



The position of Latin America

The economic process of globalization involving increased trade, communication flows, and movement of people and goods has important cultural consequences. When a culture is introduced to the globalization, some people may find it detrimental to their way of life. They may worry that some inconsiderable concepts of other culture might take place of their culture. Some societies find globalization as a dominating concept which might have effect on their lifestyle.

Every society has its own culture and way of life. It works out its history in its own unique fashion, influenced by culture, leaders, institutions, climate, geography and other elements that make up its own distinctive heritage. Culture is a phenomenon of each society or nation. It cannot be changed. It is something what represents people living there, it is their way of life, thinking, ideas, habits, eating habits, attitudes, shared opinions...

The question is: *“should we regard Latin America as a passive player in the process of globalization? Will Latin America survive in such westernization? What about its culture?”*

Culture in Latin America has a very long history. Everybody knows about Christopher Columbus and his discovery of the region. However, the culture was not born in 1492. It was born hundreds years before. Latin America is a unified region where people share common values, common religion, common tradition and common colonial past. Some people can argue that the region consists of many different states with huge political, economic and social discontinuities. Either, we can still speak about certain common culture when we analyze it.

It is clear that globalization processes can be seen in Latin America as well with ongoing industrialization, urbanization, modernization. These processes have brought new ways of life and adoption of a new consumer culture. TV, cars, supermarkets, mass-produced clothing and fashion penetrated not only to Latin-American communities but as well to indigenous societies. That had a crucial effect to the Latin-American society. For instance the television means a change of social activities transferred from outside the home to inside the home. Time that used to be spent with friends, neighbors or by participating at the community activities has been replaced by for example watching TV or doing shopping. These trends can



be easily seen in Mexico. There is evidence that values and culture in Mexico can be seen as taking turn away from the rest of the region, what does not necessary mean a loss of its Hispanidad. The „Americanization“ of Mexican culture and way of life can be noticed too. It is possible to observe that a culture adapts to US cultural contents without any aimed efforts. Despite all facts, the worldwide identity can be perceived as one of the biggest advantages of globalization. Everyone has an opportunity to start business anywhere in the world no matter what his nationality, religion, ethnicity is and can present himself in a way he wants through own culture, attitudes or opinions. It means that Latin America can profit from globalization in a large scale as much as other developed countries. Latin-Americans are strongly proud of their way of life, history and culture. The way of behavior which is very similar for the whole population of this region can be also perceived as a sign of culture. In fact, Latin America will never accept own culture to die because of the penetration of consumer culture. The only acceptable reality is a modification of the Latin-American's behavior and culture to new consumer culture coming to this region thanks to globalization.

There is a statement: „*Latin America is just a North America in waiting.*“, we cannot agree with. Latin America will always be a specific and unique region mixing European culture (with Spanish and Portuguese way of thinking, which is more than visible) with Indian culture, and moreover with an Asian and African cultural features.

Latin America is a mixture of European values, habits and European language. In the next years, the similarity with western countries will increase, however, we will continue with our particularities, just because they are compatibles with the western values. Today the question of a worldwide language is often discussed. Should the English be a worldwide language and should it be used as lingua franca? In general, English is the official language of organizations that promote globalization like the United Nations, the WTO, trade blocs like NAFTA and the EU, and media like BBC World, CNN, and Hollywood entertainment. The dominant role of English in international politics and commerce is viewed as one more imposition on cultures where English is not spoken. However, English is not the language spoken by the majority of the population. Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world after Chinese. Spanish is strong and is growing. Actually, Spanish and its culture are in expansion. We can see it very strongly in the south of USA.



We agree with Forum for the 21st century to use English as an integrating language for communication among international and global institutions or whenever it is needed. Regarding the number of Spanish speaking population we are open to negotiate the possibility of Spanish to act as lingua franca in the world, because it's the mother tongue in the majority of states of Latin America and Caribbean together with Spain. Another good example is the 12 million people learning Spanish in the European Union or the strong Spanish speaking minority in the US. On the other hand we assume that creating commission isn't really desirable. There are already many institutions working the similar field of interest according to us.

The religion in Latin America has a strong position. In tribal societies, every man and woman used to consider themselves having some level of shamanic ability. Later Spanish and Portuguese imported and spread Catholicism starting with the voyages of Columbus in 1492. The belief in God and practice of Christianity gradually replaced the native belief systems. Catholicism became the predominant religion of Latin America. The church as an institution plays very important role for Latin-Americans. It comes from the history. The colonial administration was weak; the church became an important partner in governing. Its roles included educating the youth; organizing charitable institutions such as hospitals; keeping vital statistics on baptisms, marriages, and deaths; communicating important messages to the population from the crown and its representatives; and banking tasks—lending capital to property owners for investment and conspicuous consumption. It became a rich and influential institution, despite intrachurch struggles between the secular clergy and the regular orders over mission fields and politics. We don't think that religious differences are the principal barrier avoiding comprehensiveness between religions. We are strictly against posing or establishing a global religion, because our region is strongly based on our religious diversity. That's the reason why we are strongly against the Forum's proposal to promote unchurching and religious individualization. Latin America is definitely a secular place and no individualization is preferred.

Multiculturalism is an important feature in Latin America too. It is bound to the existence of a huge number of indigenous communities living in the area with its own culture, traditions and way of life. Another significant element of multiculturalism in this region is the immigration which allows unifying people of different races, environments and cultures and



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creating a platform for learning about each other and assuring better understanding. That's why we strongly recommend creating and maintaining favorable conditions for sustainable multiculturalism together with enhancing intercultural dialogue aimed to prevent and end conflicts caused by disparities among nations and cultures. We consider existing international dialogues to be satisfactory, that's why we do not support creation of new foundation aimed to cover self-determination-sovereignty-governance issues as was proposed by the Forum. We are aware of growing interest about this issue in the world, but its not a core agenda for us.



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