

## **The New Face of the Institutions and the Role of Identity (Latin-American Case)**

Ing. Martina Jeníčková  
(University of Economics, Prague)  
e-mail: martina.jenickova@vse.cz

### **Abstract**

In my paper I would like to show the two aspects that influence the Latin-American integration efforts in the contemporary globalised world. The two aspects are the changes in character of Latin-American institutions, which I consider as a more complex and the second one is role of identity in institutionalisation. The question of Latin-American identity is not simple at all. We have at least dual perception of the identity – national and supranational (collective). The influence of the former aspect should have a positive influence on the integration while the influence of identity seems rather unclear.

### **Introduction**

From the late 1980s large changes in the international relations (IR) are passing. These radical changes are connected with several process such as globalisation and the end of cold war. These changes have of course been reflected by the scholars all over the world, I would like to remind Samuel P. Huntington and his now may classical book *The Clash of Civilizations*. Although after fifteen years of releasing some of his predictions are not fulfilled, there are some thesis e.g. the rising role of cultural identity in the IR that definitely worth consideration till now. And when we try to deal with the process of integration, the aspect of perception of identity is at least interesting because it may help or slow down this whole process. In the paper I would like to use the thesis of Nelly Arenas, who presumes that the integration in globalised world is characterised by two aspects, strengthen need for “local” cooperation on the one hand and creation of supranational identities on the other (Arenas 1999: 89).

Also Latin America went through substantial changes from the late 1980s. After less or more successful 1960s the 1970s and 1980s are not a lucky period for the region. The 1970s are typical by the economic crisis all over the world, the economic situation of Latin-America was universally not an exception. The fact that almost all Latin-American countries were governed by undemocratic, military regimes<sup>1</sup> also do not help the situation. Nor 1980s were favourable. Description of the economic situation of the region could be following, recession, problems with the balance of payments, decrease of foreign direct investments, closed economies, high inflation and Latin America become the region with the highest debts. In economic literature this decade is marked as the “lost”. From the political point of view the situation improves in the second half of 1980s, when Latin-American countries turn to democracy which is may the greatest change. These new regimes started the economic reforms in order to ameliorate the above described crisis. These reforms were universally in spirit of neoliberal policies and recommendation of world financial institutions and supporting the export strategies. In spite of the essential improvement of the economic and political environment in 1990s in the region, the social problems persist and also financial crises do not avoid the region (e.g. 1994 Mexico, 1999 Brazil, 2001 Argentina).

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<sup>1</sup> an example could be “la guerra sucia” in Argentina – the era of brutal military junta governing from 1976 to 1982/3

With the positive reversal the new wave of integration efforts can be found, some new initiatives are released (Mercosur) or the old ones are renewed (Andean Pact that was transformed to the Andean Community). As a starting point for the first part I pose a hypothesis that the Latin American institutions deal with more complex scope of areas of cooperation in comparison with the 1960s when it was mainly economic one. Another impulse for integration was the new millennium when the FTAA negotiations failed and some of the Latin-American states increased the effort to profile themselves in the IR (Brazil). The neoliberalism in the economy is re-evaluated (e.g. after Argentinean case) and the states have been finding own way that fits better in the Latin-American environment. The new integration initiatives appears, the most remarkable are the UNASUR<sup>2</sup> and may Chavez's ALBA, the leftist and rather populist initiative. In these new initiatives the role of Latin American identity is more often mentioned, that would support the above mention presumption about increasing role of supranational identity. In the first part of the paper I would like to briefly indicate the changes of the character of integration in the region, in the second part I will deal with the problem of identity in Latin America.

Identity in Latin-American territory is not simple phenomenon whose formation has followed the special historical development of the region and is influenced by the relation between Latin America and the USA and also the globalisation. For this reason I would like to summarise the concepts and process of its creation in the second part of the paper.

In conclusion, on the first sight there are two tendencies, one is the deepening of the areas of cooperation in a few decades, the other the simple fact, that there exist strong but ambiguous perception of identity (national or regional) and moreover, as we will see bellow, strong patriotism is present in the region. The former tendency should support the integration process, the latter I would mark rather as an obstacle of the integration. So how are the changes of character of Latin-American integration in the last few decades? How does the dual perception of identity influence the behaviour of Latin American states in forming of the institutions? Does it all mean a perspective to deepening of the institutionalisation or rather conflicts and stagnation?

### **Changed character of the Latin-American integration**

As briefly described above we can define at least two but rather three phases of Latin-American integration in the post-war era. The first was the wave of 1960s, that was based on economic goals – reducing the trade barriers. If we take into account wider circumstances, we can add that it was globally period of economic prosperity and the first results of the integration in Western Europe could be seen. May encouraged by these facts rising Latin-American blocs pose as their goals creation of common markets which was rather not compatible with the reality in that time. It was e.g. LAFTA, CACM or Andean pact that were created with these goals. But the important feature I would like to emphasise is the economic character of these initiatives. Than, as described, the worsen economic as well as political conditions slowed down the integration efforts which have been renewed with the changes brought by the late 1980s<sup>3</sup>. Compared to 1960s this new wave of integration seems to be different. The economic goals remain important, of course, but it is not only the economic area that is being develop but the cooperation seems to be much more richer<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> initiative of Brazil that connects Mercosur and Andean Community and comprises all twelve South-American countries

<sup>3</sup> The renewal of integration can be seen not only in the examining region but all over the world. E.g. in Europe the important turning point was an acceptance of the Maastricht Treaty.

<sup>4</sup> In theory, these changes are reflected by defining the new regionalism.

Besides the policies leading to creation of common markets (which requires free trade of goods and services, free flows of capital and persons), the blocs incorporate to their agendas also the social area, environmental area, political cooperation, or common negotiation with another subjects of the IR (For Andean Community- Protocol of Sucre, 1997) or tourism. E.g. in 1991 the principle of “open sky” was adopted in the Andean Pact framework. Also the ideas of citizenship of the blocs starts (the first steps leading to the eventual Mercosur citizenship were took in 2002). Moreover the democratic principles starts to be essential for the Latin-American countries. From 1996 the “democracy clause” is valid in the Mercosur. This clause enables to suspend the membership of the state which violates democratic principles and institutions. In practice this clause was used in 1998 to help to settle the crisis in Paraguay.

Also institutional structure was modified. The regional parliaments are incorporated to the structure (Andean Community in 1997 (reformed), Mercosur 2006, SICA 1991) and also the tribunal for solving disputes (Mercosur still do not have such tribunal, which fact is often criticise). In the basic documents of the blocs references to the principles of the UN Chart are often mentioned (SICA, UNASUR etc.) as a basic principles to follow.

The contemporary integration (of the new millennium) goes further. When we look at the Andean Community web pages today, we can count even 29 key areas of cooperation among others common foreign policy, culture, environment, drug control effort, democracy and human rights, security, energy, infrastructure or telecommunications and many others ([www.comunidadandina.org](http://www.comunidadandina.org)). If we return to UNASUR, also this bloc is being on such priorities as political dialogue, environment, energy, telecommunications, financial mechanisms, social cohesion and justice, reducing asymmetries or supporting of multilateralism in the IR, peace, democracy and human rights. Cooperation in the areas of energy, infrastructure or telecommunications is being developed with such intensity that sometimes has been marked as a new dimension of Latin-American integration. For the purpose of coordination the cooperation in this area special institution called IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South-America) was created in 2000. ([www.iirsa.org](http://www.iirsa.org)). The other key moment in deepening the integration I would see in the formation of the South-American Defence Council in 2009. Also Chavez’s projects (however they have populist aspects) covers wide area. If we leave aside ALBA (which can be marked as an integration based on a kind of “barter” trade) there is besides the Venezuela’s oil trade e.g. Telesur, the project for common TV channel that should contribute to cultural and political integration of the region (Cañizales – Lugo 2007).

In this part I mentioned some examples of rising number of areas of cooperation in Latin-American region. The important thing is that the states are aware of the need of such cooperation. In conclusion the higher number of areas of cooperation and projects the higher dependence among the states and to take step back will be more difficult. It is obvious mainly in the energy and infrastructure projects. So from this part I conclude that the complexity of integration should bring the deepening and development of the integration (at least as a spontaneous consequence of the process, because it will be more and more inconvenient to stop the cooperation).

In the next part I am going to examine the Latin-American identity as a next factor which is more mentioned in the individual integration blocs framework in the examining new “waves” of integration. It was indicated above that it is not at all a simple phenomenon, so first of all I

will try to summarise the process of its creation and the basic opinions on it in order to make it clearer.

### **Latin American Identity**

The term “identity” can include many connotations in different area of research such as social sciences or philosophy (Vergara Estevez – Vergara del Solar 2002: 79). As we are examining the cultural identity it is useful specify which point of view we have on mind. Generally, the identity is connected with the answer to the question “Who am I” (or Who I am not). Although the concept of identity is often connected with the national states (Arenas 1997: 5), one can feel his/her identity not only on national level, but also on the family, ethnic or regional/continental level. In addition the perception (or the answer to the above mentioned question) is frequently ambiguous (Vergara Estevez – Vergara del Solar 2002: 79). One can feel he/she is e.g. Brazilian as well as Latin-American. Moreover, there is not a unified view on the case of Latin-American identity, in the other words there exist several opinions on it which should be reviewed at first.

Identity is of course connected with the cultural dimension. Generally is accepted that Latin-American culture and identity is composed from synthesis of three main resources: the Indian, European (Spanish in majority) and African culture. (Medina Nuñez). But the conflict among the scholars or thinkers comes right in the next step. The main discourse was/is among other mainly about following two questions:

- 1) if the Latin-American culture is the separate unit or a part of western one and what is the main determinant for the identity
- 2) if there exists rather the national identities or a collective identity (the idea of unified Latin America).

As we stated above, when examining the Latin-American culture the three main resources (Indian, European and African) are important. All of the three left to the Latin-American culture concrete specifics. If we look into it in the historical way, the first great moment for the Latin-American history and culture were the ancient Indian civilisations as Maya, Aztec or Inca (and others). Than definitely the period of conquista, when the European conquerors brought their culture (religion, lifestyle, language etc.) to the region and little bit later brought the first African slaves to replace diminishing Indian work force. Their culture was the last component to the mosaic of Latin-American culture. For formation of identities in the region was important and may the key-one the period of the fight for independence and following building of the new states. Globalisation and the relation with the USA are two more factors importantly influencing both Latin-American identity and also integration in the region.

After this short reminder of the basic facts which will serve us to better orientation in the problem we can look at our two basic questions. The first is a discourse about the main determinant or essence of Latin-American culture and identity. Examining this problem, it is possible to identify four thesis clearly summarised by Vergara Estevez and Vergara del Solar.

According to the first, the identity is in its basis Indian, this part is for Latin America the essential and others are not as important and moreover are connected with the colonialism (or neo-colonialism) (Vergara Estevez - Vergara del Solar 2002: 80-81). This also means that the culture of the region is, of course, autonomous cultural unit because the essence quite differs from European.

Then we have the second thesis which says, on contrary to the first, that the identity is Hispanic. Conquista is in this thesis perceived as an extension of western civilisation and as a spiritual conquest of the region that brought Christian religion. The fact that Latin America gained the independence is interpreted only as a political separation from Spain, but the Spanish/Hispanic values persisted which is essential. The Spanish empire also left the starting point for social and political reality in the new states (Vergara Estevez - Vergara del Solar 2002: 81-82).

The third thesis refuses the two precedent. It reflects all three parts of the culture, but says that Latin-American identity is or should be a part of the western one, but specific because of long-term influence of Indian and African traditions. It can be summarised in Octavio Paz's idea that Latin America is an "extremity of the West" (Un extremo occidente) (Housková 1998:7). In this framework also the ideas about modernity were developed. From Indian, Spanish and African culture the Latin America accepted some aspects that restrain the progress and therefore in order to become modern Latin America should even close to the western tradition because Europe and The United States represent ideas of modern civilisation and culture<sup>5</sup>. Today it is an opinion of the followers of the neoliberal policy. (Vergara Estevez - Vergara del Solar 2002: 82-84). The concept of modernity is also connected with the globalization whose influence to the identity will be briefly examined in the end of this part.

The last (fourth) thesis describes Latin American identity as mestizo identity. This - the most common approach - sees the Latin American culture and identity as a mixture of the races, as a synthesis of all three above mentioned components, which is expressed in all part of spiritual life (language, traditions, art etc.)<sup>6</sup> (Vergara Estevez - Vergara del Solar 2002: 84-86). This is also the one which consider with my opinion.

These four thesis can be used on both, national and regional (collective) level. The perception of the level of identity and its influence to the integration is our second question: is there a collective Latin-American identity or rather various national identities? After brief historical introduction, let's look at both points of view.

The question of Latin-American (cultural) unity is nothing new, it has lasted from the period of having gained the independence and creation of the new states in the region. But the answer is not simple and clear again. First of all let's return to this period (first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century) and remind briefly the historical circumstances. As the starting point we have a unified Spanish empire (divided into two and later four viceroyalties) and Portugal Brazil. Then the fights for independence passed and the ideas of Latin-American unity and the Americanism were born. "*Disintegration from Spanish Empire in Latin America was caused primarily by the political interests and rate of arm forces at the moment of gaining the independence, not as an emancipation of the nations*" (Housková 1998: 16). After having gained the independence, new states were created but in other way than we could see in Europe – without existing and formed nations or better national feeling. In that period the word "homeland" (la patria) was used more frequently compared to the "nation" because it

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<sup>5</sup> In the ancient evaluating sense

<sup>6</sup> As Housková mentions, even this thesis or approach is not homogeneous, because there two opinions on the way how the individual parts of the culture "live" together. On the one hand we have an approach of harmony of cultures, where all parts are integrated together without problems. On the extreme position of this opinion we have the idea of the "cosmic race" of José Vasconcelos. The other, more dramatic, approach is speaking about the cultures and cultural traditions only overlap each other without deep integration, which can bring the tensions and conflict (Housková 1998:26-30).

reflected the reality better. Tejada Ripalda classified the idea of the nation as “*one of the most useless and unnatural imports from Europe*” (Housková 2004: 13). But on the other hand after the end of independence fights the influence of Europe and its national settlement lasted which together with conflicts of neighbouring countries helped to build the strong national consciousness (Housková 1998: 16). This overgrew into important aspect that projects to Latin-American identity – strong national feeling (and nationalism). Moreover, searching for and forming own identity was and is a way of self-identification and profile the new states in the IR. (Arenas 1997: 6) Moreover, it can help the state to gain its authority inwards. If we return back to our third thesis about the essence of Latin-American identity for a while, we have to have on mind another circumstance. When the Latin-American elite built the modern states, they use north-American (and French) patterns (together with rather distance from Spain and Portugal) (Housková 1998, Rodríguez Cascante 2004). It was the dispute about traditions and modernity<sup>7</sup> as mentioned above. In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century the rising industrial development, consolidation of the states and social changes stimulate to develop a definition of national cultural identities (Arenas 1997: 6). So from none national perception, strong national feeling was built during the years. Like Arenas adds, “*the nationalism become from the 18<sup>th</sup> century a modern form of collective identity*” (Arenas 1997: 5-6). Let’s add that in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century the states also returns to perception of the mestizo identity (Rodríguez Cascante 2004: 245), the traditional forms (Indian or Afroamerican culture) are incorporated into the national identities as the aspect that is authentic of Latin America (Arenas 2004: 7), by which the culture differs from the European patterns.

After these notes we can finally look at the second question concerning the Latin-American cultural unity and collective identity. In Latin-American thinking the two opposite opinions are present. First understand Latin-American culture as integral (O. Paz, C. Fuentes, M. Vargas Llosa, A. Uslar Pietri, R. Depestre etc.) (Housková 1998:15). But when we are discussing the unity of the region we have to take into account that we do not mean the homogenous region, but internally diversified in spite of presence some common features. The reflection of this culture talks about “unity and difference” as a key topic. “*Consideration about cultural identity is a consideration about multi-culture of Latin America, where the consciousness of “difference” does not disturb the consciousness of certain unity*” (Housková 2004:12-13). The thesis about Latin-American unity based on common language, religion, history, geographical unit and more or less similar values and Bolívar’s dream is nothing new, we can classify it rather as stereotypical. But despite all critics we can argue by the Armony’s and Lamy’s words that “*in spite of the significant and highly relevant political, economic, and social discontinuities that we can find among the different Latin America countries, it is still possible to speak of certain common cultural foundation*” (Armony – Lamy 1999: 244). The idea of unity, as stated above, was born from the plans and fights for independence, when there was a common enemy or rather common goal. The most famous protagonist of this idea of this period are definitely S. Bolívar<sup>8</sup> or J. Martí. But we have another personalities who believe in a unity of Latin America. E.g. Arturo Uslar Pietri says “*Latin America exists, certainly exists... it is not an intellectual formation. The product foregoes the idea.*” And adds “*A linguistic, institutional and religious unit was born.*” (Uslar Pietri cited in Medina Nuñez). Mario Vargas Llosa continues in these ideas and argues that the name Latin America do not refer only to cultural sphere but also economical and political (Medina Nuñez). In these days

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<sup>7</sup> moreover, we can not affirm that the process of modernisation was homogenous for all the continent, that means similar in all countries of the region (Rodríguez Cascante 2004: 246) which result in the deepening of inward diversity of the region.

<sup>8</sup> who describes his ideas of future unified region in his famous “Letter from Jamaica” (Carta de Jamaica) (Bolívar In Housková 2004:28-41)

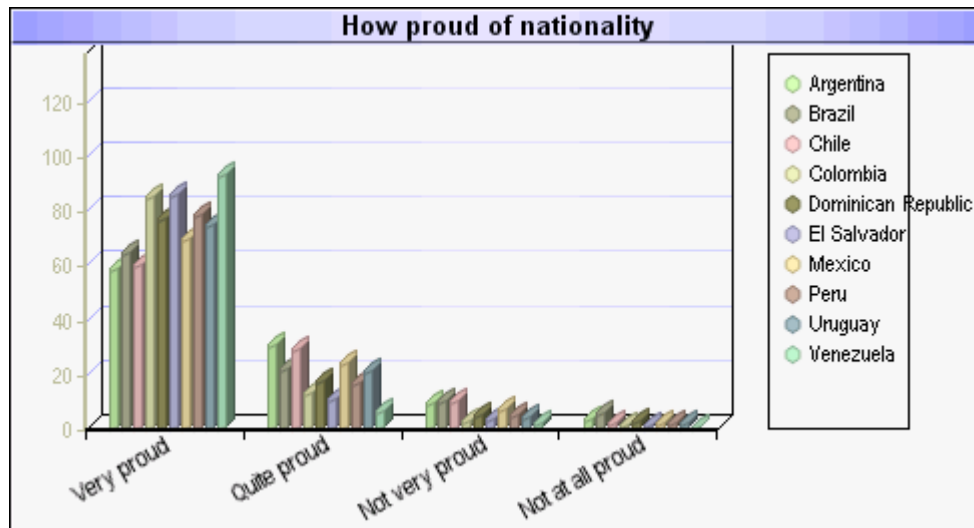
the notes about an importance of identity on the higher than national level are present in basic documents on many integration blocs (UNASUR, Andean Community etc).

The other opinion refuses the cultural unity (J. L. Borges, G. Cabrera, J. C. Onneti, J. Amado etc.) (Housková 1998:15). Some authors see the national identities as a highest level and the Latin-American identity as a construct. E.g. Jorge Amado is so radical that marks the name Latin America as a Spanish colonialist invention and argues that he really does not feel the “continental spirit”, but sees a diversified national identities. The only common things are such as poverty, famine, latifundias or dictatorship (Medina Nuñez). Juan Carlos Onetti also sees the Latin America as not more than a geographical term (Medina Nuñez). And Guillermo Cabrera Infante describes the Bolívar’s integrative dream as illogical and totally absurd (Medina Nuñez).

#### National identity and Ronald Inglehart research

To complete the picture of the second opinion let’s look on national identity and nationalism (that was mentioned a few paragraph above) through the eyes of Ronald Inglehard. Inglehard divided the world countries on the basis of his research (consisted of hundred questions) to the clusters with similar cultural patterns. His research showed that Latin American countries tend to similar values (cited by Armony – Lamy 1999: 247). For the purpose of showing one of the feature of Latin-American culture - patriotism I chose the question “How proud of nationality”. From the results summarised in the graph below we can see that one of the Latin-American values is pride of own nationality. As we can see, in every examining country most people is “very proud” of the nationality and we can almost say that the rest is “quite proud”. If we sum up these two groups of answers we gain 90%, that means that about 90% of Latin-Americans is very or quite proud of their nationality. This conclusion is may not surprising but in my opinion very important. On the one hand we have similar values and declaration of Latin-American unity, but on the other hand one of the similar values is pride of own nationality which can be rather obstacle to the integration. We can hardly expect someone proud of own state and nationality will too willing to sacrifice a part of decision-making about own matters to other side (e.g. a supranational body), because it would weaken his state in his eyes. And higher levels of integration requires such steps. So, if we return to the emphasising of identities of individual integration blocs, the reason for this is may to weaken the strong national identity in order to make the integration easier. To sum up, the collective identity is present, may inspiring and often mentioned but finally is secondary. Firstly is perceived the national identity. Moreover, the nationalism may contribute to the fact that there is no clear regional hegemony but only various candidate states for this position. For the countries is rather difficult to have someone “first among equals”. Typical is non-unified approach to the question which one should represent Latin America as a permanent member in UN Security Council (in spite of the efforts of Brazil to gain this position).

So, we can conclude that in spite of the existence of similar values, it is not sufficient condition for easy integration. Moreover, the nationalism is may one of the main reasons why despite a great number of various integration initiatives in the region there is none which fully fulfil its goals by then.



Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

The other two aspects that I marked as essential for forming of identities and integration are the relation to the United States and the globalisation. When thinking of own identity, we can determined it also negatively (as an answer to the question who I am not) (Housková 1998:19). This point is also very important in the Latin-American case because Latin-American identity is often defined towards the North-American identity, as the other America (e.g. S. Bolívar, J. Martí, J.E. Rodó etc). Moreover, the United States are important player influencing the region as well as the integration process there. The relation of Latin America to the northern neighbour is ambivalent. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century we can meet with changing position, inspiration by the United States model<sup>9</sup> and the refusal of this influence. To sum up, historically there are on the one hand the United States as a pattern but on the other hand also as country bringing moments of great disillusion (e.g. the interventions of this state in the region) (Housková 2004:14). This kind of relation outlasts practically till now. The relation to this powerful neighbour is also an aspect which influences the integration in the region. There are states allied to the United States (Colombia, some of the Central-American countries, in some aspects Chile) but also states refusing this world power (Venezuela, but in some aspects also Argentina or Brazil). This discord is in my opinion one of the key problem destroying the integration efforts in the region (e.g. Venezuelan withdrawal from Andean Community, Venezuelan – Colombian disputes which make difficult the negotiation process).

The next factor influencing Latin-American identity and integration is globalisation. In last few decades deep changes have taken place in the historical-social system. This is not expressed only in the economical-financial sphere but also as a “cultural homogenisation or standardisation” (Arenas 1997:1). More precisely we can say that cohesion above all in material dimension of cultural system has been increasing. But this standardisation does not concern the spiritual dimension of cultural system which produces so-called “cultural gap” that is destabilising contemporary world (Lehmannová 1999: 96). If we recall Huntington’s vision we can draw the attention to that part of his thesis that this problem leads to shift to own original identities, concerning especially the non-western. It is not necessary to remind the increased interactions among different subjects in the IR and risen influence of the mass-

<sup>9</sup> compare e.g. the political systems or the buildings of Congresses in some Latin American countries

media. So, on the one hand with progressive development of technologies due to which we are able to be in “closer connection with the world” (e.g. observe popular TV series from many countries on our TVs<sup>10</sup>) but on the other hand the non-western “civilisations” are returning to perception of own identity, values and cultural heritage (Arenas 1997). One explanation of the latter was found by Nelly Arenas: “*because the world became transnational and have to be even more transnational, the peoples need self-define in terms that they understand. They need a geographical, linguistic, religious, cultural community, which is clear and ... which they can touch*” (Drucker cited by Arenas 1997: 4). This is one of the explanation of higher interest of the question of identities in the region<sup>11</sup>.

Other feature of our globalised world is that there are many international organisations, especially the economic ones, that influence and may change the contemporary relations and connect individual subjects (WTO, IMF, the group of the World bank etc.). We added above that in recent period of largely developing globalisation also the new waves of regional integration have appeared. As Armony and Lamy summarise “*the economic process of globalization, involving increased trade, communication flows, and movement of people have important cultural consequences. But it is useful to remember that though economic activity is becoming increasingly global in nature, regionalized economic integration is not losing importance.*” (Armony – Lamy 1999:246).

Like was anticipated above, globalisation is connected with the concept of modernity. Firstly, globalisation and modernisation brought vast social changes. Latin America went through the great social change connected development of industries mainly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With increased urbanisation the zones of great poverty arose in the suburbs of the big cities and became a source of social unrest. Also the gap between the rich and poor people even deepened. Last but not least this development contribute to the fact that there is very weak middle class in the region (Nálevka 2005: 94). These consequences greatly influenced the post-war development of the region. To sum up, Latin-American society is typical by hierarchy with narrow layer of elite and relatively wide layer of poor ones that is easy influenced by populist rhetoric. In contemporary Latin America many problems as the poverty, inequality, drug business, various armed movements or undeveloped education or health care system persist. Moreover, with the neoliberal measures of 1990s it seems the gap even deepened. These problems are such vast that for one single country is highly difficult to solve them, so the integration projects offer the forum for searching the solution.

How Armony and Lamy noticed, also effects of globalisation on culture are vast, it could restrain some of the cultural aspect and contrary some reinforce. They identify this problem in the “contest” “*between modernizing trends and “traditional” values*” (Armony – Lamy 1999: 246). According to the point of view of Morandé the Latin-American identity rose from the processes brought by conquista and the modernisation rather hides it, rather negates the regional identity (Rodriguez Cascante 2004: 241). What is also important is that Latin-American modernity according to Jorge Larraín contains special aspects like clientelism or personalism, traditionalism, authoritarianism, insufficient development of civil society or institutions, because such aspects determine the way of negotiation and acting of players (not only) in integration process. In addition Larraín sees the Latin-American modernity as a mixture of (pre-modern) traditions and modern actions of various kind. This also means that in this approach modernisation does not mean substitution to everything that is marked as

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<sup>10</sup> Influence of such process on the Latin-American Indian communities e.g. in Armony – Lamy 1999

<sup>11</sup> In 1980s boom in the research of identity in Latin-America appears and as stated above also high officials return to it in basic declaration of integration blocs

traditional or popular (Rodriguez Cascante 2004: 244) which we could see when describing the third thesis about the essence of Latin-American identity. So, in conclusion traditions (historical context) are present also in the modern Latin America. From such opinions we can deduce that for the Latin American culture and identity the fourth thesis about mestizo character is valid rather than everything else. This also means that the European (and may North-American) integration process can inspire the Latin-American region but can not be copied because of different culture. The solution how the effective integration initiative would look like should be looking for above all on the basis of own important values.

## **Conclusion**

In the article we dealt with two aspects influencing the Latin-American integration of last three decades. The first was the changed character of the Latin-American integration compared to 1960s model. We tried to show that the spectrum of areas of cooperation is much wider and richer. Compared to 1960 when the economic dimension was dominant the contemporary integration counts with such areas as common foreign policy, security or social and labour tasks. The integration blocs adopt the UN principles to their documents as a basic principles of own working. Important is also cooperation in the energy, infrastructure and telecommunication areas. Joining in various common projects would lead to increased dependency among the states which will be probably strengthen by globalisation and which means that step back will be more and more difficult and inconvenient. Moreover, the common programmes and cooperation would help to find solutions for persisting problems of the region.

The second was the problem of identity in the region. Because of the complexity of this problem we firstly described the opinions on the essence of the identity and its development with the aim of better understanding to the problem. We tend to the thesis that Latin-American identities have mestizo character, so that the culture is individual entity slightly different from the “Western”. From this, we derived that Latin-Americans should search their own way of final shape of the integration precisely compatible with their values, not only copy e.g. the European pattern. Characterised by Bolívar’s words “*bad improvisation is better than imitation*” (Housková 1998:20). As an obstacle we also identified various approach to the United States of America.

Last but not least we examined the influence of collective versus national identities. The result can be expressed by Armony’s and Lamy’s observation: “*the paradoxical nature of Latin American collective identities stems from the fact that, in spite of – or because – of the previous existence of a very strong and encompassing sense of belonging to the Spanish-American world, the newly formed independent states had to strongly and pro actively unify a differentiate themselves as territorial entities (which usually coincided rather loosely with preexisting colonial administrative units). This inaugural thrust has persisted in its effects all over the twenties century. What sometimes may appear as a chauvinistic obsession to delimit la mexicanidad, la argentinidad, or la chilenedad, actually reflects what Lechner calls a “desire for community”. Though it certainly can lead to nationalist excesses, this “need of sociableness, protection against insecurity, and the certainty of shared feelings” is at the heart of what this author describes as the quest for citizenship.*”(Armony – Lamy 1999: 246). We have though two tendencies – collective identity should act as a integrative factor and national contrary rather as an obstacle to the integration process. We found that in Latin-American integration process perception of the national identity plays more important role than the collective Latin-American identity (which is may more often mentioned than felt as a

primary one). Moreover, Latin-American nationalism may contribute to the fact that Latin America does not have its regional leader.

Finally, we have two basic tendencies, deepened cooperation in widening areas that strengthens the integration on the one hand and nationalism that slows down the integration on the other hand. But identity is not static. Identity is being built during the history and is a “product” of specific historical consequences. This also means that that formation of the identity is an “*open, never completed process*” (Vergara Estevez – Vergara del Solar 2002: 79). And Nelly Arenas adds “*identity is what we are now*”, and what we are now is determined by historical context (Arenas 1997: 10). It means that we have to wait if the perception of identity in Latin America would shift from national to regional which would make the integration much more easier. The future and history will give us a clear answer.

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