
LATIN AMERICA: IN SEARCH OF OWN WAY

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**LATIN AMERICA IN THE CONTEXT
OF A CHANGING WORLD ORDER**

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Abstract. The article is based on the results of changes in the world order. The dominant views on the new balance of power on the world stage and the existing approaches to dividing the international community into main segments are commented on. The role of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LCA) in the process of reformatting the world order is interpreted in this vein. Its reaction to the demarcation of the world community or to the new articulation of its segments is considered. Both scientific analysis and applied developments require taking into account common dominants and understanding of the growing diversity in the state of societies and economies. The adaptation of the LCA countries is proceeding in many directions, including integration processes, diversification and, in some cases, a radical reformatting of external economic relations, which is combined with the search for new forms of technological renewal. The trend of moving away from the role of a passive object to the role of a real protagonist of the world economy and world politics is manifesting itself more and more persistently in the LCA, which is accompanied by the emergence of the leading states of the region on the global stage.

Keywords: Latin America, Global South, reformatting the world order, adaptation to a change in the world order.

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**ЛАТИНСКАЯ АМЕРИКА
В УСЛОВИЯХ МЕНЯЮЩЕГОСЯ МИРОПОРЯДКА**

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Аннотация. Исходя из результатов изменения миропорядка, комментируются доминирующие воззрения на новую расстановку сил на мировой арене, на подходы к делению международного сообщества на основные сегменты. В этом ключе трактуется роль Латино-Карибской Америки (ЛКА) в процессе реформирования мироустройства. Рассматривается ее реакция на размежевание

мирового сообщества либо на новое сочленение его сегментов. И научный анализ, и прикладные разработки требуют учета общих доминант и понимания растущего многообразия в состоянии социумов и экономик. Адаптация стран ЛКА идет по многим направлениям, включая интеграционные процессы, диверсификацию и в ряде случаев радикальное переформатирование внешних экономических связей, что сочетается с поиском новых форм технологического обновления. Все более настойчиво проявляет себя в ЛКА тренд отхода от роли пассивного объекта к роли реально-го протагониста мировой экономики и мировой политики, что сопровождается выходом ведущих государств региона на глобальную авансцену.

Ключевые слова: Латинская Америка, Глобальный Юг, переформатирование миропорядка, адаптация к смене миропорядка.

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The issue of changing the world order has become dominant in the contemporary narrative, defining the character of the epoch, considered by different interpreters, whether rightist or leftist, in the ideological field of the “collective West” and the political discourse of the countries that are collectively and unspecifically referred to today as the Global South. The polemical interpretation of this issue in the publication by Academician V.G. Baranovsky and Professor V.B. Kuvaldin [1] serves as evidence of the growing and not yet satisfied scholarly interest. The authors de facto accord the status of the basic research category to the world order in exploring the domain of modern international relations. Close attention to the topic in question is demonstrated on the “other shore”. Among recent analytical works, one can single out a book by Spanish authors from the University of Salamanca (one of the oldest in Europe). They perceive the change of the current world order as the central axis of key events of modernity in different parts of the world community [2]. All this, in the context of aggravated geopolitical confrontation, is mediated by a global technological metamorphosis, which, in addition, revolutionises military business.

The obvious result is the geopolitical split of the world community with due socioeconomic consequences. Geopolitical confrontation entering the escalating trajectory provokes socioeconomic shifts and the division of influential powers into opposing groups.

WORLD ORDER AT A CROSSROAD

In today’s realities, we, of course, treat support on the part of most of the world community coun-

tries as appealing. Hence the appeal to the Global South is sometimes euphoric. It is understandable because it seems to logically reproduce the geopolitical imperatives making an appearance on the world stage. This leads to the tendency to appeal to “common ground” and maximally enlarged split, which concerns not only our camp but also the “opposite shore”.

The reasoning of the Finnish President Alexander Stubb in *The Economist* is illustrative. There are three segments on his “chessboard”: the Global West, the Global East and the Global South. The West, in Stubb’s view, has not taken the realities of this split seriously enough. He sees the reason for this in the inadequate consideration of the motivation behind the behaviour of the second and, especially, the last segment. The identification of the desirable and the actual is the case. Stubb, however, recognises the simplification costs in the interpretation of the international activity of the “trptych” components. At the same time, he remains a supporter of the “common ground”. Meanwhile, it is easy to notice the variance in the development dynamics in each of the segments, as well as the difference in basic geopolitical and socioeconomic interests and the corresponding goal orientations [source 1].

Stubb is not alone in this perception. The attending narrative unwittingly leads to a schematisation of the actual state of things. In particular, civilisational features of society and differences in the manifestation of different identities (including opposing ones) are undeservedly overshadowed.

In Russian society, the antithesis of Western-centred beliefs has recently been accentuated. In mundane consciousness, it is characterised by a kind

of absolutisation of the relevant prejudices (“whoever is not with us is against us”). Hence the generalisation reflected in the concept of the Global South encompassing a vast geography – Asia, Africa and Latin America – under one heading. That is, exactly what used to be called the “third world”. Even in the old days, it was extremely multivaried. It is even more so today. The hope for the revival of the Bandung spirit expected from the Global South is not always justified in the new world order, bearing in mind the growing pragmatism in its ranks. The alter-globalisation effect stimulated by the World Social Forum held annually in Porto Alegre, Brazil, did not change this situation.

The costs of appealing to absolute truths are clearly visible in academic research and the vulgar propaganda of the collective West. Unhesitatingly, the world is viewed through the dichotomic prism of democracy *vs* authoritarianism. One can assume that we, in our midst, have not yet fully conceptualised the diversity of compositions and the nature of heterogeneity of societies and economies that have remained in our field of vision after the category of “third world” was phased out. Perhaps, in this regard, it is instructive to pay heed to Fukuyama’s criticism of the policy of Washington’s leaders who ignore the growing diversity of American society. In his opinion, this is the reason for erroneous decisions fraught with harmful consequences [3].

Unifying motives, even before, have not always worked in establishing the motivation for behaviour in the international arena. This is more true today, when not only *realpolitik*, and diplomatic practice but also scientific statements require an adequate definition and consideration of the peculiarities of particular situations (*truth is concrete!*). The attempt at the first stage to bring the common denominator under the “anti-West” theory has not achieved a convincing result with us, both in intent and in solving locally applied problems. In any case, it is obvious that, in the expectation of a productive outcome, it is reckless to ignore both the initial historical and civilisational differences and the fruits of economic and technological inequality, and, consequently (on this basis), the tangible differentiation of the contemplated states.

We interpret the currently popular term “world order” as a certain structural organisation ensuring

interaction within the world economy and the system of international relations. It implies specific hierarchical dominants, stadiality and direction of historical changeability that correspond – willingly or unwillingly – to the established “rules of the game”. Certain stages have their own mechanism of global regulation, *modus operandi*. If it remains effective, then the old world order continues its life cycle. Since, in current conditions, the old world order (marked by such milestones as San Francisco, Bretton Woods, Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam) is obviously failing, we are in for a process of modification or negation of the previous version and the creation of a new global institutionalisation realised through trial and error.

When revealing the mechanism of replacement of the outgoing world order, one can refer to the formula voiced in the fundamental article by I.O. Abramova and L.L. Fituni, corresponding members of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In their opinion, we are facing a lengthy, discrete and multi-component process that affects, to a greater or lesser extent, the conditions of existence of the entire international community. It assumes not only the tacit change of “world leaders”. According to the colleagues’ view, the coming world order is associated with the formation of a new global economic model and new equations of geopolitical balance that best meet the interests and demands of new leaders, and further – are consistent with the formation of a belt of junior allies and satellites around them, both new and re-emerging old ones [4].

It is fairly considered that the driver of change is rooted in the unevenness of economic development [5, p. 317]. Let us illustrate the fruits of this unevenness with charts that speak for themselves (see Figures 1 and 2).

De facto, the process of changing the world order was triggered at the previous stage by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the corresponding “camp”. One could think that what was associated with the phenomenon of the Cold War was becoming a thing of the past. In reality, it ended in a relapse and its subsequent transformation into a local, but already intense conflict. We believe that at some time our “de-ideologisation”, which de facto meant conceptual disarmament, prevented us from recognising what was happen-

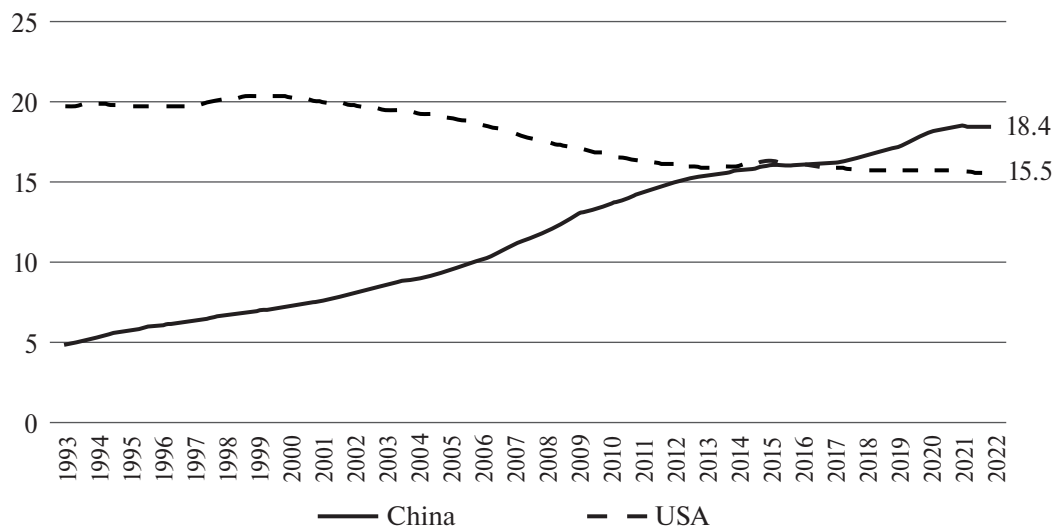


Figure 1. Share of the PRC and the USA in the total world GDP (by estimated PPP) in 1993–2022, %
Compiled by [source 2].

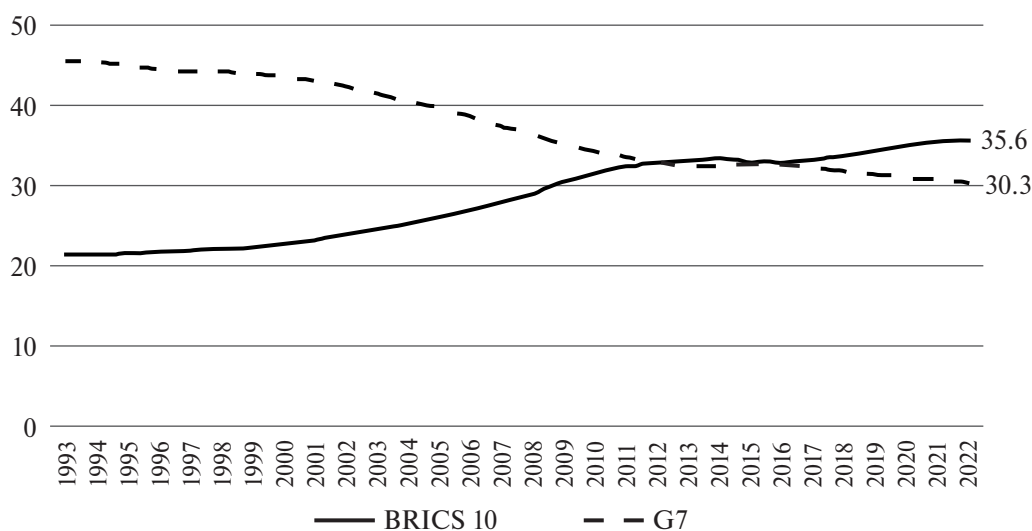


Figure 2. Share of BRICS (composed of 10 members) and “The Group of Seven” in the total world GDP (by estimated PPP) in 1993–2022, per cent

Note. The chart was compiled by *Tricontinental* Group before the Saudi leadership decided to temporarily suspend its application for BRICS membership.

Compiled by [source 2].

ing on the world stage – a factor that was avoided by China.

The Chinese economy’s growth dynamics are impressive. Without going into calendar accuracy of statistics, one can state with certainty that the second decade of this century resulted in China’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) (estimated by PPP – Purchasing Power Parity) exceeding the level of the USA. Even the slowdown of this indicator in recent years has not deprived the Celestial Empire of this superiority viewed in the fore-

seeable future. The third decade of the century, by many quantitative and qualitative indicators of technological progress, also bodes well for China’s acquisition of global primacy, leaving the USA behind as a runner-up. These are the factual comparative dynamics of growth. *The Economist* is sounding the alarm in Britain. Its analysts lament on what can be expected in the next decade – since China, already today, is well ahead of the USA in the number of patent applications for technological innovations. Meanwhile, with regard to Latin

America and the Caribbean countries (LAC), another fact is impressive. The trade turnover with China in the LAC countries has increased from \$ 18 bn in 2002 to \$ 450 bn in 2022 [source 3].

It is difficult to make comparisons in the aggregate because of the heterogeneity of the technological sector. *The Economist's* analysts resort to comparing the government's and university sectors' expenditure and results of publication activity in the leading areas of technological progress. At the same time, they take into account the dynamics of the rise of technologically advanced corporations. *The Economist's* analysts conclude that China today appears to be the leading scientific force in a broad range of areas, from crop biology to superconductivity physics. This is reflected in a special thematic issue on the technological leadership of the Celestial Empire [source 4].

The modification of the world order is associated with the increasing redistribution of resources in the hands of the main protagonists of the world economy and politics. It is indicative that today this is recognised not only by the alternative centres of power but also in the camp of traditional leaders.

In these terms, one can refer to a number of reputable figures. Primarily, this is Joseph Stiglitz, who recently stated that the situation in the United States has aggravated so much that capitalism has to be saved from itself [6, p. 38]. The time of the "American dream" has passed. The young generation can gain prosperity only in the case of receiving a serious education and having rich parents. Stated differently, Stiglitz testifies to the fact that the "American dream" has already exhausted itself.

It is of interest to turn to the opinion of Dominique De Villepin, a well-known French politician, and prime minister during the presidency of Jacques Chirac. In a lengthy article in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, he states outright that the American-centred world (*Pax Americana*) has ceased its existence. The European stronghold of the Western community is in a more difficult position. De Villepin affirms: the GDP in the USA and the EU was roughly equal in 2008. Today, the EU barely reaches half the US figure. The EU is losing its technological position. Today, a total of 72% of the cloud information consumption market hosted

in the EU is accounted for by subsidiaries of US corporations [7].

In contrast to the second most important platform of the West-centred world (the EU), developing countries in the aggregate have recently demonstrated an intensification of economic dynamics. The leading role of the rising giants of the Afro-Asian and Latin American aggregations is particularly notable against the general background. In the context of the Global South, the LAC stands out for several significant features. Based on statistical averages, the region is in the median zone, and respectively, its share of world output is close to its share of the world population. However, as stated, it shows many symptoms of the growing diversity against the unique commonality.

The situation in the LAC should be viewed as highly contradictory. An attempt to explain it through the concept of neo-colonialism (similar to African countries) is unproductive for the present period. Particularly, it is difficult to reconcile the evident results of economic progress (primarily in Brazil and Mexico) with assessments dictated by the inertia of previous perceptions and conclusions about the fatality of the technological transition phase lag.

Certain representatives from the left-wing segment of political science and quasi-academic journalism have hastily constructed a maximally expansive image of the Global South "front," often without offering clear definitions or applying consistent criteria for the typological classification of over one hundred states. This tendency is exemplified, perhaps, by a group of authors affiliated with the informal association *Global South Insights* working under the auspices of *Tricontinental* [source 2]. While their ideological inclinations are understandable, such representations risk being more aspirational than analytical – reflecting wishful thinking, if not in general, then at least to a considerable extent.

We find a somewhat similar picture "on the other shore". However, the cast of characters there is somewhat different. This can be referred to the already mentioned Stubb's publication. Judging by its tone, the author took up this subject seeking a foothold in the motivation of the Global South representatives who are ready to support the West in the modification of the world order. "The West

won the Cold War but failed to convince the rest of the world to adopt the values it holds universal”, Stubb laments [source 1].

An important feature of the current change in the world order is that geopolitics is now more actively imposing its will on geoeconomics. Traditional centres, probably, are themselves beginning to realise the loss of their leadership. There is a continued reliance on inhibiting the growth of the potential and influence of new centres. The ruling circles in the leading countries of the West-centred system seem to be desperate to maintain their superiority, acting on a competitive market basis. Globalisation resources can no longer satisfy them in the conditions when they are losing the economic race and are tending to lose the technological race. Today, they are particularly scared of the military-technical failure.

The collective West, guided by the United States, has begun to incorporate the geopolitical authoritarianism tools into the “big game”. The democracy’s apology remains purely verbal, in practice showing a bias towards hard pressure and applying “soft power” in a limited sphere. The LAC countries are as far away as possible from the confrontation zone (in the European and Middle Eastern theatres), but they are not free from the detrimental costs of geopolitical confrontation and the deformation of world economic relations.

THE DOMINANT COMMONALITY AND DIVERSITY EFFECT

How is the conflict between old and new centres perceived in the LAC countries? How does the onset of the world order transformation affect them? Let us mention a platitude: it is unproductive to talk in terms of a “ballpark figure”. At the same time, the reaction to the posed questions depends, naturally, on political commitment and socio-economic affiliation.

As evidenced by historical patterns in (LAC), the region’s primary instinct in navigating uncertainty on the international stage is often to distance itself from the epicentres of major geopolitical confrontation. The prevailing worldview within LAC societies tends to reject rigid, binary divisions of global power that typically emerge in times of heightened conflict. While the principle of the in-

divisibility of strategic security is generally met with understanding in the region, it is often interpreted through a distinctly pacifist lens. In several instances, this pacifist orientation has acted as a barrier to expressions of solidarity with Moscow. Additionally, appeals to historical memory – deeply marked by a legacy of invasions and heavy-handed interference from the northern hemisphere – further complicate alignment. This historical experience continues to shape contemporary attitudes toward global power politics, and the LAC region, the authors contend, provides numerous compelling arguments in support of this position.

The uniqueness of LAC in comparison to other macro-regions of the world is rooted in a confluence of several foundational factors:

- linguistic commonality or close ancestry (except for small Caribbean States and non-sovereign insular territories);
- predominant confessional affiliation;
- relative geographical compactness of the region;
- similarity of historical fates related to the disruption of civilisational continuity and three centuries of colonialism;
- the system-forming role of the Iberian socio-cultural genetic code;
- belonging to the first decolonisation wave (the Caribbean sub-region is mostly connected with the third wave) and a turbulent entry into the age of statehood;
- long-term persistence of the dependent development factor due to their belonging to the zone of hegemony of the collective West’s undisputed leader. Stated differently, in this case, it is necessary to take into account the direct and long-term inclusion of the LAC countries in the realm of the “northern colossus” rigid hegemony.

One cannot find any semblance in terms of dominant communion in other parts of the world community, including the Global South. The exclusion is perhaps manifested in the presence of some “Latin American communion features” in the Arab area which, however, is smaller in the area and total population, but, unlike the LAC, has retained the civilisational continuity qualities (in most cases).

The specificity of the Latin American region is undoubtedly connected with a special composition of its identity. It involuntarily acquires a pronounced duality (taking into account the dominant commonality). To put it simply, when asked about his/her affiliation, a Latin American will always answer first in specific terms – Peruvian, Mexican, etc. If the question is repeated, he or she will say “I am Hispanic”. The political culture demonstrates a combination of perceiving the homeland as a factor of citizenship and as a region-wide “*Patria Grande*” (according to Bolívar). At the same time, public consciousness in the LAC countries rejects Washington’s labelling these countries with the toponym “America”. This gives rise to the symbolic antithesis – “*Nuestra America*” (according to Martí) or, in one word, – *Nuestmmerica* [8].

When addressing the subject of identity, one cannot avoid the imprint of historical memory which often plays a decisive role in forming the content of the identification code, whether national or civilisational-regional. This circumstance is closely correlated for the LAC with the payoffs of submission to the northern neighbour’s hegemony and, naturally, the chances to overcome it¹.

Returning to the issue of historical memory, it is important to see the presence of the Cuban Revolution results in it. It challenged the world order of its time. It introduced nuclear parity in the terminology and practice of the world order, confirming the geopolitical, military and strategic bipolarity – the one which was subsequently undermined by the Sino-Soviet rift and the corresponding split at the international level. This was followed by the Chilean events of the early 1970s. Their outcome showed the geoeconomic limitations of bipolarity. Moscow, with all its will, was not able to bear the additional economic burden beyond the Atlantic.

While emphasising the unique commonality within the LAC, one cannot disregard the area’s boundaries conditioned by historical genetics and

¹ There is extensive analytical and publicistic literature on this issue in the LAC countries. The latest example is a book by a group of political scientists from the University of La Plata dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine [9]. According to the register of interventions, the country faced provocations of coups d’état, pressure from pro-American agents, defamation of information, etc. almost every year.

differences in development determined by the natural environment. The Conquista originated through developing the realm of high pre-Columbian cultures by forming the first archetype – a hybrid matrix on a state/community basis in the 16th century. This took place in the Andean and Mexican highlands. The subsequent two centuries were the time of the formation and dominance of the plantation slavery pattern associated with the forced resettlement under the influence of the growing demand for colonial goods. The humid tropics of the Caribbean were the area of dissemination. The third archetype took shape at the turn of the 20th century as a result of developing the natural resource – black soil pampa – and mass-scale free resettlement from turbulent Europe. The geographic extent covered the La Plata basin and adjacent territories with a mild subtropical climate.

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries introduced new aspects of divergence in the development trajectories attesting to the diversity scale. The calculations of per capita GDP by estimated PPP using the standard dispersion formula show an increase in its coefficient from 19.29 in 2006 to 24.45 in 2023². It is indicative that the gap in per capita GDP (by estimated PPP) between the upper “floor” of the most developed countries of the collective West and the upper stratum of Latin American countries is significantly smaller than the indicator characterising the gap within the region. In the former case, there is a gap of 2–3 times, and in the latter case – a gap of 5–6 times. In turn, the lower threshold of economic well-being in the LAC corresponds to the highest indicators in African states.

The historical trajectory of the LAC after the three centuries of colonialism runs through the first century of its own statehood, which proved to be extremely turbulent. The poor do-

² The dispersion was calculated on the basis of data provided by the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations in the “Year of the Planet” yearbooks for 2006–2024 [10]. The calculations of the dispersion factor were made according to the formula:

$$S^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2,$$

where S is the dispersion level; n is the number of items in the data sheet; X_i is the value of each i from the list; \bar{X} is the sample arithmetic mean value (the ratio of the sum of all i to the number n).

mestic market, on the one hand, and the lagged nation-building, on the other hand, proved to be definitely insufficient to provide for a solid foundation of statehood. The next century of LAC's history is usually interpreted in the Russian scientific and political literature as an example of neo-colonial existence.

However, it is reckless to present the LAC in this guise from today's perspective. One cannot ignore that in certain areas the LAC showed a significant build-up of productive forces. Some historical situations made it possible to neutralise the "price scissors" or to reverse them. This was the case when local producers found themselves on the rising tide of the commodity market. A similar situation in the world market occurred during the fierce rivalry of the warring parties (the periods of the First and Second World Wars) in purchasing scarce mineral resources and foodstuffs to supply the multimillion armies. The 1930s demonstrated an ongoing transition into the phase of import-substituting industrialisation accompanied by the nationalisation of several basic industries. The nationalist bias in politics was extended to the economy, stimulating protectionist sentiments. The same was true for the mechanism of redistribution of national income implemented by the state according to Keynesian prescriptions.

The development of dialectics in the Latin American periphery within the world economy is contradictory and ambivalent. It used to leave and still leaves a reserve for the development of productive forces. It turned out that the world leadership in economic growth dynamics undeniably belongs now to Brazil (its GDP grew by 78 times in the twentieth century). The next record holder is Japan which increased its GDP by 40 times. Meanwhile, many LAC countries are among those that have noticeably surpassed the world average. This is unambiguously indicated by the 20th-century results analysed by a team of specialists from the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations under the guidance of I.S. Korolev, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences [11]. Another argument is offered by Angus Maddison – a recognised authority on statistical reconstruction of the past. The LAC's share increased more than threefold by PPP in the total world product from the late 19th

century to the end of the 20th century. The decline in Western Europe's share from 24 to 21 per cent against this background is indicative [12].

Bipolarity brought its own adjustments against the background of Washington's hegemony in the space under its control as well as the influence of the West-centred world as a whole, though creating alternative opportunities. The more chances the practice of alternative solutions offered, the more significant the Soviet factor turned out to be in specific situations, with the extending scope of manoeuvre in the international arena for the LAC countries. This way the tendency to withdraw from objecthood to subjecthood, which is particularly significant for today's situation in the world community, was manifested.

Reflecting the inertia of perceiving the present reality through the prism of the former Third World (and the Non-Aligned Movement), we tend to categorise the LAC as the Global South. There are understandable arguments behind this. True, the LAC countries are underrepresented in the upper echelon of global governance. From this point of view, the countries of the region falling within the zone of rigid hegemony on the part of their northern neighbour have their own scores to settle with it. However, practice suggests a twofold attitude. One should not forget that the USA remains the most solvent and capacious market in the world. LAC countries are interested in access to this market, its preservation and moreover, its expansion.

The formula "Global South" evokes an association with a rhetorical accentuation that has been used for decades by left-oriented Latin American intellectuals: "Our North is the South", a phrase that became a refrain of the alter-globalisation movement. It means that the supremacy of the traditional centres of influence is running out. Other protagonists are beginning to take their place – the ones from large developing countries (regional leaders).

The collapse of the bipolar system produced a variety of consequences. This concerns as well the Third World where the states' activity in the international arena decreased. The situation in the LAC is also illustrative: the 1990s witnessed a dramatic decline in foreign policy initiatives. Passivity and limited involvement in key international affairs, including with regard to global gov-

ernance, triumphed. LAC countries are deemed to have been entering global politics as actors only in recent decades, but only sporadically. According to our observations, this became evident at the turn of the 20th century at two Hague Conferences initiated in a way by Russian diplomacy. Whereas only Mexico was present at the first one (1899), the second one (1907) was attended by all sovereign LAC states of that time, who formed an influential faction [13, p. 66]. Turning to the experience of the League of Nations, we can also see the prominent representation of the LAC (10 out of 33 participants) at the founding Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The signatories to the UN Charter in San Francisco proved to be the largest regional LAC group (1944) – 20 out of 50.

It is reckless to reduce the matter to a “voting machine” acting at the behest of the United States, given the demiurgeous and respectful attitude of Latin American diplomacy towards international law. The related contribution it made to the international law arsenal is notable. Let us recall the Louis Drago Doctrine (introduced by the head of Argentine diplomacy) which condemned and prohibited forceful coercion in respect of debtors under external obligations, the decision was further consolidated by the Second Hague Conference of 1907. Another example of high diplomatic art was demonstrated by the activity of José María da Silva Paranhos (Baron of Rio Branco), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil at the turn of the 20th century, who arranged for conflict-free delimitation of borders with nine neighbouring states, having spared modern Brazil from territorial disputes. The campaign of 1967–1968 – proclaiming Latin America a nuclear-weapon-free zone – was significant, being a precedent of universal significance. The LAC countries of the Southern Cone, with the support of some South American states (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay), achieved an impressive victory by signing the Treaty on the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone in 1986. At that time, 21 states of the southern part of the African continent acceded to the Treaty. The modern era provided many examples of increased diplomatic activity of Latin American states, demonstrating their peacekeeping potential in resolving a number of intra-national conflicts and their readiness to

seek compromise solutions in overcoming security threats at the global level.

Taking into account the available trustworthy evidence, we understand that it is naive to underestimate the reserves potentially prepared by the West-centred world in the face of the threat of a breakthrough of its established practices or retreat from them. At the same time, the sense of collective self-preservation is growing. In our time, the practice of geopolitical and geo-economic confrontation leaves no doubt about this turn of events. What can LAC countries count on in these conditions? What are their chances of minimising the costs of adaptation and realisation of alternatives resulting from strategic partnerships and ad hoc alliances; where, finally, the balance point between *pro* and *contra* can be found?

It is feasible to answer the posed questions not in the usual way focusing on traditional obstacles but with an eye to the opportunities offered by modernity and the foreseeable future, and with a mindset to see how the balance of *pro* and *contra*, especially for Latin American aspirants to the “big game” in the global context, will eventually pan out.

Given the fact of differentiation within the LAC countries, the last decade’s “left turn” in economic policy, internal and foreign policy spheres reveal a more significant variance compared to the first wave. Previously, the LAC countries, when turning to the left, invariably generated a sense of anxiety and danger in the Washington elite, being perceived as a threat to the US position in the Western hemisphere. This meant, on the one hand, an exacerbation, a tendency towards more peremptory diplomacy, and on the other hand, a willingness to show tolerance, to act with “soft power”.

The LAC countries are aware that the USA remains the dominant (albeit retreating) partner for the foreseeable future. True, Washington’s top brass is having a lot of trouble, particularly, as concerns the LAC. An obvious argument is the comparison of the large-scale (covering the entire Western hemisphere) programme “Alliance for Progress” of John F. Kennedy’s time and a clumsy attempt to devise something similar in the practice of the last administration – a constituent forum of the “Alliance for Prosperity” in 2022. No more than a third of the countries of the region

responded to it – by no means the most influential ones. A dozen LAC countries that responded to the State Department’s invitation have not so far felt any interest in Washington, except for its call for the US entrepreneurial class to support business in the LAC.

By ascertaining the dominant commonality in the past and present realities of the LAC, we do not introduce any originality but spare ourselves and our audience from being presented with a “ballpark figure”. One can state that Latin American reality is characterised by a kind of paradox. In parallel with the dominance of common features and the tenets inherent in Latin American identity, the diversity of national situations is growing. This, in any case, requires a specific typology. In our understanding, it should be grounded on the baseline characteristics of the original civilisational base. In the long run, the results of the temporal and spatial adaptation that favour a particular model of socio-economic development are to be taken into account.

CHANCES OF ADAPTATION

We agree with the characterisation of the situation in the LAC once voiced by an international seminar guided by Theotônio dos Santos, a well-known Brazilian academic economist. This seminar became functional in the late 1990s with the support of UNESCO and the United Nations University; it labelled its subject of discussions with the formula “hegemony – counter-hegemony”

thus expressing the core of its diagnosis [14, 15, 16]. We would clarify it as follows “the *dialectic* of opposition of hegemony and counter-hegemony”: it is the dialectic ratio of the opposing trends that determines, in our view, the chances of the LAC to adapt to the change of the world order as well as the region’s potential contribution to the formation of a polycentric world order.

One cannot ignore the merit of the seminar participants in their realistic assessment of the phenomenon of globalisation. They foreshadowed the conclusions on its slowdown and the onset of the “deglobalisation effect”. This had a serious impact on the global context of the LAC’s development. Meanwhile, as demonstrated by lengthy statistical series, deglobalisation is a periodically recurring phenomenon. It has a wave-like character, indicating a regular change or modification of the world order (Figure 3).

Being far today from the main “contact line” of the warring parties does not exempt the region from the consequences and payoffs of the reformatting process with respect to the world economic system and the imbalances in the world political structures. All of this is projected upon the LAC in one way or another. The wave of geoeconomic confrontation, without completely blocking the alternative cooperation channels, complicates the choice dictated not only by geopolitical preferences but also by the generally accepted benchmarks of civilisational competition.

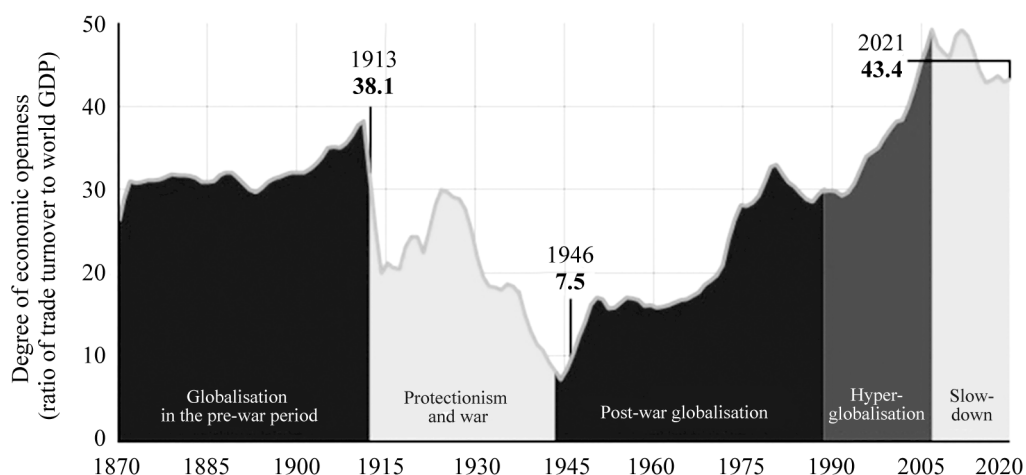


Figure 3. Strengthening and weakening of globalisation processes (1870–2020), %

Compiled by [17].

The LAC countries generally do not accept Washington's extraterritorial claims. They remain adherents of international law time-tested in the system of key UN bodies. This is one of the "secrets" of mutual understanding in the relations with the Russian Federation. However, the ruling circles and the business community of the LAC in most cases cannot ignore the risks of "disobedience". At the same time, one cannot expect their loss of interest in the American market (so far the most solvent in the world). The access to it, associated with reaching the sources of technological renewal, continues to attract a growing number of pragmatists, both right-wing and (symptomatically) left-wing ones.

The reformatting of the world order in the current "round" is associated for the LAC with the deformation of external channels of economic exchange, strengthened regionalisation trends and activated imperatives for diversifying the market orientation and the industry structure of national economic systems. Reaching the peaks of geopolitical confrontation spurs the market of armaments and military equipment, channelling it into a revolution in military affairs. The share of the military industrial sector and its products is dramatically increasing in national economies and the aggregate industrial potential of developed countries, primarily in the camp of geopolitical and geoeconomic leaders. The LAC's demand in this market is formed in a specific way. It shows no "surge" with regard to technological innovations in the offensive and strategic defence segment. As a rule, it is limited by the scarce state budget and the absence of strategic threats from regional neighbours. In this situation, the armed forces are functionally re-profiled towards ensuring public security, eliminating consequences of natural disasters, and preventing critical risks from the expansion of cross-border crime and pandemic threats, as it happened during the spread of *COVID-19*.

Destabilisation and sometimes blocking of the former channels of goods, investments and services, brings the imperative of diversifying foreign economic relations on an individual and collective basis to the forefront. Meanwhile, the permissible and possible adaptation requires a return to more effective use of regional and sub-regional integration reserves, which is in line with the world trend

for regionalisation replacing the blocked globalisation channels (see Figure 3).

In addition to foreign economic objectives, diversification assumes the expansion of the industrial scope of national economic systems. The economic development agenda in many countries of the region today is complemented by a focus on re-industrialisation. This is a question of re-equipping the existing industries on a modern technological basis and forming new industries to meet digitalisation standards. The latter is developing at an accelerated pace in the LAC, exceeding the world average [18]. The example of Brazil, which, along with South Korea, has become a world leader in the digitalisation of transactions in online payment transactions, is illustrative [19].

In overcoming the bottlenecks of the peripherally structured economic system, the LAC countries are taking a fresh look at the guidelines for modernising the transport infrastructure. Once (in the period of active work of the Union of South American Nations at the end of the first wave of the "left turn"), this subject was elevated to the rank of strategic priorities on a national and collective basis. The key tasks are, firstly, to establish inter-oceanic transport and logistics links at a modern level and, secondly, to overcome "white spots" that block (the case of Amazonian countries) interstate links and thus impede the realisation of promising integration projects.

The issue of economic diversification and its modernisation on an advanced technological basis is associated in the LAC with a return to the theme of the region's countries' resource abundance and their ability to optimise the use of the advantages endowed by nature. This becomes highly relevant, given the growing rivalry between the power players in accessing and processing particularly valuable minerals. The new balance of forces in the world economy and the world order modification results observed in recent years force the LAC states to make significant adjustments to their economic policies, including in the mining sector, as a top-priority re-industrialisation task. A concrete example is the development of lithium deposits at the junction of Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. In negotiations with foreign investors, the Bolivian government firmly insists on the transfer of

technology and know-how to local manufacturers concerning the production of finished products to advanced standards.

The replacement of non-renewable energy sources with renewable ones, i.e. the realisation of the energy transition, is taking place in the region at a level above the global average. The providers make use of the additional reserves of daylight hours abundant in Latin America and the favourable wind patterns at many of its latitudes. The environmental legislation has been successfully implemented, and the culture of operating the ecological reserves is properly established. The actions towards utilising the region's rich opportunities for the development of ecological tourism are an additional incentive. The turn of the current Brazilian administration towards resolving the conflict over the conservation activities in the Amazonian region is symptomatic and is of truly global importance.

Recent decades have witnessed a notably increased maturity of business practices in the LAC. "Multilatinas" – multinational corporations with predominantly Latin American participation – have entered foreign markets. There is growing evidence that Latin American capital is moving towards a kind of inversion in overseas operations. A prime example is its strong presence in the Portuguese and Spanish markets. The export of Portuguese capital to Brazil used to be a previous practice. Now, the Brazilian capital is predominantly deployed in the former metropolis. The flow of capital from the LAC to Spain used to be motivated by avoiding risks in the home country and acquiring assets for the sake of a "beautiful life". Now the concerns are about promising production assets. In total, the volume of investments from the LAC placed in Spain has reached 67 billion euros. One of the leading foreign investors in Spanish railway transport is Carlos Slim – the richest entrepreneur in Mexico. The decision of the German management team of *Volkswagen* to close two automobile plants in Germany, depriving 20 thousand workers and employees of jobs, is very indicative of the current situation. At the same time, production volumes will increase at *Volkswagen do Brasil*, where production costs are more competitive.

As shown by modern practice, examples of LAC countries entering world politics with an auton-

omous agenda and own initiatives are met in Washington with obvious irritation, and "disobedience" is punished by demonstrative extraterritorial sanctions, financial blackmail, "behind-the-scenes" operations of special services, and defamation in the media and social networks.

The "institutional cover" on a collective basis – like the one provided by CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) – can serve as an antidote that restores active regional and extra-regional practices within the "left turn" second wave in LAC's political climate. It is pertinent to recall the opportunities provided by BRICS, already at the stage of its expansion. The high mission of this association in its current state, based on broad civilisational representation, is naturally associated with the support for the UN's universal goal and an adequate formula for a renewed world order offered by it.

Brazilian participation in BRICS carries a pledge of solidarity support on the part of numerous LAC states. It is symbolic that its current president, L.I. Lula da Silva, was one of its most enthusiastic initiators, starting in 2003 with the triple alliance of Brazil, India and South Africa labelled as IBSA. Notably, it is symptomatic that IBSA chose the joint development of security defence capabilities as one of its strategic priorities. At that time, annual triple warfleet exercises in the South Atlantic were launched for this purpose. At the same time, incidentally, Brazil called Russia to join IBSA.

Lula's ideas underpinning the new organisation have the potential to unite developing countries – in particular, those referred to now as the Global South. However, in our time, fleshing out the idea of a new world order requires not only an institutional framework but also a real turn to practice, to active economic and technological interaction. Brazil's initiating role can be supported today by another Latin American giant – Mexico. Long years were marked by the diverging foreign policy positions of the two states, and sometimes – even by rivalry for influence on other members of the Latin American community. Now, due to the convergence of the internal policy vectors, due conditions are emerging for strengthening the momentum of Latin American solidarity as a means to relieve the burden of the northern neighbour's hegemony.

As concerns the reformatting of the world order, the Russian Federation logically and naturally finds common ground with the LAC – not in absolute terms, but relative to what is prescribed by common sense and allowed by the pragmatic balance of wishful thinking and reality. Russian diplomacy, as before, will be efficient and yield significant results in the LAC countries, being, at the very least, a real counterweight to the former world order, which allows for the dictatorship of the collective West.

* * * *

While attaching historical significance to the ongoing change of the world order, we recognise the fact of certain length and painfulness of this event. It is a natural part of the transition defining the nature of the stage we are experiencing.

The LAC countries will not escape this process; it affects them at least indirectly, if not directly. The notion of the Global South, while remaining an amorphous designation, also applies to Latin-Caribbean America in terms of the objective desire of the bulk of the world community to neutralise the voluntaristic dictate of the USA in the international arena and to stop the practice of extending the US legislation extraterritorially with a view of subordination of others to Washington's hegemony. Under the current circumstances, LAC countries are capable, to a greater or lesser extent, of disrupting the northern neighbour's and its clientele's logic of hegemony. These are countries that

can realise the sovereign political will, the ones that have gained it through the national states' consolidation potential, as well as the support of civil society, due to their awareness of national interests and the role of international solidarity on the path to the polycentric world order.

A special role on this path belongs to large states capable of bearing the burden of regional leadership. Brazil and Mexico, being presently in a conjoined political field, are able to accomplish the regional leadership mission, relying on pan-Latin American interaction institutions (CELAC, etc.).

The fundamental mission of consolidating collective efforts towards the polycentric world order can be realised on the BRICS platform which owes its institution largely to the proactive role of Brazil and personally Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, from the very time of his first presidential mandate. The LAC pays tribute to this merit.

The mechanism of strategic partnership on the BRICS platform is capable of scaling up over a wide range, becoming one of the pillars of the United Nations Organisation which needs additional support in the current turbulent environment. BRICS, cooperating with regional-level institutions and proceeding from the declarative/doctrinal phase to the plane of practical action (financial, investment, technological and humanitarian activities), can chart the path of real progress towards the new world order while minimising the distressing costs of the transition period.

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