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## **FACTOR OF IDENTITY IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN REGION**

*The article considers the evolution of the concept of «region», which in the modern sense is no longer just a geographical entity. Prerequisites for its formation in a given area are historical, socio-cultural features, as well as the specifics of political organization. It is noted that in the process of regionalism (integration processes associated with the acquisition of subjectivity by regions), the actors of international relations form a certain degree of regional ability to articulate their interests. Based on the ideas of A. Harrell and A. Paasi on the formation of regions, the role of regional identity in this process is determined. The factors of identity of South American countries and the role of regional identity in the process of formation of the Latin American macroregion is considered. It is concluded that in the international arena, Latin American states are increasingly acting as an ideologically integrated entity due to the factor of identity and the formation of a common Latin American consciousness.*

**Keywords:** *region, regionalism, identity, regional identity, Latin America.*

**Problem setting** The end of the Cold War, significant changes in the balance of power of leading states, redistribution of spheres of influence, struggle for resources and markets for goods actualized the emergence of new and strengthened the importance and influence of existing regions in international relations. Regionalization along with globalization is becoming one of the modern world trends, which is manifested primarily in localization, expanding borders between different communities, preserving cultural differences, strengthening the sense of exclusivity, the emergence of self-sufficient economic and political entities, including supranational ones.

One of the powerful political and economic macro-regions that began to develop actively in the world in the second half of the twentieth century is Latin America, for which the main foreign policy guideline is the concept of «open regionalism» based on collective action on a regional basis, development of cooperation with partners outside its regional formation. Along with this, Latin American countries

(despite the high level of heterogeneity and lack of a single worldview) usually appear on the world stage as an ideologically integrated entity that is connected with the phenomenon of identity, collective sense of belonging to a single historical, ethnic, sociocultural environment.

**Recent research and publications analysis.** Studies of regions, regionalism, regionalization are quite relevant. This issue is being developed by such scientists as M. J. Debre [1], D. Bailey [2], A. Paasi [3], H. Preusse [4], B. Hettne [5], A. Wallis [6], V. G. Vlasov [7], V. Ya. Zymoglyad [8], A. D. Voskresenskyi [9], and others. The works of A. H. Aguirresarobe [10], O. A. Stasevska [11], M. D. Voronina [12], M. A. Katkova [13], V. L. Pohribna [14], V. H. Kremen [15] and others are devoted to the problem of identity. Regionalization and identity problems of the Latin American continent have become the subject of research by E. Vivares [16], T. Ojeda Medina [17], A. Malamud [18], A. Hurrell [19], D. Ribeiro [20], and others.

**Research aim** is to show the influence of the identity factor on the formation of the Latin American region and the role of this factor in the creation of regional associations.

**Paper main body.** Regions as elements of global society have always existed. According to the British researcher Louise Fawcett, in the history of international relations, the regions are represented by empires, spheres of influence, alliances, even entire continents [21, p. 430]. In the modern sense, regions are part of an international system that function as independent units and has their own universal activity.

In general etymological sense, «region» (from the Latin regio – region, district) represents a certain territory, endowed with the integrity and interconnectedness of its constituent elements. The emergence of the concept of the region in scientific circulation is associated with the development of interest in territorial issues within geography. In geographical science, region is understood as a large area, part of the globe with certain physical and geographical parameters, where individual geographical elements are connected to each other by certain and permanent relationships. For example, there is a definition of American political scientists L. Cantori and S. Spiegel, who understood the region as a part of the world, encompassing geographically close states that form interconnected associations in international affairs [22].

But the region is not just a geographical category, the concept of «region» and «territory» cannot be equated. Of course, the territory is the basis for the formation and existence of any region, but it is not exhaustive. Necessary prerequisites for the formation of the region in a given area are socio-cultural, historical, ethnographic features, as well as the specific nature of the political organization of society.

That is why some scholars to analyze the term «region» offer a synthetic concept that combines different aspects. Thus, the American researcher E. Markusen defines

a region as a compact territorial community that historically evolves, endowed with physical content, socio-economic, political and cultural environment, as well as a spatial structure that differs from other regions and territorial units such as city or nation [23].

To better understand the evolution and modern processes of transforming international relations in their regional dimension into a popular science lexicon, Swedish scientists B. Hettne and F. Söderbaum introduced a new concept of «regionness», which is considered as a degree of regional ability to articulate the interests of a newly formed region [24]. According to B. Hettne and F. Söderbaum, regionness (process of regional development) consists of three stages: pre-regional stage, in which the potential region forms a social and geographical part; the stage of regionalization itself, within which formal and informal channels for regional cooperation are created; the stage at which the region forms a distinctive identity, legitimacy, institutional properties and abilities, etc., which transform the region into a reality and an active unit.

The region, like other social complexes, is characterized by growth and development, stagnation and decline, and its formation is directly related to the concepts of «regionalism» and «regionalization». The latter categories are considered as, respectively, a phenomenon and its practical manifestation in the process, i.e. the term «regionalism» rather describes the phenomenon itself (acquisition of subjectivity by regions, relevant policies and projects as such), while «regionalization» is, first of all, a process.

B. Hettne's conception explains regionalism in a broad sense as an ideology and a worldview, according to which the main subject of historical development is the region, which replaces the classical states [25]. More specifically, regionalism refers to a multipolar world order, the development of integration processes, and the economic connections of regional actors. According to H. Hänggi, R. Roloff and J. Rüländ, regionalism is understood as a conscious policy of the state, which is used to manage both regionalization and economic, social and other challenges, relating to a specific region [26].

Thus, regionalism is an interconnected political and economic system that provides a special status of regional entities in the political system, realizes the participation of regions in the exercise of political power, their certain independence within a consolidated entity; it is the ideology, theory and practice of regions gaining subjectivity, on the one hand, in the form of powers, spheres of responsibility and special role in the general context and, on the other hand, in the form of regional governance within the political power system.

According to A. Hurrell [27], the acquisition of regionalism is due to regionalization, the formation of regional self-awareness and identity, regional interstate cooperation, purposeful regional integration, regional consolidation.

**Regionalization** (or *soft regionalism*) is a process of informal integration within the region, the driving force of which is the social and economic interaction between various business structures, public organizations and individuals. **The formation of regional awareness and identity** is achieved by creating an idea of belonging to a certain community, created under the influence of internal (general culture, history, religious traditions) and external (the existence of the image of «other», opposing to which the regional community creates its own identity) factors and which is shared by the entire population of the region. **Regional interstate co-operation** involves the conclusion of interstate or intergovernmental agreements, the creation of appropriate international regimes. **State-promoted regional integration**, or regionalism in the narrow sense, is a policy that is consciously pursued by the states of the region, aimed at reducing or eliminating barriers to mutual exchange of goods, services, capital, labour, etc. Finally, **regional cohesion** is the formation of a consolidated regional space, which is the result of the parallel development of the four previous processes. Cohesion is understood, on the one hand, as the emergence of a special level of the countries in the region with the outside world, on the other – as the emergence of a special, regional policy in relation to a wide range of regional issues.

Regional identity is not the last place in the process of acquiring regionalism, the formation of a certain political and economic system, which provides a special status of regional entities, their uniqueness.

According to A. Paasi, in the process of formation of regions it is the category of identity that connects all the elements into a single whole. He identifies four shapes of the regional territorial formation and the acquisition of regional identity: constitution of the territorial shape (formation of «hard» or «soft» borders), the symbolic shape (appearance of the region's name and other symbols that identify it), the institutional shape (emergence of institutions, which create and reproduce territorial and symbolic forms), the establishment of the region as part of the regional system and social spatial consciousness (i.e. the emergence of a special regional identity) [28]. Accordingly, the phenomenon of identity in one sense or another accompanies all stages of formation of the region.

According to A. A. Goncharyk, regional identity should be considered as a sense of belonging to a certain community and space, which is constructed, consolidated and reproduced in a certain area, as well as expressed in symbols, images, myths about, first, significant others, secondly, the basics of consolidation of the regional community, and thirdly, the prospects and objectives of regional development [29].

One of the most interesting in the economic, political, socio-cultural sense is the Latin American region. In the XXI century it is becoming one of the most developed regions of the world with modern industry, high technology, qualified personnel, etc. Despite the fact that the South American continent is characterized

by a high level of historical ethnic diversity, significant levels of economic fragmentation, the presence of certain contradictions in political development, the region is formed under the influence of its inherent identity and originality.

Regional development takes place against the background of several concepts of regionalism. According to T. Ojeda Medina [17], in the last decade of the XX century – the beginning of the XXI century the region is dominated by the principle of open regionalism, which provided for the openness of economies under the influence of a wave of neoliberal reforms. Further, there is a gradual transition to the concept of post-liberal regionalism, which provided for cooperation not only in trade but also in security and response to common internal and external threats, with a focus on policy issues. Indeed, Latin American integration, which from the outset was based mainly on economic grounds, is no longer limited to economic aspects. The continent's ties are strengthened through other collective institutions, including political tasks.

The phenomenon of identity is one of the key in shaping the regionalism of South America. In the international arena, Latin American states are increasingly acting as an ideologically integrated entity, due to certain characteristics, which, in turn, are the cause of a sense of identity and the formation of a common Latin American consciousness. First, it is a common territory delineated by the South American continent. Secondly, – the similarity of historical origins and colonial past. Third, – linguistic unity or linguistic proximity in the main continent. Fourth, the dominant universal religion is Catholicism. Finally, – geopolitical status, which is characterized by peripheral inclusion in the world economy and politics.

The factor of Latin American countries identity is reinforced by a sense of belonging to the so-called «own» world, belonging to a particular socio-cultural environment with its norms and values, as well as confrontation with «another» world that can create external challenges and threats.

It was the identity factor that influenced the integration processes on the South American continent and the processes of regionalization. The dimension of such continental integration is certain regional entities, the most important of which is ALADI (Latin American Trade Integration Association, founded in 1980 to establish a common market for the economic and social development of the region); MERCOSUR (Latin American Economic Association, founded in 1991 to overcome the decline of Latin America's share in world trade and direct foreign investment, accelerate the free movement of goods and services); UNASUR (Union of South American Nations, established in 2004 for the regional and political organization of South America's countries). An attempt to create a single Latin American political and economic organization was the creation in 2011 of the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC), which included all 33 countries in the region, but excluding the United States and Canada.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the identity factor plays a significant role in the formation of the Latin American region. We can observe two interconnected and complementary processes that take place in the South American continent. On the one hand, the acquisition of regionalism, which goes from informal integration within the region, interstate regional cooperation to purposeful regional integration and the formation of a consolidated regional space of Latin America in economic, political, socio-cultural spheres. On the other hand, it is the formation of regional self-consciousness and identity, the creation of an ideologically holistic formation, which becomes possible precisely due to the processes of regionalization.

The identity of Latin American countries, supported by the awareness of belonging to «their» unique community, is supported by the desire to create an economically and politically strong region capable of presenting itself with dignity in the international arena.

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## **ЧИННИК ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ В ПРОЦЕСІ ФОРМУВАННЯ ЛАТИНОАМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО РЕГІОНУ**

У роботі розглядається еволюція поняття «регіон», який у сучасному розумінні вже не є лише географічним утворенням. Передумовами його формування на певній території є історичні, соціокультурні особливості, а також специфічний характер політичної організації. Зазначається, що у процесі регіоналізму (інтеграційних процесів, пов'язаних із набуттям регіонами суб'єктності) актори міжнародних відносин формують певний ступінь регіональної спроможності артикулювати свої інтереси. Спираючись на ідеї Е. Харрелла та А. Паасі щодо становлення регіонів, визначається роль регіональної ідентичності у цьому процесі. Розглядаються чинники ідентичності країн Південної Америки та роль регіональної ідентичності в процесі становлення Латиноамериканського макрорегіону. Робиться висновок, що на міжнародній арені Латиноамериканські держави все частіше виступають як



ідеологічно цілісне утворення завдяки чиннику ідентичності та становленню загальної латиноамериканської свідомості.

**Ключові слова:** регіон, регіоналізм, ідентичність, регіональна ідентичність, Латинська Америка.

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## **ФАКТОР ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ЛАТИНОАМЕРИКАНСКОГО РЕГИОНА**

*В статье рассматривается эволюция понятия «регион», который в современном понимании уже не является только географическим образованием. Предпосылками его формирования на определенной территории являются исторические социокультурные особенности, а также специфический характер политической организации. Отмечается, что в процессе регионализма (интеграционных процессов, связанных с приобретением регионами субъектности) акторы международных отношений формируют определенную степень региональной возможности артикулировать свои интересы. Опираясь на идеи Э. Харрелла и А. Пааси по поводу становления регионов, определяется роль региональной идентичности в этом процессе. Рассматриваются факторы идентичности стран Южной Америки и роль региональной идентичности в процессе становления Латинскоамериканского макрорегиона. Делается вывод о том, что на международной арене латиноамериканские государства все чаще выступают как идеологически целостное образование благодаря фактору идентичности и становлению общего латиноамериканского сознания.*

**Ключевые слова:** регион, регионализм, идентичность, региональная идентичность, Латинская Америка.

