**Ethno-Marxism and ethno-national question from Latin America**

Gilberto López y Rivas**[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Ethno-Marxism[[2]](#footnote-2), as a current critical thinking in the field of anthropology, arises from the need to recover, in the sixties years of last century, a long forgotten grain of Marxism that incorporate ethnicity in the analysis of the interclass colonial and national contradictions, as those operating in the complex multicultural reality of Latin American contexts.

It draws on a specific historical praxis that from the academy and political activism, is to accompany the struggles of exploited and oppressed sectors differentiated, --in their ethno-cultural, linguistic, and its forms of social organization and resistance – from the nationalities that have been integrated by the European conquest and colonization, and by the consequent independence movements mainly monopolized by Creole-mestizo oligarchic groups, except in the case of Haiti.

It is rooted in the study of what the Marxist tradition is known as *the colonial and national question,* which is particularly relevant in the discussions of European Marxists that faced in the early twentieth century, the problem of theorizing and fight for socialist revolution in occupied and divided nations such as Poland[[3]](#footnote-3), or multinational empires like tsarist Russia[[4]](#footnote-4) or the multi-colored fabric of nations and nationalities that constituted the Austro-Hungarian Empire[[5]](#footnote-5).

From this context of great ethnic and national diversity, it is no accident that Lenin moved away from the approaches of Marx and Engels regarding the war of conquest that the United States waged against Mexico in 1846-1848[[6]](#footnote-6); also, he did not participate in the severe judgments about various countries and peoples under colonial subject, or at the periphery of the advanced historical nations, many of them considered *"people without history"*, assuming that the development of capitalism them out of their "backwardness" or "lag ancestral” and that the world economy and, therefore, the interests of the proletarian revolution would benefit from these colonial and imperialist conquests. Recall also the controversial findings of Marx about Bolívar, who was wrongly characterized through the distorted mirror of Napoleon[[7]](#footnote-7).

Early Marx’s positions held in the forties of the nineteenth century, that attributed to capitalism the development of countries under its rule, years later was replaced by a ruthless criticism to the effects of colonialism, outlined in the first volume of *Capital*, and in articles on India[[8]](#footnote-8). However, Solomon F. Bloom, a respected analyst of Marx and pioneer in relation to the national question, believes that "while Marx's view on the progressive role of imperialism underwent considerable change, his last test for all political domination, internal or external, remained the same: the economic and social progress ".[[9]](#footnote-9)

The Argentine Marxist Leopoldo Mármora rightly points out the need to:

"Place at the center of analysis the general conception of the revolution that they produced, because that and not another is the center that encourages and gives logic to all theoretical positions and practices of Marx and Engels regarding the national problem ... In any case, world revolution, that is, the proletarian revolution in Western Europe, was and always remained the only "center" of Marx's theory.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

Mármora pointed out the rectifications of Marx to his own analysis, finding that the development of the metropolis blocked that of the colony, which in the case of Ireland meant that British rule had caused an underdeveloped agrarian country, while England transformed into a modern industrial power. That is, the realization of uneven development, Marx draws the political consequences of the case, to which "in direct opposition to its original personal conviction formulated in 1848, the freedom of the colony (Ireland), now becomes the precondition of social revolution in the metropolis. “[[11]](#footnote-11)

Lenin's contribution to the national question --nourished with questions and comments made by Roy Manabendra[[12]](#footnote-12) – was to link the socialist paradigm with the right to self-determination of oppressed nations, and to have articulated the struggle of the "advanced" proletariat with national liberation struggles of all peoples "backward", making them converge in the perspective of a desired world revolution. At the birth of the USSR, Lenin theoretically developed and implemented a policy of utmost respect for the rights of nations, nationalities and ethnic and national minorities who suffered precisely national oppression.

However, Lenin failed to recognize that the national struggle does not end with the formation or establishment of a politically independent state, and even in its ranking of countries with national problems, did not include those in Latin America, because for him, once achieved political independence, the national problem was solved. Ana Maria Rivadeo, another argentine Marxist who continued the ideas of Mármora, argues that even Lenin did not disconnected the national question from the bourgeoisie and the capitalist stage."[[13]](#footnote-13)

In retrospect, we should note that the national question was enriched with Vietnamese debate on cultural regions after the United States defeat in Vietnam, but also with the legacies left by Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti to Italy, and José Carlos Mariátegui for Peru. In turn, the rereading of the process of the Mexican Revolution have allowed to locate ethnicity in this complex dialectic between the regional and the national that subsumed ethnic identities.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Now it is clear that political self-determination of the nation and the legal and formal equality is not enough: it is necessary to assume the internal constitution of the nation and its class directionality, and note that at this stage of transnationalization of the state, national independence is subjected to profound questions as the political, economic and military sovereignty, fundamental capability of self-determination,[[15]](#footnote-15) is restricted by the needs of the present form of reproduction of capital. Therefore, economic independence is necessary and is fundamental democratization of society in the sense of an exercise of popular sovereignty; also, it is necessary the establishment the hegemony of the subordinate classes to grant the people's democratic directionality to the nation and the effective establishment of the ethno-cultural diversity through autonomy.

Hence the need to reformulate a reconstruction of the nation "from below", from the lower classes, from closely linked to the problems and demands of popular majorities, with national history and reality, with the struggles traditions and strength of the various sectors of the people (as a class category), rooted and nurtured in the space and the national time.

Current neoliberal transnationalization requires an undifferentiated humanity, subject to the laws of the market, kidnapped by competitive individualism that proclaim the law of the fittest (social Darwinism), alienated by consumerism and possessive selfishness. The neoliberal capitalism also needs the global circulation of a cosmopolitanism that refuses national identity, which waives the defense of sovereignty, the right to self-determination, safeguarding the strategic and natural resources of the territories, indigenous autonomies to participatory democracies, local knowledge; let alone, socialism; all in order to achieve the "earthly paradise" means the projected as the considered ideal American society, to make a classless humanity of consumers, without motherland and apolitical. It is intended that the world offering the neoliberal globalization in theirs US and European variants, is the only possible without viable alternative, and that the only realistic option should be the social conformism and political resignation.

Despite this cultural, ideological and political machine, takes place in the planetary space the resistance of the exploited: indigenous peoples, African descendants, women, homosexuals, youths, students, workers and even intermediate class sectors that make up the people- nation, which demonstrate against the predatory effects of neoliberalism, to which must be added those sectors directly attacked by the current violence in countries like ours, that has imposed a social war, by the pathways of the internal enemy, drug trafficking, and by the external, terrorism, which militarized territory, criminalize social protest and occupy all public spaces, to increase the oligarchic and imperialist control.

In the present era, characterized by a deepening of universalist tendencies of capital, paradoxically, we have in the field of the alternative perspectives, the transit to a nationalitarian process to dissolve the nation bourgeoisie links and to establish a national entity of a new type: popular, multiethnic, pluralistic and democratic. The development of the nation thus tends to break boundaries and overcome the contradictions of bourgeois nation, which is mainly expressed in class exploitation, racism, segregation of indigenous peoples, the peculiar oppression of women, discrimination of age groups, exclusion of youth, imperialist control of our economies and societies.

These contradictions exist within our nations, and struggles to overcome them are the very essence of the *national question of our day,* remembering that the so-called national question -for the purposes of analysis- is formed from three basic elements: first, the problem of the classes with respect to the nation; how classes content and give up the nation. Secondly, there is the problem of the nation and the various subordinating systems worldwide, colonial, neocolonial and imperialist character. The third essential component is made up of ethnic-national diversity.

The dispute over the nation, as the space where the resistors are held against imperialism and class exploitation, happens primarily by safeguarding ethnic, regional, national and cultural diversity, and the strengthening of multiple and complementary identities (citizenship, class status, ethnic background, political affiliation, gender awareness, etc.).

In building a free and democratic nation, culture, peculiar way of being and existence of peoples in their different regional, ethnic distinctions, and of gender and class, is transformed into an effective instrument of social transformation and resistance against its own cultural, ideological and political oppression.

This occurs not only in artistic expression, but also in cultural everyday life, in everyday way of doing things against capitalist domination, live differently, not to participate as an actor or an accomplice of the authoritarian system in the various practices and political action; all expressions of resistance in the battle for the maintenance and development of counter-hegemonic cultural identities. The family, school, college, neighborhood, personal, social and labor relations, the areas of revolutionary action themselves and emancipation are the spaces of a singular struggle between the culture of domination and culture of resistance, with their codes, symbols and signs themselves[[16]](#footnote-16).

The Cuban historian Jorge Ibarra identifies the historical processes that will integrate the people-nation for their country: in the independence struggles, in the "revolutionary praxis of 1868, to abolish slavery and to lay the foundations of a national community –in the territory called Cuba Libre,- founded on the principles of ethno-racial fellowship, legal equality and political freedom "[[17]](#footnote-17). Similarly, in each of our Latin American countries have emerged people-nations through the participation of different ethnic and class-based, objectively exploited and oppressed, in the respective independence, liberating, anti-dictatorial and social transformation contests groupings, that were forming in turn, a representative national popular culture, hence the accumulation of rebellions and struggles against domination. This popular national culture is the sediment of our strengths and our desire for a future where cultural diversity will be World Heritage.

Ethno-Marxism stressed that although in the past 30 years the indigenous peoples from Bravo’s river to Patagonia have shown an ongoing activity and political participation in national societies in which they are immersed, various social and political forces, including those self-ascribed to Marxism, continue conceptualizing these people based in prejudice, fixed ideas and digressions, in a wide ranging of apartheid racism or assimilationist paternalism schemes.

So, contempt and exclusionary practices to those deemed inferior, backward and unable to govern themselves and even provide innovative organizational forms, practices of participatory democracy and relations with the sustainable nature trans-generationally, go hand approaches maintain that Indians must be integrated either to the mirage of false currency market, or to the avant-garde and proletarian projects that have led to serious political mistakes deviations and democratic movements, revolutionary, and even of socialist sign.

One of those prospects is based on observing the indigenous world from the externality of us nationalities, as products of biological and cultural mixing violently imposed by oligarchic groups; in almost all Latin American countries, those represented nationalities feel masters of history, owners of national symbols and territory, and even of the future and they refer to distinct ethnic entities as "our Indians", who must be guided, rescue, save or redeem.

In most countries of the Americas, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants were not recognized as such in the constitutional frameworks, and their protests, resistance and even armed rebellion forced the states and societies to discover what had been "hidden" -during two centuries of living independently under the eyes of the dominant racist groups creoles and mestizos: the multiethnic, multicultural and multi-lingual character of most Latin American nations.

Despite the progress achieved in the constitutional and legal formality, in both national and international levels, discriminatory, segregationist and exclusion practices against members of indigenous and Afro-descendants are part of the Latin American every day. The campaign in Mexico against discrimination in education for indigenous peoples denounced the exclusion of indigenous primary students by school authorities that even forced parents to switch their children to another educational institution, who also suffer the taunts and harassment of their own classmates[[18]](#footnote-18).

But also in terms of building new alternatives and projects of socialism of the XXI century, the indigenous remain subsumed into categories that observed in the past of the gens, of primitive communism, the noble savage of the revolution that needs to be incorporated to the modernity of the struggles in which he is called as a secondary partner and ethnographic witness of the true happening of history.

Just one factor among many that caused the implosion and collapse of the Soviet Union, was the abandonment by the Stalinism of the Leninist policies on ethnicities, nationalities and oppressed nations, it is precisely this serious deviation of Stalin, still in Lenin's lifetime, which caused the final break between the main leader of the revolution and the party's general secretary[[19]](#footnote-19). Russification, forced relocation of national groups, the rigid centralism in-consulted, border changes in the Union Republics and repression as state policy formed the Stalinist reality of the so-called national question.[[20]](#footnote-20)

During the first four years of the Sandinista revolution, the government was involved in a serious conflict, including armed, for lack of a specific program in the ethno-national question by the FSLN prior to victory in 1979, and for the ignorance and misperceptions of their political cadres sent to the Atlantic Coast on the ethnic phenomena in the region. Prospects who struggled proletarianization of the Miskito, the planned and massive settlement of this region by Nicaraguan Pacific population, refusal to consider the coastal ethnic groups as peoples, together with the historical burden of ethnocentrism of important sectors of the majority nationality provoked a misunderstanding that brought about an armed resistance with social base, used by the forces of counterrevolution and imperialism[[21]](#footnote-21).

It is necessary to critically take full Eurocentric heritage which underlies the concept of "people without history", applied to those who do not conform to the mold of modern and civilized classes struggle. Leopoldo Mármora stated that this is not a peripheral phenomenon within Marxism; it refers instead to the very heart of its conceptual apparatus, and certain historical aspects of its constitution.

Critical thinking must begin with a review of those theoretical-political interpretations that have often led to the breakdown of popular national bloc. One of them has been precisely to do with little or no understanding and treatment of ethno-national question.

An analysis from the Ethno-Marxism of anti-systemic struggles in Latin America in recent decades highlights the role of the resistance and the construction of autonomy of indigenous peoples. In Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and Peru, among the countries marked by the indigenous presence, indigenous movements have been persistent protagonists in the fall of governments, defense of territories, natural and strategic resources, systematically face the repressive policies of the States and the rapaciousness of transnational corporations. Their autonomic processes have glimpsed new forms of participatory governance, renewed political gatherings and proposals to give new content to the worn institutionalized democracy. Political organizations of indigenous peoples have shown their continuity, perseverance, flexibility and imagination against bureaucratization and impaired organizational efforts in partisan, social and labor fields[[22]](#footnote-22).

Despite the efforts of indigenous peoples, in a recent article aims to answer another of Raúl Zibechi, José Bustos calls "poor results" to the autonomic processes of EZLN.[[23]](#footnote-23) Hugo Blanco replied:

"What are the" poor results "? They are teaching us that it is possible that the people govern themselves, in the Zapatista territory have built Power, which has existed for over 17 years. More than once attacked the government and the EZLN once defended the territory. The "bad government", as they call it, does not contribute a penny to the inhabitants of that territory, nor health nor education, nor anything. We are taught that it is possible that the government is democratic, ruling by commanding obedience, which shows that public office is not to serve as capitalist "democracies", but to minister, members of the Good Government does not earn a penny and charges are rotating. We are taught that there should be people who serve and people who obey. They are completely civilian governments, the role of the EZLN is exclusively military, guard the territory; if any member of the EZLN wants to be a member of a Good Government, prior to renounce the EZLN. These lessons are part of the "poor results".[[24]](#footnote-24)

Since 2008[[25]](#footnote-25) we note that in the Tenth International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, held that year in São Paulo, Brazil, during which a resolution was adopted in Solidarity with the Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean --which it flowed profusely from Internet- throughout the text referred only once mentioned indigenous and not as people, category reserved for the entire population of Latin American countries, but subsumed as part of the "various sectors of workers" , including youth, women and peasants starring are: "the opposition and resistance to the looting of wealth, privatization, corruption, environmental degradation, among other serious problems today."

The omission of relevant and specific role of the indigenous struggle becomes more noticeable when the document emphasizes that it is the first time that such a meeting is held in our continent; and this omission is greeted and congratulated all the democratic forces, progressive, popular and anti-imperialist in the region, for the important struggles and the progress made over the last decade, "that make this part of the world one of the leading centers of anti-imperialist resistance and finding alternative scenario to the imperialist hegemony of struggle for national sovereignty and social progress ".

This statement has similarities with another adopted by the Tenth International Seminar on Problems of the Revolution in Latin America, held in 2006 in Quito, Ecuador, which states:

"In all these actions the working class gets its space fundamental force of the revolutionary process, peasants, indigenous and black peoples and youth are noted for their fighting and massive participation in the struggle, denying the facts discourse which sought prostrate the action of the working to the emergence of 'new social actors' class. The proletariat, historically and strategically, never lost its role as a fundamental force of the revolutionary process. "[[26]](#footnote-26)

In the final declaration of the Twelfth International Meeting of Communist and Workers, held this time in South Africa in December 2010 Matches find a solitary phrase that settles:

"In these struggles, legitimate and progressive aspirations of indigenous peoples in defense their cultures, languages and environments have an important role," it transpires the same ideological obfuscation again, now condescending, as it omits that **these people are just of the few social sectors that are now giving a relentless struggle** not only against repressive and counterinsurgency forces of States, not only against mining corporations, logging, tourism, water privatization, and against employers of drug trafficking, but also against extractive practices and developers of progressive governments, such as Brazil and Ecuador and similar in other parts of Latin America projects[[27]](#footnote-27).

These documents refer in their omissions and commissions to proletarian’s reductionist, a position that has so damaged the revolutionary processes in the world and appears to be a difficult hurdle to abandon the communist and workers' parties that are claimed and promote -in the facts hierarchical perspective of social struggle.

In 1986, Leopoldo Mármora defined this phenomenon in the field of politics was expressed in attributing the proletariat with historical missions that exceed their real possibilities. "Neither the 'working classes' or the 'party of the proletariat' are able to be-as such-bearers of the overall interests of society. The proletariat has always kept private interests and own class."[[28]](#footnote-28) A counter hegemonic -sustained this author, is a popular national task that overwhelms the working class and not be placed in a unique historical destiny of that class. This struggle necessarily have to be the result of a democratic movement and socially heterogeneous mass. Mármora said the weight of this heritage in socialist movements regarded the liberal bourgeoisie and the modern proletariat as the only possible and necessary social subjects of any real change.

Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez said about it:

"Finally between Marx's thesis and those of classical Marxism to be abandoned, being denied by the movement of reality, is that relating to the subject of history. Today it cannot be argued that the working class is the central and exclusive subject of history, when the reality shows and requires a plural subject, the composition cannot (and should) be unchanged or set a priori. "[[29]](#footnote-29)

In this direction, it is important to remember the contributions of the Ukrainian Marxist Dunayevskaya Raya, who, consistent with the idea that the theory can develop fully only when it is based in what the masses themselves do or think, Marx emphasizes that basically consisted in which the human being was not merely object but subject; I was not only determined by history, but also created it.

  From this approach, among other activities makes a radical critique of modernism: "The peasant and proletarian masses are the shapers of history, or only rightful undergo an address and receive orders? Must be passive on the day after the revolution masses "Precisely, in condemning Stalinism, says that this regime stifled the spontaneity of the masses: the State absorbed unions and all labor organizations so that state ownership the state plan, the party were fetishes why workers should offer their lives.

Dunayevskaya proposes, instead, a perspective that is based on the individual self-developed, and aligned with Lenin, who, in his opinion, considered the masses, the proletariat, the peasantry, and even oppressed nationality, as subjects self-developed. Lenin believed that a new theoretical impulse is needed because he was born a new subject: the self-determination of nations.

Dunayevskaya also disagrees with Trotsky in his conception of the peasantry, who was not considered as subject nor did self-developed national consciousness give him much less socialist. She maintains, however, that the policy initiative is not always exclusive to the working class. When the masses are the subject, a revolution should not be analyzed from the leadership, but the subject's self-developed. He claims that Trotsky always cared much about the problem of leadership, subordinating the individual self-developed. Added to this perspective -very useful for the analysis of indigenous peoples as subjects developed one’s self is very interesting his critique of statist:

"The petty bourgeois subjectivity -sustain- always concluded clinging to certain state power, and has done especially in this era of state capitalism, whose intellectuals are imbued with the administrative mentality of the plan, the vanguard party, the Cultural Revolution as a substitute for the proletarian revolution.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

In Latin America, José Carlos Mariátegui[[31]](#footnote-31) was one of the few Marxist thinkers who understood the importance of indigenous peoples in a socialist and revolutionary articulation with other social and cultural sectors of our national levels. Unfortunately, this tradition was overshadowed by the neo-colonialist and Eurocentric currents that prevailed in most organizations and political parties of the left, who are not interested in indigenous movements until they burst with the force of their demonstrations, sometimes even armed or of its massive incursions into politics, and which observations are reluctant to acknowledge the visible contributions of indigenous peoples in the construction of socialism in the XXI century.

**2. The nation and the ethno national question**

Some decades ago, did see the lack of research in the field of anthropology, and could extend to sociology, in relation to the nation, highlighting Eric Wolf with an early contribution in this regard in 1953, which indicates the variety issues that the study of the nation provides anthropologists to analyze, for example, changes in the ecology of the relationship between technological equipment and the environment

"Can Wolf-- interest-points in the growth and decline of socio-cultural sectors involved in the formation of the nation ... and in social and cultural ties of these sectors in terms of the processes of acculturation between spatial and culturally separate groups. “Eric Wolf. "The formation of the nation: an essay formulation" in Social Sciences, 4, no. 20 (April 1953): 51

In this work, Eric Wolf investigates the Mexican Bajio in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, --according him-- key region in the formation of the Mexican nation, as data of historical research studies nation.

For the study of the nation and national ethnic question, the Etnomarxismo located reductionism of varied nature; that is, to emphasize or merely enumerate constituent elements of national phenomenon incurs some kind of reductionism, for example, classism or economism, class attributes stripped of their ethnic, gender, age; Also, watch the nation as a phenomenon of "formation of a market" or a mere "product of the bourgeoisie"; ethnicist or culturalism reductionism: explanation through ethnic factors unrelated to the class matrix; or as a psychic, subjective or imaginary reality that volatilizes in the symbolic field; essentialist reductionism, phenomena that transcend historical contexts and realities without losing their core considered its "essence".

Thus, the fundamental concept that must be observed ethno-national question is the nation. After critically on the concept of nation in different authors exercise, consider an initial definition: The nation would be a stable human community that emerged historically as how to establish bourgeois hegemony, i.e., its political, economic, social, ideological dominance and cultural over a territory it claims as its sphere of production and internal market for goods and labor, establishing also a linguistic and cultural imposition on generally heterogeneous populations in their national ethnic composition.

Nation states, in turn, defined as a legal-political organizations with a particular territory, a bureaucratic-administrative apparatus, an official language, or acting as such, an army, a common currency, are modern formations. Its slow emergence and consolidation was due to a confluence of factors of different nature, such as the establishment of positive law and its dominance over customary, the split between positive law and morality, the separation between art and religion, between religious and political power, between domestic and public economy, the emergence of new sources of legitimacy, through the imposition of a hegemonic class system, which results in legal systems (constitutions), citizenship and the emergence the status of belonging to a nation nationality.

The nation-state, again, is constituted as legal policy in a given territory and through a repressive administrative-bureaucratic apparatus imposes a system of hegemony, i.e. organizational, political, economic, social, cultural, predominantly a class constituted as dominant nationality on various national, ethnic or minority groups that live in that territory. In that space in which the State exercises its sovereignty integrators the coercive apparatus of the majority nationality are established: a legal system that establishes the relationships of ownership and exploitation of the workforce, public education from a dominant language and a 'national history', centralized administration, weights and measures, citizenship, etc., i.e., a cultural legal imposition on all ethnic linguistic groupings partner.

However, the fact that the state is the space where the public life of the subjects articulates not mean that all the inhabitants of the same sovereign territory find representation in the institutions that articulate and decide matters in all areas of their territoriality . It is therefore important to distinguish as two complementary concepts, state and nation.

While the former is derived from the legal, administrative and monopoly of violence to be the order requiring a capitalist society for survival and reproduction needs, the nation is the historical and social construction which on one hand gives identity to the State, but overflows to consist of individuals whose identity is denied in the hegemony of state consolidation

From these recitals, we can establish a specific difference between the statist nationalism and popular nationalism, rooted both in the same history of nations, even the 'classic' European nations. We refer to two contradictory processes and confronted each other. One is the role played by the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic force which introduces the idea of nation, which sets contemporary from its political and military hegemony nations, i.e. state on certain territories. They are nations of bourgeois forces arising in search of permanent domestic markets; the need for boundaries that delimit a territory that legally uniform exploitation of labor by capital, through legal, linguistic and cultural codes. Also since the emergence of national societies have their own sociopolitical by another subject, comprising the exploited and marginalized classes, the dispossessed classes, workers, peasants, intellectuals sectors, socio subordinate ethnic entities. This set of classes and social groups that make up the village, is integrating the processes of formation of the nation in an ongoing struggle to survive and develop.

Thus, the critical dynamic and momentum for the formation of a nation does not come from one-territorial geographical, cultural or ethnic community, but this, in most cases, is actually creating processes national training; ethnic affinities could be considerable support but not sufficient-condition for the formation of nations. Example: France and the French language. The essential intermediate link, the acting subject in the formation of nations is constituted by classes, social groups, social structure, and class struggle: unable to put aside the political will of the different classes, their actions conscious national class consciousness in the emergence and formation of nations.

We found a hegemonic national training through cultural patterns from the ruling class, gives identity to the State. The official history, educational institutions and even the foundational myths, religious emblems, the dominant language, political boundaries from wars and offal, the "national symbols" list the contents of the culture and identity of those who dominate. Of course, such content subsume some of the dominated, since this identity would not achieve the legitimacy that requires the state to stay and fight recurrent crises.

So coexist other national social and ethnic expressions featuring stories, customs, traditions, and languages, racial and religious conformations that, besides not being recognized by the ruling class, are denied through various mechanisms. In part, because those who hold economic and political power are not recognized in these identities and only recognize their own, and partly because they can attack, sooner or later, under the hand of those.

In the economic field, the progressive consolidation of the modern state will be favored by the expansion of mercantilism, exchange and effective fusion of different regions, the new division of labor, the increasing movement of goods, agricultural production increasingly aimed for sale, as well as strengthening regional markets in interrelationship, they integrate the domestic market. This will be a powerful factor of national unity in which the state plays a key role as coercive political instrument that imposes a double task: to unify centralize / centralize-standardize

It is difficult to identify different nations under the control of a State, as in the case of Spain, or the confluence of different states in one nation, as were some Balkan states that emerged from World War II.

Thus we come to another more comprehensive definition of nation:

"The nation would be the form of articulation, contradictory and open, diverse social content. The concept of nation is therefore not an immediate search. Largely, it would explain his reputation as something elusive and therefore may be reduced to market economism, to be the shadow of the state, politicism or imaginary of society, and also to ethnic or essentialist reductionism cultural trans historical. Organic Body and contradictory articulatory between civil society, political status and cultural and ideological productions, the nation challenges, however substantialization all at the same time, all economic, political or cultural reductionism. "Ana María Rivadeo, ob. Cit.

So far, we can summarize the following about the nation:

The need to give a historical temporality to the nation, in the interaction of closely related processes:

• As a product of class struggle emerging capitalism

• As a result of the consolidation of a national system of class hegemony in the territory, through the imposition of a legal system that introduces formal equality before the law and universalized citizenship.

• As a result of the transformation of labor into a commodity

• As a result of two trends that attract and repel: universalism versus particularism, homogenization versus differentiation

• As a link or mediation between the determinations that underlie simple concept of capital: Capital: many competing capitals; no universal capital, by its nature, is both universal and fragmented in many capitals.

This is not the nature of a process that is inherent in the development of the modern nation and is expressed in contradictory to universalizing and particularizing, standardize and differentiate, playing particularism both globally and perceived trends in the inside the nation.

The bourgeois national state manages to unify these two contradictory outward and inward tendencies. It was out, shaping the international state system as we know from the nineteenth century; in, reproducing and expanding legal constraints, ideological and cultural, through the school system, the cam, the army, the bureaucracy, the system of weights and measures, the national language, national history, myths, incubators, heroes or founding fathers, etcetera.

Again, the concept of nation is linked to the concept of hegemony; that is, the ability of a class tends to extend their moral and cultural respect of the whole of society driving; the ability to articulate their own interests with global interests.

Corporatism is the negative complement of hegemony at the opposite end equidistant. It is the attitude of a class or social group that focuses exclusively on their own interests, showing an inability to define a global perspective that allows exerting political, moral and cultural leadership over other popular domestic sectors.

"The hegemonic system structured by the practices of the dominant classes is not static, but trend and contradictory, not least because to constitute must mobilize subordinates and groups opposed to that domination. The disintegration of these, their strengths, their struggles and eventual uprising as an alternative political subject, capable of developing an anti-hegemonic, implies that the hegemonic system always involves a dispute over a common field: the field of the national. The hegemonic system, the field of national, is always, but particularly in conditions of crisis, a field of struggle. These social struggles are exactly hegemonic, when directed to internal displacement of hegemony, the dismantling of the existing hegemonic system and building a new one. They are corporate when not in question ".[[32]](#footnote-32)

Also important is to remember that the decisive dynamic and momentum for the formation of the nation does not come from one-territorial geographical, cultural or ethnic community, they are in the vast majority of cases are actually creating training processes national. The essential intermediate link, the acting subject in the formation of nations is constituted by classes, social groups, social structure, and class struggle: unable to put aside the political will of the different classes, their actions conscious national class consciousness in the emergence and formation of nations.

It is always a struggle for the nation. In our case the "popular-democratic nation", the "people-nation".

In Mexico, the Mayan Zapatista rebellion in particular places the problem of the nation as essential for effective and real democratic transition. By Ivon Lebot book, **El sueño zapatista**, now we know the concerns of the EZLN to avoid being identified at the beginning of their movement only from their indigenous status, which leads them to consciously ignore the rights issue Indigenous peoples in the *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*.

The same term *National Liberation* takes its movement, inherited from the old Latin American guerrilla movements, places the problem of the struggle for the nation not in the sense of the state independence, but to redefine the terms and conditions of the nation in its internal existence and the characteristics of its insertion into the outside world.

Contrary to the ideas of weakening of the state, we can say that the national competition state or neoliberal state is a robust controller, both economically and in the political, social, ideological, cultural and military dimensions; neoliberalism is a statist doctrine exaggeratedly; and the free market is established and sustained state political construction also by coercion and repression, the current Mexican state and its social war is an example of this.

We agree with Ana Maria Rivadeo when she says that:

"..Even when globalization configure a radical and specific capitalist globalization, which crosses and dislocates the previous metabolisms of national formations and the global system of nations, this ongoing globalization having a fundamental and critical component in the national form. In this sense, far from eliminating national social principle articulatory way, the current globalization entails an extreme exacerbation of the contradictions between its global and national form, which has always been inherent in capitalism ... these contradictions grow, reproduce and expand along with the expansion of capitalism, placing humanity in its aberrations, at the very edge of civilization collapse ".[[33]](#footnote-33) ...

Neoliberalism causes resistance and contradictions that emphasize particularizing trends and positions of the national defense, which eventually achieved imposed. Paradoxically, neoliberalism is presented as a player nationalitarian phenomena that says fight or overcome. Even in Europe, we reluctance and resistance of important sectors of the nations of the European Union unifications erased from national differences. The permanence of the nation is also shown by the side of the nation produces effects on the (national) forms of conflicts, contradictions and social struggles of the labor force and subaltern groups.

The Zapatistas can overcome the ideas that emerge from the Marxist theoretical matrix in the sense of seeing the nation as a residue of the bourgeois democratic era, as a monopoly of the ruling classes, and consequently, owners of national symbols, managers of the patriotic ritual and national history.

  These ideas resulted in many of our countries, left abandoned the struggle for national hegemony, emphasizing the class reductionism and generate two equally pernicious phenomena for national purposes, to which I have already referred: proletarian reductionism and economism.

In other words, the variegated and multifaceted ethnic and socio-cultural reality of the nation was observed through the lens standardizing social classes, and even from a Eurocentric perspective. The nation was seen as a static phenomenon, as a passive product of the bourgeoisie. The literal interpretation of the phrase "The workers have no motherland" takes the national nihilism and the abandonment of the struggle for national hegemony, denationalization and cosmopolitanism of the Marxists.

This phrase, incidentally, repeated out of context, it is necessary to understand its real meaning: **The Communist Manifesto** states:

"The workers have no motherland. They cannot take away what you do not possess. More, because the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to the status of national class, become Nation, is still national, though by no means in the bourgeois sense. "

However, in the field of politics, unionism was expressed in the working class attribute historical missions that exceeded its real possibilities.

This brought about the political and theoretical disdain of different groups within the nation as ethnic groups or peoples, and the idea of an inevitable transition to uniformity, to proletarianization and the end of ethnic and national phenomena. From this it follows that the development of the modern nation acting subjects are not only constituted by classes, but also clustered around the identities of various kinds, such as ethnicity, age group, gender, and so on.

In this struggle for the nation, it is important to know about the nature of the complex ethnic, which argue that institutions are immersed in historical processes and whose sociocultural bases, breeding conditions and forms of political linkage continually modified; hence the possibility of the Indian peoples of transformed without losing its contrasting identity. Moreover, he warned that ethnic groups are not the product of ancient continuity, if not multiple adaptations and refuncionalizaciones to changing colonial reality and from the nationalitarian processes.

Precisely because it is historical entities, ethnic systems are both always contemporary phenomena; yet the past has to be seen in terms of the present and the future.

The ethnic groups are strongly related to socioeconomic and political structure in which they are inserted. Hence ethnic entities are not "harmonic" or "balanced" but incised by their integration into the class matrix and the contradictions inherent therein.

It was in this direction that confrontation occurs with ethnicist currents and, in particular, with Guillermo Bonfil, as for anthropological current Ethno-Marxist, Indigenous peoples did not face a generic "Western" world, but to specific social classes and their representatives in the State apparatus.

From this view, the Indian problem is a sociopolitical phenomenon that cannot be reduced to cultural or economist terms nor a rigid schema. For its socio-political, subordinate ethnic groups are linked to the other exploited sectors of society, although their claims must retain their specificity.

The ethnic question becomes constitutive part of the national question and, consequently, ethnic or indigenous peoples resist hegemonic national project that can only be successfully confronted with a hegemonic counter and alternative national project. The solution to the ethnic problem involves the political action of Indians as historical subjects, as political actors and builders of their own future, in conjunction with the struggles of others exploited

The vast majority of anthropologists makes no distinction in the diverse nature of social groups, so that all fall under the category of ethnic groups. This generic use of the term ethnic groups to describe populations with territorial, cultural, economic and political of a very different complexity in extent and depth, do not seems suitable for scientific analysis, much less for the political interpretation of this problem.

The ethnic groups are, from the point of view of its historical appearance, prior to the emergence of nation’s social formations. Therefore, ethnicity appears as opposed to national. From this base, we developed a classification that may account for the differences between different socio-cultural units within the national States: ethnic groups: ethnic and ethno-national, nationality groups and national groups

An important element of the ethnic groups is that their awareness of social integration is essentially collective, not individual, as in the case of nationalities or national groups around; the ethnic groups maintain a community identity in a lesser or greater degree. José Luis Najeson notes that the loss of these local community relations, kinship, race, tribe, would also be a feature of transformation towards an awareness of different integration, not ethnic and collective, but national and individual.

Important facts on integrating national ethnic groups are on the one hand the processes related to the capitalist system in its neoliberal expression, such as increasing migration, for example, and revolutionary transformation processes of the type that unleashes the EZLN in Mexico or MAS in Bolivia.

The nationalities, which are originated in the processes of formation of nations, from pre-existing ethnic groups and through the already mentioned processes of unification-centralization and homogenization that national states carried on. They are sociocultural units throughout the entire territory considered "national" and strongly differentiated in their class structures.

The national elites are the organic intellectuals encoding a project of self-determination clearly aimed at establishing a nation-state for itself or identify itself with an existing nation-state, which, in turn, acts as a political expression of that nationality.

Remember that the term **people** has multiple connotations People = Ethnic group (the Purépecha people); people = nationality (the Mexican people); people = subject of sovereignty (the government of the people); people = subaltern classes; people = subject of international law (declarations and international jurisprudence).

These ratings are not static and rigid and depends heavily on historical and situational contexts that cross these human conglomerates. Hence our classification may overlap in a range of situations of possible transition.

I conclude by saying that the best way to be a Marxist in neoliberal times, is to keep the radicalism with which Marx studied, criticized and fought capitalism, assuming its revolutionary thought to the conditions of time and place; go to the root of the problems arising from the exploitation of the majority, in order to maintain the profits of the ruling classes; keep alive the idea of the need for a systemic transformation of society and, above all, to have confidence in the ability of human beings to resist and prevail over irrationality and chaos[[34]](#footnote-34). Indigenous peoples, with their civilizing proposals, have and will have an important role in these struggles.

1. Research - Professor INAH Morelos. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. View: Miguel Ángel Adame Ceron (Editor**) Marxismo, antropología e historia (y filosofía)** México: Ediciones Navarra, 2011. Ángel Palerm. **Antropología y marxismo.** México, CIESAS-UAM-Universidad Iberoamericana, 2008. Gilberto López y Rivas. Antropología, Etnomarxismo y compromiso social de los antropólogos. México: Ocean Sur, 2010. Alicia Castellanos and Gilberto López y Rivas. **El debate de la nación, cuestión nacional, racismo y autonomía**. México: Claves latinoamericanas, 1992. Gilberto López y Rivas. **Antropología, minorías étnicas y cuestión nacional**. México: Editorial Cuicuilco-ENAH, 1988. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: Rosa Luxemburgo. **La cuestión nacional y la autonomía**. México: cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 19179 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. View: Vladimir I. Lenin. **The struggle of the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism**. Moscow: Progress Publishers, S / f. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. View: Otto Bauer. **La cuestión de las nacionalidades y la socialdemocracia**. México: XXI Century 1979. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Horace B. Davis. **Nacionalismo y socialismo**. Barcelona: Península, 1972, pp. 242-43). Engels wrote: "In Latin America we have witnessed the conquest of Mexico, which has pleased us... It is in the interest of its own development that Mexico will be in the future under the tutelage of the United States." "The movements of 1847" in Marx-Engels, **Materiales para la historia de América Latina**. Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, Number 30, 1972, p. 183. See: Gilberto López y Rivas, **La Guerra del 47 y la Resistencia contra la ocupación**. Mexico: Ocean Sur, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. On this issue there has been a great debate concerns the negative sources on Bolivar consulted by Marx and his discrimination of the positives to which he had access in writing a biography of the hero requested by Charles Harms, director of "New York Daily Tribune” for Volume III of **New American Cyclopedia**, which circulated in January 1858. José Aricó notes, “it was a political assessment which led Marx to interpret Bolivar as authoritarian and Bonapartist and project, as he used, his hostility to its policy and to all the activities and even the personality of the liberator, which mocks bitterly throughout his long essay ". (José Arico, **Marx y América Latina**. México: Alianza Editorial Mexicana, 1982. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. H. B. Davis. Ibid. P. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bloom F. Solomon. **El mundo de las naciones. El problema nacional en Marx**. México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1975, pp. 62-63, (first edition, 1941). Also see: Renato Levrero: "Marx, Engels and the National Question", text that serves as an introduction to the compilation of works of Marx and Engels: **Imperio y colonia. Escritos sobre Irlanda**. México: Pasado y Presente, Número 72, 1979, pp. 13-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Leopoldo Mármora. **El concepto socialista de nación**. México: Pasado y presente. Número 96, 1986, p. 13 and p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid., P. 43 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This Hindu leader had occasion to discuss with Lenin his preliminary *Theses on the National and Colonial Questions*, prior to the Second Congress of the International Communist, which took place in the summer of 1920 in Moscow. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ana Maria Rivadeo. **El marxismo y la cuestión nacional.** México: UNAM, 1994, p. 10. See: From the same author: Lesa Patria. Nación y globalización. México: UNAM, 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. View: Ricardo Melgar Bao. "La region etnocultural (una categoría analitica-problemática"). Anthropos, no. 23, México, May 1988, pp. 3-14. Also: Javier Guerrero and Gilberto López y Rivas. "Las minorías étnicas como categoría política en la cuestión regional" in **La cuestión étnico-nacional en América Latina**. Mexico: impresiones de la revista **Antropología Americana**, 1984. Pp 63-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It is currently undermined the traditional concept of "national sovereignty", the mainstay of the nation - state, especially since in many cases, governments have become virtual managers of multinationals, which determines a separation or rupture of the political class with society. This deteriorates the consensus between rulers and ruled. This crisis of legitimacy derives in which the state has increasingly less able to guarantee social development. In the editorial of the newspaper **La Jornada** of August 12, 2011, the "growing political, police, military and intelligence of Washington in our country stands interference (that) also reveals an unacceptable subordination of lofty cabinet officials calderonista the designs of a foreign government, which in turn constitutes an unacceptable violation, by the current administration, the current legal framework and validated, in fact, the principle of national sovereignty.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. We must take into account the other resistance of the oppressed, which warns masterfully James C. Scott in his book **Los dominados y el arte de la Resistencia**. Mexico: ERA, 2000. It is one that is expressed in linguistic cloaking, hidden codes, the use of anonymity and intentional ambiguity. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Jorge Ibarra. **Nación y cultura nacional**. Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. View: Gilberto López y Rivas, "Campaign against discrimination in Indian education". **La Jornada-Rebelión**, 20/03/2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. In one of his last writings, Lenin writes about Stalin: "The Georgian dealing with disdain this (refers to cautious and delicate treatment for the oppressed nationalities, GLyR); making derogatory accusations of "social-chauvinism" (when he is not only a real and true "social-nationalist", but a rough Russian henchman), that Georgian violates, basically, the interests of proletarian class solidarity.” VI Lenin, Acerca del problema de las nacionalidades sobre la autonomización” en **Sobre el internacionalismo proletario**. Madrid: Akal Editor, 1975, p. 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. In 1991, in an interview that I conducted with academic Vladimir Reznichenko the still URSS, he said: "In sum, the Stalin regime was not only unpopular but also anti-national". View: Gilberto López y Rivas. "El problema de las nacionalidades en la Unión Soviética" in Alicia Castellanos Guerrero and Gilberto López y Rivas. **El debate de la nación**. Ob. Cit., P. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. View: Gilberto López y Rivas. "El proceso de autonomía en la Costa Atlántica-Caribe de Nicaragua" in Alicia Castellanos Guerrero and Gilberto López y Rivas. **El debate de la nación**. Ob. cit. Pp. 91-108. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. View: Leo Gabriel and Gilberto López y Rivas (coordinators). **Autonomías indígenas en América Latina: nuevas formas de convivencia política.** México: UAM-Plaza y Valdés, 2008. Of these coordinators: **El universo autonómico: propuesta para una nueva democracia**. México: UAM-Plaza y Valdés, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “Vanguardias, revoluciones y autonomismo latinoamericano. **Rebelión**, 11-08-2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. **Rebelión**, "Partidos y movimientos”, Agosto 16, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Gilberto López y Rivas. Antropología, Etnomarxismo. Ob. cit.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Speech at the University of Havana, on the occasion of the award of Honorary Doctorate, 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. View: Gilberto López y Rivas. "Los pueblos indígenas en el discurso de AMLO". (**La Jornada.** Abril 1, 2011). "Carta abierta y urgente a Dilma Rousseff." (**La Jornada**, January 29, 2011.) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Speech at the University of Havana, on the occasion of the award of Honorary Doctorate, 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Raya Dunayevskaya. **Filosofía y revolución, de Hegel a Sartre y de Marx a Mao**. México: Siglo XXI, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. José Carlos Mariátegui. **Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana**. Lima: Amanta, 1978. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ana Maria Rivadeo, Lesa Pátria, op. Cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. IBID, pp. 22-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. In the supplement **Radar Page 12**, (Sunday August 14, 2011), Fernando Bogado publishes an article about Erik Hobsbawm and his latest book, **How to change the world**, in which he asks "What Marx’s contributions should be preserved? First, the political nature of his thought. For him, changing the world is the same as interpret (paraphrasing one of the mythical "Theses on Feuerbach"); Hobsbawm believes that there is political fear in many Marxists when they are committed to a cause, knowing that to enter the reading of Marx, first had to have a yearning of political type: the intention to change the world. Secondly, the great scientific discovery of Marx, the capital gain ... Recognize that there is part of the salary of the workers that the capitalist retains for himself in order to increase profits over time is to find evidence of a historical oppression, first step towards a true classless society without oppressed ... Finally, the existence of a globalized economy demonstrates what Marx recognized as the destructiveness of capitalism's a problem to solve a definite historical system " [↑](#footnote-ref-34)