

## Globalization and Geopolitics: the Fate of Local Structures

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### Abstract

Apart from globalisation of finance, of production, of commerce, of information and communication growing dynamism of multilateral co-operation is one of the most concise occurrences in Latin-America.

The whole American continent experiences present-day a real boom of economic integration — what is shown by the relative initial success of MERCOSUR, by the installation of NAFTA since 1994, by the reactivation of CARICOM and the configuration of CARIFORUM as well as the reactivation of the ANDENPAKT and the present negotiations preparing the configuration of the ALCA starting in 2005 — not to forget new turns of negotiations within the context of WTO.

Even without considering the pros and cons in the discussion about this all-embracing process of globalisation in nowadays world, it is obvious that the Latin-American subcontinent has got an important strategic significance — military considering playing only a secondary role compared to the growing importance of economy and political influence.

The following three important tendencies characterise the Latin-American situation:

- A new stage of regional and sub-regional integration
- The process of democratisation and reform politics within the subcontinent, political and economic development more or less synchronous
- Diversification in foreign
- Affairs

As most of the treaties on integration deal with economic affairs it seems important to consider that free trade itself is no instrument to achieve a widespread effect of improving conditions of life within a given society. Free trade only stimulates economic growth with regard to efficiency, modernisation and competition.

Which are the advantages and disadvantages of the integration boom in Latin America?

Pro and contra viewpoints are wide ranged and use far different arguments about validity and sense.

Within the context of the conference it is not the object to analyse all possible viewpoints, but to show — referring to some examples and dynamic aspects which show the strategic importance of the region, and to some political decisions which revalue and define it - the effects of those decisions on the conditions of life of the population in the local municipalities.

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