

Latin America: The examination of a particular territory

A. Andreotti, A. Orefice¹

Introductory Notes:

The international order is made up of a set of relations between states, which have proved extremely unstable throughout history. Well, the role of the hegemonic powers appears fundamental for reordering the directives of the global establishment through the establishment of diplomatic plots (Gruppi, 1977). Nonetheless, the extreme variety of emerging countries and the nihilism of security that prevails in foreign policy do not always allow diplomacy to fulfill the role for which it was designated. In fact, the adoption of different political models can lead to exhausting power relations, while the excessive interference of the main actors can generate subordination and *dependencia* (Marini, 1993). In this regard, the object of analysis of this paper is the Latin American quadrant, a reality that has always been threatened by the US decision-making autonomy, as well as by a highly fragmented socio-institutional framework.

Undoubtedly, in order to analyze the wounds (unfortunately still open) of the countries south of the Río Bravo, it is necessary to consider a broad chronological framework, dwelling on the correlations between the internal and external fractures that made South America a marginal and torn actor. The temporal register analyzed ranges from the post-war period to the present day, since, as stated by Harmer, the Cold War underwent a "Latin Americanization", relaunching the role of the Third World as a rising star in geopolitics. It continues to play a role as a beacon of attraction and polarization both for bipolar interests and as a charismatic revolutionary hub. In addition, the extreme heterogeneity and the strong rivalry within the area have fueled that strong rift between endogenous and exogenous criticalities. This pluralism of causes has helped to write the fate of an inexorable decline for the Southern Cone (Giannattasio, 2020).

In this way the work is structured in two sections:

The first paragraph considers a historical-political analysis of the events that have affected South America. First, an interpretation of the relationships between the various administrations of the White House and the quadrant in question is proposed. Specifically, the change in attitudes assumed in line with a rapidly evolving international framework is highlighted. Secondly, a comparative view of internal political systems was adopted, as well as the establishment of strict dictatorships hindered by the spread of guerrilla warfare and local revolts. Thirdly, the focus is on the area's difficulty in identifying areas of autonomy to initiate forms of regionalism, with terrible social and economic consequences. Fourthly, an analysis of equalization of the relationships and interests of the new international players in the quadrant is addressed, starting from the emerging Popular Republic of China and the community bodies. In conclusion, the paper investigates the response to an enigmatic period of uncertainty that hangs over the entire global order. Especially in South America the ghosts of perplexity manifest themselves in social instabilities, further aggravated by the emergencies linked to the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

In the second paragraph, first of all, a review of the drug marketing processes between the US and European markets is carried out. The two present themselves as markets that are completely distant from a geographical point of view, yet interconnected both in terms of consumption and the practices adopted. On the contrary, in the second place the theme of the fight against and contrast to the criminal phenomenon is analysed. On the one hand, what has been put in place by the European Union and the United Nations Organization by both institutions and specialized agencies is reported. On the other hand we find the commitment of individual citizens in associations, or with the support of some of the European type united by ideals of legality and social justice. In addition, the fight against crime does not only concern the fight against the commercialization of narcotic substances, but also the phenomenon of the disappeared (*desaparecidos*), a practice consequent to the one mentioned above.

¹Alessandro Andreotti is the author of paragraph n.1, Aniello Orefice is the author of paragraph n.2.

The Wounds of South America: Between Heavy Inheritances and “Refeudalization”.

The Latin American subcontinent has always represented the other side of the coin of US domination in the global arena, as Washington's "backyard". Furthermore, the area is as extensive and heterogeneous as it is not cohesive to manage a process of regionalization and autonomy.

First of all, between the 1930s and 1940s the relationship between the North and South of the American continent was mainly one of economic contingency, in fact the Roosevelt administration created a model of cooperation and support through the Export/Import Bank and the *Agencia Federal de Préstamos*. The basic objective was to give strong responses to the crisis of 1929, as well as to extend the shock wave of the New Deal also in Latin America. Furthermore, the US government withdrew its troops from Haiti, to make the climate more and more favorable (Carmagnani, 1975). However, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's foreign agenda of little meddling and a common economic program was reneged with the outbreak of the Cold War. Not surprisingly, Pettinà observed that the change in attitude of the USA towards the geopolitical arena occurred in the perspective of communist containment. The main consequence was the abandonment of the isolationism of the Monroe Doctrine to adopt a model obsessed with international dynamics and much more active in foreign policy.

With Truman's passage to the presidency, Washington's role as hegemonic actor was vindicated, therefore his (essential) presence was confirmed to manage the fate of international relations. In this way, the geopolitics of aid proved to be well projected towards areas of interest, such as Greece, Turkey, Egypt and India, while towards South America it was limited to an attitude of economic planning and protectionism. This behavior also influenced the most active bodies, such as the *Comisión Económica para América Latina* (CEPAL) of Raúl Prebisch, causing the first echoes of nationalism, which subsequently resulted in aggressive right-wing populisms (Pettinà, 2018). Specifically, Truman decided to apply a specular model to that of the industrialization and development of the 1930s/40s, instead it moved towards an embedded liberalism that favored the development of the US private sector (Del Pero, 2010). On balance, the launch of the Truman doctrine in line with the bipolar logic radically marked the fate of relations between the two countries, paying no attention to economic issues, but rather to the political stability of the Southern Cone, since the alternation of government between communists and nationalists aroused many concerns (Bethell et al, 2005).

The pressing interference was confirmed as a constant throughout the twentieth century, intervening directly on the Latin American political design, for example through the signing of the Interamerican Treaty of reciprocal assistance during the Rio Conference (1947), the establishment of the ECLAC (GuerraBorges, 1997) and above all through the establishment of the Organization of American States during the Bogotá Conference (1948). In confirmation of this, in 1954 the White House supported the nationalist coup d'état in Guatemala, while in 1964 it sent more than 23,000 soldiers to the Dominican Republic to contest popular uprisings (Galgani, 2007). The “*anti-desarrollismo*” of the Mann doctrine favored the rise to power of conservative elites, despotic oligarchies or military juntas which undermined the protection of human rights. In fact, in Brazil in 1965 there was the settlement of Castel Branco, which exercised the “doctrine of national security” (López, 1987) through summary arrests and intimidation of political opponents. A bloody policy of repression was also adopted in Argentina, where the dictatorship of the *gorillas* opened the phase of military and nationalist governments, such as the one consolidated by Onganía who governed from 1964 to 1973 (Pappagallo, 2017). Relative to other countries, they were infected by the totalitarian virus from the 1960s until the end of the 1970s, as happened in Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay (Leal, 2003).

On the other hand, the torn political framework also featured a strong presence of left-wing parties. The latter proved to be the authors of the guerrillas that spread throughout the whole territory of the New World starting from the Cuban fuse. The insurgent movements led by the *barbudos* overthrew Batista's government by establishing a programmatic alliance with Moscow, in fact on April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro managed to install numerous agents among the Soviet KGB (Pettinà, 2020). The evolution of *fuoquismo* in the Latin American quadrant stimulated the process of transforming Cuba into a powerful ally of the liberation movements of the Third World, or rather into a beacon of attraction for other local revolutionary realities, even if they did not share the same international vocation of the island. In this wake, further guerrillas and conflicts developed, as happened in Peru, where the peasant movement of Cuzco led by Hugo Blanco fought against colonialism and the rule of the military. The bloodiest and bloodiest scenario was certainly Colombia, a victim of General Pinilla's regime from 1953 to 1958. The collapse of the authoritarian regime decreed the end of the waves of

"violencia", thanks to the strong opposition of Manuel Marulanda's FARC². A strong influence of the communist party was also played out in Venezuela, where the left kept alive the "struggle on two fronts", i.e. by supporting the *guerrillas* for a possible *coup d'état*, but not by renouncing political action for "a government of democratic peace" for the purpose of constituting a coalition between the *Partido revolucionario nacional*, the *Avanguardia popular* and the *Frentedemocrático nacional*. (Pappagallo, 2017). Nonetheless, the various revolutionary movements were short-lived due both to the ferocious grips of dictatorships and to the great changes in international relations. Paradoxically, in this period relations between the Southern Cone and Washington improved thanks to the Kennedy presidency, author of a much more careful political agenda than the "backyard". In this regard, the democratic president produced the Alliance for Progress, an economic development program of 20 billion in 10 years, thanks to which schools and hospitals were built, as well as fiscal and agricultural reforms (Galgani, 2007).

Despite this, Kennedy's presidency lasted a few years and the countries south of the Río Bravo were relegated once again to a marginal and secondary position in the geopolitical arena. With the succession of Nixon and Ford administrations first, and then Carter and Reagan, the White House confirmed its interest in exploiting the Latin American area exclusively to prevent the *Frente de liberación nacional* from gaining the upper hand in Guatemala and the *Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias* favored the proliferation of communism in Central and South America (Leogrande, 1988). The difficulty in identifying margins for maneuver for the Latin American actor also stemmed from a global scenario threatened following the oil shocks unleashed by the Arab-Israeli war of Yom Kippur. The phenomenon of stagflation and the establishment of a total embargo against the United States only compromised the already serious situation. Ultimately, the 1970s translated into a "lost decade" for AL (Giannattasio, 2020). In fact, as Pettinà observed, the thirty-three countries of the area never experienced a period of détente, above all due to violent coups d'état such as that of Pinochet, strategically managed by *Operación Cóndor*, or with the Videla settlement in Argentina from 1976 to 1983, periods also marked by the war against England for control of the *Islas Malvinas* (Pettinà, 2018).

The concatenation of these factors contributed to an asphyxiating condition of *dependencia*, opening the doors to the need to initiate autonomous mechanisms of concertation also with respect to the US giant. Among the various attempts to revitalize the economic sphere, it is necessary to indicate the establishment of the SECA (*Latin American Economic System*) and the signing of the Treaty of Montevideo (1980) to access *acuerdos de alcance parcial* characterized by an integrative and bilateral structure, as well as finalized by the desire to stimulate dialogue within the area through the *Asociación Latinoamericana de integración* (ALADI) (Marini, 1993). Within this body, two further forms of regional integration were born, the *Comunidad Andina de las Naciones* (CAN) and MERCOSUR (Raffiotta, 2022). As regards the second organization, it derived from the initiative of Brazil and Argentina to establish a single market, in such a way as to facilitate the transition to democracies, as well as the possibility of incorporating foreign capital more easily. This process of inclusion was completed between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the second millennium with the entry of Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador (Raffiotta, 2022). Nonetheless, the trade balance showed sporadic and insignificant changes with respect to foreign trade, further worsened by the "onerous agreements" entered into following the structural adjustment policies. The consolidation of the "Washington consensus" decreed the launch of programs to fight public debt, at the cost of introducing macroeconomic measures aimed at helping "virtuous" countries (Giannattasio, 2020). The circumstance that emerged or constituted once again a test case for the Southern Cone, victim of the umpteenth autonomous decision of the international organizations, once again the regionalization process was postponed. With regard to this, between the 1980s and 1990s various strategies were devised and applied aimed at relaunching an "*abiertoregionalismo*", which therefore was not limited exclusively to internal cooperation, but which unfolded on foreign axes, thanks to the constitution of free trade areas. On this example, the PICE (*Programa de integración y cooperación económica*) was formulated in 1985, while five years later, with the *Acta de Buenos Aires*, an attempt was made to revitalize the entire economic-financial system. (Giannattasio, 2020).

And yet, during the end of the Cold War it was not the external ruptures that weakened the processes of cohesion, but the strong internal divergences. The ethnic, cultural and linguistic commonality does not

²Asindicated by Pappagallo O. (2017) *Verso il nuovo mondo. Il PCI e l'America Latina (1945-1973)*, Franco Angeli, Milano, p.178 the years of the waves of "violencia" between 1948 and 1953 caused the death of about 300,000 people.

compensate for the economic, commercial and political divide that fragmented the subcontinent (Ruiz, 2020)³. With regard to social conditions, two strata arose in those years, firstly the “*nuevos pobres*”, i.e. the former middle classes engaged in import and export services who had unfortunately lost their status (Partes, Hoffman, 2003). Secondly, the “*desparecidos humanos*”, or the people defined as “*superfluous*”, who were unable to fully integrate into a now globalized world (Bauman, 2005). Among the various emblems of the socio-economic rift there was the Argentine crisis of 2001, the *peso* underwent a serious devaluation causing the fall in financial affairs from 57% to 17% between 1984 and 2001 (Svampa, 2008). The *pink tide* that struck Buenos Aires derived from a long economic process, which began with the introduction of the *ley de la convertibilidad* in 1991 by the Menem government and by the Minister of Economy Domingo Cavallo. The provision in question established a fixed exchange rate system between the *peso* and the dollar, based on the 1:1 value ratio, in this way the expansive monetary policy of the Argentine Central Bank was reduced, yet inflation maintained stable values of 0.5% for all year round. The collapse of the financial system occurred in 2001, when President De la Rúa adopted the “*Coralito*” law, which prevented citizens from withdrawing more than \$250 in cash per week, as well as freezing money transfers abroad. The response of the International Financial Institutions was drastic, they decided to stop funding and repeal the *ley de la convertibilidad*. The results of the disintegration were evident in a very short time, the GDP contracted by 11 % in 2002, while the unemployment rate grew from 14.8% (1998) to 22.5% (2001) (Lucernoni, 2019). With regard to the consequences on the social level, they were inevitable, there was an intensification of the phenomena of racism and gender violence, from this point of view, the sociologist Quijano used the term “*longue durée*” to indicate the constant adoption of xenophobic logics in the subcontinent. The suprematism of the *blancos* was embodied in conservative and traditional values, applying a doctrine of “we against them”, hence the segregation and social gentrification typical of numerous governments, such as the Temer one which excluded Afro-Brazilian members and women from the own executive, therefore the Bolivian separatist movement of the *Unión Juvenil Cruceñista* claimed independence from the Republic (Kaltmeier, 2019). Consequently, in the electoral sphere, public opinion tended towards the left-wing sides, such as those of Chávez in Venezuela, Correa in Ecuador and Morales in Bolivia, authors of important political agendas of welfare, independence from Washington and social integration (Kaltmeier, 2019). In this regard, organizational processes intensified in 2008, such as the establishment of the *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (UNASUR) to which twelve states adhered and the *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC) made up of thirty-three countries (Giannattasio, 2020). The main objective was to shift the center of gravity towards the European Union and the USA, assuming the features of a third pole on the international scene. Nonetheless, a new actor immediately showed interest in the countries south of the Río Bravo, the Popular Republic of China. The latter, as the area's second trading partner, continued to import soybeans from Argentina and Venezuelan oil in exchange for infrastructure and jobs, as well as transferring high technology and know-how (Ruiz, 2020). Even today, Beijing is repropounding the logic it used in Africa, while the other Asian actor, India, uses a less incisive soft power technique, as it is limited to cultural and psychological aspects (Gladys and Dussort, 2020). The multilateral structure that characterizes the new international order has made the subcontinent an interesting territory also in the eyes of the Russian Federation, which has formulated a triangular cooperation model, developing the Caracas-Moscow-Brasilia axis, facilitated by the historical friendship that binds Vladimir Putin in Maduro (Palamara, Scocozza, 2020). Although the attention shown by Moscow and the People's Republic of China is very strong, these new geopolitical partnerships in the South American quadrant have been limited to a mere perspective of compromise and pressure on the White House, unlike the European Union.

Regarding EU policy, between 2014 and 2020 it sent 3.6 billion euros in the form of official development aid and more than 1.2 billion euros in humanitarian assistance over the last twenty years. Furthermore, the EU has adopted various strategies to implement a common agenda in South America, for example through a series of free trade and cooperation agreements. In this cooperative wake, economic association agreements were signed with Mercosur on 28 June 2019 to eliminate 91% of duties on European productions to the New World, while Norway established a privileged axis with Caracas through the “Inter Contact Group Venezuela” to facilitate the democratization process (Petrocelli, 2020). Subsequently, on 27 March 2020 agreements were entered into for the resolution of commercial disputes, including the Multi-Party

³As reported by De Ferranti D., Guillermo E., Francisco HG, Walton M. (2004) *Inequality in Latin America. Breaking with History?*, Washington DC, World Bank A further serious problem affecting Latin America was inequality, in fact at the end of 1990 the Gini index of the area marked 0.522, while the threshold of Western Europe was 0.342 and the Asian one was 0.412, which encouraged crime and drug trafficking phenomena.

Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement with the aim of strengthening the network of agreements and political and economic partnerships. On the Italian side, the “Iila” has favored the involvement of the *Banca de Desarrollo* with small and medium-sized European enterprises, while from a community point of view the “Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition” has been adopted, thanks to which 50 million euros have been allocated to support agriculture and renewable energy.

As for the US position, it has continued to pose a strong threat to the “backyard”. First of all, it is necessary to point out the evolution of an ambiguous foreign policy already with Barack Obama, who during his inauguration referred to the recovery of “lost space”, yet he proved to be indifferent to the military coup in Honduras, besides to confirm a hostile attitude with the unanimous withdrawal of Cuba’s expulsion from the OAS (Guida, 2020). Another promise never kept was the resolution of the Guantanamo question, emblem of the “militarization” of the area. Undoubtedly, the strong presence of drug trafficking and organized crime have never facilitated relations, on the contrary they have been the privileged springboard for the ultra-conservative Republicans, and for those like Donald Trump who immediately adopted a unilateral posture. The construction of the wall, the suspension of Temporary protected status (despite Congressional opposition) and the expulsion of 700,000 migrants were among the most aggressive measures applied by the White House (Nocera, Trento, 2013). A still open parenthesis remains that of the new democratic administration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, since it is characterized by an ideology and a language very distant from the previous one. The choice of a government team also made up of Blinken as the new Secretary of State (and no longer of the ultra-conservative Pompeo), highlights the will to carry out a “great reset” with the past. Furthermore, to clarify, the new presidency has expressed its willingness to invest 4 billion dollars for the development of the AL, in addition to carrying out development programs for the Amazon and determining the demolition of the wall of shame in Peru (Matteuzzi, 2021). Nonetheless, the US reputation can disturb the Latin American political classes, compromising the stability of local governments. As for this, it is necessary to remember the change of government in Brazil, or the transition from Jair Bolsonaro to Lula, which has a more moderate and democratic orientation. Strong perplexity about the future of ties between the North and South of the continent also occurs in Caracas, where Biden must be able to reopen ties after Trump rejected the Maduro government in 2019, openly siding in favor of Guaido. Another change of the executive took place in Bogotá, where Petro became the new president, while the Mexican presidency of the left-wing populist Obrador, who has always been a friend of the Donald, remains in office. In addition, Biden must not neglect the economic aspect, considering the useful resource of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, a series of agreements to eliminate duties and protect investments and services, as well as evaluating its possible extension in Guatemala, Panama and Honduras. (Walton, 2021).

In conclusion, it is necessary to highlight the cyclical and repetitive role of history; the strong social and political recession that is fragmenting the New World re-proposes the direction towards an inexorable decline. Obama's words were a clear reference to the speech that gave birth to the Truman doctrine, decreeing an uncomfortable US presence in the Latin American political design, while Trump's re-proposition of a unilateral logic was equally frightening, as he took numerous decisions autonomously and in an unscrupulous manner, as George W. Bush did.

As regards the retrogression caused by the verticalization of power and the re-presentation of anti-democratic governments (Crouch, 2008), Kaltmeier spoke of “refeudalization”. The cause of this involution must be found in the structure of an unequal economic model, where 1 % of the population controls the remaining 99%, so as reported by Krysmanski “*el imperio de los multi-millionarios se está transformando en un trans-capitalismo con estructuras neo-feudales*” (Krysmanski, 2015). Therefore, as in a system based on feudalism, today power in South America appears decentralized in favor of private companies and corporations; a further affinity to be grasped with the Middle Ages it is the presence of mighty fortresses, therefore the militarization of the borders. The executive order which provided for the construction of the wall on the border with Mexico by the Trump presidency was in clear continuity with the 1994 operation *Gatekeeper* of the then president Clinton and Bush's Secure Fence Act of 2004 (Kaltmeier, 2019). In addition, the raising of mountains of concrete has also occurred in inland areas, such as the “wall of shame” which with its three meters high and ten kilometers in length separates the district of San Juan (Peru) from the poor population of Surco. (Boano, Desmaison, 2016). The process of marginalization and multiple segregation of the less well-off social spheres re-proposes a sad logic of “*citadel feudal*” (Marcuse, 1997) decidedly in contradiction with the collapse of the “iron curtain” which linked phenomena of globalization, cosmopolitanism and economic neoliberalism. The chaos that exists in AL is also due to the current pandemic situation, as a territory full of demographic waves. About 630 million people live in the area, Brazil is the most populous with 210 million inhabitants, hence the great problems of compliance with the rules of prevention of contagion such as that of social distancing, just think of the overcrowding of the *favelas* (10 million inhabitants). In the first months of 2021, the medical bulletin reported about 550,000 deaths; naturally, the shortage of diagnostic equipment is added to the already

present social difficulties, as well as the few medical-health resources. Furthermore, the different interpretation of the pandemic phenomenon should be remembered, which has increased the divergences between countries. In Chile, Argentina and Colombia, the state of emergency was decreed immediately, while the populist governments of Mexico and Brazil proved to be completely unconcerned, if not downright incredulous of the spread of the infection; in Caracas, however, the government requested 5 billion dollars from the International Monetary Fund, however not granted due to the lack of unanimous recognition of the Maduro government (Ayala, 2020).

The extreme uncertainty affecting the Latin American quadrant is also caused by the current Russia-Ukraine conflict, as the position taken by the countries south of the Río Bravo is not entirely clear, confirming the strong ideological differences within the territory. Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua, obviously Cuba and Maduro's Venezuela have openly sided in favor of Putin, in fact it was from Caracas that the first recognition of the independent pro-Russian republics took place. Governments opposed to the Russian attack have openly aligned themselves on the opposite front, such as Colombia as a strategic partner of Washington, Brazil under Lula, Chile and Uruguay under the conservative Lacalle. A third category can be identified in countries that have taken extremely ambiguous positions, such as Mexico and Argentina. In particular, Buenos Aires has adopted an intermediate line, as while asking for an end to the war, within the Organization of American States it did not want to condemn the Russian invasion, especially considering the friendship between Fernandez and Putin (Guanella, 2022). Undoubtedly the impacts triggered by the conflict have caused serious problems to the economy of the area, as it is firmly dependent on exports of raw materials (which make up 72% of the trade balance), on the other hand it is necessary to consider the strong impact of the increase in energy prices on oil. Yet, from this condition of disorder and chaos a great opportunity for redemption can arise for the area, above all considering the replacement of Russian energy resources with local ones, identifying the possibility of compromising and re-evaluating not only US relations-AL, but also the presence of South America itself on the international scene (Olarde, 2022).

Somehow, the concatenation of internal and external fragilities and international events have strongly condemned the Latin American area, inexorably wrote its fate and marked the start of a process of insecurity that would seem not yet to be concluded (Colombo, 2022).

Latin America: the comparison between illegality and legality.

Historically, the South American scenario has always been at the center of attention for the events concerning cooperation and the events connected to it. First colonization then followed by globalization, which contributed significantly in diversifying the population. On the one hand, a small, very rich élite, while on the other hand, we find the majority living in precarious and above all very poor conditions⁴. It is precisely in these conditions that the other side of cooperation takes root, the one marked by organized crime, which proliferates its business mainly through drug production and drug dealing, but also through the sad phenomenon of corruption. The situation does not concern a single state, but is a problem of the entire South American region, as can be seen from the table⁵ which shows the crime rates for the year 2022.

Nation	Crime index
Venezuela	83.58%
Guyana	68.93%
Peru _	67.10%
Brazil	67.01%
Argentina	64.14%
Bolivia	58.28%
Colombia	57.71%
Ecuador	57.24%
Chile	53.98%
Uruguay	51.44%
Ecuador	49.20%

In order to better understand the evolution of the drug market, it is advisable to carry out a historical excursus on the production, among the major producers there are Colombia, followed by Peru without forgetting Bolivia. From the point of view of marketing, from the post-war period until the mid-1980s, cocaine was mainly purchased from the US market. It happened differently in Europe, which with the advent of the new century (particularly in the first decade) recorded a consumption percentage of 40% on a par with the American continent. The remaining 20% was consumed mainly and increasingly in West Africa.

In the continuation of this essay, an examination of drug trafficking in the various territories in which it is marketed, and consequently taken on the entire globe, is reported.

Nowadays cocaine is trafficked from South to North America through practices that have changed over time, mainly due to the operations carried out by the police forces, but also to the reorganization of criminal groups. As for the transport of drugs from Colombia to Mexico or Central America, 70% is by sea across the Pacific Ocean, 20% across the Atlantic and only 10% via Venezuela and the Caribbean. The one passing through Mexican territory continues its journey by land towards the United States and Canada through the use of so-called "couriers". All this is due to the situation of the local organizations, which starting from the 90s of

⁴According to the 2022 ECLAC report (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) one of the five regional economic commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations states that 32.1% of the population lives in poverty and 13.1 in extreme poverty.

⁵The data is extracted from the Numbeo site, a Serbian crowd-sourced global databasethat analyzes various statistical data.

the last century began to grow, above all following the dismantling of the Colombian ones⁶. As for the social situation, according to government estimates, about 30,000 Mexicans have died in the last thirty years due to drug trafficking. Yet, parallel to these events we find another one that has much older roots, more specifically during the period of the South American dictatorships of the 1960s and 1980s, or rather the phenomenon of the *desaparecidos*⁷. Despite this, it is necessary to remember that to date this phenomenon has not passed from the scene, on the contrary it is still present in the South American territory, expanding with the “new missing”⁸. With regard to the different dynamics of cocaine between the South and North of the American continent, it is estimated that from 2008 to today, a quantity of at least 138 tons has been marketed to meet US demand. This enormous dose seems to have generated a turnover of 38 billion dollars, of which 1.1 billion went to farmers in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia alone. Paradoxically, the highest profits come from the United States, where the sale produces about 29.5 billion dollars through dealing between medium-level traders and final consumers.

As for the situation regarding the old container, with the advent of the 21st century it has undergone a radical change, specifically cocaine users have almost doubled from about 2 to the current 4.4 million, although the data is constantly growing. As reported by data published by the EMCDDA⁹, the average drug use today is lower than that taken in the United States. Despite this, it is necessary to indicate that there are three states above this average, namely Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy, where consumption is also greater than that of the United States. As far as Italy is concerned, in order to prevent and stimulate the repression of drug trafficking, the DCSA was created¹⁰, an inter-force body made up of personnel from the State Police, Guardia di Finanza and Armadei Carabinieri. As for trafficking, most of the drugs that arrive in Europe travel by sea through two important port calls, namely: the one to the south from Spain and Portugal, without forgetting the port of Gioia Tauro¹¹. Another equally important landing point on the European scene are the central-northern routes in the Netherlands and Belgium. Colombia remains the main trader of cocaine found in Europe. While that deriving from Peru and Bolivia are far more common than in US markets. For a short time, it must be said that between 2004 and 2007, the situation changed completely in the commercial sphere, including the African continent in the market. More precisely, two trade routes were created which included: on one side Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, on the other the Gulf of Benin with an extension up to Ghana and Nigeria. However, this situation was temporary and then waned mainly due to two reasons:

1. The advent of the so-called “Arab Spring”¹².
2. The “patrolling” in the trade routes of the pro-Arab groups of Al-Qaida.

During the first years of the new millennium it is estimated that the major marketing flows were destined for Europe, for a total of 14 billion dollars. To date, the amount is equal to 34 billion (about 124 tons), a level very similar to that of the United States. On the contrary, the European continent excels the American one in terms of the number of drug dealers, undoubtedly the figure is correlated to the lower per capita income.

⁶The Colombian mafia was mainly structured around two organizations defined as opposing cartels which managed the drug trade in the area and they were that of Medellín and that of Cali. The first was run by the best known South American drug trafficker Pablo Escobar while the other was under the management of Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela.

⁷Literally disappeared even if the most correct translation is forced disappearance, we refer to people who were arrested for political reasons, or even simply accused of having carried out “anti-government” activities by the police of the military regimes first in Argentina and Chile but also in other parts of the world.

⁸An example is what happened in Iguala in Mexico on 26 September 2014, where 6 students were killed, 25 injured and 43 kidnapped and not yet found.

⁹The European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction was established in 1993 in Lisbon. It is the European Commission's technical agency on drugs.

¹⁰Central Directorate for Anti-Drug Services created by the Central Directorate and Coordination Office of Police Activity for the Prevention and Repression of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances in implementation of article 7 of the law 685/75.

¹¹It insists on the gulf and the plain of the same name in the province of Reggio di Calabria. The port trade in this area is managed by the 'Ndrangheta (Calabrian mafia).

¹²Journalistic term that indicates the various civil revolutions that arose in North Africa between 2010 and 2012 which sometimes ended with the killing of the hegemonic state leaders.

However, it is necessary to indicate the strong social and institutional awareness of this scourge. The consequences concern: on the one hand the policies adopted by the European Union and by the various international bodies, on the other the citizens' associations and organizations characterized by ideals of legality and justice.

From a governmental point of view, alongside the individual states and the related internal law enforcement practices, we find an important activity carried out by the European Union and by the United Nations Organization. The policies adopted in the old continent in recent decades have mainly focused on two objectives:

1. the identification of a common solution to deal with drug trafficking;
2. the implications of drug marketing and consumption on public health and safety through the following points: recognition of the progress of the policies adopted; balancing drug supply and demand reduction; multidisciplinary argument in consideration of the transversality of the phenomenon; respect for human rights and ensure gender equality and health equality; participation and involvement of civil society. With regard to the other aspect, it concerns the fight against and the relative fight against drug trafficking through a multiannual strategy, first that of 2013-2020 and then the current one 2021-2025. It defines a political and priority framework of health through policies of security and social stability in synergy with three sectors of intervention: international cooperation, research, innovation and foresight, coordination, governance and implementation. From an operational point of view, European governance has established 85 measures summarized in 6 actions: strengthening security; drug demand reduction: prevention, treatment and support services; addressing drug-related harm; international cooperation; research, innovation, forecasting; coordination; governance and implementation.

As for European operations, among the specialized agencies there are:

1. EMCDDA European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction already analyzed previously;
2. EUROPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation is an agency of the European Union aimed at fighting crime in the territory of the Member States of the European Union, which became operational on 1 July 1999 with headquarters in The Hague;
3. FRONTEX the European Border and Coast Guard Agency is an agency entrusted with the functioning of the control and management system of the external borders of the Schengen Area¹³ and of the European Union based in Warsaw;
4. EUROJUST the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation is an agency of the European Union, made up of a prosecutor or a police officer for each Member State who form the "College of the organization" based in The Hague;
5. CEPOL the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training based in Budapest;

On the international scene, the government apparatus for analyzing and contrasting drug trafficking is much more complex, the most authoritative are:

- LOAD (Regional information and coordination center of Central Asia): based in Almaty, it is the organization that intends to eradicate illicit drug trafficking in the Central Asian area.
- CND (UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs) based in Vienna, is the central body responsible for guiding the strategy relating to drugs within the United Nations.
- IDEC (International Conference on Drug Enforcement): is an annual conference organized by the DEA (Joint Drug Agency), attended by high-level officials charged with identifying drug control strategies.
- INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization): based in Lyon, it pursues the objectives of ensuring and promoting the widest worldwide assistance among all police agencies.
- OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe): based in Vienna, it is a pan-European security organization which works to ensure stability, peace and democracy through political dialogue on shared values and practical activities which aim to have lasting effects.
- UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, based in Vienna.

Although it is a region very rich in natural assets, as well as boasting an enormous biodiversity, unfortunately conditions of poverty remain widespread, as it is the result of the lack of valid economic

¹³The 26 European countries of which 22 belonging to the European Union have abolished the borders.

opportunities. In a scenario where politics is often corrupt, organized crime finds the ideal context to proliferate, damaging the most vulnerable social groups. In fact, around 30% of global homicides take place in this territorial context, but also very serious violations of human rights such as: extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. This phenomenon has been defined by some scholars as the “co-opted reconfiguration of the state”¹⁴. In order to prevent and counter this situation, the organization ALAS (*America Latina Alternativa Social*) was created by Libera against the mafias, an international network made up of over ¹⁵60 organizations and associations¹⁶. They work to counter the criminal phenomenon, supporting the families of the victims, but also defending and promoting human rights through practices on the diffusion of the culture of peace, legality and social justice. In this regard, the assemblies, or the periodic meetings of all the actors involved within the system, are of fundamental importance. The first meeting was held in 2015, in Mexico City, where the Network also kicked off with the drafting of the “Common declaration of intent”, the latter establishing the cornerstones and operational contexts of the organizational structure. Subsequently, between 2017 and 2019 two other assemblies were organized, in Colombia (2017) and in Guatemala (2019), non-random places but which represent the presence of the international community in contexts tested by the violence of crime. These moments are a meeting space, as well as training with experts, as well as real artistic workshops and moments of leisure and reflection.

Here are the slogans chosen for the assemblies, linked to each other:

1. “*Tejiendorutas*” which means weaving routes;
2. “*Proyectandoimaginearios*” or designing imaginaries;

Another commitment to be disclosed is the one organized in Argentina between 7 and 13 November 2022 at the meeting of the IV general assembly of ALAS. The local context is fundamental as regards the fight against crime, as the “*Bien Restituido*” project was launched in Buenos Aires to facilitate synergy between LIBERA and Argentinean organizations for the purpose of dismantling the assets of organized crime by strengthening society to civil. On balance, the project appears feasible in the Southern Cone, since Argentina is among the signatories of the Palermo Convention¹⁷. The idea comes from the Italian experience of the social reuse of assets confiscated from the mafia.

However, it is also necessary to report other projects promoted by Don Ciotti's associations that have roots in South America such as:

- Flying projects: an articulation of 20 programs concerning different themes: social prevention of violence, gender equity, human rights and social anti-mafia.
- Germoglio network: active in the areas where violence is most deeply rooted, it also offers legal and psychosocial support to families who are victims of *desperaciónforzada*.
- Memory and Justice: Libera and the Italian-American international organization plays it between Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Among the main objectives are: to provide assistance and social reintegration for adolescents involved in criminal practices.

An experience of exchange and knowledge of the South American context in a different country of Latin America: “Groundabouts, the journeys of memory and commitment”, precisely in recent years the visits have been made to: Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador.

¹⁴ That is, the replacement of the rule of law, with real mafia systems, based on solid political and economic alliances, high levels of impunity and the rampant use of corruption.

¹⁵ It concerns those that carry out activities in the following states: Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Peru, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

¹⁶ Associations, names and numbers against the mafias founded by a Turin priest Don Luigi Ciotti in 1995, with the aim of soliciting consciences and creating an alternative community to that of the mafias.

¹⁷ It is the United Nations Convention signed in Palermo against transnational organized crime, and since its entry into force in 2003, it has seen the adhesion of 190 countries in the world.

Conclusions:

Ultimately it is possible to highlight the macabre transition of the Latin American subcontinent from the New World, a land extremely rich in resources, as well as endowed with a valid biodiversity, to an area where organized crime has taken control. Well, the constant instability of internal institutions, combined with a foreign policy framework compromised by the US giant, immediately undermined its possible national and international aspirations. Undoubtedly, the physiognomy of the Latin American quadrant appears today brutally torn by scars that never seem to heal. With reference to this, not even in the current framework are the optimal conditions outlined for the Southern Cone to be able to initiate processes of internal cohesion, given that the attacks on democracy are continuous. In addition, the entire West is projected towards a phase of value nihilism, which complicates the foreign vocation of South America. There is still a great difficulty for organizations involved in international cooperation to identify rapid and effective solutions to restore order in the territory. In fact, the sprawling diffusion of drug trafficking has managed to expand also through the means and men of the law, generating a real cooperation mirroring that of world bodies. In this way an even more enigmatic picture has emerged, causing strong perplexities about what is legal and what is not.

The hope is that the future conditions can be created for the countries south of the Río Bravo to relaunch their presence in the global arena, perhaps through the strategic use of their energy resources. Furthermore, the intensification of the United Nations operation appears necessary in order to consolidate the orientation towards democracy in these territories.

Bibliography and Sitography:

- [1]. Ayala F. (2020) *Il coronavirus in America Latina*, in "Treccani". Available at: https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlanter/geopolitica/II_Coronavirus_in_America_Latina.html
- [2]. Bauman Z.(2005) *Vidas desperdiciadas. La modernidad y sus parias*, Buenos Aires, Paidós.
- [3]. Bethell L., Roxborough I. (2005) *The Impact of the Cold War on Latin America* in M.P. Leffler D.S.P., *Origins of the Cold War: An International History*, Routledge, London.
- [4]. Boano C., Desmaison B. (2016) "Lima's 'Wall of Shame' and the gated communities that build poverty into Peru", in "The conversation". Accessed el 19 de abril de 2018.
- [5]. <http://theconversation.com/limas-wall-of-shame-and-the-gated-communities-that-build-poverty-into-peru-53356>.
- [6]. Briceno Ruiz J. (2020) "Unità nella diversità: la politica internazionale dell'America Latina nel nuovo millennio" in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L'America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell'ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [7]. Carmagnani M. (1975) *L'America Latina dal '500 a oggi: nascita, espansione e crisi di un sistema feudale*, Feltrinelli, Milano.
- [8]. Colombo A. (2022) *Il governo mondiale dell'emergenza. Dall'apoteosi della sicurezza all'epidemia dell'insicurezza*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano.
- [9]. Crouch C. (2008) *Postdemokratie*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.
- [10]. De Ferranti D., Guillermo E., Francisco H.G., Walton M. (2004) *Inequality in Latin America. Breaking with History?*, Washington DC, World Bank.
- [11]. Del Pero M. (2010) *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- [12]. Estay Reino J.(2014) *La integración latinoamericana y caribeña, desde los años cincuenta a la actualidad*, CLACSO, Buenos Aires.
- [13]. Friedman J.S. (2015) *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- [14]. Galgani P. (2007) *America Latina e Stati Uniti. Dalla dottrina Monroe ai rapporti tra George W. Bush e Chávez*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
- [15]. Giannattasio V. (2020) "Il processo di integrazione regionale: origini, sviluppi, criticità e potenzialità", in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L'America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell'ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [16]. Gruppi L. (1977) *Il concetto di egemonia in Gramsci*, Editori Riuniti, Roma.
- [17]. Guanella E. (2022) *Con o contro Putin? L'America Latina divisa sulla guerra in Ucraina*, ISPI. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/con-o-contro-putin-lamerica-latina-divisa-sulla-guerra-ucraina-33870>
- [18]. GuerraBorges A. (1997) *La integración económica de América Latina y el Caribe*, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Mexico, Distrito Federal.
- [19]. Guida A. (2020) "Continuità strategica, diversità di approcci: Stati Uniti e America Latina nel sistema post-bipolare" in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L'America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell'ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [20]. Harmer T. (2013) *El gobierno de Allende y la Guerra Fría interamericana*, Santiago, Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales.
- [21]. Kaltmeier O. (2019) *Refeudalización. Desigualdad social, económica y cultural política en América Latina en el temprano siglo XXI*, Universidad de Guadalajara, Bielefeld University Press.
- [22]. Kaltmeier O. (2017) *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of Heritage for Latin America. Heritage Politics and Nostalgia between Coloniality and Indigeneity* in "Entangled Heritages. Postcolonial Perspectives on the Uses of the Past in Latin America", Londres, Routledge.
- [23]. Kaltmeier O. (2015) *Colonialidad, nostalgia y patrimonio: conflictos sobre espacio, historia e identidad en el centro histórico de Lima*, in "Cruzando fronteras en las Américas. Las dinámicas de cambio en la política, la cultura y los medios. Fronteras discursivas: Migración, Resistencia, Patrimonio", n.99-116, Guadalajara, Universidad de Guadalajara.
- [24]. Krysmanski H. J. (2015) *Prozent-Das Imperium der Milliardäre*. Frankfurt am Main, Westend Verlag.

- [25]. Leal F. (2003) *La doctrina de la seguridad nacional: materialización de la Guerra Fría en América del Sur*, in “Revista de Estudios Sociales”, 15.
- [26]. Lechini G. (2020) “Le relazioni dell’America Latina con la Cina e l’India: verso nuovi orizzonti” in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L’America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell’ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [27]. Leogrande W. L. (1998) *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- [28]. Lucernoni M. (2019) *La terribile crisi argentina del 2011*, in “StartingFinance”. Available at: <https://startingfinance.com/approfondimenti/la-terribile-crisi-argentina-del-2001/>
- [29]. Manzo P. (2013) *Chávez, il caudillo che sfidò gli USA*, in “La Stampa”. Available at: <https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/2013/03/06/news/chavez-il-caudillo-che-sfido-gli-usa-1.36109521/>
- [30]. Marcuse P. (1997) *The Enclave, the Citadel, and the Ghetto: What has changed in the Post-Fordist U. S. City*, in “Urban Affairs Review” 33, núm. 2. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/107808749703300206>
- [31]. Marini R.M. (1993) *América Latina integración y democracia*, Nueva Sociedad Caracas.
- [32]. Matteuzzi M. (2021) *Biden e l’America latina*, in “Il Manifesto in rete”. Available at: <https://www.ilmanifestoinrete.it/2021/02/11/biden-e-lamerica-latina/>
- [33]. Neckel S. (2013) *Refeudalisierung. Systematik und Aktualität eines Begriffs der Habermas’schen Gesellschaftsanalyse*, Leviathan 41, núm. 1: 39-56.
- [34]. Nocera R. (2009) *Stati Uniti e America Latina dal 1823 a oggi*, Carocci, Roma.
- [35]. Nocera R., Trento A. (2013) *America Latina, un secolo di storia: dalla rivoluzione messicana a oggi*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [36]. Noel Dussort M. (2020) “Le relazioni dell’America Latina con la Cina e l’India: verso nuovi orizzonti” in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L’America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell’ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [37]. Olarte S. (2022) *L’impatto della guerra Russia-Ucraina in America Latina*, in “Msoithepost”. Available at: <https://www.msoithepost.org/2022/04/14/limpatto-della-guerra-russia-ucraina-in-america-latina/>
- [38]. Palamara G., Scocozza C. (2020) “La riscoperta di un interesse. Le relazioni russo-latinoamericane dopo la Guerra fredda” in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L’America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell’ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [39]. Pappagallo O. (2017) *Verso il nuovo mondo. Il PCI e l’America Latina (1945-1973)*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
- [40]. Petrocelli E. (2020) *America Latina e Unione Europea, un’agenda comune per il mondo che verrà dopo Covid-19*, in “America Latina in fermento”, CESPI. Available at: https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlante/geopolitica/II_Coronavirus_in_America_Latina.html
- [41]. Pettinà V. (2020) “Fratture esterne, fratture interne: l’America Latina nel sistema della Guerra Fredda”, in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L’America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell’ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma.
- [42]. Pettinà V. (2018) *Historiámínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico.
- [43]. Piketty T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press
- [44]. Portes A., Hoffmann K. (2003) *Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change during the Neoliberal Era*, in “Latin American Research Review”, 38, núm. 1: 41-82.
- [45]. Prebish R. (1949) *Desarrollo económico de América Latina y sus principales problemas*, CEPAL, Santiago de Chile.
- [46]. Quijano A. (2008) *Coloniality of Power: Eurocentrism and Social Classification* in “Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate”, n.181-224, Durham, Duke University Press.
- [47]. Rabe S.G. (1978) *The Elusive Conference: United States Economic Relations with Latin America 1945-1953*, in “Diplomatic History”, 2,3
- [48]. Raffiotta E. C. (2022) *L’UE e le altre organizzazioni di integrazione sovranazionale*, in T. S. Frosini, *Diritto pubblico comparato. Le democrazie stabilizzate*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- [49]. Svampa M. (2001) *Los que ganaron. La vida en los countries y barrios privados*, Buenos Aires, Biblos.
- [50]. Walton A. (2022) *Amici e nemici di Joe Biden in America Latina*, in “InsideOver”. Available at: <https://insideover.ilgiornale.it/politica/amici-e-nemici-di-joe-biden-in-america-latina.html>

- [51]. Wulzer P. (2020) “Un partenariato davvero strategico? Le relazioni tra Unione Europea e America Latina e i limiti della politica estera europea” in (a cura di) R. Nocera, P. Wulzer, *L’America Latina nella politica internazionale. Dalla fine del sistema bipolare alla crisi dell’ordine liberale*, Carocci editore, Roma
- [52]. <https://www.agenzianova.com/a/637fba9a672485.20453150/4153497/2022-11-24/america-latina-rapporto-cepal-nel-2022-poverta-ancora-al-di-sopra-del-livello-pre-pandemia>
- [53]. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-traffico-internazionale-di-droga-la-cocaina_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/
- [54]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/eu-drugs-policy/>
- [55]. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0708\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0708(01)&from=EN)
- [56]. <https://antidroga.interno.gov.it/attivita-istituzionale/1servizio/enti-internazionali/>
- [57]. <https://it.numbeo.com/criminalit%C3%A0/graduatoria-per-nazione?title=2021®ion=005>
- [58]. [https://www.libera.it/schede-63-centro e sud america](https://www.libera.it/schede-63-centro-e-sud-america)