedded in the collective consciousness. As mentioned above, the situation in central countries seems to have changed, but we are most concerned with dependent countries here.

6.32 Conjunctural and Organic Movements in Lula’s and Dilma’s Brazil

While there seems to be a structural or organic change at the meso level regarding the situation of labor, hypothetically due to the ever-decreasing rate of profit, the situation of labor in the periphery has structurally remained precarious (China would present an important exception). This is not to say that there have not been conjunctural improvements—a caveat is needed to point

to movements between the micro and meso levels. Based on the literature, I have defined the microstructure as relating to the day-to-day and conjuncture as those movements that are occasional. However, there are conjuncture that may last much longer, as they might have but temporary structural support. A case in point is the commodity boom experienced by Latin American economies in the 2000s. The boom was contingent on Chinese demand—although Chinese growth is organic, the high level of demand seen in the 2000s was less so. As Marcelo Carcanholo (2013) has affirmed, given the lack of internal dynamicity in dependent economies, increased maneuverability or room for action is found in the international economic conjuncture—when there is an increase in demand for peripheral products or an increase in supply of credit.

This brings us to the situation in Brazil during the Lula and Rousseff administrations. Framing the issue around labor and the subaltern groups, we must ask which transformations were conjunctural and which were organic—and possibly whether elements of both can be observed. The first necessary observation is that the Lula administration was successful in drastically decreasing hunger and extreme poverty, partly due to the *Bolsa Família* program but not only. The organic movement that can be attributed to this is in the political-ideological sphere, in which the understanding that this is a real possibility for state redistribution of resources set in—so much so that even conservative presidential candidates vowed to not end the program. However, the conjunctural element, found in the economic sphere, is that the financing of the program depended on the boom—that is, no structural reforms were undertaken to address the patterns of accumulation and distribution of income.

The second observation, then, refers to the lack of structural reforms—ones that could change the composition in the distribution of political and economic power within the society. This is where we can most clearly observe the embrace of a strategy of passive revolution, or revolution-restoration, in the Lula administration. Marini (2013b, 2013d) pointed to the concentration of land (*latifundio*) as the main bottleneck in the ability of Brazilian society to bring dynamicity to its internal market—as the oligarchy maintained structural support in its ability to appropriate a mass of surplus-value. That is, given the high concentration of agricultural production, and its preference for the export market, whenever wages increased, so would the price of food—because only a limited amount of agriculture was dedicated to the consumption needs of the internal market. Although Lula increased the financing of family farming, the power of landed elites was left virtually intact.

There are also significant policies during Rousseff's administration that are worth highlighting. The first is the decision to reserve half of all federal public university spots to students from public schools. As is known, since the military dictatorship allowed for the functioning of private schools in Brazil, students hailing from poor families have traditionally attended poorly funded public schools and, if they decided to pursue further studies, had to attend private universities; while those from the segments of the middle and upper classes have attended *paid* private school and received the higher quality education necessary to allow them to enter the high quality *free* public universities. In this sense, Rousseff's policy represented an organic movement, not only because it would be juridically more difficult to change, but also because it set in as a *right* in the public consciousness. The Brazilian Constitution provides a specific progressive characteristic, in that it understands that a right gained cannot be excluded—and it has gained an important footing in Brazil's social consciousness as well.

A second significant change, however, was in Rousseff's move to allow pension funds to invest in the financial market. Although her move was to *permit* and not require this movement, it opened the door for an organic change. The Temer administration would, later, make this permanent. But beyond state policy, Rousseff's move integrated labor into the financialization process, in which *more money* could be made irrespective of the amount of work done. In other words, workers were materially integrated into the mystification of the benefits of financial capital—the real appropriation of surplus-value found in the financial pool of surplus-value that is the stock market.

It is unfortunate that it was only in the inaugural address of her second mandate, in which Rousseff held considerably less power in both the economic and political moments, that she came to defend the need for structural reforms, including the reform of the media. Ironically, the media would have a significant role in constructing public support for Rousseff's impeachment, as it did in supporting, first, the *Mensalão* proceedings and, then, in Lula's conviction. This particular movement, then, begs the question of whether the situation might have been different had Lula sought a media reform—the break-up of media monopoly as Argentina sought under Cristina Kirchner—when he had the political clout—that is, when the political moment was more favorable.

An observation that covers an organic change in the Lula and Rousseff administrations is that financial capital and agribusiness bourgeois fractions gained absolute and relative power in

that period. Lula even mentioned in a speech that bankers had never made so much profit as they did during his administration, structurally supported by changes at the meso level by the generalized tendency towards financialization; but also by the Lula administration's decision to pay off all IMF foreign debt by *internalizing* that debt—that is, by converting it into debt owned by private national banks at much higher interest rates (FATTORELLI, 2013). And, supported by

Rousseff did attempt to face the finance capital sector by significantly decreasing SELIC interest rates to record lows, believing that she would receive the support of the industrial bourgeoisie. However, the latter has been going through its own financialization process and have, therefore, been profiting from high interest rates (SINGER, 2015). This particular conjuncture, however, presented a disjuncture between her actions and the possibilities provided within the political and economic moments. Although it is not possible to affirm this with any certainty, the political and economic moments would have offered Lula better conditions to pursue deeper and politically challenging transformations.

6.33 Caesarism. Or “Order and Progress”

The difficulty in building consensus has, I argue, created the structural conditions that favor the rise of Caesars, a phenomenon that many authors have incorrectly attributed to supposed cultural tendencies in Latin America that favors *charismatic leaders*. The issue goes beyond charisma and cultural appeal to political capacities. Some individuals, although they often do present charismatic features, are better apt to play the political game—that is, to maneuver within the political microstructure and conciliate the interests of the different players, designing and presenting the conciliation proposal in ways that facilitate the acceptance by the relevant players of the positions defended by the “charismatic” leaders. It must be noted that conciliation of interests is a particularly difficult task in situations of dependency, given the diminished levels of accumulated capital and retained surplus-value.

Thus, in addition to the moments in which the bourgeois fractions came to an understanding that would allow for their interests to be complementary, economic-structural limitations made the continuance of these agreements unfeasible at specific conjunctural moments connected to the organic aspects of the mesostructure. These represented moments of *rupture of complementarity*,

as Marini called them. Marini's writing suggests that analytical importance should be given to *unresolved contradictions*, specifically those that Caesarism seeks to solve.

While Marini uses the concept of Bonapartism to speak of these attempts at solving class conflict when a stalemate impedes further progress and a strongman of sorts is needed to solve the conflict, Gramsci proposed Caesarism to bring more specificity. The differentiation between conservative and progressive Caesars is particularly useful in differentiating their position vis-à-vis the working class. President Getúlio Vargas exemplified an early progressive Caesar in consolidating labor rights, albeit under bourgeois dominance; the military dictatorship may be taken as a collective, conservative Caesar in their efforts not only to repress labor movements, but most particularly in their move to force wages down. Presidents Lula and Bolsonaro represent contemporary Caesars, the former as a progressive that did not resort to violence as the previous examples but presented the capacity to temporarily hold a broad conciliation beyond the bourgeois class. Unfortunately, the rupture of complementarity, inevitable in light of the unresolved nature of the contradictions, occurred during the reign of a non-Caesar, President Dilma Rousseff. In the midst of the political-economic crisis that President Temer did not resolve, President Bolsonaro was elected to bring about restoration. His capacity as Caesar, however, demonstrated to be much more demagoguery than political skill, as a significant portion of the bourgeoisie elected to argue for the release of President Lula from jail, after they had supported his illegal imprisonment, so as to compete with Jair Bolsonaro in the following electoral cycle.

6.4 Brazilian Sub-imperialism as Passive Revolution: Conversing and beyond

The conceptualization of wars of position and movement—reframed together to denote their strong interaction and dialectical-analytical relation—are particularly useful for theoretically inquiring into what is needed for deep transformations—those between the different levels of structure; but also for analyzing the struggle for hegemony and why societal problems persist. It is important, however, to consider a second possible conceptualization for the war of position not only on the basis of an already formed, ideologically coherent civil society. We can also reflect on what it means to construct a non-bourgeois civil society that will be strong enough to build its trenches. For this, the organic intellectuals of the masses need to support them raise their consciousness and organize not only in the political moment, but also in the politico-military

degree of the military moment. This is what would be necessary to transform the economic moment at the meso and macro levels.

The *doctrine of class conciliation*, adopted by the PT administrations in their political approach to class struggle, followed the reformist tradition of previous leftist parties. Although Lula is not organically linked to the PC tradition, there are relevant continuities between their reasoning and defense of a bourgeois-labor unity. As discussed above in the subsection on the ideological dimension and deep structures, a significant part of the Brazilian Left emphasizes the geopolitical struggle as central to improving the general conditions of the Brazilian economy and raising the living standards of the Brazilian masses. President Lula's doctrine of class conciliation is the domestic-level element necessary for a more proactive foreign policy. This bourgeois unity allows the state to develop a more or less coherent foreign policy program, allowing for greater fluidity by appeasing internal conflicts. It facilitates the productive construction of regional leadership and allows for a more independent foreign policy.

However, despite the seemingly progressive nature of these developments, and the correctness in geopolitical confrontation, these occurrences cannot be read in the analytical absence of the unsolved contradictions and of the relative changes in distribution of power in the economic and political moments *in favor of* the bourgeoisie against the subaltern or masses. Additionally problematic is Brazil's deeper insertion into the surplus appropriation game led by imperialism. As the experience of imperialist nations have demonstrated, there are real social gains to be achieved through the exploitation of other societies. And theoretical mystifications are created by organic intellectuals to justify such means and ease the consciousness of the subordinate groups of imperialist historical blocs. The potential successes of sub-imperialist formations are, therefore, dangerous as they may foster the acceptance of exploitative and unjust actions abroad.

6.41 Dependent restricted hegemony and sub-imperialism

The complexity in the network of the international division of labor is expressed in the category of *sub-imperialism*, a representation of the conscious development of an "active and self-

assertive foreign policy”¹²⁴ which, without seeking to break with the current system and its own dependency, tries to make changes *within the* system in order to gain a more favorable position internationally. In a cross-dialogue of terms, we could say that sub-imperialism is presented in a state-civil society complex, in which a relationship of domination prevails and is therefore non-hegemonic, in which a domestic bourgeoisie in a semi-peripheral country (with an intermediate organic composition of capital) develops a conscious project to expand its interests.

Álvaro Bianchi (2006) provides an important distinction between hegemony and passive revolution:

Passive revolution is [...] the exercise of a restricted hegemony, a bourgeois hegemony in a historical period in which this class has already lost the capacity to assimilate the subaltern classes to its project. Passive revolution is not the hegemony of one class over the whole of society, but that of a fraction of the dominant classes over all of them through the mediation of the state.

The concept of *restricted hegemony*, then, is useful for distinguishing the qualitative limits in the “capacity to assimilate the subaltern classes to its project”. Although Álvaro utilizes the concept for a higher level of abstraction, generalizable to situations of passive revolution in general; thus, not specific to the reality of dependent capitalism.

Mathias Luce (2011, 2013) uses of the notion of regional hegemony to expand on Marini’s use of relatively autonomous expansionist policy. The change seems correct since sub-imperialism needs a certain level of consent among those who would be subordinated in this relation. However, the applicability of the concept of hegemony is much more fragile in this context, since subordinate countries (including sub-imperialist ones) generally do not have the conditions to form an internal hegemony.

Considering the two conceptual proposals and the problem at hand, I understand that the category of sub-imperialism would be best complemented analytically by the new notion of *dependent restricted hegemony*, which presents utility at the domestic and regional levels. It does not have to follow that the *dependent historical bloc* or *dependent power bloc*—the inclusion of qualifiers may also be a relevant analytical procedure—will only include bourgeois class fractions, but the whole of society will not partake in the bloc. In taking this to the regional level, we would

¹²⁴ The term “política externa ativa e altiva” has been used by former Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Celso Amorim to describe foreign policy during the Lula governments (2003-2010).

analyze the transnational class alliances built but also have to determine whether the group consists in a dependent historical bloc or a dependent power bloc.

Given the already mentioned significance of Caesars in dependent capitalism and of the differences between progressive and conservative Caesars—as well as the controversies around the thesis of Brazilian sub-imperialism under the Lula administrations—I affirm that there also needs to be an analytical differentiation between directions that sub-imperialism may take.

Sub-imperialism is always a form of passive revolution, enabling movement from above while co-opting movements from below, based on revolution-restoration, albeit each element is presented in varying degrees. We can, therefore, speak of *progressive* and *conservative* sub-imperialism. The Brazilian military dictatorship embodies the example of conservative sub-imperialism, in its emphasis on restoration through counter-revolution and state violence. The Lula administration embodies the progressive type, expressing the revolution-restoration duality more fully—although Brazil’s foreign policy under Lula sought significant changes at the international level, it supported the maintenance of the deeper neoliberal world order at the meso level—defending what we might call a more multiculturally (but not class-) inclusive world order—and the capitalist system at the macro level. Progressive sub-imperialism, then, sought a reformist restoration with inclusivity.

At the regional level, there were a few significant accomplishments in integration efforts as conceptualized as parts of the sub-imperialist project. The consolidation of Mercosur took the liberal character of the integration effort a step further by increasing the membership, but relevant contradictions remained unsolved—all touched by the lack of consensus on what the character of the organization should be, ranging from more staunchly liberal and limited to free trade aspects, the “social-liberal” neo-developmental vision, and the more marginalized Bolivarian stance. The Mercosur Obrero (Workers’ Mercosur), which showed most promise for facilitating worker organization at the regional level, did not receive much political support to be able to significantly impact neither the organization nor the societies involved.

A second notable example is the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA), initiating in the final years of the Cardoso administration. Although not completed, it is perhaps the greatest and most robust example of dependent integration of the region in the capitalist system’s international division of labor. In a promise to bring greater efficiency and increase the region’s productivity, which it will do, it is also deepening South

America's overall dependency. By building regional infrastructure that will re-emphasize the primary export pattern of productive specialization, the region will tend to move further away from industrial and technological capacity. Perhaps worse are the political repercussions, in that the agribusiness and other extractive business fractions of the bourgeoisie will tend to gain even more power relative to the masses.

Another notable aspect of IIRSA, more closely related to sub-imperialism, was the funding provided by BNDES, the Brazilian development bank. A part of the larger sub-imperialist project of promoting the internationalization "national champions", BNDES financed infrastructure loans for foreign governments, with the prerequisite that they contract a Brazilian company and purchase Brazilian supplies for the project. The financial bourgeoisie was the first to benefit, as the state sold bonds in the Brazilian market, at extremely high interest rates, to finance BNDES's program, which would then subsidize the loans at very low interest rates at a new loss for the state. The Brazilian bourgeoisie fractions in the construction and supply sectors were the most benefited, but also parts of manufacturing as industrial products were also purchased. Thus, in addition to fostering growth in the Brazilian economy, the state was also fomenting the increase in the competitiveness of Brazilian corporations vis-à-vis other dependent capitalist and central capitalist corporations. Given the solidarity rhetoric, one could have expected an intra-regional bidding scheme that could foster development throughout the region. In that same line, the Lula administration has also been criticized for not supporting the Bank of the South more generally, which would arguably have empowered a more equitable and possibly transparent approach to development (FURTADO, 2008). It must be noted, however, that political and economic moments in Brazil did not favor such support creating a competitor to BNDES, a situation in which the Brazilian bourgeoisie would have had to be willing to divide up potential profits with other Latin American bourgeois fractions.

Unasur and Celac were, perhaps, the most positive accomplishments in that they enabled political proactivity at the regional level, especially in the former as it consolidated more easily. Unasur's survival, however, proved to rely on the continued political support of the Brazilian state. Seen as an accomplishment of the progressive left, some of the conservative segments of the Brazilian right that would comprise the power bloc presided by Bolsonaro. Unasur as a superstructure had not reached a deeper level of social consciousness and was perceived by conservatives as bearing a leftist ideology at its core.

This speaks, indeed, to a deeper meso or even macro level divide in dependent capitalist ideological super-structure that draws a dichotomic division of political positions based on foreign policy stance vis-à-vis the United States. The conservative standpoint affirms the necessary alliance, with strong roots in the anti-communist crusades of the Cold War. The progressive or leftist standpoint affirms the need for an independent foreign policy—which the conservatives invariably see as pro-communist. There are, obviously, lower levels of abstraction in which further distinctions can be made, apparent in Luce's typology between complete subservience and the anti-imperialist stance discussed above. The sub-imperialist power will, invariably, be somewhere in between the extremes, showing a stronger presence in the antagonistic cooperation element. During the military dictatorship, the cooperation was centered around the anti-communist struggle, while antagonism was developed most coherently in developmentalist policies and the continuation of the dictatorship.

During the Lula administration, cooperation centered around the organizing legal principles of neoliberal international governance—including the affirmation of free trade principles in the WTO, the WTO negotiations, the organization of the Commercial G-20, the fomenting of trade via inter-regional forums (such as the South America-Africa and the South America-Middle Eastern Countries Forums, both initiated at Lula's behest). The antagonist element, on the other hand, rested on political demands for reform of that same economic structure it was cooperating to maintain. More specifically, sub-imperialist Brazil was vindicating a seat at the table for itself, and it did so through different means: by proving it had diplomatic clout in the Iran Nuclear Deal negotiations and in helping the Palestinian cause by engaging members to vote favorably at the UN General Assembly; by participating, if not leading, the political organization of peripheral and semi-peripheral states in defense of common liberal interests; and by standing against US-interventionist in Latin America.

The rhetoric and promotion of South-South cooperation, in this sense, needs to be analyzed critically—not as an expression of supposed ambiguity, but in its contradictions. As Souza (2010) rightly affirmed, there are benefits to be gained in Brazil's expansionist policy towards other Global South countries, in particular in regards to the transfer of technology and the lack of imposition of reforms as is traditional in the practice of the West. This should, however, be read as an aspect of constructing consensus in a dependent restricted hegemony. By not imposing its dominance, the Brazilian state's claim of leadership in a possible Global South historical bloc

would be more feasible. Because it is vying for hegemonic status *in competition with imperialist states* that have traditionally asserted dominance, it cannot hope to achieve power through coercion, especially since its coercive capacities are much lower than that of imperialist states and, at the same time, not much higher than the other subordinate states. Consensus-building though a progressive sub-imperialist project is, then, the most strategically feasible move within the contemporary situation.

6.411 The fragility of sub-imperialism

There are some scholars who have defended the thesis of the continuation of sub-imperialism after the end of the Lula administrations and well into Bolsonaro's time in government. I disagree because such a conception diminishes the analytical cohesion of the category, which, in turn, sterilizes important political elements regarding the integral state's role in actively constructing and promoting a sub-imperialist project abroad.

The first Rousseff administration led a relatively less active foreign policy agenda, partly due to her more technocratic style and, it would seem, belief that the Lula administrations were indeed more ideologically oriented. Her leadership was further encumbered by domestic and international situations. Domestically, her group was unable to convince the electrical sector bourgeoisie that a reform leading to changes in pricing would be, in hegemonic terms, beneficial for them as well as for the entirety of Brazilian society. She had a similar failure and one that had much deeper repercussions with the financial sector. While the high interest rates which brought record profits to the financial sector is unsustainable economically, her move to lower SELIC also proved to be politically untenable. Believing that her administration would have the support of the industrial bourgeoisie, since lower interest rates would allow for greater productive investments, Rousseff was not counting on their adherence to the financialization process, in which they were now also making record profits without needed to make investments in the productive sector. Additionally, the industrial bourgeoisie's long-standing dislike of the PT and labor movements, more generally speaking, likely also affected their unwillingness to negotiate. The industrial elite of the ABC have not forgotten Lula's time as union organizer. The Brazilian monopolistic corporate media, in their ideological affiliation with the industrial and financial fractions, were active participants in the anti-PT defamation campaign, which took new heights, since the

Mensalão, following the financial sector's disagreeable position regarding the lowering of interest rates.

Internationally, she had to deal with the Wikileaks reports that the United States was spying on Brazil. While this opened up possibilities for a nationalistic momentum that could have given her more scope for public support had she proposed a bolder agenda, she did not take advantage of the window of opportunity. On the contrary, plans she may have had for engaging the US in fostering closer relations were, in fact, encumbered, since national pride required her to step away from such engagements, even if temporarily. Additionally, different recent studies have pointed to the role that the US police forces played in Operation Car Wash, a juridical move not only to discredit the PT and Lula, but also to negatively impact the growing Brazilian transnational corporate competitors. While the latter is not held to be an internal objective of those supporting Operation Car Wash, different scholars have defended that it was the US's main motivation in the "anti-corruption" campaign.

A factor in the domestic-international nexus was the worsening economic conditions, with causes in both levels of analysis. While Lula had weathered the worst of the Great Recession storm's international impacts, Rousseff was not as capable. This is, of course, not only due to agency-level elements, but also to structural ones, to a great extent. Lula, in fact, was only able to delay the inevitable. The rupture of complementarity in the power bloc during Rousseff's leadership enabled different bourgeois fractions to deepen the economic crisis to force her level of public support to decline, a process which only accelerated after her extremely narrow victory in her re-election campaign.

The Temer administration, now leading Brazil's dependent restricted hegemony, more restorative and coercive than the previous governments, took the two years they had to pass several structural counter-reforms—structural because they would greatly affect the mesostructural level. The first move was to legalize the very so-called crime of responsibility act that Rousseff had committed—whose purely political nature became unquestionable already during the impeachment proceedings in Congress. The greatest structural counter-reform approved in Congress was the constitutionally-imposed twenty-year Spending Ceiling, which restricted the increase of government spending in every single area to the inflation rate—including social areas such as education and health.

The power of Brazil's monopolistic corporate media showed itself to be particularly powerful during the 2018 presidential campaign which elected Jair Bolsonaro. Another Caesar, admired for his ability to speak his truth and reminiscent, for many Brazilians, of the "tiozão" figure—that politically incorrect uncle that every family knows and love (even if they do not have one among them), the "tiozão" is fun and we have learned to tolerate his absurdities, including extremely violent and bigoted speech. Women can vote for a misogynist more easily when they deal with that misogyny on a daily basis. And family members of LGBTQ people tolerate his claims that he would beat up a gay male couple if he saw them kissing or believes that companies should be able to fire an LGBTQ employee due to their sexuality—not because they approve of his views, but because violence is such a normalized aspect of Brazilian's daily lives that it is, in the end, acceptable—at least when directed towards the traditionally oppressed.

Bolsonaro also had the support of large segments of the middle classes—that had been hurt by the previous economic crisis or whose children now had less available spots in public universities do to Rousseff's quota system; and especially of the bourgeoisie, who saw Bolsonaro as someone who would give continuation to Temer's ultraliberal counter-reforms. After consolidating strong economic policy power in the new Ministry of the Economy, under the stewardship of the ultraliberal economist Paulo Guedes. Menezes and Mello (2021) affirm that,

By delegating practically all economic decisions to Minister Paulo Guedes, from the privatization of the country's assets to the formatting of reforms in social security, civil service, and taxation and even the redesigning of social programs, the president abdicates his decision-making power vis-à-vis issues of central importance to the country.

The Bolsonaro administration, however, also faced important restraints. He was partially successful in dismantling the governance structure of the councils that provided organized civil society to participate in government policy-making in the respective council areas; as well as in defunding the agencies responsible for environmental regulation and indigenous land demarcation—leading to great headway in deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and Cerrado biomes. The Covid-19 pandemic and public pressure, however, required Bolsonaro and Guedes to support a temporary universal income policy, after much feet dragging in, including in the purchase of vaccines.

Most notable for our discussion, however, is Bolsonaro's foreign policy. If sub-imperialism had waned during Rousseff's presidency, it faded completely during Temer and Bolsonaro's. This

is not to say that they were against taking part in the exploitation of other peoples in the periphery. Rather, they fully gave up the “active and self-assertive” foreign policy approach—that is, the antagonistic cooperation approach in Brazil’s relation with the United States and Europe in favor of a subservient position or *automatic alignment* (following the typology) with the former, less so with the latter. This was apparent in the first months of the Bolsonaro administration, when they approved the Mercosur-European Union trade agreement by dropping all the requests that Brazil had made until then and accepting the concessions that the EU had requested. However, once France decided to add the stipulation that sought to protect the Amazon from deregulation, Bolsonaro power bloc’s relation with the EU soured.

His bloc’s greatest alignment was towards the United States, but most specifically towards Trump and his historical bloc. In hopes of being granted membership in the OECD, Brazil gave up the developing country status at the WTO—and with that, specific preferences in trade—and agreed to providing the US unprecedented access to the Amazon at the Trump’s behest. Bolsonaro also had to make efforts at improving relations with China, the country’s biggest export market and biggest investor, due to the anti-globalist group’s attacks—a subordinate group within the power bloc. Bolsonaro demonstrated the degree of his ideological alliance when President Trump lost re-election in the United States. Partly given President Biden’s declarations regarding Brazil’s deforestation policy, aligned more with the dominant European position, Bolsonaro withdrew his subservience. He had already shown signs, however, of this ideological alignment by failing to call Biden to congratulate him on his victory. Interesting, it is Biden who came to court Bolsonaro while organizing the Summit of the Americas. Partly due to the fact that a few Latin American states had announced a boycott of the summit due to Biden’s exclusion of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, Biden felt compelled to extend an olive branch to Bolsonaro and go out of his way to assure Bolsonaro’s attendance—Brazil’s added absence would point to a much greater failure of the summit.

It is regionally that Brazilian sub-imperialism suffered the most. In addition to leaving Unasur and, being followed by fellow ultraliberal neighbors, the organization was virtually killed. In its place a new organization emerged—the Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America (ProSur)—claiming to be non-ideological. It is revealing, however, that Brazil had no significant role in its creation. Regional integration in particular, and regional relations in general, took a backseat during the Temer and Bolsonaro administrations. Efforts at expanding, or even

maintaining, the expansionist policy—and the dependent restricted hegemony—were abandoned. This is, however, characteristic of administrations that tended towards subservience or automatic alignment with US imperialism.

In the face of limitations set by dependent capitalism specifically, but also to relations of force more generally, it is critical to acknowledge that progressive administration do face severe limitations. It would be, for example, incorrect to fault the Lula administration for not carrying out a socialist revolution. That said, while many conditions are given and voluntarist conceptions of the possible cannot lead to anything but failure—especially within dependent capitalism where parameters for action are smallest—the possibilities for change need to be constructed. The question to pose regarding the Lula and Rouseff administrations, then, is not why they did not engage in revolutionary struggle or develop a people's revolutionary foreign policy agenda; but rather, in which direction did their actions and policy move the relation of forces? Were they directed towards strengthening the masses by empowering their organizational potential and consciousness-raising efforts? Or were they directed towards strengthening bourgeois sectors and deepening the dependency not only of Brazil but also of other peripheral countries? This is, indeed, not a dichotomic issue, as both sides could have been strengthened, in theory. But given the antagonistic and non-conciliatory interests between capital and labor, this is also not a situation in which everyone can leave a winner.

The room for maneuver of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries has a much stronger relationship with the conjunctural moment than that of the central countries; in other words, they depend much more on favorable external conditions, such as the availability of credit and demand for their export products, given the strong limitations imposed by the organic moment. If they do not seek structural reforms, whether in the context of a passive revolution or a social revolution, during the most favorable periods, organic dependency will not change.

7. Concluding Remarks: On the politics behind intellectual history

The initial thesis project was, in certain ways, very ambitious. I have been humbled in this process and, inspired by the intellectual honesty of my chosen theorists, I have come to realize that this thesis cannot be anything more than an initial synthesis—not because my dedication was lacking, but rather due to the realization that the level of intellectual maturity required to effectively present a theoretical synthesis with the rigor that is deserved is something I will only develop through many more years of dedication, intellectual exchange, and critique. The end result that is this thesis, however, aspires to be a critical provocation that contributes (a) to the socialist project of uniting theory and praxis and embraces self-critique in the process, (b) to the continued development of Latin American critical thought, and (c) to movements that bring the intellectual down to earth, to be more concerned with learning from the subaltern than with teaching them—a relation that needs to be dialectical but that has historically favored the latter over the former. That said, this thesis aims to make a theoretical contribution through meta-theoretical analyses. Consistent with the need for theory to relate to concrete praxis, there are also several moments in which it lands in an application of elements of the framework in 21st century Brazil, with an emphasis on the relation between agency and the different levels of structure, and the relation between the domestic, regional, and international, in a framework that brings in the elements of time and space.

The objective of chapter 2 (after the Introduction) was to demonstrate the consequences around the lack of rigor in reading, and the politics behind this lack of rigor. Although this trend can (and should) be applied to an analysis of the wider problems of academicism as an anti-intellectual pursuit in universities and research centers, there are politically motivated specificities that appear when radical thought comes to scene. Gatekeeping as a phenomenon is older and embraces a wider plethora of actions than the newer notion of gatekeeping has commonly recognized. As we have seen, it goes beyond the role of journal editors, book publishers, and scholars themselves to encompass that of military dictatorial and fascist regimes, interventionist imperialist governments, foreign capital, party leaders, and the structures and superstructures—those prevailing at the time, but also the newly restructured ones that would mold academicism in their ideological image.

Chapter 3, then, attempted to relate how preferred meta-scientific categories, underpinned by particular epistemologies, impact the scholar's capacity to conduct the practices rigorously. Beyond the positivist/empiricist standpoint, part of the problem has been in how to group theories, perspectives, and approaches together. Whether we call these groupings a school, a research program, a current of thought, or something else matters—and it does precisely because that classification implies things about both the units and the grouping. However, the purpose of this discussion is found beyond rigorous nomenclatures. It has to do with developing a better understanding of the approaches at hand. Important for our discussion are two larger groupings, that ones which speaks to the dependency tradition and the Marxist tradition. It is worth remarking that Marini is found at the intersection as both, while Gramsci is not. We could have discussed whether there could be a tradition around hegemony, given the various conceptualizations and its rich tradition in the history of ideas. This would, however, have been of more tendential interest to this thesis given its focus on a dialogue between the Sardinian and Mineiro Marxists. The discussion on meta-scientific units and research programs is also important for this work given Gramsci's and Marini's participations in defining Marxism, or their attempts at setting the parameters for the Marxist research program. While non-Marxists often depict such debates as a nonsensical competition for a prophet's legacy, these are in fact rich debates on the philosophy of social science—on the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of historical and dialectical materialism. Their particular contributions to defining Marxism were, then, inserted in a meta-narrative about when, how, and why to group approaches together.

Chapter 4 established the first parameters for the dialogue between Gramsci and Marini, based on the premise that the dialectic between their political and intellectual motivations also substantiates their *rhythms of thought*, the central guiding principle of my research design. The main intersection of dialogue was, then, meta-theoretical with the intent of demonstrating the dialectic relation between theory and praxis in their rhythms. Due to its importance to analyzing the periphery and underdevelopment, the chapter also presents the relation between the internal and external, or domestic and international levels, with geographical and temporal differentiations.

Chapter 5 takes a step further and begins establishing the dialogue more directly. It is framed around a search for intersections between their methodologies and concepts—therefore, it presents a lower level of abstraction than—but remains highly referenced in—the previous chapter. There is also some initial application of concrete situations within the presentations of concepts

and categories, organized by the three moments in Gramsci's analysis of situations. I demonstrate how Marini works within Gramsci's three moments, but also in how their compatibilities and complementarities go beyond that into the more analytical level for understanding underdevelopment and subordination within a deeply hierarchical world capitalist system.

The last chapter before this Conclusion, Chapter 6, engages with the articulation of the rhythms of thought more extensively, focusing on the most relevant issues for thinking the problem of dependency: the wars of position and maneuver; the relation between consensus, coercion, and Caesars; and sub-imperialism as passive revolution with dependent restrictive hegemony. This chapter attempts to land more consistently to demonstrate the application of the central ideas brought in this thesis—but maintains the theoretical discussion alive.

The combination of the chapters, then, develop an initial answer for my central research question: how can a dialogue between Antonio Gramsci and Ruy Mauri Marini contribute to the crucial intellectual and political problem of historical materialism in Latin America? As mentioned above, my answer is, as of yet, preliminary. The dialogue between Gramsci and Marini can recenter the political role of the intellectual by emphasizing the complexity in the analytical relation between agency and the multiple levels of structure—encompassing, here, levels of structure (micro, meso, and macro), the units of analysis (the individual, class, domestic, regional, and international), and the political, economic, and ideological dimensions. In order to create and maintain a socialist revolution, it is necessary not only grasp these diverse relations; but also to comprehend the specificities of dependent capitalism, past and present.

Implied above, this thesis presents certain noteworthy limitations. The first is the need to conduct a philological study of the intellectuals I engage with, especially considering the difference in the levels of philological study already conducted of each. The International Gramsci Society has facilitated much philological research and intellectual exchange in Gramsci's oeuvre. There is no equivalent for Marini's oeuvre. On the other hand, I am able to read all of Gramsci's texts that I can access—as he has written in Spanish and Portuguese only. I do not have that skill in Italian so I would not be able to grasp nuances in his writings if I were to attempt to read untranslated versions. Although Gramsci's English translations are lacking, I do have easy access to his works in Spanish and Portuguese. Some of Marini's original texts, including interviews, however, are of more difficult access as they are not available online.

A second important limitation is related to a lacuna in my formation—the lack of philosophy of science, Marxist theory, and Latin American critical thought in the curricula, considering the classroom as an important space for digesting information and collective reflection. That said, my critical formation has happened partly in the classroom, partly in academic and militant activities, and partly as an autodidact. It is my understanding, therefore, that further collective spaces for reflection would greatly impact this thesis.

A third limitation is the shortness of the practical-analytical. I had initially planned to have two chapters to develop an analysis of the Lula, Rousseff, Temer, and Bolsonaro administrations. I do insist, however, that the discussion here developed is a necessary precondition for my analysis of Brazilian sub-imperialism. There is an apparent contradiction here, considering the argument in my thesis that thinking is a dialectical process. Both Gramsci and Marini developed analytical works well before their more theoretical writings. But perhaps I should not be as concerned with a strict formulaic path regarding the correct steps and the correct order to be taken in one's research. I have to find my own pace and fluidity and avoid mechanismism in my one meta-cognition. Thus, there is a reason for the limitation; it is, however, a limitation, nonetheless.

In addition to expanding on these limitations, a promising line in continuing this research is in further analysis of Marini's conceptualization of the state, a topic I did not approach here due to its breadth. It would also be fruitful to see whether there is potential for a dialogue between Gramsci and Marini specifically in that topic. And although these two topics are interesting and of utmost relevance, I would like to extend my future research to encompass other sub-imperialist powers and on what the synthesis I have establishing would have to contribute to research on the BRICS group and its place in the changing world order.

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Annex A – Oswaldo Guayasamín Paintings

“Meeting at the Pentagon”, 1970



“Napalm”, 1974



“Manos de un mendigo”



“Hands of Protest”



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