

VYTAUTAS RUBAVIČIUS

Features of Latin American Civilizational Imagination: Liberation Theology and Environmental Consciousness

Summary

The rise of the civilizational imagination is being observed around the world, increasingly influencing the geopolitics of world powers. The article highlights and explores some of the essential features of the civilizational imagination that strengthens the identity of the Latin American civilizational structure – the liberation theology and environmental consciousness and thinking. The cultural strata of the countries of this region are characterized by political activism, a powerful and diverse expression of philosophical, cultural, social and theological thought, as well as artistic creation. Thus, the distinguished features are characterized also by a political dimension. The imagination that creates a civilizational identity revolves within certain geo-cultural historically relational boundaries, marked on the one hand by ancient Andean civilizations and civilizational formations that include the Amazon Basin, and on the other by

Mesoamerican civilizations whose influence spreads far North through Indian tribes and their beliefs. Environmental consciousness and thinking is closely linked to the struggle to protect the lifestyles of indigenous tribes and nations, as locals are best placed to cohabitate with the environment. Nature and fauna are seen as spiritual, so social relations include communication with the environment. The article argues that the liberation theology and the growing environmental consciousness associated with it help to raise awareness at the political level of the significance of the lifestyles and worldviews of indigenous tribes and peoples in the face of environmental challenges, and their knowledge needs to be harnessed. These features of the civilizational imagination in relation to the great Western North American civilizational formation help to elevate their more general civilizational distinctiveness.

Keywords: civilizational imagination, environmental consciousness, hybridity, liberation theology, Latin American civilization, *mestizaje*, neo-collonialism, socialism.