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“The West and Latin America: Similar
Yet Distinct” en “Latin American
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El IPES nace como una institución de investigación cuya meta es impulsar estudios innovadores sobre los problemas de pobreza, desigualdad y exclusión social. Esta serie busca contribuir a la difusión y crecimiento de un paradigma emergente anclado en las nociones de Activos Sociales, Vulnerabilidad y Estructura de Oportunidades (AVEO). En este sentido, la serie recoge aportes conceptuales y dispositivos heurísticos que permitan incrementar las capacidades descriptivas y explicativas de la comunidad académica en torno a las temáticas de pobreza y exclusión social. Contribuir a forjar debates intra e interparadigmáticos y a la construcción de más y mejores abordajes para el estudio del desarrollo social es el objetivo central de esta serie.

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THE WEST AND LATIN AMERICA: SIMILAR YET DISTINCT

en “Latin American Studies: Society”.

**Definición en International Encyclopedia of Social and
Behavioral Sciences.**

Fernando Filgueira

Latin American Studies: Society

Fernando Filgueira

1. The West and Latin America: Similar Yet Distinct

Latin America refers broadly to the whole of the American Continent south of the United States. It owes its name to the Latin root of the two dominant colonial languages spoken: Spanish and Portuguese. Colonized by the Portuguese and the Spanish, most of the region fought for and won independence by the mid-nineteenth century. Clearly set apart from Europe and the English white settler colonies that later became part of the group of developed countries, Latin America has stood for most of its history at the middle of the international system of stratification and (with the exception of Cuba) squarely in the capitalist route of development. While highly heterogeneous both in the past and the present, Latin America remains a laboratory for innovative policy creation and, as a region, it has also constituted a unique case for groundbreaking comparative studies. While most of Africa came to independence only in the twentieth century, and Asia chose different development routes well into the twentieth century, what is peculiar about Latin America is that very early on it embraced Western goals of development and also bore the closest resemblance to the countries that were the basis of Western development in Europe and the USA. Yet neither the will nor the tools of Latin American development were sufficient and the Western ideal has never been fully achieved.

Economically, Latin America chose capitalism and sought growth and industrialization; politically, though less consistently, it sought liberal republics and later mass democracy; and, socially, it believed in urban and modern societies. To put it more strongly, Latin American elites, and thinkers that discussed the Latin American case, believed that this region would one day look very much like the industrialized West, and that it would achieve that goal by adopting programs based on European history (retold in a stylized fashion). Yet in all of these endeavors, Latin America has proven that the notion of a continuous, linear, and consistent development route is largely wishful thinking. While other authors drawing on the European experience had challenged early on this linear evolutionary model, no region has, at the same time, both embraced and challenged this belief. Thus the fertility of Latin America, both for policy innovations and for cutting-edge research and theory is a function of the power that comes from differences among similars. The promise, realizations, and failures of Latin American development constitute a fascinating story for the social sciences and have consistently been food for thought and building stones of major academic debates in fields as diverse as economic theory, political science, and sociology.

2. Latin American Development: Reality, Ideas, and Theories

2.1 The Colonial Past

Officially Europeans arrived in what today is Latin America in 1492. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch fought and settled in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. The Spanish and the Portuguese Empires came to control all of South America and parts of the Caribbean and Central and North America. The Portuguese settled mostly in the Caribbean and especially in the far western part of South America and expanded eastwards, gaining dominions formerly belonging to the Spanish Empire until they controlled almost half of South America. Yet occupied with their expansion over the South Atlantic and monsoon Asia, the Portuguese were slow to consolidate their rule over these newly colonized lands. Spanish colonists, by contrast, settled into the Americas and expanded rapidly, battling the native population and creating military outposts and cities. By 1521 the conquest of Mexico and the Aztec Empire was completed with the fall of Tenochtitlan. Cuzco, center of the Inca Empire, was conquered in 1533, and Santiago de Chile was founded as early as the 1540s. The Spanish organized the new territories in the form of viceroyalties, resembling the monarchical structures of Spain. Cities were founded across the continent and organized with church, military, and cabildos (town council). At first gold and later silver were the major prizes that the Spanish sought in the New World. Extraction was controlled by the Spanish and performed by enslaved natives. Soon famine, poor working conditions, and European illnesses (especially smallpox and measles) decimated the native population.

Silver, gold, and, to a much lesser extent, tobacco and sugar became the central economic activities of the major cities and regions of South America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the expansion of the sugar economies, together with cacao, tobacco, salt, and later cattle (coffee as a staple came later in the Latin American Studies: Religion nineteenth century) combined with the slave trade to enable the fully-edged entry of the region into the world economy. These developments also shaped a more complex economic and social system in which private enterprise and empire, local and international economic elites, collided, bargained, and cooperated. The 'hacienda' and the 'plantations' in which native and African labor was coerced became central ingredients of the South American and Caribbean economies and left an indelible mark on the region's elites and its people's power, status, and ideologies.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, local elites developed both separate interests from those of the Empire and political and philosophical views that increasingly saw in Europe a limit to their growth and development. Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 1808 was the spark needed for the ignition of a continent-wide movement for independence from Spanish dominion. Portugal, in turn, moved the center of its empire from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, and eventually, in 1822, the heir to the Portuguese throne, Pedro I, became Emperor of the

independent Empire of Brazil. The colonial past of more than three centuries gave way to a new continent of independent nations. Yet for many comparativists, Latin Americanists, and historians of the region and the world, the colonial past was to be the key to understanding Latin America's future.

In addition to the socioeconomic legacies that mining, haciendas, and plantations left in Latin America, a centralized political organization permeated by patrimonialism and the hegemony of the counter-reform movement (that had been defeated in Europe but triumphed in Spain and Latin America) added to Latin America its Iberian, Catholic, and antipositivist flavor. Historiography and later comparative studies from political science, sociology, and economics have sought to explain the roots of Latin American backwardness and the obstacles to the success of Western-type development in terms of its socioeconomic, political, and cultural legacies. The failure of liberal constitutionalism and capitalism in Latin America has, indeed, been accounted for by a black legend that places the blame squarely on the region's colonial heritage (for an exposition of this view, see Paz 1961, Stein and Stein 1970; it is reviewed and critiqued in Gibson 1971; see also Adelman 2000 for a review and discussion of this debate).

2.2 The Nineteenth Century: Independence, Civil War, Staples, and the Making of Latin America

While, strictly speaking, independence from Spanish and Portuguese dominion (with short interludes of French occupation in Mexico and English attempts in the River Plate area) ranged from Haiti's black revolution of 1804 to Panama's independence in 1903, the bulk of the independence process took place in a short period between 1810 and the Battle of Ayacucho in 1824. Most of the nineteenth century was dominated first by wars of independence and later by civil wars, wars among new nations, 'caudillo' struggles, and in a few cases the conquest of the frontiers (as in the Argentinean war of the desert). Yet an account of the nineteenth century that simply stresses the armed struggles and a sense of anarchy in the region misses the point. These were times of major intellectual debates that would have a long-lasting influence on Latin American scholarly debates and studies, and these were also times in which the oligarchic regimes and the export-oriented model of development took root in Latin America, only to be overcome in the first half of the twentieth century.

Cattle in Argentina and Uruguay; coffee, cacao, sugar, and tobacco in Brazil and Central America; minerals, coffee, salt, and fruits along the Pacific coast—such is a rough geography of the staples produced in Latin America throughout the nineteenth century. While nonlabor-intensive staples were required in the Rio de la Plata, in most of Latin America, production of staples was labor-intensive and based on haciendas and plantations. Coerced or semicoerced labor dominated the latter, while forms of free or market-regulated labor dominated the former. Scholars that draw on the tradition of comparative work spurred by Barrington Moore came to view this original distinction between labor-intensive and nonlabor-intensive regimes as a key to understanding democratic experiments (Stephens 1989, Rueschmeyer et al. 1992). On the economic side of comparative studies, the importance of staples and their forms of production are highlighted in Hirschman's

unsurpassed work on development, and especially in his notions of forward, backward, fiscal, and consumption linkages. He proposes a simple yet powerful idea for understanding the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in developing countries. Staples create, or have the potential to create, forward and backward productive linkages as well as tax possibilities and consumption expansion. Depending on the staple and on the intensity, extensivity, and control (foreign or domestic) of those linkages, development will be more robust and balanced or less so (Hirschman 1958, 1973, 1981).

Regarding the politics of Latin America, this was a period of upheaval and intense ideological debates. Liberals and conservatives, landed elites and incipient modern capitalists, and disputes over territory or between warlords all combined to create a violent political and ideological melting pot. In particular, on the ideological side of the debate, a continent-wide movement of intellectuals was calling for Latin America's second independence (or what they called mental independence). Sarmiento and Alberdi in Argentina, Caballero in Cuba, Varela in Uruguay, Altamirano in Mexico, to name a few, presented positivism and an unabashed faith in public primary education as the tools for mental emancipation and political and economic development.

Out of the nineteenth century a continent evolved that was scarred with civil wars, squarely placed in the world economy as a producer of staples, oligarchic in nature, Iberian in flavor, but also carrying the seeds of positivism and liberalism, and the recognition of the Anglo-Saxon giant of the north as both a threat and an ideal.

2.3 Searching for Development in the Twentieth Century: Promises, Achievements, and Failures

As the period of civil wars came to a close, the future of Latin America was laid open to the world, and the region (or so its elites believed) became ready to embrace the path and gather the fruits of Western progress. Capitalism, republican order, and modern cities and citizens would fulfill Sarmiento's dream of moving from 'barbarie' to civilization. Reality proved more stubborn and, in reflecting on its failures and obstacles, Latin American scholars, comparativists from all over the world, and students of development found in the region a case study that supported, challenged, modified, or even created paradigms for understanding society, politics, and economic development.

2.3.1 Economic promise and failure: adapting, creating and recreating development economics. In the early twentieth century the per capita income of the working population in Argentina was similar to that in the UK; in Uruguay to France; in Chile to Norway; in Brazil to Italy; and in Mexico to Portugal, Finland, or Greece (quoted in Halperin 1997). Growth in gross domestic product (GDP) was higher in most of Latin America than it was in Europe, and the value of its exports per capita, higher than or similar to most of Europe. This, of course, obscures the structure of their respective economies with respect to industrialization, social development, and types of exports. Yet, these data provide a basis for understanding the widespread belief that an outward-oriented model of development based on primary exports,

import of manufactures, free commerce, and little involvement by the state was the right path, and why classic economics with its Ricardian beliefs in comparative advantages was the dominant economic paradigm.

Still, if the comparison shifts from Europe to the United States the rate of growth and the riches accumulated in Latin America appear less than satisfactory. While there are different estimates, the USA had in the 1930s about four to six times Latin America's GDP per capita and had grown since independence at an average rate of 2 percent per annum while Latin America had grown at no more than 1 percent (Ramos 1993) Furthermore, while the data for Europe and Latin America suggest similar starting points, the points of arrival were starkly different. In the 1950s, Prebisch showed that, contrary to the hypothesis of convergence that classic and then neoclassic economic thought championed, Latin America had grown further apart from rather than closer to the developed countries during the period of its first orthodox model from early independence to roughly the 1930s.

When World War One dried up the flow of imports to Latin America, its economic elites moved, albeit shyly, to manufacturing and substituting some of the imports. But only with the world economic crisis of 1929 did the region make a drastic U-turn in its economic model. Import substitution was fact before it was theory, yet it eventually gave rise to the first homegrown theory of economic development that would have a lasting impact on the region and on comparative studies in the social sciences.

In 1948 the Economic Commission for Latin America (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe or CEPAL) was created and it brought together a number of innovative economists led by the already famous Raul Prebisch (for a synthesis of his work and a founding document of CEPAL, see Prebisch 1950). In Montecinos and Markoff's (2001) view, CEPAL's theoretical framework sought the ambitious project of establishing a new school of economic thought that would offer the basis for specific development policies for non-industrialized countries. Departing from the neoclassical economic vision of a single economic truth for all countries and criticizing some assumptions from Keynesianism (although also drawing ideas from it), CEPAL and Prebisch put forward the idea that core and periphery countries, advanced and developing countries, should seek different economic and development policies. The Ricardian comparative advantage did not benefit Latin America because agricultural products were subject to declining terms of trade. Thus the need to industrialize and to protect infant industries from outside competition was crucial in order to advance in terms of economic development. Active state involvement through industrial subsidies, tariff protection, and planning became central strategic devices for development. As CEPAL and 'cepalino' thought became hegemonic in the region, most countries adopted a model of development that has been summarized as Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and embraced an ideology that may be loosely defined as developmentalism (or 'desarrollismo'). CEPAL argued that, through state protection and active planning, Latin America would overcome traditional agrarian relations and productivity and claim its place among modern industrial societies.

Yet by the 1960s what was called the easy phase of import substitution was over. Light manufactures had been substituted, yet the production of capital goods and heavy machinery did not come about. Growth stagnated, inflation soared, and

fiscal deficits became increasingly unmanageable. The most famous Latin American offspring for the social sciences was born out of the crises of import substitution and became known as dependency theory or '*dependentismo*' (Cardozo and Faletto 1979; see also the works of André Gunder Frank 1970, Theotonio Dos Santos 1970, and James Petros 1970). While *dependentismo* owed a great debt to CEPAL's idea of core and periphery and to its notion of declining terms of trade, it went far beyond these ideas. For dependency theorists Latin American underdevelopment was not simply a problem of core-periphery relations, but of the interaction of domestic and international capital and the internal class structure in the region. The monopolistic character of multinationals, the weakness of Latin America's domestic bourgeoisie, the analyses of enclave economies in which domestic resources were exploited by outward-looking elites and international capital, and the internationalization of the domestic markets were factors that helped explain a peculiar development, one that was unique to the developing nations and that rested on a domestic class structure of large rentist capitalists and a weak industrial bourgeoisie.

A group of scholars and universities in the US and in Latin America, while less visible, was also rethinking development in radical ways. In Chicago, in Mexico's *Instituto Tecnológica Autónoma de México* (ITAM), and in the Catholic University of Chile, a new brand of orthodoxy was spreading its wings: neoclassical economic thought. In radical disagreement with *dependentismo*, this group did not believe that CEPAL's shortcomings lay in its shyness to push forward state led development. CEPAL and ISI were a problem, but they had been a problem from the start. The moment Latin America had embraced state intervention, planning, and protection was the moment of the region's mistake. While dependency saw the need to deepen state involvement and to destroy agrarian elites, neoclassical thought saw ISI as the brake on Latin American development because of state intervention and because it punished those economic sectors that had a real comparative advantage: landowners who grew and sold staples.

If the Peru of Velazco Alvarado and the Chile of Allende embodied the radicalization of ISI and dependency theory, the coups d'etat of the 1970s in the southern cone of Latin America opened the door to yet another, and maybe the most radical, experiment in social and economic change. Chile, in particular, came to be seen as the first laboratory in the world for neoclassical economic revival and for the final demise of both ISI and Keynesianism. Through tariff bashing, massive privatization, labor market deregulation, and liberalization of financial markets Chile became, before Thatcherism and Reaganism, the darling of the Chicago Boys (a group of Chilean economists who had studied at the University of Chicago between about 1955 and 1963). The end of ISI and the defeat of the dependency agenda gave rise to a third phase in economic development: neoliberalism or what has more neutrally been called the New Export Model (NEM). While the jury is still out regarding the merits and shortcomings of this second drastic development U-turn, the experiments in Latin America since the mid-1970s have fed economic and social debates and these scholarly debates have contributed to a rethinking of development and developmentalism, and comparative studies in general.

2.3.2 The search for democracy and the lost republic.

Orderly republics and democratic politics was another promise that Latin America sought to capture as it entered the twentieth century. Yet democracy and order have proven elusive in its twentieth-century history. While Argentina (1912) and Uruguay (1917) embraced mass democracy early, most other countries in the region experimented with oligarchic, military, and populist regimes with short and unstable periods of democracy throughout most of the twentieth century. Even Argentina, the most advanced and most 'European' nation reverted to authoritarianism in the 1930s, not regaining stable democracy until the 1980s. Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica (the last one especially after the 1940s) were the only Latin American countries with a reasonable, but by no means perfect, democratic record. A number of authors and scholars drew on the region to unveil the clues to democratic success and failure. Some of these scholars were specifically studying Latin America, others had larger samples, but almost all gave a prominent space to Latin America as a particularly promising puzzle.

Modernization theory was, as we shall see later, a dominant paradigm in regard to social change and development in Latin America, but its political version was also of importance and Seymour Lipset one of its major proponents. In his classic article, a simple yet powerful proposition was laid out: it was not simply capitalism that led to democracy, but also growth and social development (Lipset 1959). Following this hypothesis, Latin America was not democratic, because it was not rich. As economies developed, so democracy would flourish. By increasing the riches, creating a middle class and expanding education, countries that successfully traveled towards industrialized and modern economies would also increasingly become democratic. From another perspective, Robert Dahl and Samuel Huntington also proposed a hypothesis that would help explain Latin America's democratic failures: the lack of order (Huntington 1957, 1968, 1991, Dahl 1971). Dahl's strongest claim implied that countries that incorporated the masses before institutionalizing rules of the game would have frail democracies. For Huntington, praetorian societies in which no order could be constructed together with the dislocation that rapid economic and social change brought about helped explain the role of the military as a constructor of order and institutions and as a major player in Latin American politics. Neither Lipset nor Huntington nor Dahl constructed their theories for Latin America. And, in contrast to the homegrown economics of Latin America, the region only produced one truly unique body of work that not only grew from the specific study of the region but that also questioned the former theories.

Guillermo O'Donnell (1979) asked why the richest nation in Latin America was under authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 1970s. Lipset could not answer that, nor could Dahl (as a matter of fact, in Dahl's classic work, he offers an ad hoc explanation for Argentina). In O'Donnell's view, a new form of authoritarianism was emerging in Latin America -one that grew out of the tensions and political bottlenecks that Import Substitution Industrialization had created- he called the governments that exemplified it, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. These regimes were meant to neutralize the demands of the middle and working classes in order to deepen Import Substitution. In contrast to Lipset, O'Donnell suggested that in rich economies, dictatorship was indeed a possibility. Even more, when ISI met

dependency, authoritarianism was the natural outcome. The spread of authoritarian regimes in the 1970s suggests that O'Donnell was not far off the mark, even though these new authoritarian regimes would eventually bury, rather than deepen, import substitution (this was the case in Chile, Uruguay, and the last dictatorship in Argentina, but not in Brazil and Argentina in the 1960s).

In the 1980s and 1990s the region returned to democracy and a series of studies looking at the key to successful transitions from authoritarianism to democracy was to become a whole new field of study for comparativists. These studies renounced structural and long-term explanations of democracy and focused on the concrete choices and strategic devices that in short periods of time were used to move countries from dictatorship to open competitive regimes. The name adopted for this new field, which had as its major input the study of Latin American societies and of Southern Europe, is 'transitology.' Its major contribution to political science was the recognition of contingency and strategic action as critical factors to understand large political outcomes.

As democracies have endured in Latin America since the mid-1980s, a new body of literature has emerged regarding the issues of democratic quality. To the old notions of order and governability once championed by Huntington, this literature adds the problems of accountability and rule of the law. In addition, and as never before, the debates over party systems and executive-legislative relations have become a normal field of study for Latin Americanists. At the same time, Latin America has become a relevant region in these debates from which it was previously absent.

Finally, and after 'transitology,' a return to macronarratives and structural interpretations of Latin American democracies has taken place. Collier and Collier in *Shaping the Political Arena* (1991) and Rueschemeyer et al. in *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (1992), return to the historical questions of democratic rule in Latin America's history. The former concentrate on the region and introduce the idea of critical historical junctures attempting to understand the stability and openness of regimes as a product of the forms and shapes of popular incorporation. The latter revisit Barrington Moore's classic work on *Democracy and Dictatorship* and construct probably the best neo-Marxist account of democracy and class struggle in the world and in Latin America to date.

2.3.3 Inequality, dual societies, poverty, and uneven modernity.

According to Kuznets (1959) and his famous curve, countries increased inequality as they took off economically, moderated inequality as they entered a second industrial phase, and lowered it as industrialization and economic development further advanced. Latin America has in this area the dubious merit of being the most unequal region in the world. Indeed, the region constitutes for most scholars debating the issues of growth and inequality, a category apart: the bad Latinos, who increased inequality with economic take off but then never lowered it, and in many cases further increased it.

Besides the fact that inequality is extremely high in Latin America, other aspects of modern social development that were expected did not take place in the region or occurred in very uneven fashion. Modernization theory, with its faith in

linear evolution and continuous development, envisaged countries moving from backward agrarian societies to modern industrial ones with all that this implied: urbanization; demographic transition; more complex social structures with dominant middle classes; and societies that, while stratified, had some sort of continuity and mobility chances for all the population. As the country modernized, the people would achieve and secure modern statuses and roles, moving from peasant to worker, from rural dweller to urban citizen, from caste to class, and very especially from uneducated to educated. Parsons' pattern variables characterized this fate in development. The ascriptive would give way to the elective, the particular to the universal, the affective to the neutral, the general purpose institutions to the specific purpose institutions, and so on.

A tiny part of Latin America looks, at first sight, precisely as modernization theory would expect, but Latin American societies remain largely 'dual,' combining aspects and regions of modernity with others of blatant backwardness. Incorporation into a modern industrial society and its rules has occurred for less than half of its population. Truly, only the ISI model implied a major push towards de-segmentation, and then only in some countries. Latin America is thus unequal, dual and segmented and, for many, modernity is a curse rather than a possibility.

Among modernization theorists more sophisticated versions were developed in Latin America in order to cope and confront this reality. Gino Germani and Peter Heintz writing in the 1960s are perhaps the best exponents of this critical yet loyal twist on classic modernization theory (Heintz 1971, Germani 1962, 1971). Germani represents the most loyal representative of modernization theory and of structural functionalism as the bedrock of this theory. In his work, Germani recognizes the unevenness and the incomplete nature of social modernization in Latin America. Yet, in his opinion, this is due mainly to the asynchronicity with which the region has moved in different dimensions from traditional society to modern society. Critical to his understanding of Latin America's shortcomings is the limited capacity of the economy to incorporate migrants fully into modern labor markets and the political tension that such a reality creates. As labor, education, urban status, political citizenship, and modern consumption patterns converge, full and even incorporation of the population will take place. For Heintz the problem is less simple and has a tougher structural basis. As the upper classes or elites allow and even promote modernization, Heintz claims, they also endanger their own basis of power and privilege. Thus, elites are willing to expand and incorporate the masses only into certain areas of modernity: urban statuses and, later, education are the least threatening. Yet they are not willing to let go of their political monopoly and their economic basis of power, thus closing incorporation into modern labor markets and consumption patterns and into the state and the political system to a large part of the population. For Heintz this unbalanced development has no single solution and the point of arrival for Latin America need not be the Western ideal that modernization championed.

As import substitution and its promise of industrial modernity entered its crisis and eventually came to a close, social development was rethought from two distinct perspectives: dependency and neoclassic economics. For the former, social and national revolutions were the only route to egalitarian and robust social development; for the latter, a retreat from the state, and a return to free markets

and open economies (that relied yet did not punish those sectors with comparative advantages) was the basis for social development. The late 1980s and the 1990s were under the hegemony of neoliberal faith, and a locomotive version of development in which market-led growth was the key became uncontested. Yet in the late 1990s the previous work of CEPAL and its notion of egalitarian productive transformation (*transformación productiva con equidad*), and the United Nations Development Program with its idea of Human Development reclaimed an autonomous space for the problems of poverty and inequality, and have forced scholars to rethink development as far more complex game than that of economic development (CEPAL 1990; see also the annual Human Development Reports published since 1990). The recent scholarly work coming from the IADB, American universities and Latin American scholars have contributed to reshape development and comparative studies all over the world (Birdsall et al. 1998).

3 In Closing

Latin America has remained a laboratory for the social sciences throughout its history. This is due both to the richness of its experiences and to its common traits. The Developmentalist experiment in Chile with Frei, the Socialist experiment of Allende, and the Neoliberal experiment of Pinochet are just a tiny part of the mosaic that includes the democratic exceptionality of Costa Rica and Uruguay; the reversal of development in Argentina; the resilience of democracy in violence-ridden Colombia; the oil promise and failure of Venezuela; the uniqueness of development and origins in Brazil; the Alvarado experiment in Peru; the Mexican Revolution and its unique legacy of a non-socialist one-party system; and the revolutionary guerrillas of Central America. There is thus more than enough material for comparativists searching for deviant and test case scenarios, and much more for those searching for the exception that confirms the rule. On top of that, Latin America remains a unit. A region that chose Western ideals and capitalism (again with the exception of Cuba, an interesting case in its own right) and that has always come short in its accomplishment, will always be a puzzle to solve, given our still faithful, yet neurotic dependence on a simplified version of Western development.

Two excellent recent books that adopt a similar metaphor illustrate the point. Sandra Halperin's *In the Mirror of the Third World: Capitalist Development in Modern Europe* (1997) claims that what is wrong with development theory is precisely its attempt to understand a different route of development for the Third World. Europe, she claims, was very much like the oligarchic, rentist, authoritarian Third World until the end of World War Two. While it is true that she makes her claim of similarity for all nonindustrialized countries, her major examples of the Third World come from Latin America. The region is again the test case scenario for evolutionary models of development. On the other hand, *The Other Mirror*, edited by M. A. Centeno and F. López-Alvez (2000), attempts to trace the usefulness of grand theory for Latin America. While they claim that Latin America has been absent from the grand theory debates, they recognize that Africa and Asia have been even more absent. As one reads the book, and all its superb chapters, one is slowly convinced that their premise of Latin American absenteeism from major debates is blatantly wrong. Latin America has been at the center of comparative and development debates throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century. All the grand authors debated have had a lasting influence on comparativists and scholars that later left their mark in their different fields through the study or the privileged attention of Latin America. Some of those grand authors have, indeed, themselves, drawn on the Latin American experience of development.

See also: Authoritarianism; Dependency Theory; Latin American Studies: Economics; Latin American Studies: Politics; Latin American Studies: Religion; Modernization, Political: Development of the Concept; Modernization, Sociological Theories of

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