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The Problem of the Inauthenticity of Knowledge in Latin America

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Abstract- In Latin America, the production of scientific knowledge in the human sciences in general, and sociology in particular, has been characterized by a double concern. On the one hand, the arrival of ideas, concepts and theories from outside the continent continues to cause strangeness as to their relevance and suitability for a different social and economic context. On the other hand, as a way out of this nonconformity, there has been a search for a common epistemological basis about ourselves that would underpin and clarify this singularity. It is argued that an alternative to overcome this uncertainty lies in the Latin America's condition of dependence, that is, in the specific way in which we are inserted into the world capitalist system, as a fundamental element in understanding or explaining recurring impasses and challenging novelties. In fact, it is about strengthening a fruitful tradition, which has provided us with great insights into countless objects of study.

Keywords: *latin America, dependence, knowledge, sociology, inauthenticity.*

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The Problem of the Inauthenticity of Knowledge in Latin America

Fernando Neves

Abstract- In Latin America, the production of scientific knowledge in the human sciences in general, and sociology in particular, has been characterized by a double concern. On the one hand, the arrival of ideas, concepts and theories from outside the continent continues to cause strangeness as to their relevance and suitability for a different social and economic context. On the other hand, as a way out of this nonconformity, there has been a search for a common epistemological basis about ourselves that would underpin and clarify this singularity. It is argued that an alternative to overcome this uncertainty lies in the Latin America's condition of dependence, that is, in the specific way in which we are inserted into the world capitalist system, as a fundamental element in understanding or explaining recurring impasses and challenging novelties. In fact, it is about strengthening a fruitful tradition, which has provided us with great insights into countless objects of study.

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Introduction

The question of the "idea and its place", of its origin and appropriation elsewhere, of the genesis of concepts and the effectiveness of their application, is not restricted to the ordinary tasks of scientific activity, since it has a decisive relationship with the theme of power. This characteristic affects therefore the different fields of research, which imposes permanent difficulties for the models of production of knowledge that are to be considered valid.

In Latin America, although it was more related to philosophy and political thought (ARDAO, 1991; BONDY, 1969, 1986; DUSSEL, 2011; MIRÓ QUESADA, 1981; ZEA, 1976, 1978, 1986), the concern with the *problem of the inauthenticity of knowledge* also occurred, in different ways, in other disciplines (O'GORMAN, 1977; STAVENHAGEN, 1972; IANNI, 1976), creating a fundamental dilemma for intellectuals, the foundation of a critical procedure with permanent impacts, in order to construct a "proper" counter-discourse in opposition to the theoretical matrices coming from European modernity in crisis[1].

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[1] A synthesis of this program was elaborated by Enrique Dussel (2011, p. 179), based on the proposals of the "Philosophy of Liberation": "The hypothesis is the following: it seems it is possible to philosophize in the periphery, in underdeveloped and dependent nations, in dominated and colonial cultures, in a peripheral social formation, from the exploited and popular classes, only if one does not imitate the discourse of the philosophy of the center, only if one discovers another discourse. This discourse, being radically other, must have another point of departure, must think other themes, must arrive at different conclusions and with a different method. This is the hypothesis, the program. The present work is intended as an outline of what should be the first provisional philosophical theoretical framework of such a discourse. In other words, it is necessary not only not to conceal but to start from the center-periphery, dominator-dominated, capital-work, totality-externality asymmetry, and from this point rethink everything that has been thought up to now. But, more than that, to think what has never been thought: the very process of liberation of the dependent and peripheral peoples. The theme is the very praxis of liberation; the option for such praxis is the beginning of a philosophical proto-discourse. Politics introduces ethics, and ethics introduces philosophy".

Following this critical procedure, the perception of an original reality has contrasted the theoretical waves at every step of history, as if to challenge the strength of strange theories at every moment, in a kind of ring of knowledge, not merely to defeat them at all costs, but to expose their limits and inadequacies. However, the indistinction between common patterns and specific features of production of knowledge, which emerge from the very same social realities investigated, seems to serve more to compartmentalize reflections than to integrate them dialectically. Even so, Leopoldo Zea's (1976) version of the problem leaves no doubt as to the need for a deeper and more consequential epistemological break:

> Latin American made use of ideas that were relatively strange to them in order to face their reality: illustration, eclecticism, liberalism, positivism and, in recent years, marxism, liberalism and existentialism. In each of these cases, in the acceptance of this influence, the central idea in the mind of the Latin American was to make of his America a world on a par with the so-called Western world; of its peoples, nations similar to the great Western nations (p. 28).

But this requirement to adopt a theoretical orientation away from the canons of Europe and United States without a clear point of attachment to the social and economic gears that promote and eternalize all forms of colonialism in Latin America ends up mirroring its opposite: the emergence of a more exacerbated particularism that only reverses the signs of the equation. In this way, a broader understanding of the perpetuation of power differences in the interstate system of the capitalist world-economy (ARRIGHI, 1994; WALLERSTEIN, 1996) and the logic of internal

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domination corresponding to each political formation (MARINI, 1976) is often overlooked.

Gino Germani (1964) had already noted this problem in the case of sociology, although he restricted himself to defending the universality of science, "sociology as a science in general", given its collective and accumulative nature. But this resulted, on the other hand, in a contradictory position that disregarded the contingencies of scientific activity in the international arena, both from the point of view of each specific case and the comparison between them:

> insofar as science – sociology included – is supranational and represents the result of the joint efforts of men from different times and different countries, no nation, taken in isolation, can hope to maintain a utopian intellectual autarky, which, moreover, would imply stagnation and sterility for science at both the national and universal levels. (…) The universality of science – and of its contributions – does not derive from the blind application of theoretical models, wherever they come from, but from the continuous interaction between theory and concrete reality. (GERMANI, *ibd.*, p. 03-04).

This naturalization of scientific neutrality was part of his project to found a "scientific sociology", in order to establish the variants of the discipline in each "concrete reality", even if he didn't fully consider them in all their variables. In other words, for him, it was simply a question of promoting a methodological adjustment that would allow him to maintain a safe distance from the material and political conditioning factors involved in founding "a serious scientific tradition" (GERMANI, *ibd.*, p. 05), in carrying out research and in the formation of a community of researchers (available public and private research funds, the creation of libraries and laboratories, budget disputes, the awarding of scholarships, stable positions in teaching and research centers, the financing of publications, the reception and maintenance of students at universities, etc.), as well as bypassing hierarchies that emerge from these differences in scientific and technological development, not to mention the unequal distribution of results. Thus, for the author,

> the reception of theories from different societies or times presents itself as a *problem*, a problem that can be solved to perfection by using the general procedures of scientific knowledge. That is, it is a question of a purely methodological kind; a question, moreover, that arises in any country, whether or not it is a *producer* or *dependent* country in terms of the creation of theories (GERMANI, *ibd.*, p. 04-05).

However, contrary to this ideal of universal science, the defense of a consequent epistemological break presupposes dealing with the fetishized and multifaceted forms of domination in fundamentally capitalist ways, observable in any society, cultural tradition or historical singularity. It is therefore necessary to unravel, beyond the development of possible alternative routes, the effects of the forms of expansion of the society of merchandise, and the inexorability of the world market that underlies it, on the production of knowledge in general. But for Germani, these questions, which certainly refer to the "cultural imperialism" and "intellectual colonialism" he criticizes, are all in the realm of "ideology", and his defense of science in that of "objectivity". Nevertheless, it is precisely the opposite that is observed when the issues mentioned are not disregarded: "objectivity" as if seeking to precede and deny "ideology".

In contrast, as we know, the incorporation of modern theories produced in Europe and United States, which mainly date back to the reception of liberal ideas in the 19th century, in the context of the independence processes of the nascent Latin American nations, did not occur in a uniform way here: it was made up of specific mediations of the oligarchic political system of that time, in line with the progressive insertion of countries into the international division of labor. The construction of nations required, right then, a doctrinal body to underpin and direct it (RETAMAR, 1971; ZEA, 1976; ARDAO, 1991; SANTANA, 1992), in a search for our own form of expression, through the superimposition and fusion of cultural elements (UREÑA, 1980, p, 95). However, the independence movements did not form a coherent and harmonious whole, since economic and cultural dependence and internal social contradictions were at odds with the project of political emancipation from Europe. Simón Bolívar had already noted these difficulties in his *Letter from Jamaica* (2020), highlighting our common cultural traits and customs that could eventually support the necessary unity of peoples, as well as orient strategies to overcome the military obstacles of breaking with the European metropolis.

After all, much more than understanding that "upside-down" reality in an autonomous way, it was up to these movements to justify the new order from which they benefited. Despite all, this was our starting point, our common intellectual heritage, because before, "under colonial domination, the region was not in a position to produce its own ideas: it imported them ready-made from the metropolis, either by absorbing those brought to it by the intellectuals who came from there, or by sending its educated men, its literates, to appropriate them" (MARINI, 2008, p. 238).

Thus, the effort to think of oneself based on the reflections of others expressed, at that time, the condition of dependence in favor of the local ruling classes. This situation of limitations in the search for and selection of conceptual references closer to the Latin American social and historical context would not change afterwards, and the greater or lesser extent of acceptance of these epistemological exchanges, which were practically one-way, corresponded, in turn, to the form of the material exchanges between the rising

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political formations. In this way, the predominance of certain ideas conformed to the economic foundations that emerged along with the new patterns of colonialist actions and their resilient local means of domination, ultimately re-establishing the relationship between a given dominant social and economic system and the dominant ideas that accompany and justify it[2].

Although the incongruities of the economic and social base (summarized in the institutes of servitude, slavery and, in particular, favor[3]) hindered the safe anchoring of liberal novelties (SCHWARZ, 2000, p. 10-31), this encounter with European modernity would be the pillar of Latin America's "mental emancipation" (ZEA, 1972), referenced above all in positivism (ZEA, 1976, p. 223-383), and whose meanings would remain in dispute (BONDY, 1969; ZEA, 1969). This continuing relationship thus would represent the late result of the singular process of economic and cultural development set in motion since the colonial period.

At this point, the aforementioned problem of knowledge on the Latin American continent was gradually formalized, *the intersections between what is proper and what is external*, which involves the conceptualization of this plural and diverse reality, both from a historical point of view and in terms of languages and cultural expressions. Since then, the meaning of the question posed by Carlos M. Rama (1977), "Is there Latin America?", has been revisited over and over again, and the most recent answers to it (ALTAMIRANO, 2021) restore the divergences observed in each period.

On the one hand, the focus on the symbolic apparatus involved in this definition and the disputes over meaning that accompany it, that is, the constant search for a univocal "cultural identity" that flattens this evident diversity, has made it difficult to define an object of study with unequivocal contours in order to establish a common epistemological basis about ourselves. On the other hand, there is no country, of any latitude, in Latin America without divided and hierarchized societies, marked by generalized violence and a deep economic abyss between its social classes (FERNANDES, 2008). For this reason, perhaps we should base the most general characteristic to guide our common reflections on these universal difficulties and sufferings, which makes it both possible and necessary to consider Latin America as a "unity", or as a "specific whole", at the same time empirical and political.

But this suggestion does not correspond to an original proposition, it is just an indication of the convenience of strengthening, with possible reservations, a line of reflection established by the most diverse Latin American authors[4] as clear authenticity in the production of knowledge in the human sciences in general and sociology in particular. In any case, which guidelines should be used for the methodological framework of this "unity"? On what level does it present itself most consistently? How will this affect the content of epistemological reflections among us?

As might be expected, given the international transit of ideas and the continuous expansion of the global capitalist market, there are many lines of continuity here with what happened in Europe or United States in terms of the development and dissemination of concepts and theories, although, as we have seen, fruitful attempts to nuance this genesis according to our historical and social specificities stand out. These forms of knowledge production in Latin America have thus demarcated moments and paradigms that are quite distinct from each other, which have resulted from peculiar social processes, according to each disciplinary field or theoretical tradition.

Jaime Osorio's (1995) diagnosis of the development of Latin American sociology expressed all these distinctions well, at a time of profound political changes in the countries that were rebuilding their democracies (1980s and 1990s), after long years of political closure and state terror, with all the contradictions, difficulties and limits involved in this process. This highlighted an irreducible stance of demarcating theoretical and political positions that blocked conceptual advances through the clash of ideas, or, as he noted, "Latin American sociology refuses to dialogue with itself" (p. 19), which had repercussions, from one side to the other, in the choice of research topics and their different approaches.

Actually, these positions once again demonstrated the element of continuity between us: "(...) reflection maintains a high degree of commitment to the political and social processes of the region. This is one of the aspects that underlies the strength of this discipline on the continent, as well as its high ascendancy over politics and political discourse" (OSORIO, *ibd*., p. 20). And this "ascendancy" also makes it possible to understand the different ways in which researchers are involved with the "destiny" of

[2] "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas (…)" (MARX AND ENGELS, 1974, p. 64).

[3] According to Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1997, p. 65-113), for free men in the slave order, the specificity of the favor in relation to the rigidity of slavery consisted, in the case of Brazil, in its effectiveness as a mean of personal domination (without the need, thereby, for the mediation of a bureaucratic body), which was achieved in the duty to provide different services in circumstances of supposed lack of social differentiation, constituting a network of debts and obligations whose participants were recognized as free and equal, which, in turn, allowed them to be precariously integrated into the social order, and *appearing* as a "harmony of wills", given by respect, loyalty and veneration, and not merely as the imposition of the will of the strongest.

[4] Without pretending to exhaust the large number of authors situated, in their respective specificities, in this long tradition, it is worth remembering Ramírez Necochea, 1966; González Casanova, 1969; Bagú, 1970; Fals Borda, 2009; Fernandes, 2005; Zavaleta Mercado, 1978; Quijano, 1980; Errandonea, 1989; Vargas Valente, 1992; Martins, 2009 and Osorio, 2001.

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Latin American peoples (NEVES, 2022). But this relationship would be revealed from now on in a negative way, demonstrating an uncomfortable truth from the point of view of the historical conformation of these novelties: "if the old sociology sinned by its economic reductionism, the current one sins by its political reductionism" (OSORIO, *ibd.*, p. 22).

The abandonment of material referents that followed caused a short-circuit in research proposals and different conceptual elaborations that would never leave us again, embracing all sorts of political-epistemological projects:

> (…) social actors whose referents in which they act never appear; democratization projects without alluding to the material frameworks that would make them possible; individuals for whom their mere condition of voting already makes them citizens, without differentiating between the subsistence conditions and the political and cultural specificities of an Indian from the Peruvian or Ecuadorian highlands and a city dweller from São Paulo or Buenos Aires (OSORIO, *ibd.,* p. 22)

Thus, the element of continuity was now replaced by another one of rupture, with a profound generational, thematic and theoretical break: "From Frank and Marini, we moved on to O'Donnell and Lechner. From economics to politics. From dependency and revolution to democratization, political culture and social movements. From marxism to different paradigms. From Latin America to national cases, local studies or general reflection without specific historical references" (OSORIO, *ibd.*, p. 22). The challenge launched by Jaime Osorio, to overcome these reflections limited to "interpretative localism", distant from structural variables or the concept of "social totality" even without aiming at major generalizations, seemed to foresee the current difficulties, in which lies a significant part of the controversies observed in the vast sociological literature produced in recent years, in various fields of research and with colliding approaches to innumerable objects of study.

However, despite this profound change in political direction, this diagnosis would not invalidate, a decade later, the counterpoint of Lucio Oliver Costilla (2005), for whom, setting a new turning point in the history of the discipline, contemporary Latin American sociology has consisted of a return to critical thinking, of an emerging tendency to relate particularities to the social totality, although this has not represented a unique orientation of the discipline, given, for example, the fragmentation of results, methodological individualism and theoretical eclecticism. This new situation, combined with the creation and expansion of institutions, scientific journals and spaces for debate at congresses, meetings and seminars to discuss research results, continues to contribute to greater dissemination and integration of research, which was previously much more dispersed and isolated. It can thus be seen that the development of Latin American sociology presents moments of rise and fall of categories, concepts and theories, which have always arrived on the continent by plural routes and with varied results, configuring receptions with irregular and fluid contours (CARASSOU, 2006; MORCILLO LAIZ AND WEISZ, 2015; BLOIS, 2017).

But the connection between one economic context and another, one theoretical tradition and another, or one social experience and another, is not simple or straightforward. The objects of research and ways of approaching them emerge as symptoms of the demands, difficulties, curiosities, impasses, dilemmas and crises of each social reality, and it is from this complex of problems that concepts, theories, research tools and perspectives of analysis intersect in the task of building knowledge, that is, in the quest to understand or explain the social phenomena that each researcher sets out to scrutinize.

The way in which these connections crystallize depends on different variables in the production of knowledge itself (available resources, methodology adopted, breadth of the research problem, training of the technical staff, networking of researchers, etc.) and their results remain available for examining by the specialized community in each field of research. Latin American sociological research therefore continues to reveal the social components encoded in it, which are not just the combination of "external" elements to them, but also shape their own "internal" variations, the specificity of their results.

In this way, the problem of the inauthenticity of knowledge among us takes on more intricate contours in contemporary times, since it is combined with practices that correspond to the maintenance of conventional forms of research, albeit in a renewed internal tension, as we have seen in the case of sociology, in search of innovative solutions in a context of widespread neoliberal hostilities (budget cuts, renewed authoritarianism, commercial interferences, restrictions on the labor market, biased surveys, etc.). In the most recent conjuncture, however, the persistent distancing of structural variables and strengthening of particularist readings of social phenomena seems to be obstructing, as we have already said, the conceptual claim of Latin American "singularity" as a common platform for systematic reflection that embraces all social formations, regardless of the theme or focus intended.

This feature reopens many of the debates that took place at the origins of the discipline[5], even though

[5] On institutional disputes, the process of institutionalization of sociology and the corresponding theoretical clashes, see Brunner (1988); Briceño-León and Sonntag (1998); Serrano (1994); Blanco (2006, 2007); Blanco and Jackson (2004, 2015); Carassou (2006); Trindade et. al (2007); Medina and Carreño (2008); Rosenmann (2008) and Blois (2017).

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the scope of the problematizations and polemics over concepts and categories has gradually widened in each country, always in line with the historicity they share. Despite this and the continuous search for "authenticity" in the production of knowledge, it is certain that the subjects to which sociologists have dedicated themselves are not decisively different from what is done in Europe or United States.

In fact, the most important concerns here are much more about the logical and methodological impracticability of simply transposing results from one context to another, rather than proposing *sui generis* research objects. For this reason, the quest for a difficult "totalizing vision" (RAMA, 1977) is what allows us to glimpse the unity of the Latin American social base, its essential "singularity", without its variants being diminished.

This way of conceiving the basic interdependence between countries that are near or far from each other, and its effects on the societies that correspond to them, is not new and can already be found in the seven essays by Mariátegui (2007) on the indigenous question as an economic question, which concerns the land ownership regime according to the colonial enterprise. Also in Sergio Bagú's (1949) well-known essay on the economy of colonial society, in which he deals in his own terms with Caio Prado Jr.'s (2004) theme of the "sense of the colonization", the idea of a structural interdependence between metropolis and colony was already predominant:

> the structuring of a colonial economy is always so closely intertwined with the metropolitan economy that you can not understand one without knowing the other. Nor is it possible to follow the main historical lines of Spain and Portugal without referring to the economic history of Western Europe. The panorama is widened with this method, not to complicate it, but to better illuminate the fundamental processes (BAGÚ, *ibd*., p. 31).

The organization of the colonial economy on the basis of subordination to the world market, a global trait that would later be complemented with new theoretical suggestions, as we will see below, is, for Bagú, the "nature of the colonial economy", in other words, "producing for the international market" was the predominant orientation of "colonial capitalism". In this sense, the elaboration of a conceptual framework based on Marx (1959, 2011) results in an unavoidable explanation *of Latin America's place in the world capitalist system*, identifying the structural barriers and restrictions that permanently block the way out of the condition of dependence and *allowing us to draw up a common analytical framework*, despite the specificities of social and cultural formations. Consequently, in our view, any theoretical formulation that tries to escape these decisive considerations for the more general characterization of our historical obstacles and dilemmas will remain in a kind of prison that is both logical and ideological: without a common foundation to support this relationship between the "whole" and the "parts", it only remains to invest in a reiterated description of the devastated social landscape and the existing individual misfortunes as compensation for the explanatory deficit.

Nonetheless, some contributions to the explanation of this connection are still fundamental. The essential propositions about Latin America's specific place in the concert of global capitalism can be found in the works of Theotonio dos Santos (2011, 1999, 1968), Ruy Mauro Marini (1973, 1979, 1979a, 1996), Vânia Bambirra (2013, 1978) and, more distantly, Andre Gunder Frank (1967, 1969, 1980). Although there are many differences between them, they argued that the common feature of the continent, far beyond the continuing discussions about "multiple identities", the elaborations of "national types", the successive "populist political practices", the "Iberian heritage" and "Eurocentrism", lies in the formation of a "*sui generis* capitalism", defined by Marini by the "relationship of subordination between formally independent nations" (1973, p. 18).

CEPAL's way of interpreting underdevelopment as the absence of development (PREBISCH, 1949), and not as a result of it, was no longer sufficient, since this was a period in which the world economy had laid new foundations, with the creation of large transnational economic conglomerates and the intense expansion of the world market. The novelty in explaining the recurring impasses, then, was to realize that the disadvantage in the productive capacity of labour resulted in an increase in the rate of exploitation of the local workforce – the "super-exploitation of labour"[6] as internal compensation – and, concomitantly, in the rate of profit of foreign companies. This situation was the result of the combination of the relatively low prices of raw materials, which reduced the value of constant capital, and of basic foodstuffs and other wage goods, which lowered the value of variable capital (OSORIO, 1984), with an increase of productivity in the industrialized countries, due to the high investments in technological innovations they made (DOS SANTOS, 1987).

This type of dependency is a deep and persistent characteristic of Latin America, and it has numerous consequences for the social fabric: the persistence of the social and racial question, endemic violence and constant violations of rights, concentration of land and income, low levels of schooling, contemporary forms of slavery, fluctuating unemployment, etc. Thus, the category of "dependency", in its marxist conception, emerges and differentiates itself as *a common reference of analysis* for

[6] For the foundations and current relevance of this concept, see Osorio (2013) and Sotelo Valencia (1994, 2014).

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Latin America, from which countless research objects can be considered conceptually:

> we sought to redefine it [the category of dependency] and use it as the fundamental analytical-explanatory category of the conformation of Latin American societies and, through it, we intended to define the concrete conditioning character that the relations of dependency between the center-hegemonic and peripheral countries had in the sense of conforming certain specific types of backward and dependent economic, political and social structures (BAMBIRRA, 2013, p. 38).

These specificities, defined by a common structural situation which, however, manifests itself through different characteristics that do not always coincide in each case, make it possible to establish a link between world capitalism and our particular capitalism, provided that the mediations involved in this analytical transition are also incorporated. From this imbrication, a historically developed social totality emerges and allows us to reveal the secrets of the differences and backwardness *between* the countries of the world system, and of the social hierarchies and inequalities *within* each of them:

> (…) the backwardness of the dependent countries was a *consequence* of the development of world capitalism and, at the same time, the *condition* of this development in the world's great capitalist powers. The developed capitalist countries and the peripheral countries form the same historical unit, which has made the development of some possible and the backwardness of others inexorable (BAMBIRRA, *ibid.*, p. 44).

This historical unity, however, is not the result of theoretical automatisms, but of tangible mechanisms that generate inequalities in the world market, with even greater unevenness in a phase of monopolistic integration and, more recently, of growing financialization of economies (MARINI, 1996). Hence the importance of paying attention to the double face of dependency within Latin American social theories. If, on the one hand, we seek to objectively demonstrate and explain global structures and the economic and political mechanisms that perpetuate themselves over time, on the other hand, the very condition of dependency makes it difficult and restricts the fulfillment of this task:

> we need to overcome a one-sided perspective that limits itself to analyzing the problem from the point of view of the hegemonic center, and we need to integrate the peripheral areas into the whole analysis as part of a system of economic and social relations on a global level. In this case, the concept of dependency and its dynamics acquires all its theoretical and scientific value (DOS SANTOS, 2011, p. 358).

All situations experienced socially and individually from this moto-continuum therefore implies the combination of these broader and more general lines of force with the specific elements pointed out by social research. In this way, the typically Latin American forms of dependent capitalist accumulation and reproduction have been incorporated into explanations of our permanent obstacles and dilemmas, which has therefore provided a more general theoretical perspective – the condition of dependence and its social and individual impacts – and greater clarity regarding the different ways in which it manifests itself in each particular case.

For us, the fundamental point is that this socio-economic singularity profoundly conditions the production of social theories in Latin America, since the existence of this dialectical relationship between the general and the particular, the "whole" and the "parts", makes it difficult, on an analytical level, to separate the internal and external variables of each social reality, as well as provides, on a political level, the conceptual tools necessary to apprehend and decode the social content of the production of knowledge and its ties, conscious or not, to the interests, strategies and actions of the ruling classes in their quest to maintain these structural components *ad infinitum*. To disregard these empirical elements is also to take a side in the social system that produces violence, inequalities, injustices and torments that are typical throughout Latin America.

Thus, the inauthenticity of knowledge among us lies much more in taking no account, as an elementary theoretical foundation, of this relationship between the general movement of dependent capitalism and the world capitalist system in their respective forms of reproduction than in the pursuit of a cultural essence that individualizes and differentiates us. In other words, the Latin American effort to free itself from Western formalist logic seems to stumble over the proposition of a particularist logic that ends up detaching itself from its own history and the social origins of the arbitrariness it seeks to correct.

Therefore, the objective foundation exposed here allows for an understanding of the scientific sphere that does not become hostage to indeterminacy, idealism, ideology or performance. In the end, we hope to have briefly demonstrated that the problem of the inauthenticity of knowledge is related to other variables, which basically concern the maintenance of conventional forms of scientific knowledge production with the aggravating factors of cultural essentialism and empirical isolationism.

In a renewed internal tension, the production of social knowledge in Latin America is once again in search of innovative solutions, in its own historicity and in its practical consequences. But this more recent movement could result in losses for scientific discourse if it is content, as in other occasions, to cover up, deny or ignore the background of dependent capitalism that keeps us tied to the past and prevents us from formulating truly authentic research problems.

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