

# REGION, NATION, AND LOCALITY: COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

*Región, nación y localidad: identidades colectivas en  
América Latina*

*Região, nação e localidade: Identidades coletivas na  
América Latina*

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## **Abstract**

This research note aims to elucidate some of the characteristics of identities in contemporary Latin America, as revealed by the results of the survey The Americas and the World 2014-2015. Resorting to the available data on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, this research note presents the survey's findings regarding supranational, national, and local identities and offers an initial approach to their interpretation. As a result of this exercise, the paper outlines important points of convergence of public attitudes in Latin American societies and points out national specificities that should be kept in mind and further studied, with a view to expanding our knowledge about collective identities and their possible relationship with the various integration and regionalization processes in Latin America.

**Palabras clave:**  
*identidad nacional;*  
*identidad regional;*  
*regionalismo;*  
*América Latina;*  
*Sudamérica*

**Resumen**

Esta nota de investigación se propone elucidar algunas de las características de las identidades en América Latina contemporánea, tal como las revelan los resultados de la encuesta Las Américas y el Mundo 2014-2015. Recurriendo a la información disponible para Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, México y Perú, el trabajo presenta los hallazgos relativos a las identidades supranacionales, nacionales y locales arrojados por la encuesta y ofrece unas primeras líneas para su interpretación. Como resultado de este ejercicio, se aprecian importantes puntos de confluencia en las actitudes públicas de las sociedades de la región latinoamericana, pero también especificidades nacionales que conviene conocer y seguir estudiando, con miras a ampliar nuestro conocimiento acerca de las identidades y sus posibles relaciones con los distintos procesos de integración y regionalización en América Latina.

**Palavras-chave:**  
*identidade nacional;*  
*identidade regional;*  
*regionalismo;*  
*América Latina;*  
*América do Sul*

**Resumo**

Esta nota de pesquisa visa esclarecer algumas das características das identidades na América Latina contemporânea, tal como reveladas pelos resultados da enquete Las Américas y el Mundo 2014-2015. Utilizando a informação disponível para a Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colômbia, Equador, México e Peru, o documento apresenta os resultados relativos às identidades supranacionais, nacionais e locais obtidos pela enquete e oferece algumas primeiras linhas para a sua interpretação. Como resultado deste exercício, podem ser vistos importantes pontos de convergência nas atitudes públicas das sociedades da região latino-americana, mas também especificidades nacionais que devem ser conhecidas e mais estudadas, com vista a reforçar o nosso conhecimento sobre as identidades e as suas possíveis relações com os vários processos de integração e regionalização na América Latina.

## INTRODUCTION

“Globalization” has become a ubiquitous term in recent decades and even though there is no generally accepted definition of the concept, a consensus has been established about its main constitutive elements. Among them are, on the one hand, the intensification of interconnection in all aspects of social life, facilitated by the technological revolution of the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, the redefinition of time and space and, with it, changes in the perception of the physical limits of the latter (Guibernau, 2005: 242). On the other hand, globalization is also associated with an economic model that promotes trade liberalization, as well as the free movement of goods and capital throughout the world.

These factors of globalization directly impact the nation-state, its capabilities and the identities associated with it. While the borders of the territorial state seem to be getting blurred, supranational blocs of diverse nature have emerged and different forms of sub-state communities have acquired relevance. They all compete

with the nation for the loyalty of the citizens (see i.a. Cordero Ponce, 2018; Keating, 1999; Nielsen, 2004; Opello and Rosow, 2004 and Smith, 2007).

In the case of Latin America, starting in the 1990s, regional integration initiatives began to be promoted with the aim of increasing the international competitiveness of the region and/or some of its sub-regions in the context of trade globalization. A decade later, an antiestablishment regionalism emerged in South America, which was presented as an alternative to the neoliberal economic integration of the 1990s and which revolved around politics rather than economics (see i.a. Briceño Ruiz, 2013, Quiliconi and Salgado Espinoza, 2017; Sanahuja, 2011; Vivares *et al.*, 2013). Differing in scope, both in their conception and in their results, these regional arrangements have been linked to specific types of political regimes and have given a new physiognomy to the geopolitical map of the American continent south of the Rio Grande.

Against this background, multiple questions arise about the identity of the population of Latin America. In the context of the globalized world of the 21st century, is national identity a primary reference for people in this region of the world? Are regional identities associated with the recent processes of regionalization/integration strong? Are localities a relevant focus of identity? What is the content of the national identity of the contemporary Latin American population?

The present research note aims to make an original contribution to this discussion. Using the results of the survey *The Americas and the World 2014-2015* ([www.lasamericasyelmundo.cide.edu](http://www.lasamericasyelmundo.cide.edu)), the research note presents the data on regional, national, and local identities for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru and highlights the similarities and differences, as well as identifiable patterns among the countries. As a descriptive exercise, this text offers initial – by no means definitive – answers to the questions posed and aims to indicate possible starting points for a future research agenda on this topic.

This research note is divided into four sections. The first is dedicated to discussing the concepts that guide the research. The notions of “identity”, “national identity” and “regional identity” receive, in this context, particular attention. The second section focuses on the issue of regionalism in Latin America since the 1990s and highlights the tension between the different models and their possible implications for identities in the subcontinent. The third section briefly presents the methodological bases of the *The Americas and the World 2014-2015* survey, while the fourth section examines regional identities and their relationship to national identity as well as the specific characteristics of national identity in the participating countries. A brief final section recapitulates the main findings and proposes several topics for a future research agenda aimed at broadening our understanding of identities in Latin America in the third decade of the 21st century.

## NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL IDENTITY: A CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

“Identity”, like so many other notions that aim to capture psychological and social dimensions, is a polysemic concept. As Slocum and Van Langenhove point out, when speaking of identity, “one cluster of meanings refers to what constitutes the individuality of something, that is what makes a single individual entity distinct from another one. A second cluster of meaning is focused upon what kind of common characteristics a class of entities might have, that is to what extent there are similarities between members of a group” (2005: 137).

In either case, “identity” is a relational term that refers to the condition of differentiation of an entity from others. When that entity is a collectivity, identity includes, in addition to the criteria of differentiation from “others”, the criteria of similarity between those who make up the group. Identity is, thus, a form of categorization that defines an “us” and draws a border against all possible “them” (see Paasi, 2002: 139; Triandafyllidou, 1998 and Wodak *et al.*, 2009: 11).

Among modern collective identities, perhaps national identity is predominant. According to Montserrat Guibernau, national identity is “a collective sentiment based upon the belief of belonging to the same nation and of sharing most of the attributes that make it distinct from other nations” (2007: 11). To this definition, which focuses on subjective aspects, Anthony D. Smith adds a dimension that is not only objective, but fundamentally political:

What we mean by national identity involves some sense of political community, however tenuous. A political community in turn implies at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all the members of the community. It also suggests a definite social space, a fairly well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong (Smith 1991: 9).

National identity is, therefore, a mechanism of collective differentiation, which works, in turn, as a means of excluding non-members of the group. It implies a psychological dimension: the sense of belonging and differentiation from “the others”; a cultural dimension: shared values, symbols, and beliefs; a historical dimension: foundational myths, selective history, and a projection into the future; a territorial dimension: the spatial location of the national community and a landscape with symbolic value; as well as a political dimension, expressed both in the aspiration to achieve or preserve statehood and in a series of rights and duties linked to citizenship, for the members of the group, from whose enjoyment those who are not considered members are excluded (Guibernau, 2007: 11-23; Wodak *et al.*, 2009: 25-26).

In the current context of globalization, this fundamentally territorial (Herb, 1999: 10) and exclusive form of identity is opposed by the notion of cosmopolitanism,

a fluid and dynamic territorial identity that, politically, transcends affiliation with a given nation-state and aspires to universal citizenship “free of national prejudices” (Guibernau, 2007: 186); while culturally, it abandons particularism and opts for an eclecticism that reflects transnational consumption patterns.

National identity and cosmopolitanism are not, in principle, mutually exclusive. Neither are national identity and other geographical identities on a larger or smaller scale. On the contrary, whether conceived as one in a set of concentric circles or as situated between a cascade of geographically-based identities (Kaplan, 1999: 31-32), national identity coexists, sometimes harmoniously and sometimes in tension, with supra- and sub-national regional identities.

The concept of “regional identity” undoubtedly presents some challenges to its definition. First, is the need to define “the region”, the object of the identity of interest. Anssi Paasi, maintains that regions are social constructs, which, however, “may become crucial instruments of power that manifest themselves in shaping the spaces of governance, economy and culture” (2000: 6). Emphasizing the impact of the notion of region on the configuration of space, Paasi argues that, despite the fact that regions are currently defined in academic debates as “relational, networked and non-bounded entities, regional identity implies certain boundedness and a politics of distinction” (2011: 12).

Second, as with the concept of national identity, the concept of regional identity can be understood in more than one sense. On the one hand, “regional identity” denotes the supposed natural and cultural qualities that distinguish a region. On the other hand, it refers to the inhabitants’ consciousness of belonging to a region. Paasi adds that the term can even refer to both aspects at once (2012: 1453).

As spatial rather than territorial configurations, regions exist at different scales, from the local (subnational) to the supranational<sup>1</sup>, giving rise to a broader set of related geographical identities. This notion of the coexistence of multiple spatial identities has generated different images, ranging from that of nested identities (quasi-hierarchical concentric circles) (Kaplan, 1999 and Knight, 1999), to that of the “marble cake”: a multiplicity of context-dependent identities, which are interwoven and flow into each other, without clearly defined boundaries between them (Risse, 2001: 10).

For the purposes of this research note, however, it is appropriate to discuss sub-national and supranational regional identities separately, since each of them

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1. Strictly speaking, the unit of reference is the state. However, since the state is conventionally and mistakenly equated with the nation, the vocabulary of political science and international relations refers to relations between “nations” as well as sub- and supranational instances of governance, when, in fact, it is a matter of relations between states and sub- or supra-state instances. In order to avoid confusion, the convention of speaking of the national and its associated notions is adopted here, while recognizing that it is imprecise.

denotes a different way of relating to space, territory and the people who inhabit it. Indeed, subnational or local regional identities express a sense of socio-territorial belonging, which is anchored in an awareness of the experienced territory. Differing in the dimension in which they are conceived, local identities range from “the terroir” to “the intermediate level of socio-cultural integration between the national level and the local level of the ‘matrias’” (Giménez, 1994: 166 and 168)<sup>2</sup>. As products of a relationship with a concrete and known territory and society, local identities often prevail over supranational regional identities, which derive from a relationship with more abstract and distant entities (Knight, 1999; Terlouw, 2018: 260).

With regard to supranational regional identities, as already anticipated, the focus of reference is a geographical space made up of cultural links that transcend national borders, or by institutional frameworks that derive from the establishment of governance structures involving several states. Particularly in the latter case, the abstract nature of supranational regions has led those researching the subject of the conformation of such regions to ask themselves about the level of attachment that they may arouse (Antonsich, 2010; Knight, 1999: 323). The answer, suggests Risse (2001: 9), lies in the importance that a given social context has for individuals. In other words, the more outstanding a supranational region becomes in the daily life of individuals, the greater the number of people who identify with it.

As stated at the beginning of this text, in the last thirty years Latin America has been the stage of multiple integration efforts and regionalization processes that have modified the very understanding of the region that was previously held. In order to investigate the regional identities of the contemporary Latin American population, it is therefore essential to review, even if only briefly, these processes. That is the objective of the following section.

## REGIONALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

First used in 1856 by the Chilean Francisco Bilbao, the term “Latin America” emerged as an appellation to identify the peoples south of the Rio Grande and distinguish them from “the Saxon race” of the United States, a country whose expansionist drive was, at the time, as evident as it was feared (Parker, 2008; Ramos, 2003: 121). Five years later, in 1861, the expression “Latin America” began to be popularized by virtue of the pan-Latinist movement, which served to justify the imperialist project of Napoleon III and the French intervention in Mexico (1863-1867). In its Napoleonic interpretation, Latin America represented a Spanish and

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2. All translations from Spanish are the author's.

Portuguese-speaking region, with a Catholic base, which was to be distinguished from and must contain the United States of America (Larraín, 2007: 4; Núñez Vilavicencio, 2008: 190, Ramos, 2012: 44-45).

Despite its association with France's Second Empire, the term "Latin America" took root in the young American republics, as it enabled them to emphasize their political independence from Spain and Portugal, while accentuating the common culture, especially the language and religion, which were considered fundamental –and even elements of superiority– in their process of affirmation against the emerging international power that the United States had become.

As a cultural and geopolitical entity, whose main reference ("the other") was, from the outset, the United States, Latin America preserved a certain cohesion throughout the 20th century. Towards the 1990s, promoted by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), sub-regional integration projects began to be implemented throughout the sub-continent under the "open regionalism" model. This modality revolved around economic and trade liberalization, although, according to ECLAC, it went beyond it, insofar as it contained "a preferential ingredient reflected in integration agreements and reinforced by the geographical proximity and cultural affinity of the countries in the region" (cited in Gudynas, 2005: 1). As part of this wave of regionalism, in 1991 the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) was created; between 1991 and 1993 the Central American Integration System (SICA) was set up and the Andean Pact was reactivated, until it was redefined, in 1996 as the Andean Community (CAN).

Although these regionalisms strengthened trade alliances between some countries of the subcontinent, excluding the rest of them, they did not represent a questioning of the notion of Latin America. This would change in 1994, with the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with which Mexico not only sealed its orientation towards the United States, but also made clear its distance from the rest of Latin America, generating a real identity crisis in the region. According to Parker, "[...] from [a] geopolitical and geoeconomic point of view, Mexico would be in the other America, sharing a common market, such an extensive border and significant commercial and migratory flows with the United States. In this concept, Latin America becomes insubstantial, an imagined reality, but not geopolitically or economically feasible" (Parker, 2008; see also Falomir Lockhart, 2013: 99).

From 2004 this division between North America –which now included Mexico– and South America deepened further, as at the Summit of the Americas, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela rejected the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an initiative launched ten years earlier by the United States. That same year, led by Venezuela, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples

of Our America (ALBA) was born, and in December, under the leadership of Brazil, the South American Community of Nations was constituted, becoming in 2007, Unasur.

Unlike the schemes of open regionalism of the 1990s and NAFTA, these new regional initiatives revolved around political concertation and explicitly rejected a concept of integration that was seen as a way of locking links with the U.S. economy (Riggiozzi, 2012: 425). Moreover, in contrast to the economic and trade integration efforts in the north of the continent, which were presented as state-driven, the new South American regionalism was conceived as a series of instances of “regionalization”, involving the action of a variety of state and non-state actors in processes and structures that transcended state borders and therefore responded to broader societal interests.

Given this varied panorama and the multiple paths of regionalism in Latin America, the question arises as to whether regional integration and regionalization processes have succeeded in generating regional identities that compete with national identities. It also seems necessary to inquire whether the notion of Latin America represents a reference of identity for the population of the subcontinent or whether, as Vivares *et al.* question, “we are facing a process of reconfiguration of Latin America from a South American axis” (2013: 22). Finally, it is worth investigating the positioning of local identities in this set of multiple identities that characterize contemporary Latin American society. In what follows and resorting to the results of the survey *The Americas and the World 2014-2015*, we will try to make a first approach to the possible answers.

## **A NOTE ON THE METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY *THE AMERICAS AND THE WORLD 2014-2015***

The survey *The Americas and the World 2014-2015* is part of a regional project that, since 2004, has been dedicated to investigating public opinions and attitudes on foreign policy and international relations in Latin America (see *The Americas and the World*). Driven by a decentralized network of national research teams ascribed to academic institutions, the project focuses on conducting a biennial survey from representative samples of the population in the participating countries in order to gather information about public opinions and attitudes on international issues.

In the 2014-2015 edition, which serves as a basis for this work, the survey was applied in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. In all cases, the interviews were conducted face-to-face at homes to a representative and stratified sample of the national adult population. The number of cases by country was: Argentina: 1030; Brazil: 1881; Chile: 1206; Colombia: 1500; Ecuador: 1800;

Mexico: 2400 and Peru: 1200 and the margin of error ranged from +/- 3.1 % in Argentina to +/- 2.0 % in Mexico.

This paper explores the results of a series of questions on national identity and supra- and sub-national regional identities, which were part of the battery of questions applied in the seven countries<sup>3</sup>. While for the supranational regional identities, the references “Latin American”, “South American”, “North American”, “Central American” and “world citizen” were used; in the case of the local identity, it was the state, province or department that served as reference point.

Finally, the content of national identity was explored through a question that required respondents to evaluate the importance of certain factors for being a national of the country of reference<sup>4</sup>. These factors reflect the dimensions of national identity as discussed above (see p.5) and together with the rest of the data offer an interesting overview of the configuration and characteristics of collective identities in Latin America.

## REGION, NATION, LOCALITY: THE DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY IN LATIN AMERICA

The first interesting finding of the survey relates to supranational regional identity. Despite the different regionalization and integration schemes of the last decades, the most widespread supranational regional identity turned out to be, in fact, the Latin American one (see figure 1). With 59 percentage points, Colombia is the country where the largest proportion of the sample chose this option, followed by Argentina and Ecuador, both with 53 percentage points. With 44 %, Mexico ranked third, Peru fourth with 39 % and Chile fifth with 38 %.

Also striking is the high frequency in South American countries of the “South American” response as the first option for supranational identity: 35 % in Ecuador, 33 % in Chile, 27 % in Argentina and Peru and 19 % in Colombia. These data contrast with the low frequency (7 %) of the “North American” response in the case of Mexico and offer a starting point for discussing the relationship between state integration processes, societal regionalization processes, and collective identities.

An additional fact deserves to be mentioned in this context: cosmopolitanism, reflected in the “world citizen” response, does not seem to be very widespread among the population of the countries participating in the study. Except in the notorious case of Mexico, where with 33 % this response was in second place (after

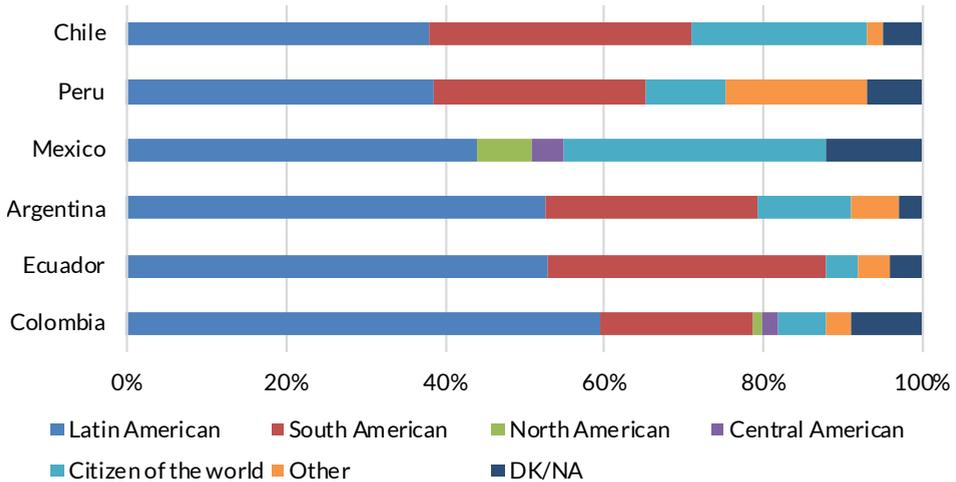
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3. The survey comprises a battery of common questions that apply in all participating countries and country-specific questions designed by the national research teams.

4. All questionnaires and databases are available in *The Americas and the World*.

“Latin American”), the “world citizen” option ranked third in the rest of the countries with rather lower percentages, which fluctuated between 22 % (in Chile) and 4 % (in Ecuador).

**Figure 1. Supranational regional identity 2014-2015**  
**Tell me, what do you feel yourself most strongly?**



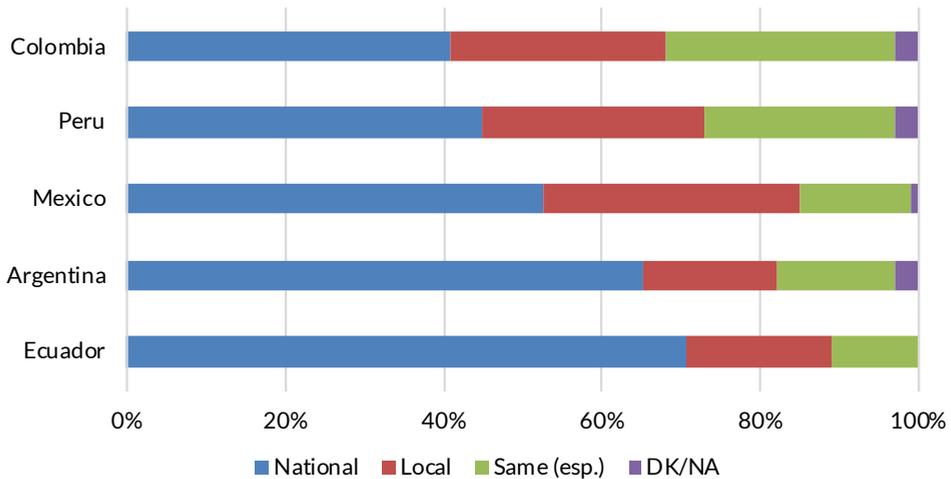
Source: Own elaboration based on The Americas and the World 2014-2015.

There are also interesting nuances in terms of national identity and its relationship to local identities. The questionnaire for the 2014-2015 edition included two variants of a question on this topic, each of which was applied to 50 % of the sample. In its first version (questionnaire A), the question required the surveyed public to answer what they felt themselves most strongly and to choose between two mutually exclusive options: the demonym of their nation and the demonym of their locality. The results of this question posed to half of the sample show the prevalence of national identity over local identity, although with important differences between countries (see figure 2). Thus, while in Ecuador 70 % of the population surveyed responded that they felt “more Ecuadorian than their local identity,” in Colombia the percentage of the sample that privileged their national identity over their local one was 42 %, that is 28 percentage points less than in Ecuador. Between those two extremes were Argentina with 66 %, Mexico with 52 % and Peru with 45 %. It is remarkable that Mexico was the country with the highest percentage (32 %) of the population that preferred its local identity over the national one, followed by Colombia and Peru (both with 28 %), Ecuador (18 %) and Argentina

(17 %). Finally, it is worth noting that in Colombia 30 % of the sample spontaneously responded that they identified themselves as Colombian as strongly as they identified with their department, making it the only case in which this spontaneous response was second in frequency.

**Figure 2. National identity vs. local identity (exclusive) 2014-2015**

**What do you feel yourself most strongly? (version A)**

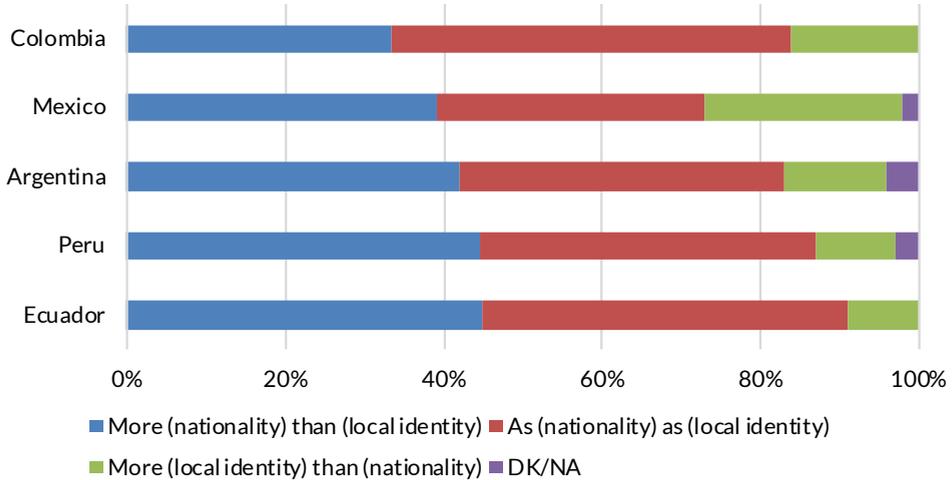


Source: Own elaboration based on The Americas and the World 2014-2015.

In the second variant of this question, instead of two mutually exclusive options, three alternative answers were offered: “more [nationality] than [local demonym],” “as [nationality] as [local demonym],” and “more [local demonym] than [nationality]”. Given this formulation, in almost all countries the responses in favor of national identity and dual identity (“as [nationality] as [local demonym]”) achieved similar scores (see Figure 3): 44 % and 42 %, respectively, in Peru, 42 % and 41 % in Argentina, and 39 % and 34 % in Mexico. Reversing the order of preference, in Ecuador 46 % of the sample opted for dual identity, while 45 % did so for national identity. The only case that deviates from this pattern is, again, Colombia, where 50 % of the population expressed a preference for dual identity, while 33 % did so for national identity, presenting a gap of 17 percentage points between the two options.

**Figure 3. National identity vs. local identity (dual) 2014-2015**

**What do you feel yourself most strongly? (version B)**



Source: Own elaboration based on The Americas and the World 2014-2015.

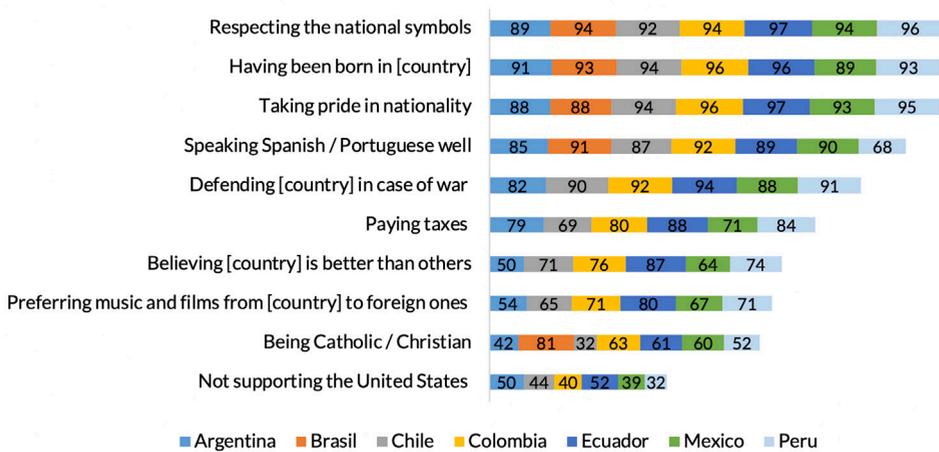
What does national identity mean for each of the populations surveyed, and what characteristics and attitudes are associated with that identity? To explore this issue, the survey included a question that requested respondents to assess the level of importance to their respective national identities of a number of pre-determined alternatives (figure 4)<sup>5</sup>. The answers obtained in all countries allow us to glimpse, in the first place, the existence of a national identity with a high symbolic content. Between 97 % and 89 % of the population surveyed in all cases considered “respect for national symbols” to be “very important” or “somewhat important,” while “feeling very proud to be [a nationality]” was equally high, at 97 to 88 points. Nativism was also shown to be an important component of national identity in all participating countries: with scores ranging from 96 % to 89 %, respondents said that “being born in [the respective country]” was “very important” or “somewhat important. Between 92 % and 85 % of the population considered it “very important” or “somewhat important” to speak Spanish (Portuguese in the case of Brazil). An interesting exception to this general trend was Peru, where 68 % of the sample chose “very important” or

5. The specific formulation was: “People have different ideas about what it means to be [country demonym]. In your opinion, how important is each of the following to being [country demonym]?”. The response options were “very important”, “somewhat important”, “not very important”, “not important at all”.

“somewhat important”, while 30 % chose “not important” or “not important at all.” A final response, this time a manifestation of the political dimension of national identity, occurred within the high frequency group: “defending the country in case of war” was considered “very important” or “somewhat important” by percentages of the sample that fluctuated, in all cases, between 92 % and 84 %.

**Figure 4. The components of national identity**

How important is each of these aspects to being [nationality]? (%)



Sum of "very important" and "somewhat important" responses.

Source: prepared by Adriana Castañeda with data from the survey The Americas and the World 2014-2015.

The other response alternatives generated more heterogeneous reactions. For example, 88 percent of the population surveyed in Ecuador thought that “paying taxes” was “very important” or “somewhat important,” while at the other extreme, 69 % of the sample in Chile chose those options. “Believing that [the country] is better than other countries” generated positive responses from 87 % of the sample in Ecuador, but only 50 % in Argentina. It is also noteworthy that religion did not occupy a prominent place in the national identity of the population surveyed, as this aspect was considered “very important” or “somewhat important” by between 63 % and 42 % of the respondents in the different countries. The exception that should be highlighted here is the case of Brazil, where 81 % of the population considered “being Christian” as “very important” or “somewhat important”. Finally, “not supporting the United States” was considered “very important” or “important” by 52 % of the sample in Ecuador – at the positive end – and 32 % of the population

in Peru at the negative end. It should be noted that this was the only response that generated more rejection than acceptance, as it was considered “not very important” or “not important at all” by 59 % of the sample in Peru, 54 % in Mexico, and 52 % in Colombia, thus calling into question anti-Americanism as a constitutive element of national identities in Latin America.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results of the survey *The Americas and the World 2014-2015* outline a varied panorama of collective identities in Latin America. Firstly, the data point to the predominance of Latin American identity throughout the region. At the same time, they highlight the existence of a South American identity considerably extended to the south of the continent, which finds no equivalent in a North American identity in Mexico.

On this point, and with the perspective of developing a future research agenda, it is necessary to investigate, in the first place, the meaning of Latin American identity for the population of the region. If, as noted above, the identification of individuals with a supranational region increases according to the importance that the region has in their daily lives, knowing how “being Latin American” takes shape in people’s daily lives is essential to understanding this identity preference.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that Latin American identity is the oldest of the supranational identities explored, so its preeminence may well be explained by its long history. In this context, it is worth putting into perspective the high incidence of South American identity among the countries of that region. Although this study has attempted to relate supranational identity to the processes of regionalism and/or integration, the existence of a historical South American cultural identity (comparable to that of Latin America) cannot be ruled out.

With regard to the possible reconfiguration of the notion of Latin America from a South American axis, the data provided by the survey offer only a starting point. It will be necessary to compare the results of future surveys, in order to establish whether there is an increase in the incidence of South American identity and, more importantly, whether this increase - if it exists - occurs at the expense of Latin American identity.

This section on supranational identities cannot be closed without mentioning the case of Mexico, as a country that “broke ranks” with Latin America, precipitating an identity crisis in the rest of the region. Even though it is clear that trade integration with the United States and Canada has not so far translated into the emergence of a North American identity in Mexico, it is striking that a third of the Mexican population surveyed considered themselves “citizens of the world” rather than Latin Americans. The question could then be asked whether this distancing

from the rest of Latin America not only caused an identity crisis in the other countries of the subcontinent, but -more importantly- among the Mexican population itself.

Secondly, the results of *The Americas and the World 2014-2015* highlight an interesting relationship between national identity and local identity in virtually all the countries studied. While preference for national identity predominated in the face of mutually exclusive options, the possibility of expressing a dual identity (as [national] as well as [local]) elicited in most cases levels of positive response that were almost identical to those presented by the preference for national identity.

Besides confirming the notion of multiple identities coexisting in a not necessarily hierarchical relationship, these results show the persistence of localism and the strength of the lived territory as a source of identity. Although in the survey the local reference was not the “terroir” but the province, the results of the survey show that, whether in federal systems as in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, or in unitary systems as in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, sub-national units are much more than administrative entities and instill a powerful sense of belonging. This is particularly striking in the case of Colombia, where a strong local identity was manifested and a preference for a dual identity prevailed over a national one, thus highlighting the need to further explore the relationship between the nation and the subnational units in that country.

Finally, the results of the survey seem to delineate, in all the countries surveyed, national identities of a preeminently cultural and psychological nature. This is suggested by the high importance attributed to factors such as national pride, respect for patriotic symbols and language, which were expressed with considerably higher values than factors of a political/civic nature.

Without that being its objective, the question concerning national identity also yielded interesting data that allows us to problematize, from another perspective, Latin American identity. As already mentioned, the notion of Latin America that emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proposed a substantial differentiation of the region from the United States. This differentiation was fundamentally articulated around cultural elements: the Spanish and Portuguese languages and the Catholic religion. In the results of *The Americas and the World 2014-2015*, except in the case of Peru, language continues to occupy a predominant place as an identity factor; however, religion does not. Moreover, for the majority of the population surveyed, rejection of the United States is not a major element in the constitution of their national identity. In the absence of Catholicism as a factor of identity, and in view of the dissolution of the figure of the United States as that significant “other” against which the region was traditionally defined, the content of Latin American identity in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is presented as a fascinating puzzle.

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