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*Latin American Foreign Policy:
Toward Fragmentation and Pragmatic Accomodation?*

Abstract: *For several years, Latin American foreign policy has shifted between autonomy and subordination, observing a conjunctural pragmatic accommodation by decision makers. This article examines this topic, based on a conceptual framework that links internal, external and personal elements of authors such as James Rosenau, Valerie Hudson, Robert Russell and Juan Tokatlian. The analysis takes into account regional differences, the role of powers of different rank such as Brazil, Mexico and Colombia to demonstrate the importance of presidentialist emphases and preferences, although some of them are more rhetorical than real. The changes and continuities of Latin American foreign policy are considered, taking into account various sub-regions, and domestic agendas of interaction with the international. The United States continues to be the main reference for the foreign policy of the region. However, this power has been losing space that has been filled by countries such as China, India, Japan and Russia. The article concludes that Latin American changes are more political, conjunctural and pragmatic, and there is a tendency towards the construction of a New Right that is articulated with US hegemonic interests.*

Keywords: Latin America foreign policy; Multilateralism; Autonomy; Subordination.

1. Introduction

There have been changes in the XXI Century in Latin America. Many of them are conjunctural more than structural and more political than economic. However, such transformations vary throughout the region. In this sense, the article examines the changes and continuities of Latin America's external insertion considering its sub-regions and agendas. United States continues to portray itself as the main referent of foreign policy in the region. However, it has lost grounds, which have been filled by countries as China, India, Japan and Russia.

Several factors that coincide with the design and practices of Latin American foreign policy are observed. Some are external, other internal and other related with personality traits of decision makers. In this sense, not only hard capacities of countries will influence their external insertion but also ideals, values and beliefs will influence

nuances and priorities of a given country on a specific topic. Presidential diplomacy, clientelism, and the absence of State policies give a special meaning to systemic, conjectural and personal variables. This article aims at answering the following questions: Which external, internal and personal elements influence external insertion in Latin America? What sub- regional differences are found by country and topic?

The hypothesis is that the transition Latin America is undergoing is taking the region to a new way of international insertion; this by non-traditional actors as cities and regions, and from new topics in the international agenda. In this sense, in the first part a conceptual framework is built by reviewing authors as James Rosenau, Valerie Hudson, and Russel and Tokatlian. The position of the United States and other power poles in the Latin American agenda, the main changes and their impact on a New Multilateralism – or not, are analyzed. In the second part, the different Latin American sub regions are analyzed. Thirdly, the analysis of new understandings of Latin American external insertion in regards to topics and actors, as paradiplomacy and strategic inter regionalism. Finally, it concludes that the changes in Latin American external insertion are more conjunctural than structural and will depend on the guests at the presidential house.

This article is part of a broader research on Latin American foreign policy. It uses a qualitative and deductive methodology, and primary and secondary sources.

2. *Latin American foreign policy: external, internal and personal factors*

A series of elements that affect the direction of external insertion of Latin America are found in the analysis. North American, European and Latin American international analysts have searched for explanations of the elements and actors that influence geographical and theme priorities. Some of analysts identify external, internal and personal factors.

James Rosenau alludes the way in which the international system is made and how countries exercise their influence; for Latin America, the United States constitutes the main political and economic reference. Rosenau analyzes systemic, governmental, non-governmental and idiosyncratic factors.¹ The first refers to the situation and tendencies of the international system. In this sense, the location of the United States and its weakening, and the access of powers as China, India and Russia play an important role.

Furthermore, Valerie Hudson identifies five elements that influence a country's external insertion: individual characteristic, perceptions, society and culture, political system and international system. In spite its similarities with Rosenau, the author adds perception, culture and political system. In different works, Russell and Tokatlian refer to the "Grand Strategy" in the design of foreign policies and highlight five models of Latin American foreign insertion, all of which relate with the North American hegemonic power. The decade of the '90 was a period of mass *settling*, in different degrees, to Washington. From the beginning of the XXI century, several countries led by Hugo Chavez broadened the space for resistance to American preferences, combining ways of settling and *opposition*. «En América Latina – emphasize Robert Russell and Juan Gabriel Tokatlian – la gran estrategia ha sido concebida y practicada en una clave singular. Se ha expresado mediante dos lógicas: la aquiescencia y la

¹ See J. ROSENAU, *Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy*, in J.A. VÁSQUEZ, ed., *Classics of International Relations*, Upper Saddle, NJ, Prentice Hal, 1996, pp. 179-190.

autonomía». ² These models by Russell and Tokatlian ³ take particularly into consideration a group of permanent, durable and contingent factors: permanent factors are size of the countries and location; durable are power, natural resources, identity, and the degree of diversification of foreign relations; and contingent factors are political orientations and the importance of the country to the United States.⁴ At the same time, they point that dichotomous visions need to be overcome since not one country is completely settled or opponent.

Firstly, in regards to the systemic factors identified by these authors, Trump has mentioned the United States as “America First”, showing a different foreign policy. It is not an alternative vision of the international order nor a new doctrine or a consistent guide of foreign policy. It withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), from climate change, from UNESCO and from the global pact on immigration and asylum. However, it does affect the Latin American region in topics as migration, safety and commerce. As shown by Lars Schoultz, US policy towards the region has been based on the “belief that Latin Americans are an inferior branch of the human race”. This has been the case since Monroe Doctrine in 1823.

From an unmovable prejudice between white poor and evangelic peasants, Trump has built a story or an image where Latin Americans are a source of instability for Americans: lack of employment is due to factories moving to Mexico, salary is stagnant because of illegal immigration, drugs are made in the homes of Latin American families, and worst crimes are by Latin immigrants or Salvadorian gangs.

Trump assures that the current commercial policy weakens the country and defends a protectionist approach. On the one hand, he states that free-trade agreements have been prejudicial for the industry of the United States, as they have derived from massive moves. On the other hand, he advocates for stopping the arrival of foreign products by

² R. RUSSELL-J.G. TOKATLIAN, *América Latina y su gran estrategia: entre la aquiescencia y la autonomía* in «Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals», 104, 2013, p. 157.

³ See RUSSELL-J.G. TOKATLIAN, *Modelos de política exterior y opciones estratégicas: El caso de América Latina frente a Estados Unidos*, in «Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals», 85-86, 2009, pp. 211-249.

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 213.

imposing a 45% tariff on all Chinese imports and 35% on most Mexican products. At a fiscal level, he proposes to lower taxes. In fact, he has set tariffs of 10% on aluminum and 25% in steel. Some of the most affected countries are Brazil, which in the first nine months of 2017 represented 13% of steel imports, Mexico and Colombia.

Secondly, individual factors are personality and idiosyncrasy, which include the leadership capacity of decision-makers. Over the last years, Latin American leaders arose, as Hugo Chavez from Venezuela or Luis Inacio Lula Da Silva from Brazil, whose ability to influence has not been requested by other leaders, eventually losing credibility. Nowadays leadership is lacking in Latin America, even though sectorial leadership arise, as the one exercised by Colombia on drugs over Juan Manuel Santos' government or the one sought by Ivan Duque on immigration from Venezuela.

Among the factors, ideas, traditions, language and other play an important role, which most times are linked with ideology or pragmatism of the leaders. In Colombia, for instance, in the government of Alvaro Uribe there was "Microphone Diplomacy", exercised by diverse actors involved, directly or indirectly, in decision-making.

When comparing countries as Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Chile, it is observed that the variable change of government is important. Presidential diplomacy tends to impose and a style either pragmatic or ideological permeates the language and alliances. They are influenced by culture, value, traditions and identity. Perceptions and images become fundamental. This is why countries are so determined to improve their image.

Given the heterogeneity of the region, which presents diverse vulnerability and sensitivity as they differentiate in sub regions and theme agendas, Latin American countries respond differently to systemic and individual factors. The crisis of globalization is present in a different manner in all of them.

3. Heterogeneity and regional fragmentation

Latin America is asymmetric. It is classified in Southern Cone, Andean, Great Caribbean, and Mexico. Each has its particularities.

First, the Southern Cone is a region of military origins which managed to transit to democracy by consolidating a democratic institutional tradition and governability. It is hence present in earlier reflections and analysis on topics as democracy, transparency, and institutions. However, the Southern Cone is no stranger to territorial threats as the differences of Chile with Bolivia and Peru, the triple border and problems between Chile and Argentina. Historically the sub region has seen Brazil as a giant with expansion pretentions. In this sense, MERCOSUR managed to create a climate of trust between its members. Geopolitics plays an important role as Brazil limits with 10 countries in South American and for many years played a leadership role reflected on UNASUR and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, as multilateral bodies, and on the Council of South American Defense and the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure of South America IIRSA. Brazil lost leadership and with the election of Jair Bolsonaro as president brings uncertainty to the region. It is closer to the United States more than the Latin American countries.

Second, there is the Andean region in which two visions of the world and two ways to insert internationally: on the one hand, Peru and Colombia are part of the Pacific Alliance; and, on the other hand, the rest of the Andean countries among which we include Venezuela even if it withdrew from the Andean Community. In this region, there are leaders' part of the Pink Wave as Nicolas Maduro, Evo Morales and former president Rafael Correa. There have been changes in Ecuador with the election of Lenin Moreno moving closer to Peru and Colombia. The identity of the region alters by the influence of the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Amazon, which reflect on the external image.

In Colombia, there was also a change in government. The new president Ivan Duque is approaching the United States within a new "pragmatic settlement" to face the Venezuelan crisis. Drugs is paramount in the bilateral relationship. Colombia has had a pragmatic accommodation with the rest of the world. «Los cambios en la inserción

externa colombiana son más pragmáticos y coyunturales que estructurales, y van a depender del acomodamiento de quien ocupe la casa de gobierno».⁵

Third is the Great Caribbean, which comprises the islands as well as the continental part of Latin American to the Caribbean Sea: English-speaking, French-speaking and Spanish-speaking independent islands, overseas territories and protectorates and, also, Central America, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia. This composition implies, from an economic standpoint, the existence of a market characterized by diversity and heterogeneity. At a political level, the States that make the Great Caribbean have diverse margins of autonomy, sovereignty, political development and external relations. It characterizes for being the only region of the hemisphere that presents a mosaic of European influence, as the British, Spanish, French, Dutch and even Danish are present – as was the case in the 20's with the possession of Denmark of the Virgin Islands, now American.

This variety of influences and cultures is expressed in five languages: Spanish, French, English, Creole and Deutch; and a variety of dialects, more than six religions: Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, protestant, episcopacy, vudu, among others; and several ethnic groups from which standout black, white and mestizo. Furthermore, there is great diversity of population sizes which together with economic, political and cultural manifestations, indicate an immense complexity.

History and geopolitics in the Caribbean have been impregnated by the presence of external powers as Great Britain, France, The Netherlands, Russia (former Soviet Union) or the United States, which raced, depending on the historic moment, for its presence and expansion towards this geographical area. Currently the interest has decreased.

Mexico's border with the United States is 3,200 km long. It has a trade agreement which was renegotiated with the US and complex migratory dynamics because of

⁵ M. ARDILA - I. CLEMENTE, *Santos: Una diplomacia tradicional con cambios*, in «Revista OASIS», 29, 2019, p. 31.

President Trump's immigration policy. Mexico's foreign policy was a result not only of its Revolution but also of the loss of territory during the XIX Century. It was characterized by defensive, isolationist and jurist traits. Its relationship with the United States is marked by the asymmetry of power and the logic of domination. The lack of trust is linked to the loss of sovereignty. Mexico losses 65% of its territory between 1836 and 1847 and promoted a policy of "Defensive Nationalism" as was called by Mario Ojeda, Guadalupe Gonzalez, Lorenzo Meyer and Soledad Loaeza; and later by a "Pragmatism of Principle".⁶ By pressure by its internal economic elites, it approached the United States moving from a confrontation to cooperation and settling with the northern neighbor.

International analysts have pointed that the greatest political oncoming to the United States was with the entering the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, and the political renovation following the triumph of Vicente Fox at the polls in 2000, moving gradually away from South America ⁷.

Notwithstanding, since Donald Trump reached the White House, a questioning of the relationship with Mexico is present, particularly in regards to commerce and immigration. Further, President Manuel Lopez Obrador has shown more autonomous and diverse policies as a move towards Latin America. At the end of September ended the negotiation of United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Some bilateral advances were possible between Mexico and the United States as are the rules of origin for the car and textile industries, and that the US does not impose restrictions on perishables from Mexico. Even though the bilateral negotiation was not well received by Canada, it continued in the trade agreement.

⁶ See R. VELÁSQUEZ FLORES, "*Pragmatismo principista*": la política exterior de México, in «Revista de Relaciones Internacionales de la UNAM», 120-121, 2015, pp. 151-164.

⁷ See R. BERNAL-MEZA, *México: de la autonomista potencia media a socio subordinado de Estados Unidos*, in «Revista Ciclos en la Historia, la Economía y la Sociedad», XVIII, 35-36, 2009, pp. 233-278; A. ROUQUIÉ, *México y el TLCAN, veinte años después*, in «Foro Internacional», LV, 2, 2015, pp. 433-453.

New agreed chapters include digital commerce, labor, environment, small and medium enterprises, competitiveness, anticorruption, regulatory practice and macroeconomic policies and exchange rates. Notwithstanding, the current situation shows the presence of a New Right in Latin America.

4. Latin America today and the crisis of multilateralism

Three political processes mark the Latin American juncture: elections, weakening of regional powers, and crisis of multilateralism. In 2018 there were presidential elections in seven Latin American countries: Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Cuba and Venezuela; leaving behind the tendency towards the new Latin American left and supporting the new right to which Argentina, Chile and Ecuador adhere.

From 2003 to 2015 Latin American countries have benefited from high prices of raw materials as petroleum, natural gas, copper, iron and aluminum. With the lowering of prices of petroleum and the change in the development model of China there was a deceleration of Latin American economies. Social politics began to decrease accentuating inequality in income distribution. Latin America lost an opportunity to reduce its vulnerability and diversify its economies.

From the countries holding elections, it is important to highlight Mexico, Brazil and Colombia, which are regional powers of different rank. In Mexico, the winning of Manuel Lopez Obrador with over 30 million votes gives him the legitimacy to make a series of changes at domestic and international levels. The appointments create trust among different sectors of society and for investment.

Besides the diversification of Mexican foreign policy, he will focus on multilateralism and integration, and the approach to Latin America. Within this emphasis, the Pacific Alliance plays an important role as will CELAC. Anyway, a Pragmatism of Principle, as named by Rafael Velasquez, continues to dominate in Mexico's foreign policy. Manuel Lopez Obrador is seeking to diversify international

relations and approach Latin America. A role as a mediator in the face of the Venezuelan crisis would give it legitimacy and leadership in the region.

In regards to Brazil, the situation is uncertain as it decides between democracy or authoritarianism, leadership, bilateralism or integration. Brazil has a history of authoritarianism and expansionism that make the rest of Latin America fear. The triumph of Bolsonaro creates uncertainty in the region and the fear of the return of authoritarianism. Most likely will strengthen the relationship with the United States and the new Latin American right. Its rhetoric shows profound changes that seem more pragmatic than real. He speaks of intervening in Venezuela. Both countries share a border with a length of 2,199 km.

In regards to Colombia, the government of Juan Manuel Santos promoted Traditional Diplomacy, a *Pragmatic Accomodation* in permanent interaction with its internal politics, with political and economic elites fragmented, before its mostly political project. Its international insertion was motivated by showing a new image of the country, fostering an Economic Diplomacy by attracting foreign investment, increasing its presence in the world and negotiating a peace deal with the support of the international community. President Ivan Duque promotes a new policy oriented towards the United States, as demonstrated by its participation in the United Nations General Assembly, and presidential and ministerial meetings. Venezuela and its immigrants worry Colombia and is seeking international, regional and national support to face the over 2 million Venezuelans in the country.

These election processes between 2017 and 2018 portray the crisis of the Pink Wave and the installment of a New Right in Latin America. In 2017, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador and Peru were the main Latin American countries to undergo the most profound and complex crisis linked to corruption in the high spheres of government. This contributed to its weakening as regional powers and the loss at elections of the candidate by the Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) in Brazil.

In Latin America primary regional powers flourished as Brazil and Mexico, and secondary as Chile, Argentina, Venezuela (with Chavez) and Colombia. The former

with greater capacity and international projection while the later used soft power. Both used multilateralism in their regional projection. This was Brazil's approach on UNASUR, which integrated all South American countries; and Mexico with the Meso American project, which included Central America, Dominican Republic and Colombia. This was possible in the context of the weakening of the United States and the combination of ideology and pragmatism.⁸ According to Gardini and Lambert, five factors are intended to serve as tools to explore the possible sources and identify the possible agents of ideology and pragmatism in foreign policy: ends and purposes, means available, agency, process and structure.

Brazil and Mexico were weakened eventhough the first managed to ascend over several years. It exercised great leadership and promoted projects on infrastructure as IIRSA and safety as Council of South American Defense. Given its soft and hard capacities it surpassed Mexico and over all enjoyed great legitimacy in terms of trust and legitimacy. Mexico is seen too close to the United States, which weakened it as a regional power⁹. Later, drug trafficking, violence, corruption and inequality of income distribution weakened it even further.

On their part, secondary regional powers do *Soft Balancing* to the hegemonic power and other regional powers and compete for regional leadership. Their interests vary, and present convergence and divergence in regards to its international activity, capacities, leadership and legitimacy. The difference is based on continuity and consolidation of a project in terms of national interest – State Policy – as well as in its international activity, capacities (military expenditure, natural resources) and international image linked to the perception of other actors, legitimacy, leadership and the discourse, among others. Chile and Colombia will opt for Soft Power and Public Diplomacy to improve

⁸ See G.L. GARDINI - P. LAMBERT, eds., *Latin Americas Foreign Policy*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

⁹ See R. BERNAL-MEZA, *México: de la autonomista potencia media a socio subordinado de Estados Unidos*, cit., pp. 233-278.

their image, exercise leadership, build new partnerships and find a new balance of regional power.

Nowadays Latin America lacks leadership of a single country and what is found is theme leadership. The absence of leadership hinders integration and multilateralism. In addition, the economic crisis and the disinterest of the elites to assume the cost implied by leadership make difficult the improvement of hierarchy in the regional power.

Latin America has not overcome the crisis of multilateralism. Initially it was argued that multilateral organizations as OAS or CAN had been created in a very different context, of a cold war in which threats came from States themselves. Today threats are transnational and the presence of non-governmental actors makes it more complex. At the same time, rebellious governments wanted to build associations without the presence of the United States. This gave origin to UNASUR, CELAC and ALBA.

In this sense, liberal and post-liberal models from the Atlantic and the Pacific took form and made evident breaks in Latin American integration. At the same time, countries lack continuous State policies on integration, which leads to giving a special meaning to variables as changes in government. The withdrawal of Ecuador from ALBA and its interest in signing the Pacific Alliance is a good example. Both ALBA and UNASUR are in even greater crisis and in disintegrating processes. On the other hand, the lack of leadership and regional powers committed with integration difficult their viability. There are integrationist discourses but sovereignty is determinant. Behind it is the role of State and society.

In this sense, regionalism is undergoing a transition and uncertainty in which two countries, Brazil and Mexico, are hesitant in their performance and in regards to integration. Most likely Manuel Lopez Obrador will approach Latin American multilateralism in a certainly pragmatic way remaining in the Pacific Alliance in which Mexico has shown results. At the end, it has a tradition in that region as member of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Transpacific Partnership (TPP), and

having 16 deep ports on the Mexican pacific. Mexico had an early insertion in Asia-Pacific.

Given these two considerations, there is a need to search for other mechanism and actors to revitalize integration as the participation of non-governmental actors or association of regional groups as Pacific-Alliance – Mercosur.

5. Mechanisms and actors

Zeraoui defines Paradiplomacy as an activity reserved for intermediate governments, provinces or municipalities and not for private institutions:¹⁰ «[...] Es exclusiva del poder político federal y no de entidades privadas, la paradiplomacia es una actividad reservada a los gobiernos intermedios, provincias o municipalidades y no a las instituciones privadas. Las universidades o las empresas privadas pueden tener actividades internacionales o relaciones internacionales, pero diferenciadas de la diplomacia o la para-diplomacia».¹¹

They are the relationships of non-central governments with cultural, commercial and industrial centers of other States, including the relationship with the governments of foreign States. In this sense, non-central governments seek to institute international relations through the establishment of formal and informal contacts, permanent or ad-hoc with foreign entities, either public or private, with the purpose of promoting socio-economic, political or cultural matters, as well as any other external dimension of their constitutional competences.¹² Paradiplomacy of the regions is the same as of the cities even though it has had an economicist character of the “city brand”. None the less, there is internationalization actions that include other areas as culture or society. In country branding there are cities, which have a particular identity and perception of the

¹⁰ See Z. ZERAOUI, *Para entender la paradiplomacia*, in «Desafíos», XXVIII, 1, enero-junio, 2016, pp. 15-34.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹² N. CORNAGO, *Exploring the Global Dimensions of Paradiplomacy: Functional and Normative Dynamics in the Global Spreading of Subnational Involvement in Foreign Affairs*, in «Foreign Relations of Constituent Units». Forum of Federations/Forum des Fédérations, Ottawa, 2001, <http://www.ciff.on.ca> (accessed 20/06/02).

international community. As pointed by Zidane and Rey (2016), Curitiba in Brazil is known for urban planning and environmental management; The Hague in The Netherlands is known for hosting organizations of legal and judicial topics as the International Criminal Court, part of the UN system; and Geneva in Switzerland is known as host of multilateral organizations as the International Red Cross. At the level of Latin American integration groups, the experience of the participation of cities in MERCOSUR is the most novel, institutionalized and permanent. Mercociudades is the main Network of South American Local Governments. It was funded in 1995 by initiative of the main mayors and prefects of the region. The objective is the participation of local governments in the process of regional integration, promoting the creation of an institutional scope for the cities of Mercosur and developing exchange and horizontal cooperation between local governments of the region.¹³ Its objectives have favored cooperation, tourism, exchange of product information, conflict resolution, among others.

The Andean Community by Decree 586 in 2003 created the Andean Network of Cities as a consultative institution of the Andean Integration System, which included over 30 cities. It aimed at strengthening cities as actors of integration. This council is integrated by 3 representatives of each country, one of which is the metropolitan mayor of the city hosting the government of the Member State, and the other two will be elected between the mayors of the Network of Andean Cities. The commitment is the promotion of the Andean integration process. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in their country must accredit these representatives.

Later, in 2007, there was a cooperation agreement between the Andean Network of Cities and the Network of Mercociudades. It wanted to promote and strengthen the mechanisms of communication between cities and their associations to debate on the realities of South American cities and move forward on common actions for local democracy. However, the crisis in the Andean Community hindered its projection. The lack of legitimacy generates distrust on local leadership in cities and regions.

¹³ See www.mercociudades.org/node/2250 (accessed 15/01/2019).

Looking at the associations of regional groups, Mercosur and the Pacific Alliance are part of a strategic inter-regionalism with strategic elements. Strategic regionalism is a process resulting from an Alliance between Nation-States and transnational firms or national businesses, which have, began a process of internationalization of their economic activities. Its origins are found in the strategic commercial politics, an accepted modality in the new theory of international trade to describe in part the functioning of certain oligopolistic markets. However, it is not only economic and commercial rationale but politics that result fundamental to broaden the conception of strategic regionalism where a country is leader (or a leading axis) that promotes through regional integration conditions and a favorable legal framework for the expansion of activities of ETN. We are referring to the association between regional groups and organisms. We may confirm that it is part of a New Multilateralism and of the search of new regional associations, which characterizes by its flexibility, variety of actors, low costs, and the possibility to serve as bridge to Asia.

The Pacific Alliance and Mercosur present convergences linked to the geographic location, soft balancing to ALBA, the search for greater margins of autonomy, and capacities. The participation of countries as Mexico and Brazil as primary regional powers, and of Chile, Argentina and Colombia as secondary strengthen the position to face the United States and Trump's protectionism and hence cooperate on topics as immigration of Venezuelans.

The association of both groups empowers its geostrategic as Andean countries, with exit to the Pacific and territories in the Amazon with great environmental resources. It is also strategic because of the growth of the economies of China, India, Japan and Korea; and as the countries with greater investment from China and India in Latin America.

6. *Conclusions*

Latin America is fragmented and integration and multilateralism are difficult. It is oriented towards a New Right and a pragmatic accommodation with the United States. Countries lack a “Grand Strategy”. Latin American changes are more conjunctural than structural, depending on presidential preferences. Uncertainty and transition are at the core of Latin America due to the presidency of Donald Trump in the United States. Latin America is diverse and shows differences within and outside the region but within each country. The current conjuncture and its new heads of state deepen uncertainty showing a new more pragmatic and less ideological right. Recovery and ascent of countries as Brazil and Mexico will take its time and even more Latin American integration and multilateralism.

The orientation of foreign policy in Latin America is influenced by internal, external and personal elements. At the same time, foreign policy is more pragmatic than ideological. However, Presidential diplomacy continues to be important in all Latin American countries.

The absence of leadership hinders integration and multilateralism. In this sense, it is necessary to advance towards integration and theme leadership in Strategic Interregionalism: Pacific Alliance – MERCOSUR and in the internationalization of subnational governments.

Regional differences continue to be observed between Mexico, Central America and South America even though UNASUR weakens South America as a politically built region and with a leadership as the one exercised by Brazil for years. However, the crisis in Brazil weakened this region and the possibility of association. Latin America is a fragmented region with diverse vulnerabilities and political and economic developments.

Latin America is going through political and economic transformations. The rise of the left government came to end. A tendency towards the right is observed, changing the Latin American political map. Of the twenty countries, during 2018 a third of these held

presidential elections. Colombia, Paraguay and Peru remained to the right, while Costa Rica and Venezuela remain on the left. The most radical change was in Brazil and Mexico, where the first turned to the right and the second to the left. The map could continue to change in 2019, as elections are expected in Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, Panama and Uruguay. The left will seek to stay in Bolivia and Uruguay while the right will do the same in Argentina, Panama and Guatemala.

The crisis in Venezuela and the arrival to power of Jair Bolsonaro focus attention on Latin America and its loss of relative autonomy on its international relations. These two cases force us to reflect seriously on something that seems distant and typical of the phase of democratic transition in the region: the military issue and its role in the institutions. We observe the resurgence of the neoliberal project with features of fragility as it is based on fragmented and polarized societies and is produced under much primaries economy. These hegemonic projects cannot be definitively consolidated because a large part of society does not accept them.

In addition to the elections to be held in 2019, the first year of Ivan Duque in Colombia is another aspect to be considered, as the future of the Peace Agreement agreed with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the negotiation process is still uncertain. With the National Liberation Army (ELN) was interrupted. Regarding the first, land rights issues and the financing of programs for reparation to victims are still pending. As for the resumption of talks with the ELN, the government has made it a condition that the kidnappings and all criminal activity cease. Likewise, faced with the security crisis stemming from the Venezuelan migration, the Colombian Government has hardened its position before the Government of President Nicolas Maduro. Derived from the exodus of nearly two million Venezuelans to Colombia, the effects of the border crisis with Venezuela will increase internal tension, given that even if Maduro left the government in 2019, an unstable situation would continue. Colombia has been the country that has received the most migrants. Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and

Panama are also dealing with the consequences of mass displacement. In turn, Colombia has assumed leadership in the Lima Group.

This year the position against Maduro has hardened, sanctions and diplomatic isolation are greater. Juan Guaidó proclaimed himself interim president. It was decided to prevent Venezuelan officials from entering Colombia and block financial and banking operations of persons identified as part of the regime; restrict the granting of international credits from competent bodies; suspend military cooperation; and to urge other States to support the request submitted to the International Criminal Court to investigate the possible commission of crimes against humanity. However, on January 10 President Maduro took possession of his second presidential term during which he will inevitably continue to collide with his neighbors in the region. The clash is expected in particular with Brazil, given that President Jair Bolsonaro has called on all countries of the world to unite to "liberate" Venezuela. Similarly, attention should be paid to the increase in military cooperation with Russia, one of the largest owners of oil fields in Venezuela.

China and Russia will seek to consolidate a greater presence in the region. Given that, China will play an important role in Latin American geopolitics, in recent years. Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama and El Salvador form the allied group of Peking in the Central American Integration System (SICA). For Russia, Latin America has left the secondary place it occupied in the past and has become an important partner. Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela are a constant in the relations with this country. The Pacific Alliance will continue to consolidate as a platform for regional integration. Within the framework of this mechanism, Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Peru will continue advancing in the negotiation process of free trade agreements with Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore, with a view to their becoming Associated States. On the other hand, the Free Trade Agreement between the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the European Union is at a crucial moment after 20 years of negotiations. Beyond the technical obstacles that have not allowed the parties to reach

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an agreement, the position taken by the governments of Argentina and Brazil will be decisive on the future of this agreement.

Latin America is going through a transition at the bilateral and multilateral levels. His foreign policy seems to be more ideological than pragmatic.

