

State, pattern of development and agriculture: the Brazilian case

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes transformations in Brazilian agriculture in the light of the relations between the rural sector and the Brazilian model of economic development during the last 50 years. The article aims to distinguish the period prior to the crisis of the 1980s with that prevailing in the last two decades, focusing on the State's intervention in the rural context. Particular attention is given to the way in which the Brazilian State incorporated specific interests from different rural segments, both in the developmentalist phase and the subsequent period marked by fiscal crisis.

Key words. Rural development; Pattern of development; Brazilian agriculture.

The characterization of the pattern of development adopted by Latin American societies from the mid 1940's to the early 1980's has been denominated in the specialized literature the *national-developmental* project in an attempt to understand a common trajectory in the various national experiences. The term certainly embodies contradictions, particularly if one confronts its ECLA inspired theoretical matrix with the military-nationalist project, which was dominant in a good portion of these societies for considerable time.¹ Few countries maintained the national development project throughout the entire period considered. The international crises that shook the interventionist structures of European and North American capitalism during the 1970's, also placed in check the Latin American recipe for industrialization, with the exceptions of Mexico and Brazil. The latter was able to maintain, in a certain form, the basic

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¹ It is in this sense that Furtado (1995: 103) refers to a "deep antinomy between development and social project" in Brazil, when comparing the military regime to the pre-1964 proposal for an ECLA standard of industrialization.

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concept of the project through the mid 1980's, even while plunged in a deep crisis (Fiori, 1992a; Hirschman, 1987).

In the Brazilian case, the results obtained were criticized by these perspectives,² especially because of the inability of the model mentioned to lead to alternatives compatible with the international transformations underway since the 1970's. It was also not able to make endogenous the national development process vis-à-vis the commitments, demands and interests of the national and international segments that punctuate the local trajectory.

The transformations in Brazilian agriculture do not escape the rule, and remained subordinated to the industrializing strategies, corroborating a rapid modification of the national demographic situation, which over 50 years inverted the country's rural and urban population. While in 1930, 70% of the people were residing in rural areas, by 1980 just under one third of the population still lived in the countryside.

The development of capitalism in rural Brazil, however, gave continuity to the historic characteristics of the country's social formation, including the high concentration of land ownership, and to the asymmetries that ruled the trajectory of national industrialization.³

For our purposes, the emphasis on the theme of the State articulates an entire series of characteristics of the dynamic of the national development "model" in question. In fact, the State took responsibility for promoting growth and administrating the economic cycle, for controlling multinational interests in the domestic orbit and for the form of distribution of income and of wealth in general (Fiori, 1992b).

Nevertheless, the praxis of this project and the structure on which the political and economic regime were consolidated did not correspond either to the idea of construction of the Nation (denying citizenship to thousands of poor people) or the creation of a "national capitalism" supported by a "conquering bourgeoisie":

² Fiori (1992b) and Martins (1991), for example, despite emphasizing the economic efficiency of government action and the positive macroeconomic performance supported by high growth rates, pointed to a series of "problematic" issues in terms of the authoritarian state and social inequality. Portella (1994), in turn, blames the import substitution mode for the poor suitability of the developmentalist structure in the 1980's.

³ A systematization of these mistaken attempts can be found in Fiori (1992b): a) the atrophy of the private financial system; b) truncated development of government financial centralization; c) the absence of an authentic process of monopolization; d) the lack of national control over foreign capital; e) the regressive distribution of income; f) the concentration of land ownership; g) exacerbated industrial protectionism, and the favoring of special interests; h) "privatization" of the State, compromising its economic and bureaucratic rationality; i) an "elective affinity" between the national development project and the military regime. Cf. Fiori (1992b: 81-82).

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To over simplify, it is possible to say that from the 1930's to the 1980's [...] the idea of nation building prevailed in Brazil, based on industrialization via import substitution, with the State as the demiurge, various shades of nationalism as an ideology and different forms of populism as a political support. This was commonly called 'national developmentalism', which was not a concept, but described and synthesized a political project and a style of action (Martins, 1991: 3).

The peaking of the international crises in the early 1980's left the Latin American countries in the peculiar situation of becoming exporters of capital due to the growing foreign debt. This was allied to a dramatic absence and or lack of political visibility of other national projects, which were suffocated by the hegemony of neoliberal policies, in a context of growing globalization of economic, political and financial relations. The international transformations not only made the national pattern of development the center of attention, but led to a crisis of its very postulates. The resulting political entropy compromised the project's rationality and domestic economic logic pointed to the structural depletion of the model, as well as of the government action that sustained it (Martins, 1991).

The transformations underway in contemporary capitalism led to the redimensioning of the very form of State action and to a review of concepts about development, in particular those concerning social economic development. In this situation, it is opportune to reconsider the interfaces that were established with the rural dynamic, emphasizing its mercantile, techno-productive and financial factors.

State, national-developmentalism and capitalist economy

We believe that the situation, considering the problem of the State at the epicenter, can be approached in a number of manners. Given the objectives of this text, we thus intend to simply review the issues related to the withering of the national developmentalist standard and the possibilities that were opened in the field of public policies. It is clear that this route calls for a reanalysis of the relationship between the form of the state and the process of capitalist accumulation, and more generically, of the relationship between economics and politics. Some speculations about these issues will be sketched.

It appears clear to us that interventionism set the tone for ECLA's proposal for the development of Latin American societies and characterized the specificity of late peripheral growth. This can be demonstrated, for example, in the criticism - and subsequent blockage - that the proposal aimed at the points of strangulation found in these countries, which limited industrialization. As

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Rodríguez (1986) maintained, the State acted as a protagonist in the industrialization process, accepting, at the level of debate and in the government actions, the role of mediator between political instances and the productive base, emphasizing the “social” dimension of the public intervention.⁴

The recuperation of the role of the State at the base of the foundation of the national-developmental project complied with the goal of identifying its limits and scope, maintaining the “interventionist” perspective. Nevertheless, it also led to the false interpretation that the Latin American State acted, to use an expression of Poulantzas (1985), as a *Subject-State*, supported by an absolute autonomy from the interests and commitments at stake.⁵

Without disconsidering the discretionary character of the government power and its “elective affinity” for the military regime (Fiori, 1992b), it is necessary to consider the “power of arbitration of the developmentalist State, unlike the “first-worldist” experience in which the arbitration

was historically made viable by means of a state institutionality that condensed the conflict of classes and the competition among capital that was filtered by a political system that was able to intermediate the conflicts and successive agreements protecting a certain autonomous operational ability to the State bureaucracies” (Fiori, 1989: 107).

In the Latin American case, and above all the Brazilian one, “this arbitration was always more difficult, to the degree to which the conflicts between highly heterogeneous forces and the weak social “representativity” shifted directly to within the State apparatus, using its institutional nature and the power of its bureaucracies as cement for its agreements”. The “equal among unequals” treatment wound up perpetuating the subterfuge of an “escaping forward”, in the terms used by Fiori, as a response to the governability crises. This had consequences, in a certain way, on the degree of statization, in the size of the bureaucracy and in the protective interventionism. This strategy led to a “heterodoxically politicized valorization of capital”,

⁴ “From this derives the specificity of a government interventionism explicitly dedicated to executing a ‘development model’ for society as a whole. It is worth noting that the State intervention did not correspond as much to a “correctional” function of the market as to a deliberate effort to promote economic and social development” (Lechner, 1993: 238).

⁵ For Poulantzas, “*the State, in this case capitalist, should not be considered as one more intrinsic entity, as is the case of ‘capital’, as a relationship, more precisely as the material condensation of a relation of forces between classes and class factions, as expressed more specifically, at the heart of the State*”. This understanding of the state form avoids, according to the author “the impasses of the eternal pseudo-dilemma of the discussion about the State, between the State conceived as an object or tool and the State as Subject. The State as an object: the old instrumentalist concept of the State, a passive tool, if not neutral, totally manipulated by a single class or fraction, in which case no autonomy is recognized to the State. The State as Subject, the autonomy of the State, considered here as absolute, is submit to its will as the rationalizing instance of civil society” (Poulantzas, 1985: 147-148).

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forcing a conviviality at the heart of state power of “highly speculative factions and orbits of mercantile finance and of low productivity industrial and agrarian factions. Given that in this process, unlike those in the central countries, the defeated and the various sectors denominated as ‘civil society’ never had any veto power over the decisions of the victorious” (idem, *ibidem*: 107-108).

This specific manner in which the State established itself in both the political and economic orbit, derived, according to Faletto (1989), from the dependent character of Latin American societies, in which the problem of efficiency of state economic action does not stem only and exclusively from the technobureaucratic capacity, but also from the intricate relations of power, under the characteristics already indicated. This led to a deepening of the relationship between economics and politics, or between the State and accumulation of capital in the “interventionist” context of the standard in question.⁶

One possible approach is that presented by Bresser Pereira (1989) based on the cyclic character of state intervention, in an attempt to counter both the neoliberal thesis of an exclusively private nature as well as the state prescription. In this approach, the “presence” of the State, which would indicate the “degree” of existing intervention, should not only be analyzed in quantitative terms, but above all qualitative ones. In this case, the character of this intervention changes during the different phases of the cycle, and through the different economic and political cycles. It is also possible according to Bresser to think of the existence of some stages during these stages (not exactly in a linear form), particularly if we consider the last long cycle, the 30 golden years of contemporary capitalism:

In the first stage state intervention is guided by primitive accumulation, by the forced savings needed to begin industrialization; then, the welfare state was established; in the third, the support for scientific development and technological progress became the main factor of state intervention (Bresser Pereira, 1989: 127).

According to Bresser, this “dynamic” approach to the State form became important due to the fact that “direct” intervention through the establishment of state companies, for example, at the beginning of the industrialization process, is essential for guaranteeing the process of structural

⁶ Without discussing the merits of the arguments of the “derivationist school” of the State, it is worth repeating the warning made by Altwater (s/d: 88), for whom the “very category ‘State Interventionism’ is problematic. Its current use implies an imprecise relation between society, its economic structure and the State”.

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change, although it became dysfunctional, as in the excess in public spending, at a later time. The crises of the 1980's marked the descending phase of this cycle and forced a conjugated process of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. The central issue was thus the definition of the *mix* (not the best one) for intervention suitable to the needs of the fluctuating economic cycles.

Bresser's contribution, however, by relating the form and mechanisms of state intervention to the process of accumulation and its cyclic oscillations, corners the conflicting political dynamic of which we previously spoke, now at the function of accumulation and productive valorization.

We believe that to better understand these relations, whether in times of stability or crisis, the relational-strategic perspective formulated by Jessop (1990) appears to be more suitable. This analysis understands that a movement towards increased autonomy of the State, defined as a process of *particularization*, promoted an institutional separation of the circuit of capital, sought a political consensus among the various factions of the dominant class, which was able to make viable a political strategy of accumulation. In the Brazilian case:

the State acquired considerable autonomy vis-à-vis its social base, making it an active subject in the execution of the modernizing industrialization project that transformed society [...] and established the basis of state institutionality that would endure from the 1930's until today. Thus, the basic role of the State in the consolidation of the hegemonic project since 1930 was sustained by the limits of the political pacts among the dominant classes and on the progressive capacity for intervention in the economy that the new management instruments, the political innovations and the centralization process would confer to them (Nogueira, 1993: 4).

Thus, from Jessop's perspective (1990), the construction of "entrepreneurial hegemony" involved various elements that composed the strategic selectivity – forms of representation, intervention and articulation – which assumed a structural character in a given state form. The author understood capital accumulation as the contingent result of the dialect of structures and strategies. The efficiency of the latter depended on their adaptation to the margin of the maneuver corresponding to the prevailing structures and their reflection in the interplay of political forces.⁷

⁷ The line of thinking defended by Jessop is echoed in the regulationist approach. However, this appears to us broader than, for example, the work undertaken by Théret (1990) in which the spheres of *political accumulation* (material and symbolic resources of power) and of economic accumulation have their own dynamic and appear more distanced.

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The particularization factor mentioned by Jessop (1990), if applied to the historic Brazilian case, would indicate a limitation, given the existence of a process of “politicized accumulation”:

politicized, because it responds much more than to the rules of the market, to the determinations of a State whose action, however, is always submit to the limits imposed by an extremely limited but intense political struggle between interests of capital and regional power blocks, incapable of imposing, by means of a clear supremacy, the political hierarchization of socioeconomic heterogeneity” (Fiori, 1992a: 105).

This does not prevent that in moments of leveraging of the development process (which would correspond to the ascendent phase of the Bresser Perreira cycle), that the interventionism does not make itself present, as already indicated. This indefintion also marks the critical phase *vis-à-vis* the difficulty of “mounting a new strategic project”.

According to Nogueira (1993), it is precisely the constitution of the formation of the modern State in Brazil that explains the difficulty of conducting the changes by institutional means, verified by the intra-block power disputes and the near impossibility of tracing and redefining strategies, leading to political crises that soon become institutional ones, as Brazilian society has experienced in recent times. Advancing a bit, we can speculate that, in some way, this situation led Evans(1993) to consider Brazil as an intermediary case of a developmentalist State.

In reality, we would like to emphasize that Jessup’s analysis offers a dialectical treatment of the political and economic determinations in the definition of the strategic proess. To some degree, in the relation between economics and politics, this perspective was already indicated by Poulantzas’ (1985: 194) analysis of State apparatuses, specifically the economic apparatus, in which the notion of the State as a regulating agent emerged significantly. Because, “if from here on the process of accumulation of capital directly sets the agenda for State action, it is only touches its core when articulated and inserted in its politics as a whole”. The strategic idea of defining a capacity of articulation of the state public apparatus is reinforced, thus forging a trail that could have characteristics associated to social-economic development and not necessarily to growth *stricto sensu*.

In this direction, we can aggregate the perspective of Evans (1995), for whom the definition of the notion of relative *embedded autonomy* is fundamental. It is worth emphasizing that the dislocation of the accumulation of capital as a determining axis of the points of inflection of the development process – opening to a conjugated determination with the political sphere – would guide the analysis of the broad economic historiography of Latin American societies and of Brazil in particular.

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Metamorphosis of State action, development and globalization

In a context of deep transformations in the international capitalist order, above all after the end of the period known as the “glorious thirty” (Hirschman, 1986), it is also necessary to reconsider the very role of the State, which passed from having protagonistic position to a defensive posture, due to the emergence of liberal-conservative thinking (Draibe, 1993) and the process widely called “globalization”.

Initially, it appears important to us to insist on the profile and relations established based on the developmentalist state, considering the Brazilian case, in order to then focus on the crisis that struck it.

To do so, we believe that Evans’ (1993) contribution is useful. First, this author seeks to better define the concept of *Developmentalist State*, applied to those States that

extract surplus but also supply collective goods. This strengthens long-term business prospects among private elites given the increased incentives to the engagement in transformative investments and to the reduction of the risks involved in these investments. They may not be immune to the “orientation to income” or to the use of part of the social surplus for the purposes of the occupants of government posts and their friends, and not for the citizenry as a whole. Nevertheless, in the final accounting, the consequences of its actions promote more than impede the economic adjustment and structural transformation (Evans, 1993: 117).

Far beyond the relative autonomy prescribed by Marxist analyses, Evans (1993, 1995) sought to develop the notion of *relative inserted autonomy*, for which the constitution of a “true bureaucracy” is essential,⁸ as attested by the Japanese case. In Evan’s perspective, the Marxist approach is limited by the designs of capitalist accumulation. It is necessary to “insert them” in a “concrete set of social ties that would link the State to society and create institutionalized channels for the continuous negotiation and renegotiation of goals and policies”(Evans, 1993: 136).

According to Evans, (1995) the relative autonomy established was a necessary mechanism for guaranteeing the capacity of the responses of the public policies to the problems detected in the private actors, given that they depend, in the final instance, on the same actors for their

⁸ “[...] The clear contrast between the pre-bureaucratic, patrimonialist character of the predatory State and the more narrowly Weberian character of the developmentalist state should provoke doubts among those who attribute the ineffectiveness of the Third World states to their bureaucratic nature. The lack of bureaucracy may be a better diagnosis” (Evans, 1993: 135).

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implementation. The limits to the possible challenges to the clientelism and the corruption are maintained, due to the fact that this insertion only has value in the context of autonomy. In the Brazilian case, the only Latin American example analyzed by the author, the bureaucratic consolidation took place in “pockets of efficiency”, yet were not able to become generalized to the entire public web. This conduces to individualization and not to institutionalization of the relations established between the State and civil society, making specific forms of activity emerge, such as the “bureaucratic rings” formulated by Cardoso (1993).

In this way, it appears to us appropriate to apply the consideration sketched here to the recent trajectory of the Latin American societies. The interventionist performance of these States, far from establishing a mix of the degree of participation in the public sphere, there was a consolidation of political arrangements supported by the economic vitality that, with its already commented scope and limits, was not able to survive the structural crises of the depletion of a strategic project. In the Brazilian case, this project was undermined by its crisis of hegemony in the late 1970's, by the experience of the II PND and by the emergence of neoliberal thinking, substantiated in the so-called “Washington Consensus” (Williamson, 1992). This crisis was sharply manifest in the state fabric itself, going beyond the fiscal dimension, infecting the entire State and its bureaucracy.

Concerning the problematic of the Latin American and Brazilian developmentalist State, the crisis, according to Fiori (1992b: 85), was a cruel and faithful portrait of the State's *modus operandi*: “strong when arbitrating with certain autonomy the domestic value of money and credits. Weak each time that it sought to go beyond the limits established by its constitutive commitments. Always moving on the knife edge of a liberal-developmental alliance among extremely segmented and heterogeneous interests, it wound up succumbing to the contradictions that are constantly activating and destabilizing it, being led in its critical trajectory to a more complete entropy of its Schumpeterian side”.

In another work, the same author detailed the dimensions that accompanied the depletion of the “old paradigm” and its interface with the problematic of the State, thus configuring a road without return. According to Fiori:

It was upon this framework of a relatively successful ‘developmentalism’ (from the point of view of its industrializing objectives) that the international financial crises of the late 1970's had an impact in a differentiated and specific form. From an economic point of view, the shock of interest rates, followed by the government's assumption of the foreign private debt, multiplied the domestic public debt, corroded the patrimonial

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structure and decreed the financial crises of the State and of the entire economy, eroding the capacity for reproduction of the developmentalist paradigm. From a political point of view, on the other hand, the crises of authoritarianism began even before the economic crises. Successive electoral defeats, added to the victorious questioning of a combative unionism, and the absence of corporate solidarity in relation to the economic strategy of the Geisel Government, created the cultural broth that corroded the authoritarian coalition and opened the doors to the redemocratization process. After 1982, these two processes were conjugated and increasingly confused with global transformations, giving place to a transition to a new paradigm without form and without defined name [...] (Fiori, 1995: 352).

It is essential to consider the changes in the international situation in order to characterize the new forms of insertion of public policies, above all given the globalizing structures, in particular of the financial structure (Chesnais, 1996). For Martins (1996: 6-7), these changes basically refer to three factors: a) the expansion of large companies, with multiplication of operations abroad from their national bases, defining and implanting competitive organizational models and strategies on an international level; b) the growing weight of science and technology in the increasingly concentrated productive forces; c) the rise of the financial macro-structure~, allowing the financial institutions to exceed their classic functions of offering credit and intermediation. For Jessop (1992), the alterations in the global economy and their relations with the functions of the State are marked by four parameters: a) the guidance of government action to support the new technologies and their broad application to the promotion of competitiveness; b) the regulation of the forms of the business alliances, commercial disputes, transfer of knowledge, migration of labor, etc., considering the growing internationalization process of companies and the resulting compromising of the forms of State control on a national level; c) the linking of the form of the state to the transformations underway in the passage from the *Keynesian Welfare State* (KWS) to the *Schumpeterian Workfare State* (SWS);⁹ d) the restructuring of the States and their international repositioning considering the importance that

⁹ “Thirdly, there has been a paradigm shift from a Fordist growth model based on mass production, scale economies, and mass consumption to one oriented to flexible production, innovation, scope economies, innovation rents, and more rapidly changing and differentiated patterns of consumption. [...] It is in this context that the transition to a post-Fordist techno-economic paradigm is prompting a reorientation of the state’s principal economic functions. For the combination of the late Fordist trend towards internationalization and the post-Fordist emphasis on flexible production encourages policy-makers to focus on the supply-side problem of international competitiveness and to attempt to subordinate welfare policy to the demands of flexibility. This is the shift from the KWS to the SWS” (Jessop, 1992: 6).

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the hegemony of the U.S.-Germany-Japan trio had on the formation of regional spaces, such as NAFTA, APEC and the European Union.

Without precognizing the failure of the State, Jessup, like Evans (1993; 1995), reconsidered the form of government insertion, if in a distinct environment. It is important to highlight his characterization of a new Schumpeterian State (SWS), even if Jessop did not necessarily share recognition for these trends. In this new environment, the State is urged to promote technological innovations (forms of products, processes, markets and organization) and to support a strategy for structural competitiveness – considering open economies – above all by providing conditions that converge for this purpose, with the subordination of social policies to the demands of flexibility of the labor market and competitiveness (Jessop, 1992).

This process of reformulation of Government functions, considered by the recent literature as “State reform” or even: “reform of the state apparatus”, also led to a redefinition of its internal structure. In the Brazilian case, it was recently common to emphasize the transformation of what had been denominated the Social State, with a legal-bureaucratic public administration, to a Social Liberal State, with the participation of a general-strategic public administration (Bresser Pereira, 1997). The activities related to the production of goods and services, which had been undertaken by state agencies, were all privatized, as well as their auxiliary activities, now charged to sub-contracted companies. These measures were justified by the idea that the excess interventionism of the Social State was one of the principal causes of the crises of the States, in addition to all the neoclassical-conservative measures, and defined the logic of the administrative reform plan of the FHC government (Bresser Pereira, 1997). On the other pole, the activities exclusive to the State, (inspection, taxation etc.) remained in its formal structure, but were redimensioned by the size and form of intervention, in an attempt to distinguish them by their place of execution: whether in the strategic nucleus, formulating agencies, executive agencies or regulatory agencies (Brazil/Presidência República, 1995; Bresser Pereira, 1997).

Even if one disagrees with this proposal, it is interesting to observe, as has Evans (1993), that from a liberal perspective that called for a reduction in government tasks and for the privatization of government companies, the State had an important role to fulfill, leading us to two other important issues. First, the process of globalization has been recently re-evaluated, after an avalanche of studies in the early 1990’s that identified the death of nation States. Without contesting the loss of administrative autonomy, above all, of macroeconomic policies by the part of “peripheral societies”, some authors have sought to see the impacts of globalization in relative terms. Wade (1996: 88) maintained that: in the States of the South we

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may see a reassertion of the role of the State and even a deliberate step towards disintegration from the world economy for another, more distress-driven reason. [...] Many countries of the South that have fast-rising populations will find it difficult to raise the ratio of skilled to unskilled people as fast as the ladder itself is rising. It is least possible that the difficulties of competing in international markets will strengthen the hand of political forces that seek to pursue more autarchic, state-led policies. This would then be another way in which, in the South as well as in the North, reports of the death of the national economy are greatly exaggerated”.

Secondly, in a more offensive perspective that highlights the functions of “*State-husbandry*” and “*State-midwifery*”, Evans (1995) has pointed to the need for State intervention in the consolidation of sectors that respond to the strategic government policies. It is still not known if these interventions have the stamina to unleash a new outbreak of autonomous growth or to formulate a new pattern of development.

Economic development, pattern of development and agriculture

The characterization of the notion of the pattern of development, has, as we have seen until now, an intimate relation with the profile of state intervention. This relationship proved to be pertinent to consider the contours of the national developmentalist standard and subsequently its crises and depletion. In this case, specifically, the concept of development is linked to the economic realm and its possibilities of interpreting the processes pertaining to the rural region. This concern shaped the debates of the 1960’s and 1970’s concerning the Brazilian situation, as we will examine below.

The very concept of development, far from being an evolutionist perspective, has been questioned or even re-elaborated (Sachs, 1989). In the realm of economics and economic history, there are various interpretations and currents that seek to explain the phenomenon (Arndt, 1981; Cowen and Shenton, 1996). Schumpeter (1985: 47), for example, understood the term as simply:

The changes of economic life that were not imposed from outside, but that arose from within, by their own initiative. If it is concluded that these changes are not emerging in the economic sphere, and that the phenomenon that we call economic development is in practice based on the fact that the data change and that the economy continuously adapts to them, then we would say that there is no economic development. We mean to say that economic development is not a phenomenon to be explained economically, but that the economy, without development is dragged by the changes in the world around

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it, and that the causes and therefore the explanation of development should be sought outside the set of facts that are described by economic theory. Nor would mere economic growth demonstrated by growth in population and wealth be designated as a process of development, [...].¹⁰

Schumpeter's contribution has been essential to the characterization of the transformations in the economic order, particularly those related to technological innovations, understood here in their broader sense, as demonstrated by the author. As we saw above, this characterization is necessary to introduce other elements and factors, which were at times "external" to the economic environment, but have a strong capacity to explain the changes it experienced.

In this sense, Polanyi was recently revived by the economic literature, despite having written more than 50 years ago. He saw the economic process as a social process, the rationality of which does not refer exclusively to the means employed and the results expected, but precisely to the relationship between them, transcending its formal meaning and respective attempts to apply it to the social reality. This movement of positions of the economic process, which are susceptible to a wide variety of appropriations, leads, according to Schumpeter, to the realm of the institutional analysis to be understood. To conduct this analysis, the tools employed by the author relate to the forms of commerce, to the uses of money and to the elements of the market (Polanyi, 1978).

In this perspective some authors have sought to incorporate the notion of social development (Furtado, 1994; Sachs, 1995) with the recent support of multilateral agencies. This redimensioning, like that coupled to the concerns for the environment and sustainability, have sought to reflect upon that which Sachs (1995: 31-2) has called the experiences of *bad development*:

We are here at the kernel of the notion of *bad development*, which is not incompatible with economic growth, even strong growth. It is that growth and development are not synonymous. While enormous social disparities persist, growth certainly continues to be a necessary, *although in no way sufficient*, condition for development, whose distributive and qualitative factors cannot be denied. It is a mistake to say that the

¹⁰ For his purposes, Schumpeter defines the crucial elements that, by breaking with the circular flow, led to a set of innovations (in products, production methods, market, raw materials and industrial organization) fundamental to the "creative destruction" process. These include: "enterprise" (the realization of new combinations), the "entrepreneur" by means of which these combinations are realized) and credit, the mediator par excellence of these relations. Cf. Schumpeter (cap. II).

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exorbitant social and ecological costs of certain forms of economic growth constitute the *inevitable damages of progress* (emphasis by the author).

As Hirschman (1986) well recalls, these concerns were, in some form, the object of the constitutive analyses of the school that was conventionally called the “economy of development”. Based on two basic principles, *monoeconomy* and *reciprocal advantages*, this author sought to frame a basic typology for the understanding of development theories. The orthodox economy was located in the first quadrant, in which the two principles were affirmed.¹¹ When the first principle is affirmed, but the second denied, the author includes the thinking of Marx. The economy of development, with its various leanings, is situated precisely in the inverse sense, or that is, it affirms the reciprocity of the advantages and denies the monoeconomy. Finally, in the quadrant in which the two principles are denied, we find the neoMarxist theories.

In some way, and disagreeing with a strict “neoMarxist” characterization, we can locate the ECLA inspired ideas mentioned above in this last quadrant of Hirschman’s scheme. It is worth highlighting that one of the basic issues of this school was founded on the notion of *underdevelopment*¹² (Furtado, 1992), to some degree associated to the process of industrialization. For our later interests, it is worth mentioning that, from ECLA’s perspective, beyond the importance of the national dimension, the issue of international relations was constantly in focus, conditioning the peripheral situation of the Latin American economies. This focus was at the base of the import substitution model, crucial to the characterization of the economic environment of the national developmentalist standard.

Furtado (1992: 6), in an article that reviewed the issue of underdevelopment, affirmed:

[...]development theories are explanatory schemes of social processes in which the assimilation of new technologies and the consequent increase of productivity lead to the

¹¹ “Two propositions are found at the base of the orthodox position: 1) economic science is based on a certain number of simple but powerful and universally valid theorems, ‘in the same way there is only a single physics, there is only one economic science’; 2) one of these universal theorems is that, in a market economy, all the participants in the economic exchanges take advantage of all its voluntary acts of participation ‘because if not, they do not take place’. In this way classic science simultaneously affirmed monoeconomy and the reciprocity of advantages” (Hirschman, 1986: 53).

¹² “Underdevelopment is a disequilibrium in the assimilation of the technological advances produced by industrial capitalism in favor of the innovations that directly influence lifestyle. This proclivity towards absorption of innovations in the standards of consumption has as a counterpart a delay in the adoption of more effective production methods. It is that the two processes of penetration of new techniques are supported by the same vector, which is accumulation, in the productive forces and directly in consumption objects. The growth of one requires the advance of the other. The root of underdevelopment resides in the disarticulation of these two processes caused by modernization” (Furtado, 1992: 8).

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improvement of well-being of a population with a growing social homogenization. [...] The concept of social homogenization does not refer to the uniformization of living standards but that members of a society have their needs for food, clothing, housing, education, leisure and a minimum of cultural goods broadly satisfied.

Therefore, any ambition of making the peripheral economies, “identical” to the industrialized economies through a process of overcoming underdevelopment is also seen in a relative manner. In this line, the author makes an effort to defend the principles of social homogenization and the creation of an efficient production system with relative technological autonomy. This requires the decentralization of market-oriented decisions, guided State action and exposure to international competition. Recurring to Schumpeter’s previously presented definition, it is interesting to contrast Furtado’s position with other analyses that reflect a strategy closer to the principle of “suitability”, above all in times of globalization. Thus, instead of “social homogenization” we have “social solidarity” and in the place of technological autonomy, there is a dispute of the “fringes” of the new paradigm (Mello, 1992).

For the purposes of this study - an analysis of the relations between economic development and agriculture in Brazil in the 1980’s and 1990’s - it is necessary to refer to the use of the very concept of pattern of development, and reject any non-historic approach. The definition of the pattern of development proposed by Erber (1992) appears to us to be an important initial mark for undertaking the study, by applying it to the case of agriculture. For Erber, the concept can be defined, in a given capitalist formation, as the “set of relations between the economic and social agents that guarantees, over a period of time, the maintenance of the processes of accumulation of *capital and of the preservation of political power*” (Erber, 1992: 9). In the case of *economic development*, Erber suggests some relations that should be characterized and emphasized in the analysis. They include:

- a) norms of accumulation, determined by the intersectoral and intrasectoral relations of purchases, technical progress and prices [...], by the standard of competition, by the relations of production, by the introduction of technical progress and by the creation of new sectors or markets; b) production norms, determined by the degree of automation and minimum scales of production, standardization of products, the relation between productivity and salaries, the degree of hierarchization and the rigidity of the forms of control of the labor process, the fragmentation of the activities of conception and execution, the collective or individual character of the labor contract; c) consumption norms, the composition of the basic food basket for consumers and forms of providing this basket [...]; d) financing norms for the public and private sector,

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relations between self-financing, domestic credit, involuntary transfers (via inflation for example), taxation and foreign resources, property relations and those of prices between the financial system and other sectors; e) norms for innovation and diffusion of technical progress, relations between technical progress and scientific development, types of scientific and technical knowledge (even organizational ones) the participation of various agents [...] in the introduction and diffusion of knowledge, sectoral differences in these processes, the rhythm of introduction and diffusion; f) norms for State intervention, State action as an agent of resolution of political conflicts and of maintenance of the power structure, as regulator of activity at the macroeconomic level, as regulator, supplier or organizer of specific activities, sectors or companies and as a direct supplier of goods and services; g) norms for international insertion, participation in international trade flows, financing, investment and technology, participation of foreign companies and institutions in the other structural relations of the pattern of development (Erber, 1992: 10).

In keeping with Erber, it is worth adding that these norms establish links among each other that are capable of maintaining the stability of the pattern of development in a given period, although the distinct rhythms in which they act influence the possibility for crises of the standard itself. The author adds that the structural relations that sustain the pattern of development move at a national level according to contours determined by the foreign dimension, above all those related to the industrialization process that is often confused with the very notion of the pattern of development, which according to Erber, assumes a central role in the dynamic of capitalist accumulation.

We have reviewed these contributions as a background to the basic debate concerning the modernization process of Brazilian agriculture in the recent period and to allow developing and deepening some of the basic factors related to the patterns of development, as will be seen below. To do so it is necessary to briefly summarize some general concepts about the relation between agriculture and economic development.

The “place” and the “weight” attributed to the rural sector in the development process vary considerably according to the various schools of thought (Throsby, 1986), and according to the historical-temporal reality about which we return, denying once again the principle of the mono-economy of which Hirschman spoke. Recognizing the specificities of the distinct interpretations of the “functions” of agriculture, we can agree with Throsby (1986: 39 pp..) who shows us that the relationship between agriculture and economic development encompasses five

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inter-related areas: a) agriculture is directly associated to the food sector, which, in turn, is at the center of the development process. This process leads to the need to treat the rural sector according to an intersectoral analysis; b) in this line, the agricultural sector is directly involved in the questions related to the distribution of wealth, specifically to the issue of food security and social exclusion, which, in turn associates this debate more to the social-economic than the technological environment; c) in sequence, the relations between agriculture and distribution of wealth, or more precisely with social equality, are also explored; d) for the countries in development, factors concerning mechanisms of structural change (land ownership, for example) are essential, as well as the role of technical progress and of changes in the intensity of the use of various productive factors and to the incorporation of social, political and institutional variables; e) finally, and with equal emphasis for developing countries, are highlighted the policies aimed at infrastructure for the sector, such as the best use and access to property assets.

Throsby's position differs significantly from orthodox economics, whose most important proponents are Hayami and Ruttan (1988). Declaring that the debate about development can be divided into three distinct approaches (1. stages/phases of growth; 2. Dual economy 3. Structuralist economy), these authors maintain that the agricultural process should be considered from their own bases, with emphasis on a microeconomic perspective. Or that is, "the review of the literature about the economy of development indicates that there is a new consensus in the sense that agricultural growth is understood to be essential (if not a precondition) for industrialization and global economic growth. Nevertheless, the process of agricultural growth on its own is outside of the analysis of most development economists. Both technical changes as well as institutional evolution have been treated as exogenous to their systems" (idem: 47). The perspective of these authors emphasizes approaches that focus on models of resource exploitation, conservation, localization, diffusion, modern inputs and finally of induced innovation. In the final case, the technological innovations are induced by the change in relative prices and by the institutional responses to the changes in the market.

Another possibility for reconsidering the interfaces of the agricultural sector with economic development reside in the adoption of a dual perspective, as taken by Mounier (1992): a) that of the point of view of global analysis, or that is, one that considers "development factors"; b) or, even, from a plurisectoral analysis, one that is related to the "development sectors". In the first case, the emphasis is on explaining "how" agriculture is inserted in the development context. The second questions "why" this insertion took place. In the latter approach, the intersectoral dimension can be treated in terms of "dual models" (traditional/agricultural x modern/industrial) of "sectional models" or "departmental" ones (consumer goods/capital goods,

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intermediary goods); and even in terms of “sectoral models” (in which the social relations related to production and the social division of labor operate). It is from the development sectors approach that the author considers the plurisectoral analysis of agricultural growth, from two perspectives: “industrial-centrist” theories” and “agrocentrist” theories (Mounier, 1992: cap. V).

In the schools that focus on the industrialization process as the dynamic motor of development, the schemes of expanded reproduction are recuperated, in which are noticed an hierarchization of the industrial structure, generally associating the priority industries to the capital goods sector, thus establishing poles, complexes etc, as Erber (1992) had previously indicated. From this matrix emerges a concept of “industrialization of agriculture” in which agricultural development appears to be conditioned on industrial development. This is one more division formulated by Mounier, an author who isolates a radical interpretation of this process, (or that is, the complete annulment of the “agricultural specificities” and their subordination to the industrial dynamic, as one of its branches) from the other interpretation, defended by Johnston (1970), which maintained close ties with the Rostowian approach of growth in stages, according to which industrialization of agriculture would be constituted in one of these moments. In any case, particularly in the French literature dedicated to the issue, a growing body of work is found that strives to apply this methodological instrument, beginning with the studies of Boudeville (1963) and Malassis (1968).

In the field of agrocentrist theories, “se reconnaît à ce qu’elle prétend que la bonne santé d’une économie, quelque soit son niveau de développement, dépend toujours de la bonne santé de l’agriculture” (Mounier, 1992: 196). This same line emphasizes the “functions” of agriculture for the development process, which are: a) food supply (goods-salary) b) generation of employment; c) liberation of labor for industry; d) generation of industrial inputs; e) financing of industrial activities; f) generation of investments for industry; g) constitution of a market for urban-industrial goods and services; h) contribution to the ecological and territorial equilibrium. In a reading more concerned with “agrarian questions”, the author emphasizes the concerns for the social struggles in rural areas and the possibility for reproduction of the peasantry.

It appears to us that even in an “agrocentrist” approach, the dichotomy between agriculture and industry is not discarded, nor is that between the rural and the urban, which the industrial-centrist approach attempts to suppress with the notion of the agroindustrial complex. It is also worth adding, in this brief review of the relations between agriculture and development, the importance that the rural sector has in the process of international insertion, above all in

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economies in “under development”, a factor that Mounier (1992) also worked with. As we saw previously, structuralist thinkers, in particular those linked to ECLA, focused much of their concerns on this factor, characterizing the peripheral economies of *outward oriented growth* (agroexports), as found in Latin America. They also saw this as an origin of industrialization in these countries.

It is above all beginning in the 1930's, when an offensive agricultural policy became dominant in the United States (Veiga, 1994), that we can begin to think of the construction of an international system of commercial agricultural and agro-foods relations different than that process of exploitation and exportation of raw materials prevailing in the countries with a “colonial past”. In a certain way, the establishment and the management of domestic agricultural policies, while there was a prevalence of “modern” agricultural policies, constituted an extremely delicate task, particularly for developing countries. As indicated by Friedmann and McMichael (1989), the United States appeared to be the only case capable of autonomously implementing a finished agricultural policy model, above all after the consolidation of its rural development strategy and consolidation and application of its regulatory and financial mechanisms for agricultural activities during the 1930's. This model was characterized by the determination of a technological standard applied to agriculture (based on the binomial (mechanization/mineral chemical) and by the expansion of an agrofood regime at a global level based on milk, meats and cereals, which according to his analysis counted to a large degree on regulatory support (cf. Goodman & Redclift, 1989; Tubiana, 1985). In the European case, after the enactment of the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) the countries with strong participation in agricultural production, such as France and Germany, increasingly came to produce in excess of the demand of the European Community.

Latin America was also the target of a configuration of this international standard, particularly after the 1950's (Burbach and Flynn, 1982), whose implantation decisively influenced the transformation of the technical base of the rural establishments and the form that agroindustrial processing took place, and also modified food standards. In this sense, it can be said that the very management of a key policy, such as the National Rural Credit System (SNCR) in Brazil was conditioned, in the final instance, by the operationalization of that model (the *green revolution*).

Independent of the success of this standard, the recessionary international economy at the end of the 1970's, as discussed above, and the consequent increased cost of the enactment of these interventionist policies, led to a critical context during the 1980's. Questions were raised about

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the previous strategy's suitability to new environmental standards, or concerning the difficulties of finding markets for the surplus production of foods that led to bitter commercial wars between the principal *fair traders* (Friedmann, 1991; Goodman & Redclift, 1989). It was also observed that the United States lost its previously consolidated hegemonic condition, thus redimensioning the possible "spaces" in the foreign trade among the other partners, including Argentina and Brazil (Tubiana, 1985).¹³

Associated to the repositioning of the countries that had most influence on international agrarian standards, the impacts on agricultural production caused by the political, financial and technological transformations of this "new globalized world" were felt in various fields: employment, available technology financing etc. (Buttel & Goodman, 1989). Upon examining the European case more carefully, Bonanno (1989) located the modifications on three levels: a) the economic level: where there was an emergence of flexible forms of production; unemployment and State fiscal crises; b) the social level: where there were changes in the family structure and in labor relations in agriculture; growing similarities between the rural and urban context concerning the regularity of employment, remuneration of labor and the object of employment; c) the political level: where there were crises among political organizations of workers and a resurgence of neoconservatism. According to the author, these transformations accompanied the broad trends in the European rural environment such as the insertion in the process of economic and commercial integration of the European Community, financing of agricultural policies during the fiscal crisis, a concentration of productive units, redefinition of rural identity and issues related to the environment.

This new *modus operandi* of agriculture, or at least the perception of it in the most recent analyses, has raised two issues: a) *the repositioning of the "functions" of agriculture in the economic development process*, in particular in a context of change of technoeconomic paradigm and in the intensification of the globalization process; and b) in a review of the theoretical instruments used to understand the international agrofood system and agricultural-

¹³ According to Goodman and Redclift (1989: 6): "The intensity of world price fluctuations has increased significantly and this instability has been exacerbated in the 1980's by the vigorous, heavily subsidized efforts of the EEC and the United States to expand their exports. These recent trends have further distorted agrarian structures in the Third World but the farm crisis there, which is not the central concern of this volume, is one of food scarcity rather than overproduction, fiscal constraints, and farm indebtedness. The main components of the international farm crisis can be identified as follows: a) the development in the United States of a model of technological innovation and market intervention for agriculture and its international dissemination; b) the breakdown of the post-war system of regulation of world agricultural trade managed by the United States; c) the crisis of political representation and legitimation between farmers' organizations and the state; d) the failure to anticipate or contain the environmental problems associated with the new agricultural technology/policy model".

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industrial relations. Both also relate to the understanding of the formulation and management of sectoral policies, in the case of agricultural and agrarian policies.

The concern for the relationship between agriculture and its spatial movements has allowed the analysis of the sector to take on importance in the debates about the globalization and technological restructuring process. This is the perspective adopted by Bonanno et al. (1994), who looks at the influence of globalization on the Nation-State considering the different compositions between winners and losers in the context of economic internationalization (nations-regional groups; State-transnational companies); of the enactment of new procedures in the productive structure (both agricultural as well as industrial) supported by *global sourcing* and by modifications in labor relations. The regional dimension has taken on increased importance in detriment to a national hegemony (which continues to operate in the regulation of the physical-spatial movement of transnational companies even because no other political alternative has emerged). Nevertheless, for the agricultural sector, the State has maintained its importance, although in a weakened form, as a forum where farmers can resolve their problems.

Unlike the position assumed by Goodman and Watts (1994),¹⁴ Bonanno et al. (1994) argue that we are now in a “Sloanist” era,¹⁵ although one that has not broken directly with the Fordist phase. To the contrary, they have shown that the economy still maintains two characteristics: mass production (even if in a new and smaller productive scale) and the fact that increased income for a good part of the population can be transferred to consumer goods.

In this new globalized composition, the agricultural sector is also inserted in the so-called “glocalization process” or that is, the production of global goods and services with local specificities. This shapes the dilemma between mass and niche consumption, incorporating agriculture to the landscape of the global market of the global production system, in which the standardization of commodities gives place to the differentiation of products and to the segmentation of markets. In this sense, the relationship between losers and winners does not

¹⁴ To escape the traps of the debate about whether agriculture has a Fordist character, the authors conclude that it is necessary to observe the movements of territorialization/deterritorialization, at the local regional and national levels and to the structures that can converge on these objectives, expressed by the product chain or even by means of the *agrofood system*. Thus, to list the key points of this review of the theme, Goodman and Watts return to the classic question raised by political economists of the 19th century: what is the difference produced by the distinction and specificity of agriculture products? These authors focus on the fact that agricultural production is essentially land based and that there is a physiological demand of human consumption for agrofood goods. In addition, they highlight the cultural meaning of the social practice of eating.

¹⁵ “This new dimension of globalization should not be characterized by the term ‘Fordism’ but rather by ‘Sloanism’, in reference to Alfred P. Sloan. Sloan took five basic models of automobiles and introduced the possibility of an almost unlimited augmentation of accessories. This differentiation of the automotive market into an almost infinite number of segments could, at same time, force consumers into the very top of their discretionary range in purchasing automobiles” (Bonanno et al., 1994: 14).

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necessarily reside in the size of the companies (including rural ones) nor in their internationalized structure, but in the ability to adapt to new conditions of the system.

The updating of the issue of agriculture and its “functions” in the process of national development, in the light of the action of the State and of the specific dynamic of capitalist accumulation in one country with the characteristics of the Brazilian economy, requires a broad effort to associate the transformations of the national economy to the particularity of the rural dynamic, both of which are tributaries of a broad process of economic-productive and political restructuring, through which capitalism has passed in this time of chronic instability. More precisely, it involves characterizing the national-developmental pattern by investigating at the origin the special form of state intervention that operated in the Brazilian case and the forms assumed by agriculture in this process.

The Brazilian Economy and the transformations in agriculture

Seen from a historic perspective, the relationship between agriculture and economic development in Brazil has been analyzed by many authors. Most have either emphasized the agrarian roots of Brazilian social formation, or compared the national rural environment to the recent transformations, which have redimensioned its capacity to be suitable to the demands of the industrialization process or to recycle itself for the possibilities created by the strategies of the international insertion of the local economy.

Caio Prado Jr. provided important insights into the mercantile-export character of the colonial economy, supported by “large monocultural properties worked by slaves” (Prado Jr., 1972), in which the presence of these slaves (and their later substitution by immigrant peasants) were not sufficient to allow identifying in Brazil that ancient mode of production which was also not feudal. Managed under the auspices of the accumulation process in the European metropolises, the colonial economy functioned to consolidate the capitalist system, a thesis that wound up influencing many lines of thinking.¹⁶ Agriculture was always treated by Prado Jr. from this perspective, or that is, inserted in the process of capitalist accumulation.

In the colony, the counterpoint was between commercial agriculture (in the latifundio system) and subsistence agriculture, with the later in a second plane and often inserted within the large plantations. These “colonial traces” of Brazilian agriculture according to the perspective in

¹⁶ Bresser Pereira came to identify these ideas in authors tied to the “New Dependency” schools and to the model that he called “Capitalist Underdevelopment”. See Bresser Pereira (1985: 13-46).

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question, responded for the “backwardness” of production relations in the rural areas in the 20th century. This delay was criticized by the historian, whether to defend the application of agrarian reform or argue for extension of labor rights to the rural environment.

From another, no less important angle, the ECLA school, and more specifically, the ideas of Celso Furtado, presented a diagnosis of the Brazilian economy considering the center-periphery relations. These relations were conditioned by the unequal distribution of technical progress, which was concentrated in the central countries, reproducing and expanding the hiatus between these economies and the peripheral nations, a trend that, due to the historic process of social and economic formation, accentuated the degree of heterogeneity and specialization characteristic of these economies (Furtado, 1968). The insertion in international trade was established by the export of primary products to the “centers” that presented dropping prices, reflecting a deterioration in the terms of trade. The structure of peripheral countries was perceived as backwards and labor productivity was distinguished according to the branches that composed it, that is: subsistence agriculture, export agriculture and manufacturing (Cruz, 1969). The industrialization process was synthesized in the import substitution model. Furtado defended the strong participation of national capital, private and public, in which the State fulfilled the function of rationalizing (by means of planning) the “spontaneous industrialization” process, acting on the points of strangulation of the peripheral economies.¹⁷

According to the ECLA school, traditional subsistence agriculture, in addition to having low productivity, would serve as a supplier of labor for export agriculture, which, due to low salaries and productive specialization, coexisted with a drop in prices of export products. Export agriculture, which leads to the concentration of more advanced technologies in the periphery, would be the predominant axis of these economies in the phase before the crisis of 1929. The incentive to industrialization would come from the impediments established by the global crises and from the points of strangulation in the ability to import, considering the fragility of the central economies in the period between the wars. From the perspective of center-peripheral relations, the passage from the primary exporter phase to the phase of “development from within” considers export agriculture as a source of resources for industrialization, whether in relation to currency exchange, whether in the support of a process of regional industrial growth. Thus, the problems raised by the “industrialization of the periphery” were related to technological unemployment, inflation, industrial diversification towards the internal and

¹⁷ A criticism of the weight of ECLA’s interpretation of the origins of industrialization can be found in Silva (1976) and Mello (1986). For a review of the debate of this theme, see Saes (1989) and Suzigan (2000).

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external market, as well as the alteration of the land ownership structure, in which large properties were seen as an impediment to the increase of productivity of agricultural labor and as a cause of the low supply of goods needed to meet urban demand. (Furtado, 1968).

As Furtado presented in another important work (Furtado, 1975), Castro (1972) summarized the “functions” of the agrarian dynamic. In order to deepen the analysis of the roles of agriculture in economic development, this author maintained that agriculture, or that is the form of production in rural areas, is not an obstacle to the industrialization process when it assumes the internal perspective of development itself. In this light he examined the attributes of agriculture: a) the generation of a growing surplus of food and raw materials (compatible with the pace of economic growth, without determining the global growth rates); b) liberation of labor; c) creation of markets for industrial products and the d) transfer of capital to the urban sector. In the final case, in the view of this author, the mechanism of the exchange policy appears not to have been fundamental to the constitution of capital for industrialization. Assuming that a “late” industrialization process should respect the structural parameters dominant in the society in question, Castro emphasized that the possibility for the expansion of industrial sectors that produced goods and raw materials for agriculture would require a greater concentration of income and of land (by means of technological progress on large properties).

Even in this period, various positions would mark the debate about the national agrarian question and its meaning for economic development.¹⁸ Ignácio Rangel analyzed the disintegration of the rural complex prevalent until the beginnings of industrialization. His analysis of the national “agrarian crisis” was based on an eclectic theoretical apparatus that identified a duality in the national economy, characterized by relations that could be defined “internally” (for example, maintaining feudal traces) and or “externally” (through incorporation to the international capitalist dynamic). Rangel (1961) is concerned with the impact of the rapid process of liberation of agricultural labor that at times exceeded the capacity for its absorption by the urban-industrial sector (Rangel, 1979), which led him to defend alternative proposals to maintain the rural worker in the fields (Rangel, 1986).

Schools of liberal thinking argued that agriculture was not an obstacle to industrial development, given that it corresponded to the demand for agricultural goods, observing the relative price stability in the two sectors. This line, considered the functionality of agriculture or, in the final analysis, it was industry that did not accompany the agricultural performance

¹⁸ There is a broad and varied literature about the debate concerning the agrarian question and Brazilian agriculture in the 1950's – 1970's. See, Carvalho (1978), David (1997), Delgado (2005), Filgueiras (1994), Gonçalves Neto (1997) and Servilha (1994).

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(Paiva, 1985). A group of studies from researchers at the University of São Paulo USP,¹⁹ in addition to contributions from Ruy Miller Paiva, established the foundation for this current that strongly influenced the interpretation of the modernization of Brazilian agriculture, in particular that experienced in the late 1960's and during the following decade. This last author, developed his concept of the technological duality of the model of agricultural modernization based on the dichotomy between the traditional and the modern (Paiva, 1971), a focus that explained the mechanism of self control operating in Brazil's rural areas (Paiva, 1979).

The work of Oliveira (1987) appeared as an alternative to the dualistic and ECLA inspired thinking, by presenting the theme of capital accumulation as a dividing line, which accentuated how the extremely precarious living conditions of the agricultural working class was essential to the transfer of surpluses to the development process adopted. In addition, he was critical of the "role" of the State, in terms of the class struggle and the dispute for power among its factions. Silva (1977) also analyzed the dual line and its critics, and maintained that the presence of the pre-capitalist relations were intrinsic to the constitution of capitalism in Brazil. He located these relations in agrarian space, and pointed to the process of valorization of capital and its influence on relative prices as its principal determinants.²⁰

In the perspective proposed here, the relations between agriculture and development wound up corroborating the "demands" placed on the agricultural sector by late industrialization, supported by the import substitution model (Hirschman, 1968; Tavares, 1973). It is not by chance that, in general, most of the analyses of agricultural modernization follow the steps presented by Mello (1986) for the economy as a whole and, as we emphasized previously, a "determined" vision of the possibilities for intervention of the state apparatus.²¹ Thus, according

¹⁹ We do not intend to conduct a complete presentation of the works in this field, which is beyond the scope of this study. In addition to the authors mentioned see Araujo and Schuh (1975), Pastore et al. (1976) and Schuh (1975).

²⁰ Brazilian agriculture has at times been the object of a dual characterization, creating oppositions that do not always shed light on the agrarian situation. As David (1997: 32) commented: "Nous devons remarquer, cependant, que cette littérature se caractérise par une tendance générale à présenter la problématique agraire comme étant soumise à des situations dichotomiques et, à la fois, à sous-estimer, les aspects macro-économiques de la question. Ce point de vue dual s'est exprimé au travers d'oppositions successives: dans les années soixante, *réforme structurelle* contre *modernisation*; dans les années soixante-dix *production pour l'exportation et substitution des importations (énergie)* contre *production d'aliments*, dans les années quatre-vingt, *industrialisation de l'agriculture* (dans un sens privilégiant le complexe agro-industriel) contre *performance anti-cyclique*. Bien que représentative des dilemmes vécus par l'agriculture brésilienne, cette approche duale au cours des différentes phases ou périodes dissimule la permanente modernisation productive qui s'est poursuivie pendant les années étudiées" (grifos da autora).

²¹ According to this author, the following periods can be considered characteristic of the Brazilian capitalist export economy: a) birth and consolidation of large industry – the phase that runs from 1888, with the rise of salaried labor, through 1933; b) restricted industrialization – the period from 1933 - 1955; c) heavy industrialization – characterized by the endogenization of the productive department for production goods, which took place from 1956 - 1961, conferring specificity to the Brazilian economy in capitalist terms. See Mello (1986).

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to Moreira (1982), the technical transformations that took place in the rural establishments after 1965 are related to the deep changes in the industrial productive structure introduced with the implantation of the Target Plan (1956-1961). The formation of the State “tripod”, the national and international bourgeoisie, the base of the so-called “associated capitalism” and the rise and consolidation of base industry in the country in the period indicated would allow the later development of productive industry of production goods (D_1) for agriculture. This latter industry arrived in the wake of the implantation of D_1 for the economy in general. For example, tractor production in Brazil began after 1960, when 0.3% of the tractors used in the country were Brazilian made. By 1970, due to the implantation of base industries in Brazil’s metal and machinery sectors, domestically made tractors corresponded to 99% of the total supply (Fonseca, 1987).

Thus a possible periodization for the process known as *conservative modernization*²² of Brazilian agriculture can be found in Delgado (1985). According to this author, there were three periods: a) *agricultural modernization*, or that is, the alteration of technological standards at the beginning of the 1950’s, established above all by the use (through imports) of machinery and fertilizers; b) *industrialization of the rural production processes* – with the installation of a department of production goods and raw materials for agriculture, since the late 1950’s, with the support of State incentives; c) *the fusion or integration of intersectoral capitals* – this involved the constitution and development of financial capital in agriculture under the command of large capital, particularly after 1965 with the implantation of SNCR.

Some of the technological innovations that took place in agricultural production under the second Vargas government received little attention, in comparison to the set of broader proposals that guided the movement to unblock the “strangulation points” during the Vargas administration (Fiori & Lessa, 1991). Likewise, agriculture was given a residual position in the previously mentioned Target Plan, corroborating its entrance “by the back door” to the more elaborated constitution of an “associative” pattern of development (Lafer, 1970; Lessa, 1982). In general, it can be said that the vision of agriculture as an obstacle to the industrialization process, and the resulting attempts to overcome the crises in Brazilian capitalism (as in the early 1960’s) was little present in the texts of the government development programs in the

²² The term *conservative modernization* was frequently used to designate the public policies aimed at the Brazilian rural region particularly in the period from 1965-1979, giving priority to “just some crops and regions, as well as some specific types of productive units (medium and large size properties). Never a dynamic transformation that was self-sustained; to the contrary, this was a modernization induced by means of heavy social costs and which only took hold because of support from the State” (Graziano da Silva, 1982: 40).

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period from 1945 - 1968 (Delgado, 1988; Moreira, 1982). According to Delgado (1988), this situation would only be altered after the Strategic Development Plan -PED (1968-70), in which the modernization of the latifúndios was definitively incorporated to the industrialization strategy, and with the subsequent plans calling for a series of sectoral projects aimed at national and social integration, such as the programs aimed at the country's North and Northeastern regions and those related to steered settlements (Gonçalves Neto, 1997).

In addition to the incorporation of the industrial dimension *stricto sensu* (Graziano da Silva, 1981; Muller, 1982), agricultural production came to attract the strategies of financial capital (Delgado, 1985). In the second half of the 1960's a set of agricultural policies was implemented that led to the adoption of a technological package derived from the Green Revolution in the United States. Muller (1989) pointed to the dominance of a new agricultural standard, which indicated a process of intensification of intersectoral relations, in which the productive matrix that was determinant of the economic dynamic was located in the industrial activities themselves.

By way of conclusion: State and agriculture in the recent Brazilian context

In sum, a review of the specialized literature allows affirming that the modernization process of Brazilian agriculture was based, above all, on the following factors: a) the adoption of a technological standard rooted in the binomial chemical, mineral-mechanization; b) notwithstanding this observation, an increase in production and of productivity, even if the land ownership structure remained unaltered in the period, attested to a slight increase in concentration; c) the consolidation of the agroindustrial production chains and complexes, which established a dynamic in agricultural production that involved greater sophistication and distinction of the product processed, as well as integration with the chemical-pharmaceutical industry and the capital goods sector; d) the influence of the financial sphere in agricultural production, integrating agroindustrial and agrocommercial capital, but also strengthening the speculative valorization of rural property and the transformation of real assets, such as land and cattle into financial assets. In this last item, it is important to mention the process known as "territorialization" of the bourgeoisie, or the broad application of industrial and financial capital in rural property, especially in operations supported by strong fiscal incentives sponsored by the State. Brazilian agriculture also gained increased participation in foreign markets, through a foreign exchange policy based on mini-devaluations, which triggered a significant increase in exports of a number of products.

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The recessive context of the early 1980's witnessed the withering of national-developmental patterns, which at best limped along until the end of the decade (Martins, 1991). This was the case in the industrial sector, in which the loss of dynamism of a good portion of manufacturing sectors was not replaced by another block that could sustain initiatives and activities capable of forming an alternative to the dominant standard. As a result of the poor results of the PND II policies, and of the consequences of the adjustments imposed by the international crisis, the Brazilian economy suffered drastically reduced growth in its productive sectors, in particular the industrial sector (Rezende, 1989).

In the case of the rural sector, in particular in the first half of the 1980's, changes in foreign debt financing put pressure on agricultural and agroindustrial activities to generate funds to pay debt services. But reduced harvests after 1983 because of poor climate and the reduced and indexed offer of public financing to the rural sector hampered this effort. Thus, "in the period 1981-1985 the exchange rate and salary policies were particularly important, which allowed redirectioning agricultural production to obtain exportable surpluses. And in terms of agricultural policy itself, minimum prices were emphasized with the clear objective of compensating for the declining role of rural credit" (Graziano da Silva, 1993: 182).

In the 1980's and 1990's, a more complex approach to the transformation in the Brazilian rural environment gave way to a discourse in support of production renovated on financial, technological and institutional bases – different than those that dominated the previous period – would attest to a strong liberalizing orientation imposed on agricultural activity. This was the result of the adjustments made in macroeconomic policies, particularly after 1999, when the export drive would repeat the performance of the first half of the 1980's, although in even higher volumes. (Delgado, 2005).

Despite this performance, agricultural businesses were highly critical. They demanded a policy to support income for the sector (which became known as "agribusiness"), they complained of the high costs of finance and of the quantity of taxes on agricultural activities. Speaking in name of the "rural producer" some business leaders emphasized a failure in the regulatory power of the State and proposed a privatization of its functions. These critics became sharper after the implementation of the Real Plan, for which agriculture was considered the "green anchor" (Melo, 1996). They forced tough negotiations with the Executive Branch, which led to the treatment given to private debts and in sectoral concessions to so-called "agribusiness", adopting, since then, a program (and a discourse) aimed at the rural sector based on a dual vision of the process. That is, an attempt was made to conjugate in the government sphere the

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“agro-industrial model” with “rural development” (family agriculture and agrarian reform), which led to new conflicts in the field.

In sum, the adjustments made in the 1980's and the scarce resources led to sharper disputes over public funds, but first depleted the old formulas and mechanisms of agricultural policy (above all the SNCR of the 1970's; and the Minimum Guaranteed Minimum Price Policy, of the following decade). The internationalization of Brazilian agroindustry made macroeconomic policies more important - particularly those related to the exchange rate, foreign commerce etc. - than the sectoral policies themselves. On the other hand, certain programs in the “social area” of agriculture, served much more as “shock absorbing cushions” for the conflict than as effective policies for agrarian restructuring (see the results of the National Agrarian Reform Plan – I). Land ownership remained untouched and even unquestioned in terms of its social functions. Notwithstanding this situation, the agrarian question returned to the scene in 1995, by means of social movements such as the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), or even in the context of the dispute for the “family farm” project led by the rural workers union movement (Palmeira and Leite, 1998). Both processes required reactions and responses from the State, either in the form of specific projects, or in its bureaucratic apparatus, reinforcing the “duality” of the previously mentioned sectoral policies.

Far from becoming obsolete, the issue of relations between State, development and agriculture in Brazil took on unexpected hues for the analysts of the 1980's: there was a multiplicity of actors, with a wide variety of dynamics, the emergence of “new” questions raised by the different regional contexts (territorial development, sustainability, expanded exports of monocultures and others) and the redesign of the legal instruments enacted by the governments. The consequences of this process will certainly reflect the idiosyncrasies that mark the Brazilian case, as we sought to show in this article. Its conclusion still depends on the dispute for the interpretations of the themes sketched here in a context posterior to the crisis of the national-developmental pattern, the forms of which are still not completely clear.

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