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Cultura e identidad para la integración latinoamericana

Culture and identity for latinamerican integration

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RESUMEN:

Este trabajo pretende resaltar la importancia de la cultura y del capital social para los proyectos de integración en América Latina. Dado que el concepto de cultura es tan complejo, se presenta primero una discusión teórica sobre diversos intentos para definirla, explicando de manera particular tres grandes definiciones. A partir de este acercamiento conceptual se pregunta el autor si existe una cultura e identidad latinoamericana que pueda promover los procesos de integración latinoamericana. La respuesta es positiva.

PALABRAS CLAVE: cultura, identidad, integración, América Latina.

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to highlight the importance of culture and social capital for integration projects in Latin America. Since the concept of culture is so complex, it is presented first a theoretical discussion to define it, explaining in particular three great definitions. Based on this conceptual approach, the author asks if there is a Latin American culture and identity that can promote Latin American integration processes. The answer is positive. Keywords: Culture, Identity, Integration, Latin America

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INTRODUCTION

Many analysts are mentioning the great role that a people's culture can play in relation to their levels of development (Radl, 2000; Kliksberg, 2000; Medina, 2011; Harrison and Huntigton, 2000...). There are those who even point out that certain peoples are practically doomed to underdevelopment due to the fact that they have a passive attitude, they are less disciplined for work, with limited social capital to carry out large collective economic projects. However, one must always ask about the meaning of the concept of culture before being able to affirm whether or not it can play an important role in any society's development.

This article deals with three main interpretations on the concept of culture, in order to determine which of them can be adopted to affirm, for example, as Bernardo Kliksberg (2000) points out, that culture and social capital are forgotten keys for development in the Latin American region. In this way, after the theoretical discussion, the proposal of this paper is to emphasize that Latin American culture and identity have become a key factors in the development and integration processes of the region.

SOME INTERPRETATIONS ON CULTURE

Our research on the cultural dimension in the integration processes in Latin America in the 21st century must start from a specific focus on the concept of culture, which in itself is complex and multidimensional. Raymond Williams, speaking about this Anglo-Saxon word culture, has characterized it as "one of the two or three most complicated words of the English language" (Williams, 1976, p. 87), noting that at the same time its meaning is something very interesting but also quite confusing.

This concept was first used by Cicerón ¹ in the first century B.C. with the expression *Cultura Animi* ², with an etymological root coming from the Latin verb *colere*, initially referred to the cultivation of land, which is where the word agriculture (and others related as pig farming -porcicultura in Spanish-, Horticulture, etc.) comes from. Just as the field can be cultivated, this action can also be used with the aim of cultivating the human spirit through philosophy, knowledge, history analysis, education, etc. in order that the citizen of Rome could be perfectly located in his society, knowing his historical past and in the perspective of building a better future. Culture in this sense is a teleological project that, although it can be sought by any citizen with common sense, can be conquered above all through quality education.

Its fundamental elements as formation of the citizen spirit are found previously developed since the time of ancient Greece, when we see how the concept of *Paideia* ³ was used. It was an ideal paradigm of the individual and the community within the city state with the political participation of all citizens, which can be achieved through the careful education of children and young people, provided by the State institutions.

We can see that the content of this concept was disappearing with the passing of the centuries at the end of the Roman Empire and throughout the middle ages, depending of the original Latin sense as cultivation of the mind ⁴, but referred only to small social groups. In modern time, particularly during the eighteenth century, the century of lights, it was used in another way. However, we also observe that in the last centuries the meaning of the word began to have multiple meanings, as it is analyzed by Kroeber and Kuckhohn (1952) when compiling 164 definitions of the concept, and similarly with many meanings as observed by Texeira Cohelho (2000) in his Dictionary of Cultural Policy.

In this article we address three important meanings of the concept of culture when talking about integration processes in Latin America.

The first of these takes up the meaning of the Greek *Paideia* and Cicero's understanding about the cultivation of spirit, in a vision of a constant project for the formation of citizens through education. It is a political project that even has a vision against empirical reality, announcing projections that do not necessarily exist in present reality but are a necessary part of a better future we want to build, for which we must fight.

Thus, there is an element of some idealism in the proposal of a future project "that sees in the term of culture the indicator of a global formative spirit of a collective individual life, which manifests itself in many social behaviors and acts, but specially in some specific and particular activities (plastic arts, theater, etc.)". (Texeira, 2000, p. 120)

For example, we can speak about a democratic political culture in the Enlightenment century, the 18th century in Europe, even before the French revolution and the beginning of European liberalism regimes which replaced absolutism throughout the 19th century. The 18th century went back to the Ciceronian sense of *Formation de l'Esprit* ⁵. The writers who intervened in the Encyclopedia coordinated by Diderot and D'Alambert anticipated something that did not exist during the absolutist regime - democracy and citizen participation for the election of rulers - and, in that sense, promoted a democratic culture which influenced the political project of all liberals.

It was about cultivating the spirit of citizen participation that was going to materialize later in the new forms of state. It is a concept that is directly linked to the political experience of the present contrasted with that desirable in the future to come; thus, "culture becomes a concept-goal, with an emancipatory political accent, which still cannot be imposed, although it persists" (Thorn, 1976, p. 62). It is the visualization of an imaginary where a future, different from the present reality, may be possible because it has become a political project to be fought for, as Edgar Morin points out: "Culture is, in short, which helps the spirit to contextualize, globalize and anticipate" (Morin, 1995, p. 47), as a commitment to a certain line of action within human history.

A second conception that we want to emphasize also comes from the root of the Latin verb *colere* but applied exclusively to a sector of citizens who have had the opportunity to be cultivated, having formed academically. It is no longer used as a noun but as an adjective wanting to indicate people who have culture distinguishing them from those who do not; in fact a cultured individual is synonymous with someone who had an education, who has been instructed with knowledge of history, literature, etc., of someone who has traveled a lot, who knows several languages, who knows how to eat with style and appropriate instruments, which is scholar, wise, civilized, in contrast to other social groups that are ignorant and barbaric.

It is a very old tradition that comes from the vision of citizens in ancient Greece who considered themselves civilized in contrast to the barbarians and uncivilized who did not speak Greek. Similarly, the Roman citizens treated slaves and foreigners as uneducated people because they do not belong to their civilization. Something similar happened during the feudal era when knowledge was concentrated in sectors of the Church and the nobility that were based in the castles and monasteries leaving the servants and people who inhabited the villages in the world of non-culture.

Located in Latin American history of the nineteenth century, for example, the Argentine writer Domingo Faustino Sarmiento bequeathed his vision of the region to posterity by writing his book *Civilization and Barbarism*. Life of Juan Facundo Quiroga. Physical aspect, customs and areas of the Argentine Republic, where the civilization culture was represented by Europe and the United States⁶ while barbarism was the life of the countryside in Latin America. In fact, this was the vision that the Spanish conquerors imposed with their concept of civilization (equivalent to culture) on the world of the Indians, considered savages, in the discovered continent. What is surprising in Sarmiento is the denial of values in the people of his region (he says in his book that they are “savages” and “filthy Indians”) contrasted with the great civilization coming from outside. Even today, anyone can find on the net, for example, this definition:

A cultured person is someone who likes to read books, who has seen many classic movies, has a refined sense of appreciation of art, etc. To be considered a cultured person, you must know the world and its languages, understand politics and also the history of the world. Above all this, a cultured person is someone interested and committed to culture⁷.

Within this vision, it could be concluded that there are people who have culture and others who lack it; there is a sector of the population that has been cultivated and many others that, although they have their individual conscience and common sense, are uncultured as they have not been able to access the patterns of knowledge and behavior dominating in a given society.

This is not correct in another vision on culture. Certainly the inhabitants of any nation live in an unequal situation, not only in their economic situation but also in the cultural and educational aspect. This inequality is very old despite the development of science and the arts as Rousseau⁸; testified. In the capitalist system, the situation of inequality has worsened. In the cultural sphere there are deep slopes: at the end of the 19th century, for example, Nietzsche expressed it in the following way, when talking about the existence of two kinds of human beings: some are those who only live vegetating without knowing where they come from, where they are or the course of the history:

Contemplate the flock that grazes, passes before you: they don't know what yesterday or today means, they jump from one place to another, eat, rest, digest, jump again, and so on from tomorrow to night, day after day, tied closely, with his pleasure or pain, to the post of the moment and without knowing, for this reason, any sadness or boredom”; but there are others whom he calls historical men:

The spectacle of the past pushes them into the future, inflames their courage to continue in life, ignites their hope that what is fair may still come, that happiness awaits them at on the other side of the mountain where they walk their steps. These historical men believe that the sense of existence will be revealed in the course of a process and, therefore, they only look back to, in the light of the path traveled, understand the present and desire the future more ardently” (Nietzsche, 2014)

This reality in an unequal world like the one we live in shows the different levels of access to knowledge, but what is wrong is the characterization of culture as belonging only to a few while others lack it. As anthropologists of the XIX and XX centuries came to admit, all human beings possess culture because we all have a particular way of life with their own worldview. There may be many valorizations as is done by adjecting civilized and primitive cultures, advanced and backward cultures, high culture and popular culture⁹, but all these are value judgments about the ways of life of the different human groups, about the culture we all have. And these judgments can be contradictory since there are times when many can say that illiterates lack culture, but others can also find great cultural values in them as Carlos Fuentes refers:

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, at the beginning of the XX century, conducted a survey among Andalusian peasants, who could not read or write, and reached this conclusion: What cults are these illiterate! The same could be said, today, of many indigenous and peasant groups of Indo-Afro-Hispanic America: What cults are these illiterates. (Fuentes, 2011)

Finally, we have a third stream of interpretation that comes from the anthropologists¹⁰ of the nineteenth century, who developed a concept of culture that has become predominant in many areas and that refers to all the predominant expressions of lifestyle that an individual can have or a social group or an entire nation. In this way, the term “refers us to the idea of a way that characterizes the way of life of a community in its global, totalizing dimension (...)”. It is “the models by which an individual or a community responds to its own symbolic needs or desires”. (Texeira, 2000, p. 120)

Thus, the term culture continues to point to certain activities of the human being that, however, are not restricted to the traditional ones (literature, painting, cinema;...) but extend into a network of meanings or languages including both popular culture (carnival) such as advertising, fashion, behavior (or attitude), party, consumption, living together, etc. (...)” (Texeira, 2000, p.121). All human beings have culture; this is not exclusive to a few illustrated.

In this explanation, we find in general as content of culture the expressions of life of a community, the subjective elements of people, the world of meanings. “We define culture in purely subjective terms such as values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and all that underlying conception that prevails in the consciousness of the people of a society” (Harrison & Huntington, 2000: xv). It is not only the way and customs that an individual or a community or people in general lives (what some call folklore, which can be observed empirically in the ways of dressing, eating, dancing and traditions, etc. .) but also the world of beliefs (including religion) and meanings: one can speak thus of “a system of meanings related to the symbolic representation of the conditions of existence in one community” (Texeira, 2000, p. 121). With more poetic words, Octavio Paz defines culture as “the character, soul or genius of peoples (...)”. (Paz, in Marras, 1992, p. 468)

Taking also a reference to a Chilean author who tells us about the Latin American Cultural Space, the term can be defined as follows: “Culture is the set of questions and answers for meaning, which has to do with the forms of communication, identities and language, with the way of thinking, ethical models and knowledge, with the meaning we give to our actions, with creativity and with the way we define space, time, nature and relationship with the others. This is about culture as a substrate of life”. (Garretón, 2008, pp. 46-47)

CULTURE AND LATINAMERICAN IDENTITY

We can ask ourselves now if there is a Latin American culture within what are today as many peoples as the Cuban, Argentine, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Brazilian, etc. Are there common features that give us a general identity that can coexist with the particular identity of different groups, communities and nations? And we add a second fundamental question: Can culture become a fundamental axis of the Latin American integration project?

On the first, there is still a great controversy since there are many who ensure the existence of such common features in that diverse region called Latin America while there are others who deny and reject it ¹¹. Defending the existence of an identity, we must refer to a common history such as the colony time where the name of New Spain was imposed as property of this whole territory to the Iberian Peninsula: a whole series of elements (language and the imposition of the Catholic religion as something that is common in most of the territory) were lived by all the inhabitants of this southern part of the continent and show common things - good and bad from different perspectives but that can be called conditioning cultural factors - that have still remained after independence in diverse and multiple nations. There is a Latin American culture that has certainly been changing and has been assimilated in different national and regional forms during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that still endures in the twenty-first century, where anyone traveling to different countries can feel that something that is “ours” and that in a diffuse way could also be identified with the concept of Latin American identity.

Volfang Vogt (1986) points out, for example, that the way we have been known in the world in the twentieth century has been mostly through literature; from abroad, they recognize us with certain peculiarities and general characteristics. And he is quite right when we see historically that the region has predominantly Nobel prizes in the literature field such as the Chilean Gabriela Mistral, the Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias, the Chilean Pablo Neruda, the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, the Mexican Octavio Paz, and the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa. We have earned an identity in front of the entire world that comes especially since the nineteenth century with the widespread use of the name of Latin America, generally accepted both within the region and in contrast with other regions of the planet. It is not that the Consensus Gentium is a determining criterion for culture, but it is certainly necessary to recognize that identity, as Castells (2000) points out, can come both from what the subjects say about themselves and from what others say about the same communities.

This recognition of Latin American identity can be taken as a symbol in the expression of great literary figures such as Mario Vargas Llosa, regardless of his political positions, who expresses it enthusiastically: “I do not think that the concept of Latin America is a fiction or a fashion. I think it responds to a reality of a historical type, of a cultural type, of a geographical type, a very complex, very diverse reality, that of a mosaic in which diversity is as important as the common denominator”. (Vargas Llosa, in Marras, 1992, p. 99)

How to define identity and culture in our region? These are the common features that inherited us in a mixture of the indigenous, the Spanish and the blackness. And everything is expressed in the common language of Spanish and Portuguese. It is true that there are very different characteristics in every region and nation, but identity can be felt both by what we say from the inside and by the way that those outside recognize us. We are talking about an identity that comes from a common trunk as it was to be all property of Spain and Portugal and that is still manifested in general features despite the difference between independent nations. And this common base is what the culture concept can take up for an autonomous project.

Some authors wanted to interpret historical materialism ¹² as a structure where the most important is the economy while the world of ideas and culture are only an expression of society material basis and, therefore, something in importance of second term in relation to the economy and politics. This deception led to minimizing the study of culture in many fields because it was forgotten that in historical processes, although it must be admitted in the structural analysis that ideas are conditioned by the material basis of society, there are also diachronic axes where ideas of small groups, faced with the dominant currents of thought, could be translated into a political project and organization with the power to disrupt a specific structure and change the material base towards a new mode of production. There is great power in the ideas that are created and transmitted, because there are human beings who die for ideals.

In this point, we add to the question that inspired Harrison and Huntington’s book (2000) ¹³ expressed in this way: “To what extent can cultural factors influence economic and political development?” (Harrison and Huntington, 2000, p. xiv). The ways of being positive and negative in social groups (what many call social

capital) influence for good and bad any development project. So, with culture being so important, we should also focus on cultural processes as an engine of change and the search for better society alternatives. The same authors then consider the following: "How can political and social action make cultures more favorable to progress becomes the central question that we will explore in this book" (Harrison and Huntington, 2000, p. xvi). The title of this book, *Culture matters*, becomes an important suggestion for the actions that a society should take in relation to its future and refers to a symposium organized by Harvard in 1999 especially with this approach and which was titled *Cultural Values and Human Progress*, held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, in Cambridge, Massachusetts¹⁴, where the common denominator was the certainty that there are cultural factors that favor and others that impede development. In each region, then, medium and long-term educational work is necessary to promote the values that favor the construction of a more developed society. Even what is under discussion is what kind of development we are looking for since there is no single universal model, but in each country an imaginary consensus on the nation's own project and its insertion in the globalized world should be reached.

A classic sociologist as important as Max Weber delved into the complex issue of the great influence of religious culture¹⁵ to explain how the capitalist economic system could develop with more possibilities within an Anglo-Saxon country like England - where the industrial revolution was born - precisely based on the great value that Protestantism gives to work, in contrast to the contempt given in a predominant interpretation in the Catholic religion, considering it as a punishment of God and effect from the original sin.

In this way, there can be production of meanings that activate social movements in search of something new that is not but can be; it is the driving factor of utopia. It is about analyzing reality as a social process, visualizing where we come from and where we can move forward. More clearly Carlos Fuentes (2011) has expressed it when he points out that, through literature, the different views that were projected in the 16th century have reached the American continent: the first as an analysis of what it is with crudeness of Machiavelli's political vision in the Prince; the second as an idealism that seeks what should be in society regarding the vision of Thomas More in *Utopia*; in a third vision, regarding what can be done, Fuentes considers Erasmus of Rotterdam as a good example: what can be done soon in the near future according to the conditions of the present? Erasmus was a severe and acute critic of the practices in Catholic Church - as Martin Luther was - , but without leaving the institution and promoting changes from inside.

Culture and literature can be easily developed in these three dimensions, but the power of the creative imagination must be understood when works are capable of projecting both what should be and what can be. According to Fuentes, "The Spanish Colony prohibited the writing and circulation of novels, claiming that reading fictions was dangerous for a population recently converted to Christianity. Which, in another sense, constitutes an eulogy of the novel, considering it not harmless, but dangerous". (Fuentes, 2011)

In our own vision, we are referring to the need not to let ourselves be confined only in the predominant anthropological concept of culture, descriptive of the way of life of people and interpretive in relation to their meanings, only as a manifestation of present reality in the way of life of groups, peoples and nations, but also as a projection of what can be done in the immediate future. Using words of Bachelard (1994) in relation to the social imaginary, from the earth we can try to reach the Dreams of Will. And that is what makes culture a powerful instrument of transformation: "In the social field, in regional integration, culture can be a powerful development factor". (Kliksberg and Tomassini, 2000, p.9)

We argue with Garretón (2008) that especially in the current moment that Latin America is experiencing in a globalization process, "the cultural dimension constitutes a fundamental axis in the conformation of a Latin American block that is integrated into the globalized world... More and more culture become a productive force without which the economy does not exist, and also because, with the weakening of national states and politics, we warn that culture becomes the cement of societies. In fact, it is mainly from the culture that the forces in struggle against the transnational powers of the economy or the political forms of domination are organized" (Garretón, 2008: 46).

Culture is directly related to the concept of identity, because it is about the common features of a social group, and it can also be a common project vision to build in the future. This culture can be recognized from within (what the members of a community say) and also be recognized as such by external actors (what the others say of a certain group). This is the way, for example, as Manuel Castells proposes - following the Alan Touraine's methodology - the analysis of identity, exposed in the second volume of his work *The Age of Information*, where the second volume is precisely titled the *Power of Identity*.

In this work we call identity to a consciousness of belonging to a specific region, which is in contrast to others such as Europe or Asia but also with the area of North America in the same continent. It is not only an aspect of geography but above all of culture, coming from a common historical and social heritage (the domination of Spain and Portugal in colonial times) and above all a language that although it expresses itself with many differentiated particularities between countries (and even within regions in the same country), an elementary communication facility cannot be denied in contrast, especially with the Anglo-Saxon languages. But we also try to talk about inherited and present values that enable the possible formation of a common project as a certain way of inserting into the concert of nations in this period of globalization.

If we follow these guidelines, a first approach to the identity of our region is precisely in the question about ourselves. Certainly we find opposing radical positions like those of Guillermo Cabrera Infante who dislikes the word Latin America enormously, because he affirms that it is an aberration when there are such different peoples; it is illusory, according to this author, to want to force a common identity on something so diverse. Others like René Depestre point out the illusion of a general concept when in historical reality "instead of doing Latin America, we made nations". (Depestre, in Marras, 1992)

It is quite obvious to accept the differences that are so bog in Latin American region, but this does not mean that something common is not seen by the same inhabitants. When we see the case of Europe, it is clear that there are many major differences even in language between the countries of that continent, but the concept of European has also become clear, which has even materialized in a common project of integration throughout the Second part of the 20th century, the European Union.

The UNDP (2001) conducted an interesting research on Integration, Identity and Globalization in Latin America, whose results were published in 2001. On the subject we are discussing about the Latin American elites vision of the region, the result is surprising: "Almost eight out of ten members of Latin American elites (78%) believe that there is some kind of Latin American cultural identity common to all Spanish-Portuguese-speaking countries in the Americas. Only a fifth (20%) believes that it does not exist; the rest (2%) did not expressed themselves" (UNDP, 2001, p. 64). The methodology to obtain this result was based on surveys and interviews. It is possible to speak by an overwhelming majority about a common identity where "the most important cultural dividing line of the hemisphere is defined" (Idem). If this position is related to the integration project, most of the opinions are interesting: "All Latin American elites, regardless of their place of residence, are partisans of hemispheric integration" (Idem: 51). In this perspective, it is only necessary to take into account that the interviewees are defined as elites in the economic or political aspects, which although they have a great influence on the dominant ideologies of the countries and base their perception on the multiple international contacts along with trips made or stays for certain periods in other nations, the rest of the inhabitants should also be considered. In general terms for some authors, this identity, which at the same time is multiple (the Indian, the Spanish, the African, the European, the mestizo, the American), is no longer questionable: "the peculiar identity of the peoples that form Latin America is no longer in dispute. This has already been assumed without any prejudice". (Zea, 1993, p. 9)

However, one thing that we must recognize very clearly is that identity itself is a changing historical process. One thing was the multiple indigenous groups before the arrival of the Spaniards with their own mentality, vision and religious traditions and another reality was formed with the brutal imposition of the Catholic Church on all the inhabitants; another thing was also the population in the centuries of the colony through the process of miscegenation ¹⁶ - something that did not happen in North America -; that is why

Bolívar, in his Letter from Jamaica, states that “we are not Indians or Europeans, but a middle species between the legitimate owners of the country and the Spanish usurpers” (Bolívar, 1815). However, in many regions of America, black blood was mixed through the thousands of slaves brought from Africa and, therefore, our identity, as Carlos Fuentes says, comes from the European, the American and the blackness in a long concept enunciated as Afro-Indo-Iberian-American. Fuentes himself (1992), in his book *The Buried Mirror*, points out that in the XX century, thousands of migrants from many parts of the world would also have to be added to talk about a new Melting pot, which is like a race cosmic that is presented with the inheritance of a mixture of varied cultural traditions but that is projected in the globalized world with its own identity.

In this way, our identity has been changing within the historical process, but within it, since the end of the 20th century, Bolívar’s dream of integration into a great union of republics has been reborn in a new way. It is in this process that culture is not only defined as common features in different nations but also as imaginary of a future project where from the present there is and encourages an engine of unity around Latin America with its own autonomy compared to the traditional domination American and in front of the rest of the world.

What Garretón calls “Latin American cultural space” is both the expression of something common that comes to us from Spanish colonial domination and manifests itself into the future as an autonomous project. And as he puts it, “our hypothesis is that the cultural dimension constitutes a fundamental axis in the conformation of a Latin American block that is integrated into the globalized world (...)” (Garretón, 2008, p. 46). It is something that exists in the current consciousness of the population and elites and that is playing an important role in the project of present and future integration:

Affirming Latin America as a cultural space is far from being an arbitrary invention or a voluntarist gesture, since there are many features that are already part of what we could call today the heritage of this space, beyond the geographical dimension. For example, the language, certain historical milestones that practically the whole group of countries in the region has lived, the deficit of instrumental rationality, the role of State and politics in shaping our societies (...) There is also a presence outside of Latin America in the artistic level, for example, but also through emigrations or urban life models reproduced in other cultural contexts. All this shapes the germ of what we have now in the Latin American cultural space. (Garretón, 2008, p.47)

The same author speaks of the dangers that loom over this common space: the first is the globalization process itself that is affecting through computer science, the invasion of uniform products and the greatest interrelation in the world all regional identities and local, trying to dilute them overwhelmingly. Here it should be understood that the fight against globalization as a generalized process of information networks will not succeed, because national and local isolation is not a possible option; What you need to look for is the specific way of inserting yourself in this globalization: if with a subordination model or with an autonomous project.

The second problem is the social exclusion when we see big population masses, considered as leftovers by the effects of the globalization of wild capitalism. It is not only the exploitation at work but especially in recent decades the real possibility of not having work with an open unemployment among masses of underemployed. When a common geographical space with such richness in its natural resources is appropriated only by a few, identity cracks causing protests, mobilizations and migration. The exacerbation of this trend towards poverty and extreme poverty jeopardizes any social cohesion project and provokes also migration everywhere.

The third problem Garretón points out refers to the lack of political will to build this common space. Here we talk about the negative tendencies of our own culture that lead us to individualism and segregation. It can be seen that in our Independence history, in contrast to North America made by the United States, in real life we formed multiple nations to constitute the disjointed states of the south. This was a terrible experience for Bolívar who died depressed in his last years when he saw the destruction of the dream of the great American homeland.

In this third problem, it should be clearly stated that our culture not only has a tendency towards integration but also towards disintegration. An important task is centered here when we talk about the possibility of promoting and coordinating the political will of all social actors towards more continental projects such as the Latin American Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) or more regional ones such as the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA)), such as the Union of Southern Nations (UNASUR), MERCOSUR, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) or the Central American Integration System (SICA), especially when some governments are trying to remain in subordination to the USA imperialism.

Not all social actors agree on latinamerican integration projects and we find others that openly oppose them. And for this reason, we can affirm that the culture of integration as a symbolic capital in our history exists but in struggle with other ideological tendencies that prefer to look more towards an alliance with North America remmaining as separated nations.

Our independence in the XIX century was born together with the dream of Simón Bolívar about a great American homeland, or Nuestra America's ideas by José Martí, but very quickly the old New Spain began to be divided into multiple autonomous republics. However, awareness of the same origin caused the identity of a common name since the mid-nineteenth century - Latin America, different from the Anglo-Saxon world in the same continent -, which was gradually recognized widely among nations themselves and even from abroad in the diplomatic field. Since then there is a symbolic capital that many authors such as José Torres Caicedo (2014) emphasized with a vision of the future, for example, in the field of poetry:

The rule of law will reign; Slave of the Law is the citizen, - Of his acts perfect sovereign, the reason will rule his actions. The selfish boundaries that separate nations from nations will end; and instead of the voice of the cannons, you will hear songs to the Union.

The imaginary of an autonomous integration has resurfaced in the mid-twentieth century and has been expressed in regional projects in several regions at the level of intergovernmental cooperation. But in the midst of all these projects, we ask ourselves, how does culture intervene in this Latin American landscape?

We have to accept that culture understood as common features beyond differences is not enough to carry out the common project of autonomous integration not subordinated to the United States. Circumstances and processes that drive the path towards a common goal are necessary. It may be interesting to bring to mind the concept of *Anfictionía*¹⁷, which was used in ancient Greek times to overcome the differences between the multiple and sometimes conflicting City-State such as Athens, Sparta, Ephesus, Rhodes, Miletus, Thebes, etc. It was a multiple political reality as referred to by the constitutions of each city analyzed by Aristotle in his book *Politica*; but together they had a common language, Greek, and the concept of being civilized communities, governed by law and justice for collective well-being despite having sometimes opposite regimes such as monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Simón Bolívar himself had it in mind as a reference for his project of the great American homeland in the Letter of Jamaica of 1815:

How beautiful it would be if the Isthmus of Panama was for us what that of Corinth was for the Greeks! Hopefully one day we will have the fortune of installing an august congress of the representatives of the republics, kingdoms and empires to discuss and discuss the high interests of peace and war, with the nations of other parts of the world. (Bolívar, 1815)

The *Anfictionia* worked only through a coordination of the autonomous cities with the cultural product of sporting actions among all as the Olympic games were. It also worked at the time of greatest danger to all as it was the Persian invasion where everyone, including Sparta, saw the need to join politically and militarily. But in history the clashes between brothers that ended in the disastrous 27-year of Peloponnesian war - with various phases, including provisional and useless peace agreements - were stronger, especially between the two most significant cities Athens and Sparta.

In this way, it can be said that a single language or common civilizational features are not enough to define an integration project. That is why we have pointed out that culture is also the imaginary of an integration

model on which one must commit to disseminate and fight for it. It must be admitted that in the empirical reality the imaginary is only in certain areas of governmental institutions and in certain Latin American elites. At this moment, neither all governments nor all the citizens of our region fully share this imaginary.

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IN CULTURAL PROJECTS

In the context of a complex ideological struggle where it is necessary to attract more individuals and social actors to broaden the consensus on the great project of Latin American integration, there is a need to emphasize three important tasks:

The first is the need to influence citizens and elites more in current integration schemes, trying to strengthen and deepen projects such as CELAC, UNASUR, ALBA, MERCOSUR, SICA. In the second part of the XX century when the Central American Common Market emerged, a process began to retake the integration flags and, in many cases, retaking Bolívar's dream of a common homeland. The models have been concretized in regional areas until reaching the proposal of CELAC, which is the broadest scheme in Latin America but is barely in its formulation stage.

The second is the need to influence our respective national levels because it is evident that, especially in the XXI century, the path of electoral democracy is an important element to reorient government actions in the future. We know the great diversity of political ideologies in the current governing powers: a great inspirational vein was opened at the beginning of this Century with the Bolivarian ideal in governments such as Hugo Chávez-Maduro in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Lula da Silva-Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Tabaré Vázquez-José Mujica in Uruguay, the Kirchners in Argentina, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, the socialist regime in Cuba. But there have been also contrasting realities with conservative governments in the second decade in Latin America: there are governments who want to remain subordinate to the United States such as Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia ... And in addition, we must always take into account the changing political scenarios in the national levels by the Army forces and by electoral processes: the Coup d'Etat in Honduras 2019, the legislative blow to Fernando Lugo in Paraguay and to Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, the rise of Bolsonaro as president of Brazil; the victory of Mauricio Macri in Argentina. But we can also see the electoral triumph of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico in 2018 with his progressive movement Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (MORENA). It is a great task of rebuilding national orders in each country in specific moments in which the the imaginary is moving to different political scenarios.

The third is the need to disseminate our autonomous integration project, knowing that it still belongs to certain Latin American elites but needs to take root more in broad population sectors. In the field of academia, we are determined to perform this task but knowing that there is much to go. We cannot take for granted an ascending process towards Latin American integration with an autonomous development project; we have to admit an ideological struggle with different tendencies where open discussion - at the level of governmental institutions and civil society organizations - will always be a scenario where we can move forward through increasingly broader consensuses.

If we talk about the current culture of Latin Americans, for example, we find ourselves in an arid and difficult terrain. How to fight in the cultural field? An illustration of our way of consuming culture was shown to us by the 2013 Latin American Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices conducted by the OEI (2014) for the first time over the entire region. If we talk about cultural practices as understood by this survey, we have actions such as participation in artistic and cultural events, having access to media (television, radio and newspapers), listening to music, watching videos, reading books, going to the movies, having a computer or Internet access, participation in social networks, etc. Certainly it can be said that in the last decades there is a much more diverse offer of cultural products in all our countries. In all of them we must give the ideological struggle for integration and for a common autonomous project of our peoples.

Beyond the use of mass media, the Latin American struggle can currently use the internet and social networks to try to be more effective in the ideological struggle to strengthen our symbolic capital of identity and culture. In this field we have great opportunity to reach the population although the use of social networks may still be low in some regions¹⁸.

In this panorama of cultural practices so small we have to ask ourselves: how are we going to influence Latin American culture with our autonomous integration project, which in reality so far only belongs to small groups? And all this in order to find our place in this century as mentioned by García Canclini (2002)¹⁹ for whom Latin America has its axis in the field of symbolic production, although it warns of the great danger of getting lost in the world of globalization: We have gone from being:

(...) a group of nations with unstable governments, military coups, but with socio-political entity, to being a market: a repertoire of raw materials with prices in decline, marketable stories if they become folk music and soap operas, and a huge client package for manufacturing and northern technologies, but with low purchasing power, which pays debts selling its oil, its banks and airlines (...). (García Canclini, 2002, p. 46)

The ideological struggle for integration has a high difficulty degree because of the difficulty of influencing, through communication with the flag of the project, an autonomous model and, specially, looking at the great economic, political and cultural power of the United States, who with all his propaganda insists only on a bilateral relationship with each country and, when he speaks about the Latin American region, it only wants to revive ancient concepts such as Pan-Americanism as he tried to do with the Initiative for the Americas or with the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA or ALCA).

However, the conflictive relationship of the region with the United States is a key to the Latin American identity and project itself. We define ourselves in contrast to something different that is in our own continent, which is certainly another culture, the Anglo-Saxon, but since the XIX century with the Monroe Doctrine and in the XX century with the Pan-Americanism translated into imperialism, they always represent a threat of domination. However, Latin America does not represent an advanced civilization but rather the underdevelopment of the south versus the developed north. Therefore, the relationship between the two cultures in the Americas has become a Love-Hate relationship, as defined by Rangel (2007), provoking many latinamerican people to migrate to the North.

Hatred and opposition with North America comes from the very emergence of Latin American nations by the Monroe Doctrine but extends to the entire history of the XIX and XX centuries by so many military interventions with direct presence of their troops or in support for coups such as the Pinochet in Chile or the counterrevolution in Nicaragua or support for the merciless war of Napoleon Duarte against the guerrillas in El Salvador. All this has been shown with new documents by Grace Livingstone (2009) in his book *America's Back Yard*, a concept used disparagingly by Americans, even by governments and presidents as Ronald Reagan. The terms of Civilization and Barbarism used by Sarmiento, have been applied by the United States presenting themselves as appointed by the divinity to impose order and civilization in a barbaric world as Latin Americans. This conception of estrangement and confrontation with US imperialism is what has also forged the need for a project of its own, but at the same time it is complex since the high standard of living in the North also represents a great attraction for the southern people in more unstable conditions, as shown by the growing phenomenon of migration from the South to the North.

This relationship that we can also call Repulsion-Attraction to North America - the Love-Hate that Rangel talks about (1987) - is at the same time a strengthening and also a weakening factor of the Latin American identity and project²⁰. What is reflected in our region is that love-hate relationship both because of the socio-political reality of a pole of attraction of the developed world in the north and the historical trend of domination with multiple interventions in more than 200 years. In this way, similar to how the aggression of the Persians was able to achieve the unification of the various Greek cities, also now, a common enemy for more than 200 years is in many cases achieving Latin American unity. Benedetti expresses it in the following way:

The Latin American is the non-American or non-American (...) The Latin American would be the non-American which, of course, is a rare thing, since we cannot say non-American countries; then it is said Latin American and it is already like a convention... What gives unity to Latin America is the U.S. Increasingly, American means American, and inhabitant of any other place in America means Latin American; that is, U.S. He has robbed us the name of Americans. I think that the common denominator of Latin America is to have a common enemy: the United States. (Benedetti, in Marras, 1992, p. 205)

And so it will be as long as that persistence of domination of the Northern Empire lasts for seizing our natural resources and for imposing unequal exchange and underdevelopment on the region. Here we are talking not only of the pride of many of our cultural expressions but also of the need that is being imposed by an alternative and autonomous project of the intentions of that manifest design that still persists. There are great writers like Fuentes, García Márquez, Bioy Casares who have perceived the great strength of our identity. The latter affirms it this way: "Yes, I feel in Latin America. With my eyes closed I feel in Latin America" (Bioy C., in Marras, 1992: 147).

CONCLUSIONS

Culture is not a banal element in society but a fundamental factor to consider when we talk about Latin American development and integration. The political and economic changes and the government's action in turn are very important, but if there is no conviction of the population about the new projects to be implemented, everything runs the great risk of reversing. The revolution, as Gramsci pointed out at the beginning of the XX century, can be done before the seizure of political power through education and the ideological formation of the masses.

More than pessimism because of the conditions of underdevelopment and domination that exist in Latin American countries, there are always great possibilities to follow the Bolivarian dream for the great homeland of Our America, because we can feel the ideological force of a historical alternative for integration and for better stages of development despite the eventual triumphs of conservative forces such as Mauricio Macri in Argentina, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Mario Abdo in Paraguay, Iván Duque in Colombia, etc. This has been pointed out in the Latin American Meeting: Democratize the word in the people integration, which took place in Quito, Ecuador, in November 2013, which had the very clear aim of "prioritizing support in our work agendas promotion and dissemination of the integration processes of the Latin American region, in the way for the unity of our people". (ALAI, 2013)

Here there is a conviction that in the integration project, we should give great importance to the cultural field:

Today, war is cultural. It is symbolic, and more effective than a military offensive is the permanent bombardment of lies, manipulations, messages and unique images that impose a collective imaginary that facilitates the reimposition of neoliberal models. The concept of media terrorism is related to a network of political, economic, social and psychological strategies that seek to create fictitious realities, collective fears and turn lies into truths that allow society to be manipulated according to the conflict and the enemy in question. (Aharonian, 2014)

It is worth ending then with the vision of the sense of hope proposed by Ernst Bloch, as an engine that drives us to continue in this struggle that has resumed the Bolivarian dream, remembering that culture can be a fundamental protagonist. We are not confining ourselves only in an unattainable idealism but in empirical processes that are announcing the creation of new realities²¹. And we have to express this in better communication methods, as the Communication Forum for the Integration of Our America (Foro de Comunicación para la Integración de Nuestra América) showed (created at the Latin American Meeting: "Democratize the word in the integration of peoples" (Quito, November 4-6) of 2013), remembering that it is a struggle that comes expressly in the XIX century when the Colombian José María Torres Caicedo (2014) had written his poem about The Two Americas, in a vision that still inspires us strongly in the 21st century: "Those peoples born to ally: The union is their duty, their law to love themselves; the same origin and mission; The race of Latin America, In front has the Saxon race, mortal Enemy that already threatens His freedom to destroy and his banner" (Torres, C., 2014).

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NOTAS

- 1 Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) is known as a great thinker, writer and speaker who got into the political life of Rome and for his determined action to combat the conspiracies against the Republic was appointed Pater Patriae; although

later after the Julio Cesar murder, he himself was killed by supporters of Marco Antonio. In life, he used to go to his village in Tusculum to write; hence comes his writing *Tusculanae Disputationes*, where this meaning of the concept of Culture appears.

- 2 The original text of Cicero in *Tusculanae Disputationes* reads as follows: “Cultura animi philosophia est, quae conatur extrahere vitia radicitus, et praeparat animos ad satus accipiendos, eaque mandat his, et, ut ita dicam, serit, quae adulta fructus uberrimos ferunt” (Cicero, *Ex Tusculana* II. 1812, p. 273) “Culture is the philosophy of the soul, which brings out the vices at the root, and prepares the mind to receive the seed, and commits to it and, so to speak, sows something there that when it grows it can have the most abundant fruit”.
- 3 One of the largest and most significant studies on Greek Paideia was conducted by Jaeger (2000), pointing out the importance of caring for citizens’ education in many perspectives of the city-states of Ancient Greece (Athens and Sparta, for example).
- 4 Thus, for example, we find the work of Francis Bacon in 1605 with the title “The culture and manurance of minds”, which recovers the Latin root of the verb *colere* in the sense of cultivation. In the same way we find, within his work *Leviathan*, the reference of Thomas Hobbes to the education of children: “The labor bestowed on the earth is called culture; and the education of children, a culture of their minds”, in 1651 (Chapter XXXI: Of the Kingdom of God by nature).
- 5 This is what Tonnelat refers to in his book *Civilisation: Le Mot et l’Idée*: “The 18th-century writers such as Vauvenargues and Voltaire would have been the first to use the word absolutely, granting it the meaning of Formation de l’Esprit”. (Quoted in Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 9)
- 6 Now we can find this contrast paradoxical when in the twentieth century it was precisely Europeans and Americans who demonstrated extraordinary barbarism during the two bloody world wars, particularly with the use of the first atomic bombs of the USA on the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- 7 This quote can easily be found at this address: <http://en.wikihow.com/ser-una-persona-culta>
- 8 I am referring to two works by Juan Jacobo Rousseau (1712-1778): the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (Speech about Sciences and Arts), written in 1750 and the *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes* (Speech on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men), written in 1754. One of the main theses is that the so-called progress of science and social relations, rather than to improve society, have contributed to increase inequality among human beings.
- 9 Smelser points out, for example, that powerful groups have made their dominant values the seat of true culture, although they admit that there may also be a popular or common culture of the people. Distinguishing the high culture from that of other popular social groups “was part of the products of the stratification and domination of some European societies”. (Smelser, in Münch and Smelser, 1993, p. 4)
- 10 Reference is usually made to the work of Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) in his text *The Science of Culture* of 1871 as the starting point of this anthropological conception of culture. Tylor (1977) mentioned that culture should be conceived as civilization as “that complex totality that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs and any other habit or capacity acquired by man as belonging to society”. With some variants, but in that same thought were Kroeber, Boas, Malinowski and even Geertz (1973) although emphasizing the plural of Cultures and the aspect of control mechanisms that govern collective behavior.
- 11 One of them, in the literature field, has been Guillermo Cabrera Infante, stating that it is a “stupid idea” to “call all this one continent and half such as Latin America. It seems absurd and dangerous (...) The name is decisive and the fact that so many people south of the Rio Grande accept to call themselves Latin Americans, or worse still call themselves Latinos, as if they lived in Lazio, as if everyone spoke Latin, is extraordinary ridiculous (...) The project of considering this one continent and a half as a single country (...). I consider it truly illogical, totally absurd ... What do Cubans have to do with Mexicans, or Venezuelans with (...) Chileans living in the same continent (...) No, there is no such identity (...) the idea that I am a Latin American really breaks my liver”. (Cabrera, in Marras 1992, pp. 69, 70, 75, 76)
- 12 This was mainly due to an erroneous interpretation of Marx’s thesis in *The German Ideology* that “it is not the conscience of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines the conscience”. In a simplistic interpretation, it was concluded that culture is nothing more than an expression of the material conditions of life, leaving aside the full potential of ideas in the same processes of social transformation. In the Marxist tradition, Gramsci was among the first to give importance to ideas within what he called the struggle for hegemony, even before the seizure of power.
- 13 Harrison and Huntigton (2000) book is based on a concept of culture that goes beyond manifestations and the way of life of people. The authors say: “This book explores how culture in this subjective sense affects the extent to which and the ways in which societies achieve or fail to achieve progress in economic development and political democratization” (Harrison and Huntigton, 2000, p. xv).

- 14 In this Symposium, many topics were discussed such as Social Capital, Culture and Economic Development, Cultural factors that prevent Development in Latin America and Africa, Confusionism and development, Interpersonal relations and State intervention, Culture and Gender, Cultural Minorities, Culture and Underdevelopment, etc.
- 15 Weber's text entitled Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism is an important line of interpretation to analyze, for example, how in the American continent the north side can exist with great industrial development while the south side, with large variants, is in a situation of poverty and underdevelopment.
- 16 For example, Benjamín Carrión says about this process: "Racial characteristics of Ibero-American miscegenation: the begetting male, European; the matrix that conceives, indigenous. The relation among males and females in the biological process of miscegenation is disproportionate; the Indians who conceive and give birth to children of the peninsular are in incalculable majority" (Carrión, in Zea, 1993: 396). The same author cites Rosenblat: "There were cases such as that Álvaro, a partner of Bernal Díaz, a man of the sea, who had 30 children in three years' work. Or that of the capital Francisco de Aguirre who, in addition to his legitimate children, had more than 50 male children in the new territory, and claimed to have populated the Indies with them" (Idem).
- 17 All City-States in Greece were autonomous but they joined together because they recognized themselves as one civilization and one language. This is the meaning of Anfictionia, integration in one Project spite the differences. We must see how it worked in the imaginary of a great homeland with the realization of the Olympic games, but especially in the political and military sphere in the crucial moments of confrontation with the Persians. It is interesting to note that they joined specially when a common enemy was about to destroy them. The warlike experiences in Thermopylae, Marathon and Salamis are heroic, because they symbolized a unique homeland with a military political collaboration among most of the State cities. The Greek tragedy was shown when, once the common enemy that endangered them all disappeared, the rivalries returned and above all the fatal confrontation of the Peloponnesian War between Greek brothers Athens and Sparta - narrated in detail by Thucydides - that not only destroyed Athens but made the entire Greek civilization decline.
- 18 In Latin America, only 21% of the population connects daily to the internet and uses email while there are 55% who claim they have never used it; the others do it occasionally. If we go to particularities of countries we have some examples such as the following: "The highest percentages of daily Internet users are concentrated in South American countries with the use of computers. Argentina (39%), Chile (34%), Uruguay (30%), Costa Rica (29%) and Brazil (29%) show the highest percentages of daily users and rank as the main countries in the region where Internet Access is older. The previous data contrast with the percentages of daily users offered by Nicaragua (5%), Honduras (8%), El Salvador (11%) and Bolivia (11%)" (OEI, 2014: 107). You can clearly see that in countries such as Nicaragua, Honduras, Paraguay and Bolivia, about three quarters of the population have never connected to the internet and therefore are the most lagging behind in this area.
- 19 In fact, Canclini in this book states that he does not believe in a Latin American culture but only in a multicultural geographical region, due to the great current differences between the nations of this subcontinent. However, when talking about the "Latin Americans", there is no doubt that he is referring to a common feature that defines them, starting with this name that comes from XIX century and that they need their own project within globalization.
- 20 At this contemporary moment, it is interesting to analyze, by the complexity of the situation, how a large part of the inhabitants of Latin American origin in the United States come to vote for the Republican party, being the one who is most opposed to immigration reforms that were trying to legalize the undocumented. Thus, the legislative elections in the United States in November 2014 threw an absolute majority of the Republicans in both houses of Congress, thereby creating almost insurmountable difficulties to proceed with the immigration reform proposed by the Democrats.
- 21 In this point, it is very interesting to contemplate how "The Ius constitutionale commune project describes a useful utopia of advancing in a democratic constitutionalism", focused precisely on the Latin American region, with a methodological approach that "sought to combine the legal-constitutional analysis with empirical elements". (Bogdandy, Fix-Fierro and Morales, 2014)