REVIEW PAPER

The uses of class: A Latin American anthropological reading of Marxist debates in the twentieth century

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Abstract

The article takes up six Marxist-inspired debates that substantially impacted Latin American anthropological thought toward social classes in the twentieth century. The aim is to provide a summary of these uses and to situate their possible current applications. We will begin by covering Marxist discussions and categories, presenting a concise review of Marx's debates on class, and their re-readings by European authors such as Lukacs and Gramsci. Then, we will discuss Weber's principal criticisms of these arguments, referring to the theoretical underpinnings of social stratification. In addition, we will synthesize the critical turns of Marxism: feminist debates on social reproduction, the geographical discussion on the spatial configuration of class, Bourdieu's articulationist proposal and re-readings of Gramsci's works. Following these debates, we will analyze the six uses of the concept of social class in Latin American world-historical anthropology from the second half of the twentieth century. We group them by their central topic and by the national academia in which their articulation had institutional effects on the discipline (Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina). We end with a look at the debate's outcomes in the twenty-first century, in the context of international crisis and its Latin American configuration, to propose a conceptualization that dialogs with the revised traditions.

Keywords Social class · Marxism · Conflict · World-historic anthropology · Latin America

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Introduction

This article revisits and analyzes the Latin American Marxist anthropological debates on social classes produced in the second half of the twentieth century in five of the region's countries: Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina. Few concepts in the recent history of social sciences have had as controversial and politically implied a trajectory as that granted to social class. Central to the twentieth-century arguments between capitalism and communism, this term has taken on a polysemic character that is difficult to synthesize (Carrier 2015, p. 28). With the Cold War over at the end of the last century, the hegemonic anglophone academia ostracized the concept in a way. However, in the twenty-first century, the cyclical crises of the neoliberal model and the growing "lumpenproletariat" in extensive world populations revitalized anglophone anthropological interest in the classes (Kalb 2015b).

In Latin America, the anthropological use of the classes was no less polysemic nor problematic, but we have our own genealogies for these debates. Considering the importance of revisiting Marxist theorizations, and by doing so, recovering the innovative and historically situated character of Latin American anthropologies, we propose a genealogical debate for this article. Encompassing the heterogeneity of the uses of the term class (as well as its historical configurations and social-political outcomes) is beyond the reaches of one single text. For that reason, we will limit ourselves to one specific exercise: inspired by Portantiero's analysis (1977) on Gramsci's work, we will take up six Marxist anthropological debates that substantially impacted Latin American anthropological thought toward social classes in the twentieth century. We aim to summarize these uses and to situate their possible applications in the current context.[1] Three central objectives delimit our approach in the following pages, which seek to address three specific analytical challenges.

The first challenge refers to the effect that the waning prominence of Marxist discussions (in general) and the concept of class (in particular) has had worldwide in the training of social scientists in the twenty-first century. Marxist theoretical reflections and authors that were considered required references for academic training two decades ago no longer appear in undergraduate and graduate curricula of various disciplinary fields. For many among the new generations of researchers, these debates and their key categories are increasingly remote or even unintelligible.

Considering this circumstance, *our first objective in this article is to offer a general reading guide. This guide aims to situate a Marxist conceptualization on the social classes, as well as the Weberian critique and the perspectives that seek to articulate these approaches*. This theoretical genealogy will be synthesized between sections two and four of this text, covering the proposals from different fields (philosophy, economy, sociology, history, anthropology). These sections may be overlooked by readers that are already familiar with these discussions. For those who decide to read them, three aspects should be taken into consideration.

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[1] Our bibliographical review was extensive, including 150 international publications. Due to space limitations, we excluded several texts that, although relevant, did not contribute to our objective.

First, we avoided including excessive direct quotations of the authors considered classics. Second, we did not fully exhaust the discussions addressed (an unattainable task within the length of a single article). As a result, the language employed may seem overly "journalistic" to experts in the themes debated. Third, for readers who are knowledgeable about Marxist debates on social class, sections two to four may seem somewhat disconnected from the debate carried out in the fifth and sixth sections. From our perspective, and considering our experience as anthropology teachers in different South American and European countries over the last two decades, this appreciation is generational: the new generations need this quick guide; these initial sections are intended for them. In short, we aim to provide a comprehensive reading guide for those who have been introduced to the social sciences in the last decade, for whom certain expressions that no longer have daily political international uses—such as "class struggle," "class in itself, and for itself" and "class consciousness"—may not be easily assimilated. Therefore, these introductory sections broadly situate arguments and authors that are needed to understand the Latin American anthropological literature covered in the fifth section.

The second challenge refers particularly to the marginal character that debates on classes have in anthropology worldwide, which is linked to the persistence of the discipline's culturalist biases (Kalb 2015a; Kasmir 2015). An entanglement of problems characterizes the capitalist neoliberalism of the twenty-first century that is faced simultaneously in different parts of the planet, as does the repetition of multiple patterns of inequality, environmental catastrophe, violence, social exclusion, and income concentration (Kalb and Mollona 2018, pp. 1–2). Considering these issues, it is only possible to understand the cyclical processes of crisis experienced in the global North and South if our approaches articulate micro, meso, and macrosocial perspectives. This pushes anthropologists, on the one hand, to embrace multiscalar perspectives, methodologies, and analytical approaches (Çağlar and Glick-Schiller 2021; Guizardi and Merenson 2021), and, on the other hand, to reassess their debates on the relationship between particularism and universalism. Although many researchers have already joined this analytical movement, the effort to extend anthropological language and praxis toward categories that invoke multiscalar approaches is still incipient.

Our second objective is to contribute to this debate by revisiting anthropological works from the global South that addressed these issues decades ago. Between the sixties and the eighties, several Latin American Marxist anthropologists sought to overcome the micro-scale and apolitical perspectives that broadly characterized the discipline's classical (Malinowskian) approach (Clifford 1997; Fabian 2002; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Hannerz 1986), by fostering macroscalar, dialectical, and diachronic visions on social change. In doing so, they offered reflections on the confluence (and overflows) between politics and culture, economy and society, and social conflicts and collective symbolism. The concept of class was one of the articulating axes of their debates. The theoretical tools and the political activism played out by these Latin American researchers can offer us interesting outlets for constructing a multiscale contemporary anthropology. Furthermore, they could help in extending the debate toward "eccentric" voices: that is, toward productions and perspectives situated on the margins of political, social, economic, and scientific hegemonies.

The third challenge refers to the scant international knowledge about these Latin American anthropological debates. *In recognition of this problem, our third objective is to offer an introductory genealogy, revisiting some of the most important Marxist anthropological production of Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina from the second half of the twentieth century*. The reason why we chose these countries can be explained as follows: In the cases of Brazil and Mexico, anthropology has a central character and a strong link with the political construction of Nation-states and conceptions on the relationship between national identities and ethnic groups (Grimson and Semán 2006). In the cases of Argentina and Chile, Marxist debates that took place in these countries in response to the South American dictatorial processes (from the sixties to the nineties) acquired importance. Chile played an important role in Latin American Marxist thought from the military coup in Brazil (1964) until the Chilean coup (1973). Argentine thinkers, in turn, were prominent in the international articulation of the Marxist perspective from exile (especially after the dictatorship started in 1976) that impacted many Latin American anthropological theoretical outcomes in the twenty-first century. In the case of Peru, our focus recognizes the importance of Peruvian Andean anthropology as a reference for South American ethnographic and ethnohistorical approaches (De la Cadena 2009). However, the impact of the conflicts and confluences between classical Peruvian Andean anthropology and Marxist anthropological perspectives is less known internationally, and, given the magnitude of the contributions that these debates aroused, they deserve to be reviewed.

These countries have extensive Marxist literature from other disciplinary fields (such as economics, political science, geography). These works are fundamental for the contemporary production of knowledge in Latin America (and internationally, as in the case of some authors). However, addressing this production and putting it in dialog with anthropological works exceeds the specific focus of this article (it will be a horizon for future debates). Our specific focus on Latin American Marxist anthropology also results from the recognition of its avant-garde role in questioning the naturalization of the discipline's definition "by the exoticism of its subject matter and by the distance, conceived as both cultural and geographic, that separated the researcher from the researched group" (Peirano 1998, p. 105). In this sense, our work here intends to recognize critical anthropological perspectives that "may be distinguished as attempts at radical otherness, at the study of 'contact' with otherness, at 'nearby' otherness, or as a radicalization of 'us'" (Peirano 1998, p. 106).

To fulfill these objectives, we will start by presenting, in the second section, a synthetic review of Marx's debates on class, and the re-readings of them carried out by authors such as Lukacs and Gramsci. In the third section, we will pick up Weber's main criticisms of the Marxist argument, referring to the theoretical underpinnings of social stratification. In the fourth, we will synthesize the critical turns of Marxism: feminist debates on social reproduction, the geographical discussion on the spatial configuration of class, Bourdieu's articulationist proposal, and re-readings of Gramsci's arguments. In the fifth, we will introduce some important aspects of the historical Latin American contexts in the second half of the twentieth century, and discuss the six uses of the concept of social class in Latin American world-historical anthropology (locally known as *critical anthropologies*) in this period. As

said before, we group them by their central topic and national academia, where their articulation had institutional effects on the discipline: Peru, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina. We end with a look at the debate's outcomes in the twenty-first century, in the context of international crisis and its Latin American configuration to propose a conceptualization that dialogs with the revised traditions.

Marx and its outcomes

It is impossible to understand the uses of the concept of social class in Latin American Anthropology without reviewing Marx's debates. This does not mean there is consensus about the validity of his proposals. Rather, the political character of his theorization influenced everything that was produced afterward. In the twentieth century there were those who rejected his ideas, those who partially reformulated them, and those who embraced them completely. In any case, it was challenging to refer to this concept ignoring Marx's arguments. So, we will take a look at the central axes of his debates.

Marx assumed that the production of the basic material conditions for human survival—food, shelter, clothing—made up the founding *structure* of societal organization (Marx 2008[1867], p. 208). Therefore, "class position" corresponded to the place people occupied in this process (Bourdieu 2002a, p. 122). By participating in productive activities, people were framed by a specific set of social relations and simultaneously positioned in relation to the possession or capacity to control "means of production" (natural resources, human labor, capital) (Carrier 2015, p. 29). This combination of relational, spatial, and material attributes that define the position of a social group in the "cogs" of a productive mode frames what Marx considers a "class" (Carrier 2015, p. 29). Establishing an analogy with the author's postulation about commodity fetishism (Marx 2008[1867], p. 87), classes were not things, but rather social processes of and in production.

In his debate on the classes in capitalism, Marx (1996[1867]) describes the proletariat as those who have no access to control natural resources and capital and only sell their own labor. The bourgeoisie, in contrast, are those who own the means of production. Between them, there is a structural contradiction which, constitutes the main engine of history when it bursts into conflict. It is the dispossessed classes, those who "have nothing to lose" that can trigger this conflict that Marx (1996) calls "class struggle." Therefore, in philosophical terms, the concept of class has a privileged place when explaining the materialistic dialectic. Marx's re-reading of Hegel stipulates that the movement of history does not come from the dialectic process of the ideas that make up the spirit (the clash between a thesis and its antithesis, in the emergence of a synthesis). On the contrary, it comes from the contradictions between concrete social processes: between social classes antagonized in a productive mode, that refuse to cede to each other and thus give way to a new system of social organization.

To show the workings of the class struggle in capitalism, Marx drew on various arguments of the liberal economy from his time: his surplus value theory was developed from David Ricardo's labor theory of value and its applications in Adam

Smith. Marx agreed with Ricardo that only *human labor* could generate value. However, he questioned the liberal premise on the inequality between classes in capitalism, stipulating that it does not have its origins in the circulation of goods, but rather in the bourgeois expropriation of the value generated by proletarian labor (Marx 2008[1867]). He also rejected ideas on the capacity of the individual's free action, assuming that these can only be understood from the ensemble of relationships, processes, and materialities that constitute their class position (Marx 2008[1867], p. 9).

He argued that the conditions for the existence of a social class are dialectically linked to the possibility of its permanence in time. The production of a class would imply, then, the *reproduction* of the factors or relations that *condition* its positioning.[2] When the proletarians take on the dominant sector world visions, they distance themselves from their own class *consciousness* and reproduce the exploitative system from which they suffer (Lukács 1970, p. 76). Consequently, the concepts of *social class, work,* and *reproduction* constitute linking categories in the interpretative Marxist framework (Kalb 2015a, p. 54). Additionally, the idea of class unfolds a series of compound categories: *class position, class struggle, class consciousness.*

However, despite his frequent use of the word "class," Marx never came up with a fully explicit definition for the term in all of his work. Both he and Engels contributed to the conceptual confusion around the term by using it with different meanings in different texts and changing their positions related to the concept over time.[3]

Seeking to solve these analytical complexities, his successors multiplied the term's possible interpretations. The outcomes of the Russian Revolution intervened drastically in these discussions (1917). The deterministic economic framework became a hegemonic political orientation due to the Soviet influence from the twenties, relying crucially on the programmatic readings of Lenin (1974[1909]). A substantive sector of Marxists began to emphasize the material conditions of social existence—the *infrastructure*—assuming the position the Soviet Union called "orthodox." Against this tide, various authors (the heterodox) proposed that these elements were dialectically linked to the social classes' experience of the representations, symbols, institutions, and relations of power—the *superstructural* aspects. In 1931, with Soviet totalitarianism intensifying, Stalin established by decree that Marxism–Leninism was the central philosophical source for the Soviet Union, including all the international communist parties (Service 2006, p. 268). So, economic determinism from Lenin (according to the Stalinist interpretation) was

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[2] The use of the term "condition" attends to Borón's (2006) reflections on the inadequate translations of Marx's Prologue in "*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*" in 1859. There, he explicitly states that "the means of production of material life 'determines' [*bedingen*, in German] the process of social, political, and spiritual life in general" (Marx in Borón 2006, p. 48). The translation of *beningen* as "determine" is inadequate because the verb means "condition", "require", "presuppose", and "imply" (Borón 2006, p. 48). Traditional critiques highlight that the use of the verb "determine" is to accuse Marx of "economist reductionism", when this would not have been the expression chosen by the author (Borón 2006, p. 48).

[3] For example, Engels (2019 [1845], p. 9), in his analysis on the working-class situation in England in 1845, called the bourgeois class the "middle class", adopting the terms in use at the time by the British.

internationally imposed as the "official" version of Marx's work (Palerm 2008, pp. 56–57; Quijano 2000, p. 357).

This reading was questioned even at the beginning of the twentieth century by European authors like Lukács (1970). They, wanting to understand the representational, relational and subjectivizing aspects of the class experience, enquired how individuals and groups perceived their belonging to a social class (the "class in itself") and how they positioned this perception in relation to the other classes (the "class for itself") (Carrier 2015, p. 30). Within the heterodox perspectives, Gramsci's debates had a transcendent impact, raising the centrality of power disputed in the configuration of the class struggles.

Accepting Marx's argument that class positioning can only be given by the set of historical and economic relationships in which the groups participate, Gramsci (1981[1938]) proposed conceiving the struggle for position based on a non-deterministic logic of the relation between economy, culture, and politics; between infrastructure and superstructure (Betancourt 1990, p. 113). He proposed assuming the State legal apparatus and the field of cultural productions (understood in a broad sense as cultural practices and not "high culture") as part of the compositional relations of the mode of production. Thus, the scenario where conflicts were resolved would be in this social field of a contextual and historical character, made up of production, political, and cultural relations, and the State and legal apparatuses. Gramsci called it the "historical bloc" (Betancourt 1990, p. 113), focusing the argument on the interpretation of the dispute process that allows the configuration of dialectical positions of power between the dominated and the dominating. With this he made

> […] a useful distinction between civil and political society, in which the former is made up by voluntary (or at least rational and non-coercive) affiliations like schools, families, and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracies) whose role in polity is direct domination. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but rather through what Gramsci calls consent […]. The form that this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as "hegemony." (Said 1979, pp. 6–7).

With this proposal, he placed the constituted heterogeneity of those in the "dominated" position, observing among them a wide variety of political subjectivities related to their cultural, racial, and gender diversities (Gramsci 1981[1938], p. 181). He adopted the term "subaltern classes" to refer to these groups (Gramsci 1981[1938], p. 181).[4] So, as well as the place the subjects occupy in the productive process, his definition accentuates the political and dialogical character of marginalization, associating the classes (in plural) that "are subject to the initiative of the

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[4] Some authors attribute this Reading on heterogeneity to Marx himself, particularly given the impact of his analyses published in the European press in the nineteenth century about the ethnic minorities in Iceland, Ireland, Poland, and the black population in the United States (Anderson 2016, p. 3).

dominant" and that "even when they rebel, they are in a state of anguished defense" (Gramsci 1981[1938], p. 178).

From 1930 onwards, Gramsci resized the term "classes," alternating it with "subaltern groups" and "popular masses." He devoted his entire Notebook 25 (Gramsci 1981[1938]) to this revision, where he defines the heterogeneous and political character of subalternity, linking this new meaning to his question on how to seek political autonomy for marginalized groups in hegemonic disputes. In these inquiries, he recorded various symbolic mechanisms that act in the process of forming the hegemonies. He observed that they configure disputes in the constitution of dominant alterities in a conflict that acquires an inescapably identarian character (a turn with enormous implications for contemporary anthropological thought, as we shall see). So, he elucidated that "for a social elite, the elements of the subaltern groups will always have something barbaric and pathological to them" (Gramsci 1981, p. 175). And additionally, the subaltern history is told in a fractional way: an effect of displacing these groups as story or narrative tellers, especially in national communities (Gramsci 1981, p. 178).

Already in the first decades of the last century, Max Weber offered a critical argument on what he understood to be the inadequacies of Marx's approach to class. His criticisms dialog to a certain extent with Gramsci because they assume the central nature of power relations in the conformation of social asymmetries. Weberian proposals had a transcendent character, inspiring the formation of another theoretical matrix.

Weber's critique

Weber's critique of Marx's concept of class took up a significant part of the last century's social science agenda (Kalb 2015b, p. 1). Although these authors' proposals are considered a parting of ways, there are, at least, five common analytical assumptions. First, they assume that human beings are social subjects; second, both consider that the persons transform their contexts, and third, that they do so restricted by their historical circumstances (Carrier 2015, p. 29). Fourth, they agree that classes articulate divergent interests that often clash with those defended by the imagined national community (Aron 1981, p. 45). Fifth, they understand class as an articulating aspect of collective life that is inexplicable if isolated from other social components (Kalb 2015b, p. 2).

Despite these similarities, Weber focuses his analysis on a radically different axis from that of Marx: he believes that the differentiation of subjects' social locations is not due to their place in the productive process, but rather their ability to access forms of consumption and negotiation (including the workforce) in the market (Carrier 2015, p. 30). That is to say, "it resembled Marx on seeing classes as groups of people who have different relationships with the central economic sphere" (Carrier 2015, p. 30), but he placed this sphere in an exchange system, in the market. So, class differences were conditioned by the possibilities of different groups imposing their interests and needs on the logic of operation and circulation of wealth. These "possibilities" would configure a specific logic of power, implying the ability

of these groups (or people) to steer social relations in the direction of their interests (Carrier 2015, p. 31). So, there would be a relation between the acquisition of wealth, the political control of distribution, and the willingness of the class.

Based on the above, Weber (1996[1922], p. 682) criticizes the Marxist argument on consciousness, indicating that a sense of belonging between subjects of the same class does not necessarily drive a mutual recognition. He assumed that such recognition requires shared values, morals, and sentimental structures that are more common within status group but can be unusual across the class itself, given their constitutive heterogeneity. He indicated that the classes "have their true homeland in the economic order and status group have theirs in the social order and therefore in the sphere of distribution of honor, influencing the legal order and being influenced by it" (Weber 1996[1922], p. 690). So, members of a class could even carry out the same productive work but be radically apart from each other in terms of world visions and the attribution of meaning to social practices. He cites as an example, Catholic and Protestant workers in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century as sharing the same class in Marxist terms but being completely unconnected to each other (Weber 2012[1905]).

At this point, Weber introduces a critique of the Marxist vision on religious processes and on the production of symbolic dimension or feelings of belonging between various social groups. He emphasizes that several of the values assumed by European proletarians in their revolutionary processes since the nineteenth century came from the ascetic transfiguration of religious moralities converted into elements of community and political bonding. Thus, it should be considered that the role of religious processes in the formation of groups with collective action agendas (and shared consciences of those agendas) went beyond what Marx proposed when defining religion as the opium of the people (Marx 1970[1845]). Social classes, derived solely from the positioning of the productive process, cannot explain these modes of connection (values, symbols, relations) found in the communities: they would not represent a community, rather "only the possible basis of acting in community" (Weber 1996[1922], p. 694).

This perspective inspired the emergence of the "social stratification" approach. This term alludes to organizing social subjects or groups based on indices that quantify possession of goods and access to consumption (Duek and Inda 2006). The layers are ordered hierarchically according to an ascending pattern (often illustrated by a pyramid) that differentiates the subjects into the terms "upper, middle and lower class, or superior, medium or inferior" (Duek and Inda 2009, p. 38). This approach understands that

> Relationships between people lead to forms of unequal distribution of certain tangible and intangible goods, which have positively or negatively privileged classes as a result. These can be production goods, but also education and qualification goods that configure "class situation" in the market and that correlate to "opportunity structures" (Rivas 2008, p. 374).

Note that the Weberian expression "class situation" is used in contrast to the Marxist term "class position" to indicate the place subjects occupy in relation to access to unequal distribution of goods and services (Bourdieu 2002a, p. 122).

The most frequent anthropological criticisms of these approaches refer to the trend toward quantifying uses that reduce the concept to a series of variables "sanitized, measurable, reified and reduced to a mere category of income, education and occupational status" (Kalb 2015b, p. 2). These uses, called "objectivist" by critics, tend to associate class to an equation or a line in a graph and result in "efforts to turn its indicators—skills, education, income, residence status—into simple attributes of that other key symbol of modernity, the individual" (Kalb 2015b, pp. 2–3).

Various aspects of the Weberian had echoes in contemporary and later Marxist formulations, fueling new critical turns.

Critical turns

Re-readings of the classic Marxist texts opened new interpretation paths in heterodox arguments in the second half of the twentieth century. At least four of them had an important impact on Latin American thoughts on class.

The first refers to the re-readings of "*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*," where Engels (2017[1844]) reflects on the place that parental and state education has on class and the mechanisms of expropriation of surplus value. These debates provided the starting point of feminist critique from Simone de Beauvoir (2018 [1949]) onwards. The author incorporates Engel's arguments on the links between patriarchal, family, and state oppression in the classic "*The second sex*". However, she rejected that such oppression was determined by the advent of private property in the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal kinship inheritance law. She highlighted that Engels did not indicate how the transition from the community to the private regime could be carried out; and that there was no historical evidence that supported that property had fatally led to female servitude (De Beauvoir 2018[1949], pp. 54–55).Thus, she argued that the praxis of violence exercised over women fed the formation of the male desire for domination and the creation of instruments that allowed the practical exercise of this female submission (De Beauvoir 2018[1949], p. 57).Together, these elements would be pre-requisites for the existence of private property(Anderson 2016, p. 200).

From this debate, feminism reshaped Marxist reflections on social reproduction (Ferguson 2008, pp. 43–44), making the centrality of female exploitation visible and assuming the "sexual contract" came before the "social contract" (Pateman 1988). These readings acknowledged female subalternity as an essential structure of posterior hierarchical forms of division and domination (ethnicity, status, class) (Segato 2010, pp. 14–15). They argued that the female overload associated with family reproduction processes (emphasizing the unequal burden taken on by women in care work) and male violence were long-term structures in the subalternity of human societies (Segato 2010).

De Beauvoir's hypotheses had a substantial impact on posterior Marxist developments, particularly for authors such as Althusser (1988), who sought to build a bridge between these arguments and French structuralism, influencing the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. It is no coincidence that Bourdieu used these reflections—with no mention of feminists, however—to back up his thesis in the

now-classic book *Masculine Domination* (Bourdieu 1998).[5] This work marked his critique of, and contribution to Marxism, establishing that social conflict came not only from the class struggle but also the gender struggle (Lovell 2000).

The second re-reading refers to the reinterpretation of Engels's fruitful inquiry into the link between class relations and the spatial organization of capitalism; a debate that connects with the sexual division of labor and the spatial separation between the public as the locus of masculinity and the private as the feminine environment. Engel's studies (2019[1845]) on the urban articulation between class inequality in England's industrial cities inspired Marxist geography that, together with Lefebvre (1974), set out spatialized readings of the productive mode.

In a very controversial theorization—rejected by many Marxist sectors in the seventies—Lefebvre (1974) formulated the tridimensionality of space principle. In his argument, space is (i) the set of social practices in a given place and (ii) the concrete material environment that houses said practices. (iii) But, in addition, it would also be the social perception, the signs, and the meanings that different groups have of these places and the imagination or projections of how they will act and intervene in the relationships that thrive within them. These three dimensions suppose a dialectic articulation between space, the economic bases, and the practices and representations of social life. Through this perspective, Lefebvre (1974) stipulated that space was, dialectically, the container of the productive mode and the productive mode in *strictu* sensu. Class relations constituted spatialities to the same extent as spatial forms and experiences constituted them.

These ideas were fought by a substantive part of the critical Marxist geography, but authors such as Harvey (2008) changed their position in the first decade of the present century, recognizing their theoretical-empirical validity. So, Lefebvre inspired the development of an urban socio-anthropology that sought to understand, specifically, the spatial dimension of asymmetries, and inequities of class, leaning on the idea that spatiality is as constitutive of the form and content of the structural as agency and symbolisms are to subjects and classes (Harvey 2008). This debate assumes that space incorporates economic and political structural processes that are materialized there through the action of the State and economic groups. Investment in urban infrastructure was centrally connected to the need to reapply the capitalist excess of surplus value in favor of the production of more excess (Harvey 2008, p. 17).

Then, urbanism was a structural mechanism of the reproduction of capital and class positions (Lefebvre 1974, p. 223). Through taxing social resources, the State

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5 In this work, Bourdieu applied feminist reasonings on the reproduction of the patriarch in an analysis of an ethnic group in Algeria, on whom he carried out ethnography during his years of military service. He concluded that the androcentric conformation of social hierarchies was structuring and initial (established before class and strata divisions) and that its reproduction was sustained by symbolic mechanisms that expressed, permitted, and constituted the *masculine domination*. He defined this domination as the "social order dominated by the masculine principle" (Bourdieu 1998, p. 7), that is "built through the principle of fundamental division between the masculine, active and the feminine, passive, and that this principle creates, expresses and directs desire, the masculine desire as a desire to possess, as in dominate" (Bourdieu 1998, p. 19).

centralized what was invested in one or another area, in one or another urban project, allowing the capitalization and decapitalization of specific classes and social sectors. It acted by concentrating surplus value in determined areas (where economic capital was immobilized in infrastructure investments), causing the valuing of some specific lands and spaces and, as a result, the groups who inhabited or controlled said spaces (Harvey 2007, pp. 210–211). The number of resources that a State invested in certain public works inferred which were the priority spaces in their ideological framework. The concentration of public investment caused, then, the differentiation of the urban according to political criterion, and a fundamental link with class relations was imprinted on the space (Lefebvre 1974, p. 220).

The third rereading refers to the articulationist dialog that Bourdieu established with the two previous turns. This gave rise to a theory that ties the Marxist idea of class "position" to the Weberian of class "situation," offering an interpretation of the inequality and differentiation processes that integrally compute "objectifiable," "symbolic," and "relational" aspects (Bourdieu 2002a, p. 123).

For this, Bourdieu redefined the set of relationships and materialities of social groups, conceiving these as derived from possessing a set of capital forms (social, cultural symbolic, economic) that, distributed asymmetrically, constitute the "social field" (Bourdieu 2011). Simultaneously, he understood the social field as a sphere of collective life that was procedurally autonomous "through history around certain types of relations, interests, and resources" (Manzo 2010, p. 398). This autonomation process was forged by struggles and efforts tending contradictorily to transformation and conservation. They depended on subjects disputing spaces, putting their resources at stake in "struggle to win" positions (Manzo 2010, p. 398).

Thus, subjects fight to appropriate different capitals according to the opportunities and limitations their social position conditions them to (in relation to the hierarchies and structures of distinction) (Bourdieu 2002b). In these processes, they establish their location in the social field (the class in itself) and their distance in relation to others (the class for itself). These strategies are not neutral, even when a naturalizing discourse is used to justify them (Bourdieu 2002b, p 67). They constitute an esthetic sense (Bourdieu 2002b, p. 53), which involves incorporating narrative, practical, and performative frames. When these elements persist in time as mid- or long-term phenomena and are transmitted between subjects who share location and spatialities in the social field, they become "class conditioning" (Bourdieu 2002b, p. 99).

Bourdieu's theorization of the social field incorporated Marx and Weber's perspective on the tension between the subjects' capacity for action and the structural constrictions that fall on them in every social context (Bourdieu 2011, p. 31). These investigations pushed him to formulate the concept of "trajectory," with which he sought to sociologically define the limits and possibilities of the social movement of class groups and sub-groups (Cachón 1989, p. 513) and theorize on the role of the subjects in these movements (Gutiérrez 2005, p. 24). So, he progressed toward a dialectic perspective between the "external social structures" and the "internal" ones of the class (sub)groups (Gutiérrez 2005, p. 16), stipulating that the former constituted social fields where subjects transited. The latter responded to those they

incorporate from the knowledge, experience, and potential they access through their *trajectories in and across these fields* (Gutiérrez 2005, p. 17).

These definitions imply taking into consideration personal trajectories as framed in family histories, traversed by large-scale political, economic, and social processes, while at the same imbued with a local, daily, and micro-scale constitution (Lera et al. 2007, pp. 34–35). With the idea of class trajectory, Bourdieu (1977, p. 82) sought to overcome "the biographical illusion," that is to say, the methodological individualism that is restricted to thinking the subject as confined to an atomized, a-historical, a-collective existence. This led him to believe that the family is, in the social field, one of the central spaces for the reproduction of social trajectories (Cachón 1989, p. 541), where the elements that allow the conservation of, or rupture from, the asymmetries of power are disputed (class among them).

The fourth re-reading refers to the reinterpretations of Gramsci, which led to at least four "schools" with a huge influence on contemporary Latin American thinking. Firstly, the group of British Marxist historians made up of figures such as Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, and Edward Thompson. Secondly, the studies of subalterns in India, in which Ranajit Guha, Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Partha Chatterjee participated.[6] Thirdly, the field we refer to nowadays as "cultural studies" where authors such as Hall (1973) reviewed the role of symbolic and cultural processes in Marxist theorization on capitalist accumulation. Their theories allowed a rethinking of the structuring role of African slavery—as in Gilroy ([1993] 2002, pp. 43–48); for example–, they reconstructed the Marxist theory of primitive accumulation, showing that the surpluses generated by the trafficking of African slaves constituted a primordial form of said accumulation, that was financed by the industrial revolution. These debates positioned a new understanding of social conflict, postulating that the capitalist class struggle is incomprehensible if separated from racial conflict.

In the nineties, these Gramscian debates influenced Black American Feminism, which proposed a revisiting of the Marxist concept of social reproduction, theorizing that class experience was an intrinsically *intersectional* form: crossed by a set of inequality markers that molded and conformed the social experiences of groups of people. In its initial formulation, the concept alluded to the fact that women suffer from the intersection of various conditioning elements of social marginalization, experiencing condensation of social inequalities linked to their ethnic, class, and gender ascriptions (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1244).

As we shall see, several of these proposals appear early on in the Latin American anthropology critiques in the second half of the last century.

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[6] Feminist thinkers linked to this group set forth a new theory of exploitation and autonomy of class and gender within subaltern groups (Chakravorty-Spivak 1988), bringing together feminism's criticisms and the Gramscian perspective.

Six Latin American uses (twentieth century)

Now that we have broadly situated the genealogical debates about classes in international Marxism, we can finally get to the six fields of the concept's anthropological application that had substantive impacts on Latin America in the twentieth century.

For these debates to be understood in the context of their production, it is convenient to set out some historical processes that marked the twentieth century in Latin America and, particularly, in South America, where five of the six anthropological formulations that we will address are set. However, an analytical precaution: the enormous heterogeneity of Latin American countries in economic, cultural, social, and political terms must be considered. Readers should be aware that any synthetic historical reconstruction will inevitably leave many nuances unattended. Considering the above, let us attend to some general aspects.

Since most of the Latin American countries gained independence in the nineteenth century, the first half of the twentieth was marked by conflictive State organization and consolidation processes. Once independent, these countries remained predominantly exporters of raw materials and importers of industrialized products (as in the colony), thus reproducing patterns of economic dependence with Europe (until the First World War) and, later, with the United States (Ribeiro 1977, p. 11). This led to Latin America being labeled "backward" in relation to the global axes of industrialization in the North Atlantic.

Between 1850 and 1950, in Latin America in general, the predominance of conceptions derived from social evolutionism was matched by the racist vision that European migration was a mechanism of promoting the "evolution" of the nations. Several countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, Uruguay, and Mexico) adopted policies to encourage this migration, hoping to "whiten" their population (Margulis 1977, p. 289).[7] This was supposed to be the quickest way to tame the three workhorses of progress: *urbanization, industrialization*, and *modernization* (Cardoso and Falleto 1971, pp. 44–45; Kearney 1986, p. 333; Ribeiro 1977, pp. 475–476). This situation would change in the first half of the twentieth century. Latin America would continue to receive Europeans until the end of the Second World War, but in more modest proportions than at the beginning of the century. The term "development" began to engender as a transversal and international political discourse, stemming precisely from the imperialistic geopolitics that the United States deployed toward Latin America (after 1949) (Rist 2008).

In this period, given the productive reorganization undertaken by several countries to overcome the 1929 crisis, many Latin American States started an industrialization process by substituting imports (Cardoso and Falleto 1971, pp. 3–4). In parallel, the rich capitalist countries proposed a new geopolitical order, dividing the planet into three spheres. The *First World*, comprised of the (self-proclaimed)

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[7] The demographic impact of the phenomenon was considerable in certain Latin American countries: between 1856 and 1932, Argentina received 6.4 million migrants. 4.4 million arrived in Brazil between 1821 and 1932. Uruguay saw some 713,000 migrants arrive from 1911 to 1932; Mexico received 226,000 between 1911 and 1932, and Cuba 857,000 from 1901 to 1932 (Margulis 1977, p. 283).

"developed" capitalist countries; the *Second World,* made up of socialist and communist countries; and the *Third World*, a classification given by the capitalist countries to those others where development seemed like a chimera. The whole of Latin America was placed in this third block, becoming an ideological battlefield for the great powers which embarked on protectionist policies and political interventions that had a profound impact in the region (Rist 2008, pp. 80–81).

During Cold War geopolitics, the concept of development (especially the sense given to it by United States' President Truman after 1949) continued to be juxtaposed to industrialization and modernization (Rist 2008). However, in line with the colonialism that imbued conceptions of modernity, it was assumed that all that belonged to indigenous Latin Americans and those from the African diaspora was the opposite of modern (Quijano 2000). In different countries of the region, development consolidated itself as the goal of economic and political action that would give continuity to the colonialist ethos. It was not long before critical Latin American voices were raised—many of them articulated from the "Theory of Dependence" (as we will see)—and denounced the falsehoods reproduced by developmental "imperatives" (Ribeiro 1977).

Development and international migration continued to be semantically connected as social categories in Latin America during this period. However, state political action focused on encouraging the rural exodus (Kearney 1986). In the second half of the twentieth century, Latin America had the world's biggest rural–urban migration. Between 1950 and 1990, it changed from being predominately rural, with only 42% of its population in urban areas (Da Cunha 2002, p. 21), to 80% of its population in cities, consolidating its ranking as the second most urbanized area in today's world: below North America with 82%, but above Europe with 73% (UN 2015, pp. 1–7).[8]

Then, over-crowding in the cities' poor sectors—shanty towns known locally as *barriadas, campamentos, favelas, or villas miserias* depending on the country—was progressively shaped as a structural problem in Latin American countries. Their inhabitants were from diverse rural areas of each country: these neighborhoods ended up bringing together indigenous and afro descendent groups which were being proletarianized through dramatic and precarious urban insertion.

From the sixties onwards, the deepening of social inequalities and the concentration of the working class in the big Latin American cities fostered the political organization of unions and leftwing movements with socialist or communist inspiration. The United States started an offensive of control policy over the region, financing military coups. That was the case for all the South American countries analyzed in the following pages: Brazil (1964), Peru (1968), Chile (1973), and Argentina

[8] In Brazil, this rural–urban migration displaced 54 million people between 1950 and 1995 (Camarano and Abramovay 1999:3). In Mexico, the rural population accounted for 68% of its total inhabitants in 1920. By the end of the twentieth century, this had dropped to less than 25% (Carton de Grammont 2009, p. 17). In Peru, the urban population grew from 35 to 70% between 1950 and 2000 (Da Cunha 2009, p. 24). From 1940 to 1981, the population of Lima, Peru's capital, went from 645,000 people to 4.6 million (Golte and Adams 1990, p. 38). Argentina had an urban rate of 62% in 1947, while by 2000, this had reached 89.9%.

(1976). In the case of Mexico (the other country analyzed here), although a dictator-ship was not established, the repression of left-wing movements was violent (as in the student revolts of 1968).

In addition to ruthless censorship and repression, State violence, and the decline in civil and political rights, Latin American military dictatorships were character-ized by aligning themselves with neoliberal economic guidelines, particularly in the seventies. The military neo-liberalizing strategy was marked by deindustrialization, the concentration of income, the financial system as a protagonist, privatizations, persecution of unions and workers movements, and the external opening up of Latin American markets (Guizardi and Merenson 2021). Brazil was an exception to this model. The State's strategy in the hands of the Brazilian military was substantially different from the models used by the military governments in Argentina and Chile during the same period (two of the most striking examples of violent neo-liberali-zation of economies in the seventies). In Brazil, neoliberal reforms aimed at shrink-ing the State were not institutionalized by the military government. On the contrary, after 1968, the dictatorship favored the nationalization of the economy. Fostering a primary industry (i.e., raw materials for international markets) meant investing in port infrastructure, transportation, and industry as part of a plan for social and ter-ritorial control: a strategy that stayed in place until the nineties with the onset of the neoliberal reforms that characterized the return to democracy (Sader 1999). This historical background is critical to understanding the anthropological developments that we discuss below.

Orthodox, elitist, and culturalist

The first of the anthropological perspectives that we aim to review here refers to the uses of the concept of class in the first half of the last century. In several Latin American countries, Marxist authors from different disciplines applied a lineal read-ing of dialectic materialism, understanding that the history of class struggle should follow the forms of conflict between the proletarians and bourgeoise as described by Marx (2008[1867]). This reading postulated that Indigenous ethnic groups and Afro-descendent populations had to be understood directly as workers, that their transition to proletarian status was urgent, and that their assimilation would be cen-tral to the establishment of the communist mode of production.

These ideas circulated in Latin America at a time when most countries were fac-ing the first decades of the abrupt urban transition that reversed Latin American demography, causing most of the population to concentrate in the cities. Between the fifties and the seventies, the majority of Latin Americans still worked in rural areas and belonged to communities with Indigenous or African origins. Marxist debates then advocated transforming these groups into peasants, specifying that their ethnic identity would impede reaching "class consciousness" and promoting the revolution.

Ironically, liberal arguments followed a similar vein but postulated that the eth-nic conscience would impede these groups from integrating into the "national com-munity." These discussions took place at a time when the concept of race had not yet been sufficiently questioned in international anthropology and was understood

in direct analogy with a substantiated and a-political notion of culture (the latter was assumed to inscribe to a determined and delimited cultural area (De la Cadena 2009, p. 257, Peirano 1998, p. 106). Particularly in Latin America, the link between race, culture, and territory was established through the debate on *mestizaje* (miscegenation or melting pot), as part of the intellectual, liberal elite's commitment to the nationalist agenda (De la Cadena 2009, p. 257).

In several countries, the Marxist vision on these debates positioned itself against the native groups in their specificities, resulting in a most contradictory reading on *mestizaje*. On the one hand, they assumed mixed-blood subjects as a "problem" for achieving proletarian consciousness, given their position "between worlds" (between the precapitalist and capitalist social formations). On the other hand, they conceived miscegenation as a way of pushing them—through assimilation and acculturation mechanisms—to capitalist modernity (interpreted in a unilinear way):

> The conservative proposals imagined the Indians turned into "farmers" or normalized as urban mestizos; on the opposite side, the revolutionary projects needed "peasants" or wage laborers, rather than "superstitious Indians" immersed in subsistence economies. (De la Cadena 2009, pp. 263–264).

So, with a focus on assimilation and acculturation, the Marxist anthropological interpretations were similar to—very contradictorily—the local elites' conservative visions. However, they also approached a third position that we could consider as the political and intellectual opposite pole: the *culturalist perspectives* from the United States.

De la Cadena (2009, pp. 259–260) reconstructs the intellectual flow between different Latin American spaces and the Anglophone anthropology production centers (particularly in the United States) in this period. By doing so, she shows how terms like "assimilation" and "acculturation" were adaptations by US anthropologists of the term *mestizaje* (miscegenation) in turn used by Latin American intellectuals who had received the North Americans in their countries and served as their assistants in fieldwork. These anthropologists were present in Latin America due to the United States' policy of influence in the region between the first and second half of the twentieth century (De la Cadena 2009, p. 261). The *Rockefeller* and the *Ford Foundation*s financed many of the studies confirming these acculturation theories in South American territories. There was a clear political agenda behind this funding: to stop the expansion of Marxist readings (García 2009, p. 426).

Beyond the United States government's political intentions and the international funding of anthropology programs, these exchanges promoted academic dialogs with critical outcomes, both in Anglophone and Latin American anthropology. One striking example is June Nash, an unavoidable reference in Marxist and feminist anthropology in the United States. She worked in different Latin American countries from the seventies with grants from the Social Science Research Council, Fulbright-Hayes, and the Guggenheim Foundation. Following decades of work in Mexico, together with Helen Safa, she edited what is considered the foundational work on Anglophone feminist reflections on the classes in Latin America (Nash and Safa 1976). In her classic book on Indigenous mining families in Bolivia, Nash (1979) argued a Gramscian reading refuting acculturation, establishing the role of

community identity and class belonging, the intersection between social consciousness based on Indigenous roots and the sophisticated class ideologies, as well as the role of women and the family in resisting the mechanisms of subordination. Her work falls under the debates of Dependency Theory (which we will pick up later), and criticizes Weberian rationalism, the tradition/modernity dualism, and the description of the peasantry as a pre-political subject.

This permeability was also a fact between Latin American anthropologists. De la Cadena (2009) recovers it in relation to the Andean world. In turn, Cardoso de Oliveira (2007, p. 40) recounts how, in the seventies, Brazilian anthropologists devised strategies to use US funding sources—such as the ones he was awarded, through the Harvard-Brazil Project, with funds from the Ford Foundation—to carry out critiques of Anglophone anthropological visions (Álvarez 2010, p. 171). Furthermore, he comments that these projects were simultaneous to the research funded by UNESCO's *Centro Latinoamericano de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales* (the Latin American Centre for Social Science Research), which operated in Rio de Janeiro from 1958 and was shut down by the Military regime in 1964, and "whose starting point was the criticism of any culturalism, particularly acculturation theories" (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 40). There is a progressive positioning of an anthropological reading, that does not coincide with the unilineal historicism of Marxism, the elites' nationalist miscegenation, or the Anglophone culturalist's influence.

Brazilian anthropology on racial and ethnic conflict

The second field refers to the Brazilian anthropology of the sixties. Its development was enhanced by the crossing of three intellectuals' trajectories with heterogeneous approaches to Marxism: Florestan Fernandes, Darcy Ribeiro, and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira.

Fernandes came from a poor background, from a working-class and activist family. His extensive work was influenced by a critical and heterodox Marxist vision of social sciences and affirmed the racism's centrality in structuring class relations. In the sixties, Fernandes (1965) published a two-volume book that provoked violent reactions both within and outside Brazilian Marxism: "*A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*" [The Integration of the Black in a Class Society]. Several of his arguments constituted vanguard elements that were integrated into Anglophone anthropology from the seventies onwards.

In this work, Fernandes analyzes the connection between colonial racism, capitalist accumulation, and White supremacy in Brazil, setting out how these elements molded the values, myths, relations, and stratification of the national society. His ideas have several parallels with those of African-Caribbean authors who pre-date him, like Fanon (2009[1952]), whose writings influenced many Latin American anthropologists in the following decades, starting a lengthy debate on the intersection between race and class, from a perspective that recovers and goes beyond Marxist arguments. In Brazil, Fernandes influenced several generations of anthropologists and sociologists, given his role as the director of one of the most important higher

education institutions in social sciences in the country (Peirano 1991, 1998). This implied the development of Marxist interpretations that expanded the concept of class struggle in terms of racial conflict between Black and White (see Ianni 1978) and, thanks to the contributions of Ribeiro, also that between Indigenous Peoples and White.

As Ribeiro would remember later, he and Fernandes arrived at university with an unusual perspective for their time; "call it leftist, Marxist, communist, socialist, whatever you want. We were preoccupied with the nation as problem; with society as the object of transformation" (Ribeiro in Peirano 1991, p. 75). At the end of the sixties, Ribeiro picked up the debates Fernandes developed about the Black in Brazil once again, investigating the place of the Brazilian indigenous ethnic group in the class structure. Consequently, his works constituted part of the vanguard of Latin American research in the study of social conflicts.

However, his proposals must be understood within the framework of a transcendent militant commitment, given his political role in the formation and institutionalization of critical thought in Brazil and Latin America, along with the articulation of organisms that became the leading promoters of heterodox Marxist readings in the region. From 1955 onwards, Ribeiro held important, powerful positions within the Brazilian executive. As Minister for Education, he promoted international political networks to convert Brazil into the linking nucleus for Latin American critical thought (Peirano 1991). He drove, therefore, the foundation of the *Centro Latinoamericano de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales* [the Latin American Research Center in Social Sciences] (1957–1964) of the United Nations with its headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. He also powered the creation of the *Escuela Latinoamericana de Sociología* (ELAS) [the Latin American School of Sociology], with its headquarters in Santiago (Chile), which later became the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO) [the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences] (Stavenhagen 2014).[9] Later, he was Brazilian President Joao Goulart's (1961–1964) most important minister. When the military coup burst on the scene in 1964, he began a period of exile in several Latin American countries where he pushed for important university reforms linked with promoting a democratic transition to socialism. Salvador Allende invited him to advise his cabinet on the issue, for example. In 1965, Ribeiro was one of the promoters for the creation of the *Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales* (CLACSO) [Latin American Council of Social Sciences], together with UNESCO, which sought to constitute an organism to represent Latin American political intellect in a context of increasing military repression.

While acting politically in a transnational way, Ribeiro disseminated his critical proposals along two main lines. The first related to Eurocentric anthropological categorizations. He rejected classical anthropology's epistemological edifice, attacking the substantive definition of culture, proposing to understand indigenous groups as

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[9] In addition, he created the *Universidad Nacional de Brasília* (National University of Brasilia) (bilingual Portuguese-Spanish, with 50% of its teachers from other Latin American countries) and designed the Brazilian university reform orientated towards critical thought and the Latin American integrationist perspective.

"historical-cultural configurations" (Ribeiro 1970). He also questioned the exoticist morbidity that skews the definition of "other peoples," the microcosmic reduction of the ethnographic perspective and, with a solid argumentation based on years of ethnographic experience, disallowed the equilibrium model and the conceptualization of synchronicity. Through these discussions, he concluded that the hegemonic categories of classic anthropology, in an objectivist and scientistic discourse, reproduced political blindness.

Secondly, he proposed a national-centric dislocation of the anthropological argument. This dislocation, far from signifying the use of anthropology for the tacit reproduction of the Nation-State, criticized allowing the constitution of a view on ethnic groups that did not consider state and nationalizing violence. He outlined an anthropology of Indigenous Peoples "in" the Nation-State, assuming it as *political praxis* (Ribeiro in Peirano 1991, p. 78). From the seventies onwards, he set out the inescapably political character of Latin American anthropology. This work continues to constitute the epistemic heart of various critical proposals, such as the "anthropologies of the world" of Lins Ribeiro and Escobar (2009), "the anthropologies of the South "from Krotz (2015) or the "peripheral anthropologies" of Cardoso de Oliveira (2017, pp. 123–149).

Cardoso de Oliveira picked up several of these debates and worked toward a new outcome: a theory of *inter-ethnic frictions* (Cardoso de Oliveira 1963). He is a central figure in Brazilian anthropology not only for the importance of his work but also for the role he played in the institutionalization of the discipline (he founded the discipline's first Brazilian and Latin American postgraduate course in the sixties), his pro-Indigenous political militancy, and his work in dialoguing with, and the internationalization of, Latin American anthropologies (Peirano 1991). He had a close relationship with Mexican Academia, visiting on several occasions during the seventies and eighties, where the second Latin American anthropological postgraduate course was being created in Mexico City (Correa 1993). He was a trained philosopher and defended his degree thesis in 1953 (Peirano 1991, p. 87), guided by Fernandes. After finishing his thesis, Ribeiro invited him to join his team of ethnographers in the Brazilian Protection of Indians Service (SPI, in Portuguese acronym) (Peirano 1991, p. 87).

On analyzing his experience with Indigenous Peoples from the Centre-West of Brazil, he turned the epistemic center of his perspective toward the social relations between groups, endorsing Ribeiro's criticism of the concepts of social change (from Great Britain anthropologists) and acculturation (from the US anthropologists). However, he approached the centralization of the *situation* and the social *situationality,* leaning on Balandier and Godelier (Cardoso de Oliveira 1963, p. 34). In concrete terms, he assumed the social situation as the only locus where one could observe the mediation between crystallized forms of identity experience, subjective and group identity processes, and the structural conflicts between groups that, in their interaction, build boundaries that define them.

Thus, he observed that "culture" did not retreat like a hologram into an "identity." Groups would articulate conflictive processes of "ethnic identification" that are processed in the conflict with other groups (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 53). It is only to the extent that agents use ethnic identity to classify themselves and others for

purposes of interaction that they constitute groups or collectivities. Thus, the only way to apprehend identity ethnographically would be through the observation of the identification mechanisms deployed by groups at a specific historical moment and in a "concrete situation" through which a group organizes its "being for the other" (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 53).

He assumed, then, that the "totality" cannot be stated as this or that society or group, as this or that "culture": the situation of conflict between groups would be the only possible totality (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 38). He called this conflict "inter-ethnic frictions," conceiving them as "a way of describing the situation of contact between ethnic groups irreversibly linked to each other, despite the contradictions—expressed through conflicts (manifests) or tensions (latent)—existing among them" (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 56). He argued that all these elements are channeled into a historically identifiable dialectical contradiction, traversed by the colonial and Nation-State political conformation. With this, he revealed a critical reading of the Eurocentrism of certain Marxist arguments that ignored the foundational role that the ethnic domination of the native societies of the global South had for European capitalism:

> Seen from this perspective, concerns about the integration of Indians into the national society which have always been a source of distress for ethnologists and indigenists-were shifted onto theoretical grounds. Contact was seen as a dynamic process, and the notion of totality did not rest with one agent or the other (national or Indian) but in the universe of the observed phenomenon. Interethnic friction was proposed in a context in which British and US theories of contact, namely social change (Malinowski) and acculturation (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz), had proved inadequate; Balandier's views and Femandes's studies on race relations in Brazil were chosen instead as inspiration. (Peirano 1998, p. 119).

The inter-ethnic frictions constitute a reformulation of the unilineal idea of the class struggle as the central conflict that articulates the historical process, advocating the existence of heterogeneous forms of conflict that had a structuring character in the capitalist mode of production. This gives a particular vision of the processes of domination and colonialism. Although the Indigenous cause inspired this theorization, Cardoso de Oliveira (2007) supposed that it could be applied to other groups and other conflict relations. This agenda would influence South American anthropologists who would apply it to understand other relations (class, racial, and ethnic) in the twenty-first century.

Mexican critical social anthropology

Between the first and second halves of the twentieth century, institutional Mexican anthropology experienced internal conflicts which resulted in divisions within the discipline (Vázquez 2014, p. 121). During the government of General Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940), the anthropologist Alfonso Caso assumed the lifetime direction of the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH, in Spanish

acronym) [National Institute of Anthropology and History], founded in 1939, and of the *Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (ENAH, in Spanish acronym) [National School of Anthropology and History], founded in 1938.[10] These institutions were orientated toward applied anthropological work of a state character. Institutional conflicts emerged from the critics of this historical relationship of Mexican anthropology with real powers of the State (Warman 1970) and in response to Caso's despotic behavior, which caused two professional ruptures (in 1943 and in 1968):

> In both, groups of innovative anthropologists—many of whom chose to call themselves critical social anthropologists […]–conflicted due to adopting visions that differed from the dominant thinking as espoused by the then life director of the INAH who had introduced a denigrating language not only toward his opponents but also with some of his close colleagues. (Vázquez 2014, p. 121).

The break of 1968 was configured as a contest between the defenders of "applied" and "academic" anthropologies (Vázquez 2014, p. 121). Although this division would prove to be inaccurate since they were interconnected and interdependent areas (Vázquez 2014, p. 120). Despite this, the debates on this separation had political consequences: they fostered the articulation of a historical anthropology to which those who identified with the "academic" orientation adhered. After the conflict of 1968, anthropologists and archeologists who collectively disagreed with the ENAH and INAH published the book "*De eso que llaman antropología*" [That's what they call anthropology] (Warman et al. 1970), where they openly criticize the distortions of Mexican anthropology in its relationship with the Nation-State (Warman 1970, p. 9).

The work had important impacts, holding an early critical perspective to the colonial character of anthropological knowledge as "a creature of Western Civilization," which responded to the need-to-know cultures to "make the relationship of dominant more satisfactory, less conflictive and more profitable" (Warman 1970, pp. 10–11). It also argued that these European imperialistic and economic objectives were racist in character and that the anthropological tradition was a scientific tool of white expansion.

Several researchers who adhered to these criticisms—articulated by Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, Guillermo Bonfil and Ángel Palerm—founded the *Centro de Investigaciones Superiores del INAH* (CISINAH, in Spanish acronym) [Higher Research Centre of INAH] in 1973. In 1980, CISINAH became the *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* (CIESAS) [Research and Higher Studies Center in Social Anthropology] (Vázquez 2014, p. 121). It was here that the first postgraduate program in Mexican Anthropology was created, the second in Latin America. Under its first director, Ángel Palerm, the program was orientated toward

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[10] He also took over the direction of the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* [National Indigenous Institute] from when it opened until it closed (1948–1971). Cano was, consequently, a sort of state control figure of anthropology in the Mexico of his time.

historical anthropology that sought to reconcile Mexican decolonial criticism with Marxist perspectives.

Palerm inaugurated a new field of anthropological criticism, defining his gaze as Marxist anti-dogmatism (Palerm 2008 [1978], pp. 49–77). His critical program stipulated five theoretical-methodological axes. First, a concern to historicize the anthropological argument and contextualize it, framing it in concrete social situations (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 50). Second, the integration of elements from dialectic materialism, but from a forceful critique of linear evolutionism that appears at certain moments in Marx's work. For this reason, he categorically rejected the term "primitive societies" (which he called "evolutionist") and calls them "non-capitalist and non-Western societies" (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 50). Considering the complexity of ethnic struggles in Mexico and in various Latin American spaces, he proposes that history cannot be subsumed to the class struggles and the logic of the argument must be made more flexible to assume the asymmetric interpenetration between racial and ethnic conflicts in concrete historical contexts. Thus, he advocates a "multilineal" view of history.[11]

Third, he denounces that, in British social anthropology, the assumed theoretical configuration responds to the limitations imposed by the colonial agencies that financed field work. And that, in American culturalism, political alienation constituted a kind of "escapism," a search for a "fictitious academic independence" (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 63). Based on the above, he argues that the only way to achieve a critical anthropological production in Latin America would be to assume the discipline as an emancipatory praxis. Fourth, he assumes that this practice would only be successful if appropriate as native thought "substituting the Indigenism of anthropologists and bureaucrats for the Indigenism of the Indians" (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 64). Fifth, he considered that the Marxist category "social class" should undergo a drastic review, since:

> […] both the peasant mode of production and the peasantry, both the colonies and their own modes of production and their characteristic social classes, deliberately remain outside *Capital's* field of analysis. Of course, Marx dealt with these questions elsewhere, but it was in an incidental way and never with the breadth or depth that characterizes his analysis of the capitalist mode of production and its social structure. It is also extremely obvious that the methodological conditions imposed on the model, by excluding both the colonial formations and the peasants, do not allow an analysis of the problems raised by the articulation between different modes of production. The difficulty is serious, because the study of complex societies necessarily involves the analysis of these articulations between the dominant mode of production and those that are subordinate to it. (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 238).

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[11] Incidentally, he observed that the formulation of the multilineal character of history in Mexican anthropology occurs from the work of Aguirre Beltrán onwards; but it was Julian Steward who received the merits for the proposal, taking it to the United States and publishing it in English, after seasons of ethnographic work in Mexican territories together with Beltrán's team (Palerm 2008, p. 262).

In dialog with Gramsci, Palerm (2008 [1978], p. 109) observed that, in the Mesoamerican state societies before the conquest, the members of the State occupied a privileged social place, and that the social configuration of their classes is incomprehensible outside the institutional framework of relations of power. Then, he refers to the formation of the members of State as a "ruling class," establishing that this position allowed a relatively independent form of control over the means of production; one that was centrally articulated with the control of the administrative and repressive state apparatus. He also observes the centrality of religious functions for the formation of this type of ruling class, opening the Marxist analytical spectrum, and putting it in dialog with critical Weberian inferences. According to his reflections, in these Mesoamerican state societies, the class struggle was not an alternative, given the solidity of the control (military, administrative, moral, and symbolic-religious) exercised by the dominant classes (Palerm 2008, p. 110). Consequently, despite their antiquity, none of them had ever reached a capitalist mode of production (Palerm 2008, p. 110).

In his theory of classes, he proposes an investigative agenda according to which "the way to understand both the ruling class and the total social structure and the functioning of the economic system necessarily passes through the State" (Palerm 2008 [1978], p. 114). Accordingly, he adds that certain social classes, which occupy subordinate places in the articulation between different productive modes and capitalism in Latin America, constitute a "segment society" and that its analysis demands an emphasis of the contextualized configuration of their relationship with other classes and groups in the total society (Palerm 2008[1978], p. 260).

Dependentist influences from Chile

After the military coup in Brazil (1964), Chile took on a protagonist role in the articulation of critical Latin American thought, receiving researchers exiled from various countries (Stavenhagen 2014). As had happened in Brazil, the epicenter of these processes was institutions created together with UNESCO—the *Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe* (CEPAL) [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean] and the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO) [Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences]—which kept up an intense international activity until Augusto Pinochet's military coup (1973). The Argentinean thinker Atilio Borón, who migrated to Chile to study his Master in FLACSO in 1967, remembers that at that time Santiago became an "Athens" of social thought, receiving the intellectuals who articulated a new Latin American Marxist heterodoxy (Borón 2016), conformed around the Theory of Dependence (Cardoso and Faletto 1971; Ribeiro 1977).

In broad terms, the theory criticized the development concept (Kearney 1986, p. 338), setting out explicitly that capitalism is engendered as a globalized expropriating system. According to the dependentist argument, the accumulation of wealth in certain countries could only happen through the appropriation of the means of production (natural resources, human labor, capital) of other countries. The capitalist model is considered to have been established as a "world system," generated from

long-lasting historical configurations that gained a particular shape thanks to colonialism. Thus, the planet would be divided into central and peripheral countries of capitalism, interconnected by an intrinsic dependence.[12]

As Kearney (1986, p. 338) recovers, the Theory of Dependence constituted a Latin American criticism on the modernization that predated by four decades of anglophone anthropological debates. Their central ideas oxygenated anthropology in different Latin American countries, arguing (i)the analytical centrality of the colonial encounter in the construction of long-term inequalities; (ii) the continuity between country and city; (iii) and between ethnic, working class, and peasant identities in the formation of the popular Latin America experience; (iv) the profound influence of colonial slavery and racism as conformers of long-lasting relational structures, and (v) the need to produce empirical records of the relationships and alterities protected by a historical perspective that conceives the articulation between national and international processes (Kearney 1986, p. 338). Note that the approach to social classes appears here as inseparable from the effort to understand the historicity of alterities shaped by power relations since colonization. In this sense, the Theory of Dependency influenced a historical vision of class relations in Latin American anthropology, encouraging the theorization of the concept with that of race and ethnicity.

In general, criticisms of the anthropological use of the theory refer to the fact that, as it is an argumentation on a meso- and macrosocial scale, which focuses on the structural character of social inequalities, its anthropological application to specific communities in Latin America entailed methodological and analytical problems (Kearney 1986, p. 339). However, rather than being limitations, these problems encouraged diverse approaches and innovative methodologies (Kearney 1986, p. 341).

On gender relations, for example, and with an important avant-garde character, we find demographic, sociological, and anthropological works such as De Oliveira and García (1984), on country-city migration in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil; and those of Noordan and Arriagada (1980) for the Chilean context. Criticisms of the concept of "development" from a gender perspective have already appeared in these studies in the early eighties. Thus, they analyzed a scenario of economic adjustments where the class strategies developed by women played a fundamental role. When we compare these debates with those that took place in the global North at the end of the twentieth century, we observe that the former are marked early by an inclination to include a gender vision of female participation and agency among the new sectors of workers and their peripherization in the large cities, using at the same time, a

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[12] Wallerstein (1996) observes that in the seventies two Marxist-inspired visions in Latin America were polarized and were understood as extreme poles of the critique of development. The first, the Theory of Dependence, heterodox in relation to the Soviet position, argued that Latin American developments were an oxymoron: beyond governmental policies, "the only thing that develops is the capitalist world economy and that world economy is by nature polarized (Wallerstein 1996, p. 196). The second, orthodox in relation to the Russian communist party, proposed that the "capitalist world economy develops so successfully that it is destroying itself" (Wallerstein 1996, p. 197).

perspective that interconnects the experience of women with class, ethnic, and racial assignments, with urban marginalization and female reproductive overload.

Decolonial perspectives from Peru

Marisol De la Cadena (2009) warns of the emergence of yet another position on the uses of class, ethnicity, and acculturation in Latin American anthropology of the seventies. She observes that the emergence of indigenous intellectuals caused the circulation of divergent readings on *mestizaje*, questioning both the Marxist discourse, as well as that of the liberal-nationalist elites and American culturalist (De la Cadena 2009, p. 258).

Illustrating this process with the life of José María Arguedas and the construction of anthropological Andeanism in Peru, De la Cadena (2009) shows how the existence of liminal subjects—whose identities crossed the indigenous worlds of the Creoles gentlemen—configured a disavowal of the Marxist class concept. Aníbal Quijano, a contemporary of Arguedas, was one of his main critics, locating his antagonism for dependentist Marxist readings, to which he adhered to at the beginning of his career (Quijano 2000). The suicide of Arguedas had an important impact on Quijano's perception, prompting him to review his arguments and assume his theorization about the existence of conflicts of otherness that cannot be subsumed to the logic of class contradictions. This discussion originated, in line with authors such as Dussel, the decolonial Latin American critique of the class concept.

In his review of Marx's work, Quijano (2000, p. 358) made explicit that most of his ideas about classes did not present a break with the frameworks that preceded them, reproducing at least six points of the theorization of Saint-Simonian socialists that, in turn, were inspired by the uses of evolutionary botany. In this reflection, he offered a schematic and synthetic recovery of the place of social classes in the general framework of the dialectical materialist argument, which is considered one of the starting points of decolonial Latin American criticism. The six points that Marx adopted from Saint Simon were as follows:

> (1) The idea of society as an organic totality, from the organizing axis of Saint Simón's perspective of a historical-social knowledge and of which historical materialism is the main expression. (2) The very concept of social classes, referring to population bands homogenized by their respective places and roles in society's production relations. (3) the exploitation of labor and the control of the ownership of production resources as the basis for the division of society into social classes, In Marx they would later form part of the concept of relations of production. (4) The nomenclature of social class coined from that hypothesis, masters and slaves, aristocrats and commoners, lords and serfs, industrialists and workers. (5) The evolutionary, unidirectional perspective of history as a succession of such class societies, whin in historical materialism would be known as "modes of production." (6) The relationship between social classes and the final revolution against all exploitation, not long after called "socialist" revolution (Quijano 2000, p. 359).

Quijano (2000, p. 360) observes that Marx adhered for most of his life to the "Saint-Simonian, Eurocentric perspective of a unilineal and unidirectional historical sequence of class societies" and that the fallacy of this perspective was only assumed when he became familiar with the outcomes of the Russian populism of his time. Consequently, he was aware of the Eurocentrism of his historical perspective; "But he did not the corresponding epistemological leap. Later historical materialism chose to condemn and omit that stretch of Marx's enquiry and dogmatically clung to the most Eurocentric of its heritage" (Quijano 2000, p. 360). Anderson (2016, pp. 2–3) agrees with this criticism, observing that it was not in the theoretical writings, but in his performance in the press of the time that Marx opened a debate on the historical variability of class struggles and on the role of colonialism and racism in the configuration of capitalism. Thus, it is precisely in these writings where we most clearly find a *multilineal vision of the historical process* (Anderson 2016, p. 3). This, as we saw, was especially important for the reflection of Latin American anthropology, in particular in Mexico.

This questioning fed the anthropological reading of the centrality of racial exploitation and ethnic hierarchies established by colonialism (García-Canclini 1984). It also marked the explanation of the place of native groups in the configuration of social inequalities (De la Cadena 2009; Quijano 2000; Segato 1999), establishing the impossibility of understanding social classes, abstracting from ethnic and racial markers and their incorporations in the historical processes of alterity in Latin American Nation-States (Segato 1999).

Hybridizations

After the military coup of 1976 in Argentina, Mexico confirmed its role in accepting exiles from the new intellectual Argentinean left (Terán 1993). Burgos (2004) shows how the "Mexican circumstances" served in the period as a "resonance box" and a "theoretical laboratory" for the observation, study, and discussion of ongoing processes in Latin American societies by an active group of "Argentinean Gramscians" (the "argenmex"). This group promotes the publication of texts linked to Marxism and the theoretical reflection and renewal of this tradition through journals that would soon become references on the continent, such as *Comunicación y Cultura* [Communication and Culture] (1973–1985) and *Controversia* [Controversy] (1979–1981).[13]

In this task, intellectuals such as Ana Amado, Nicolás Cassulo, Héctor Schmucler, Oscar Terán, Miguel Bartolomé, and Ernesto García-Canclini played prominent roles. Learning in exile, as well as the tragic events in Argentina, led to a profound revision that implied a "a substantial change in the way of dealing with the

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[13] Several factors contributed to explaining just how exceptional this circumstance was (Yankelevich 2010). For example, the hospitality the Mexican State offered to political exiles; the economic oil boom of the seventies that allowed an unprecedented development of university academic life and the cultural and publishing world in the country; the repercussions of the internal reorganization and theoretical opening that the Mexican Communist party was going through at that time.

knowledge of historical processes" (Schmucler 1981, p. 15; Zarovsky 2015, p. 135). This meant reviewing the crisis of the infrastructure-superstructure Marxist metaphor and incorporating subjectivity and desire as a fundamental part of historical and political processes. Likewise, it implied anchoring the understanding of politics in daily life, which implied "managing a conception of culture understood as an articulating axis of political proposals rather than as a derivation or consequence of changes in the economic structure" (Schmucler 1981, p. 15).

With this agenda of debates, the "argenmex" carried out an in-depth review of the intersections between communication, culture, and politics, influencing displacements and renovation in these fields in Argentina, after the return to democracy (Grimson and Varela 1999). They also participated in institutional creation in their host country. Schmucler and García-Canclini joined the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana de México* [Autonomous Metropolitan University of Mexico] in 1975, a year after its creation. The former assumed the direction of the Communication's degree early on, while the latter joined the Anthropology Department with its head office in Iztapalapa. There, in 1993, together with the sociologist Ludger Pries, he created the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology.

In the eighties, García-Canclini (1984, p. 69) offered an anthropological critique that aimed to make visible a more hybrid reading of the Gramscian concept of "subalternity," arguing not only on the uses but the "limits of Gramsci." In his words, to explain the relations between classes, "we must reformulate the opposition between the hegemonic and the subaltern, including other cultural interactions, especially the processes of consumption and the forms of communication and organization typical of the popular sectors" (García-Canclini 1984, p. 70).

It is true that this debate took a more complete form in his classic book "*Culturas Híbridas*" [Hybrid Cultures] (García-Canclini 1989), where the author advances with more confidence toward the critique of the notion of the classes, showing how the heterogeneity of uses, affiliations, and reinterpretations that popular sectors in Latin America made of this idea imply an epistemic questioning of the term. If, on the one hand, the work can be understood as a deconstruction of the class category, on the other it can also be understood as the announcement of the most Avant-garde current uses of the concept in Anglophone anthropology of the twenty-first century. In it, various authors assume a position similar to that García-Canclini, proposing that classes should be understood as strategies to enter and exit, or directly to survive modernity. From this articulated use, a kind of "umbrella" definition of class emerges in Anglophone historical anthropology in which the concept:

> [...] Commonly it refers to structural social divisions and sees those divisions as influencing individual and collective behavior, cultural and political afflictions, and social pathologies of modern and modernizing societies. A number of classes and class relationships are possible, but commonly the key classes are made up of those who hold substantial property and those who do not, and the key relationship is between them [...]. This common core picture is complicated by the changing nature of subdivisions within these classes, and by the existence of surplus populations, those whose lives are not centered on the

wage relationship but who seem to get by on the margins of modernity. (Kalb 2015b, p. 1).

It is possible to affirm that the work of García-Canclini had already established by the eighties the bases of these reflections on the pulverized nature of class experiences and the consequent need to think about the expansion, abandonment, or reformulation of the term but from the perspective of concrete historical Latin American experiences. Thus, contrary to what happened in hegemonic Anglophone anthropology, the Latin American perspectives that re-dimensioned the impact of globalization in the nineties (with the undeniable influence of García-Canclini), did so from a reading of cultural relations supported by critical reinterpretations of Marxism. In this sense, the theorization of cultural hybridizations in Latin America has positions that escape the a-political provincialism ("the primitivist instinct") that Kalb (2015a, pp. 51–52) attributes to the Anglophone anthropology of this period.

Class in the twenty-first century

The fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the posterior transition processes of the Soviet States toward capitalism impacted on the use of the class concept in social sciences in general, and in Anglophone anthropology, in particular (Kalb 2015a, b). The flexibilization of work and the reduction in the number of workers employed in industry as well as the internationalization and regionalized sectorization of the productive system that characterized globalization (Harvey 2007) were read by said anthropology from perspectives that accentuated the multicultural encounters that circulation provided. This "new anthropological culturalism" (Kasmir 2015b, p. 56) tended to disregard the contemporary validity of the concept of class (Kalb 2015b, p. 3). In addition, it contributed to making capitalism's advance invisible and its reconfiguration increasingly devoid of humanizing safeguards, with the progressive decline of the international consensus on Human Rights, the upsurge in the use of weapons of war against migrant populations at international borders, the increase in social inequalities, and the dismantling of State social protection structures in hundreds of countries around the globe (Kalb 2015a, p. 50).

Since the beginning of the current century, it has become increasingly difficult to sustain these culturalist perspectives, given the radicalization of the expropriating and destructive logics of capitalism (Kalb 2015a, p. 50). In this process, Anglo-Saxon anthropological ideas about the new culturalism collided with the consequences of historical processes, especially in the global capitalist periphery (Kalb 2015b, p. 3).

After the economic crisis between 2008 and 2012 that destabilized the global North, Anglophone anthropology renewed its interest in the concept of class once again, raising new questions on how to interweave macrosocial analyses—on the logic of the capitalist productive mode in its geopolitics—with the contextualization of social conflicts and their articulation to cultural patterns, forms of identification, and narratives of the imagined communities (national or not) (Kalb 2015a, b).This entailed assuming the criticisms built from decolonial arguments and from the black

and feminist movements about the limitations of the Marxist debate. It also implied an active dialog with the anthropologies from the global South, which held a critical view of the unequal outcomes of the turn-of-the-century capitalism (Lins-Ribeiro and Escobar 2009; Krotz 2015).

These global processes and the social debates that accompanied them had their own configurations in Latin America. From 2003 onwards, several countries in the region began to show a favorable macroeconomic situation, with the international market having revalued the raw materials that, historically, were exported to the global North (Svampa 2013). Particularly in South America, this period was marked by the emergences of popular, left and center-left governments supported by redistributive perspectives and with a multilateralist vision of international relations (Arnolds and Jalles 2014, pp. 8–9). The *Partido dos Trabalhadores* [Workers Party] took over the presidency in Brazil; Kirchnerism Argentina and the *Frente Amplio* [Broad Front] in Uruguay. Economies grew, the States created agreements and treaties for cooperation in various fields, sharing consumption markets (importing and exporting with each other). In social terms, the political agendas were orientated at passing progressive legal reforms.

In addition, a very significant change in social stratification was observed, with the arrival of *emerging popular sectors*: specific niches of the population that experienced a progressive increase in their consumption capacities and access to various goods. The sectors had crossed the poverty threshold, and for different scholars they configured an *emerging middle class*. For example, in Brazil some 40 million people joined this sector (Arnolds and Jalles 2014).

Thus, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Latin America experienced an expansion of the middle classes with the reaffirmation of employment opportunities and an (slow but real) expansion of formalized blue-collar labor. It was not just a question of a change in the material conditions of income and consumption: there was a simultaneous transformation in the social imaginary about otherness and the boundaries between the classes. According to the Economic and Political Commission for Latin America (CEPAL 2012), at the end of this decade, most of the Latin American population felt they belonged to these "middle" classes (consolidated or lower) (CEPAL 2012).

However, from 2008, and even more clearly from 2015 onwards, the economic, social and political conditions of the region began to change: the prices of export products dropped in the international market, and this affected the economies and the States, updating the *dependentist* debates that we explored in the preceding pages. These processes detonated a crisis which caused a swing to the right in the national governments, affecting in particular the emerging popular sectors. They experienced a setback in their capacities of economic insertion and consumption, also suffering the withdrawal of State redistributive models. A new cycle of neoliberal policies was beginning in the region.

A relevant part of the Latin American sociological and anthropological production on the subject had been observing the centrality acquired by hate speech in daily experiences of groups and attesting that this period of redistributive regression

is also characterized by the polarization of political scenarios with a marked perspective of conflict between classes.[14] In this context, the studies carried out on social stratification in Latin America began to register the impoverishment of these emerging sectors.[15] Considering these processes and their outcomes, a large part of the social science literature in the region adopted an approach that dialogs with Bourdieu in his articulationist effort.

It is from this articulating approach that we situate our proposal. We back ourselves up with perspectives that, from critical references from Latin American anthropology itself, went into the narratives of the classes in much more depth (Visacovsky 2014), researching identity uses in contexts of conflict and protest (Briones et al. 2004), inquiring about economies and moralities, observing transformations in values, ethics, and consumption (Noel 2020). Returning to Latin American Marxist anthropological debates from the last century, we propose a connection between the notions of class "position" and "situation," seeking to interpret the processes of inequality and differentiation by integrating "objectifiable," "symbolic" and "relational" aspects (Bourdieu 2002a, p. 123). In this way, we will conclude this article by pointing to six elements inspired by the authors reviewed in the fifth section that, as we understand it, should be incorporated into the agenda of contemporary anthropology of social classes.

First, the Brazilian and Peruvian debates reviewed should inspire new anthropological conceptions of class as a construction centrally articulated by racial exploitation and domination (such as in the arguments of Fernandes, Ribeiro, and Quijano)—and by its long life in the formation of the capitalist world system—as well as by the patriarchal exploitation of non-male genders. This implies assuming it as an intrinsically *intersectional* form, crossed by a set of inequity markers that condition the social experience of groups of people. The Black Feminist debate on intersectionality contributed in a forceful way to increase the visibility of the inequalities faced by subaltern genders. However, several of those studies focused their analysis on the connection between racial or ethnic configurations and gender, paying less attention to class definitions and articulations. Regarding this, we propose to recover the perspective proposed by the Chilean dependentist Latin American researchers of the eighties. The anthropological understanding of class relations must be constituted from the analysis of the set of racial, ethnicizing and gender relations that the subjects/groups go through and that, simultaneously, institutionalize forms of behavior, notions of identity, social practices, central performances, and narrative

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[14] Brazil is a compelling example. Since 2016, hate speech has become a central node in the interpretation of social and political processes. The swing to the extreme right was supported by the promotion of hatred against the Workers' Party, led by Luis Inácio Lula da Silva among popular social sectors, that contradictorily were beneficiaries of his redistributive policies (Casimiro 2018).

[15] The research done by CEPAL (2019, p. 27), and carried out in eighteen Latin American countries, shows that the middle class (measured by stratification and based on multi-dimensional aspects) increased in the region by 26,7%, in 2002, to 36,6% in 2008, and 41,1% in 2017; however, it fell back to 36% in 2018. Currently, "76,8% of the population is made up of groups that belong to low or lower-middle class" (CEPAL 2019, p. 28). Although it is true there was an increase in middle classes until 2015, since then there has been a generalized decline, with a tendency to impoverishment (CEPAL 2019, p. 29).

constructions for the operationalization of national communities. Thus, class, racism, ethnicity, and gender should be understood for their intersection with the historic construction of the national hegemonies.

But, in addition, this approach should take a careful look at the role of parental and family networks and productive and reproductive gender inequalities in the construction of class experiences, retrieving the debates started decades ago by Safra and Nash in their work on Mexican and Bolivian territories, as debated in the last section. This makes it possible to expand the Marxist focus toward to kinship relations (a field that is frequently invisible in critical thinking), situating us in debates about the role of the family trajectories in the configuration of class conditioning. However, in these uses, inspired by these previous Marxist dependentist debates carried out by Latin American women (such as De Oliveira, García, Noordan, and Arriagada), the concept of family based on feminist anthropological debates is also expanded, according to which it constitutes "complex social units, of wide structural, social, economic diversity," which places subjects in multiple relationships (sexual, economic, reproductive, socializing), that are difficult to classify (Gonzálvez 2013, p. 90). And, furthermore, families intervene, and are intervened with, simultaneously by global and local contexts (Gonzálvez 2013, p. 90).

Second, this intersectional notion should also imply observing class as part of a concrete experience, situated on a board of power disputes, as proposed by Ángel Palerm's reading of Gramsci. From this perspective, class "is a generic name for this bundle of unstable, uneven, contradictory and antagonistic relational interdependences, a 'configuration' in Norbert Elias's terms" (Kalb 2015b, p. 14). This implies assuming that every class is a contextual phenomenon, that it can only exist in a specific set of relationships, that "it does not refer to this group or that, to this position or that, to this factor or that. Rather, it encapsulates a political and intellectual effort to point to the problematic of shifting, interconnected and antagonistic social inequalities" (Kalb 2015b, p. 14).

As Palerm and Warm stated in Mexico many decades ago, this concrete set of relations is constructed from a local history and an articulation with regional, national, or global historicities. The contextualization of class—its existence in a concrete and three-dimensional social space, as proposed by Lefebvre (1974)—implies observing it by overcoming the static idea of an arrangement of relations between owners and workers or a measurable distribution of inequalities on a social scale. It should be taken as a comprehensive set of the manifestation of global (im)balances in a local space. In addition, it is necessary to assume the situational facet–embodied in people and in their trajectories–of the inequalities, myths, ideologies and mythologies about production and social reproduction (Kalb 2015b, p. 14), as Cardoso de Oliveira proposed in his theory of interethnic frictions.

From our perspective, this specific context of the existence of class relations constitutes a "cultural configuration." The concept, as we see it, traces back to the arguments of Cardoso de Oliveira and Ribeiro, and indicates the existence, in a concrete social space, of a "framework shared by opposing of different actors, of complex articulations of social heterogeneity" (Grimson 2011, p. 172). It also includes the

fields of possibility of this shared framework: the practices, representations, and institutions that exist or are possible (hegemonic of counter-hegemonic). Although they are radically heterogenous, these configurations become a kind of totality, with some level off interrelation between their component parts. For this reason, they are endowed with a common symbolic thread (which includes conflicting meanings) shared by the people and social sectors that comprise them (Grimson 2011, pp. 172–174). In them, the subjects have some space for action in the face of structural conditions, even though they cannot choose them integrally. In other words, the theorization of class relations, as cultural configurations, supposes a dialectic between agency and structuring. It assumes, to pick up Palerm's (2008) proposals, that the local context is constructed from the confrontation between (i) the relational power disputes of the groups; (ii) their expectations of action (in the present and in the imagined/desired future); (iii) the transformations that they can effectively carry out; and (iv) the symbolisms and principles of otherness that frame and come about from all these processes.

Third, the situational and contextualized experience of class as a cultural configuration, located in a concrete space, implies defining it as conflict. At this point, we would like to extrapolate the vicissitudes of the theory of identities proposed by Cardoso de Oliveira (1963) and argue that classes can be thought of with a scheme like that set out by the author to define ethnic groups and their boundaries. Thus, they could not be considered wholes in themselves, but are configured from the process of interaction, of conflict, with other classes. Hence, the anthropological approach must focus on the situation and the *situationality* of those who experience this conflict (Cardoso de Oliveira 1963, p. 34).

In concrete terms, in our scheme, we must assume the social situation as the only locus where you can observe the mediation between crystallized forms of identity experience, subjective and group identification processes, and the structural conflicts between the groups that through their interaction, construct their boundaries (or borders). It is only to the extent that agents make use of their class position, situation, or identity to classify themselves and others for interaction purposes that they constitute social classes. The only way to apprehend the class ethnographically would be through the observation of the dynamic mechanisms deployed by the groups or people in a specific historical moment, in a particular context: in a "concrete situation" through which they organize "their being for the other" (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 53). This organization necessarily engenders a specific experience of conflict that, paraphrasing Cardoso de Oliveira, we call "inter-class frictions." We conceive them as "a way of describing the situation of contact between groups irreversibly linked to each other, despite the contradictions—expressed through (manifest) conflicts or (latent) tensions—that exist between them" (Cardoso de Oliveira 2007, p. 56).

Fourth, the situational character of the experience of the classes brings us back to questioning the possibilities and limitations of subjects and groups in the transformation of their environment and of the economic and political structures that cross and/or shape them. It is necessary to recover a dialectical position between the agency and structure incorporating a historical vision of the capacities and limitations of the subjects and groups, as all the authors reviewed in the fifth section proposed. In this specific sense, we urge considering the action of the subjects and

groups as part of a historical process, as a turn in continuities and ruptures that point to how their situational assignments changed over time. In this exercise, it is also convenient to return to Bourdieu: in addition to being intersectional, configurative, conflictive and situational, *class is also a trajectory*.

Fifth, as Kalb (2015b, p. 15) suggests, the flexible accumulation and social fragmentation that characterizes current capitalism implies a multiplication of possible class positions: people transit and momentarily occupy different situationalities. In theoretical terms, this pushes us toward re-dimensioning the Marxist and Weberian concepts (on class position and situation). Simultaneously, it pushes us to assume the inferences of so many Latin American researchers reviewed in this article who, since the sixties, have advocated a *multilinear reading of the historical process*. The dynamics of different conditionings, situations, and class positions that characterize social life in Latin America currently demands a complex reading of history, an acceptance of class as the interaction of different forms of conflict and as configurations of experience, multi-determined practice, and sensitivities.

Sixth, in methodological terms, these multilinear historical dynamics (in Palerm's terms) of classes in current capitalism position ethnography as a suitable tool for tracking and heterogeneity of class experience. But it is advisable to stipulate three fundamental methodological implications in the ethnographic treatment of the subject (i) the need to assume a contextualist ethnographies perspective; (ii) to historicize the interpretation of relationships in context; (iii) to extend the ethnographic perspective, correlating the situational and contextual experience of class with macrosocial, macropolitical, and macroeconomic factors.

These six aspects, far from being new, emanate from the social history of contributions made by critical Latin American anthropologies. It is time to revisit them.

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