

## **The reaction of ECLAC during the Chilean authoritarian regime: Between the repression, institutional constraints, and evaluations of the economic model**

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**ABSTRACT:** Although ECLAC's ideas and history have awakened great historiographical interest, no works systematically address the institution's role during the authoritarian regime in its host country. Based on primary sources, I argue that the Commission, far from behaving like a bureaucratic island, engaged with the economic and political context around it. Despite being a UN institutional agency, I show it was not immune from government repression. Furthermore, the institution had to cooperate with the Pinochet government in many technical assistance projects. Even so, ECLAC positioned itself in the key economic debates of the context, with variations in tone and language.

**Keywords:** ECLAC; institutional constraints; Chilean authoritarian regime.

**Área Temática:** História Econômica, do Pensamento Econômico e Demografia Histórica.

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## 1. Introduction

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)'s development ideas have been a classical research and teaching topic in the History of Economics in Latin America. Although it can be discussed to what extent ECLAC's structuralist ideas were original (CARDOSO, 1977; KAY, 1989; BOIANOVSKY, 2023), it represented a Latin American voice in development economics (FAJARDO, 2022). Furthermore, the Commission was influential in institutionalizing Economics and Social Sciences in the region in the 1950s and 1960s (MARKOFF; MONTECINOS, 2009; KLÜGER, 2017). Finally, its ideas influenced state-led import substitution industrialization in different countries through broad personal and intergovernmental networks (DEVÉS, 2000; ROSENTHAL, 2004). Although ECLAC's ideas and history have awakened great interest in historiography, it has focused on the economic thought of its great structuralist economists, primarily in its "classic period (the 1950s and 1960s)", and its changes even until the present (BIELSCHOWSKY, 2000; BÁRCENA; BIELSCHOWSKY; TORRES, 2022).

Though these works recognized and explored the ties between the economic and political historical factors to the change of ECLAC economic thinking, the influence of national contexts is still largely unexplored. Some scholars have asserted the influence of the Chilean context on ECLAC's history and ideas in preceding decades. For example, Dosman (2011, 519-521) points out that the 1970 presidential elections, which ended with Salvador Allende's win, "chilenized" ECLAC and ILPES: "the ideological battle invaded the entire UN complex with active campaigns for the rival parties". More recently, Fajardo (2021) highlights how ECLAC was highly shaped by Brazil's and Chile's national contexts in the 1950s and 1960s. In this paper, I try to demonstrate the institution's role during the authoritarian regime in its host country, an episode that has not attracted sufficient attention from scholars.

On the one hand, scholarship about the Chicago Boys has recognized the birth and rise of these economists within the Chilean authoritarian regime explicitly opposed to ECLAC's development ideas and influence on Economics in Latin America (VALDÉS, 1995; GÁRATE, 2012; FAJARDO, 2022). On the other hand, the historiography about ECLAC has paid little attention to the influence of the Chilean authoritarian regime on Commission's activities and change of ideas in the 1970s and 1980s, with general analyses in which the topic occasionally appears (BIELSCHOWSKY, 2000; RODRÍGUEZ, 2009) or identifying more specific but somewhat superficial and chronologically restricted issues related to Chilean context (KAY, 1989; LOVE, 1996; ROSENTHAL, 2004; DOSMAN, 2011; COVIELLO, 2017; MORALES, 2012).

In this paper, I focus on ECLAC's response to this context as a complex institution through the relations of its institutional and intellectual levels. By this, I mean to analyze to what extent and in which ways the Commission, broadly speaking, could react to the challenging context of the Chilean dictatorship, considering its institutional constraints and changing economic ideas of the 1970s and 1980s.

## 2. ECLAC's institutional crossroads: Repression, protection of human rights, and technical cooperation with the Chilean government

After the violent coup against the Popular Unity government that resulted in Salvador Allende's death, not even the multilateral institutions, which in theory have greater autonomy than universities and independent intellectuals, escaped the authoritarian regime's repression, as was in the notorious case of the Latin American Social Science Faculty (FLACSO) (MORALES & GARBER, 2018). The repression also affected the ECLAC, whose members suffered different types of persecution, including murders. The Commission, under the leadership of Executive Secretary Enrique Iglesias, mobilized its status linked to the UN to act as a shield, protecting not only its staff but also other international institutions based in Santiago.

Relations between the United Nations and the Chilean government were complicated during the authoritarian years, especially in human rights matters. The first UN institution to react to human rights abuses in Chile was the International Labor Organization (ILO). Created in 1919, the institution

became part of the UN system in 1946. After denunciations of Chilean trade unions, ILO institutionalized the *Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission On Freedom of Association* in 1974 to analyze the workers' situation in Chile. After visiting the country between November 28th and December 19th, 1974, this Commission produced an extensive report that denounced the human and workers' rights violations (ILO, 1975), which was essential to start an international campaign against the Pinochet regime, including in the United States press (MARZÁN, 2016). In parallel, on November 6th, 1974, the United Nations General Assembly decided its first condemnatory resolution against the Chilean government (Viancos, 1990). Moreover, given the government's unsatisfactory responses on the subject, on February 27th, 1975, through Resolution 8 (XXXI), the UN Commission on Human Rights established the Ad hoc Working Group on the Situation of Human Rights in Chile, chaired by Pakistani Ghulam Ali Allana, that aimed to investigate the matter (UNITED NATIONS, 1976).

Although the Chilean dictatorship had agreed to create this group, it prevented the visit of its observers in Chile in both 1975 and 1976 (VIANCOS, 1990). The accumulated tensions reached their peak in 1978. On December 7th, 1977, the UN Commission on Human Rights condemned the Chilean regime once again, and eight days later, the UN General Assembly announced the fourth condemnatory resolution (FUNDACIÓN PATRICIO ALWYN AZÓCAR, 1978; VIANCOS, 1990)<sup>2</sup>. The Chilean dictatorship's reaction was tremendous. On December 19th, Augusto Pinochet convoked a Plebiscite against "international aggression." The population had to decide if it supports the President "in defense of the dignity of Chile and reaffirms the legitimacy of the Government to spearhead our constitutional process, or supports the resolution of the United Nations and its desire to impose ourselves from abroad on our future destiny" (FUNDACIÓN PATRICIO AYLWIN AZÓCAR, 1978, p.1). In a questionable electoral process on January 4th, 1978, the "Yes" option won the Plebiscite, getting 75% of the total votes, while the "No" option got 20.2%. Blank and invalid votes represented 4.8% (HUNEEUS, 2007, p.87).

Despite the liberty degrees that multilateral institutions supposedly had in an authoritarian context, the coup in Chile affected the ECLAC's activities and the human rights of its staff. Due to the coup, as registered in the internal employee newsletter, ECLAC suspended its activities until September 19th (SECRETARIA EXECUTIVA DE LA CEPAL, 1973). The two most known cases of human rights violations against ECLAC staff were of the Spanish Carmelo Soria and the Chilean Fernando de la Cruz Olivares Mori. Both were members of the Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE), part of ECLAC's system<sup>3</sup>. Found in his car in the *El Carmen* channel on July 15th, 1976, the murder of Carmelo Soria caused an enormous international campaign worldwide. Navy officers arrested Fernando Olivares from CELADE headquarters on October 5th, 1973, to supposedly be interrogated in the Ministry of Defense. He disappeared, and his family still fights for his body's identification (MEMORIA VIVA, 2010).

Moreover, two Bolivian students died on September 11th (Iglesias, 2013). There were several lesser-known cases of human rights abuses on ECLAC staff. A month earlier than Carmelo Soria's murder, in response to a consultation of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Army Colonel Enrique Valdés Puga (REPÚBLICA DE CHILE, 1976A), the Chilean repressive institution *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* (DINA) identified "suspicious antecedents" about Russian and Cuban ECLAC's members like Enrid Alayes, Francisco León, Nikolai Poliakov, Frida Poliakov, and Eugeni Kossarev and proposed their expulsion from the country. DINA labeled some of them as belonging to the KGB (República de Chile, 1976b, p.1). Pedro Alejandro Castillo Yañez, Doctor and Demographer of CELADE, was also detained in 1981 (REPÚBLICA DE CHILE, 1981).

Diplomatically, Enrique Iglesias played a crucial role in the relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to press against the Chilean government's human rights abuses. Two days after the

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<sup>2</sup>As a permanent point of conflict, the commission condemned Chile 12 times until 1990 (VIANCOS, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> CELADE was created as an autonomous institution in 1957. Initially, it conducted demographic studies in partnership with the University of Chile, offering training courses and technical assistance to the Chilean government. In 1971 the institution became part of ECLAC's system (LAZARTE, 2021). Beyond the ECLAC, the ECLAC system incorporates institutions under its institutional orbit, such as ILPES and the CELADE. In 1997, it would integrate the ECLAC's Population Division.

coup, Iglesias requested permission from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rear Admiral Ismael Huerta Díaz (1973-1974), to exit many Latin American journalists who were at a UN event on September 11th (IGLESIAS, 1973A). Nine days later, the ECLAC Executive Secretary also requested the liberty of the National Stadium's prisoner David Tejada Pardo, son of David Tejada and Rivero, Director of the Pan American Health Organization and ILPES's staff (IGLESIAS, 1973B). In December 1976, Iglesias pressured the Ministry de Foreign Affairs to reconstitute the Argentine ECLAC economist Norberto González's political rights because his name appeared on the government's list in 1973 (REPÚBLICA DE CHILE, 1976C, p.2). Another critical case that attracted attention from Iglesias was that of Juan Enrique Pamjean, a CELADE staff, arrested on January 6th, 1976 (MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE CHILE, 1976A),

The case of Juan Enrique Pamjean, next to others already discussed, reveals how the Chilean authoritarian regime's repression enormously affected CELADE. It is worth noting that although CELADE took part in ECLAC's system in 1971, the institution's headquarters were not in ECLAC headquarters in the isolated and wealthy *comuna* of *Vitacura*<sup>4</sup>. It was in the *comune* of *Providencia*, near the Santiago's downtown. This fact made CELADE more vulnerable because ECLAC could not fully protect it. Pamjean's case also shows how the Chilean dictatorship selectively considered the immunities of the Santiago-based international staff. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs justified his detention due to his hiring activities with the Communist Party (MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE CHILE, 1976B). Another example of this was the communications between Enrique Iglesias and the Ministry of Foreign Relations regarding the case of Juan Eduardo Araya, from the Pan American Health Organization, arrested in 1980. Facing Enrique Iglesias's claims about the immunities of Araya, the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded that this immunity would only occur for "acts carried out in their official capacity" and that "elements of a subversive nature" were found in his residence (MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE CHILE, 1980A).

Even though it was not absolute, ECLAC had more relative autonomy than many other institutions located in Chile. This institutional status attracted the attention of civil society organizations. On July 14th, 1977, the Group of Family Members of Missing Detainees (AFDD) entered ECLAC headquarters and announced a hunger strike. The group, composed of twenty-four women and two men who were familiars of the dictatorship's victims, demanded information about the missing people from the Chilean government and the creation of a committee to investigate human rights abuses. This event required direct intervention from the Austrian Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations (1972-1981), who ended the strike on June 23rd after an agreement with Pinochet (CARVALHO, 1977).

The repressive actions also manifested in the intellectual liberty dimension. The publication of a paper criticizing the dictatorship in 1973 by the American professor Laurence Birns, signing as an ECLAC staff, caused problems. Iglesias, in correspondence with Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Program for Development (UNPD), realized that the Chilean government "systematically noticed me about his papers" (IGLESIAS, 1974, p.1). In 1973, Iglesias argued that Laurence Birns had been a consultant for the Commission only for three months on "theoretical topics" not related to "Chilean concrete problems" (IGLESIAS, 1973D, p. 1). The Ministry of Defense also spied on the ECLAC Argentine Sociologist Jorge Graciarena because he attended FLACSO seminars together with other important Chilean intellectuals like José Joaquim Brunner, Enzo Faletto, Tomás Moulian, and Alejandro Foxley (MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA DE CHILE, 1982, p.3).

Rather than isolated, these cases were symptoms of the conflicting relations between the Pinochet government and the ECLAC. Military Junta's secret minutes of November 5th, 1973, evidences an agreement between Pinochet and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase hostilities against FLACSO and ECLAC. The attack against ECLAC was impressive: "15 officials were eliminated, but the cleaning must continue" (REPÚBLICA DE CHILE, 1973, p.1). The Chilean government also planned to avoid ECLAC hiring Chileans whom the institution could protect. In

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<sup>4</sup> *Comuna* is the lowest administrative subdivision adopted in Chile to describe urban and rural areas. Santiago de.

response to an inquiry from the Director of Multilateral Policy in 1979, the Legal Director, Hernán Ríos de Marín, explained that the Chilean government could not interfere with it since the prerogatives and immunities of the Agreement between ECLAC and the Chilean State applied equally to Chilean staff (REPÚBLICA DE CHILE, 1979, p.1).

If repression is not a minor dimension of the Commission's reaction, ECLAC's institutional nature is another crucial aspect. While the Latin American authoritarian regimes influenced by monetarism, especially the Chilean one, severely questioned the ECLAC's economic thought (LOVE, 1996), on the institutional dimension, the Commission had to cooperate with one of its most infamous "clients," the Chilean dictatorship.

In 1974, the ECLAC Division of Natural and Environmental Resources organized a seminar on the consequences of the energy crisis with the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) (CEPAL, 1974b, p. 22). It also collaborated with the Directorate of Tourism of the Ministry of Economy in a mission to Arica to recover valuable artistic objects from the 16th and 17th centuries (PINOCHET, 1975, p. 369). Moreover, ECLAC Transport and Telecommunications Division signed an agreement with the Chilean Ministry of Transport to supervise a project funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and directed by the Catholic University of Chile to implement a computerized information system on maritime transport (CEPAL, 1975b, p. 41). Previously, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Patricio Carvajal (1974-1978), wrote to Enrique Iglesias on September 12th, 1974, requesting the Commission's collaboration in a project to rationalize the system of transport flows and procedures between Chile and Bolivia (MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE CHILE, 1974). Furthermore, the Transport and Telecommunications Division "collaborated in drafting the project that modifies the Chilean merchant navy law" (CEPAL, 1977b, p. 22). Finally, in the early 1980s, the Commission signed an agreement with the government to execute a World Bank-funded "project designed to study the institutional and economic efficiency of the Chilean transport system" (CEPAL, 1984b, p. 49).

Concerning statistical information, technical training, and planning, ECLAC Statistical Division and Projects offered classes at the National Institute of Statistics of Chile to carry out the national census (CEPAL, 1977b, p. 32). ILPES collaborated with the National Planning Office (ODEPLAN) to formulate development plans and methodologies for different Chilean regions (CEPAL, 1977b, p. 65). Lastly, between 1984 and 1986, ECLAC prepared the Seminar on Municipal Planning and Management and assisted the Regional Planning and Co-ordination Office (SERPLAC) of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago and the Municipalities of Las Condes and Quinta Normal (CEPAL, 1984b, p. 25).

Various Chilean government bodies and ministries participated in events and meetings organized by or at ECLAC. In 1974, the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) supported CEPAL in the Inventory of Environmental Problems in Latin America (PINOCHET, 1975, p. 290). The Chilean government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also participated in the ECLAC of the Preparatory Meeting of the United Nations on Desertification in 1978 (PINOCHET, 1978, p. 49). Still, in 1978, some specialists from the Railways Company participated in the Information Systems Studies within the scope of the project implemented by the Latin American Railway Association (ALAF), ECLAC, and BIRF, which aimed to improve the logistical and financial organization of the Railway transport system that connected Arica to La Paz (PINOCHET, 1978, p. 378; CEPAL, 1977b, p.22). In November 1979, the Chilean government's Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications participated in a meeting at ECLAC headquarters, in which Chile joined the International Transit Road (ITR) Customs Agreement (PINOCHET, 1980, p.432). Finally, in 1980, ODEPLAN participated in the International Seminar on Environmental Statistics and Management, organized by ECLAC (p.335).

In sum, technical cooperation was concerned with the administrative restructuring of national and subnational bodies of the Chilean State and specific projects in the transportation sector. It is worth noting that ECLAC was a multifaceted institution composed of less prestigious divisions and administrative divisions, whose economists had a more technically orientated approach. On the

contrary, in the ECLAC Development Division, the economist's work had a more analytical and somewhat theoretical level in the sense that they dealt with issues such as the problems and policies for the long-term development process and study of economic policies at the national level (Ilic, Jha & Sokirkin, 1970, p. 20). This division was responsible for the traditional annual *Estudio Económico de América Latina*. This document series, created in 1949, is a privileged space to realize which economic ideas and critics of the Chilean authoritarian regime were institutionally legitimate to appear with the ECLAC signature

### 3. The focus on the Chilean case and the first years: from economic model characterization to shock treatment (1973-1975)

Between the repression and the technical cooperation, ECLAC paid attention to economic and social transformations produced by Chicago Boy's economic policies through its *Estudios Económicos*, whose introduction of the first issue was the so-called "Latin American manifest" of Prebisch. The structure of this document series markedly changed over time. Figure 1 shows that until the early 1960s, economic policy analyses were short and scarce. The document's main focus was the evolution and features of economic sectors, international trade, and balance of payments, which were the great topics of structuralism (RODRÍGUEZ, 2009).

Figure 1 - Summary of the 1956 *Estudio Económico*.

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Source: CEPAL (1956a).

With many changes over the previous decades, from 1975 onwards, the report progressively became more standardized. Figure 2 presents that a "typical" *Estudio Económico* was composed of a first chapter about general Latin American economic changes, a second one dedicated to the

“economic situation of the countries,” and finally, a monographic study about some development or juncture’s urgent topic.

Figure 2 - Summary of the 1978 *Estudio Económico*

<b>INDICE</b>		<b>Tercera Parte</b>	
<b>Primera Parte</b>		<b>LA INTERNACIONALIZACION DE LA ECONOMIA MUNDIAL Y AMERICA LATINA: SIGNIFICADO Y OPCIONES</b>	
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El Salvador .....	242	En los cuadros del presente estudio se han empleado los siguientes signos:	
Granada .....	257	Tres puntos (...) indican que los datos faltan o no constan por separado.	
Guatemala .....	268	La raya (-) indica que la cantidad es nula o despreciable.	
Guyana .....	289	Un espacio en blanco en un cuadro indica que el concepto de que se trata no es aplicable.	
Haiti .....	302	Un signo menos (-) indica déficit o disminución, salvo que se especifique otra cosa.	
Honduras .....	321	El punto (.) se usa para separar los decimales.	
Jamaica .....	336	La raya inclinada (/) indica un año agrícola o fiscal (por ejemplo, 1970/1971).	
México .....	358	El guión (-) puesto entre cifras que expresen años, por ejemplo 1971-1973, indica que se trata de todo el período considerado, ambos años inclusive.	
Nicaragua .....	390	La palabra "toneladas" indica toneladas métricas, y la palabra "dólares", dólares de los Estados Unidos, salvo indicación contraria.	
Panamá .....	406	Salvo indicación en contrario, las referencias a tasas anuales de crecimiento o variación corresponden a tasas anuales compuestas.	
Paraguay .....	423	Debido a que a veces se redondean las cifras, los datos parciales y los porcentajes presentados en los cuadros no siempre suman el total correspondiente.	
Perú .....	437		
República Dominicana .....	461		
Suriname .....	478		
Trinidad y Tabago .....	489		
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Source: CEPAL (1978a).

The ECLAC's greater focus on short-term economic policies was a notable feature of the organization in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Andrés Bianchi (2000), who directed the institution's Economic Development Division between 1981 and 1989, in 1975, ECLAC Executive

Secretary Enrique Iglesias restructured the document series, reorienting the report's emphasis towards economic juncture analysis and improving statistical data.

Related to this emphasis on short-term economic policies, the presence and features of monographic studies changed significantly in the 1970s and 1980s. Figure 3 presents the remarkable decrease in monographic studies from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s.

Figure 3 - Titles and keywords of *Estudios Económicos* (1973-1990)

Year	Titles of monographic studies	Keywords in monographic studies subsections
1969	The exchange terms in Latin America	Prices and unit values; evolution by country; relative position of Latin America in the world market.
	Recent evolution of Latin American maritime transport	Foreign trade; merchant fleet; regulation; payment balances.
	Income distribution in Latin America	Income distribution structure; variations within the region.
1970	The expansion of transnational companies and their influence on Latin American development	Regional and sectoral distribution; financing; American subsidiaries.
	Evolution and perspectives of relations between Latin America and the European Economic Community	trade policy; cooperation modalities; preferential agreements
	Evolution and prospects of exports from Latin America to Japan	Japanese market; Japan's trade policy; financial and technical cooperation; raw Materials; manufactured.
1972	Evolution and perspectives of the process planning in Latin America	Planning mechanisms; limitations and insufficiency of the planning process; International cooperation
	Mining in Latin America and its recent evolution	Known mineral reserves and resources; production; consumption; exports; evolution of international prices.
	Recent production and consumption energy in Latin America	Total consumption; Oil industry; State participation; international trends
1973	Center and periphery: the negotiation on new bases	Confrontation or consensus? monetary crisis.
	El cambio social en America Latina em comenzios de los años setenta	Estilos nacionales de desarrollo; Estado; distribución del ingreso; heterogeneidad estructural; modernización dependiente.
1974	World inflation and Latin America	Diagnostics; therapeutics; imported inflation; propagation mechanisms; instruments of economic policy.
1975	Latin America and the transition to a new international economic order	Responsibilities and unknowns of the central countries; periphery; crossroads of current growth style.
1976	Changes and trends in the industrialization process of Latin America	Decline in the relative importance of the Southern Cone; concentration of production in the largest countries
1977	Changes and main trends in world trade in the 1970s	New pattern of industrial exports; variation in the export structure of the periphery.
	Trends and changes in investment by international companies in developing countries and particularly in Latin America	Trends and distribution of direct investment in Latin America; the case of American companies.
1978	The internationalization of the world economy and Latin America: meanings and options	Center-periphery; capital movements; oil; reasons, varieties and dangers of openness; national policies.
1980	The economic development of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in the seventies	economic activity; manufacturing production; unemployment; external debt; IMF; inflation; fiscal indicators.
1982	The exchange rate policy and the processes of renegotiation of external debt	Devaluations; exchange systems; exchange rate instability; rescheduling of external debt; the role of the IMF.
1983	Financial restriction, transfer of resources and renegotiations	Cost of external credit; net capital inflow; renegotiation of external debt.
1984	The evolution of the economy and economic policy in Uruguay in the period 1981-1984	Economic policy; economic activity; inflation; public deficit; monetary imbalance; corporate debt.

Source: Elaborated by the author based in the *Estudios Económicos* (1973-1990)



The changes were not only quantitative. Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, ECLAC published important monographic studies on “classical” structuralist topics such as center-periphery relations, economic planning, development styles, and social change. From the second half of the 1970s to the 1980s, the Commission devoted more attention to juncture’s urgent issues in the Latin American situation, such as inflation, exchange rate policy, external debt, renegotiation of external debt, and specific studies about countries.

Figure 4 quantitatively shows how the chapter on the “economic situation of the countries” grew rapidly. It is worth noting that during the Chilean authoritarian regime, the Chilean case attracted relatively much attention from ECLAC.

Figure 4 - Number of pages dedicated to economic policy analysis for each Latin American country

Country/year	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Acumulated
Chile	12	15	40	35	36	37	34	37	43	39	39	41	39	43	39	37	35	35	636
Brazil	11	6	28	30	30	29	22	31	47	41	53	41	35	37	37	35	38	37	588
Mexico	14	16	22	31	31	33	31	35	41	41	35	35	35	35	33	33	35	39	575
Paraguay	7	5	12	9	11	16	13	21	55	59	47	43	49	57	35	35	37	33	544
Perú	10	13	18	18	26	25	24	25	35	45	45	28	31	37	35	39	43	39	536
Argentina	18	17	24	25	25	26	24	25	27	25	25	35	34	35	37	35	41	39	517
Bolívia	19	8	18	18	21	39	17	17	31	43	33	29	31	31	31	33	33	33	485
Venezuela	13	10	18	16	27	18	19	25	30	28	37	26	33	31	33	36	40	33	473
Uruguay	10	6	18	16	16	13	17	19	23	23	29	72	31	37	37	33	31	31	462
Colombia	12	7	14	20	29	22	26	25	33	33	31	27	27	27	31	31	33	31	459
Costa Rica	8	8	15	17	22	17	22	27	48	27	27	29	27	29	27	31	33	29	443
Nicarágua	9	7	11	14	20	17	28	31	25	25	25	35	29	35	35	33	29	29	437
Ecuador	15	7	17	13	9	15	18	23	29	31	37	29	27	31	29	25	27	27	409
Panamá	9	8	14	18	19	18	18	19	21	19	21	21	27	35	39	35	33	33	407
Guatemala	8	7	14	21	20	22	20	23	25	23	29	27	25	29	25	29	29	29	405
Honduras	8	7	12	16	17	16	16	16	25	25	23	25	33	35	31	25	31	29	390
El Salvador	8	7	13	15	21	16	18	19	25	23	25	27	25	29	23	25	29	25	373
República Dominicana	7	6	13	10	19	18	18	21	21	21	23	27	29	31	27	25	27	23	366
Cuba	0	0	0	0	0	19	14	17	19	29	37	35	35	35	33	33	37	0	343
Haití	8	5	9	10	16	20	19	17	19	19	19	23	23	21	21	25	27	27	328
Jamaica	4	4	12	17	20	23	25	57	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	183
Trinidad e Tobago	6	4	17	16	24	13	11	36	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	144
Guiana	5	4	13	10	13	14	11	15	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106
Barbados	5	4	11	10	13	15	14	15	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	104
Suriname	0	0	0	18	12	12	11	15	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85
Bahamas	0	0	11	9	10	11	9	13	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78
Granada	0	0	11	10	9	12	0	19	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76
Dominica	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Belize	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Antígua e Barbuda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Estados Unidos das Índias Ocidentais	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>9992</b>

Source: Elaborated by the author

The Commission produced 636 pages on the Chilean case, 48 and 91 more than Brazil and Mexico, the second and third most written countries in the ranking. This magnitude is also impressive compared with other neoliberal experiences in the same period. ECLAC dedicated 119 pages more to the Chilean case than Argentina and 174 more compared to Uruguay.

It can be that the more available statistical information contributed to ECLAC’s more relative attention to what was happening in Chile. However, I argue that this fact reflected the influence of the Chilean national context in ECLAC and the efforts of the institution to problematize neoliberal

economic policies in the country. Another explanatory factor related to this was the nationality disequilibria within ECLAC. According to Andrés Bianchi (2000, p.44), there was over Southern Cone representation in the Commission, mainly from Chile and Argentina: “there were very few Brazilians and Colombians, Mexicans, Peruvians, Venezuelans, and Central Americans were conspicuous by their absence.”

Since the first months of the dictatorship, the institution has been interested in Chilean events. In the 1973 *Estudio Económico*, ECLAC considered that in the context of oil crisis and global inflation, Chile “was one of a few countries in which internal events constituted the decisive factor” because after September 11th “the general circumstances and the orientation of economic policy will experience a considerable change” (CEPAL, 1973a, p. 176). From the very beginning, ECLAC tried to understand the new economic strategy of the Pinochet government. Based on a statement by Fernando Léniz, civil engineer and Minister of Economy (1973-1975), the institution stated that economic policy would value the role of “market forces and private companies in promoting the development process. For this reason, the transfer to the State of property and the management of a broad set of activities ceased to be the fundamental objective of economic action” (CEPAL, 1973a, pp. 185-186).

In the 1974 report, the criticism of “economic authorities” was more articulated. In its monographic study “World Inflation and Latin America,” ECLAC discussed the theoretical problems and dilemmas associated with stagflation. The report cited Paul Samuelson’s paper “Worldwide Stagflation” (1974), which coined the term “crisis of monistic explanations.” ECLAC mobilized Samuelson’s authority as an argumentative recourse to make a point for the Latin American approach to inflation, which appointed the role of structural factors in generating inflation. Even recognizing that center and periphery have different structural factors, the report emphasized that Samuelson, “who navigates through different waters, in an article cited above, marks the accent of his analysis on the ‘profound structural changes both here and abroad that have given rise to a new inflationary crisis’” (CEPAL 1974a, p. 5).

To understand this citation better, I explore why ECLAC specifically chose Samuelson. It is worth noting that 1974 *Estudio Económico* was published late, in September 1975. As discussed above, the Jorge Cauas and Chicago Boys’ shock treatment was already implemented in April, and monetarist ideas had crossed Chile since the first Milton Friedman visit in March. Samuelson and Friedman represented different versions of neoclassical theory (MIROWSKY & HANDS, 1998). During his career, Samuelson, as a professor at the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT), was responsible for publicizing Keynesianism in its neoclassical synthesis. While Chicago’s perfect competition models greatly emphasized on price theory in the confront with empirical data, imperfect competition MIT models were more complex, and the empirical data influenced the very choice and instrumentalization of the models (CHERRIER, 2014). Furthermore, during the 1960s and 1970s, Samuelson and Friedman criticized each other in public debates in the United States (MONTES, 2016). So, in a context that the Chicago Boys’ ideas were raised in Chile under the public influence of Friedman, ECLAC used the major Friedman’s rivals as a rhetorical instrument.

Beyond the monographic study, the 1974 *Estudio Económico* registered the criticism of Chilean economic authorities regarding inflation. According to this document, there are few and slow results. The inflationary level remained at 375% in 1974 “despite the priority assigned to the efforts to contain it” (CEPAL, 1974a, p. 252). ECLAC pointed out that Chilean inflation was due to four factors: 1) the rise of prices during the last two years of the Allende government; 2) imported inflation from the rest of the world; 3) the “corrective inflation” caused by the price liberalization policy; 4) readjustment of the exchange rate. For the Commission, “Although the first two factors were outside the orbit of the economic authorities, the others emerged from the general strategy” (CEPAL, 1974a, p. 252).

At this moment, Santiago had a very important role in the economic debate about gradualism and shock treatment regarding the speed of inflation reduction and the depth of economic reforms. Despite the Chilean dictatorship being well-known for the radical economic reforms implemented by the Chicago Boys, the Chicago Boys’ hegemony within the State was not just after the coup. Actually,

between 1973 and 1975, there was no consensus between the Military Junta and its supporters about the specific economic and political project to be archived. In this sense, the famous Chicago Boys' *El Ladrillo* (DE CASTRO, 1992) was only one source of ideas circulating within the government. Some other military engineers and economists assumed top-level economic positions and implemented measures with concern regarding the social costs of growth and unemployment. Because of this, they were identified as gradualists in the literature (FONTAINE, 1988; VALDÉS, 1995). This economic policy orientation was severely criticized by the Chicago Boys, who, in the initial years, participated in a few mid-level positions. They demanded the "shock treatment" of inflation and long-term economic reforms (VALDÉS, 1995).

In April 1975, the debate within the government was resolved, with the interference of Augusto Pinochet in favor of supporters of shock treatment, with the approval of the *Programa de Recuperación Económica*. The plan aimed to combat inflation with large-scale cuts in government spending and public investment. Furthermore, it aimed to deal with imbalances in the balance of payments. The plan was implemented by the Minister of Finance Jorge Cauas, who graduated in Economics from Columbia University, with the support of the Chicago Boys. GDP and industrial production decreased respectively by 17% and 26%, with a deterioration in the investment rate and increased unemployment (FFRENCH-DAVIS, 2010, p. 64).

Conscious of this debate, although the Commission initially tried to present it neutrally, ECLAC positioned itself from the gradualist approach side. The institution had expressed concern about the increase in unemployment rate from 7% in 1973 to 10% in 1974 (CEPAL, 1974a, p.254). ECLAC also criticized the results of the *Programa de Recuperación Económica* and its shock treatment:

The government began to apply a *Programa de Recuperación Económica* in May, [...] This intense decrease in demand from the public sector reinforced the depressive effects coming from abroad. It contributed to accentuating the contraction that the economy had been experiencing since the beginning of the year (CEPAL, 1975a, p. 167).

Another evidence of the ECLAC's gradualist positions is that in the 1976 *Estudio Económico*, ECLAC related the economic results of the country to a more abstract plane of rigidity liberal theoretical and philosophical principles of the "strictly orthodox" 1975 economic policies (CEPAL, 1976a, p. 48):

Would it have been possible, even with such a small volume of imports, to have achieved higher activity and employment levels? [...] economic policy did not consider this doubt and possibility because its spectrum of objectives was limited to the problems of external balance and inflation. [...] Combining them, on the other hand, would have involved profound rectifications of the official guidance in Chile. Of course, it would have required greater participation from the public sphere and defined and discriminatory criteria regarding the allocation of foreign currency towards purposes that would have had the greater activating effect [...] Both conditions seem antagonistic to the general philosophy of economic policy (CEPAL, 1976a, pp. 148-149).

While in the first years of the Chilean military regime, ECLAC made many criticisms against the economic policy of the Chilean authoritarian regime, in the second half of the 1970s, the Commission's positions were more ambiguous due to the general improvement in the economic indicators of the Chilean economy.

#### **4. ECLAC's defensive positions and criticisms of trade and financial liberalizations**

After winning the power battle over gradualist approaches, under the intellectual leadership of the Minister of Finance Sérgio de Castro, Chicago Boys implemented the monetary approach to the balance of payments and the regime's most-known economic reforms, the "seven modernizations": labor, pension, agriculture, health, education, justice, and administrative reforms. All these initiatives and the 1980 Constitution were part of the efforts to create a new institutional framework, the "protected democracy," based on technocratic decisions (HUNEEUS, 2007). The Chilean

economy performed its best in the authoritarian years. The economy grew rapidly, with a GDP average growth of 7.2 % a year, a significant decrease in inflation (it reached 35% in 1980), an increase in capital inflows, and a recovery of real wages (VALDÉS, 1995, pp. 25-27).

During this period, ECLAC recognized the Chilean economy's best moment. Nevertheless, the *Estudios Económicos* expressed concerns about the low investment rate and the high unemployment rate. For instance, in the 1977 *Estudio Económico*, ECLAC stated that although the investment increased to 18%, its participation in GDP continued only at 10%, which is lower than the prior 1975 crisis and Latin American average (CEPAL, 1977a, p. 178). Concerning unemployment, the 1979 report described that despite the economic growth, the unemployment rate in the Great Santiago decreased just a little, from 14% in 1978 to 13.6 in 1979 (CEPAL, 1979a, p.191). While at the beginning of the dictatorship, ECLAC criticized the decrease in the investment rate and the rise of the unemployment rate because of the decrease in economic activity, from 1976 onwards, the Commission approached these problems from a defensive position. I mean these evaluations by “defensives” because the margin of criticism of economic policies was more restricted in the second half of the 1970s, and criticisms of it became more specific regarding the domestic economic variables.

One of the main ECLAC’s criticisms of the regime’s macroeconomic policies in these years was respecting the external debt process. In the Chilean case, before the Latin American debt crisis, the *Estudios Económicos* criticized the increase in the economy's external vulnerability in its attempt to integrate into the international economy, which led to current account deficits and an increase in external debt (CEPAL, 1976a-1981a). The external debt issue was an institutional concern of ECLAC. Indeed, it was an institutional concern. In the 18th ECLAC Session in La Paz in 1979, an unknown country required more profound analyses of external debt because it was an increasingly important phenomenon in the region. In response, the ECLAC Executive Secretary, Enrique Iglesias, stated that there had been a project on monetary and financial matters, with particular attention to external debt (CEPAL, 1980b, pp. 70-71). These initiatives show how the demands of ECLAC-assisted countries conditioned the changes in the Commission's thinking and subjects of interest.

Unlike the descriptive tone adopted by reports on the privatization process and labor and pension reforms (CEPAL, 1979a, pp. 194-195), ECLAC attracted great interest in Southern Cone’s trade liberalization. It produced an extensive monographic study entitled “The Internationalization of the Global Economy and Latin America: Meanings and Options,” published in 1978 (CEPAL, 1978a). This report mainly focused on the *aperturistas* (liberalization) trade policies. Its tone and language demonstrate a combative view against “some lines of thought and praxis that have acquired great significance recently in Latin America and abroad” (CEPAL, 1978a, p. 575). ECLAC identified two variants of what the *aperturista* approach means. Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, “without pejorative intention, could be defined as ideological.” Otherwise, Brazil and Colombia belonged to the pragmatic *aperturismo* (CEPAL, 1978a, p. 577).

According to ECLAC, in the ideological position, trade liberalization was linked to a more structural and overall change in the economy (CEPAL, 1978a, p. 577). In this view, the comparative advantages and market mechanisms must guide industrialization and economic development. Moreover, this position proposed a great rupture with the Latin American import substitution industrialization and the making of a new development style characterized by outward development and based on an “alternative ideal type,” the post-war German social market economy” of the ordoliberalism<sup>5</sup> (CEPAL, 1978a, pp. 577-578).

Bárzaga (2013) realizes that ordoliberal economic ideas have circulated in Latin America since the mid-twentieth century through philanthropic institution funding like the German Christian Democratic Party’s Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. According to him, the ordoliberalism and the Chicago School of Economics tolerated each other. They also had sympathies and alliances in the region, including for the Chicago Boys reforms under the Pinochet regime. Although this argument needs further exploration, there is some evidence that the Chicago Boys indeed looked with sympathy to

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<sup>5</sup> See Fèvre (2021) for a comprehensive analysis of the roots, development, and influence of the ordoliberal’s economic thought. For works that deal with ordoliberals on post-war transnational neoliberal networks, see Plewhe (2009).

the German experience. In the famous economic policy document *El Ladrillo*, the Chicago Boy Sérgio de Castro described the dictatorship economic model as “a social market economy” that “had logical coherence and offered a possibility of getting out of underdevelopment” (DE CASTRO, 1992, p. 12). Moreover, he cited Germany, Brazil, Denmark, Spain, and Japan as successful examples of economic development (p.24).

It is worth noting that the report rejected the ideological approach. In discussing its “dangers,” the report conceived that one of the problems with *aperturistas* policies is that after trade liberalization, the internal prices increase significantly, in some cases at a higher level than external ones. Unlike criticizing it only theoretically, as it is mandatory in language diplomacy (Hodara, 1987), ECLAC personalized the criticism, identifying the Chicago Boy Rolf Lüders as an example of this position<sup>6</sup>. He had recently published a paper in the University of Chile review *Estudios de Economía*, in which he criticized the ECLAC ideas and proposed alternative trade policies. In addition, he celebrated that the governments now possess their “own and capable economic advisors,” making it unnecessary to accept “a single, narrow model, like the one supported by ECLAC in its initial years” (LÜDERS, 1977, pp. 76-77). Moreover, ECLAC criticized the ideological *aperturista* approach, concerning the Chilean case because both its economic policy approach and intellectual basis were linked to ordoliberalism and Chicago economic ideas that spread to the Chilean context.

Some institutional changes within the Commission, connected to overall historical transformations, help explain these changing concerns towards short-term policies and trade liberalization. After the Guatemala 17th Period of Sessions of ECLAC between 1978 and 1979, the Economic Development Division, within the scope of Program 240 “Development Questions and Policies,” conducted more profound studies on the country’s economic policies. In its subprogram 240.2: “Development of strategies and policies,” ECLAC began the analysis of “the new economic development strategy adopted by the countries of the Southern Cone during the second half of the 1970s” (ECLAC, 1981b, p. 17), focusing first on the cases of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay. The efforts to understand these experiences would continue. In 1980, the ECLAC Executive Secretary Enrique Iglesias decided that given “the influence that some postulates of neoliberalism were acquiring in several countries in the region,” it was time to evaluate these experiences systemically.

While rejecting the ideological approach to trade liberalization, ECLAC showed a clear preference for the pragmatic approach, led by Brazil and Colombia, which has as its main characteristic the absence of a radical rupture about the import-substitution industrialization. ECLAC valued that this approach tried to combine elements of import-substitution and outward development. In order to avoid the extremes of *aperturismo*, the Commission proposed an “alternative strategy,” which conceived the trade liberalization not as a rupture but rather “as the pursuit of more favorable and historically necessary channels for industrialization” (ECLAC, 1978, p. 586).

ECLAC reports in the second half of the 1970s evidenced a more cautious tone on the Chilean economy’s internal performance due to its best moment. Unlike other economic reforms, trade liberalization attracted significant attention from the Commission staff. Beyond the difficulties that ECLAC staff had in analyzing pioneering economic reforms, trade liberalization was a major matter for the institution's economic thought. This bridge connected the region’s emerging questions of economic policies with the ECLAC intellectual crisis and renovation, which manifested in the “styles of development” discussions in the period (MEDEIROS, 2021). Indeed, trade liberalization was a subject that, from a neoliberal perspective, challenged the traditional theoretical pillars of ECLAC of the 1950s and 1960s, associated with the state's role in economic development, import substitution, and protectionism<sup>7</sup>. Despite some similar concerns with the ECLAC development strategy in the

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<sup>6</sup> Rolf Lüders was one of the first students sent to Chicago in the second half of the 1950s due to the 1956 agreement between the Catholic University of Chile and the American university. He became Minister of Finance and Economy (1982-1983) and was responsible for reshaping the bank system after the 1982 crisis (VALDÉS, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Since the 1960s, the obstacles of the Latin American industrialization process have been reflected upon within the institution and some of its more prominent economists and sociologists. The self-assessments involved more in-depth analyses of aspects such as income concentration, persistent structural heterogeneity, labor-saving technology, insufficient demand and investment, and the role of underdevelopment’s political and social dimensions (PREBISCH, [1963] 2000; CARDOSO & FALETTO, [1967] 1970; PINTO, 1970).

1990s (CEPAL, 1990), like export promotion, new types of state intervention, and a more balanced approach between markets and the state, the reports at that time reflected the anxieties and response of an institution historically located in the second half of the 1970s.

## 5. Repercussions on the debt crisis and the increase of the ECLAC criticism

In the early 1980s, the limits of the Chilean economy's macroeconomic imbalances associated with the balance of payments and high internal interests became increasingly evident. In 1982, the country experienced the biggest recession in Latin America. Chilean GDP decreased by 14%, while the average growth rate in Latin America was only 3.2 % (FFRENCH-DAVIS, 2010, P.18). Ffrench-Davis (2010) states that this crisis represented a rupture that divided the authoritarian regime years into two periods. The crisis ended the former, between 1973 and 1981, named "pure neoliberalism," in which the Chicago Boys implemented the well-known radical liberal economic policies and reforms. The demission of the powerful Minister of Finance Sérgio de Castro was symbolic of this rupture. Moreover, it initiated the "pragmatic neoliberalism" between 1982 and 1990. Despite the continuity of general lines of neoliberalism, the Minister of Finance Hernán Büchi adopted heterodox policies to recover the economy after the crisis and decrease the balance of payments problems<sup>8</sup>.

Politically, the 1982 crisis was also remarkable. According to Huneus (2007), the authoritarian regime lost its legitimacy based on the apparent success of the economic model in the late 1970s. The deterioration of economic and social conditions led to many protests involving various political actors, including trade unions, opposition leaders who came from exile, and the middle class that supported the coup against Allende. There was the creation of the opposition coalition *Alianza Democrática*, led by the Chilean Christian Democratic Party, which would be crucial in the fight to return to democracy in the late 1980s (HUNEEUS, 2007).

As economic conditions deteriorated in early 1980, ECLAC reports progressively criticized the Chilean economic policies regarding the crisis's origins and the government's responses. In the 1981 *Estudio Económico*, ECLAC timidly reported the end of the Chilean economy's optimism generated by the results of the late 1970s. The report realized there were two different evaluations in the debate about the Chilean economy, one positive and the other negative, without citing its negative evaluations as part of the debate (CEPAL, 1981a, p.317).

In particular, demonstrating the different views about the Chilean economy, the *Estudio Económico* described the optimistic one concerning the balance of payments imbalances. According to it, due to the significant increase in exports, "it was possible to relativize the concern due to the external imbalance" and argue that "the growing deficit in the current account of the payment balance was a symptom of the strength of the economy, which logically attracted foreign capital" (CEPAL, 1981a, pp. 318-320). Although the 1981 report did not explicitly cite it, this description expresses the official public interpretations of the Chilean Ministry of Finance Sérgio de Castro, which expressed it in the document *Exposición sobre el estado de la Hacienda Pública de 1981* (DE CASTRO, 1981). There was an implicit dialogue between the ECLAC report and the Sérgio de Castro's support for a fixed exchange rate and the defense of the current account deficit:

This deficit precisely reflects and measures the external savings we have brought into the country. Not achieving this external horror would force us to grow less, or at the cost of a substantial decrease in Chileans' current standard of living. Therefore, there is no doubt that the current deficit generated under the conditions described above is highly beneficial for the country (DE CASTRO, 1981a, pp. 23-24).

Like in 1975, the 1982 *Estudio Económico* argued that although external factors contributed to the Chilean economic crisis, "its unusual severity was mainly due to the profound imbalances that had been created in previous years, and the vacillating and partial way in which the economic policy sought to correct them" (CEPAL, 1982a, p. 287). Unlike the optimism exhaled by Sérgio de Castro,

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<sup>8</sup> Some of these measures were the great increase in public spending on employment programs, real exchange rate devaluations, import tariffs, subsidies to export activities, nationalizing private debt, and financial system regulation (FFRENCH-DAVIS, 2010, P.117).

ECLAC considered “it was obvious that it could not be expected that the external horror would continue to cover negative balances of this magnitude in the future” (p. 287).

ECLAC was also conscious of the public economic debate about the devaluation of the national currency in the early 1980s. It is worth noting that this debate crossed the Chicago Boys group, dividing them between those who defended the exchange devaluation to increase Chilean export competitiveness and those who supported the current exchange system and alternatively proposed a wage decrease to correct external imbalances (CEPAL, 1982a). Pinochet resolved this controversy by dismissing Sérgio de Castro, the leading fixed exchange rate supporter (FONTAINE, 1988).

More than describing the economic debate, ECLAC criticized the “deflationist” way chosen by the economic authorities until mid-1982, arguing that this contributed to a worse recession both in financial and productive terms. The document labeled the government’s responses as partial. It aimed to attack separately Chilean economic problems: the external imbalance at the beginning of the year, the banking sector’s crisis in the middle of the year, and the drop in economic activity at the end (CEPAL, 1982a, p. 289). In 1982, the Chilean government registered the biggest public deficit since 1974. However, the Commission realized that this result was due to the drop in revenues due to the recession. It criticized “the government’s subordination, at least during the majority of the year, to the theory and practice of ‘automatic adjustment’ and its renunciation of following a decidedly anti-cyclical public spending policy” (CEPAL, 1982a, pp. 322-324).

Regarding the Latin American debt crisis, the Chilean government signed two agreements with the IMF. The former was signed on 10th January 1983, and the second was signed only three days later due to the Central Bank's intervention in private banks. ECLAC reports monitored the Chilean economic performance in the light of the IMF agreements, focusing on indicators related to fiscal deficit, monetary expansion, commercial balance, international reserves levels, inflation, external debt, and growth *económica*. There was a tremendous concern about the agreement goal’s effects on growth in employment (CEPAL, 1983a, p. 303). Monitoring short-term Chilean economic policies was a great institutional concern of ECLAC. As expressed in the 1986 biannual report, the Division of Economic Development, within the framework of the now “Program 10: Development Questions and Policies” (former Program 240), was concerned with proposing “heterodox, but realistic” alternatives to negotiate the external debt through an external adjustment with the lowest possible cost on economic activity and income distribution (CEPAL, 1986b, pp. 9-10).

These concerns also mobilized the publication of two monographic studies, in 1982 and 1983, about the topic in the *Estudios Económicos* series (CEPAL, 1982a, 1983a). In the former, ECLAC openly criticized the IMF’s role in the Latin American debt crisis, appointing “important deficiencies in the performance of this institution” (CEPAL, 1983a, p. 89). Among them, it criticized the “paradigm that guides IMF adjustment policies,” which stands out as uniformly applying to different countries. Furthermore, CEPAL criticized the tendency of the agreements proposed by the institution to “appear to favor especially measures intended to guarantee the payment of foreign creditors, at the expense of growth” (p. 89), inducing a drop in imports and economic activity.

## **6. The stress of focus on short-term policies and the return to democracy (1985-1990)**

From 1984 onwards, conditioned by the relief provided by IMF credits and the restructuring of external debt with commercial banks (CEPAL, 1983a), the recovery of the Chilean economy began with the use of idle capacity associated with more pragmatic measures applied by Minister of Finance Hernán Büchi. It resulted in higher growth rates until the end of the dictatorship in 1989, without changing the regressive nature of income distribution (FFRENCH-DAVIS, 2010). In the second half of the 1980s, the ECLAC reports became highly descriptive. Unlike in the 1976-1980 period, when the reports tried to systematize the problems of trade liberalization and external debt, the ECLAC reports concentrated on describing the increase and decrease of economic variables, monitoring especially how much the Chilean economy accomplished the IMF goals of external adjustment and inflation.

The ECLAC's stress on short-term economic policies and indicators became evident in creating another economic juncture report, the *Panorama Económico de América Latina*. This document series, initiated by the Executive Secretary of the ECLAC in 1985, aimed to provide a shorter-term description of Latin American economies, covering six months. Unlike the annual *Estudio Económico*, *Panorama Económico* focused on "the basic characteristics of the economic evolution of the main countries of the region during the first semester of the year, based on the most recent current historical statistics" (CEPAL, 1986c, p. 9). Figure 1 shows that the document's structure was more streamlined, starting with a general overview of Latin America briefly discussing specific countries in approximately 8-10 pages.

Figure 5 – *Panorama Económico* summary

AMERICA LATINA . . . . .	5
La inflación. . . . .	7
El sector externo y la transferencia de recursos . . . . .	8
El peso de la deuda. . . . .	10
Cuadros estadísticos y gráficos . . . . .	11
ARGENTINA . . . . .	16
Gráfico y cuadros estadísticos. . . . .	18
BRASIL . . . . .	24
Gráfico y cuadros estadísticos . . . . .	26
COLOMBIA . . . . .	32
Gráfico y cuadros estadísticos . . . . .	34
CHILE . . . . .	39
Gráfico y cuadros estadísticos . . . . .	41
ECUADOR . . . . .	49
Cuadros estadísticos. . . . .	51
MEXICO . . . . .	54
Gráfico y cuadros estadísticos . . . . .	56
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Source: *Panorama Económico de América Latina* 1988.

The *Estudios Económicos* between 1985 and 1990 assumed an exhaustively descriptive tone without significant evaluations or criticisms on a more general analytical level. The reports continued to monitor subjects like growth, inflation, and unemployment, focusing on fiscal and debt indicators. In 1985, the report noted the decrease in Chilean economic growth and the relative increase in inflation (CEPAL, 1985a, p.286). The *Panorama Económico* showed a better external economic situation with details in the same year.

The juncture evaluation through IMF goals became a significant feature of ECLAC reports in which the institution acknowledged better economic indicators. For instance, the *Estudio Económico* of 1986 registered that the Chilean economy overcame all goals proposed by the Fund with "the best performance of recent years" (CEPAL, 1986a, p. 263). Besides the increase of the GDP and the public investments and reduction of inflation, the report showed "also in the case of the adjustment program that was agreed with the Monetary Fund, the goals were generally fulfilled with certainty," with a greater than expected increase in international reserves and a reduction in the public deficit (CEPAL, 1986a, p. 263). Otherwise, the *Panorama Económico* of the first semester identified a better external situation and a decreased unemployment level.

The descriptive tone of *Estudios Económicos* and *Panorama Económico* also manifested in Commission analysis about the process of re-democratization of Chilean society and the rise of the first democratic government of Patricio Alwyn (1990-1994) of the center-left coalition *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*. After the 1988 Plebiscite that put an end to the authoritarian regime,



the new coalition, formed by the Christian Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, rose to power, winning the presidential elections over the Pinochet-supporter candidate Hernán Büchi (HUNEEUS, 2007).

ECLAC reports limited the discussions of the context of transition to democracy from a short-term economic policies point of view. In transition years, they described the last measures of the authoritarian regime to slow down economic activity by increasing interest rates since the expansion of aggregate demand in previous years caused inflationary pressures (CEPAL, 1989c; 1990c). In this sense, the 1990 *Estudios Económicos* observed that the transition generated expectations and apprehensions among economic agents: “On the one hand, salary and social improvements were expected, while the business sector raised its fears regarding possible changes in the background of the current economic policy model” (CEPAL, 1990a, p. 176). As a result, the “new economic authorities” continued the adjustment process through a contractionary fiscal policy. Moreover, the independent Central Bank began to operate, increasing the contraction effects of fiscal policy. Furthermore, without a conclusion, the document emphasized the new characteristics of the policy of consensus and agreements between different political groups and sectors of society, as well as the labor and tax reforms proposed by the new government to balance the wage bargain and increase social spending.

## **Final remarks**

In this paper, I showed that the Commission, far from behaving like a bureaucratic island, engaged with the economic, political, and social context around it. It would be simplifying and erroneous to take ECLAC, in the institutional dimension, as opposition to the Chilean dictatorship. The Commission mobilized its institutional and symbolic recourses and relative autonomy to confront the challenges of the Chilean authoritarian regime. Due to the ECLAC’s institutional nature, its history during the Chilean dictatorship has many nuances. On the one hand, the Commission had to make efforts to protect against human rights abuses. On the other hand, the institution must continue its relations with the Chilean government regarding technical assistance. At the same time, from an intellectual point of view, ECLAC problematized the Chicago Boys' economic policies. The variation of tone and language in ECLAC’s reports represented the institution’s attempts to contrast monetarist ideas but also to adapt its economic knowledge to new Latin American economic problems and the strength of liberal orthodoxy in the region.

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