Hemisphere in Flux:

International Relations, Multilateralism and Prospects for Democratic Deepening of Inter-American Affairs

A research workshop convened by CLALS, INCT/INEU and CRIES
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American University

A partnership between American University's Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, the *Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia para Estudos sobre os Estados Unidos*, (INCT/INEU) and the *Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales* (CRIES), has launched a multi-year program of research, debate and publication devoted to illuminating the future of international relations in the Western Hemisphere. In that context, an October 13-15 workshop at AU brought together leading scholars from throughout the Americas to discuss agendas for research on the topic and begin to explore avenues for future inquiry. This document summarizes in very broad strokes some of the key features of the discussion.

Following introductory presentations by the program organizers, representing the three sponsoring institutions, the meeting was divided into the following thematically-focused sections: 1. *Country – level approaches to the Hemisphere amidst growing multi-polarity;* 2. *The proliferation and reconfiguration of multilateral organizations;* 3. *Regional Mechanisms across key issue areas;* 4. *Human Rights & Democracy; and* 5. *The role of civil society in foreign policies and in regional organizations*. The remainder of this report reviews the discussion in sequence.

1. *Country – level approaches to the Hemisphere amidst growing multi-polarity*

An initial session focused on how countries in the Hemisphere are reconfiguring their policies toward bilateral and multilateral relations, the specific decision-making processes that are shaping policymaking, and the domestic and external factors that produce particular approaches to foreign policies directed at Hemispheric affairs.

Brazil

Professor Tullo Vigevani of INCT/INEU and the State University of Sao Paulo argued that Brazil's current foreign policy is shaped by the dynamics of US' regional decline and a commitment to the promotion of multilateral organizations. Brazilian policy makers believe that the United States is overextending its capabilities, and are considering the challenges and opportunities this might bring to Brazilian foreign policy. Current policy recognizes the key global and regional role of the US, but also its decline in importance amidst a re-structuring of the international system.

Brazil has traditionally sought to strengthen multilateral bodies and promoted the participation of other Latin American countries in them. The question for Brazilian policy makers is the fate of multilateral bodies in the context of fading US leadership and capabilities. In the particular issue of human rights protection, Brazil's leadership believes that the continuity of the processes led by the OAS's bodies can be maintained only if human rights play the same central role in new regional organizations such as UNASUR and CEALC. Instead of weakening the relevant OAS bodies, an active role protecting human rights from other organizations could magnify the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

In sum, Brazilian foreign policy is shaped by the ideas about the reconfiguration of power in the hemisphere and the opportunities for Brazil, as well as a commitment to strengthening new regional organizations without weakening the OAS.

United States

AU Professor Philip Brenner presented an outline of how the US makes foreign policy toward Latin America, a policy that he summarizes as one of benign neglect. US policy in towards Latin America under President Barack Obama has been characterized by a "wait and see" approach. The administration has been content to watch as change occurs in the region, and to hope for the best outcomes in terms of ambiguously defined US interests. Five factors explain this policy.

Factor I - Lack of Interest: There has been an historic lack of attention to the region. The

United States generally has focused on Latin America when it perceives a security threat emanating from the region, and presently there is none. Policy makers are consumed by perceived threats and conflicts in other regions of the world. President Obama himself has shown little personal interest in Latin America.

Factor II - Organizational Dynamics: The executive branch has had difficulty formulating a coherent policy. The White House has insisted on taking the lead, but political advisers have dominated decision-making. The State Department's Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) bureau was hampered by the Senate's hold on key appointments well into 2009, and Secretary of State Clinton has tended to rely *ad hoc* on officials outside of WHA.

Factor III – Congress: In the absence of executive branch initiatives, the U.S. Congress seized the opportunity to shape policy toward the region. Cuba policy has been dominated by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Florida), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Sen. Roberto Menendez (D-New Jersey). Ultra-conservative members of Congress influenced U.S. policy towards Honduras in the wake of the 2009 coup.

Factor IV – The Latino Lobby: The Latino community in the United States is divided: Cuban-Americans focus on Cuba itself or on countries they perceive to be allies of Cuba. But the largest segments of ethnic Latinos tend not to focus on foreign policy, and concern themselves with domestic issues, such as the economy and jobs, civil rights and immigration. Even when non-Cuban Latinos take up foreign policy issues, the Obama Administration has tended to ignore them, taking granted that they will not vote for Republicans.

Factor V—Limited Capacity: The United States has fewer resources to shape policy in Latin America than was the case in the past. In addition to budget deficits, the US military is engaged in other parts of the world. USAID funds to the region have decreased, and are concentrated in a few countries. Latin American countries have been able to diversify their trade relations instead of relying largely on the United States, and investments from China and from countries within the region, such as Brazil and Mexico,

have reduced US influenced. The proliferation of multilateral institutions within the region that exclude the United States also reduces the levers of influence available to the United States. These changes have limited the US capacity to act, and American quiescence in part reflects recognition of US limitations.

These five factors have produced the "benign neglect" policy toward Latin America, which is not likely change if these conditions endure.

Chile

According to AU Professor Carlos Portales, a former Chilean diplomat, during the 17 years of the Pinochet era Chile remained isolated from global affairs, though it maintained a policy of trade openness in its key bilateral relations. Without altering those relations, Chile engaged in a number of global issues after 1990, with human rights at the forefront. Along with human rights, Chile seeks to foster democracy, regional economic and political integration, and security. Chile promoted the development of non-structured security schemes in South America, in line with the recently created South American Council of Defense. In terms of trade, Chile finds Latin America as a consumer of Chilean manufactured products and capital, and praises the importance of the region accordingly. The overarching point framing the discussion is that transition to democracy has led Chilean foreign policy to shift from isolation to partial engagement with the region and its multilateral institutions.

Mexico

According to Manuel Suarez Mier, an AU Professor with experience as a senior official in the Mexican Foreign Service, Mexico's geopolitical location and history are critical for understanding its policies toward the Hemisphere. As the only country in the region that has lost half of its territory, Mexico has vigorously promoted equality among states, non-intervention, and legal restrictions on the use of force. At the same time, Mexico seeks to reinforce an image of solid sovereignty *vis a vis* the United States. Despite US' retaliation suspending development aid, for example, Mexico never suspended relations with Cuba, gaining a good standing with the domestic left.

Mexico recognizes, however, that its relationship with the US is critical for advancing national interests, and thus plays a double game of showing independence and negotiating cooperation with the US. Cooperation includes two of the broadest agreements that the US holds with any Latin American country: NAFTA and Plan Merida.

Regarding Latin America, Mexico has repeatedly played a leadership role, as evident in its efforts to influence Central American conflicts and its participation in the Contadora Group.

The decision-making processes of Mexican foreign policy were traditionally restricted to the President, who was in charge of setting goals, strategies, and resources. In contrast, since the end of the PRI's domestic political hegemony, some presidents have delegated the planning of foreign policy.

In conclusion, the challenges and opportunities of Mexico's proximity with the United States are major factors in shaping its foreign policy. Mexico's relations with Latin America, on the other hand, have had important moments of engagement, but they have been restricted to critical circumstances in the region.

Venezuela

Andrés Serbín, an expert on Venezuelan foreign policy and director of CRIES, argued that many aspects of Hugo Chavez's foreign policy are a continuation of older Venezuelan practices. Oil diplomacy is not new in Venezuela. In fact, Chávez's foreign policy represents continuity in at least three areas. First, the use of economic resources to strengthen diplomacy has long been common practice. Second, the President has conventionally been the key, and often the only, decision-maker. Third, international activism has traditionally been exaggerated for the size and resources of the country.

Despite the continuities, changing domestic circumstances have produced shifts in

foreign policy making. Chavez faces (and propels) a high level of social polarization, a steep decline of political parties, constant resources from petroleum exports, exclusion of the opposition from the political process, and a vast concentration of power in the hands of the president.

His foreign policy has been oriented to geopolitical and ideological diplomacy, which replaced the policy of economic diversification of previous governments. Such diplomacy is framed under the "Bolivarian Dream" of integration based on the values of his administration. Key components include the rejection of the United States role in the Americas, a diplomacy targeted toward groups on the left, and competition to other models of regional integration. Chavez has concentrated foreign policy making in the Executive even more than was the case under his predecessors. He has seriously weakened the diplomatic corps and appears to want to eliminate it altogether in favor of political assignments.

In sum, even if the use of the state's resources for diplomacy is not new in Venezuela, its ideological and regional dimensions are central to Hugo Chavez's foreign policy.

Colombia

Professor Arlene Tickner of the Universidad de los Andes suggested that the new Santos administration represents more continuity than change from the preceding administration of President Alvaro Uribe. She emphasized that the critical factor for Colombia's recent foreign policy has been its internal security situation, and that the main strategy introduced in response has been a special relationship with the United States.

Over the last three administrations, Colombian leaders have maintained a strategy of "intervention by invitation," an explicit effort to invite the US to intervene in Colombia to help fix domestic problems. This began by trying to present Colombia as a problem for the region and for the United States after peace negotiations failed in the early 2000s. Following a series of military successes, Colombia is now re-shaping its image as a success case to export to other troubled scenarios. Now the country seeks to convince

external actors that its success can only be sustainable by attracting foreign investment, which would be highly protected by the government, in terms of security and respect for international rules.

Apart from the security dynamics that underlie foreign policy, Colombia's external relations are shaped by the concentration of decision-making in the president. 80% of all embassies are political posts and clientelistic spaces, with inexistent checks from civil society on the country's foreign agenda.

Canada

Professor Victor Armory, of the University of Quebec in Montreal, argued that Canada is veering politically to the right, and its place in the hemisphere is consequently changing. Canada is becoming a more involved diplomatic actor and an increasingly relevant trader and investor. Several big challenges lay ahead: striking a balance between national interest realism and a visible ideological shift in foreign policy; maintaining and mobilizing Canada's reputation as a moderate, fair, positive influence in global affairs; building stronger partnerships with key players in the hemisphere, particularly Brazil; and finding a path to Latin America that doesn't lead Ottawa away from Washington, but instead gives it more leverage *vis a vis* the US.

Even though Canada only became a member of OAS after 1990, Canada has been involved in the Americas in the last decades in democracy promotion and the drafting of the Inter-American democratic charter; in investments in energy and other sectors; as a recipient of Brazilian investment; and in the promotion of civil society participation, exemplified by hosting the first Summit of the Americas together with the Peoples Summit of the Americas.

Argentina

Federico Merke, an expert on Argentinian foreign policy, suggested that a combination of international factors, mainly the reconfiguration of power in the region, and domestic factors, principally the model of economic development, shape foreign policy making in

Argentina. Specifically, variables in the international and domestic realms shape and constrain Argentinian foreign policy. In the international realm the key variables are, first, a perception about a shift in the distribution of global power to the East; second, the rise of Brazil as a partner or competitor to Argentina; third, the declining US influence in South America and the increased autonomy of the region; fourth, the rising prices of commodities, especially soy beans, in the context of increasing globalization; and fifth, Argentina's role in regional mechanisms of human rights protection and democracy promotion.

In the domestic realm, the main variable is the model of economic development, which greatly shapes foreign policy and has driven the clearest changes in policy orientation. Second, the figure of the president is central to set the agenda and leads the execution of foreign policy. Third, to a greater degree than in many other countries in the region, Argentine foreign service officials endure across administrations and are more stable than officials in other sectors of the public service. Fourth, political parties cannot influence foreign policy due to their short-term time horizons. And finally, public opinion does not seem to influence foreign policy significantly, although this reflects convergence with elite perspectives rather than exclusion.

In terms of specific issues in the agenda, Argentina has promoted a multipolar order, participated in UN peace operations, and supported non-proliferation. In the region, Argentina has sought to strengthen UNASUR while it attempts to build its relationship with Brazil as a partner in non-conflictive terms. The big absence from the foreign policy picture since the Menem administration is the United States, which does not play a major role for Argentinian diplomacy in the region.

In sum, Argentina watches very closely the shifts in the global distribution of power and seeks to benefit from the new opportunities it generates, while it designs foreign policy to fulfill the domestic requirements of its economic development model.

2. *The proliferation and reconfiguration of multilateral organizations*

While for many decades Inter-American affairs were heavily determined by the leadership of the United States and its economic and security agendas, in the new century we encounter important loci of regional decision-making spearheaded by other countries, as well as a growing number of regional bodies that exclude the U.S. In this session, participants presented thought pieces regarding new regional organizations in the Americas and the reconfiguration of institutional frameworks in the region. The latter included analyses of the "post-liberal" character of contemporary regionalism, the US perception of Latin American regionalism, the evolution of specific organizations, and an overview of UNASUR.

Post-liberal regionalism

Although not in attendance at the workshop, Professor Jose Antonio Sanahuja of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid contributed a memo to shape discussion of the "post-liberal" character of Latin American regionalism.

Latin America's approach towards regionalism is not just a result of national interests, functional needs, or rational preferences. Rather, it has its roots in the identities and values that have traditionally defined politics throughout the region. Today's competing narratives pre-date the current trends of regional integration, and draw, for example, on longstanding traditions of Panamericanism and Bolivarianism (which was fundamentally different from Chavez's radicalized version).

Narratives in favor of regional integration face paradoxical obstacles: while every country speaks in favor of integration, nationalism and the defense of sovereignty have been the main factors of mobilization among governments in the region.

Latin America now faces a permanent "trilemma" that entails the nation-state and the defense of sovereignty, aspirations for effective regional integration and the search for autonomy at the international level. It is possible to achieve one, or at most two of these goals, but there is no way to achieve all three.

Different configurations of the above options distinguish the "old regionalism" and the "new regionalism." The "old regionalism" centered on economic integration and

development policies proposed by CEPAL towards the end of the 1950s. In contrast, the "new" regionalism's objectives have extended further, encompassing political and security matters.

In this context, regionalism and aspirations of Latin American regional integration are redefined in a South American context through a "post-liberal" strategy inspired by the search for greater autonomy on the international stage and in development policies, particularly with respect to the United States. Regional developmental integration is being redefined, in part, as a strategy to support the "Developmental State."

Latin American multilateralism, as perceived by U.S. relevant actors

Profs. Tullo Vigevani and Luis Fernando Ayerbe of the State University of Sao Paulo presented their ongoing research about how different actors in the United States perceive the new schemes of regional integration in Latin America. The main actors considered in their study of U.S. perceptions of Latin American multilateralism include the White House, Congress, the two political parties, a few key states (such as Florida, Texas, and California), and think tanks.

Latin American multilateralism is not, in general, a priority concern among key actors in the US. When it becomes a relevant issue for them, it is often as a particular country uses multilateralism to project its own foreign policy agenda, as Venezuela has done through ALBA. These actors consider legitimate most Latin American strategies of integration, as part of a "logical Latin American subsystem" within the Inter-American system, unless they see these strategies as threats to security or economic interests of the United States.

Mosaic of Regional Organizations

Alvaro Díaz, an economist and former Chilean diplomat currently at the Economic Commission for Latin America, presented an overview of the regional organizations of the Americas. In general, two tendencies divide Latin America, according to their

differentiated approach to globalization. Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, and Chile are seeking to diversify their global partnerships to include Asia and Europe. On the other hand, Colombia, Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, are still open to globalization, but structurally articulated with the United States.

The United States is still the most powerful country in the world and exhibits hegemonic behavior. Yet it has lost many of its attributes. Its economic relevance has diminished, as has its prestige as a political model since 2000. Alternative development models, emerging from such varied settings as Europe, Russia, and China, now shape thinking about development across the Global South.

Latin America has many economic organizations. Beyond those operating on a regional scale, eleven countries in the region have FTAs with the US, and others with Europe. UNASUR and CELAC will become important forums, but their institutionalization will be limited and slow. Diaz argued that they will not displace the OAS. Most countries in the region will chose to participate in multiple regional organizations, and will change their focus of attention depending on the issues at hand.

UNASUR is not likely to develop a body similar to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and Court, because UNASUR relies on consensus for its decisions. UNASUR might, however, establish functional mechanisms to prevent interruptions of democracy, civil unrest, or imminent (and large) violations of human rights.

UNASUR

Professor Gilberto Rodrigues argued that while most processes of economic integration are based on WTO's (formerly GATT's) regional trade rules, UNASUR is a political process of integration with its own dynamics. Integration in Latin America had envisioned integration under the trade scheme of the FTAA, but domestic pressures in the United States made it impossible to offer an attractive deal to Brazil and other Latin American countries.

South America followed an alternative path of integration, political and not economic, and excluding the United States. Its main body is the new UNASUR, of which the main operating mechanism is its Defense Council. This mechanism overlaps functionally with the security mechanisms of the OAS, but even so the United States has not opposed its creation. The second main area of South American integration is regional infrastructure. Big projects are underway in South America, planned by UNASUR's infrastructure body. Despite the progress in these two areas, there has been little initiative toward institutionalization of UNASUR's operations or bureaucracy.

Finally, anticipating a discussion that unfolded more extensively later in the meeting,it was noted that civil society is not present in practice in UNASUR, even though it is mentioned in the treaty. This raises questions about the chances of effectiveness of an organization that originates without representation from civil society after the relative successes of such participation within the OAS and the UN.

3. *Regional Mechanisms across key issue areas*

Regional integration in the Americas has been uneven across different issue areas. Different regional mechanisms now exist, with various degrees of effectiveness, to coordinate policy and respond to regional challenges. The third session of the workshop analyzed these different regional mechanisms. Without attempting to cover all key issue areas, presentations sought to open avenues for sharing hypotheses about trends and debating evolving logics of regionalism in the Hemisphere. The session included discussions about environmental protection, investment, presidential summits, and energy.

Analyzing Regional Issue-arenas: Environmental Protection in the Americas

Drawing on a book manuscript in preparation, Professor Leslie Elliot Armijo suggested that the first step to analyze environmental protection in the Americas is to identify the key states involved. The United States, Brazil, and Venezuela are major players in the

definition of regional schemes of cooperation with three different visions of regional integration. The US seeks a model of free markets on a hemispheric level. Brazil seeks a model of capitalist developmentalism, with a narrower scope in South America. Venezuela seeks a model of popular socialism, extended to Latin America and the Caribbean.

The second step is to map the issue scope. There is consensus in the Americas around a few ideas, and disunity regarding many others. All states agree that greenhouse gases should be cut, but disagree on whether there should be carbon trading or subsidies to alternative energy. All states agree that forests should be protected, but disagree on how to pay for their preservation. All states agree that polluted water should be cleaned, but disagree on how to ensure access to water and sanitation for the poor. All states agree that development should be sustainable and growth made green, but disagree on how to make this a reality.

Third, we should map the policies in place for environmental protection. To date, serious multilateral negotiation among Western Hemisphere states has been conducted via global forums, where progress is difficult. CEPAL and IADB have promoted LAC gatherings and gently pushed regional market-based solutions, with very limited success so far. Civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean are generally highly critical in orientation and committed to an expansive definition of environmental protection.

Fourth, we should define the key interests of the main states. In the U.S., consumer preferences are important within the national territory, but the preferences of transnational corporations dominate elsewhere. Venezuela will not lead in this issue-arena. Independent civil society organizations are weak and the environmental problems are easily dismissed as a byproduct of capitalism. Brazil perceives itself as virtuous (mainly in terms of renewable and alternative energy), which clever non-state actors could build on, while there is also a vigorous domestic constituency.

In conclusion, there is little regional collaboration in environmental protection to date.

Nonetheless, the way forward to global improvement may be via regional collaboration. Purveyors of ideas (IGOs, NGOs, CSOs) are right to concentrate on swaying domestic constituencies in key states. But the leadership of a key state, or states, is necessary to achieve more coordination in environmental protection.

Investment and inter American economic relations

Professor Paul Haslam of the University of Ottawa argued that the governance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Americas is largely non-institutionalized, or weakly institutionalized, as there is no one or two institutions that govern it. Instead, there is a web of mostly bilateral agreements (432 ratified) and some sub-regional agreements.

The Hemisphere is characterized by three zones: a zone of high protection to FDI that includes NAFTA, Chile, Central America and Colombia; a zone of medium protection that includes most of the rest of South America; and a zone of low protection that includes Brazil, the Guyanas, and the Caribbean.

Haslam noted that this Hemispheric arrangement is only partially understood by the literature that looks at North South agreements. South-South agreements cannot be understood by the same logic (seeking access to US market, in exchange for limits on policy autonomy). Therefore an interesting question is to explain the actual pattern of investment protection.

Summits: political forums coordinating the new fase of regionalism

Federico Merke, who had previously presented a discussion piece on Argentinian foreign policy, introduced the question of how presidential summits are shaping the process of Latin American integration. According to his research on this topic, presidential summits in the Americas are characterized by overlapping agendas, poor coordination, inadequate preparatory organization and few follow up mechanisms. They are a space for socialization and trust building among leaders, rather than for policy coordination. But

even if poorly structured, no country has an incentive to withdraw from summits, or to make them more effective. This at least guarantees continuity and positive path dependence. To date, human rights and democracy have been at the core of the summits, which has raised the cost for states to avoid following international norms on these issues.

The actors in the summits have changed. The United States is no longer present in most summits, as it has lost the capacity to build spaces for dialogue with a hemispheric scope. At the same time, new actors have begun to appear, such as private corporations, unions, and civil society organizations. The OAS and the Inter American Development Bank have had to adapt to the summits scheme, and are trying to contribute depending on the issues raised in each summit.

The intensification of summit gatherings shows the lack of regional institutionalization. Each summit strengthens the role of presidents, while it weakens other political bodies. It was agreed that the main questions to explore in further research on summits include: How are agendas built? Who influences them, and through what mechanisms? How have civil society organizations influenced summits? And finally, what is the impact of summits in the domestic political processes in each country?

Energy integration and resource extraction in the new phase of regionalism in the Americas

Diana Tussie, head of the Department of International Relations at FLACSO Argentina, contributed a memo in which she argued that the process of energy integration is propelling a greater degree of political and economic integration in South America.

The inability of the US to push through the FTAA indicated a nascent South American regional political economy, separate from Mexico and Central America resting on a number of initiatives, all related to the characteristics of the particular export

specialization. These initiatives are directed at making extractive industries (oil, gas and mining) a key economic backbone of integration.

The key factors that drive regional integration in South America are, first, the long-term decline, relative to its leading rivals, of the economic reach of the US. Second, the reduced capacity of the US to assert its authority in what used to be considered its "backyard. The failures of the United States to push through the FTAA or to win support for its preferred candidate during the election of the secretary general of the Organization of American States in 2005 were prime examples of a turning point. Third, the re-emergence throughout South America of powerful mass movements, which propelled to office various left-wing governments, usually on an explicitly anti-neoliberal basis. Fourth, the Chinese locomotive that has given rise to a new global incentive structure for natural resource extraction, a revival of "El Dorado."

A prime driver of renewed growth is a series of resource-extraction initiatives, particularly various proposals for continent-wide pipelines, the biggest infrastructure initiative the region has ever seen. The need to find avenues of cooperation over natural resource extraction is the immediate background to the emergence of one of the new regional integration initiatives, the Union of South American Nations. Energy and the commodity boom overall has led to the emergence of a fresh ideational disposition whereby the state is brought in again to regulate, coordinate in the search for a new balance between states and markets.

Tussie's memorandum argued that a real sense of urgency is driving these energy projects. The centrality acquired by natural resources in the politics of regionalism is explained by the place of South American economies in a global political economy characterized by a commodity boom resulting from the demand of primary goods by industrializing China and India (mainly minerals, energy, agricultural goods, etc.). High commodity prices reinforce incentives in all South American economies for greater dependence on the export-led production of such resources.

The governance of natural resources has also been at the root of activism and multiple popular protests such as the Guerra del Agua or the Guerra del Gas. The advent of progressive governments in South America in the last decade gave environmental and social movements the hope that there would be reconsideration of unfavorable contracts signed in the neoliberal era with mining, energy and mineral companies. The link between extractive industries and regionalism is also manifest in the growing number of bilateral treaties that are being signed and implemented between South American countries which, in one way or another, facilitate production, transportation and exports of natural resources.

4. *Human Rights & Democracy*

One of the main objectives of the Hemisphere in Flux project is to assess the impact of the existing constellation of regional institutions for human rights and democracy, focusing on diplomatic aspects as well as jurisprudence, and exploring the compatibility of emerging alliances and institutional innovations with those that through the OAS have spawned the Democratic Charter and the Inter-American system of protection of human rights. In this session, participants discussed whether new regional bodies could undermine existing frameworks for the protection of human rights and democracy in the region, with specific presentations about the Inter-American Commission, the Democratic Charter, the new role of UNASUR in protecting democratic practices, and human rights activism in the Americas.

Introduction and reflections on the Inter-American Commission

AU professor Juan Mendez, who is also UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, presented the main questions for this session, and argued that one of the main questions regarding human rights in the Americas is what can be expected from the OAS' decline in terms of its relevance and its capacity to mediate regional conflicts. It is not clear what the future of the Inter American system will be, especially its capacity to protect democracy and human rights. These are not separate issues, as democracy is understood in the system as a human right, including

civil society participation.

Mendez noted that human rights bodies within the Inter American system enjoy broad legitimacy and they are commonly supported by states, which recognize their independence and impartiality. However, both the Commission and the Court have limited resources to enforce their rulings. In the context of emerging sub-regional bodies, it appears that these will not attempt to override the OAS human rights system. It might even be the case that Mercosur's human rights body strengthens the OAS bodies, as it may help the Commission to monitor compliance.

Democracy and the Democratic Charter

AU Professor Robert Pastor observed that while the Democratic Charter in the Americas is promoting conditions for democracy in the region, it does not stop the possibility of lapses into authoritarianism. This follows an essential contradiction in the OAS Charter: democracy is a must, but non-intervention is too.

The Democratic Charter is the result of the balance of power in the region. It was only once most countries in the Americas were already democracies that the Charter could be put in effect. Its mandate is a common responsibility to protect democracy in all countries, and to respond quickly to any interruption in the democratic processes of member states.

The Charter was effective in Haiti, shortly after it was adopted, with the credible threat of forceful action of the US and others, and the constitutional government was reinstated. In contrast, recent divisions in the Americas have stalled the possibility for the Charter to be an enforceable mechanism.

OAS, UNASUR, and the promotion of democracy

Professor Maxwell Cameron of the University of British Columbia articulated his

presentation around this question: Can we have an effective peer review mechanism for the protection of democracy?

Cameron emphasized how democratic the region has become, and also how much the region is willing to promote democracy. New regional organizations should not be seen as obstacles for the promotion of democracy, as UNASUR has the capacity to enforce democratic provision even more than the OAS. The question is how to make the Inter American system more effective.

One option for strengthening the Inter American protection of human rights would be to name a Special Rapporteur for democracy (independent from the Secretary General) at the OAS. This official would study whether a given country has distanced itself from democratic practices, and assess whether democratically elected governments govern democratically.

Human Rights activism in the Inter American system

Glenda Mezzaroba, a researcher at INEU and at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas, argued that the Inter American system and civil society have constructed a mutually cooperative relationship. Social movement networks have become a potential source of public legitimacy and national pressure on the state and its respective political elites for the adoption of the decisions by the IAHRS. Current studies of human rights activism have been analyzing institutional processes and structures, and forms of collective action separately. An important item to research is the mutual influences in the shaping of patterns of interaction between the IAHRS and human rights civil society organizations.

The questions that remain open include: How have HR civil society organizations utilized the political and legal mobilization resources and strategies made available by the IAHRS? How have they passed through the different bodies (the General Assembly of the OAS, the Summit of the Americas, the Commission and the Court, etc.). How have cases and causes been constructed alongside the system? What is the impact of the results

of merit on collective action? Which strategic adaptations and innovations have been being carried out given the recent process reforms?

5. *The role of civil society in foreign policies and in regional organizations*

Another main objective of the project is to explore the emerging channels of civil society participation in regional governance, including their relationship to intergovernmental decision-making processes. Central to this component of the project is the aspiration to reduce existing democratic deficits in regional governance, a challenge that takes on special relevance in a context where the past quarter century has witnessed the proliferation of consolidated democracies across the region yet where continuing shortcomings, and noteworthy cases of backsliding, are strikingly evident.

This theme was a recurrent feature of the discussions throughout the workshop. In a penultimate session, Andres Serbin, director of CRIES, presented an overview of the participation of civil society in the traditional Inter American system, and the challenges for its role in the context of new regional organizations.

Serbin noted that civil society organizations in Latin America build their agendas around the state. In a first generation, they focused on human rights promotion. In a second generation, they turned their focus toward rejection of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Lastly, more recently, they have emphasized environmental protection and civil rights.

The recent development and consolidation of democracy in Latin America has not been matched by a commensurate institutional development of the state and civil society, Serbin maintained. Moreover, foreign policy issues and priorities are not usually integrated into the agendas of civil society organizations. The exceptions to this are marked by organizations and human rights networks in the eighties, which have engaged the human rights system and the anti-FTAA anti-globalization and anti-neoliberalism of

the early nineties, and which emerged in the heat of the Social Forums and Social Summits promoted parallel to the presidential summits.

Currently, there is a strong demobilization of social movements and networks that emerged around the Social Summits, and the agenda of regional networks has shifted to issues of protection of natural resources and the environment in the context of state-driven developmentalism, and the defense of land and resources of communities and indigenous organizations.

Along with the weakening of Social Summits as a mobilizer of regional organizations and networks of civil society and as a mechanism for dialogue with agencies and intergovernmental Summits, there have been virtually no new effective mechanisms for citizen participation in regional processes, with the probable exception of MERCOSUR. The presence of civil society in dialogue forums in the Summits of the Americas and the OAS General Assembly has declined.

Finally, new emerging organizations like ALBA, UNASUR and ECLAC, show significant democratic deficits, given the absence of effective mechanisms for citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies and actions of these actors. To this must be added a number of weaknesses and shortcomings of their own organizations and civil society networks that not only prioritize the issues of foreign policy and the regional agenda but also show limitations in terms of training on these issues, transparency and accountability.

Future work

After synthesizing central questions, hypotheses and debates around foreign policy, regional integration, human rights and democracy, and the participation of civil society, workshop participants discussed substantive themes and analytic approaches that could be developed in research papers that could be commissioned following the workshop. It was agreed that during the subsequent months leaders of the project will build a common

framework to guide the structure of the papers, including common questions to be addressed in each case, and ways to engage the current literature theoretically and empirically. It was anticipated that these papers would be prepared during the first half of 2012, and presented at a conference in the fall, with the goal of producing an edited volume in 2013.