

ADVANCES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Strategic planning is a particular approach to planning, originally associated with the business world. In the early 1970s, Latin America and the Caribbean began to discuss this concept. However, this approach became popular relatively recently (mid-80's onwards), as it became an essential component of the reform processes in the Public Sector of that region. Those processes were grounded on compliance with conditionalities (conditions attached to a loan, debt relief, bilateral aid or membership in international organizations, especially by, or in, international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank). This paper will present a general overview of the advances in Strategic Planning of the Public Sector in Latin America. First, in general, and then it focuses on selected countries' initiatives (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Dominican Republic). It will evaluate which (if any) advances had thusly been achieved. Its ultimate goal is to present a balance of the current state: achievements, shortfalls, and failures, thereby enabling us to redefine the paradigmatic architecture of strategic planning in the Public Sector. Ideally, this will enable us to rediscover its roots and to improve the tools and techniques for its operation and further evaluation. The main idea is to present a historical perspective of the evolution of planning in the region: from its inception (however limited or impaired) to the present day; with its resurgence and revitalization, based largely on the introduction of the concept of a Strategic Plan. Supporting data come from various sources: specialized bibliography and first hand knowledge. Further documentary research was conducted, in order to support various points of view and arguments. In sum, this paper emphasizes the risks of planning in the Public Sector today, and its potential devolution into the disreputable status it enjoyed in the region in decades gone by.

Key words: Latin American and the Caribbean, public sector, strategic planning.

Introduction

The literature is replete on the topic of strategic planning, in general; and, in the public sector in specific. Nevertheless, decades ago, some authors (Calcagno, Sainz and de Barbieri, 1968) laid the foundation for what today is known as Strategic Planning in the Public Sector in Latin American and the Caribbean, by beginning to postulate the importance of considering political viability plans, even designing analysis models for such purpose.

The pioneer work of Strategic Planning in Latin America, is registered initially in *Strategy and Plan* (Matus, 1973), the book that precedes the masterwork on the topic. Its author makes a clear and

interesting distinction between Normative Planning and Strategic Planning. It considers that the first is enclosed in the economic domain and relegates the political issue to a secondary level. Moreover, it enters its major effort in the definition of a norm, considered as they *must be* and as the starting point for the establishment of a course of action that permits to reach objectives fixed “a priori”. While, in the second, the objectives are derived from the reality and the norm complies with an *indicative* role.

In *Situational Planning*, a book the author began to write while still in jail, after being Minister of Economy in the Government of the Popular Unity of President Salvador Allende in Chile, and that he finished and published in exile, at the Center for Development Studies (CENDES, by acronym in Spanish) of the Universidad Central of Venezuela (Matus, 1978). It achieves a holistic synthesis that traces the path for the Strategic Planning conceptualization and performance, utilizing the Bertalanffy systems’ approach, the cybernetic and other technological developments of the epoch, articulating the instrumental frame of economy and political sciences, to pose – from a comprehensive perspective– oriented to the transformation of reality, the fundamental of strategic planning¹.

With the Matus influence, in the early 1980s, Latin America and the Caribbean began to develop a line of thought which itself sets out the basic principles of strategic planning in the public sector: the directionality in the development process and recognition of the struggle between actors (Pichardo-Muñiz & Vargas-Vásquez 1982 and Pichardo-Muñiz 1984).

On the other hand, the Latin American and the Caribbean Institute for Economy and Social Planning (ILPES, by acronym in Spanish), in the late 1990s, optical acting expands and starts becoming an issue on the assumption of irreplaceable Planning functions, propitiating the analysis and reflection around three lines of interest: i. *Prospective Vision*, to incorporate prevision, coherence, unity and, uncertainty reduction (Medina-Vásquez 2000); ii. *Coordination*, with the consequent compatibility between budget, programs and market regulation (Garnier 2000) ; and iii *Evaluation* of plans, programs and projects as fundamental labor of a public management, results-oriented model, and the establishment of a performance indicator system (Wiesner 1999). This approach implies the application of a planning strategic concept, the participation in the design and even in the execution and orienting its management towards results.

Later on, ILPES has been occupied in the revaluation of development planning, highlighting that now it covers all the institutions and that, with independence from the institutional actors, such process emphasizes the strategic concept, participation, anticipation of the future, actions’ coordination and results’ evaluation (Lira 2006).

Likewise, it has realized interesting contributions to the history’s reconstruction of planning thought and practice, indicating among its current challenges, the conceptual innovations’ incorporation from past decades and the integration of its basic functions: strategic vision, implementing stakeholders’ coordination, monitoring and assessment (Leiva 2012).

Previous works constitute the main theoretical antecedent and benchmark for this paper, which is structured as follows:

Section one begins with a review of the evolution of Planning Theory and Practice in the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, the background or history. Specifically, it will focus on selected stages of development, as well as its differentiating characteristics: origins, deployment, crises and *withdrawal*, resurgence and revitalization, including the widespread adoption of the concept of a strategic plan. First in general, and then it focuses on selected country initiatives (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Dominican Republic)

Section two provides a general overview of the advances in Strategic Planning in the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. More precisely, the aim is to evaluate the current situation, in form concise and substantive, in order to show: accomplishments, shortfalls, and failures.

Section three offers a guideline with perspectives for the future. It further posits the need to re-define the paradigmatic architecture of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector; rediscovering its roots, and improving the tools and techniques for its operation and further evaluation.

As conclusions it stresses the risks posed by a scenario in which Strategic Planning in Public Sector Institutions may fall back to the disreputable state of traditional planning of previous decades. It closes by making a series of recommendations for the region as a whole, in specific, as well as to other regions with similar histories and characteristics. It is hoped that this approach will be informative and practical to both politics and technicians.

Problem of Research

Strategic Planning is a fashionable trend in Latin America's Public Sector. It has become the "lingua franca" of technicians and politicians, as well as an assorted melange of Public Sector workers and related institutions, both national and international. Those actors have been redefining the planning approach, focusing on its methodology and its instrumental of application.

Indeed, current Strategic Planning in Latin America's Public Sector involves varying degrees of approaches:

1. Adopting the concept of a "Strategic Plan".
2. Participatory design in plans and projects preparation.
3. Increased awareness of new functions applicable to Public Sector Planning (such as prospective vision, coordination, and evaluation).
4. Searching for nexus and sector articulation with transversal management systems (mainly, budgeting and public investment).

Nevertheless, indiscriminate use of the concept "Strategic Plan" has resulted in an erroneous association between its formulation to processes and instrumentals alien to the essence of Strategic Planning. Furthermore, this oversight may have eroded the basis for a credible formulation and implementation of an effective planning strategy: a working method that comes before, and presides over, actions.

There is, accordingly, a need to go back to the very roots of strategic planning, to improve its operational and evaluator tools and techniques. This reframing will enable us to decrease the likelihood that strategic planning in Public Sector institutions may, once more, fall into the disrepute it wallowed in some decades past.

Research Focus

Our research focus, therefore, is on examining and providing evidence as to how planning in Latin America's Public Sector has been evolving from its original incarnation and practice, to the current incorporation of the concept of a "Strategic Plan," as a key tool in the Public Sector's methodology and work instruments. A key question is thusly brought up: Under which premises (if at all) has the concept of a "Strategic Plan" been incorporated into governments' (i.e., Public Sector) day-to-day businesses?

Research Methodology

This paper is, mainly, an exploratory study guided by documentary research. Therefore, its main objective is to identify trends and advances (if any) achieved on Strategic Planning in Latin America's and the Caribbean Public Sector in the last decades. We seek to gain insight as to which country's Public Sector is actively engaged in this practice, as well as to make policy recommendations applicable to both this region and to others with similar characteristics and experiences.

Documentary research is a well-recognized analysis technique in the sociological method. It encompasses the classical social tradition initiated by Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx and others. Moreover, it has been the main method (indeed, sometimes the only one) for leading sociologists. Its application involves the use of texts and documents. Since this is a written text, the list of document sources includes government publications, such as guidelines, plan formulations, ministerial reports, and so on. These hold information relevant to the focus of research: both providing support to viewpoints or arguments. The key point is the types of documents available and the ability to use them as reliable sources of evidence: profiting from the breadth and depth of their information content. Documentary research (along with surveys and ethnography) is one of the three major types of social research. It has arguably been the most widely used of the three throughout the history of

sociology and other social sciences. However, documentary research is just as good as (and, sometimes, even more cost effective than) the others.

General Background of Research

As an exploratory study conducted by documentary research, its methodology consisted in the review and analysis of specialized bibliography combined with *firsthand* knowledge.

Instruments and Procedures

A systematic search was conducted, in order to retrieve literature pertinent to the evolution of Public Sector Planning Theory and Practice in Latin America and the Caribbean. Electronic and Manual search was similarly conducted with peer-reviewed international events. Additional publications, identified from the bibliography of previously retrieved articles, were also employed.

Nonetheless, this research is mainly supported by primary documents (defined as eye-witness accounts of people who experienced a particular event covered in the study, applying *firsthand* understanding that an expert may base an opinion on facts or data “perceived,” rather than actual knowledge) in the selection of specialized bibliography and its analysis.

Accordingly, quality control criteria were applied when handling documentary sources. Those criteria are: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Authenticity refers to whether the evidence produced is genuine and originates from unquestionable sources. Credibility, in turn, refers to whether the evidence is typical of its kind. Representativeness means that the documents consulted are a true sampling of the breadth of available documents relevant to the particular research. Meaning refers to whether the evidence produced is clear and comprehensible (Scott 1990: 1-2).

In summary, relevant information was obtained through the following questions guideline. It provided a logical, methodical strategy for evaluating and analyzing each of the stages of development of planning in the Public Sector in Latin American and the Caribbean.

1. Which one is the main factor affecting the adoption of planning?
2. Where does the main influence for the adoption of planning come from?
3. What is the role assigned to planning?
4. What is the main purpose of planning?
5. What is the main focus of interest of planning?
6. What is the preferential scope of planning?
7. What is the predominant time frame?
8. What are the prevailing planning instruments?
9. What is planning's predominant approach?
10. What is the privileged analysis instrument used?

Experiences Analysis

In order to focus the description, a small number of countries' initiatives currently taking place were selected. Those are the backbone of the focus of our research. It is expected that these countries (as well as others not focused on in this paper) could engage in Strategic Planning in areas not examined on this paper.

The stated goals and objectives vary greatly from one initiative to another, but they all share the common idea of increasing Strategic Planning.

Based on the analyzed experiences, we draw on three main goals: focusing on the “operability” of a Plan, focusing on constructing a twofold system (one for Planning, and another for Evaluation), and to remain in the operation of determined processes: prospective vision in national development planning formulation, planning method, and institutional reforms. Upon their review, we produce a prospective list of the main challenges expected to arise in the future. Each initiative was reviewed,

and relevant details were drawn out and examined; its ultimate aim not being an exhaustive evaluation but to search for common or similar traits and characteristic, so as to clarify and understand some of the answers stemming from our research focus.

The initiatives analyzed are the following: (1) The articulation between planning, multiannual budgets and public investment, which correspond to the initiative “Brasil Avança”; (2) the “Central Government’s Evaluation and Control Management System” from Chile; (3). The “National Planning System” in Colombia, which articulates the relations between the State and the Civil Society and, the participation of the latter in priority definition; (4) the methodological adequacy of the planning historical process in Cuba; and, (5) the institutional and legal reforms, in sectorial terms, and its expression in the creation of Institutional Planning Bureau and the Institutional Strategic Plans’ formulation for projects and monitoring and evaluation systems in the Dominican Republic (Table 1).

Table 1. Initiatives and criteria selection (in alphabet order by country).

Country	Criteria selection	Initiative
Brazil	Articulation of Public Planning-Investment- Budget	Multiannual Plan “Brasil Avança”
Chile	Assumption of the evaluation like basic function intrinsic to Planning	“Central Government’s Evaluation and Control Management System”
Colombia	The participation of stakeholders in the priority identification for the plans and projects’ formulation	“National Planning System” (with stakeholder participants)
Cuba	Methodological instrument development for the scenarios’ design (prospective vision)	Methodological Adequacy of the planning historical process
Dominican Republic	Search of nexus and sectorial articulation with transversal management systems (mainly budgeting and public investment)	Legal and Institutional Reforms and its expression in the creation of Institutional Planning Bureau and the Institutional Strategic Plans’ formulation for projects and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Source: Own elaboration

Planning Evolution in the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean

A quick journey through the evolution of Planning’s theory and practice in the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, shows the *ups* and *downs* of its capacities’ development; and, consequently, in regards to its *goodness*. And as such, it permits to construct a containing periodization of, at least, 4 (four) development moments or stages, with differentiating characteristics, among them:

- (i.) The *origins* of National Planning, associated to the promotion of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in which National Planning is assigned the role of discipline the industrial policy of import substitution, in the framework of a controller State, that assumes welfare-oriented functions in the social level and productive in the economic aspects;
- (ii.) The *deployment* of the Development Planning. In this occasion, the influence is from the *Alianza para el Progreso* (ALPRO, by acronym in Spanish). In its declaration, it conditioned the loan and donations grant to the existence of wide national programs, properly studied, that would strengthen democracy, safeguard the free enterprise and promote social reforms;
- (iii.) The *crises* of Planning which, in turn, is a reflection of the *crisis* of the industrial development model and the Welfare and Entrepreneur State; and consequently, the *withdrawal*

of National Planning, in the framework of the economic opening, economic and financial liberalization, deregulation of the State apparatus and the predominant market-centric vision which, in the free market's framework, consigns it as a mechanism par excellence of the resource allocation; and

- (iv.) The *resurgence* of Planning, mainly in compass with the international organizations, as an instrument to organize the processes of institutional reform, and channel the usage of loans and other associated financial resources. In this context, it attends the *revitalization* of Planning in the Public Sector (Table 2).

Table 2. Planning Evolution in the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean: historical facts that have marked its evolution (1929 -2013).

Criteria/ Year	1929	1961	1980	2000 and in
Moments or development state	The origins	The deployment	The crises and withdrawals	The resurgence and revitalization
1 Main relevant facts affecting the adoption of planning	Economic depression State Comptroller Consolidation of a new International Economic Order World Wars	Influence of the Cuban revolution	Debt crises Industrial crises development model Welfare State crises	State Reforms Civil Society Influence Right Approach Capabilities Approach Summit's Rio Millennium Goals New Public Management influence
2 Influence source	ECLAC (Technical Assistance)	International Aid	Monetary Fund (Stand By Agreements)	Multilateral Agencies (Loans and Non-Reimbursable Technical Cooperation)
3 Planning Role	Instrument to achieve development		Facilitate economic opening, economic and financial liberalization, and the deregulation of the State.	Accompany the reform processes, compliance with conditionalities and financial disbursements against commitments.
4 Main Purpose	Velocity of the Economic Growth	Direction of the Economic and Social Development	Restoring financial stability and macro structural adjustment	Incorporation of the Institutional Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plans as institutional guidelines
5 Main Interest Focus	Economic Development per se	Emphasis on the so-called social aspects of development, but without achieving proper articulation.	State reform (including privatization and functions' transfer)	Compliance with development goals
6 Preferential Scope	Global	Sectorial	Macroeconomic	Institutional
7 Time frame predominant	Medium term	Short term (*)	Short term	Medium term
8 Prevailing planning instrument	National Development Plan	Action Programs Intervention Projects	Measures of economic policies and, in some cases, social compensation programs	Cooperation programs and projects Institutional Strategic Plans Annual Operational Plans
9 Predominant approach	Economic	Socio-Economic	Financial-Macroeconomic	Administration, Management and Governance

Criteria/ Year	1929	1961	1980	2000 and in
Moments or development state	The origins	The deployment	The crises and withdrawals	The resurgence and revitalization
10 Privileged Instrumental Analysis	Input-Product Modeling and Simulation Lineal Programming General Equilibrium Model PERT-CPM Economic Evaluation	Econometric Models Social Projects Evaluation	Historical Series Statistical and Econometric Models	Mission-Vision-Values Analysis SWOT Project Cycle Logical Framework Approach Management Performance Indicators The Balanced Scorecard

(*) Despite that some countries showed interest in studies for the long term: Ecuador 1964-1973; Perú 1968-1978; Panamá 1970-1980; Bolivia 1962-1971; Honduras 1974-1983, Dominican Republic 1976-1986 and Costa Rica 2000.

Source: Elaborated based on Matus 1972; Leiva 2012; and personal experiences.

The Origins

The historical experience documents as a recognized fact that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first Planning experiences at national level, promoted from the State, initiated in the second five-year period of 1940². Under the influence of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with the tutelage of Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch, who since then advised – contrary to Adam Smith – that the *invisible hand* behaved like *stepmother*; because, instead of correcting the market’s imperfection, it accentuates them.

ECLAC main concern was the study of the underdevelopment conditions, henceforth the thesis of the deterioration in trade terms³. The proposal consisted in an *inwards* development model, whose purpose was to substitute the imports with national production, to view the redistribution of income and improve the living standards of the majority of the population.

In that context, national planning was conceived as an instrument capable of disciplining the industrial development, with global scope, in a medium term, through the actions of national development plans, to solve the velocity of the economical growth’s concern recurring to the economical approach and mechanism derived from that discipline.

At the beginning, the first national planning’s initiative in Latin America, were oriented towards the attention of specific problems, that were considered obstacles or restrictions for development, such as, the energy supply, the transport and communications’ infrastructure provision and the improvement of the population’s sanitary conditions. Subsequently, the function of formulating National Development Plans is incorporated. It is comprehensive and addresses the economy as a whole (Table 3).

Table 3. Main initiatives of the first national planning experiences in Latin America (1930-1961).

Country	Date	Initiative
Mexico	1930	General Planning Law
	1934-1940	Six-Years Plans
	1941-1946	
	1953-1958	National Investment Plan
	1959	The Investment Committee raised its administrative hierarchy to become part of the Public Investment Directorate of the Ministry of the Presidency

Country	Date	Initiative
Argentina	1933	National Economic Action Plan
	1946-1952	Five- Years Plans
	1953-1957	
	1958	Planning Board of the Province of Buenos Aires
	1959	Federal Investment Council
Brazil	1939-1943	Special Plan of Obras Públicas e Aparelhamento da Defesa Nacional (*)
	1949-1953	SALTE (Health, Food, Transportation)
	1951	Plano de Reparcelhamento e Fomento de Economia Nacional
	1956	Goals Program
Chile	1939	Immediate Action Plan in response to mitigating the effects of the earthquake of 1939
	1954-1961	Agricultural and Transport Development Plan

(*) Leiva (2011: 14) indicates that "the experience of that plan should be extended in the next five-Years in the Plane of Works and Equipment, but it not implemented".

Source: Elaborated based on Matus 1978; Moreno, 1979; Leiva 2012; and personal experiences.

Mexico is the first country in the region in taking steps in that direction, with the enactment of a General Planning Law and the formulation of Six-Years Plans conceived as programs of economical, social and political reform.

Meanwhile, Chile is highlighted for the creation of the Reconstruction Corporation, responsible for a Mitigation Plan formulation, to reduce the effects of the earthquake in 1939, and the Corporation of Foment (CORFO by acronym in Spanish), as a law of the republic; which, in the following years, assumes the tasks of formulating immediate action foment plans in different economic sectors of strategic interest (Electrical Energy, Agriculture, Industry, Trade and Transport).

Other Latin American and Caribbean countries are incorporated in the previous list with different initiatives, even though; it would not necessarily imply the creation of organisms or instances responsible for national planning. Bolivia, which in 1942, creates the Bolivian Foment Corporation; Ecuador that in 1954 creates through Decree the National Planning and Economic Coordination Board (JUNAPLA, by acronym in Spanish); Guatemala which in 1954 creates a National Planning Council, integrated by diverse ministries; and Jamaica, which in 1955 creates the Central Planning Unit.

Later on, Panamá, in 1956 created the Department of Planning, as part of the Presidency of the Republic's bureau, which two years later was formed as the Ministry of the Presidency and a year after establishes the Directorate General of Planning and Management and the Department of Planning; Venezuela, in 1958 establishes by Decree the Presidency Central Coordination and Planning Bureau (CORDIPLAN, by acronym in Spanish); and Colombia, which that same year institutes the National Planning Department, as an advisory organism of the President and its direct dependents.

Cuba deserves a separate mention, because after the triumph of the revolution, in 1960, establishes the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN, by acronym in Spanish), with the mandate to fix, orient, supervise and coordinate economic policy, in a context in which planning, as in every socialist regime, is inherent and constitute the central element in the economy's direction for the compliance of economic policy guidelines in the practice of the coordination, allocation, redistribution, regulation and control functions of the necessary resources for the development strategy's implementation, framing the effort of annual plans formulation in projections of medium and long term. In 1962, the first National Economy Development Plan was formulated.

The Deployment of the Development Planning

From 1961 and on, Latin America and the Caribbean initiate new experiences and deepen some of the already existing ones, in the framework of the so-called Development Planning. In that

occasion, the influence is from the *Alianza para el Progreso* (ALPRO, by acronym in Spanish); an initiative emerged in the United States of America, as a way to counteract the influence of the Cuban revolution.

In its Declaration to the People of our America, the Letter of *Punta del Este*, signed in Uruguay, by the countries belonging to the Organization of American States (OAS) with the exception of Cuba, conditioned loans and donations grants to the existence of wide national programs, properly studied, that would strengthen democracy, safeguard free enterprise and identify the necessary reforms to achieve the improvement of the population's living standards (agricultural reform, literacy, environmental sanitation, housing development, among other social measures).

In this context, various initiatives are taken in order to institutionalize national planning, assigning the task of national development plan formulation (Table 4).

Table 4. Institutionalization Initiative for the National planning from 1961 and on, and during the 70's.

Country	Year	Institutionalization Initiative
Mexico	1961	Establishing Intrasecretarial Commission composed of the Secretariats of the Presidency, of Finance, and Public Credit, responsible for the formulation of the Immediate Action Plan 1962-1964.
	1966	National Development Economic and Social Plan 1966-1970
	1970	Creation of National Planning Council
Argentina	1961	Creation of National Development Council
Brazil	1961	Creation of the Ministry of Planning
	1972	Federal Planning System
Bolivia	1961	Creation of the Ministry of Planning and Coordination
	1962	Decennial Plan for Economic and Social Development 1962-1971
Perú	1962	Creation of the National Planning Institute and the National Planning System
Costa Rica	1963	Creation of the National Planning and Economic Policy Bureau (OFIPLAN, by acronym in Spanish) and the National Fund of the National Development Plan, funded with 1% of public institutional budgets.
	1974	Creation of the National Planning System
Chile	1964	Creation of the National Planning Bureau, dependent from the Presidency of the Republic
	1967	Transformation of the National Planning Bureau in a decentralized public service agency, with its own Patrimony.
Dominican Republic	1968	Creation of the National Planning Bureau (ONAPLAN, by acronym in Spanish)
Jamaica	1972	The National Planning Agency was established
Panamá	1973	Creation of the National Planning and Economic Policy Bureau (MIPPE, by acronym in Spanish)

Source: Elaborated based on Moreno 1979; Leiva 2012; legal framework consultations; and personal experiences.

Among the measures to National Planning's institutionalization, from 1961 and on, and during the 70's, it is highlighted: (1) the status escalation of already established instances and the creation of National Planning Systems, Brazil for example, creates, in 1961, the Ministry of Planning, and in 1972 establishes the Federal Planning System (road that, then, other countries also take); or Chile that, in 1967 enacts a law and transforms the Planning Bureau, dependent of the Presidency of the Republic, in an decentralized public services organism, with its own patrimony; and, (2) the creation of National Planning bureaus as executive arms of the Presidency of the Republic. Among them, the National Planning and Economic Policy Bureau (OFIPLAN) in Costa Rica, founded in 1963; and, the National Planning Bureau (ONAPLAN) from the Dominican Republic, in 1968.

In general, during this period, especially in the new experiences of planning, special attention

must be paid to the operational aspects: intervention action programs and projects' formulation, emphasizing in the inclusion of the so-called *social* aspects of development⁴, even without necessarily achieving the due articulation, and expanding the approach and the instrument analysis to developments proceeding from sociology and the political sciences. Closely linked to their status as foreign aid organization, the National Planning instances centralized the approval of international cooperation, a function that they maintain up to this present day and that, in many ways, supports their validity throughout their entire existence.

The "Crises" and Withdrawal

The economic crises in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose detonator was the external debt crisis, in turn, revealed other critical situations: the development model as a whole and the conception of the Welfare and Entrepreneurial State. The repercussions were expanded, various and of larger scope in the material conditions and life quality of the majority of the population.

At first, the economic-financial crisis was confronted by the governments under the protection of the multilateral banking with financial stabilization policies and structural adjustment programs. The search, first for economic stabilization and commercial liberalization after, inspired processes of fiscal reform-in the majority of countries-, still unfinished and of markets' deregulation, in the framework of the *Washington Consensus* (Burki and Perry, 1998).

In that situation, in the majority of Latin America and Caribbean countries, national planning systems turn to a secondary place and the institutionalized instances created for such purpose were even reduced to their minimal expression; and, in the best cases, were transformed in development promoting agencies dedicated to the formulation of investment or infrastructure projects, framed in rigid criteria of supply and demand that the market structure itself would overgrow.

So that, in general terms, the simplification of the national planning bureaus in Latin America and the Caribbean, paradoxically coincide with the Planning "crisis" (Matus, 1973), characterized –among other elements–, by the dissociation of plans in respect to reality, total or partial lack of proposal execution, the absence of systematic evaluation and the introduction of adjustment in the planning process, and the inertia of the organisms in charge of national planning. The most relevant output of planning denominated *normative*, is a plan disassociated from the social reality that it pretends to discipline; and even, in occasions dissociated from the political process that originates and sustains it. This situation curtails the possibilities of planning execution and feeds the incredulity on its efficacy.

Simultaneously, a divorce was introduced between the technical formulation and the political will. Such discrepancy has occupied the undertakings not only of planning as a discipline, but the entire conjoint of social sciences. The frustration of the technical sphere and the dissatisfaction at the political level lead to, in many cases, the isolation of planning from the highest spheres of decision level and an incredulous attitude is assumed before the utility of it.

The Resurgence and "Revitalization" of the Planning in the Public Sector

As to all epoch of exacerbated criticism, of paradigm interpellation, meaning, of questioning, follows an epoch of exploration of new options, initiating several attempts to, from diverse perspectives, pretend to revitalize the planning.

The concept of Strategic Planning begins to expand as a way of renewing an approach to planning, characterized by the recognition of the multiplicity of actors and events before which the planned action is defined; the consideration of medium and long term as time frames and the importance of the environment in which to plan. From there, derives the Strategy as a central element of planning and the prevention and prevision capacities, as well as, the development of conditions and proactive behavior occupy an important place in planning actions.

The State reform processes in distinct areas of action, paradoxically implied a generous investment of resources, personal and from the cooperation. This situation generated a multiplicity of plans, programs and projects of diverse nature, complexity and scope, whose need of control made Planning and its goodness to refloat.

Among the main features characteristically of the resurgence of Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean is distinguished the revival in its trust as an auxiliary mechanism in the distributions of resources and the establishment of dates for goal compliance.

The *revitalization* of planning has been characterized by the appreciation of planning as a working and visionary method ahead of the future. And, in that framework, singular events of interest have taken place, such as the expansion of its scopes and areas of application and the redefinition of its analysis and action's instrument. In this sense emerges: (1) the incorporation of the Strategic Plan concept, (2) the participatory design in plan and project preparation, (3) the definition of new functions for Planning in the Public Sector (prospective vision, coordination and evaluation) and, (4) the search of nexus an sectorial coordination with transversal management systems (mainly budgeting and public investment).

In regards to the function of long term thought in a world clung to pragmatism and short term, Medina-Vásquez (2000, p. 47-48) points out the existence of indication at an interesting level of development of the provisional acting capacity, therefore, it considers that what is necessary to develop are "*the links of the productive chains of the prediction back and forth*". In relations with the function of coordination Garnier (2000, pp. 10-45) indicates that to coordinate is a function essentially political, which supposes to establish priorities and set responsibilities (political, financial and operational) and establish a strategic coordination in the interior of policies and its linkages, with regards to the financial resources and the different forms of management. In respect to the function of evaluation (Wiesner 1999, p. 13) highlights that "*even though there is not an unique formula, an approach based in (i) self-evaluations and in (ii) strategic evaluation, seems attractive and could be considered by those countries that want to strengthen their evaluations programs*".

On another side, in the heat of this planning revitalization's process, some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are emphasizing the renovation of Bureaus and Ministries in charge of National Planning, the generalization of Institutional Planning Bureaus, and the deployment of international cooperation programs of broad scope that, similarly, begin to value the participatory design with involved actors⁵, to propitiate the realization of Baseline Studies and to incorporate the evaluation, including – even thought timidly- the evaluation of impact (social and environmental), in occasions recurring to models *cuasi* experimental.

In such way that *spaces* of action for planning have been opening, in the context of the returning to the State's basic functions, the restoration of balance with civil society, the generalized adoption and without questioning the market principles (privatization, competition, deregulation and payment for services, among others), the territorial decentralization competency delegation from the central government, the focalization in public administration topics, the reduction of the size of the State (*downsizing* and *rightsizing*) and the institutionalization of the e-government (Electronic Government).

In the scope of national budget, there has been introduced *budget innovations* that, according to its main approach, may be classified in three levels (Tavares & Berreta 2006: 9-30): (1) *Macroeconomic level innovations*, focused mainly in the fiscal responsibility in the budget formulation, the case of the Fiscal Responsibility Law in Brazil, the one with highest scope in the region; (2) *Innovations in relation to the strategic budget allocation*, which means in the meso-level, which refers to the distributive budgeting focused on the strategic plan, to define the resources allocation based on priorities, again the case of Brazil as well as Colombia and Mexico; and (3) *Microeconomic level innovations*, which refers to the traditional budget, whose expected results is the effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the resources, where the cases of Guatemala and Uruguay are emblematic.

Lastly – even though not in the last place – in regards to the *National Systems of Public Investment* (SNIP, by acronym in Spanish), the ILPES (2001, p. 20-21) indicates that in general, in a low responsibility environment can be found-not because of lack of resources or absence of political will, but because of the organization itself and that culture that sustains Public Administration, which provokes a low level of transparency (accountability)-, a generalized disregard in the compliance of the law and a lack of capacity of the public sector itself to enforce them. In other words, responsibility and transparency; law compliance and capacity of the public administration to enforce the disposition, constitute the three management blocks that are not clearly explicit in the original versions of the National Investment System, but that today are in need to be reformed to adequate them to the

new circumstances and to help them move closer to the call to comply with a transcending function, especially in the framework of the Information Society or Electronic Government.

Multiannual Plan “Avança Brazil”

After the crises and the *withdrawal* of National Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Brazil the first step towards the recuperation of institutionalism of planning was to give back to it the rank of Ministry to the functions of planning and budgeting (Ministry of Planning and Budget – MPO –, by acronym in Portuguese) and the creation of conditions for the elaboration of a new development strategy. Event occurred during the first government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

The Multiannual Plan 2000-2004 “Avança Brazil” and the subsequent multiannual plans constitute a novel approach of integral and multispectral character, that situates planning at the center of government’s highest level decisions.

The strengthening of strategic orientation and intensive management (highlighting the organization of actions under the form of “ventures”) constitute the effort’s central pillars, which seeks to rationalize and improve public expenditure, through the implementation of a result-oriented public management system, in respect to effectiveness, efficiency and public expenditure transparency.

Up to this moment, Brazil constitutes the most complete example in Latin America and the Caribbean of plan-budget articulation, with connection disbursements-physical targets, that permits to link the Multiannual Plan with the annual budget, complete unification of the national level classifier and mechanisms of information on the total public expenditure execution and its consistency with the National Development Plan. This process was facilitated by the organizational fusion of Planning, budget and administration in one singular Ministry.

Additionally, fiscal norms are incorporated in the Fiscal Responsibility Act enacted in 2000, considered to have the broader scope of application (in the three powers: Judicial, Executive and Legislative) in three government spheres: Federal, State and Municipal. Through it are institutionalized the use of control variables on public finances.

Ultimately, the challenge to confront in order to guarantee the sustainability of the Brazilian effort in the planning-budget-public investment articulation, goes through the continuity and deepening of the political will to preserve the functionality of the created institutionalism, respecting the channels and technical procedures established and the introduction to adjustments, particularly to respond to the requirements emanating from the territorial particularities.

“Evaluation System and Management Control of the Central Government” of Chile

In 2000, in Chile, was created the “Evaluation System and Management Control of the Central Government”, focused on the results-based budget under the category of the *informed*-budget, with the purpose of improving the allocation and use of resources, to contribute towards improving the quality of public expenditure.

The gradualness in the incorporation of instrument has been a distinctive feature of the system. Thus, performance indicators were initiated in 1993, through a pilot project that incorporated five institutions of public services, which was extended in 1994 and in 1997 and the number of indicators tripled, covering in that moment 80% of the total of feasible institutions to integrate (Arenas and Berner 2010, p. 13). The mechanism of Institutional Remuneration Incentive in the framework of the Management Improvement Program began in 1998. That same year, the documents of public account denominated Integral Management Balance were elaborated as well. Those two instruments were added, from 2000, the strategic definitions, along with the indicators of performance and goals. The presentation of new programs to the Budget in standard format and the redesigning of the Management Improvement Program, incorporating the development of management systems; as well as, the implementation of new lines of evaluation, such as, programs’ impact evaluation were incorporated in 2001 and the institutional comprehensive evaluation in 2002. The certification under the ISO standards is obtained in 2005. The Goals for Institutional Efficiency, an incentive remunerative mechanism for institutional performance is installed in 2007. The Public Administration Modernization Fund is created in 2008. The service quality incentive is introduced in 2009.

Panels of external evaluators conduct the evaluations. The evaluation of government programs is based on the methodology of logical framework: and therefore, it is centered in aspects of organization and management, and outcomes at product level (coverage, focalization and others). The impact assessment, as well as the evaluation of new programs, is focused on the intermediate and final results in target populations, constructing baseline studies, using *cuasi* experimental models and attending to the collection of field information; and, in the case of the latter, perfecting the construction of the *control* group. Meanwhile, the comprehensive evaluation of the expenditure analyzes the strategic consistency between the institutional and sectorial objectives, the institutional design (institutional structure and distribution of functions among the different working units), the productive and management processes, the use of financial resources and the outcomes in the provision of goods and services (Arenas and Berner 2010, p. 27-33 and 47-50).

As a summary, a little over a decade of operations of the Evaluation and Management Control System of the Central Government in Chile, validates as challenges the importance of: (1) articulating the evaluation and control functions to the budget formulation and allocation, (2) utilize multiples evaluation methodologies and the *abandonment* constructing an unique evaluation system, (3) improve the information systems, the quality and pertinence of the performance and goals indicators systems, the incentives of public services' quality management and the use of information and communication technology, (4) articulating the institutional programs in the framework of clearly established public policies, its articulations and crossed effects and, (5) foment the necessity and importance of training and technical assistance processes.

"National Planning System" of Colombia with Participating Stakeholders

In 1991, Colombia, by constitutional mandate incorporated the "National Planning System", composed by the National Planning Council and Territorial Councils in 32 departments and 1,967 municipalities. Through it, they procure to weaken the clientelist culture and generate an interactive process of agreement's construction between the State and the Civil Society, instead of a simple articulation of projects or the technocratic exercise of articulating policies in a text (Forero-Pineda 2000, p. 13).

In this context, planning participation has gained a space of recognition and social legitimacy, even though, obviously, the territory results are unequal and in some cases ambiguous and diversity marks experience as a whole.

The main absent is the linking mandate of the participatory instances' results and the function of strategic reflection that is *made invisible* in favor of punctual interventions to solve immediate necessities linked to material lacking destined to construct a minimum *level* of social protection.

Summarizing, important steps have been taken in Colombia, in the State-Civil Society articulation, through the construction of a culture of participation in public affairs, as demonstrated in the advancement of the Social Accountability's instauration, as a mechanism for citizen's control practice and social inspection of the delivery of local public services, its management and outcomes, both in the hands of the Central Government and the State decentralized agencies. Nonetheless, the articulation of mechanisms for participation with the decision-making as a space for perfectible improvements and deepening continues to be the main challenge.

Methodological Adequacy of the Historical Process of Planning in Cuba

Cuba, being a country whose planning as center of the highest level political decision, it has settled on a socialism of historical continuity and the elaboration of five-year plans has been maintained in a uninterrupted way for more than 50 years, from the decade of 1970 designs a long term development strategy, for which has conducted diagnosis and prognosis of the national economy and sectorial and territorial themes, utilizing the methodology of economic and social scenarios, in two basic forms: (1) a *trends* scenario, more prone to the econometric study; and, (2) an *active* scenario, more associated with heuristic methods.

In such way, planning in Cuba have been transiting from a model of planning highly centralized, based on material balances, to a scheme yet unfinished, that acts from financial basis,

referred especially to the entry of foreign currency, which has modified the concept of planning and simplified its State function and that requires refinement in the search of integrality of the plan in its different time frames, in the integration of the financial aspects, in the articulation of the entrepreneurial plans with the nation's plans, in the harmonization of the general country's interests with the territory and the development of initiatives *from the bottom*, among other aspects of interest.

In summary, the fundamental challenge of Cuban planning is centered in addressing the uncertainty in the global markets, in face of the increasing and considerable degree of economic opening and the transit of centralized planning to the microeconomic flexibility and macroeconomic regulation.

Institutional and Legal Sector Reforms and Modification of Transversal Management Systems in the Dominican Republic

Since the end of the decade of 1980 and beginning of 1990, Dominican Republic initiates a process of legal and institutional reforms with string incidence of strategic actors of the civil society, sustained in the modernization of the performance of sector of marked incidence in the quality of life of the population: labor rights, with the subsequent reform of the Work Code and rights of *second generation*: education, health, social security, environment, which culminates with the approval of the legal framework for each respective sector.

In the same way, between 2004 and 2008 are modified and regulated a set of advocacy laws in the transversal systems of financial management, budget, planning and human resources.

The organization of the State has implied institutional transformation of different scopes, via the creation of new institutions, fusion or adding to the existent ones (Environment, social security, public function, treasury, for example). Likewise, the transformation of Secretariat of State into Ministries, with constitutional referendum, in 2012.

The instrumentation and regulation of the different legal frameworks have implied aligning the norm and supporting the institutional, organizational and functional configuration, not only of the public institutions, but also the non-government organizations, entrepreneurial chambers and social organizations.

The necessity to discipline the institutional reform processes, as well as the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America (DR-CAFTA), events in which the international agencies have acted as *leverage* mechanism, meaning a display of the formulation of logical frameworks and the design of monitoring and implementation mechanisms for the compliance of conditionalities and financial disbursement against loan's commitments of the financial international organisms, the multilateral banking and the international cooperation⁶.

Such processes have favored the empowerment of the Institutional Planning Offices Event that, paradoxically, occurs in the framework of the weakening of the National Planning Office, recently elevated to the rank of Viceministry of the Ministry for Economy, Planning and Development, but that in its institutional transformation loses attributions and competencies, in particular referring to the formulation of income and expenditure budget.

As corollary, the formulation of the National Development Strategy, converted to the law of the Republic in 2011, which addresses and vision of the country up to 2030, whose formulation of the document-base of the proposal, despite has a function of planning fallen under the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, but not directly with the Vice Ministry of Planning, with the collaboration of the National Reform Council and the participation of entrepreneurial, work, and academic institutions, as well as, the civil society.

Ultimately, the Dominican experience shows a *blossoming* of the instrumental arising from planning, in particular its more technocratic versions. In such a way that the main challenge consists of, on one side, in the articulation of what ILPES has identified as the new functions of planning (prospective vision, coordination and evaluation); and, on the other, in the necessity of reinventing the instrumental utilized according to the streams of global thought.

A balance of Planning in the Public Sector in Latin America, as any other balance may suffer simplifications and generalizations, even with that, the quick tour through Planning's theoretical and practical foundation in the region, shown that the utilization of methods and techniques which throughout history have varied trying to adapt to the new times' changes.

From its initial spread, with adherence to the economic discipline and the tools derived from it; passing from its vision expansion to the scope of sociology, particularly the structural analysis and actors' participation, also arising from Political Sciences, including the dialogic participation developed by psychology, to venture in the field of administration, management, and business schools; to the most recent developments coming from the entrepreneurial field-even though is not always aware of it-, without necessarily having derived an instrument that captures the specificity of the situations and circumstances in which they are applied.

The concept of *Strategic Plan's* internalization, as indicative of planning's adoption gives an account of the planning's uses generalization in the public sector. Nowadays, the prejudices of the past have been surmounted and planning is practiced in all sorts of private organizations and institutions both public and from civil society.

Strategic Planning, in its distinct versions and formulations, which in previous decades had been positioned as a privileged tool of the entrepreneurial and management action (particularly through the spread and popular model of Steiner 1983).

The formulation of *Mission-Vision-Values*, coming from the School of Strategy Design⁷, which view of process is conceptual, nowadays it is part of the promotional showcase of any enterprise, with independence from the nature of the latter and the degrees of success in its definition. Its dissemination has corresponded, fundamentally, to the administration, managerial and business faculties, where it shows higher levels of acceptance.

The commonly known a *SWOT analysis*, (by acronym in English of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats); maybe because of its simplicity of application, has become the substitutive technique of the research methodologies for the elaboration of diagnosis. Including, in some cases, a "stakeholders" analysis.

The *Balanced Scorecard*, initially an instrument developed in the corporative world of private enterprise, each day gains more adhesions to form part of the modern planning tools. Particularly, in the public field, the initiatives of the New Public Management promote its acceptance and use.

The *Project Cycle* has been popularized, mainly in the light of the incidence of the international organizations, which integrates seven phases (Identification, Preparation, Appraisal, Approval, Implementation, Completion and Evaluation).

The *Logic Framework Approach* has been adopted not only as an *official* project formulation's methodology in international organizations, but also as an obliged reference for monitoring, implementation and evaluation systems (again in the case of the Dominican Republic is evident, and also in the case Chile, in the government evaluation's programs as part of the "Evaluation System and Management Control of the Central Government").

It has begun to give importance to the value of *Baseline Study* and the *Impact Evaluation*, recurring to the classical *quasi* experimental models, example of that are the social programs in Mexico and more recently, in the Dominican Republic (the case of the Baseline Study and the Social Protection Program's impacts assessment, conducted by the International Centre of Economic Policy, CINPE, by acronym in Spanish, of the *Universidad Nacional* in Costa Rica). Similarly, the use of methods based on evaluation criteria related to multiple objectives in a common metrics, even though still timid and more linked to the action of research institutes (also the case of studies carried by CINPE).

The participatory design in plan and project preparation have had notable advances, because even the formulation of the Mission-Vision-Values, the use of SWOT and the construction of the Planning Matrix derived from the logical framework approach, require collaborative efforts, becoming popular the Focus Group and, in less measure, the Task Force.

The habilitation, the certification, the quality awards and best practices also have played an important role in the institutional renovation, opening spaces for planning and institutional evaluations.

In terms of participation in the action priorities establishment, not only Colombia has had incursion of relevance through the participatory design in plan project preparation, but also Brazil with the Municipal Participatory System (PPM, by acronym in Spanish) that after has extended to other countries and in the case of the Dominican Republic has accumulated important experience, incentive first from the State and the assumed by the Dominican Federation of Municipalities, FE-DOMU, (by acronym in Spanish).

Perspectives

During the most recent decades, and still with more strength in the present century, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the concept of Strategic Plan gains dynamism in the Public Sector, as a mechanism to accompany the reform processes, to comply with conditionalities and commitments against financial disbursements, which are partly due to international organizations' influence. Its formulation or design is assumed under diverse methodological perspective.

Summarizing, the positive sign of the *perspectives* of strategic planning in the public sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, in face of the increasing complexities of the future world, will be marked by overcoming the school of thoughts centered in the design and the recognition of the strategy as a concept and formal process, with emphasis in the excessive formality and in the separation of phases before planning, with lack of integration and insufficiencies of the communication channels between manager and executive and with the delegation of the formulation in the hands of external facilitators.

New theoretical-methodological developments that translate into quantitative and qualitative instruments, coming from the structural analysis, of the game theory and the complex thought, for the construction of *situational rooms* and scenarios and the impact evaluation based on multiple criteria, implemented in collaborative form, will make a difference and the possibilities of construction of a promising future for the acceptance and generalization of planning as a working method.

Increasingly, planning, as a construction and valuation process of options for the intervention, orients the decision-making that precedes and chairs the action and, continues to have validity; unless the defects of improvisation, activism, spontaneity, anarchism and other vices of artisanal forms of work are elevated to the category of virtue.

Conclusions

Planning, as work method, wills and resources of the organization system, is essential to the history of humanity⁸. However, the field of Strategic Planning is fairly new, especially in the public sector, and this explains why its basic knowledge is still under development.

In fact, the Societal Planning, term coined to make reference to the Planning of Society as a whole, is a legacy from the XX century. And, it could not be any different, since its practice requires a State with political will that would confer or deny legitimacy to the planning, to say it in the words of Max Weber, assuming directive roles, or at least regulation ones.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a quick journey through the experiences of national planning, seen through its maximum expression in the existence of Bureaus and Ministries of National Planning and the formulation of National Development Plans, show that the commitment of the State in general has been weak in converting planning in their working method and corrective mechanism of resources allocation.

The latter is a condition that aggravates in situation of crisis (with independence of nature of themselves, its reasons, manifestation and detonators), in which the priority attention is focused in the immediate answers.

Both in its origins and the posterior deployment, the main function that is assigned to Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean, is to constitute itself in an instrument to achieve development. Contrary to the socialist world in which National planning appeared as a *substitute* of the market, or, of the advance capitalists economies in which it is assumed as a *corrective* mechanisms of the market imperfections.

Nowadays we assist a generalized use of institutional plans and projects in the public sector, and

the ideological prejudices derived from its adoption in determined ways of economic organization and government regimes, contrary to the past, have been practically surmounted.

However, the School of Design's approach prevails, centered in the definition of Mission-Vision-Values; using SWOT as a diagnosis method and the logical framework matrix as benchmark for projects' execution and evaluation. Despite the vagueness of the procedure (for example workshops with stakeholders), Strategic Planning potentially overlaps with normative (or traditional) planning, and its weak theoretical methodology.

The aim of this paper is simply to suggest that there is a need to examine the strategic plan formulation in the public sector in Latin American and the Caribbean. In spite of the limit of our methodology, it was possible to collect a significant amount of information, in general, and on each analysed initiative. However, a comprehensive analysis of Strategic Planning within the Public Sector in Latin American and the Caribbean would require collecting data from each country, combined with interviews, and ideally an ethnographic approach.

Strategic Planning, contrary to what many institutions, organizations and enterprises practice nowadays, is not about assigning a name or last name or adjective to planning. It is a different way of understanding and practicing planning, that allows to expand the strategic spaces for action, beyond the functions of national planning offices, which in many countries continue without legitimate their actions. It is a way of reuniting with their roots in the interest of redefining their paradigmatic architecture in a manner that it is possible to perfect instruments and techniques for its operability and evaluation, in the framework of action modes and collective construction operating in "situations of shared power" (Matus, 1982).

In such a way, the indiscriminate use of the concept Strategic Plan associated its formulation to processes and instrument foreign to its initial conception, could be again generating a *mantle* of insecurity over the utility and effectiveness of planning as a working method. Is a need for strategic planning to redefine its paradigmatic architecture, rediscovering its roots, in order to development tools and techniques for its operation and evaluation, at the risk that planning may fall again in the disrepute of previous decades.

The perspectives are encrypted in the abandonment of traditional methods and in the unveiling of the covert ways of the instrumental, improper by definition, of the strategic planning and in the development of a powerful instrumental arsenal (with quantitative and qualitative approach that potentiates the linkages or *value chains* of the planning process, with included evaluation, coming from the structural analysis, of the theory of games and the complex thought, for the construction of *situational rooms* and scenarios and evaluation based on multiples criteria, implemented in collaborative and participatory way, for the search of answers to three central questions: (1) Where are we? (2) Where do we want to go? and (3) How do we get there?

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Notes

(Endnotes)

- 1 This line of thought is developed with the leadership of Carlos Matus, having to Venezuela as referent country, then in the Venezuelan Institute of Planning (IVEPLAN, by acronym in Spanish), today Venezuelan School of Planning, entity created by the Venezuelan Government under the wing of the Central Planning and Coordination Office (CORDIPLAN, by acronym in Spanish) of the Secretariat of the Republic.
- 2 It is very common, particularly in Central American authors, to circumscribe National Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean, to the beginning of the decade of 1960 (See, for example Garnier 2000: 2), not knowing that, by that moment, countries like Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, in that order, had already expanded and acquired abundant experience in that field; or even the case of Bolivia, which in 1942 created a Foment Corporation to Chile's style; or Ecuador, which in 1954, institutes an entity with National Planning responsibility. For its part, Venezuela and Colombia, in 1958, had already taken steps in that direction. A different interpretation is observed, however, in the display of Mexican authors or the ones from the so-called Southern cone (Leiva 2012, 11-15, for example, conduces a detailed recount of the first steps of planning in Latin America, during the forties and fifties of the last century).
- 3 For that epoch, the orthodox liberal economists, starting from the classic scheme of the international division of work (according to which to the centre countries corresponded the production of industrial goods and the peripheral countries the provision of raw material and foodstuffs) defended the theory of the comparative advantages, formulated by David Ricardo who postulates that said commercial exchange based on such specialization per countries, involves a reduction in the production's costs. ECLAC is opposed to those assumptions. In its places, sustains that the industrialized countries' agents, in as much as they appropriate the technical process, they reduce their costs of production and the diminishing of the prices translate in an increment in the incomes and profits, given that the prices of agricultural goods tend to increase in a proportion relatively inferior to that of industrialized goods; besides that, the demand for primary products tend to grow with relative slowness or irregularity compared to the industrial growth occurred in the centre countries, so that rather the commercial relation sustained between the countries of the centre and the periphery are unequal for the latter countries and such unequal exchange constitutes – to the ECLAC judgment – the fundamental cause of the Latin American underdevelopment (ECLAC, 1951 and Prebisch, 1963).
- 4 To some extent under the influence of so-called social indicators *movement*.
- 5 A pioneer effort in that sense corresponds to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Technical Society of German Cooperation) with the development of the method "Zielorientierte Projektplanung" (Objective Oriented Project Planning-ZOPP-).
- 6 A pioneer effort in that sense corresponds to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Technical Society of German Cooperation) with the development of the method "Zielorientierte Projektplanung" (Objective Oriented Project Planning-ZOPP-) which, broadly, As an example, they usually contemplate three types of conditionality: (a) structural changes destined to reduce the discretion and improve public expenditure management; (b) transformations of great importance, even at a minor scale, within priority sectors whose execution will promote higher efficiency and quality in the delivery of services; and (c) basic capacity development for the sectorial coordination and to give qualitative important steps towards the consolidation of State Policies.
- 7 Mintzberg (1994, 2-3) defines 10 schools of Thought on Strategic Planning. They are: Design, Planning, Positioning, Cognitive,

Entrepreneurial, Learning, Political, Cultural, Environmental and Configurational. And, he describes the first three are related, generally speaking, he explains that the design and planning school are almost identical, with the exception that second is more “formal”., but both are essentially SWOT analysis.

- 8 The totality of architectural works of the so-called “seven wonders”, both of the ancient world and the modern (The Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Egypt and Mesoamerica built by various indigenous cultures, Machu Picchu Sanctuary), cultural spaces (such as the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the *Congos* of Villa Mella, language, dance and music of the Garifuna, the project to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of Aymara communities in Bolivia, Chile and Peru and in other parts of the world), the culinary culture of the people (in all of them - in one way or another - is observed appropriate ways of utilizing the resources –i.e. *leftovers* or surplus- to pay for the daily food), family gatherings and festivals, historic monuments, temples and other landmarks, are a living example of this statement, because they reflect a forward-looking vision, determination, commitment and leadership conjunction summarized in ability achievement, with samples of ingenuity, creativity, innovation and utopia.

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Received: *April 23, 2013*

Accepted: *May 14, 2013*