Different perspectives on Latin American identity

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Abstract
The given research article deals with the discussion of issues concerning the identity of the Latin American people by examining its history and cultural representations as well as modern perceptions. Latin American people had a mixture of cultures in their own identity, as many ethnicities, such as pre-Columbian civilizations, colonial Europe, Africans, and contemporary socio-political movements, influenced them. To undertake this investigation, the study explores diverse multicultural views originating from different regions and people from social, political, and ethnic origins to acquire a perfect understanding of what it means to be a Latin American individual. This is evident in demonstrating the influence of the colonial past, the rich heritage of indigenous and African communities, and the dynamic nature of identity in provoking the problems of the present day as characterized by globalization, immigration, and change in leadership. Based on the case studies of Brazil, Mexico, and Bolivia, the article emphasizes that despite the diverse members of the region's population, the residents continue to strive to create a united Latin American subject. The conclusion reiterates the authors' approach to embracing this complex history and the fight for social justice in creating a united and integrated Latin American people.

Introduction

Latin American identity is a complex and all-encompassing definition that represents the cultural, historical, and social life of one of the largest continents on earth. Including the south of Argentina/Chile and the north of Mexico/Caribbean, Latin America hosts more than 650 million people who possess a rich and diverse sum of multiple layers of identity. Latin American identity must therefore be studied with its history, current manifestations, and future interpretations of the region's culture, which is still developing.

Historical Foundations

Latin American identity can be traced even before the arrival of Columbus and the Europeans in the area. Like any other part of America, it was originally occupied by highly developed tribes, including the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca, before the encroachment of the Europeans. They established complex political, architectural, and artistic structures in the region that remain in force even today. European cultural, religious, and linguistic activities were imposed on the indigenous area through the colonial period. The blending of the demography of indigenous and Europeans in Latin America resulted in what is called mestizaje, which resulted in the formation of a new ethnic group that is dominant in every Latin American country today.

These colonial formations also saw millions of Africans relocated through the export of black people through the transatlantic slave trade. The African peasantry have energetically engaged in the building of an image of multicultural Latin America, especially in countries like Brazil, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Thus, ethnological and ethnodancing syncretism created peculiar forms of culture as a part of the Latin American people's search for their identity.

Cultural Expressions

Latin American culture is rather diverse and expressive. Culturally, the region is very colorful, with features ranging from music festivals to dances, literature, and even food that all portray the region's diverse history.

Samba, tango, salsa, and other types of music represent dance, and the movement known as magical realism in literature, with its representatives García Márquez and Allende, also describes Latin American identity. All of these cultural manifestations are important symbols of the identity of the regions of Latin America, and festivals are held not only in this area but also in many other regions of the world.

In part, therefore, religion creates a very strong aspect of identity in Latin America. Most of the people in the region follow the Roman Catholic faith due to colonial influence from the Spanish and Portuguese, but there is a minor practice of animism among indigenous and Africans that mixes with the Roman Catholic practices. Unlike some of the other cultural holidays, like the Mexican Day of the Dead or the Brazilian Candomblé rituals, Latin Americans celebrate what can be seen as a mix of various beliefs.

Contemporary Perspectives

Therefore, in the present-day context, the identities of Latin American countries are constantly shifting as they adapt to social, political, and economic transformations. The nation's identities in the region are quite fluid and smoldering with the existence of a competing existence of many entities, each with its own historical and cultural characteristics. Of course, there are features and issues that Latin Americans have in common; for example, colonization impacts, the liberation movement, and further social justice efforts.

Indigenous activism has gained momentum in the last few decades regarding the assertion of indigenous peoples' rights, language, and culture. Bolivia and Ecuador, for instance, have done well in adopting the indigenous people into the nation's identification process and adopting policies that respect the indigenous people.

Also, Afro-Latin Americans remain to claim their existence and fight racism and marginalization as other Latin Americans embrace their culture. Various efforts at the revival and celebration of Afro-Latin culture have been initiated and sustained, thus promoting the acknowledgment of the black contribution to Latin American society's identity.

Globalization brings, in addition to gender and sexual preferences, other topics that have only started to be present in Latin American culture in the last few years. Political activism, such as feminism and LGBTQ+ movements across the region, calls for more rights and importance for women and different sexual orientations while changing the perception of what it is to be a Latin American.

Challenges and Opportunities

The notion of globalization, which is still unfolding constantly, puts forward numerous questions with regard to the identity of Latin Americans. Although globalization may act as a cause of the decrease of cultural diversity and local cultures, it also creates the opportunity for the presentation and recognition of Latin American cultures to the global public. The appeal of Latin music, films, and foods around the globe indicates Latin America's cultural impact and the opportunities for a Latin American identity in the globalized world.

It is the family structure and migration, either within Latin America or in other countries, that also influence identity. Migrants share cultural values with their countries of origin but also adopt the cultures of the host countries; thus, their identity is between two worlds. Through these linkages, it is most possible to enhance and diversify the conceptions of the common identity of Latin American people.

Latin American identity is not a singular idea since people from this region had to accommodate their identities to numerous histories, cultures, and social contexts. Thus, analyzing the multiplicity of points of view with regards to this context, we find out the essence of being Latin American. The analysis of the concepts represented in this exploration is that social justice should be used as a moral compass for people to become more inclusive of the diverse societies in the region. Thus, Latin America is gradually searching for the key to its place in the 21st century, and its identity will certainly undergo more shifts in the future as a unique blend of European, African, and indigenous traditions.

Case Study

With the aim of explaining some interpretations about the crisis of the colonial order and the independence revolutions in Latin America, a tour is made of the moments, projects, and meanings of the commitment to an American identity based on the texts of Lynch (1985) and Guerra (1994).

Lynch (1985), in his text, explains the need of the Spanish to control their colonies, guarantee

economic dependence, and finance their wars, which is why they began a new migration process that led to a replacement of the administrative and official positions that the Creoles occupied and took power away from the ecclesiastical and military sectors. However, having to depend on the colonies, the Americans began to occupy important positions in the armies.

Based on the author's studies (Lynch, 1985), the Spanish even modified the map in administrative jurisdictional terms, creating the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and Nueva Granada and decentralizing power. For example, the viceroyalty of the south was created by political strategy to appear as a state in an area abandoned and weakened by the presence of Portugal and England. The mines of Potosí were taken away from Peru, even though they were closer to Lima. The administration system was reorganized so that it responded directly to the crown, while the viceroys had roots in the controlled area. The above had the effect that the trade of the colonies was relegated and underdeveloped, and demands began from the agrarian, manufacturing, and administrative sectors for free trade and public positions. In this way, the independences were a reaction to these requests resulting from reforms and to the patriotic feelings that they aroused.

For his part, Guerra (1994) maintains that for the majority of historical texts, the Hispanic revolution and the Spanish crisis have such intense relations that they are often confused, even when both contexts are completely foreign and distant. It is often said that the independence stage of the Latin American countries coincides with the royal abdications of 1808 and the subsequent crisis of the empire in 1810 (Guerra, 1994, page 196).

The author (Guerra, 1994) highlights that until 1810, the Creole elites, in their fight for political equality, presented themselves, above all, as Spaniards equal to the peninsulars who enjoyed the privileges and privileges that were given to them as descendants of the conquerors and settlers of America. The Spanish Americans clung to their customs, their leaders, the way of exercising power of their peninsular rulers, and believed in the sovereignty of the king, but, due to the crisis of peninsular Spain, the imprisonment of King Ferdinand VII, the emergence of the boards in Spain, and the idea of their emergence in America, marked differences began to take shape. The American Spaniards believed in their equality with the peninsular people, but in the midst of the crisis, the belief arose among the peninsular people that there were great differences between them and their colonies in the Americas.

On the other hand, Lynch (1985) maintains that the Spanish-American revolutions for independence were violent, unexpected, and universal, being somewhat precipitated after Napoleon's invasion of Spain, at which time the empire lost its power, and in less than fifteen years, it lost a large part of the dominated territory, generating in the inhabitants of America a recognition of their belonging to the territory, which could be attributed to a certain degree of resentment with the Spanish crown or to the simple fact of recognizing a society that had wealth that could be used and reinvest for its development. (p. 213)

Lynch, unlike Guerra, emphasizes the economic perspective, evidencing the way in which the colony, "America," begins to reinvest in itself, to discreetly emancipate itself, to be self-sufficient, and only sends part of its profits to Spain, thereby unintentionally demonstrating a high degree of autonomy and well-being without the need to have its formal independence, which, according to the author, was a kind of "informal empire" (Lynch, 1994, p. 215).

For Guerra (1994), the political issue gains strength at this point in history and must be reviewed from the perspective of power, rethinking from this the ideals that accompanied the constitution of the new nation-states in America and even today called Spain. Despite the above, due to the hegemony of colonial power, the nascent political models were not exactly something new. They did not mean a break with the subjugation, slavery, and domination exercised by the European colonists; what occurs in the "independence" era is a kind of evolution of the colonial powers in those who could succeed them without prejudice to losing the dominant ties. , showing through history and the official story a legitimation of political power, as it is established, by "presenting the revolutionary process as the almost natural consequence of "long-term" phenomena; (...) consider that the time and manner in which they occurred could not be different from what they were" (Guerra, 1994, page 197).

Lynch (1985) takes a previous tour of the independence ideals of colonized America, recounting the processes carried out in the 18th century, placing special emphasis on the issue that concerns the present reflection, at the same turning point in which Guerra (1994) points out the emergence of the idea of Latin America, of the emancipatory ideal: when the breath of equality with the peninsular Spaniards knocks on the door of the Creoles through free circulation texts, lands begin to be debated with invading Spaniards and with the native peoples. The idea of nation was held by Creoles, who already belonged to a state in which

they had been born as invaders, as settlers, as natives.

It seems that, according to the authors addressed, the Hispanic revolution and the Spanish crisis, in terms of their structure as a state, have such intense relations that they tend to be confused when both contexts are completely foreign and distant. According to them, the independence stage of the Latin American countries coincides with the royal abdications of 1808 and the subsequent crisis of the empire in 1810.

"The scheme, however, is simplistic, since the regions and groups that recognize the Cortes and the central government continue to participate, until their independence at the beginning of the 1820s, in the vicissitudes of peninsular liberalism. Conversely, the regions or insurgent groups fighting against the peninsular authorities and against the "loyalist" Americans do not cease to participate indirectly in the evolutions, both theoretical and practical, of the political group from which they are separating; hence, many provisions of the Constitution of Cádiz and, among them, its electoral practices exert a great influence on those of the new countries" (Guerra, 1994, page 196).

Through the official story of historians, it is possible to establish that the appearance of the new states and their legal existence over the sovereignty of the people or the nation, as turning points in history, opened the way to the ideals of "emancipation." and national" and the rejection of "Spanish despotism" to result in the birth of new sovereignties.

Another tension to understand the crisis of the colonial order are the Enlightenment ideas, especially those that have to do with the ways of governing and modernity that circulated opinions such as that the individual builds through reason and not providence, the separation of powers, and other systems of government that reached the field of debates, readings, and translations that were consumed in all the colonies. This, as Lynch (1985) says, was ideological support for the revolutionaries of the time. As Guerra states well, in the historical period prior to the emancipation of America, significant similarities were perceived with the peninsula based on the conceptions regarding the monarchy: "Everyone—including the Indian republics, equal in this to other social groups—rejects the invader by appealing to loyalty to the king; to the reciprocal ties between him and his "peoples"; to the defense of religion, the country, and its "usages and customs" (Guerra, 1994, page 200).

The Spanish Americans clung to their customs, their leaders, and the way of exercising power of their peninsular rulers and believed in the sovereignty of the king; however, due to the crisis of peninsular Spain and the imprisonment of King Ferdinand VII, with the emergence of the boards in Spain and the idea of their emergence in America, marked differences began to emerge. Likewise, the Spanish Americans believed in their equality with the peninsulars; however, in the midst of the crisis, the belief that there are great differences between them and their colonies in the Americas arises among the peninsulars.

In relation to the territorial structure, peninsular Spain considered that the Hispanic Monarchy was unitary; another was the predominant conception in America, since "except for a tiny minority made up of a part of the Europeans residing in America—officials, high clergy, and merchants linked to the trade of Cádiz—the Monarchy was clearly plural, in a double dimension: a traditional one—a set of ≪towns≫, that is, kingdoms and provinces—and another more recent and dualistic one, which we have already talked about, which saw it as formed by a European pillar and an American one. In this sense, America was the last stronghold of the old plural structure of the monarchy" (Guerra, 1994, page 203).

"The very particular political structure of American society emerges here in full light, that is, its hierarchical territorial organization, centered on the main cities, capitals, or capitals of an entire region, which exercise their jurisdiction over a set of towns and villages.". "We are here before the American transposition of one of the most original aspects of the political and territorial structure of Castile: that of the large municipalities, true collective lordships, which dominate a very vast set of villas, towns, and dependent places" (Guerra, 1994, page 215).

The reasons for this intransigent attitude must undoubtedly be sought in the influence that the trade of Cádiz exerted on it and also in the fact that the Regency was all the more jealous of its authority the more precarious its legitimacy was. But, above all, since the independence of the English colonies in North America, the Spanish ruling elites considered the future independence of Spanish America to be inevitable. American grievances and the junta's justifications were considered mere rhetoric intended to cover independence purposes. It was, therefore, a separatist movement that had to be repressed by force; the fear of independence contributed to precipitating it. (Guerra, 1994, p. 216).

Up to this point, it can be stated that there are many points of disagreement and events that led to the

colonial crisis, but for Guerra (1994), perhaps the lack of tact in the language and the poor understanding of the Spanish people regarding the leadership undertaken In American territory, it was what precipitated the independence struggles and ideals. It was the fear of losing the colonies that caused them to be lost, since Spain, by assuming a repressive, inequitable attitude with a slave-like view, instigated the American leaders to transform their view of the kingdom and open other struggles for their people.

The role of the state and social movements
Arditi (2009), in his text "The Turn to the Left in Latin America: A Post-Neoliberal Policy?" seeks to understand the scope of new forms of Latin American capitalism and how this constitutes one of the most important challenges facing critical thinking and Latin American social sciences today (Arditi, 2009). By the way, neoliberal policies are a series of postulates worldwide that have bled Third World economies and have generated greater inequality in poorly educated people, in which the acculturation processes have been marked by war, mass annihilation, and political movements led by society, persecuted and massacred by the North American country's fear of losing its power, to see his actions questioned.

Gambina and Pinazo (2014) postulate a discussion between the global crisis of capitalism that originated between 2007 and 2008 and the situation of political change that the Latin American and Caribbean region is experiencing. Regarding the first question, it is highlighted that initially the governments of the region denied the impact of the crisis of capitalism in Latin America, since in contrast to what was experienced in other countries in Europe and the world, Latin America was growing. .

What was happening meant the deregulation of salary gains; financial deregulation due to the new management of debts, capital, and credit, which was a potential crisis factor; and the global productive reorganization that allowed wage reduction by incorporating new areas of consumption (Gambina & Pinazo, 2014, pp. 89–90).

In the neoliberal spirit, the periphery, that is, countries that are not considered first world or developed, became the centers of production, which increased employability in those places but lowered production costs, having a direct impact on the "center," since employment possibilities were reduced, salaries were reduced, and, in any case, the crisis was evident in first world countries, leading to the exclusion of the less fortunate (Svampa, 2006).

Regarding neoliberalism, it is valid to mention the case of China, which has been shaping itself as a world power, and through its insertion into the global market, it has transformed the dynamics of production since "its economic and political strategy has been based on guaranteeing transnational companies have low labor costs, low conflict, and a constantly growing internal market, so they can install their production there" (Gambina & Pinazo, 2014, page 93).

In contrast to what the Chinese economy proposes, the crisis in Latin America arises since, while there was growth, no thought was given to why, and that growth was appropriated via profitability by Canadian, American, or European mining companies. open sky, which implied enormous currency transfers as a result of the profitability of the national and transnational banking sector that hegemonizes the financial systems of Latin America.

The above ultimately makes it possible to understand that Latin America is growing due to the global crisis, foreign investments in the new energy market, and the indiscriminate exploitation of the land. Although there is regional consensus about the social and political aspects that reveal the crisis as an opportunity, a different and emancipatory debate must be opened in which the region is made aware of the political and economic processes that are being experienced (Gambina & Pinazo, 2014, pp. 93–96).

Regarding the way in which Latin America has faced the neoliberal phenomenon and the crisis that capitalism brings with it, some contingent strategies are discussed, such as neodevelopmentalism and productive capitalism. The States have taken actions and tendencies that seek to regulate production, strengthen the internal market, and raise wages as a way of isolating themselves from the global problems resulting from neoliberal policies, without achieving them. On the contrary, despite the separatist efforts of the regimes. , each strategy generated ends up playing into their hands and involving the economies as much as possible to continue favoring social inequality (Gambina & Pinazo, 2014, pp. 100–102).

Svampa (2014) analyzes some of the characteristic dimensions of social movements in Latin America, which have emerged in the same order proposed by Gambina and Pizano, as a contingency of neoliberal policies, encompassing the dimensions and types of social movements that have emerged in Latin America to benefit the people.

Regarding the dimensions analyzed by Svampa (2014), the first is territoriality, which for urban and rural movements is the conception of the territory as a space of resistance, of resignification, and of the creation of new social relations, emphasizing the defense and promotion of life and diversity. The second fundamental dimension of Latin American social movements is their direct non-institutional action by those who consider they do not have power, compared to those who do; these are actions that can achieve dismissals but not institutions. The third is that non-institutional collective action develops, to a certain extent, forms of direct democracy and new structures of participation, designing a new paradigm of politics conceived from below; Finally, the fourth dimension is the demand for autonomy, as a strategic approach that seeks to challenge hegemonic structures from their own conception of law (Svampa, 2006).

In the same sense, Svampa (2014) proposes two types of mobilizations: those of the public sector that highlight the borders of precariousness; for example, in the fields of education, health, and public services: the teacher protests and student struggles that run through a large part of Latin American countries (Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, among others); and urban and rural territorial ones: peasant mobilizations, indigenous peoples, organizations of the unemployed, street vendors, and multisectoral assemblies, oriented both to the state and to the private sectors.

Despite the contingent phenomena, to overcome the crisis and face the challenges posed by neoliberal policies, it is necessary to rethink current trends at the political and economic level. It is necessary to discuss the political future, the function of the subject, and the way to intervene by the state without entering into the game of the new forms of capitalism. It involves discussing the state and popular movements, creating strategic alliances in the region, and rethinking the role of Latin America in the world (Gambina & Pinazo, 2014, pp. 103–104).

Conclusion

Latin American identity can be defined as a multifaceted concept prevailing in a region with a developed system of cultures that are shaped by history and that contain different aspects of a collective conscience. Therefore, the region has different cultures from pre-Columbian civilizations, which were influenced by European colonization and the African diaspora. Thus, owing to a rather historical background, there developed a certain cultural amalgam that is still in progress. Modern approaches toward identity are quite consistent with these assumptions, as national identities are, as a rule, fragile and various cultural minorities try to stress their uniqueness. It has shown that Indigenous and Afro-Latin American struggles sit at the forefront of combating ignorance and marginalization, and that the women, feminists, and LGBTQ+ movements are changing and redefining what it means to be Latin American.

The impact of globalization on Latin American people's identities can be categorized as both a blessing and a curse. It has its disadvantages, such as the exportation of local values and the penetration of global cultural products into the region, but it also creates a market for Latin American cultures within the international community through popular Latin music, literature, and foods, among others. Internal migration and emigration to other countries also strengthen the Latin American people's identity. These community arrivals continue to culturally and religiously associate with the original countries while at the same time acculturating to the cultural differences in the new environments, resulting in new cultural blends. The idea of identifying with the diverse aspects of one's identity is imperative for social justice and the development of a more unified self-concept.

In light of this, the identity of Latin America will keep developing in the future regarding the shifts at the international and regional level. It's also possible by continuing to try to incorporate Indigenous and Afro-Latin viewpoints and by paying attention to assorted cultural mergers. The analysis of topics related to social justice, gender, and race, as well as the sexual orientation that is prevalent in Latin America, will enhance the ideas about Latin American identity's nature. Thus, Latin America can aspire to a collective, sensitive, and comprehensive identity based on such cultural assets and diversities. These arguments make it possible to state that the outlined direction of regional development can contribute to the socially oriented formation of regional identity based on the readiness of educators, policymakers, and communities to work together to build a better future for people living in the region, regardless of the level of globalization.

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