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*Legacy*

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**Theotonio Dos Santos (1936–2018): The Revolutionary Intellectual Who Pioneered Dependency Theory**

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**INTRODUCTION**

On 11 September 1973 — the day of the military coup in Chile in which the Allende government was overthrown — a decree was issued by the military junta headed by General Pinochet, in which the name of Theotonio Dos Santos was mentioned. His first name was misspelled as Teotorio, revealing the unfamiliarity with Brazilian names. He was the only foreigner mentioned on this list of 95 persons. Their names were all familiar to me as key public figures of the Chilean political system. The decree ordered the persons mentioned on this list to give themselves up voluntarily to the Ministry of Defence before 16:30 hours on this fateful day. Furthermore, the decree threatened that ‘if they refused to do so they would have to face the consequences which could easily be foreseen’.<sup>1</sup> This list included the leaders of the various political parties of the Popular Unity coalition which formed the Allende government as well as some key government functionaries. This list of 95 persons also included the leaders of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), an extreme left-wing organization which did not belong to the Popular Unity coalition. Most of those on the list did not present themselves at the Ministry of Defence: some requested asylum in embassies, some went into hiding and some were sooner or later detained. A few were shot or died in the concentration camps. Theotonio Dos Santos managed to find asylum in the Embassy of Panamá under difficult circumstances (Dos Santos, 1978a: 14) but it took five months before he was able to leave the country and start his second exile in Mexico. But why was his name on the list?

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I wish to thank the editors for inviting me to write this Legacy and for their helpful comments. Any remaining shortcomings are my exclusive responsibility.

1. For the ‘Military Junta Decree No. 10: Order to Political Leaders in this List to Appear before Military Authorities to be Arrested’, please see: [www.archivochile.com/Dictadura\\_militar/doc\\_jm\\_gob\\_pino8/DMdocjm0022.pdf](http://www.archivochile.com/Dictadura_militar/doc_jm_gob_pino8/DMdocjm0022.pdf)

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At the time of the coup, Theotonio Dos Santos was the Director of the Centro de Estudios Socio-Económicos (CESO) — Centre of Socioeconomic Studies — belonging to the Faculty of Political Economy of the University of Chile, the country's oldest and principal university. He had arrived in Chile as an exile from Brazil only seven years earlier, in 1966, and while at CESO he wrote his key texts on dependency theory (referred to hereafter as DT), becoming one of its pioneers. Soon after Allende assumed office in November 1970, Dos Santos and a member of his dependency research team, Roberto Pizarro, were approached in the offices of CESO by a key person from Allende's Socialist Party, inviting them to become members. It is perhaps not surprising that they received such an invitation as the programme of the Popular Unity coalition was heavily influenced by DT. Soon thereafter Dos Santos joined the party; he never occupied any leading position within it although he had strong links to some of its leaders. As he recounts: 'I was a militant, but considered as such only to some extent, as they referred to me as the intellectual comrade ... I think this was more a restriction, I was a militant but an intellectual' (Lozoya, 2015: 269).<sup>2</sup> But the military junta knew full well the power of ideas and wanted to silence his voice.

Dos Santos has been referred to in a variety of ways: as 'one of the most brilliant intellectuals of Latin America', 'an authentic organic intellectual', 'a real revolutionary', 'one of the most important social scientists and economists in the history of the 20th century', 'an economist at the service of the people', and it has been claimed that his 'epistemological contribution to the social sciences has transcended the regional space of Latin America'.<sup>3</sup> Some of these characterizations are naturally exaggerations by enthusiastic admirers but they do reflect the impact he had on many people and his large following. He was an inspiring speaker who was able to talk on a great variety of contemporary topics in a critical and illuminating manner. As a former colleague at CESO reminisces: 'When Dos Santos is in full flight, he reminds us of the sociological imagination of Wright Mills: he begins to analyse the political and economic situation by tying things together here and there, with ever greater speed ... there one finds hundreds and even thousands of bright and promising working hypotheses' (Valenzuela, 2018: 2). I fully agree with such an assessment having been myself a colleague of Dos Santos. But what particularly stirred his audience and readers was the optimism he radiated about the possibilities for a better future.

Dos Santos was a persistent critic of imperialism and capitalism and a tireless campaigner for revolutionary socialism. His predictions on world affairs sometimes turned out to be wrong but he made people reflect and engage. He was a sociable, approachable and warm person full of vitality who was driven by his convictions and historical optimism. His optimism contrasted with the rather disempowering pessimism of André Gunder Frank

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2. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Spanish or Portuguese are mine.

3. These quotations have been taken from various obituaries after his death.

— another CESO colleague — as illustrated in the following observation. Given Frank's past personal history (his family had fled Nazi Germany), he correctly foresaw the overthrow of the Allende regime and was packing his luggage to leave Chile, having accepted an invitation at the Free University of Berlin (Kay, 2005a: 1179). Meanwhile Dos Santos, having settled in Chile as an exile, had bought a house in Santiago just a few months before the military coup. Although his optimism was often misplaced, it did inspire people and encouraged their participation in progressive social and political movements.

In a more conventional manner, Dos Santos could be characterized as a committed intellectual, an organic intellectual, a public or engaged intellectual. But for me his life and work is best captured in the expression used by Lozoya (2015: 259) — that of a 'revolutionary intellectual', by which she means an intellectual who not only argues for revolutionary change but is also able to revolutionize his disciplinary field.<sup>4</sup>

## FORMATIVE YEARS IN ACADEMIA AND POLITICS IN BRAZIL

It is necessary to provide the context in which Dos Santos grew up in order to gain a proper understanding of the emergence and development of DT and of his legacy. Various factors played key roles in the appearance of DT in Latin America: the turbulent world politics during the Cold War period and, especially, the political ramifications in the region of the 1959 Cuban revolution; the realization that the process of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) was not fulfilling all its expectations and was entering a phase of 'exhaustion' of its 'easy' stage; the increasing influence of Marxism among students and young scholars, especially the writings on imperialism and decolonization; and, last but not least, the dissatisfaction with orthodox economic theories and the sociology of modernization (see Kay, 2019a).

Theotonio Dos Santos was born in 1936 in Carangola in the state of Minas Gerais of Brazil. He studied sociology, politics and public administration at the Faculty of Economics of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, graduating in 1961. He then continued his studies for a master's degree in political sciences at the new University of Brasilia (UB) which was founded in 1960

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4. Details of Dos Santos's professional activities can be seen and downloaded from the website of the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) — National Council for Scientific and Technological Development: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6723468271805377>. According to this source he authored or edited 119 books, and published 42 chapters in books not edited by himself, 173 articles in scientific journals, and 163 articles in magazines and newspapers. This includes new editions and translations. His works were translated into 15 languages and published in over 30 countries. He gave over 200 presentations at conferences, seminars and similar events. Furthermore he actively used conventional and social media, giving interviews on radio and television and writing blogs. Several of his writings are available online; some of his interviews and talks are available on YouTube.

— the same year that the city was founded. Brasília displaced Rio de Janeiro as the capital of Brazil; its location in the centre of the country was highly symbolic, as was the modernist architecture of Oscar Niemeyer. Among the founders of UB was Darcy Ribeiro who became its first rector. He encouraged interdisciplinary studies as well as progressive curricula, research and teaching methods. Dos Santos graduated in 1964 with a thesis on the social classes in Brazil (Martins, 1999: 38). While completing his master's thesis, Dos Santos also became a part-time lecturer at the university. He recalls the university with fondness as 'an extremely rich experience in the pedagogical field, but also by the contact with the most daring of the Brazilian intelligentsia' (quoted in Dal Rosso and Seabra, 2016: 1036). He praises its 'magnificent environment for teaching and learning' and laments that Ribeiro's innovative project was 'in great part destroyed after 1964 by the military dictatorship' (Dos Santos, 2005a: 91). While at the university he published his first book, *Who are the Enemies of the People?* (Dos Santos, 1962).

It was at the University of Brasília that Dos Santos met fellow students Vânia Bambirra and Ruy Mauro Marini. They formed part of a reading group on Marx's *Capital* — as was quite common in those days among left-wing students in universities throughout Latin America. It was the period of the Cuban revolution, the emergence of guerrilla movements in some countries of the region, as well as of the growing influence of Marxism and activism among students. These three colleagues, who I will refer to as the 'trio', were active in politics and were among the founders of the Organização Revolucionária Marxista — Política Operária (Marxist Revolutionary Organization — Labour Politics), referred to as Política Operária or POLOP, for short. It was an extreme left-wing organization resulting from the fusion of various smaller revolutionary political organizations, including dissidents from the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), who all disagreed with the politics of the PCB which they considered class collaborationist (Martins, 1999: 79).<sup>5</sup> Dos Santos had already been an activist during his student days at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, being involved with the labour movement and socialist politics.

While in Brasília, Dos Santos became the General Secretary of POLOP but he later shifted away from the organization due to political differences regarding its strategy of *foquismo* based on the establishment of a *foco* (a focus or centre). A group within POLOP took up the armed struggle in their fight for socialism. They were inspired by the Cuban revolution and Che Guevara, believing that revolution could be brought about by a small group

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5. Several of the founders of POLOP became influential intellectuals in Brazil and beyond, such as Paul Singer, Eric Sachs, Emir Sader, Eder Sader, Michael Löwy and Simon Schwartzman, besides the trio, already mentioned (Martins, 1999: 79). Raphael Seabra (forthcoming) argues that the debates among members of POLOP were influential in shaping the ideas on DT by the trio. I am grateful to Seabra for enabling me to access various draft chapters of the book on the life and work of Dos Santos which he is currently editing with J.C. Cárdenas.

of fighters (hence the term ‘foco’) engaged in guerrilla warfare, starting among the peasantry in the countryside. This foco would trigger an uprising and spread from the countryside to the cities and eventually overthrow the existing regime. Dos Santos refused to endorse the armed struggle as he was not convinced that it would lead to the desired outcome; rather, he argued that it was necessary to create a mass movement through political work. As predicted by Dos Santos, the armed struggle failed and several of his comrades died in the process (Lozoya, 2015: 272). One of Dos Santos’s books is dedicated to ‘Comandante Juárez Brito; compañero y amigo, tu muerte no será en vano’ — ‘Commander Juárez Brito; comrade and friend, your death will not be in vain’ (Dos Santos, 1972a).<sup>6</sup>

In 1963, André Gunder Frank was hired as a visiting professor by Darcy Ribeiro to teach a postgraduate course on sociological theory in the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Brasília. Ribeiro was already a well-known and respected anthropologist when he became the rector of this new university and it was fellow anthropologist Eric Wolf who had recommended Frank to him. Dos Santos, Bambirra and Marini became Frank’s students at UB. It was one of Frank’s first teaching appointments. He was then 33 years of age, while Dos Santos was 26 or 27 years old when taking Frank’s course and participating in his seminars. It is possible that his years at Brasília (1963–64), being in the midst of a progressive university, played a role in the development of some of Frank’s ideas for his path-breaking critical analysis of the sociology of modernization (Frank, 1967/1972).<sup>7</sup> Dos Santos would later reminisce: ‘It was at the University of Brasília also that I met André Gunder Frank and we systematically started a collaboration of decades with Ruy Mauro Marini; along with my then wife Vânia Bambirra, we formed a polemical trio worldwide’ (quoted in Dal Rosso and Seabra, 2016: 1036–37).

In 1964 a military coup d’état overthrew the reformist government of João Goulart initiating a period of dictatorship in Brazil which lasted for 21 years and drove many people into exile. Dos Santos first went into hiding, continuing his political activities clandestinely, but he decided to seek asylum in the Chilean embassy in 1965, when the tribunal of Minas Gerais condemned him to 15 years’ imprisonment for rebellion (Lozoya, 2015: 265–66).<sup>8</sup> In 1966 he arrived in Chile where several prominent intellectuals were already living in exile, among them Florestan Fernandes, who helped Dos Santos to get a job at CESO (Vidal, 2013).

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6. Vânia Bambirra, who married Dos Santos, was later to edit a two-volume book with the most comprehensive analyses of the insurrectional revolutionary movements in Latin America at the time, including of POLOP (Bambirra, 1971).

7. Frank’s Latin American experience at an early stage of his academic life, living from 1962 to 1973 in the region, had a radicalizing influence on him and shaped many of his ideas; see Kay (2005a).

8. The military tribunal had charged him for being the ‘the intellectual mentor of subversive penetration in the countryside’ (Dos Santos, 1978a: 13).

Fernandes was a renowned sociologist who was a friend of Eduardo Hamuy, a fellow sociologist, who was then Director of CESO. Chile was an attractive and inspiring place to be at that time for an intellectual and revolutionary activist. The regional offices of various United Nations organizations were located in the capital Santiago, among them the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the Institute of Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). These and other international organizations attracted some of the best professionals from Latin America and elsewhere. Several Brazilian exiles found employment in these institutions, among them Fernando H. Cardoso who was to become one of the founders of DT and later President of Brazil. Politically, Chile was also an exciting place to be due to its relatively mature political culture and the existence of significant Marxist political parties. Moreover, Eduardo Frei Montalva had been elected to the presidency on a reformist programme in 1964, and Salvador Allende had come a close second in that presidential contest. Hence, a new phase in Dos Santos's life started auspiciously in Chile.

### **THE RISE OF DEPENDENCY THEORY: EXILE IN CHILE**

As soon as Dos Santos had settled in CESO, he tried to recreate the trio from the University of Brasilia so as to strengthen the research capacity of CESO, to tilt it more to the left and also for personal reasons. In 1967, Vânia Bambirra, his wife, joined the staff of CESO and Dos Santos managed to convince Ruy Mauro Marini to move from his exile in Mexico to Chile. Marini heeded his advice and travelled to Chile where he initially managed to get a job at the University of Concepción in the south of the country. It is significant that in this university some of the key leaders of the MIR had studied: the university was considered one of the strongholds of this revolutionary movement which developed close links with the revolutionary leaders of Cuba. After just a year at the University of Concepción, Marini was invited to join CESO in 1970 and the trio were together again, albeit in exile. All three remained in CESO until that fatal coup d'état in 1973. It is this trio who, together with André Gunder Frank, are at the heart of the development of the Marxist strand of DT. Frank was already in Chile, having accepted an appointment in the Department of Sociology of the University of Chile in Santiago in 1968. The trio re-established the relationship with Frank which they had formed in Brasilia. This was further strengthened when Frank also moved to CESO in 1971. The trio became a quartet and CESO became known as the centre of DT in Latin America.<sup>9</sup>

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9. For the most detailed analysis of the history of CESO during its relatively short existence from 1965 to 1973, see Cárdenas (2011). See also Wasserman (2012).

In mid-1967 Dos Santos created and led a research team to investigate the relations of dependency in Latin America. A year later he presented a 14-page progress report of his research team which can be considered one of the key foundational texts of DT. In explaining the aims of the research he provided one of the first definitions of dependence:

It is about analysing dependency not only as an external factor that limits economic development, but as something that makes up a certain type of social structure whose legality or dynamism is given by the condition of dependence. By defining dependence as the mode of operation of our societies, this concept has been placed as a fundamental explanatory concept of the condition of underdevelopment. (Dos Santos, 1968/2015: 29)

The initial team was composed of six researchers of which only Dos Santos and Bambirra were senior researchers, while the remainder were just starting their academic careers. There were also a few student assistants attached to the research.<sup>10</sup> One of the activities of the CESO research team on dependency was the organization of a permanent seminar in which prominent authors who had done research on topics related to dependency in Latin America were invited to present their work; these included André Gunder Frank, Sergio Bagú, Marcos Kaplan, Aníbal Quijano, Osvaldo Sunkel, Tomás Vasconi and Pierre Vilar.

It is worth pointing out that even at this early stage Dos Santos was not only thinking in terms of Latin America but more generally about the world economy. At that time, there were no institutes of Latin American studies, let alone centres on the world economy, in any university in the region, and only a few countries were beginning to establish research centres for the study of their own country from a social sciences perspective rather than from a traditional, and usually conservative, nationalistic descriptive historical perspective. The only institutions which had a regional remit and were located in Latin America were the various UN Regional Organizations or Offices such as ECLA, FAO, UNESCO and the ILO. In this sense, too, Dos Santos's research programme at CESO was quite a pioneering effort.

### **Theotonio Dos Santos's Concept of Dependency**

Dos Santos's first visit to the United States came when he was invited by Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, as a visiting professor in the department of sociology for the first semester of 1969. Besides teaching he took the opportunity to conduct some research, gathering a wealth of

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10. Besides the various publications by Dos Santos on dependency, two other remarkable books which arose from this research team were Caputo and Pizarro (1970) and Ramos (1972). Sergio Ramos was a member of the Chilean Communist Party who took part in the discussions on Popular Unity's economic programme and later formed part of the Allende government's economic team. Both books had a significant influence on shaping the programme of the Popular Unity government.



empirical material on the US economy, society and politics (Dos Santos, 1978a: 13–15). In December that year he was invited to present a paper to the 82nd Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (AEA) which took place in New York. The title of his presentation was ‘Imperialism as Viewed from the Underdeveloped Periphery’ which he delivered in the panel on ‘Economics of Imperialism’; the chairman of the panel was the well-known Marxist economist Paul Sweezy, founding editor of the independent socialist magazine, *Monthly Review*. Another speaker on that panel was Harry Magdoff, known for his work on imperialism and closely associated with *Monthly Review*. The discussants of the panel were the distinguished scholars Stephen Hymer from Yale University, Arthur MacEwan from Harvard University and Victor Perlo, a graduate from Columbia University and member of the communist party of the United States. This panel chaired by Sweezy was highly unusual, not only because most of the speakers were Marxists but also due to the topic and the fact that Dos Santos was a sociology graduate and not an economist in the traditional sense.<sup>11</sup>

Dos Santos’s paper was published the following year in the *American Economic Review* (AER), the most influential journal in economics, under the title ‘The Structure of Dependence’ (Dos Santos, 1970a). He became known initially in the English-speaking world largely through this article, which has been fully or partially reprinted in several readers.<sup>12</sup> It contains his classic definition of dependence which was first published in Spanish in a CESO publication (Dos Santos, 1968b: 6) and subsequently reproduced in a compilation of some of his CESO texts (Dos Santos, 1970b). These CESO texts, or parts thereof, were reproduced in subsequent single-authored books by him, for example in Dos Santos (1978a), by different publishers in several Latin American countries, for example Dos Santos (1970c), as well as in edited books by others, for example Dos Santos (1972b), thereby securing a wide diffusion of his key text on dependency throughout Latin America and beyond.

What then is Dos Santos’s definition of dependence?

By dependence we mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy *to which the former is subjected*. The relation of inter-dependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and can be self-sustaining, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on their immediate development. (Dos Santos, 1970a: 231, italics added)

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11. Similar versions of the text he presented had been presented earlier at the Second General Assembly of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) and at the Ninth Congress of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología (ALAS) which were held in Lima in 1968 and in Mexico City in 1969, respectively (Dos Santos, 1970b: 11–12).
  12. Such as in the readers edited by Fann and Hodges, Livingstone, Todaro and Wilber; see the References under Dos Santos (1970a).



An almost identical definition appeared in Dos Santos's earlier text presented at the CLACSO Assembly of 1968 (see footnote 10), which was published in Dos Santos (1970c: 180). This text was translated by David Lehmann and published in a book edited by Henry Bernstein, which is also often quoted or referred to in English language texts which discuss DT. It is worth comparing the two definitions:

Dependence is a *conditioning situation* [italics in the original Spanish text] in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. A relationship of interdependence between two or more economies or between such economies and the world trading system becomes a dependent relationship when some countries can expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position, can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries, which may have positive or negative effects on their immediate development. *In either case, the basic situation of dependence causes these countries to be both backward and exploited* [italics added]. (Dos Santos, 1973: 76)

There are two notable differences between these two definitions: (1) for some reason, the last sentence of the second quotation (see my italics), which strengthens Dos Santos's definition of DT, is omitted from the AER article; (2) the phrase 'to which the former is subjected' is omitted in the first sentence of the second quotation but is included in the first quotation, from the AER (see my italics), thereby providing a stronger sentence. In a text published several years later, Dos Santos (1991: 28) clarifies that in the dialectical relations between the dominant and the dependent countries, that is between the external and internal factors, 'the process of capital accumulation of the dependent countries is *conditioned* by their insertion in the world economy while at the same time being *determined* by their own internal laws of development' (italics in the original by Dos Santos).

### **Influence of Raúl Prebisch's Centre–Periphery System**

What transpires from these definitions is the central idea of an inter-dependent world system, shadowing Prebisch's idea of the centre–periphery system (ECLA, 1951; Kay, 2019b) in which a certain international division of labour dictates that the centre countries industrialize and develop through the export of industrial commodities while the periphery countries are largely confined to the production and export of primary commodities based on the exploitation of their natural resources. Both Dos Santos and Prebisch characterize this as an unequal trading system in which the periphery (or dependent countries in Dos Santos's terminology) transfer an economic surplus to the centre (or dominant countries). Prebisch explains this transfer of surplus as arising from the periphery's deterioration of the terms of trade, in terms of the evolution of the price of primary commodities exported by the periphery countries and imported by the centre countries, as compared to the price of industrial commodities exported by the centre and imported by

the periphery. Dos Santos also includes other transfers such as those arising from profit remittances, transfer pricing, royalty payments, high interest payments for servicing foreign debt, and payments for other services common in studies on imperialism. In later publications Dos Santos also introduces the Marxist concept of unequal exchange derived from the analysis of Arghiri Emmanuel (1972); this is rooted in the Marxist labour theory of value and hence is not confined to the production and export of raw materials by the periphery, as in Prebisch's analysis, but also arises in the export of industrial commodities as well as services from the dependent to the dominant countries. However, Prebisch (1950, 1964) does refer to the existence of surplus labour in the periphery as leading to a low-wage economy which is one of the reasons for the deterioration of the periphery's terms of trade, as well as for unequal exchange, foreshadowing elements of Arthur Lewis's famous analysis on 'unlimited supplies of labour' and terms of trade published in 1954.

There are, of course, other similarities and differences; there is no space here to discuss them all, but one of the major differences relates to the social and political dimension. Unlike Prebisch, Dos Santos was both a trained interdisciplinary scholar and a Marxist and therefore also brought to the analysis of dependency relations the social and political dimension. In his writings, Dos Santos always stresses the dependent country's internal class relations and political relations and how these are interlinked and articulated in a dialectical manner with those of the dominant country. Hence, dependency is not just an external factor but is closely related to, and determined by, the internal structure and socio-political relations of the dependent countries. While Prebisch was neither a sociologist nor a political scientist, he was a forceful and engaged political actor at the national level in Argentina and on the world stage, through his activities in ECLA and UNCTAD (Dosman, 2008; Kay, 2019b). Prebisch was also an activist, but what could be referred to as an 'institutional activist', having created and shaped institutions during his life. While Prebisch's aims were to reform institutions and thereby bring about a fairer and inclusive capitalism system, Dos Santos's aims were to revolutionize this system through a democratic socialist transformation.

I make these references to Prebisch partly because his centre-periphery paradigm and the work of ECLA — which he led almost from its beginnings in the late 1940s until his move to UNCTAD in 1964 — had a significant influence on Dos Santos and on the emergence of DT in general. But looking at Prebisch also helps to illuminate the two different strands within DT, or what I refer to as the structuralist or reformist and the Marxist or revolutionary strands (Kay, 1989, 1991). A particular, 'structuralist' perspective on development had emerged from the work of Prebisch and his team at ECLA, arising from their emphasis on the historical and structural features which had shaped the development process of Latin America (and other periphery regions of the world) since the colonial period, as distinct from

the economic (and socio-political structures) which had emerged since the industrial revolution in the centre or developed countries (Sunkel, 1966; Sunkel and Paz, 1970). Hence Latin America had to find its own development strategy and path as structures and circumstances differed compared to those of the centre. As a way to overcome or reduce the negative consequences of the deterioration of the terms of trade, which was limiting the region's development potential, Prebisch forcefully argued in favour of the industrialization of Latin America which required protectionism as well as other supportive measures from the state. At the time, such a proposal was considered a heresy given the dominance of orthodox economics. No wonder Albert Hirschman (1961: 13) characterized ECLA's (1951) pioneering report as 'ECLA's manifesto', alluding to another historical manifesto, as it challenged orthodox trade theory and the existing international division of labour.<sup>13</sup>

I would consider as key representatives of the structuralist version of DT, Osvaldo Sunkel (1969, 1972), Celso Furtado (1973, 1974; Kay, 2005b) and, with some qualification, Fernando Henrique Cardoso<sup>14</sup> (1972, 1973; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979), all of whom had worked, at one time or another, in ECLA or associated institutions. For the Marxist version of DT, some of the key original contributors besides Dos Santos were André Gunder Frank (1966, 1977), though again with some qualification,<sup>15</sup> Ruy Mauro Marini (1972, 1978) and Vânia Bambirra (1973, 1978). From a wider perspective, Prebisch could be considered as a forerunner of DT, at least for the structuralist variant. Proponents of the Marxist variant criticized Prebisch and ECLA for supporting the emerging industrial bourgeoisie and for seeking to promote capitalist development, albeit through progressive reforms. In the view of the Marxist dependency authors, such a process would only further entrench dependency relations, hence their advocacy for a socialist transformation.<sup>16</sup>

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13. This pioneering ECLA report was largely written by Raúl Prebisch; see also Prebisch (1950).

14. Cardoso does not fully fit into the structuralist position as his writings on DT are also influenced by Marxism. He had a good command of Marxism having participated in Marxist study groups in his student days, like so many other Latin American social scientists at the time — but he was not a Marxist and never pretended to be. Later in life he shifted to a neo-structuralist position, and, as President of Brazil, to a neoliberal position in the view of his left-wing critics, among them Dos Santos (more on this below).

15. Caveats arise, first and foremost, as Frank himself disagreed with the various ways in which authors of the dependency school have been categorized; see his extensive review essay of five books which discuss DT (Frank, 1991). Secondly, I consider him mainly as a forerunner of world system theory, and he himself preferred to use the terms 'development of underdevelopment' or 'metropolis-satellite' rather than dependency — a term he hardly used — when referring to the underdeveloped or dependent countries (Kay, 2005a, 2011).

16. It is notable that in his later years, when he witnessed the rise of neoliberalism, Prebisch became a fierce critic of it and came close to some of the views of the Marxist dependency writers (Prebisch, 1981). He even argued 'for a synthesis of both socialism and genuine economic liberalism' (Prebisch, 1984: 191).

### **Theotonio Dos Santos's Dependency Analysis**

What then is Dos Santos's contribution to DT? We have already mentioned his definition of dependence, given in reply to his own question of 'what is dependence?', which is the most widely known synthetic characterizations of dependency. While the rise of DT is a collective effort and comprises more strands than the two I have suggested, there are also some variations between authors within each strand, arising from different emphases on the various aspects of the dependency complex or due to some novel idea. In developing his ideas on DT, Dos Santos undertook a critical reading of ECLA's work of which he first became familiar while studying and working at the University of Brasilia, as ECLA had established an office in the new capital of Brazil.

ECLA structuralists, although proponents of an ISI strategy, became critical of the way it was being implemented by governments. After an initial phase of rapid industrial growth during the 1950s and early 1960s the process became 'exhausted' to use ECLA's phrase. One of the reasons for this slow-down was the foreign exchange bottleneck which had developed as imports rose faster than exports. As ISI proceeded it required increasing imports of intermediate goods (various inputs) as well as of capitals goods (machinery, tools, spare parts) while exports did not rise fast enough to generate the required foreign exchange. Hence, the imports of these goods became more expensive and were being rationed, affecting industrial investment and leading to lower rates of growth. Furthermore, the expectations of employment generation and improvement in the highly unequal income distribution were disappointing.

On the basis of ECLA's analysis and his own, Dos Santos discovered the increasing penetration of foreign capital, mainly from US multinationals, into Latin America's industrial sector. While in the past foreign investors, to a greater or lesser extent, had invested in mining and some plantations, mainly for export, they now began to direct their investment to the industrial sector by establishing subsidiaries so as to retain access to the domestic market as they now had to face protective barriers for the export of their manufactures. As a consequence of the ISI strategy, industry became the most dynamic sector of the economy in the initial phase. Thus foreign capital gained an increasing level of control over the national economy through this process of denationalization. Furthermore, the national bourgeoisie welcomed this foreign capital and associated its interests with those of the foreign bourgeoisie, who were the main domestic beneficiaries. Dos Santos castigated the 'national' bourgeoisie for becoming subservient to foreign capital. Hence, for Marxists, the new industrial bourgeoisie was seen as abdicating its historically progressive role. It was this new incursion and dominance of foreign capital and its impact on the country's economy, society and polity that Dos Santos labelled 'the new character of dependence', which is the title of one of his publications (Dos Santos, 1968c).

Dos Santos was concerned that a large proportion of industry's economic surplus was transferred abroad to the country of origin of the multinationals, thereby limiting the process of capital accumulation and economic growth. He interpreted this situation through recourse to the Marxist theory of imperialism and particularly to the writings of Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Nikolai Bukharin, as well as the non-Marxist John Hobson. However, while he considered theories of imperialism to be a useful starting point, he recognized their limitations: they were mainly concerned with developments in the imperial countries while neglecting to discuss the consequences these had for the colonial countries. This led to his urge to analyse, within a Marxist framework, the particular transformations of the colonial countries brought about by their incorporation into the sphere of the imperialist countries. Dos Santos believed that a distinct form of capitalism developed within the dominated countries and hence his aim was to develop a Marxist theory of dependency which classical or orthodox Marxism was unable to fully explain. This was indeed an ambitious and controversial task, which he undertook together with the other members of the CESO 'quartet' and for which he was criticized by some Marxists and non-Marxists (see Kay, 1989).

A key aspect of this new dependency for Dos Santos is technological dependence. The cycle of capital accumulation in dependent countries cannot be completed internally as they have only an incipient and simple capitals goods sector. Traditionally, most, if not all, of the equipment, tools and machinery for the extraction of the region's natural resources are imported from the dominant countries. With ISI, dependent countries need to import the required capital and intermediate goods for developing their industrial sector. In order to achieve sustainable economic growth and higher living standards, a country cannot rely solely on using more land, labour and capital but has to increasingly rely on raising the productivity of these three factors of production by introducing advanced technologies and developing its own capital goods sector. As the Latin American countries had not yet been able to develop such a capital goods sector they had to import the machinery and related tools from the dominant countries, allowing the latter to acquire an even greater stranglehold over their economies. In short, one of the key characteristics of dependency is that the dependent countries lack the capacity for autonomous and self-sustaining growth as the realization of their investment cycle requires, to a greater or lesser extent, the import of capital goods and hence cannot be achieved domestically.

It is common to observe in the process of industrialization in the advanced capitalist countries that there is a certain sequence, from the production of consumer goods to the production of intermediate and capital goods, as a result of the various linkages between them. Thus Dos Santos observed that the industrialization of dependent countries potentially has the capacity to overcome economic dependence: 'If the dependent economies can obtain a

high degree of productive autonomy and develop an important sector I (of machines and industrialized raw materials), foreign capital would lose its capacity to determine the character of its development, it would turn into a purely artificial expression which would soon be destroyed, terminating the dependence relationship' (Dos Santos, 1978a: 100). This statement is quite remarkable as it raises the possibility that dependency can be overcome within capitalism and hence no socialist revolution is required. Indeed, Dos Santos and Bamberger are the only Marxist dependency authors to raise this possibility (see Bamberger, 1973: 101), coming tantalizingly close to the structuralist dependency position. However, both continue their analysis by arguing that this path for the disappearance of dependency is blocked by transnational capital as the foreign multinationals shift their consumer goods industries to the dependent countries and block the establishment of domestic capital goods industries so as to retain their control over technology. This has deleterious implications for technological progress and growth in the dependent countries. Thus it is the political influence and power of transnational capital (or neo-imperialism, as some refer to it) which blocks this liberating possibility for dependent countries.

The development experiences of some of the newly industrializing countries (NICs), such as South Korea and Taiwan, seem to contradict this ultimately pessimistic view (Kay, 2002). Paradoxically, Dos Santos finds it difficult to admit that these countries can develop a capital goods sector thereby achieving an integrated industrial structure which can break the ties of dependence. The NICs were seen by *dependentistas* or dependists (terms used to refer to dependency writers) as mere export platforms for industrial consumer goods, taking advantage of their cheap labour. This was partly the case in the first phase with the creation of industrial export zones, largely in coastal areas, which had few linkages with the domestic economy. Dos Santos also argued that these NICs were able to exploit crisis periods in the dominant countries to develop their industrial structure but that, in the expansionary wave of capitalism, the ties of dependency would reassert themselves (Martins, 1999: 77). I would suggest that another reason for Dos Santos's unwillingness to examine more closely the successful industrial experience of the NICs is that it would give credence to the structuralist view of dependence and particularly to the thesis of 'associated dependent development' of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1973), with whom Dos Santos had long-standing differences, of which more later, where Cardoso argued that dependent countries could achieve high rates of economic growth. Dos Santos's pessimism about capitalism was counterbalanced with his unwavering optimism about the future of socialism which is a constant thread throughout his writings.

Furthermore, Dos Santos rejected the possibility of a developmentalist alliance between the 'national' industrial bourgeoisie and the working class which centre-left parties and the communist party were advocating in Brazil and in other Latin American countries (Dos Santos, 1967). According to its

proponents, such an alliance would make it possible to confront the landlord class and financial-commercial class as well as foreign capital which were blocking the development potential of the country by, for example, opposing land reform. The Marxist dependists argued that the industrial bourgeoisie was far from undertaking such a nationalist progressive stance as it was closely linked to the other fractions of the upper class and preferred the alliance with foreign capital instead of confronting (neo-)imperialism (Dos Santos, 1968a). Changing the dependent relations would require confrontation not only with the dominant class within the country but also with the dominant class of the hegemonic centre. Only an alliance between the working class, especially the 'new proletariat' arising from ISI and the peasantry, and some sectors of the small progressive bourgeoisie, in which the industrial proletariat would assume the leading role under the banner of socialism, would be able to break the ties of dependence and achieve an inclusive and equitable development.

### **A Historical Turning Point: The End of Chile's Road to Socialism**

The political choice facing Latin America was put dramatically by Dos Santos (1969, 1977a) as being between socialism and fascism. He was influenced by his experience of the 1964 military coup in Brazil, brought about by the increasing militancy of the working class and the peasantry as well as the deepening of class divisions and conflicts; he believed that, together with the growing contradictions of dependent capitalism, this would lead to a fascist dictatorship or a socialist revolution. Given the transfer of part of the economic surplus via unequal exchange to the dominant countries, the domestic capitalist class resorted to super-exploiting its labour force, either by prolonging the working day or by intensifying the work process, so as to protect its profits and remain competitive in international markets (Marini, 1972). As the ISI process advanced, the requirements for accumulation increased as industries became more capital intensive thereby pushing the capitalist class to squeeze more surplus value from labour. This only exacerbated social conflicts leading to the dilemma mentioned so starkly by Dos Santos (1972a): socialism or fascism. Similar processes were happening in other countries of the region. It seemed that Dos Santos's intuition was not so far off the mark as, in 1970, a socialist government was elected into office in Chile followed by the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979 and other brief attempts at some sort of socialism in a number of countries. But these socialist experiences were all reversed and a wave of military dictatorships dominated the political landscape of the region from the mid-1970s to the 1980s. Writing a decade later, Dos Santos saw no reason to change his assessment as he wrote: 'the profound Latin American crisis cannot find a solution within capitalism. Either one advances in a revolutionary and decisive manner towards socialism . . . or one appeals to fascist barbarism, the



only alternative able to secure the conditions of political survival for capital' (Dos Santos, 1978a: 471).

Indeed, barbarism appeared to have taken over not just in Chile, with the long rule of the military dictatorship from 1973 to 1989, but also in several other countries of the region in the wake of other coups d'état. The Chilean drama marked a turning point as it ushered in the era of neoliberal globalization and the gradual waning of DT. But first DT spread to other countries in Latin America, to the USA and Europe, giving it a new impetus due to the diaspora of exiles from Chile. The Chilean transition to socialism via the ballot box attracted international attention despite the small size of the country and its location, tucked away in the southern corner of South America, hemmed in by the high Andean mountain range on the east and the vast Pacific Ocean on the west. Many academics, researchers and activists visited Chile during the Allende years to view this experiment at first hand. For left-wingers and Marxists it almost became a pilgrimage. As CESO was the hub of DT it received several prominent visitors, among them Eric Hobsbawm, Alain Touraine and Paul Sweezy. Many foreign students also came to Chile to do research on this transformative experience. These events and personal experiences sowed the seeds for the solidarity movement after the overthrow of Allende. The solidarity campaigns all over the world played a crucial role in helping to secure release and safe passage for many exiles as well as finding an appropriate livelihood for them in their new countries of residency.

#### **FROM DEPENDENCY TO WORLD SYSTEM THEORY: FROM EXILE IN MEXICO BACK TO BRAZIL**

Dos Santos was fortunate that a few months after arriving in Mexico in 1974 he was able to resume his academic activities with a job at the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas (Economics Research Institute) at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) — the National Autonomous University of Mexico — in Mexico City. It is the country's main university with over 300,000 students, making it one of the largest universities in Latin America. In 1976 Dos Santos became the coordinator of the doctoral programme of the Faculty of Economics. He taught a variety of courses such as international economics and the political economy of science and technology, reflecting a shift in his research towards the world economy with particular interest in the scientific-technical revolution, thus deepening his earlier focus on technology. He also taught courses on political science and philosophy in the Faculty of Political Science and Philosophy at UNAM (CNPq, 2018; Dos Santos, 2000/2002: 146).

As he himself wrote: 'From 1974, during my second exile in Mexico, I dedicated myself to the more global question of the scientific-technical revolution, developing along with Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank,

and Samir Amin, among others, a theory of a world system on which my current research focuses' (Dos Santos, 1998: 68). As André Gunder Frank (n.d.: 2–3) would acknowledge when reviewing Dos Santos's (2000/2002) book: 'it was Theotonio who, decades ago, brought to our attention that we have to do our own study of the world economy, as we then did'. Together with his compatriot Celso Furtado, among others, Dos Santos became co-founder of the Association of Third World Economists, whose first congress took place in Algiers in 1976 under the auspices of the Non-Aligned Movement which was formed in 1961 by a group of (largely developing) countries which were not aligned to the major power blocs existing at the time, the USA and the USSR. His friend Samir Amin was also present (Domínguez-Martín, 2018: 203–04). The debates at this congress were much influenced by DT as its ideas had spread to other Third World countries (to use a common term in those Cold War days), beyond the region which had given it birth.

Although the Bambirra–Marini–Dos Santos trio all went in their second exile to Mexico, living in Mexico City and working at the same university, UNAM, they were unable to recreate the enthusiasm, drive, sense of purpose and political urgency which had been the reason and motivation for their collaborative work since their student days. They were all now well-established figures, each with their own followers. They gradually drifted apart professionally, each pursuing their own particular research agenda. Although Bambirra and Dos Santos published some joint chapters and books (e.g. Bambirra and Dos Santos, 1979, 1980) during this period they were not working together on DT. Times and circumstances had changed as the historical tide had turned.<sup>17</sup>

During his exile in Mexico, Dos Santos brought together several of his earlier works on DT, along with a few additional chapters written in Mexico, in what I consider his most important book on dependency (Dos Santos, 1978a). He also published books on his new research on the scientific-technological revolution (Dos Santos, 1977b) and on the crisis of imperialism (Dos Santos, 1977c) as well as a critique of the Brazilian miracle (Dos Santos, 1974, 1978b). He continued to publish a great number of articles on world affairs, contemporary capitalism, Marxism, socialism, the foreign debt problem, transnational corporations and Brazil. Some of the research which he started while in Mexico was published only later, after his return to Brazil in early 1980 upon the restoration of democracy — and after he had assured himself that the political amnesty granted by the post-dictatorship government also applied in his case (Dos Santos, 1983a, 1983b, 1984).

Upon his return to Brazil, Dos Santos threw himself into politics and wrote a book on the Brazilian path to socialism (Dos Santos, 1986). He was one of the founding members of the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) — Democratic Labour Party — which pursued democratic socialism.

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17. A few other colleagues from CESO also found refuge in Mexico, becoming influential social scientists, including José Valenzuela Feijó in economics and Jaime Osorio in sociology.

Its founding leader was Leonel Brizola, a politician whom Dos Santos had admired from his younger days in Brazil, who was elected twice to the governorship of the state of Rio de Janeiro. In an earlier incarnation of this party, before the dictatorship, it was the largest left-wing party in Brazil. With the rise of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) — Workers' Party — that position was claimed by the PT whose leader, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, commonly known as Lula, was later elected President of Brazil with the support of the PDT, serving two terms from 2003 to 2010. Dos Santos ran for governor in his home state of Minas Gerais, but failed to get elected. Later he ran as a candidate for the post of federal deputy but again without success (Martins, 1999: 60). When Brizola and his PDT broke with the PT, Dos Santos joined the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB) — Brazilian Socialist Party — a party with social-democratic leanings.

While Dos Santos (2000/2002: 103) initially saw the election of Fernando Henrique Cardoso to the presidency of Brazil in 1995 as a positive step, he soon became critical of the government's shift to the right, its adoption of neoliberal policies, and its creeping authoritarianism: 'Cardoso seems to want to convince us that Brazil today needs a man from the left with the language of the right' (Dos Santos, 1998: 67). The initial cordial relationship between Dos Santos and Cardoso during their period in Chile thus became strained upon their return to Brazil due to their political differences. In an Open Letter written in 2010 — eight years after the end of Cardoso's presidency in 2002 — Dos Santos settled accounts with Cardoso by publicly criticizing the performance of his presidency. This Open Letter was provoked by another Open Letter, from Cardoso to Lula, who was coming to the end of his presidency, in which Cardosa defends his record as president and attacks that of Lula. Dos Santos starts his letter as follows:

My dear Fernando, I am obliged to respond to the open letter you sent to Lula, in the name of an old polemic that you and José Serra initiated in 1978 against Rui [sic] Mauro Marini, myself, André Gunder Frank and Vânia Bamberra, breaking with a common theoretical effort we started in Chile in the second half of the 1960s. (Dos Santos, 2010a)

He characterizes Cardoso's rule as mediocre and wants him far away from power in Brazil as, in his view, do the majority of Brazilians. However, should they ever meet at an academic event he would be happy to continue the discussions on DT with him. He ends his letter by expressing regret at having to confront him in this radical manner, given their old friendship. Notwithstanding Dos Santos's defence of Lula's government as compared to that of Cardoso, he was also critical of Lula; he added his signature to a manifesto of over 300 economists, largely linked to Lula's party, the PT, demanding a change in economic policy. This manifesto was published in 2003 during the first year of Lula's presidency and was followed a year later by a more critical letter chastising Lula for following the same economic policies as those of the previous government of Cardoso (Leiva, 2008: 86–87).

On the academic front, Dos Santos moved through various universities; in 1984 he organized an international congress of economists which brought together Frank, Marini and Wallerstein (Domínguez-Martín, 2018: 206). In 1988 he and Ruy Mauro Marini were able to reintegrate themselves into the University of Brasília, thanks to the amnesty law. But in 1992 Dos Santos accepted a post at Universidad Federal Fluminense (UFF) in Rio de Janeiro where, in 1995, he received his PhD in Economics. He had been granted the same title 10 years earlier, in 1985, by the Federal University of Minas Gerais, receiving both degrees *por notorio saber* (literally ‘for notorious knowledge’), for his contribution to knowledge through his many publications (ibid.). In this period, he also developed his links with the United Nations University (UNU) and with UNESCO coordinating as president the joint teaching programme on the Global Economy and Sustainable Development of the network known as REGGEN. He also took up various leadership roles in professional associations and institutions, becoming president of the Asociación Latino-Americana de Sociología (ALAS — Latin American Association of Sociology), a member of the executive council of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Política Científica y Tecnológica (Latin American Association of Scientific and Technological Policy), consultant for the Sistema Económico Latinoamericano (SELA — Latin American Economic System) and director of studies of the Maison des Science de l’Homme of the University of Paris I. In 1990 he became associate professor of Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto and of the University of Paris VIII (Martins, 1999: 61).

### Contemporary Capitalism, Crisis and Social Theory

In the last years of his life, Dos Santos renewed his efforts to contribute to critical theory by writing what became a trilogy which he named *La Trilogía Sobre el Capitalismo Contemporáneo, la Crisis y la Teoría Social* — *The Trilogy on Contemporary Capitalism, Crisis and Social Theory*. In the first book of this trilogy, Dos Santos (2000/2002) brings together various of his reflections on DT which were published in the 1990s, as well as his critique of those sectors on the left that have followed the neoliberal project. In the second book (Dos Santos, 2004), he discusses the main transformations of the world economy and the challenges and opportunities these provide for Latin American regional integration, as a way to counteract the disintegration created by the neoliberal globalization process. He had already touched on these issues, including the increasingly popular topic of sustainable development, in an earlier book (Dos Santos, 1993).

In the final book of this trilogy (Dos Santos, 2007), he undertakes a sharp critique of the philosophical underpinning of neoliberalism and of its free market fundamentalism. He highlights the relationship between state terror and neoliberal policies, drawing on the experience of Chile and other

countries in the region, and demonstrates how governments and capital use economic recessions to discipline labour, erode workers' rights and deactivate social movements. In this book he also analyses the long Kondratiev waves within a world system perspective, arguing that an expansive cycle started in 1994 on the basis of the scientific-technical revolution leading to the huge transfer of resources to the financial system. In his long prologue to the Peruvian edition of this book, published in 2010 with a slightly different title, he refers to the financial crisis and recession of 2008–09 revealing the instability of the free market and how this is opening a new long cycle in the world capitalist system with colossal negative consequences. He argues that this deep crisis might open the way to post-capitalist or even socialist experiences of sufficient force 'to inaugurate a new world system, embedded in a planetary civilization, plural, egalitarian and democratic' (Dos Santos, 2010b: 18). But he warns readers that such an outcome is not guaranteed as fascism might raise its ugly head again as has happened in previous crises of capitalism (Caputo, 2013/2018).

Although Dos Santos referred to a 'planetary civilization' in the third book of his trilogy, it was only in his later years that he properly developed this concept while trying to grapple with the process of globalization. He writes: 'As we have noted, the world is changing, drastically. We are at the frontier of a new economic, social, political and cultural era. What defines it and, essentially, the creation of a global dimension of life, is the starting point for a planetary civilization' (Dos Santos, 2016: 250). He then makes a useful distinction between the concepts of globalization, world economy, world system and new world order and explains the meaning of his new term.

The concept of a *Planetary Civilization* is based on the idea of the convergence of civilizations and cultures towards a pluralistic conviviality in a single planetary system. This new stage of civilization has not yet materialized, but it is already foreseen by the common interests of all countries and all governments that need to survive on a single planet . . . All are subordinate to the same global natural resources, and their populations depend on a biological and cultural heritage common to all mankind. (ibid.: 251; italics in the original)

Furthermore, he issues this dramatic warning: 'The planetary civilization will be pluralistic, tolerant and multiple or will not be!' (ibid.: 13). In a related article, he calls for 'a revised conception of development in more social, sustainable, and human terms, a stronger role for the state in the organization of the local, national, and world economies, and a stronger system of South–South relations based on a rebirth of Third World institutions and a civilizational, philosophical, and political framework that transcends the Eurocentric view of the world' (Dos Santos, 2011: 45; see also Dos Santos, 2012).

In the long introduction to this book, written in honour of Celso Furtado, Dos Santos (2016) refers to his relationship with Furtado and to his involvement in launching Furtado's candidacy for the Nobel Prize in Economics at

a major event in 2003.<sup>18</sup> Surprisingly, he does not refer to their respective contributions to DT. Furtado was an early structuralist, having joined ECLA at a young age, and he later became one of the key representatives of the structuralist variant of DT. While the two men had much in common, Dos Santos critiqued this strand of DT for its reformism. While times do change, the critical judgement on Dos Santos which is made by Domínguez-Martí (2018: 195–96) with reference to this book is open to question: ‘a tribute that is symptomatic of his [Dos Santos’s] final identification with the interdisciplinary and culturalist approach of the great Brazilian intellectual [Furtado] ... summed up in the concept of “planetary civilization”, which ended up replacing socialism in the utopian horizon of Theotonio’.

In what turned out to be his last major book — and a sizeable one, with 561 pages — Dos Santos (2016: 14) mentions in his preface that he had already used the term ‘planetary civilization’, which he develops in the book, in a 1988 publication (see also Dos Santos, 2010c). In a significant and symbolic paragraph he refers in this prologue to the committed intellectuals, fighters and friends who had died and gives their names, over 45 of them. Among these friends he singles out Darcy Ribeiro who, as I mentioned earlier, was the first rector of the University of Brasília, where the quartet planted the seeds of DT (Dos Santos, 2016: 14). Dos Santos was the last of those pioneering Marxist dependists to die. I found this acknowledgement very moving as, in my view, he was expressing his last farewell to these deceased friends and perhaps also to his surviving friends, readers and younger generations.

## ON THE ORIGINS AND RELEVANCE OF DEPENDENCY THEORY

While the origins of DT are diverse and ‘dependency’ and similar terms had been used previously by several authors, it was only in the mid-1960s that the term started to be used in a systematic manner by Dos Santos, Marini, Bamberger (‘the trio’), Frank (‘the quartet’) and Cardoso. The precursor to the Marxist variant of DT can be traced to the quartet’s exchange of ideas during their years at the newly founded University of Brasília (Wasserman, 2012). It is perhaps symbolic and appropriate that this happened in Brasília, the new capital of Brazil located at the heart of South America, as DT was foremost an audacious critique of the dominant Northern-centric development theories and a manifestation of creative critical thinking from the perspective of the South. Thinkers like José Carlos Mariátegui (1928/1971) with his ‘Seven Essays’ and Raúl Prebisch (1950) with his ‘ECLA Manifesto’ had begun to facilitate the breakthrough of this critique, but it was DT that achieved a global impact and marked the key turning point in the search for an autochthonous voice from the region. Whatever the limitations of DT, this is

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18. For a Legacy article on Celso Furtado, see Kay (2005b). Although the campaign created quite a stir it did not succeed in its aim: Furtado did not receive the Nobel Prize.

its main contribution to the social sciences in what might today be referred to as the decolonization of knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

There have been many analyses and criticisms of DT from a variety of quarters including debates between the dependists (see Kay, 1989).<sup>20</sup> For Cardoso and Faletto (1979: xxiii) it was senseless to attempt to formulate a theory of dependent capitalism with its own laws of movements. Cardoso preferred to discuss different situations of dependency rather than attempting to construct an overarching theory. While Marini developed the most theoretically advanced DT from a Marxist perspective, Bambirra (1973: 7) still considered that the Marxist strand of dependency had not yet achieved theoretical status.<sup>21</sup> I would add: neither had the structuralist strand. DT might not be a theory in a strict sense of the concept but it was a social, political and cultural phenomenon at the time.<sup>22</sup>

Dos Santos was prompted to disagree with Cardoso as to who first launched DT. He took umbrage at an assertion by Cardoso (1980: 163) in which Cardoso intends to attribute to himself the sole authorship of the origins of DT. Dos Santos instead argues that he had already anticipated the dependency thesis in a 1966 publication which Cardoso had read and quoted subsequently.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, he clarifies that: 'We did several seminars together in Santiago de Chile and, despite being younger, I think we influenced each other. Although many authors have tried to reveal themselves as creators of the theory of dependence, it was André Gunder Frank, Fernando Henrique Cardoso and I. I consider [the dispute] a minor issue' (Dos Santos, 2000/2002: 145–46).<sup>24</sup> Frank (2003) refers to this comment by Dos Santos and fully agrees with him, going even further by arguing that it is not only a minor issue but it should not be an issue at all.<sup>25</sup>

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19. As an example, consider the following text from the 'Redemption Song' by the iconic Caribbean singer Bob Marley: 'Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery/ None but ourselves can free our mind/ ... / Won't you help to sing/ These songs of freedom?/ That's all I ever ask'. This song is quoted by the influential Caribbean dependist Norman Girvan (2006: 347). One of the key contributors to the analysis of ideological and cultural dependency is Tomás Vasconi (1971, 1972).

20. Dos Santos (2000/2002: 145) wrote that my book (Kay, 1989) 'offers the best summary of the debates of the period', and that my article (Kay, 1993) 'indicates with acute insight some current paths of the debate'.

21. According to Seabra (2019), the Marxist strand of dependency reached the status of theory largely due to the work of Ruy Mauro Marini.

22. Robert Packenham (1992: vi) refers to 'the dependency movement' which he attacks for politicizing scholarship by violating 'the most basic value in the academy: the freedom to go where the facts, logic, and reason lead, unfettered by political pressures and fears of being politically incorrect'. For a review of Packenham's book, see Kay (1994).

23. Dos Santos refers to a mimeographed text of his from 1966 which Cardoso cited in some of his earlier publications and which was properly published a year later as Dos Santos (1967).

24. Surprisingly Dos Santos does not refer here to either Ruy Mauro Marini or Vânia Bambirra.

25. While the terms 'dependent' or 'dependency' had been used before by some writers, their usage was largely descriptive and lacked the analytical meaning as developed by the authors mentioned in this article. Celso Furtado (1956) used the term in the mid-1950s in his book



After leaving Chile in 1973, never to return again to live in Latin America, Frank 'reoriented' his research and published his latest major book (which he considered his best) on Asia (Frank, 1998: v; Kay, 2011). Although it was no longer the focus of his research, Frank remained firmly rooted in Latin America: as Dos Santos asserted (2005b), Frank 'felt himself to be above all a Latin American'. Their friendship endured, as illustrated by the fact that each contributed a chapter to a book edited in the other's honour (Dos Santos, 1996; Frank, 1999). Upon Frank's death in April 2005, Dos Santos wrote a moving obituary recounting Frank's last visit to Brazil in August 2003:

André himself was also able finally to return to Brasília, Sao Paulo, and Santa Catarina. Despite his already advanced illness, he made a point of traveling to all of these places to bear witness to the fact that dependency theory was born in 1963–1964 out of our debates and discoveries in the magnificent environment for teaching and learning that was the Universidade de Brasília. (Dos Santos, 2005a: 91)

While the quartet's reflections at the University of Brasília were a precursor to DT, it was through their continuing research at CESO in Santiago that it developed and matured. Both Dos Santos and Marini retained fond memories of their short but intense creative period at CESO. As Dos Santos (2005b) recalls:

Exiled in Chile like us, André joined the Center for Socio-Economic Studies (CESO) of the University of Chile's School of Economics, of which I was the Director. Ruy and Vania were also there, which enabled us to carry out many joint projects. . . . The experience of the Unidad Popular government was a major stimulus to intellectual work, a fantastic laboratory for analyzing social change and revolution. Frank lived this reality very intensely, with the support of his wife Marta, who was Chilean.

Earlier, he had also praised the fraternal environment of CESO which facilitated open and frank debate, which was generally uncommon in intellectual circles (Dos Santos, 1970b: 11). Ruy Mauro Marini shared those sentiments: 'The CESO was, at the time, one of the main intellectual centres of Latin America. . . . The secret of the intense intellectual life that characterized it . . . was the permanent internal practice of dialogue and discussion' (quoted in Cárdenas, 2015: 122).<sup>26</sup>

In the later years of his life, Dos Santos received various honorary doctoral degrees from universities in Peru, Mexico, Argentina and Chile as well as other distinctions and prizes, among them the World Marxian Economics Award given by the World Association for Political Economy (WAPE). Surprisingly (and shamefully) he was not given an honorary doctoral degree by the University of Chile. But former colleagues of CESO and friends

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on the Brazilian economy, but it was only in his later writings that it acquired its proper meaning (Kay, 2005b). For discussions on the origins of dependency theory, see Palma (1978), Kay (1989) and especially Love (1990).

26. For my own views on CESO and the intellectual climate during the 1960s and early 1970s in Chile, see Lozoya (2013).

organized an event in honour of Dos Santos shortly after his death which took place in the main historical building of the University of Chile, just a couple of blocks away from the presidential palace where Allende died on 11 September 1973.

Is DT still relevant today? While the structuralist strand of DT morphed into neo-structuralism as a way to deal with the onslaught of neoliberalism, those working within the Marxist strand of DT largely shifted into world system theory. Whereas the mutation of the former into neo-structuralism could be considered a backward step, in the sense that it incorporated elements of neoliberalism and gave up some key aspects of structuralism (Gwynne and Kay, 2004), the shift of the latter to world system theory could be considered a natural progression, especially for those who were world system theorists *avant la lettre* as was the case with Dos Santos — although, unlike Frank who fully embraced world system theory, he continued to use the concept of dependency until his death. In attempting to answer the question of its pertinence, some analysts have written about the continuing relevance of DT (Kay and Gwynne, 2000); about its life, death and resurrection (Beigel, 2006); about its rise and fall, but leaving open its possible redemption (Cortés, 2016; Sánchez, 2003); about updating it (Katz, 2019); reformulating it (Rodrigues, 2014); reloading it (Pimmer and Schmidt, 2015); and going beyond it (De Oliveira, 2019). Whatever the verdict about the contemporary relevance of DT, it is undoubtedly the case that it experienced a revival after the financial crisis of 2007–08 whose effects are still reverberating in the world economy.<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Theotonio Dos Santos made a major contribution to DT and to a lesser extent to world system theory. He will be forever remembered for his pioneering contribution to DT. DT reflected an historical period in Latin America which influenced the rising student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as Third World and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world. It also shaped the political and governmental programmes in several countries. DT reformed the academic and research curricula in many countries and began to shift the Northern-centric bias of the social sciences not only in the North but also in the South, helping to decolonize our minds. There have been setbacks as times change and counter-movements emerge, as with the rise of neoliberalism.

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27. In recent years, several books and journal special issues have been published on dependency theory contributing to its revival which, however, is still relatively low key; see Katz (2018), Martins and Filgueiras (2018), Osorio (2016), Seabra (2016), Sotelo (2018), among others. For an insightful analysis of the enduring relevance of structuralism, see Fischer (2015).

Dos Santos was at the centre of this dependency movement although many would not have known it. Whatever the merits of these theories and Dos Santos's contribution to them, he undoubtedly encouraged new generations of scholars and activists to ground themselves in the real problems facing the world, their own countries and peoples.<sup>28</sup> He was keen to contribute to a social science which reflected the realities of the South within the world context and warned against the mechanical application of theories emanating from a different reality. His many writings and numerous talks all over the world were an inspiration and motivation for many to develop their critical intellectual creativity and activism for the betterment of humanity.

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28. As part of his political activism it was important for Dos Santos to reach out to the widest possible audience and hence his articles and books were reproduced in a variety of publications. A four-volume book of his collected works is available online for free (but note that the page numbering can be erratic): María del Carmen del Valle Rivera and Sergio Javier Jasso Villazul (eds) (2015) *Obras Reunidas de Theotonio dos Santos* [*Collected Works of Theotonio Dos Santos*], 4 volumes. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). It can be downloaded from <http://ru.iiec.unam.mx/id/eprint/3105>. Dos Santos's 'academic curriculum vitae', which refers only to his professional activities and publications, can be downloaded from the website of the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development): <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6723468271805377>.

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