

CEPAL

Review

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The validity of the State-as-planner in the current crisis

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The State has always been dealt with in a somewhat paradoxical manner in the writings of ECLAC; it is regarded as a decisive agent in the formulation and application of development strategies, but its true, changeable, nature is not analysed in depth. This paradox has been resolved by assuming the existence of an ideal planning and reformist State which would fully perform the function assigned to it. Taking this paradox as his starting point, the author's object in this article is to describe the way in which the topic of the State has been dealt with by ECLAC, to point out some of the criticisms which have been made of it, and to outline the way in which this subject should be reformulated in the light of the current political conditions in the region and the requirements of a strategy for achieving autonomous, equitable and democratic development.

In this last connection, the author explores the important political issue relating to the role which the State should play in the current crisis, arguing that there is no single position that might be chosen on the basis of purely technical criteria. Instead, the possible ways of resolving this issue revolve around three main political formulas (liberal, State and democratic) whose content the author analyses and compares. Finally, in relation to the type of State seen as being desirable, two basic propositions are developed: the need to strengthen the State apparatus, and the need to establish and consolidate democratic forms of political organization.

*Director of the Social Development Division of ECLAC. The author wishes to express his appreciation for the comments made by Aníbal Pinto and Pedro Sainz.

I

The role of the State as viewed by ECLAC

1. *The original concepts*

ECLAC originally conceived of the State as playing the role of the main agent of development, in large measure as a result of the failings which it had detected in private economic agents and in the market as a mechanism. Its casting of the State in this role was not the outgrowth of its application of doctrinary principles; on the contrary, as is also true of the development programme it proposed at the time, this was above all a response to the consequences of the crisis of the 1930s in Latin America (Prebisch, 1951 and 1954).

This crisis drove ECLAC to question the pattern of development which the countries of the region had been following, as well as the institutional foundations of the national and international economic order which has been its basis.¹ To say that ECLAC questioned these foundations is not to say that it rejected them, but only that it was not bowing to the doctrinary influence of the centres and accepting them uncritically. They had to be evaluated in order to determine whether they could serve as a support for the peripheral economies which were endeavouring to change their development pattern.

The ECLAC documents of the period do not set forth a systematic analysis of these institutional foundations; perhaps their controversial nature hindered an open discussion of them. In any event, the scattered references made to them

¹In very general terms, the main institutional foundations of a capitalist market economy are the private ownership of capital, the private management of commercial enterprises, the private appropriation of profits, competition, the price system as a basic guide for economic agents, the free availability of the factors of production and, at the international level, the free circulation of goods and factors. It will be helpful to bear this list of institutional foundations in mind (the first three of which correspond to the capitalist aspect of the concept, while the rest correspond to the market aspect), since it can be used as a guideline for clarifying the intensity and scope of the types of State intervention characterizing the various hybrid forms of economic organization (both theoretical and practical), such as that proposed by ECLAC in its early days.

can be used to reconstruct an outline of the institutional order which ECLAC considered desirable and the role which it saw the State fulfilling within it (Rodríguez, 1980; Gurrieri, 1982b).

The picture sketched by ECLAC in these areas is ambivalent, however. On the one hand, it underscored the importance of the dynamism and creativity which spring from individual efforts prompted by private interest and of the greater economic efficiency made possible by the private management of enterprises. On the other hand, it pointed out the weaknesses of some of these foundations as an effective basis for the decisions and tasks required for development.

The main weaknesses were associated with some of the characteristics of private economic agents and the market. These agents often do not have the necessary resources and drive to carry forward the tasks required for development but, even more importantly, they lack the global perspective they would need in order to take the most appropriate decisions. Attaining such a global perspective involves passing beyond the bounds of a viewpoint ruled by the interests of the individual enterprise and taking into consideration such aspects as, *inter alia*, the relations among the various sectors of the national economic structure, external economic relations, the social and political repercussions of economic decisions, and appropriate technological changes, all of which must also be seen within the context of an extended time frame.

Moreover, this weakness on the part of private economic agents cannot be made up for by market mechanisms, whose signals do not reflect the above aspects either, since they are no more than a reflection of the effective demand of these same agents. The sum of these individual rationalities does not equal a global rationality. Furthermore, the peripheral economies must control and re-direct international market stimuli since, if these stimuli were to be given free rein, the economies would then only replicate an economic structure whose flaws have already been revealed by the crisis. Development will not be achieved through the spontaneous action of market forces, but rather as a result of the deliberate efforts of the whole of society, guided by the State.

These shortcomings were what justified and, at the same time, oriented and delimited the type of State intervention proposed by ECLAC during those early years. Generally speaking, State intervention was envisioned as being as broad-based and intensive as it was because of the requirements of the proposed development programme and the weakness of private agents and the market in regard to its implementation.

ECLAC saw State intervention as being necessary in many economic spheres, but some of them are especially important: firstly, systematically structuring the long-term global vision referred to above into a plan aimed at transforming the structure left as a legacy from the outward-oriented development pattern into a modern industrial economy; secondly, taking direct action in the crucial areas of this plan, including the encouragement of capital accumulation by raising the coefficient of internal savings and attracting and channelling external resources, the protection and promotion of industrialization, the diminishment of external vulnerability, the creation of infrastructure, and the encouragement and orientation of technological change; and thirdly, in close relation to the preceding two courses of action, the prevention and control of the various types of economic disequilibria inevitably brought on by a structural transformation such as that provided for in the above type of plan.

Thus, State intervention was to be broad-based and intensive, if it is judged by the doctrinary precepts prevalent at the time in Latin America, but it would be a mistake to suppose that ECLAC was in favour of its expansion to the point where it would suffocate private economic agents or the mechanism of the market. The ideal situation, in its view, was instead to strike a balance between the public and private sectors, between the State and the market, which would highlight the positive aspects of each, facilitate their complementarity and avoid the adverse consequences of too great a predominance of any one of these agents over the others. This equilibrium would be the expression of an institutional framework that combined the basic foundations of a capitalist market economy with the necessary measure of State intervention. In the particular combination originally proposed by ECLAC, State intervention would be directed

much more towards complementing, supplementing and sustaining such features than towards attempting to make radical changes in them. In other words, it was felt that State intervention should stimulate private activity whenever possible and take its place only when it was unavoidable. In short, it was proposing a State-as-planner which, guided by the development plan and relying upon monetary, fiscal, exchange and tariff instruments, would direct the economic activity of society as a whole; the direct execution of this activity, however, should preferably and primarily remain in private hands. The end result of this process ought to be a mutual strengthening of the private economy and the State.

In the early 1960s, ECLAC began to make a number of changes in its original programme whose result was to further broaden and deepened the economic and social role of the State. Two of the main changes were the need for structural reforms (which were intended to boost the accumulation of capital, channel the use of this capital appropriately, distribute wealth more equitably and promote production) and for policies directly aimed at redistributing the fruits of economic progress. In both cases, the State was to play an important role, expanding its intervention to include the redistribution of the means of production (in cases where the inefficient management of private enterprises made this advisable, such as in the agrarian structure) and of income, with a view to mitigating social inequality and the social and political problems which it caused.

From the 1970s to the present, further changes have been made in the overall proposals of ECLAC, but they have not significantly altered the original concept of the State's role or the combination of public and private elements which has been the basis of the institutional order seen as being desirable.

2. The State-as-organizer and Keynesianism

In working out its thinking concerning the role of the State, ECLAC drew upon the theories and experiences of the centres, but had to modify them in order to adapt them to the situation of the peripheral countries. From the 1930s onwards, the predominant historical trends in

the centres have revolved around the formation of the welfare State or the social State of law; at the theoretical level, these tendencies are exemplified by the proposal of the "State-as-organizer" (Myrdal, 1957) and the forms of State intervention linked to Keynesian thinking.

In quickly reviewing the history of these trends, it should be borne in mind that those who originally wielded State power proposed to order society in accordance with their criteria and interests; the archetypes of this viewpoint were the "absolute State" and the establishment of an economy organized to serve the interests of State power (mercantilism). However, the very economic expansion which the order imposed by the absolute State made possible and which it needed for its own maintenance and growth, diversified the nuclei of non-State power, which reacted against absolutism. This reaction was manifested, in particular, in the liberal economic doctrine, which espoused the subordination of State power to the criteria, interests and powers of the economic organization, and in the liberal/democratic political doctrine, which proposed the dissolution of absolutism on the basis of the sovereignty of the law and the expansion of civil and political rights (Tilly, 1975; Neumann, 1968).

The consolidation of the liberal and democratic trends which, to a greater or lesser degree, took place in the various societies in question had the effect of multiplying the internal centres of power; in all the societies in which these processes were present, power structures became increasingly complex and, within them, heterogeneous nuclei of power of various origins exerted influence in many spheres of society. Furthermore, this increase in complexity was occurring in societies which, largely due to these same processes, had reached a high degree of economic interdependence and political integration.

This multiplication of the centres of power and the conflicts which arose among them brought the issue of the "order" once again to the fore, an issue which the absolute State had attempted to resolve through a heavy reliance on coercion; but this issue takes on a different cast in highly integrated and interdependent societies containing a multitude of power nuclei (especially economic and political nuclei) apart from State power. This order is established, in

principle, through the mechanism of the market and representative democratic institutions. The economic and political crises of the early part of the century revealed the need to compensate for the weaknesses of the market as a mechanism and to expand and consolidate democratic institutions. This is the problem which the State-as-organizer attempts to resolve by harmonizing conflicting interests and co-ordinating the action of the various parts of society in the pursuance of a collective purpose. To this end, the State needs to regain a larger portion of the power dispersed within society, establish institutional mechanisms of conflict resolution which are suited to societies in which there is a high degree of economic diversification and political participation and, above all, be able to orient and co-ordinate collective action.

The model for State intervention in the economy was provided by Keynesian thinking. In summary Keynesian thought maintains that the capitalist market system does not spontaneously establish a volume of production which will allow full employment, and it therefore proposes that the State should supplement this volume by using fiscal and monetary policies to regulate effective demand. Once this volume of production has been attained through the compensatory and regulatory action of the State, the mechanisms of the capitalist market economy can determine what is to be produced, how it is to be produced, and how the value of the final product is to be distributed among the factors of production (although in this last regard the State as a regulatory and compensatory factor once again comes into play).

3. *The peripheral State*

When the issue of State intervention came under discussion in Latin America as a consequence of the crisis of 1929 and the Second World War, it was seen that the problems stemming from this crisis were not the only ones with which these societies were faced. In addition, their agenda also included, as noted by ECLAC, the need to change their pattern of economic growth; it was not a question of promoting the expansion of an existing system, but rather of creating a new one, and this called for new economic agents, with different capabilities and potentials, and new material means.

Furthermore, the question of national integration had not been resolved by the previous pattern of development either; on the contrary, the external appendant linkages of some economic areas and sectors had only heightened the heterogeneity of the economic and social structure. Actually, the countries needed to promote social as well as physical and economic integration, inasmuch as there were large segments of the population which did not regard themselves as members of the society in which they lived. In short, these societies were faced with the task of building the nation so that they could become true national States (Anderson, 1967; Oszlak, 1982).

The political aspects of constructing a nation are also related to democratization. As noted above, many countries urgently needed to undertake the political task of transforming all their inhabitants into citizens, but they, like the societies of the centres, also had to harmonize conflicting interests. Thus this was really a twofold task. On the one hand, the politically marginalized sectors of the population had to be incorporated and, on the other hand, the conflicts among those who were already participating politically in society had to be harmonized. This task was not successfully carried out in all cases, as attested to by the political instability of the region.

In addition to all of this, there were the problems associated with the peripheral nature of the Latin American societies. Due to this peripheral status, the State was subject to "external" factors which had a significant effect on its decisions and performance, both because of these societies' position and function in the international economic structure and because of the presence of major internal nuclei of power whose decisions were guided by external elements. Consequently, the State had to overcome this peripheral situation and attempt to put itself on an equal footing with the States on which it was dependent.

In sum, the crisis of the outward-oriented growth model revealed the extent of the challenges which the Latin American societies and States had before them. These challenges had been confronted in the centres over a much longer period of time and, because of this, these problems had come about gradually. In the Latin American countries, however, the problems are

superimposed upon each other —although in different ways in the various countries— creating a picture of superimposed, heterogeneous layers.

Given this agenda of problems which the Latin American societies had to address, and given the State as a key agent in this process, the models of the welfare State and the forms of Keynesian intervention were patently insufficient. The role of the State in Latin America had to be broader and more intensive than in the central countries because, even though the latter were in the midst of a serious crisis, they nonetheless did not have to deal with the transformation of their growth pattern, the economic and political integration of strikingly heterogeneous structures, or the productive absorption of large segments of the population that were engaged in pre-capitalist modes of production.

The State-as-planner as characterized by ECLAC was seen as undertaking a greater degree of intervention than that suggested by the Keynesian model because its objectives were not confined to guaranteeing full employment, stimulating economic growth (how much to produce) and ensuring a more equitable distribution of income (how to distribute), but also included restructuring the economy for industrialization (what to produce), orienting the utilization of the factors of production in accordance with their availability (how to produce), and accomplishing all this from a peripheral position which made it necessary to exercise a much firmer control over external economic relations and their impacts. The main focus of Keynesianism is on supplementing private activity by means of regulatory activity directed primarily at stabilizing the economy in the short term; ECLAC proposed that the State itself should take

the initiative —due to the absence of a number of important private agents— in attempting to bring about changes aimed at restructuring and developing the economy over the long term. Both schools of thought attribute importance to the "indirect" activity of the State, i.e., the use of conventional policy tools to influence the "direct" activity of private agents. However, Keynesianism has only occasionally (e.g., in the final pages of its "general theory") supported the position taken by ECLAC in advocating a key and "direct" role for the State in the accumulation of capital when the objective is to promote long-term growth.

If the thinking of ECLAC concerning the role of the State is considered against the backdrop of the historical experience of the central countries, the results are enlightening: the problems which ECLAC believed the Latin American States should address have also figured —except in those aspects related to a peripheral position— in the agenda of the central States at some point in their evolution. The only difference —and it is an important one— is that the central States have dealt with these problems over the lengthy period of time stretching between absolutism and the present day, whereas the Latin American States have to deal with all of them at the same time and within a much shorter period. Thus, in the light of the centres' experiences and theories and of the needs of the Latin American societies, ECLAC correctly identified the key items at that point in time on the agenda of tasks which the Latin American States *should* address; an agenda whose importance and timeliness have been reinforced by today's crisis. However, ECLAC did not ask itself, at the time, whether the Latin American States were up to these tasks, if they *could carry them out successfully*.

II

Criticism of the ECLAC concept of the State

1. *The nature of the State*

Although the State was seen as playing a central role in the development programme, little was done during the early years of ECLAC to investigate its nature and its actual capacity for carrying

out the tasks assigned to it. Even though the formulation and application of the development programme demanded, as a minimum condition, the pre-existence of a State having specific characteristics, the question of whether or not such a State existed was not raised as a central issue, at

least explicitly. As a result, ECLAC's ideas regarding the nature of the State remained, to a great degree, tacit ones.

Nonetheless, the general lines of these implicit ideas can be easily reconstructed. The State was regarded as an economic agent which interacted with other individual and collective agents both within and beyond the national society. It was, however, a multi-faceted agent, because it was represented by all those who occupied positions within the State apparatus; among these, two of the major actors were "politicians" and "technical experts".

The main features of this many-sided agent, which were required for its effective action and, at the same time, were assumed as a given, were the following:

- a) *Internal unity and consistency* of the various agents representing the State, under the authority of government leaders;
- b) *Autonomy from* other agents, which allowed it to override the one-sided and sectoral viewpoints of such agents and to develop an overall vision (plan) that superseded them and expressed the general interests of the national community;
- c) *Political and economic power*, which it used to impose its views upon the other agents, either in the form of orders given by virtue of its political authority or in the form of influence exerted through economic policy instruments and the resources controlled by the State;
- d) *Techno-administrative and managerial capacity* to carry forward the proposed programme efficiently;
- e) *Control over external economic relations* of the same sort which all States exercise over domestic political relations.

One might say that, according to the original ECLAC thinking on the subject, the State was perceived as a conductor who defended the autonomy and liberty of the musicians in the orchestra but who also brought various types of influence to bear on them in order to ensure that they would play the scores he had composed. In addition, ECLAC's emphasis on the role of the State stemmed from a concept of political action

in which a technical rationality played a decisive part; the State was to be the one which formulated this rationality and put it into practice by means of the development plan and the instrument of planning.

2. *Some dimensions of self-criticism*

Among the most persistent criticisms which have been made of ECLAC's concept of the State, the first that might be mentioned is the criticism made by the liberal school of thought; as is well known, this doctrine criticizes all State intervention except that which is designed to sustain and expand the capitalist market economy. In the liberal view, the State cannot be the agent which elaborates and applies a general technical rationality; this task must be the spontaneous result of the activity of private agents and the market. It contends that the State, by virtue of its very nature, tends to limit the freedom of private economic agents and easily falls into the errors of inefficiency and corruption. Therefore, this school of thought does not advocate the expansion of the State's intervention, but instead argues for its control with a view to ensuring that it performs its functions in a way which is suited to private economic interests (the "subsidiary State").

The liberal line of reasoning cannot be critiqued in the space of a few lines; nevertheless, two important flaws should be pointed out. Firstly, those belonging to this school wish to control the power emanating from the State, but devote much less attention to the concentration of economic and political power in private hands. Secondly, in recent years the anti-State principles of liberalism have been used in both the centre and the periphery to dismantle the State structures and functions which had come into being as a result of efforts to build more democratic and equitable societies. In effect, it has committed the error of failing to distinguish between State intervention aimed at consolidating authoritarian and oligarchic approaches, on the one hand, and those designed to expand democracy and make it more equitable, on the other (Gurrieri, 1982b).

In view of these and other weaknesses mentioned earlier, liberal political thinking does not represent a theoretical option which could be used in the place of the one developed by ECLAC;

to the contrary, its excessive reliance on the virtues of the market compounds the inadequacy of its view of the importance of private power and of the nature of State interventions. Nonetheless, ECLAC itself was not content with its analysis of the State and therefore proceeded to take another hard and critical look at the subject.

As ECLAC developed its thinking in this area, it came under fire from two different directions within the organization in the mid-1960s: sociological analysis and the reflections prompted by the so-called "planning crisis".

Sociological analysis in ECLAC has always been directed towards the search for an "integrated focus" on development, and this search rapidly led it to the structures of power. If the changeable history of economic and political processes are studied, they are seen to be the result of conflicts and alliances among social classes and groups; the economic and political "patterns" or "styles" which take root are the manifestation of structures of domination which have survived long enough to steer these processes along a stable course (Cardoso and Faletto, 1969). If development is analysed as a product of collective action, then questions arise as to the identity of the economic and political "agents" which would attempt and succeed in formulating it and carrying it out (Medina, 1963). From both vantage points—as an historical analysis and as a programme of action—sociology found itself headed in the direction of the issue of power: its main nuclei, its distribution in society, its various manifestations (economic, political, cultural, etc.). Nevertheless, this effort did not result in a more detailed examination of the State apparatus and its activities because attention was centred on the social forces which were thought to shape the structure and orientation of the State. In other words, much more attention was devoted to the State as a system of domination than to the State as an apparatus, to the social and political forces struggling to control its institutional structure than to its configuration and functioning.

The ideas that arose out of analyses of the so-called "planning crisis" had an outcome which complemented that of the sociological criticism. The exploration of the difficulties which had been encountered in applying development plans once again brought up the pheno-

menon of power, although in this case it referred more directly to the State apparatus (Boeninger, 1976; Matus, 1972 and 1980; ILPES, 1973 and 1974). It was seen that this apparatus did not have the unity and consistency which it had been assumed to have and that, instead, it was an extremely complex structure where, in the midst of a task of growing proportions, a multitude of actors were striving to assert their interests and were turning to various resources of power in order to do so. Furthermore, the direction of State action was not usually determined by an autonomous and imperative application of its technical rationality, but instead by complicated decision-making processes involving the interaction of nuclei of State and private power in which the technical rationality became intermixed with political and bureaucratic rationalities (Medina, 1972). The techno-administrative and managerial efficiency of the State could not be regarded as a given in this situation; on the contrary, it constituted a quite difficult problem to resolve. Finally, the State's control over external economic relations was seen to be increasingly limited in an international economy which was rapidly becoming transnationalized.

In the light of these criticisms, a different image began to be formed of the nature of the State, of politics and of planning and, hence, of the way in which development plans should be designed and executed. In other words, it became necessary to change the "political formula" which ECLAC had used during an extended period of time in addressing the political problems of development. The concept of the political process as one in which a single actor (the State) exerted an overriding influence had to give way to a different concept in which many actors, drawing upon a varied range of power resources, influenced decision-making; and the State was not necessarily the most powerful among them. The supposedly external State which was superimposed upon society had, instead, to be thought of as a part of society—generally a central and decisive part, but nonetheless inextricably bound to it. The duality of State and society in which the State occupied a dominant position had to be replaced by a view in which the two constituted a close partnership; the vision of a unified and consistent State had to be put aside in favour of a perspective in which the State was many-sided and often inconsistent;

the State seen as subject to a higher overall rationality had to cede its place to a State in which particular and sectoral rationalities deriving from its heterogeneous apparatus prevailed. The clear separation of the economy and politics, with the former being regarded as the domain of a technical rationality as opposed to the supposed arbitrariness and "non-scientific" nature of the latter, had to be abandoned for a perspective in which techno-economic, political and bureaucratic rationalities were placed at the service of a planning process directed by a substantive rationality arising out of the very core of the society itself.

This body of criticism was sufficiently sound and incisive to have a through-going impact on the conventional framework within which ECLAC had explored political issues in general and the State in particular. However, it did not, in principle, alter the development programmes proposed by ECLAC. To characterize the issue as it was viewed by ECLAC, the crucial question was: How were the strategies aimed at development, autonomy, equity and democracy to be formulated and executed without the support of the ideal States which had always been assumed to exist but, instead, on the basis of the societies and States which actually did exist?

3. *Other criticisms*

There have also been other criticisms made, however, which have given rise to the view that it would be either mistaken or illusory to institute strategies involving radical change, given the actual characteristics of the State and the political process (Canak, 1984).

One such viewpoint (which is situated to the right in the doctrinal spectrum) emphasizes that the idea of a State-as-planner making large-scale transformations involves a misconception of social reality and of the changes to which it can be subjected. There are two factors which, in this view, would limit the action of such a State. Firstly, the limited understanding it has of social reality narrows the scope of the technical rationality on which it intends to base its action. Secondly, most political decisions generate conflicts which end up modifying the results of State action. If the State, in taking action, were to overlook both of these factors, it might well make mistakes and provoke conflicts which

would upset and distort the ends that it had originally set out to achieve. Therefore, it is argued, an intelligently-directed State should not embark upon a radical and broad plan of action but instead should undertake a limited form of social engineering which would keep conflicts and errors to a minimum. Furthermore, the ends and the means of this limited action should be adapted step by step so as to take into account the actual effects it produces as this process unfolds (Oszlak, 1980).

There is no question about the fact that this doctrinary position points up important aspects of the political decision-making process, but it suffers from a basic flaw in that it is not commensurate with the major political dilemmas facing the countries of the region. These dilemmas, and the decisions relating to them, involve sweeping changes which are not the product of exaggerated revolutionary zeal but rather of the crossroads of history. What must be found is a course of action through which the State, without either being naive or arrogantly believing itself omnipotent or omniscient, can carry forward the tasks it must perform.

Another viewpoint (this one being to the left of the doctrinal spectrum by virtue of its neo-Marxist origins) is that the State in the Latin American countries should invariably be regarded as part of a dependent capitalist society and that this identity necessarily entails functions and restrictions which have a decisive impact on the actions it can carry out. The State in a capitalist society is thus seen, always and inevitably, as a capitalist State. The State apparatus may succeed in gaining a certain degree of autonomy from the capitalist society whose order it is assumed to guarantee and organize, but its autonomy will always be limited and conflictive if it opposes the nuclei of power whose interests coincide with this type of economic and social organization or if it runs counter to the principles upon which it itself is based. These limitations, according to this view, were brought out by the crisis of the Latin American reformist régimes which were attempting to stimulate economic growth and social change by means of solutions that were "ambiguous" from the standpoint of capitalism. If economic growth is to be furthered within a system of this type, it is argued, then its principles of accumulation and redistribution should be observed and support

should be drawn from the most dynamic nuclei of economic power, i.e., the most highly concentrated and transnationalized ones (O'Donnell, 1982; Kesselman, 1983; Hamilton, 1981).

Actually, both these positions base their arguments on the strength of the existing power structures as a justification for their skepticism about the possibility of successfully implementing broad and sweeping reforms. Accordingly, since the reformist governments are thought not to have sufficient power to subdue or channel the nuclei of State and private power opposing them, they should simply limit their drives for change to what they can actually accomplish, given the existing power structure, or they should simply abandon such efforts and bring their action into line with the economic and political logic of the system they had hoped to change. However, at variance with these two points of view, ECLAC has always believed that the limits of reform and the potentials of democratic planning are broader and greater than these criticisms would indicate. In its judgement, many historical experiences demonstrate that between conservative social engineering on a small scale and radical revolution there is a wide field, of uncertain boundaries, in which strategies such as that of ECLAC can find their place (Maravall, 1981).

4. *The Latin American experience*

It will be enlightening to see how this last statement measures up against Latin America's experiences. In this connection, it may be asserted that the historical evolution and present nature of the State's functions and structure in Latin America are the outgrowth of the role it has played in economic, social and political processes which are first and foremost related to the confirmation of its internal and external power. Generally speaking, the nature of these processes and the problems which they have entailed have caused the State to expand and diversify its structure in order to encompass increasingly broader functions.

The core of State action in the economic process has consisted of laying the economic and political groundwork for growth and development and furthering them through regulatory and productive activities. From the stage of outward-oriented growth onwards, through the

various phases of industrialization, the State has had to expand its sphere of action because it has borne the main responsibility for maintaining these processes.

Viewing this evolution from the standpoint of the productive function of the State, it may be seen that in the stage based on the export of primary products, the State supplied the specific infrastructure required for this pattern of growth (roadways, railways, ports); during the initial phase of industrialization, it also provided the general infrastructure (e.g., for energy and communications) and the necessary financial impetus; and in the later phases of industrialization, it also took charge of the basic inputs industries of relatively low market profitability (steel, shipbuilding, etc.). In conjunction with all of this, it often took on the responsibility of producing primary products for export and of running many other productive enterprises.

The main causes of the Latin American States' growing presence in the economic process in general and in industrialization in particular have to do with the underdeveloped and peripheral nature of the economies and societies of these countries. Due to this status, local private agents are in an intrinsically weak position *vis-a-vis* the challenges of economic growth, while the external agents are so powerful that their penetration, if unchecked, could well have an impact on any national State's bid for autonomy. The relative weakness of the former and the strength of the latter within a context of increasing economic, financial and technological demands require the State to play a role of ever greater proportions. This situation, especially in the initial phases of industrialization, has been typical of most countries whose development was "delayed", including such noteworthy examples as Japan. In such cases the State has attempted to attract and/or control external agents while encouraging the development of the country's private sector; to this end, it has often initiated or promoted activity in this sector by offering it investment opportunities, providing it with financing, protecting it from outside competition and from internal risks, ensuring it a stable demand (through the use of State "purchasing power"), supplying it with inexpensive inputs, guaranteeing its profitability, etc. While the underdevelopment of the periphery has often been marked by the weakness of the local

social sectors which have played a key role in the development of the centres (both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat), it is also true that the State has frequently gone to considerable lengths to make them more vigorous.

The State has thus strengthened the private sector, and this sector's vitality has, in its turn, served to increase the State's economic power. The coexistence of the State and the private sector has been marked by tension, however, since both wish to control the economic process. The history of Latin America contains many examples of the struggle between "nationalism" and "liberalism", between State *dirigisme* and "free enterprise", as well as of various unstable arrangements for the pragmatic coexistence of the two, ranging from that of a mixed economy all the way to State capitalism.

Nevertheless, there is more involved than just a complex power relation between two rivals for supremacy which, at the same time, provide support to each other; another factor which must be taken into account is the ambivalent role that the State must perform in the development of the peripheral capitalist systems. In view of what has already been said it would seem to be a mistake to suppose —taking the viewpoint that this is a "zero sum" game— that any increase in State action entails a concomitant reduction in the private sphere; on the contrary, much of this increase has been necessary in order for private expansion to take place. Furthermore, there has been a great deal of intermixing of the public and private sectors in the predominant modality of growth, and the cases in which this mode of growth has been the most successful have been based on a relatively stable combination of the two marked by mutual understanding.

This is one side of the coin. The other concerns the fact that economic growth in Latin America has been prone to heteronomy; the social and regional concentration of power, wealth and income; the exclusion of vast social groups from the benefits of growth; and the exacerbation of social conflict. These tendencies give rise to disequilibria which have been further heightened by the social and political processes of increasing mobilization and democratization. In stimulating economic growth, the State has

had to resolve serious sectoral imbalances, just as it has also had to take action in relation to the social conflicts arising out of growth itself, out of the disparity between the actual amount of growth and the population's expectations, and out of the social and political demands prompted by mobilization and democratization.

In essence, State action in the social process is primarily aimed at dealing with the difficulties raised by the confluence of two opposing currents: a concentrative and exclusionary economic process, and a social process inspired by the principle of an equitable distribution of the fruits of growth. In order for it to do this, the State must assume the responsibility of mitigating social and regional inequalities and promoting a wide-ranging social policy.

The State has also run up against contradictory tendencies in the political process. In addition to performing the classic functions relating to its internal and external consolidation, the State must, on the one hand, guarantee the operability of an institutional order whose dynamism spurs a growing concentrating of economic power and, on the other hand, not only embody a general rationality which overrides powerful individual interests, but also serve as a flexible institutional framework which will incorporate all the social forces activated by the phenomenon of democratization.

These are, in a highly summarized form, the main economic, social and political challenges which the State faces. The specific ways in which they have been confronted have varied widely, as have the relative priorities assigned to them, but, taken as a whole, these are the factors that have shaped the main features of the anatomy and physiology of the Latin American States of today. These challenges have become more formidable in recent years due to the economic crisis and the processes of redemocratization, and the crucial question is therefore not whether the State should or should not intervene —because in fact it will do so, and on a large scale— but rather what should be the characteristics of State action under the actual historical conditions of present-day Latin America within the framework of strategies aimed at democracy, autonomy, growth and equity.

III

The building of the State

1. *Political formulas*

If the State is both the object and subject of the development strategy and if, as a consequence, the "building" of the State is one of the strategy's main objectives, then it is essential to define the type of State which is desired as well as the extent and intensity of its intervention in the economy and society.

It is a question, in short, of taking positions with respect to the desired role of the State. A technical approach is of little use in formulating such positions because they are based on political principles; in other words, in addressing this issue it is not possible to arrive at optimal solutions of a technical nature, but only to affirm positions on the basis of value judgments and then to try to put them into practice in concrete situations. The position taken in any given situation with respect to the desired role of the State should be based on this combination of political principles and real conditions. These principles can be organized into certain key "political formulas", each of which, in turn, involves its own specific definition of the role of the State.

If the State's role is seen as the pivotal issue, then three main "political formulas" can be identified which differ from one another as regards the social actors upon which they rely, the type of rationality which they contend should be the predominant one, their diagnostic analysis of the present crisis situation, and the route which they choose to take in dealing with it.

In the *liberal formula*, private enterprises (particularly the most dynamic and productive ones) are the key social actors, and the predominant rationality should be that represented by the economic calculations of these enterprises and the logic of the market which serves as the framework for their action. In the *State formula*, the key agent is the State apparatus, and the logic which should prevail is the technical and political rationality of this apparatus. Finally, in the *democratic formula*, all the social actors, both State and private, are regarded as important agents of the political and economic process (although emphasis is placed on the actors

which are excluded or subordinated in the two preceding formulas), and the rationality which should guide this process should arise out of the interaction among them and out of a decision-making process based on democratic mechanisms.

This very brief presentation of three such important political formulas may perhaps be simplistic, but its purpose is to highlight the key differences among them as regards the social actors which should ultimately lead the political and economic process and the type of rationality which should govern it. Many political controversies amount, in essence, to a difference of principle as to the political formula considered desirable.

Each of these formulas makes its own diagnosis of the present crisis, according to which the main responsibility for the crisis is attributed to the other political formulas, i.e., to the actors and types of rationalities associated with the other political formulas. For example, the diagnostic analysis of the liberal formula, which has received a great deal of attention in the past few years, identifies the main cause of the current crisis as being the excesses committed by States which are "overloaded" by the vast number of demands prompted and exacerbated by an "ungovernable" democratic process (Birch, 1984). These phenomena are thought to have weakened the key social actors—the most dynamic private enterprises—and to have thwarted the economic calculations of these enterprises and the logic of the market as a mechanism, with serious consequences for investment, productivity, economic growth, the rate of inflation, political stability, etc. In much the same way, the remaining formulas also base their diagnoses of the situation on the untoward functioning of the others and on the effects this is felt to have had on the actors and the type of rationality which they advocate (Hearn, 1983).

Based on the foregoing, the role which each political formula assigns to the State can be readily identified. In summary, in the liberal formula the primary function of the State is to support private agents and the market mecha-

nism so that they can operate as well as possible. The State formula can be characterized as such because all of its advocates contend that the dominant rationality should be that of the State; but while unanimous on this point, they take widely varying positions on the functions which the State should perform. These differences are particularly marked as regards the desired scope and intensity of State regulation of private activity, its direct participation in economic activities and its "social" role.

In the democratic formula, the State is seen as both a battlefield and a place of reconciliation for the interests of different social groups. In this sense, the State is not seen as undertaking a major role of its own; instead, its activity is a reflection of society. In this case, the State's main function is not to lead society but to guarantee the operability of democratic mechanisms because it is supposed that the society as a whole will set its own course through its use of this machinery.

Each of these formulas, if considered and applied unilaterally, obscures and narrows the roles of the other actors and rationalities and, under these circumstances, may take an "unforward" form. In reality, concrete experiences tend to combine elements of all three of these formulas, although, certainly, attempts have also been made throughout history to emphasize the principles of one formula over those of the others.

Each of these formulas focuses attention on some aspect of reality which must not be overlooked in working out the role of the State in the current crisis. The strength of the liberal formula lies in the marked concentration of private economic power which has occurred during the past few decades; in an economy founded upon its premises, it would be naive to ignore such power in view of the influence it has on the political and economic process, just as the factors on which private enterprises base their calculations—and, hence, their economic behaviour—cannot be changed at will.

For these reasons, the actors and rationalities of the liberal formula must play a part in any realistic political formula to be applied to this type of economic organization. It should not be forgotten, however, that its rationality conforms to the interests of its actors, which do not necessarily coincide with those of society as a whole, and that most of these actors are transnational

corporations which, if they were to rise to a predominant position, would have a direct impact on the level of autonomy attainable by the Latin American countries. Therefore, while it is necessary to take advantage of these enterprises' dynamic potential, it is just as necessary to regulate and control their activity so that it will be consistent with that of the other actors and rationalities.

Similarly, the State formula is in fact based on a sharp increase in the power of the State. Its enormous influence cannot be denied, nor can the need for its guidance and intervention in societies which are becoming more and more economically and socially complex, which are marked by increasingly concentrated and transnationalized private economic power, and in which all the social groups are becoming much more politically active. It is also a well-known fact, however, that the State is not usually guided by purely technical considerations and that its activity is often influenced by the interests of the very groups which form it. Thus, State actors and their rationality can make a very important contribution, but this must also be combined with elements from the other formulas.

Finally, the democratic formula would be justified even if for no other reason than that the agents and rationalities of the other formulas do not represent the whole of society, especially the social groups which make up the forgotten majority. Decisions taken as a result of the political participation of all social groups should exert a decisive influence on the roles of the State and of the major private actors; this participation is now gaining momentum thanks to the stimulus provided by the processes of democratization.

No one basic formula contains all the elements needed to arrive at a mixed economy, a desirable approach and a viable option all at the same time, and they must therefore be combined. Indeed, history provides a highly varied sample of "hybrid" political formulas which mix the elements of the above-mentioned formulas together in various ways, such as those of State capitalism, democratic Statism, and others (Oszlak, 1982). The first step in addressing the issue of the State's role in the present crisis should therefore be to undertake a systematic examination of those hybrid political formulas which would be desirable and viable in the specific situations of today; furthermore, from the

very outset there should be a clear realization that, whatever the combination of elements that is proposed, there will inevitably be tension among the elements drawn from the different formulas (Wolfe, 1984). The resolution of this tension would be the highest expression of the political art of development, which should always be accompanied by a large measure of originality and flexibility.

2. *The desirable political formula*

In the preceding discussion an attempt has been made to convey the idea that any proposal for action designed to deal with the present crisis and the problems of Latin American development should embody the contours of the political formula that its authors consider to be both desirable and viable, which will thus come to be both the object and subject of the proposal. This political formula should basically be a combination (whose exact make-up would vary as the specific situations in question change) of the components of the three basic formulas—liberal, State and democratic—since all of them have arguments in their favour, based on either fact or merit, which make it necessary to take them into consideration in designing such a formula. The role assigned to the State and the desired nature and scope of its economic and social "intervention" will depend on the political formula chosen and on its adaptation to the different national situations concerned. It has also been argued that, no matter what political formula is felt to be desirable, it will always be marked by tension and instability due to the fact that it will be a combination of heterogeneous and often conflicting elements drawn from the basic formulas; because of this, social actors ought to be prepared to take a flexible, undogmatic approach within a political context in which an ongoing effort will be required to reconcile interests and harmonize rationalities.

On this basis, it is possible to go one step further and to specify a number of the features of the desirable political formula, taking into account some of the primary values which should guide a general strategy of action, i.e., autonomy, equity, democracy and stability. These values considerably narrow the range of desirable political formulas from which to choose and make it possible to single out some of

the characteristics that such a formula must have if it is to be in keeping with these values.

Two features are of particular importance: the strengthening of the State apparatus, and the establishment and consolidation of democratic forms of political organization.

a) There are a number of reasons why it is necessary to strengthen the State apparatus. Firstly, the developmental history of the central and peripheral countries reveals that the State apparatus has expanded its functions and authorities the most in times of economic crisis, during which it is particularly necessary for a central power to control the disequilibria generated by the crisis and to seek a means of ending it; the present crisis will surely be no exception.

Secondly, mention has already been made of the lack of economic, social and political integration in most of the Latin American societies, which are often split by deep internal divisions. They continue to be marked by structural heterogeneity, with the attendant disparities in productivity and income among regions and economic sectors, a sharp inequality of power and of living conditions and opportunities among social groups, the exclusion of some groups from political participation, the persistence of inequalities among ethnic groups, and differential access to goods and services and to full citizenship. Consequently, feelings of national belonging are often weak; this sense of identification, which is a decisive factor in integration, especially in the "new" States, is further undermined by a cultural dependency which saps national lifestyles and forms of expression. In sum, the material and ideational foundations upon which national States are built are manifestly weak in these countries, and these foundations must be bolstered through a process in which the State apparatus must play a major role.

Thirdly, in the present international context, trends are coming to the fore which are weakening the capacity to govern and reducing the autonomy of the governments of the peripheral countries, such as the sharpening political/military conflict between the great powers, the progressive transnationalization of the production apparatuses of these countries, or the marked increase in their financial dependence. The countries can fight against these trends and maintain or increase their autonomy only if they

succeed in strengthening their State apparatuses, which are the only bulwark that can stem this tide.

The process of strengthening the State apparatus should proceed along the general lines of the archetype of the State-as-planner devised by ECLAC, whose features were discussed earlier. This planning capacity is based on three main factors: technical and administrative efficiency, political capacity and economic/financial power. Increasing the technical and administrative efficiency of the State apparatus is an objective with which all agree, provided that it is not divorced from or placed above the other objectives which should guide the action of this apparatus. After many years during which Weber's model of bureaucratic rationality reigned unopposed over the processes of "administrative reform", a point has been reached in Latin America where it is clear that the type of efficiency sought through this model should be subordinate to the "social efficiency" of overall State action; this social effectiveness is manifested in the consistency of State action with the various sorts of objectives which should rule its actions (Pérez Salgado, 1984).

The political capacity of the State basically refers to its readiness to lay down obligations or mandates for all the social groups and to demand that they be fulfilled, even if it must resort to compulsion in order to see that this is done (Myrdal, 1968); however, this "strength" or "effectiveness" cannot be based solely or primarily on the use of the coercive power associated with authoritarian political organizations, but should instead be sustained by principles which, in the opinion of the citizens, give legitimacy to such mandates. In today's Western political culture, of which the Latin American countries are a part, this legitimacy can only be attained through a reliance on democratic political principles; in other words, the obligations and acts of compulsion which will be regarded as legitimate will be those which a State establishes through democratic procedures. This is the only way to achieve the high level of individual and collective responsibility and discipline which should serve as a solid foundation for a vigorous and stable State political capacity.

The economic and financial power of the State is closely linked to its political capacity, since the two buttress one another. This power is

expressed and exercised in various ways, but its central element revolves around the process of capital accumulation; in the final analysis, the actual degree of such power attained in a given situation can be measured in terms of the capacity to control this process of accumulation (Prebisch, 1981). This is the only way in which the State can put itself on an equal footing with private economic powers. It is difficult to decide which mechanisms are best suited to securing this power, but the most widespread are the appropriate control and use of economic policy instruments and direct productive investment; only the actual circumstances involved can determine what the most fitting combination of mechanisms will be.

b) Within the framework of the topics dealt with in this article, there are three main justifications for the establishment and consolidation of democratic forms of political organization: the intrinsic value of democratic principles (Medina, 1977), the role which democratic mechanisms for the articulation of interests can play in stabilizing and institutionalizing the political process, and the relation which both these factors bear to the objectives of social equity.

In supporting a development strategy of a democratic nature, the fact should be borne in mind that such a strategy implies a specific way of solving the key problem of how to co-ordinate complex and politically activated societies. On the one hand, authoritarian decision-making mechanisms must be put aside, since they run counter to the very essence of democracy, which calls for broad-based participation in decision-making. On the other hand, mechanisms of articulation such as the market and feelings of national belonging are not enough. The physical, economic and social integration of society is essential for the operation of a full democracy, just as the solidarity fostered by a sense of national identification is an important element in establishing and consolidating stable democratic machinery for decision-making and conflict resolution. However, democratic planning—an ideal which embodies the democratic form of articulation—can only be conceived of as a process in which all the social actors, State and private, participate in the co-ordinated formulation and fulfilment of national objectives.

The institutional machinery for democratic articulation includes, first of all, the mechanisms

associated with liberal democracy, which are based on the aggregative and representative function of political parties, free elections, parliamentary institutions and the civil and political rights that are the foundation for this machinery. The obstacles standing in the way of a full application of such mechanisms in many Latin American countries, and the setbacks which some of them have experienced, indicate the difficulty of the task that lies ahead and the incompleteness of what has already been done, at the same time that the renewed strength of democratic movements signals the persistence of these political values.

Nonetheless, particularly in the central countries but in the peripheral ones as well, it has become evident that there are major nuclei of economic power whose articulation—which is essential for the stabilization and guidance of political and economic processes—has not been fully accomplished by means of the available mechanisms for socially concerting the efforts of these powers, which are not intended to supplement the conventional ones but rather to complement them (Van Klaveren, 1983). Like the classic institutions of liberal democracy, these procedures represent a promising avenue for efforts to devise ways of harmonizing and concerting interests; however, just as the former are founded upon a respect for civil and political rights, the latter require that all social groups attain a considerable degree of awareness and organization of their interests. A process of concerted effort which bypasses major social groups is of little value. Both the classic and modern forms of democracy and concerted effort can be incomplete, limited or restricted; the objective is to ensure that they will be broad-based or comprehensive.

Liberal-democratic mechanisms and procedures for concerting efforts are not all, however, that is involved in the process of democratization. The growing concentration of State and private power makes it necessary to search for ways of diffusing and controlling such power. The purpose of doing this is clear and has been underscored by many: to deepen the democratization of the State apparatus and of commercial enterprise, which are currently the major vehicles for the concentration of economic power (Cardoso, 1984). If this is not done, conventional democratic mechanisms will be overrun and the

process of fostering concerted efforts will bypass all those who are not part of these concentrated power structures.

An essential pre-condition for these mechanisms of democratization is the existence of a democratic society, i.e., a society in which there is an acceptance of diversity, controversy and conflict and, at the same time, a respect for the institutional machinery through which disparate interests are organized, expressed and influenced. This machinery is no more than an empty shell unless it corresponds to a deep-seated social consensus which accords it legitimacy. Such a consensus constitutes the basis of the "democratic discipline" which is an indispensable component of a State having enough authority to carry forward democratically-determined decisions (Portantiero, 1984).

The three dimensions of the democratization process—democratic-liberal institutions of the classic sort, concerted social effort and democratic control over the main State and private nuclei of power—together with the social consensus which is their basis, form the support structure for the objectives of through-going democratization. The fact that these elements constitute what is virtually a utopian arrangement should not be regarded as a reason for dismissing them. It is not a question of establishing a fully democratic society in the short run, but rather of knowing what its principal forms are and working towards them; institutions are consolidated through the continuous and prolonged activity of men, and the only way to arrive at such a society is therefore by applying its principles as broadly and as continuously as possible. Moreover, the processes of redemocratization now taking place in Latin America indicate that these objectives are headed in the right direction and are making viable what until recently seemed unattainable.

The existence of a democratic political organization is also a necessary pre-condition for the application of a strategy for establishing equity (Gurrieri and Sainz, 1983). Once it is no longer possible to pre-suppose the assured existence of a planning and reforming State, it then becomes clear that without democracy there can be no equity, and the establishment and strengthening of democracy should consequently be one of the priority objectives of a

strategy of this type, especially in weak democracies such as those of Latin America. This is particularly important during times of crisis such as the present, since democracy provides the only true rampart which the less powerful groups can build in order to prevent a disproportionate share of the costs of the crisis from falling upon their shoulders.

Furthermore, the stability of democratic political arrangements is contingent upon the society having passed a certain minimum threshold of equity. In other words, it is not possible to establish vigorous and stable democratic institutions in societies subject to very sharp economic, ethnic, social and cultural inequality. It can therefore be argued that equity and democracy are mutually reinforcing and constitute two virtually inseparable aspects of the overall strategy.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the democratization process encompasses two related aspects. One of these aspects is the activation and preparation of actors so that they will be able to participate in the democratic procedures of decision-making; this is especially important in societies such as those of Latin America, in which many of the actors fall far short of possessing the necessary awareness and organization to do so. The second aspect is the rationalization and institutionalization of democratic decision-making processes. If the activation and preparation of social actors does not go hand in hand with the establishment of sound mechanisms of articulation, then the political process results in chaos; if these mechanisms do not incorporate all the relevant actors, then they will represent no more than a spurious and unstable form of democracy.

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