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Regionalization in New Scenarios: Democratic Deficit and Civil Society Participation in South American Regionalism

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**Coordinadora Regional de
Investigaciones Económicas
y Sociales (CRIES)**

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Introduction

In the past decade, Latin America's geopolitical map underwent some significant changes. After September 11, 2001, while the aspiration to create the Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA) started vanishing, United States foreign policy shifted its strategic focus to other regions of the world, showing an increasing neglect towards the region. At the same time, the election of a broad spectrum of progressive and center-left governments in most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries did not materialize in a new impetus for an effective agenda for regional integration, nor did it created the conditions for active involvement of Latin America and Caribbean citizens in this process.

Within this framework, while currently the FTAA does not longer represent an ambitioned goal for most Latin American and Caribbean nations, the bilateral free trade agreements signed by the US and some other countries such as Peru, Colombia[1], Panama and possibly Ecuador and Uruguay; and the signing of the Dominican Republic —Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) reflect some states' sustained interest in endorsing agreements with the US, particularly in the subregions in close proximity and in the nations along the Pacific coast.[2] Among the Andean countries, with the withdrawal of Venezuela, those agreements have, in turn, contributed to the weakening and fragmentation of the Andean Community of Nations —CAN, and the restructuring of MERCOSUR with Venezuela's admission still pending. MERCOSUR, however, has not managed to solve its patent institutional drawbacks or to progress towards a more developed and committed regional structure, nor has it helped in a substantial way to the effective formation of the South American Community of Nations (CSN), recently renamed as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).[3]

The emergent leading role of Venezuela in the region during the past decade, supported by its oil-based revenues, has not only contributed to the restructuring of the Latin American geopolitical map, but also to the establishment and development of a new integration paradigm through the creation of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of our America (ALBA).[4] So far, ALBA has been joined by Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Dominica, Chavez's closest allies.

The organization also intends to attract Haiti, as well as other Caribbean island states.[5] At the same time, despite its increasing global player role, Brazil has not fully succeeded in becoming a regional leader regarding issues other than its trade and economic interests, while fostering regional policies based on soft power, prudent and cautious-profile decisions and global aspirations[6] which are basically marked, however, by its economic agenda.[7]

Within this context, the region has at times been torn between the traditional American hegemony, which has severely worn off and has not shown, during the first two years of the Obama administration any substantial change and what some analysts call 'the new Venezuelan hegemony'[8] based on the high international prices of oil, the country's energy and financial resources, and the assertive ideological crusade fostered by its current president.[9] Also, as we have pointed out in other papers, regional tensions translate into an open competition between the sprouting leaderships of Venezuela and Brazil, with differentiated conceptual frames, strategies and objectives.[10]

Additionally, beyond the wreckage of the FTAA project, bilateral agreements persist with the US; MERCOSUR (and especially Brazil) have insisted on promoting, since the beginning of this century, the creation of a South American Community of Nations (CSN) with different degrees of commitment by the South American countries in the process of transition into becoming the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the support of several international financial institutions (particularly, the Inter-American Development Bank —IDB— and the Andean Development Corporation —CAF—); while Chavez's radical Bolivarianism has prompted the creation of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA). These three paradigms of integration, to varied extent and with different scopes, contribute to a greater fragmentation of the hemisphere. In fact, they pose serious obstacles to the consolidation and strengthening of institutionally-consolidated regional integration schemes that can substantially improve intra-regional commercial relationships, include and develop a relevant social dimension in a scenario of social exclusion and abysmal disparities, and maintain and deepen democracy beyond the rhetorical statements delivered at summits and forums while there is a lack of political will to foster and follow-up the resolutions taken.[11] Finally, tensions and potential conflicts among some countries in the region, along with the persistence —though somehow moderate— of border conflicts,[12] make this scenario even more complex.

Within this context, the region tends to be increasingly fragmented and is torn apart by multiple centrifugal forces.[13]

However, the difficult consolidation of democracy over the past twenty years has also given rise to a wide range of discourses on the need to overcome, through a more active involvement of citizens, the clear democratic gaps shown by the integration processes in the region. These discourses have generally materialized into presidential speeches and into decisions supported by several governmental technocrats and officers, but with limited influence of citizens in the actual formulation of regional agendas, either by means of direct participation or through their parliamentary representatives.[14]

Nevertheless, this situation is not dissociated from the arrival to power by different left-wing and center-left governments or from the increasing demands made by the citizens. These demands not only aim at deepening and consolidating the institutional structures of democratic systems, but also at implementing adequate policies to surmount the deep social, economic and ethnical inequalities characteristic of the region in order to enforce political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

The development of a civil society that makes greater demands to the State and of a citizenry demanding transparency, information, and accountability, clashes with the political tradition in the countries of the region of ascribing the decision-making power to the executive branch, if not specifically to the president, in particular with regard to foreign policies and external affairs.

Even more worrying is the fact that integration initiatives, of a clear inter-governmental nature, leave little room for the construction of a bottom-up regional integration project with strong support by organized citizens and the inclusion of a relevant social dimension. This occurs even though the European experience has

shown that no regional integration process should overlook the active involvement of citizens and the overcoming of "democratic deficits"[15], which characterize regional processes structured and fostered by the elites or by the political will of the incumbent president or administration.

In light of this general overview of the prevailing trends in the region, this document aims at analyzing both the present dynamics of the regionalism processes in Latin America and the Caribbean and the rise of new inter-governmental initiatives to promote regional approaches different from those developed under the "Washington Consensus" in the 1990s, taking into account its most outstanding traits and trends, and the evolution of civil society organizations and networks' capacity to influence, in this new context, the regional agendas.

Although we assume with the editors of this volume that the regional initiatives materialized in UNASUR and ALBA[16] constitute a new phase of the type of regionalism that shows transforming features (whether characterized as post-liberal[17], post-commercial or post-hegemonic[18] regionalism[19]), this chapter challenges several assumptions regarding those initiatives. In this regard, we argue that there are pending questions associated with distinctive features of coordination between these actors in the process of formulating and implementing a regional agenda and that, in the context of new regional integration initiatives, the interaction between citizens and social movements, on one side, and of governments and political parties on the other, currently show serious shortcomings. These shortcomings are evident in the lack of institutionalized discussion mechanisms and the limited spaces for citizen participation, which broadens the existing democratic deficit in multilateral organizations both at regional level —the focus of this volume— and at global level.

Within this context, it is essential to highlight the transition that also affects the spaces for citizen participation in regional agendas and in the development of this new stage of regionalism. The gradual reduction of Social Summits held in parallel or in coordination with inter-governmental Summits is a symptom of the displacement of CSOs from a relevant role in the regionalism process. In this regard, it is similar to what happened at the UN under the impact of the multi-

lateralism crisis that resulted in the progressive reduction of world conferences that offered a space for transnational CSOs to meet, interact and advocate with governmental representatives. Between the 1990s and the first decade of this century, Social Summits were the instrument of choice to generate debate and exchange forums between governments, emerging inter-governmental organizations and civil society organizations in addressing different issues of the regional agendas. However, the increasing reduction in the number of conferences linked to the mobilization of social movements and networks that had been channeled in the past (in particular in the case of the FTAA and the early stages of CSN and ALBA) through different Social Summits, is now reflected in the absence of institutionalized participation spaces in UNASUR and ALBA, unlike the MERCOSUR case. As a result, the construction of regional social consensus to build and institutionalize new regional spaces for civil society participation is seriously obstructed and is becoming increasingly vertical in its nature. Furthermore, it fails to respond to the ongoing re-democratization processes and the consolidation of democracies in the region, as well as to the demands and expectations of its citizens. Similarly it deepens, in turn, the democratic deficit of inter-governmental organizations.

Thus, starting from the analysis of the transition from the previous stages to the present stage of regionalism and the changes in the regional and hemispheric environment, we aim at examining the introduction of social agendas in the regional integration processes and the initiatives to approve, in different political and organizational contexts, Social Charters that will formalize their implementation. Within this context, we analyze the distinctive features of the evolution of civil society in the new regional political scenario, its weaknesses, drawbacks and strengths; the emerging social actors in the process of building citizenship in the region, and the obstacles they face. Finally, we analyze the scope of citizen participation in the regional agenda through the existing participation mechanisms and their limitations in order to address the key question to be addressed by this chapter: at the present stage of the regionalism process, is there an effective citizen participation in the formulation of the different issues of the regional agenda which can contribute to overcome the existing democratic deficit?

1. From open regionalism to post-liberal regionalism: social agendas, social charters or mere letters of intent?

Beyond the conceptual, strategic, and ideological differences and the struggling leaderships reflected in the ALBA and UNASUR initiatives, regionalism in Latin America is going through a transition period in which, nonetheless, we can identify some common features and trends.

First, unlike during the preceding decade, the current phase of regionalism features a distinct politicization of the regional agenda and a displacement of the trade and economic issues from the central focus of the integration process for the benefit of more political issues, which shows a "return to politics" in foreign affairs and development policies. Second, this process is not divorced from a manifest "return to the State" both in terms of foreign affairs and social and development policies. As the bulk of the agreements is of inter-governmental nature, the State is becoming the most prominent actor in the process, while non-state actors such as civil society organizations and networks and the business sector are relegated to lesser influential positions in the negotiation of these agreements. This "return to the State" is linked with the return of strong nationalistic views that revitalize the traditional concepts of national interest and sovereignty,[20] at odds with the demands of regional integration and the need to concede and yield to supranational norms. Third, linked with the two "returns" mentioned above and, in particular, with the necessary internal legitimacy of democratically elected governments and the fostering of a top-down social agenda, there is a "return to the development agenda" that unmistakably shifts away from the "Washington Consensus" and its formulas towards a neo-developmentalist drive.

To these three fundamental "returns" of this stage, after the open regionalism phase of the preceding decade, we should add the prioritization of new issues in the regional agenda, which include, on the one hand, concern for the creation of common policies and institutions, cooperation in non-trade environments and a greater emphasis on the social context and existing asymmetries; and on the other, a focus on regional infrastructure, energy, finance and security issues, as it began to appear in the constitutive treaty of the South American Community of Nations (CSN) .[21] In addition to these issues, there is an increasing interest in South-South cooperation, both on the part of the emerging new regional architecture —particularly in the cases of Brazil and Venezuela— and on the part of a series of initiatives among the Global South countries oriented towards the fostering of an extra-regional and global projection strategy.

Within this context, it is important to stress, first, the new relevance gained by the national sovereignty principle. In this regard, the State is legitimized as the main promoter of integration initiatives through inter-governmental agreements, while the governments of the region aim at building a political community at the regional level through political dialogue and *concertación*, without conditioning their countries' autonomy or independence. In this highly politicized scenario the construction of an inter-governmental consensus as a privileged instrument to reach regional decisions frequently becomes an obstacle to the consolidation, through dialogue and cooperation, of a deeper and stronger regional architecture and of a set of supranational institutional norms.[22]

Second, it is worth noting that the majority of the recently established integration organizations and spaces in Latin America have a reactive and/or defensive approach to their relations with the United States; both because of the historical threat of a hegemonic intervention or of its overwhelming influence in the region.[23] Indeed, for better or worse, the United States is still a fundamental reference in these processes and continues to have influence, even assuming different roles,[24] on the creation of integration organizations, giving continuity and renewed strength to the national sovereignty principle.

And, finally, the current strengthening of this principle is not only associated with a renewed nationalist trend, but also with a series of distinctive and particular characteristics of this new stage of the Latin American integration processes.

Another feature of the new regionalism identified in the region in recent years, in the process of overcoming the neoliberal stage and, in several cases, of fostering an anti-hegemonic approach, is that it has been mainly promoted by progressive governments. This occurs in the framework of the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, the defense of human rights and social inclusion, and the building of citizenship through the three returns mentioned —the return to the State,

the return to politics and the return to development— as its most distinctive traits. However, the state's perception of the role of organized citizens —in terms of political allies, its cooption into clientelistic systems, or its contracting for social projects (or the three of them combined)— does not translate into the creation and development of institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation,[25] neither at national or regional level, although there may be some local, community and municipal exceptions.

The return to a more active role of the State not only implies the revitalization of its capacity to formulate and implement social policies (eventually ceasing to partially delegate its implementation to civil society organizations (CSOs), but also a return to state-centric views and perceptions in terms of the role played by civil society. In this regard, the mobilization of civil society, even if considered to be fragmentary and based on an "immediate democracy", may be perceived as being constructively democratic[26] as a "bottom up" process, but unable, at the same time, of consolidating through institutionalized mechanisms within a democratic and legal context. In fact, the state-centric matrix we shall analyze later when addressing the development of civil society in Latin America, becomes once more revitalized within this process and conditions the building up of citizenship. Despite the difficulties of acknowledging a role for organized citizens at the national level, usually these views and perceptions strengthen the defense of national interest and sovereignty assumed by the governments involved, where the participation of nonpartisan political players is, at the very least, seen as suspicious, if not directly rejected. This reluctance by governments to accept a more active political role of civil society tends at the same time to increase democratic deficit in regional and sub-regional organizations, as shown by their recent evolution. In this regard, the expansion of deliberative public spaces that may lead to a more informed citizenry that is "fluctuating though not necessarily participative",[27] does not match with the lack of developed national and regional institutional spaces and resources.

Furthermore, the re-politicization of regional agendas at this stage restricts the new regionalism process to traditional political actors such as governments and political parties and tends to reject the inclusion of civil society nonpartisan players, thus excluding or ignoring the regional CSO networks which in the past fostered clearly anti-hegemonic agendas with potentially high anti-systemic content. This affirmation should obviously be nuanced if we take into account the emergence of new players such as the indigenous movements or the environmental groups and organizations[28] which, as illustrated by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Cochabamba in December 2010,[29] managed to generate effective interlocutions in regional multilateral environments. However, the criticism made in this context by CSOs to inter-governmental organizations and to the role of emerging countries does not take into consideration the linkage between the new role undertaken by the State and the new preeminence acquired by the national sovereignty principle and national interest in the formulation of regional policies and strategies.[30]

Paradoxically, development has been taken up again by the State, frequently at the expense of the previous work of CSOs and networks, which had a more protagonist role in this field during the 1980s and 1990s. As pointed out in a recent report, "in different ways and under different approaches, in recent years the State has regained its investments and presence in the social field; it has gone from the neoliberal position that alienated the State from its social responsibilities to a political practice in which the State recovers its central role as a social player".[31] It is also worth noting, as argued above, that this state-centric approach reactivates the imposition of "top-down" social agendas without the participation of civil society both at national and regional levels. The social programs developed in this context, on the one hand, restore and reinforce political clientelism, while on the other, are directed to the same sectors that have originated important social movements in recent decades and have contributed to relieve poverty, hindering however their autonomous growth.[32]

Beyond the political difficulties associated with the construction of a consensus and of a new imaginary on the creation of a "South American", "Greater Caribbean" or "Latin American" space by the political and technocratic elites of the region, one of the main obstacles to advance an effective construction of this space is the ideological legacy of two crucial features. One of those features is the political culture of the elites that tend to delegate and concentrate the decision-making power in

their hands. This creates a clear democratic deficit that is only partially legitimized through electoral processes[33] and originates an evident political exclusion often associated with such elites' distrust towards the citizens and their demands for participation. The second feature is the neoliberal "open regionalism" legacy that is clearly associated with the "Washington consensus".

The first feature is evidenced by the frequency with which foreign affairs and international integration and cooperation decisions are monopolized by the executive branch (if not directly by the president), without going through a debate by the pertinent parliamentary committees or through broader plebiscite or referendum mechanisms. Similarly, more often than not, these decisions by the executive branch are eventually made, in response to the pressure or influence exercised by powerful private sector and political lobby groups. This feature is also evidenced by the reaction of the sectors excluded from the process which, nonetheless, manage to have access to the necessary information to question these decisions. Perhaps the most straightforward example of the former is the restrictive nature of business negotiations open only to technocratic sectors and economic interests groups. An example of the latter are the reactions caused throughout the length and breadth of the continent by the negotiations to create the FTAA, which was strongly rejected by rural and agricultural workers, several trade unions and a wide range of social organizations and networks with different ideological positions that gathered to form an anti-FTAA movement closely associated with anti-neoliberal and anti-globalization beliefs.[34] In this example in particular, as showed in a number of studies, it was the mobilization and consultation promoted by a broad spectrum of organizations that achieved an impact on public opinion and some Latin American governments.[35]

The second feature is related to a premise that prevailed during the acceleration of the regional integration processes that took place during the 1990s, which were deeply conditioned by the structural reforms inspired by the "Washington Consensus", and the idea that trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization of state-owned companies would lead to greater development and, especially, to greater economic growth. Basically understood as a response and reaction to the globalization processes, the "open regionalism" process of the 1990s readjusted the original regional integration

principles of liberal global governance to a scenario where the autonomy and powers of the State and social welfare policies were being questioned and where there was a strong emphasis on the regulating role of the global market. Within this context, the decisions taken regarding the implementation of free trade agreements and new sub-regional integration schemes were mainly made by technocratic sectors, frequently depending on corporate interests with little or no participation of the citizens, which resulted in widespread social reactions in several countries of the region.

By the end of the 1990s, however, it became obvious that the consequences of the policies associated with structural reforms and "open regionalism" processes, despite the economic growth accomplished, entailed a number of negative social effects; made the traditional social inequality, exclusion and poverty problems of the region even more complex; and mainly favored several business groups and transnational corporations. Some international financial institutions were the first to react to this situation after several indicators began to show the increasing social exclusion rates and critical inequality levels. Both the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) started to highlight the need to associate the reforms made at the time with inclusion development policies aiming at alleviating the unequal distribution of wealth in the region. This also led to reviewing the role of the State in terms of social policies and the need to emphasize the role of social actors in development (including the active participation of civil society organizations and networks),[36] to foster transparency in governmental actions and to fully enforce the Rule of Law through the implementation of political reforms which would consolidate the State's institutional structure. Many newly elected governments within a broad spectrum of politically progressive views have also acknowledged the need for a redefinition of the responsibility of the State in this regard, considering that it should have a more relevant and leading role.[37]

This acknowledgement also influenced the rise of new regional integration concepts, which included more equitable and socially inclusive regionalism models involving the committed participation of citizens in the transition process from the neoliberal approach to new developmentalist schemes based on a more active role of the State.

However, as Grugel[38] accurately points out, this growing reference to the inclusion and to a more active role of citizens strongly emphasized the need to develop a social agenda in regional integration processes, basically by governments and intergovernmental agencies, without paving the way, with a few exceptions, for real involvement and effective citizen empowerment. In this regard, the rising social dimension in the new concepts of regionalism emphasized the incorporation of social redistribution mechanisms, regional social and labor regulations, regional sector policies concerning health and education, among others,[39] promoted by a more active and sensitized State regarding social issues. Nevertheless, it only contributed in a collateral and limited way to promoting and reinforcing social empowerment mechanisms that effectively allowed citizens to claim their civil, political and social rights as rights and not privileges, and to fostering their active participation in the design and implementation of public policies aimed at promoting regional public goods.[40]

In fact, the introduction of a social agenda, with its inherent concern for balancing situations of exclusion, did not bring about the development of a new vision regarding the construction of a regional, social and supranational citizenship, redefining the role of citizens in this construction processes of the new architecture of regional integration. Several examples of this situation can be found in the CAN, where the proliferation of agreements and resolutions to promote a social agenda is at odds with the absence of vigorous citizen involvement and commitment with the integration process, and of institutional mechanisms that enable its implementation, or in MERCOSUR, where the Economic and Social Forum, created by intergovernmental decision and boosted since the early 21st century, initially confined citizen involvement, in many instances, to a pre-set agenda and a corporate and tripartite vision focused on the interaction between government, business organizations, and trade unions, frequently setting aside other citizen organizations and networks.[41] Implementing other mechanisms, however, would imply building different consensuses from existing ones and defining new social contracts at a regional level, which would in turn involve yielding sovereignty, something governments are not too prone to do.

Nevertheless, the new scenario created by the rising of progressive governments calls not only for the construction of these consensuses but also for greater citizen involvement in the design of regional integration and in the development of a social citizenship, key to its consolidation and development.

Paradoxically, the current emphasis placed by some governments of the region on the need to promote and approve, together with the existing Inter-American Democratic Charter, a Social Charter for the Americas, in the context of the OAS,[42] or the several initiatives concerning the implementation of Social Charters in the context of regional and sub-regional integration bodies, particularly the CAN and UNASUR,[43] seems to reproduce, on the one hand, the imposition of a social agenda that fails to include effective citizen involvement (more like a downward imposition from governments rather than the result of an upward construction) and, on the other, it tends to bring to the regional level the usual tension between freedom and justice, or between civil and political rights and economic and social rights, which are presented as contradictory and not necessarily as supplementary. Indeed, the definition of social charters by governments, within the framework of the different intergovernmental instances and without consultation and involvement of CSOs is prone to be interpreted as the drafting of unilateral and vertical letters of intent or statements of good will rather than the result of an effective exercise of citizen involvement and participation, even if they offer specific guidelines for social policies.[44]

In any case, with the introduction of the social dimension in the debates concerning regional integration and the different concepts of regionalism, there is a predominant view at this new stage, however, that regionalization must be promoted "from above", citizens still being the subject-matter of regionalization (even if they are a privileged subject-matter, particularly in the context of neo-populist rhetoric) and not active promoters and active participants of regional integration.

Nevertheless, as a result of the work carried out by civil society networks and organizations and the changing political environment in the region, governmental approaches have begun to accept the relevance of the social dimension in regional integration, irrespective of trade agreements and political will; which, sooner or later, may affect "the adoption of a calculated, deliberate, and discretionary strategy by political elites, associ-

ated with a willingness to give up sovereignty at least in part" .[45]

2. Low-intensity citizenship: civil society in Latin America.

In a global context where the rising transnational civil society organizations and networks are increasingly restrained and contested,[46] it is not surprising that the new regionalism promoted in Latin America disregards the socio-political dimension of integration in terms of supplementing democratic political dynamics based on parties and elected governments with an active participation and involvement of civil society, both at the national level and at the regional inter-governmental level. Particularly when addressing the creation of a new regional space and the implementation of regional policies.

Thus, we should consider certain facts that ought to be taken into account.

First, as evidenced by the precedent of North Atlantic societies,[47] there can be no solid civil society in the absence of the development of a previous social contract between the state and citizens. In most Latin America countries, twenty years of democratic recovery and structural reforms have not led, however, to the unfolding of new social contracts, based on the creation of reliable institutions and the development of political projects of national scope. In fact, elections and changes in administrations led to the supremacy of government policies (frequently guided and legitimated by election interests) rather than the predominance of State objectives and policies that address citizens' demands. The absence of a sound and stable institutional framework and of continuity in State objectives intertwines with the institutional weakness of citizens' organizations, thus creating a vicious circle hard to overcome. While this generalization is not applicable to all countries in the region, it fully portrays the prevailing trend.

Second, and since the restoration of democracy, together with an endogenous impulse (plainly evident concerning human right organizations and movements), the chances of development for citizens organizations have been often bound by the support of external donors rather than by

an effective acceptance by the State of greater and more institutionalized citizen involvement.[48] Consequently there is a proliferation of NGOs and civil society networks with different sectorial interests, financed with resources coming from international cooperation or the support of Nordic NGOs. This situation is even more obvious if we focus on regional networks and organizations, mainly funded by Northern donors. Furthermore, the participation of many of these networks in the OAS, the Ibero-American Summits, the European Union-Latin America Forums or the Summit of the Americas, is frequently funded by Canadian, US or European cooperation and not backed by the funding or support of their own governments or regional organizations. This situation contrasts, in some cases, with the financial support received from governments by variegated citizen networks and organizations at the national level for the implementation of diverse social projects or programs because of their political bonds with public officials, members of parliament or political parties.[49]

Third, citizen involvement in regional integration contexts and processes is frequently perceived negatively by governments, intergovernmental bodies and donors.[50] More often than not, integration issues are not part of donor organizations' agendas; governments do not want citizens to get involved in these matters or if they do, they want them to do so orderly and responding to a downward imposition, while inter-governmental bodies respond to the mandates of their member governments. Examples: In the first case, after the end of the Cold War, many donors lost interest in regional issues and shifted their agendas to issue priorities instead of regional ones. [51] In the second case, certain experiences such as the creation of Consultative Councils in different governmental and intergovernmental agencies do not frequently arise out of the initiative of citizens' organizations and are conveyed and organized by those agencies or by the governments of their member countries.

In sum, the policies fostered by the different Latin American governments in terms of increasing citizen involvement in regional integration processes develop as a result of an imposition of such policies by the executive, or by technocratic or political elites, or, more recently, through the co-optation of citizens' organizations in a context of clientelistic systems historically rooted in the region.

Nevertheless, the development of citizens' organizations, both at the national and regional levels, also shows a wide array of weaknesses and failures that contribute to deepening and strengthening this scenario.

As a region, Latin America has some distinctive features concerning the formation of a civil society in its different countries and at a regional level. In this regard, and first of all, the concept of **civil society** as a means to analyze and address the development of non-governmental associative activities, which are not profit-driven and seek to promote public good,[52] burst into the region in the '80s, in the framework of re-democratization and post-authoritarian democracy consolidation processes, simultaneously with the changes that were taking place in Eastern Europe societies after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[53] During this period, the most relevant associative references in Latin America were predominantly human right networks and movements that exposed the abuses of military regimes and promoted the upholding of the Rule of Law, the expansion of citizens' rights and the consolidation of democracy.[54] Building a new citizenship in a democratic context became at this stage the greatest challenge for the development of civil society.

In fact, it was here when the concept of civil society came on the scene in the region. The concept was taken from the political tradition and the experience of Western societies, primarily from North Atlantic countries.[55] Simultaneously, some local traditions were rescued and updated, mainly related to philanthropic and charitable works by the Catholic Church. Thus, the work performed in community and neighborhood associations, promoted by the progressive sectors of the Catholic Church in the 1960s, was recovered within a broader framework to foster new forms of citizen association and organization, identified from then on as activities performed by the civil society, linked to the re-creation of solidarity values towards the poor, the excluded and the marginal.

These two sources —one external, the other with local roots— which admit some exceptions, helped to shape the association fabric of civil society in the region, with some additional relevant features. On the one hand, the globalization of human rights and international law gave impetus, especially from the 1980s onwards, to relations with broader international networks and NGOs. It also influenced the development of sector movements and organizations that legitimate their actions based on a series of universal values, including the defense and promotion of global public goods[56]; such as gender equality, anti-discrimination, racial equality, defense and protection of the environment, promotion of sustainable development and eradication of poverty. These movements and organizations usually interacted with international organizations, international cooperation agencies, and NGOs of the North, thus significantly broadening the spectrum of rights to which citizens could access and developing a social space which, more often than not, surpasses the boundaries of the State in terms of territory.[57]

On the other hand, under the impact of the structural reforms implemented in the 1990s within the framework of the "Washington Consensus" and the first stage of structural adjustments, there was a strong development of a "third sector" aimed at compensating, in the context of social policies, for the deficiencies of a weakened and inefficient State, through philanthropy and solidarity by non-governmental sectors, and, particularly, non-governmental organizations. In fact, the concept of a "third sector" is often clearly different from and at odds with the concept of civil society that arose from the development of social movements and the struggles for broadening citizen rights. In this regard, there are two different approaches; one that sees citizens as the target of social public policies, generally backed by philanthropic networks and organizations, and another that sees them as active citizens, a collective subject that creates a new relationship with the State and advocates for broader and better rights and, eventually, new citizen rights[58].

However, despite this concurrence of endogenous and exogenous factors, civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean, unlike other regions and especially Europe, was not historically shaped, according to Garretón, as "an associative tissue that counterbalanced the State," organized from below or promoted from outside. On the contrary, "it (was) the State who creates society through politics from the symbolic principle of a nation" and "politics and the State (were) the ones that generate, constitute, structure what could be nowadays called civil society. This civil society, whatever its contents or organizational levels, fails to exist autonomously from the State, save a few

exceptions".[59] Therefore, resorting to the State in Latin America and the Caribbean is inherent in any expression of citizen organization and politics is the unavoidable arena where it unfolds, since it is the State that shapes the social and political matrix of society. This unique genesis imposes a strong state-centric mark to the emergence and development of civil society in the region and, also, as stated by Hengsterberg, Kohut and Maihold, implies a relational concept in that "its strength, shape, fields of action, all of it is linked to State action. Whoever discusses civil society must also discuss the State". [60] In this regard, the State is, by act or omission, a permanent reference for the development of civil society in the region,[61] even in the case of the development of anti-systemic social movements.

In Latin America and the Caribbean this specific and well-defined matrix of the particular development of citizenship and civil society organizations have distinctive features which we have thoroughly analyzed in previous studies on this issue in the region.[62] We will mention only five of them briefly.

First, from a *genealogic* viewpoint, its background and recent origin can be traced back to community and grass-root organizations from the 1960s, with a *strong sense of mission and moral superiority*, which were often tainted with strong ideological and anti-systemic elements, mainly in the framework of their development during authoritarian regimes.[63]. In this regard, they were initially *anti-governmental* in nature, in predominantly statist societies, and they have frequently developed into social protest movements, especially on the basis of their own experiences in the context of military regimes. As a result, their current development is often conditioned by these origins and closely related to the political dynamics of each country.[64] However, as a consequence of the impact of the neoliberal narrative of the 1990s, some of them underwent an eventual re-shaping into philanthropic organizations and networks, associated with the so-called "third sector", increasingly linked to State management and public policies. This re-shaping process, more often than not, created ambiguities between the original anti-governmental nature of some of these organizations and the identification and supplementary role played by others in governmental policies. This ambiguity is currently fed and reinforced by the clientelistic and populists approaches of some governments. In all

cases, however, the State remains the fundamental reference for their development.

Second, regarding **context**, civil society organizations are heavily shaped by the values of national political cultures.[65] Thus, they have to be differentiated according to the diverse sub-regional and national contexts as they often reproduce features of the political cultures and values of each society (including *patrimonialism*, *political clientelism*, *corporatism*, *personalism*, and ultimately, because of their grass-root origins, *localism*, as outstanding features) that, in turn, create different modalities of relationship with the State.

Thirdly, in the context of the re-democratization processes and the struggle against authoritarian regimens and their sequels, civil society organizations (CSO) have gained special impetus since the 1980s associated, first of all, with the emergence and development of *human right organizations and movements*. Lately, within the context of democracy consolidation and the attempts to reform democratic systems, and the loopholes in social policies created by the effects of the reforms promoted under the Washington Consensus guidelines, they have evolved into different modalities of citizen mobilization and action concerning demands related to public policies and goods. The deep social and economic inequalities inherent in the region, such as poverty and social exclusion, have all contribute to civil society organizations paying special attention to social policies aimed at fighting poverty, and developing their own social programs, both at the community and national levels. Furthermore, these factors have led to the development of anti-systemic and anti-governmental social movements advocating for radical social change. Eventually, in the context of hyper-mobilization processes *vis a vis* the de-legitimization and the problems faced by traditional political actors in responding to citizens' demands, they generated "anti-politics" processes that questioned not only the legitimacy of the State but also that of existing democratic political parties. However, as a more recent phenomenon and in contexts of growing democratic institutionalization, some of them have evolved into citizen movements and non-governmental organizations that emerged as a reaction to social violence and citizen security issues. Many of them resort, however, to the use of social mobilization as a privileged methodology of political pressure. In addition, in the new democratic environment they

are increasingly including among their demands a wide array of rights that encompass civil, social, economic and cultural rights.[66]

Fourth, as a result of their primarily national features and grass-root origin, they tend to have *difficulties* in their early stages *to organize themselves in national, regional or transnational networks*, especially in the case of solidarity or political reform organizations, and to develop alliances and coordination modalities among the different organizations with diverse sectional interests. With growth being conditioned by globalization, by the emergence of new issues, and by the acknowledgement of global public goods, and, in particular, by *the globalization of international law and human rights*, the most obvious exception are movements concerning human rights, women, afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, the environment, and trade unions that are members of international federations. Within this framework, with the exceptions just mentioned, CSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean encountered serious difficulties in mobilizing for regional issues that in general were beyond the realm of their interests and most urgent demands. Issues such as peace, regional security, conflict prevention, multilateral agendas, the democratic deficit of regional and sub-regional bodies, and regional democratic governance had been frequently left out from their agendas and priorities. However, organizing the World Social Forums and the Americas Social Forum, and conveying movements against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and free trade treaties with the US in general, as well as joining world movements against neoliberal globalization, has considerably modified this trend in the past two decades, giving rise to regional and transnational networks and movements in the region. Furthermore, the experience gained in organizing and developing Social Forums and transnational movements has modeled the development of Social Summits that were held in parallel to intergovernmental Summits as privileged instruments of mobilization and dialogue with governments.

Fifth, CSOs are basically formed at the national level by NGOs and citizens' organizations with sectional and specific agendas that are more professionalized, urban, and rooted in the middle-class; and by social movements (unemployed people, peasants without land, and sometimes trade union groups) that are generally associated with more radical protests in their demands for change. There are often major differences between both types of organization concerning conceptual, theoretical and ideological standards. These differences stem from different approaches and understandings, which include the vision of a "third sector" as a supplement and supervisor of the State and the market (neoliberal version) and the concept of a "counter-hegemonic block" (Gramscian version) or contest spaces (post-modern and activist version) fighting the State, by a citizenship that is under construction.[67] However, this classification results from a simplified vision of a complex and heterogeneous network of organizations and movements whose boundaries are not easily distinguishable.[68] In addition, in the context of Latin American countries, they do not always correspond to the deep social inequalities and differential accesses to the exercise of citizenship, information and resources.[69] Furthermore, their links with donors, transnational social movements, and Northern NGOs, frequently influences, with nuances, their agendas and strategies.[70]

However, these distinctive trends of the evolution of civil society in Latin America also establish different strategies of relationship with governments. While some organizations favor dialogue, communication and lobbying; others resort to mobilization and confrontation as instruments to promote change.[71] Nevertheless, these strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive and eventually can be combined, as an "NGOzation" of social movements and a tendency in some NGOs to use social mobilization as a strategy can be frequently observed; sometimes associated with a high impact of those strategies on the media. However, the agendas of both groups are not always coincidental, since some propose different degrees of reform while others take more radical approaches towards social change. Nevertheless, taking into account the characteristics of Latin American states and the significant development of political clientelism, both kinds of civil society organizations can be co-opted by the State through several mechanisms. Also, both approaches have the potential to persist on sticking to anti-governmental visions and positions inherited from earlier stages.

Furthermore, as institutional development and democratic maturity grow, the State is able to foster more evident and structured policies for strengthening citizen involvement through observation/monitoring mechanisms, consultation

or participation in decision-making processes, with higher, lower or no financial and institutional support and with less or more increasing CSO autonomy.

Within this framework, the greater challenges for CSOs and social movements in the region are related on an internal level, to applying to their own structure the values that they preach —transparency, democratic decisions, account-ability, observance of the rules of the game and the mandates of their grass roots, representation and legitimacy— which justify, from an ethical view-point, their mandates and aspirations but which do not necessarily legitimate their representativity within democratic systems, so much so that such representativity is often contested both by governments and by traditional political parties.[72]

Finally, a common misunderstanding particularly by some CSOs, is that they claim that they are mere social actors without assuming that they are non-party political actors in more dynamic and complex realms, subject to national socio-political contexts. In a democracy, they cannot replace traditional political actors such as political parties, parliaments, trade unions, but they can complement and monitor their actions irrespec-tive of the reluctance of political elites to accept the implementation of mechanisms that enable the involvement and empowerment of citizens and to create broader institutions for civil society participation than voting at regular elections, as stated by Hengstenberg, Kohut and Maihold.[73] In the same way as the transition period towards democracy was the time for political parties, the consolidation process of democracy is conceived as the time for civil society, within the transition from political democratization to social democra-tization, emphasizing social cohesion and citizen-ship expansion.[74] However, in many countries of the region, this transition is still pending, despite the fact that many of the new governments in the region are linked to left-wing parties and move-ments.

In this regard, the rise of civil society in Latin America currently occurs within a triangle formed by the new role of the State to be developed in the region, the adequate functioning of political parties, and the development of a new political culture among citizens. State reform inevitably implies at this new stage, a redefining of the bonds between state institutions and organized

citizens; a new way for political parties and civil society organizations and social movements to relate among them (especially if the aim is to avoid the rising of "anti-politics" that contest the legitimacy of political parties); and a governance focused not only on reaching higher levels of state management performance and efficiency, but also a growing citizen involvement in political decisions, particularly in the realm of public poli-cies. However, as observed by Dagnino,[75] greater involvement in management based on the human resources (which are highly professionalized in general) and technical resources of civil society (increasingly trained and informed) should not be confused with the necessary politicization of civil society organizations and networks in the process of searching to increase both their involvement and their empowerment in the reformulation of power relations in society.

Within this context, a complex relationship arises within civil society between social movements with different roots and origins and citizens' or-ganizations with sectional interests. This complex relationship contributes to the heterogeneity and fragmentation of organized citizenship. It is also linked, generally in a competitive and sometimes conflicting manner, to traditional political ac-tors related to the State even where the State has shown, as in the past few decades, growingly democratic traits. In this regard, the autonomy of social movements and NGOs from the State within the context of progressive governments, remains a matter of debate that show the conti-nuity of the anti-governmental and anti-systemic nature of many of these civil society networks and organizations, particularly when dealing with the construction of power,[76] and the reluctance of governments, of any ideology, to legitimate their actions.[77]

Finally, in Latin America the conformation of civil society by the State has given rise to a number of exclusions, many of which are ethnical and social, but also gender —and age-related, which affect broad sectors of the population, both in rural and urban areas. Some of the traditionally excluded sectors, especially in the case of indigenous move-ments, may vindicate, based on their own political traditions, positions that challenge not only the existing democratic system, but also the State as such which is perceived as an imposition from the colonization and conquest of the region. In some cases, these sectors also tend to reject a concept

of civil society alien to their own community traditions, a situation that often compromises and further divides the realm of civil society in the region.[78] This situation is often combined with the absence or inability of the State to have an effective presence and to impose the rule of law in both rural and urban areas. The emergence of "divided cities", with territories that are under the control of criminal networks evidence a situation which mainly affect the everyday life of "informal citizens" in a context of marked inequalities and social exclusions inherent in the region.[79]

As can be observed from this schematic scenario, the main references for civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean can be historically traced back to the State and politics, and are linked to a unique paradox —civil society arose from the State matrix and after the experiences of authoritarianism and State terrorism in the 1970s, is often associated with anti-governmental backgrounds. Nevertheless, despite the gradual development and strengthening of organized citizens in democratic times, civil society needs the State to achieve a more vigorous and effective degree of development.[80] However, within the context of such development, civil society organizations often keep anti-governmental and anti-systemic traits that hinder the relations between CSOs and the State, even within the established parameters set forth by the Rule of Law and the respective democratic Constitutions.

In addition, as already mentioned, relationships between the State and civil society vary in each country, despite sharing some common features and traits. In some cases, the State seems to be very active in involving civil society organizations in the management of several public policy issues, especially in local and municipal areas, although it tends not to create spaces for their involvement in decision-making processes. However, in view of the key role played by the State in the formation of Latin American societies, most initiatives concerning civil society participation and involvement in defining and implementing social policies are promoted "from above", often combining co-optation mechanisms with political clientelism. In other cases, growth of the associative fabric of civil society is limited by restrictive laws through regulations and rules that imperil its development.[81]

However, as a general conclusion, an evident correlation is found between the greater development and strengthening of state institutions, higher human development indexes, and a greater development and influence of civil society organizations. Unlike what happens in other regions, this general trend corresponds to the previous argument that civil society in the region is actually developing from a state matrix and from the impulse given by democratization, but that this development occurs mainly in the framework of a **citizenship construction process**[82] aimed at exercising and broadening citizens' rights in democracy. This citizenship construction process carries the burden of each country's political dynamics, is closely related to such dynamics, and reflects the weaknesses and the strengths of each State, as well as the virtues and perversions of the political system and culture of each country. However, taking into account the characteristics already mentioned that are shaped by the State in the region and the society dissatisfaction with politics, this construction process currently results in low-intensity citizenships[83] partially associated with the retreat and fragmentation of CSOs in most countries of the region.[84]

This citizenship construction process involves a wide and diverse array of social organizations, networks and movements with specific sectional interests and priorities but also with a severe lack of coordination of their agendas and objectives. An obvious consequence of this is that, despite being generally perceived in a positive way by public opinion, especially in the case of NGOs, their influence on public policies is very limited; interface with state agencies is generally restricted (even if this interface increases in times of political or social crisis to later lose strength), and their connection with the private sector is virtually non-existent. [85]

Furthermore, despite the fact that most demands and agendas of citizens' organizations are sector-based (which hinder the coordination of common agendas and platforms at the national level) it is clear that the priorities set by these organizations often estrange them from regional issues and tend to reproduce, at the hemispheric level, the same problems that are present at the national level, worsened by the competition for resources and donors. As a result, in regional terms, only few organizations and networks manage to actively participate in regional processes and agendas, with the remarkable exception of contestation movements (anti-FTAA, anti-globalization, anti-US) which succeed in coordinating common platforms

with the ability to influence governments.[86] However, as we will analyze further, the transition of these movements from contestation and "anti" positions to dialogue and proactive "alter" positions was not easy.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the emergence of the World Social Forum and these contestation movements has contributed to developing, on the one hand, a clearer perception of regional priorities concerning the defense of common public goods and, on the other, a greater coordination capacity amongst citizens' organizations and social movements at regional and hemispheric levels. Yet, these developments have not influenced, until quite recently, the creation of regional movements with an effective ability to influence integration agendas, sufficiently trained and informed, with a proactive capacity and an efficient involvement in existing or potential institutional areas and spaces.

3. The transnational and regional dimensions: global civil society and regional civil society

Since the end of the Cold War the development and expansion of civil society networks and organizations at the international level accelerated its pace, and their interaction and cooperation with inter-governmental organizations and especially UN agencies increased. As Edwards points out the rationale behind this interaction and cooperation is related to the idea that "global civil society" can foster democratic practices through the creation of additional channels and mechanisms for citizen participation, accountability, consultation and debate, improving global governance and promoting long-standing international agreements.[87] Although the international system is still mostly state-centered, the burst of citizen networks and organizations at the global level and the development of transnational activities have led, among other factors, to the potential emergence of multi-layered and multi-actor networked global governance structures[88].

Throughout the 90s, new concepts emerged -such as "new diplomacy", "citizen diplomacy", "*soft power*", and "complex multilateralism"- to explain the participation of non-state actors and the growing leading role adopted by civil society

networks and organizations in the debates and discussions on international politics, global governance and the resolution of global problems. Within this framework, new terms such as "global civil society", "transnational civil society" and "transnational social movements"[89] were introduced to explain the transnational development of these actors. Despite the ambiguity of the concept of "civil society", conceived as a space containing different - and potentially contradictory - interests and agendas, this debate opened the possibility of addressing more efficiently the problem of the democratic deficit embedded in inter-governmental organizations. Furthermore, within a framework of a broad commitment to democracy, human rights, and the protection of the environment, positive impacts and outcomes were achieved by global campaigns conducted by different movements and NGOs with the aim of transforming specific policies addressing on a variety of global issues. This process paved the way for fostering and defending a series of common global values through civil society participation, as an important part of what, at that time, was called complex multilateralism in the international system.[90]

Despite the ethical and moral stands of civil society networks and organizations, this debate also raises several criticisms regarding their lack of accountability and legitimacy and the fact that they represented only themselves. As a matter of fact, these criticisms have especially focused on the fact that many NGOs, especially in the South, "are self-selected, unaccountable, and poorly rooted in society, thereby questioning their legitimacy as participants in global debate".[91]

However, more recently, there are two important processes worth mentioning within this framework.

First, especially after the unilateralist policies fostered by the United States since September 2001 and the limited participation of civil society in the 2005 Millennium Summit,[92] which affected and jeopardized multilateralism under the UN umbrella,[93] civil society networks and organizations began to be less active in inter-governmental spaces (especially at the UN) and the idea of global governance based on complex multilateralism including non-state actors started to lose momentum. As a matter of fact, several analysts point

out to the disappointment of transnational social movements and international non-governmental organizations (INGO) with regard to the influence achieved in multilateral spaces, in parallel with the emergence and development of new actors of global civil society that are less interested in, or completely skeptical about the possibility of acting in those spaces, or about the usefulness of developing coordinated actions or policies with intergovernmental organizations.[94]

Second, despite the continuity of the World Social Forum and despite its limited impact on the global agenda,[95] over the last decade civil society organization networks at the regional level have not developed and strengthened in line with the expectations fueled in previous years. This situation is probably due to their own shortcomings and weaknesses and the contradictions and tensions arising from their inherent heterogeneity as well as from the lack of suitable interlocutors both among and with intergovernmental organizations. Also, another factor to take into account is the reluctance of the latter, and especially of some of its member countries, to open spaces for civil society participation and engagement. As identified by a 2003 study mapping civil society networks in Latin America and the Caribbean, at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century regional civil society networks took a significant turn, after two decades of expansion. The study further pointed out that these organizations could face growing challenges and obstacles hindering their development and their advocacy ability,[96] a forecast that has currently been fulfilled. A recent document based on consultations with CSOs from Latin America and the Caribbean reveals both the tensions between governments and civil society making the latter highly vulnerable in certain countries,[97] the challenge posed by monitoring multilateral and international organizations, and the need to develop international CSO networks able to fulfill this function adequately and with the necessary technical skills.[98]

The impact of advocacy processes is measured based on two critical variables: government needs and NGOs' capacity.[99] CSOs' effective capacity of advocacy depends largely on the openness of intergovernmental organizations granted by the decisions and the consensus achieved by their member states. In this regard, on the one hand, there are significant constraints on their influence and effectiveness, particularly when they do not

show enough transparency, representativeness and accountability,[100] while, on the other, their performance can be hindered when they are perceived as a threat to state sovereignty. Many constraints limiting civil society participation, whether explicitly or implicitly, are imposed by the states themselves or more accurately by the governments representing those states which, paradoxically enough, in Latin America and the Caribbean seem to be predominantly progressive.[101]

In Latin America and the Caribbean, where the principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention constitute a cornerstone of the legal tradition of intergovernmental organizations, there is strong reluctance to accept and/or institutionalize civil society participation. This reluctance is evidenced not only by the debate and the potential discussion of regional agendas and policies but also by institutional interlocution and coordination aimed at fostering and executing those agendas and policies. Basically, both legal tradition and state-centered doctrines, and the reluctance to recognize CSOs as political actors (added to CSOs' own reluctance to assume that role as non-party actors) have seriously restricted CSOs' participation in concrete and specific initiatives and strategies in coordination with IGOs', if not completely barred it. Despite government's rhetoric CSOs' acquired knowledge in terms of lessons learned and useful experiences is usually ignored. Moreover, even within the UN framework the multi-actor and multi-layered approach, which requires coordination among different actors to foster specific policies and strategies, often materializes through selective and *ad hoc* associations that replace an effective and sustained participation of civil society at the institutional level.

Nonetheless, many of the difficulties and obstacles hindering effective coordination between intergovernmental organizations and CSOs, both at the global and at the regional level, are also a result of CSOs' shortcomings and weaknesses.

However, at the regional level, certain promising signs have emerged in this direction, slowed down nonetheless by a series of conceptual, institutional and political obstacles.

The most promising signs are evident in the increasing capacity of regional civil society networks to formulate and implement proactive agendas

to foster regional integration. These networks include initiatives such as the Hemispheric Social Alliance, which emerged originally harbored by the resistance against the NAFTA; [102] the *Mesa de Articulación de Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de ONGs de América Latina y el Caribe*,[103] mostly focused on generating liaison with governments on regional topics in the framework of forums, summits and dialogues with Presidents and Ministers; the Citizen Diplomacy Forum,[104] aimed at lobbying and influencing the agenda of the OAS and a set of regional and sub-regional organizations, or the Bolivarian Congress of Peoples,[105] developed around an agenda opposing neo-liberalism, the FTAA, and US hegemonic power and clearly identified with ALBA (as a member of its Council of Social Movements), and an assemblage of civil society initiatives and networks at the sub-regional level such as the CC-SICA,[106] in the case of Central America, and SOMOS MERCOSUR[107] in MERCOSUR.

Moreover, obstacles to their growth and influence are linked to two sets of problems.

First, the same difficulty identified in the State-civil society relations, in the framework of citizenship building in a democratic system is amplified and magnified in regional integration processes, characterized by certain distinctive features of its own. In essence, if the conflictive State-civil society relation at the national level creates difficulties *per se* when it comes to institutionalizing political spaces for effective empowerment of civil society,[108] the problem is deepened and worsened when it comes to a complex interlocution with a developing regional civil society represented by an array of networks and alliances, seriously fragmented and atomized by the diversity of its actors and by the different sectional interests they represent. Beyond the general aim of promoting and defending regional common goods, these networks and alliances show serious difficulties when trying to articulate a common voice and position. Particularly when they have to deal with a diversity of governments and domestic technocrats, at times showing conflicting State and government interests amongst them. Nonetheless, those are the interlocutors, which within a political framework, are supposed to interact and promote citizen empowerment initiatives and agendas beyond their predominantly trade or techno-political objectives.[109] In fact, rather than agreements of a technical nature, there seems to

be missing a process of negotiations of a regional social contract encompassing both citizens' and government interests.[110]

The second difficulty lies with the overall absence or the very incipient emergence of institutionalized spaces for interfacing with governments within regional organizations and integration forums. Beyond specific junctures such as regional Summits and diverse regional Forums (including the Summit of the Americas, the South American Community of Nations Summits, the Ibero-American Forum or the European Union-Latin America Forums), usually characterized by high media coverage and little further follow-up, there are no institutionalized spaces for interaction between CSOs and inter-governmental organizations.

Within this framework, we will now address the most recent advances.

4 The missing actor: the development of civil society participation mechanisms in regional integration processes and the dilemmas of integration "from above".

After a brief review of the focus of tension and the differences both between the dynamics and the actors of UNASUR/MERCOSUR and ALBA, it becomes evident that, notwithstanding the fact that ALBA can be perceived as "the core of Latin-American integration" and that "both processes operate in a parallel but coordinated manner"[111] according to some high ranking Venezuelan officials, there are significant conceptual, ideological, leadership and external relation differences between both schemes. Those differences make it difficult to forecast and asses the political compatibility of both integration schemes. Nevertheless, it is also evident that the emergence of ALBA and Chavez's regional policies, with its strong emphasis on social issues, as pointed out in previous articles,[112] have introduced in the regional agenda a social and political dimension that had often been left aside in the past. Thus, the analysis of the latest documents produced by regional and sub-regional integration initiatives and meetings, including UNASUR, show that the social agenda is increasingly gaining momentum and relevance within the regional agenda. Accordingly, the regional objectives traditionally restricted to economic growth are being balanced

with those focused on equity, social inclusion and justice, and the appeal to the access of citizens of the region to the potential benefits of integration and development. Moreover, it is also evident that this process cannot be dissociated from the predominantly progressive nature of many new governments in the area.

However, the increasing relevance of the social agenda in regional integration processes, as shown, for example, in the statements made in Porlamar during the 2007 Energy Summit regarding the "universal access to energy as a civil right",[113] does not necessarily mean that all citizens are actually exercising their rights to influence decisions within integration processes. In this regard, it is also important to review the extent to which both schemes —UNASUR and ALBA , create effective channels for citizens' participation and empowerment in the regional process.

As we argued before, in a way, all integration initiatives implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean, from the most radically commercialist and neoliberal to the most statist and anti-hegemonic ones, refer to or have created some kind of mechanisms of consultation or dialogue with civil society, regardless of the fact that this concept has been interpreted in different ways in each case, generating specific modalities of interlocution and interface with selected government representatives. Such mechanisms, albeit few, have proven to be effective in terms of their influence on agendas and decisions, especially when associated with social protests and demonstrations, as evidenced, despite the current debate on the matter,[114] by the regional mobilization led by the Hemispheric Social Alliance (ASC) against the FTAA. More often than not, the pressure exerted by these protests and demonstrations has allowed civil society networks and organizations to foster several recommendations within the framework of forums and dialogue mechanisms with government representatives, especially during the Summits of the Americas[115] and the General Assemblies and special meetings of the OAS. Particularly in these cases, civil society networks and organizations were able to influence, though usually in a limited manner, the negotiation of free trade agreements or cooperation and political coordination programs at the regional and subregional levels. As we have already argued in prior studies,[116] it is important to point out that, especially regarding the implementation of the FTAA,

social contestation and mobilization organized by trade unions, social movements and non-governmental organizations, have become, over the last decade, an important regional political reference, eventually coordinated with stands by progressive governments in an attempt to socially legitimize their positions.[117]

However, social mobilization does not always result in the adoption of more effective and democratic institutionalized mechanisms to allow citizen participation in decision making processes at the regional level or to promote the establishment of a more fluent dialogue with governmental authorities. Eventually, its impact tends to fade once the political juncture, the actual crisis or its political climax dilutes.

Many citizen organizations and social networks lack the technical knowledge and adequate preparation to deal with integration and international issues, and quite often, parochial views end up leading to radical positions without an adequate factual and analytical basis.[118] This situation is aggravated by the lack of information on decision-making processes and integration organizations mechanisms, which is frequently associated with the institutional weaknesses of these organizations. As a consequence, civil society networks and organizations tend to adopt anti-systemic positions, leading them to elaborate proposals within the framework of the prevailing state-centered approaches and views.

Social organizations and movements are characterized by their heterogeneity, and associated with the process of building citizenship in the region. Trade unions, rural and indigenous movements, ecologists, women and ethnic movements, and non-governmental networks and organizations with different partisan and thematic interests converge within the civil society realm. In this context, the advocacy capability of civil society at large, despite the existence of relatively developed consultation, participation or monitoring mechanisms, has been, up until recent times, severely limited at the regional level, with the possible exception of the strength and influence attained by the coalition against the FTAA. However, the prominence the HSA coalition reached at the beginning of the first decade of the current century, while holding plebiscites and civil society consultations and developing a high level of dialogue with several governments, contrasts with the current shift of

its agenda towards climate justice issues and challenging mega-projects such as IIRSA, and with the emergences of new social actors engaged in strong activism, but with differentiated agendas, such as indigenous or environmentalist movements. Environmental movements' campaigns are especially oriented against neo-extractivist practices promoted by some governments, including several left-wing ones.[119]

This limited development also faces an important lack of institutionalized participation spaces within the different regional integration schemes, which frequently reflects in social organizations and movements being co-opted or manipulated (by means of clientelistic mechanisms) by governments or inter-governmental bodies. In this regard, it is sometimes difficult to identify which elements of the final declarations and documents agreed upon at the Summits and the technical meetings of regional inter-governmental organizations have been included as the result of actions fostered by civil society and which ones where appropriated and assumed by governments. This is particularly evident in those spheres in which governments and more specifically, Presidents personal clout have a predominant influence.[120]

However, a significant difference between the ALBA and the various components of UNASUR's structure is the level of development of institutionalized mechanisms of citizen participation in decisions regarding regional integration.

With regards to the UNASUR, the civil society participation and advocacy mechanism originally created at the South American Community of Nations (CSN) was initially structured by convening parallel Social Summits. Both at the Second CSN Summit in Brasilia and especially during the Third CSN Summit in Cochabamba in December 2006, Social Summits were held before the Intergovernmental Summit. During those Summits, several mechanisms and spaces where created for dialogue and interaction with governments and especially with some presidents and foreign affairs ministers in order to present and debate the conclusions, recommendations and proposals of civil society forums, workshops and work groups held during the parallel Social Summits.[121] In addition to these dialogue and exchange roundtables with government representatives, during the 2006 Cochabamba Summit, a special meeting was held between deputy foreign affairs ministers, govern-

ment representatives, and 12 representatives of civil society. During this meeting, social movement claims and recommendations regarding a fairer and democratic integration were presented and discussed.[122]

An important evidence of the effective advocacy of CSO is that the initiative to rename the CSN as UNASUR was suggested by the civil society representatives at the Cochabamba Social Summit, and was later reintroduced by President Hugo Chávez during the Porlamar Energy Summit. Nevertheless, regardless of the new name for the South American organization, the Cochabamba Social Summit showed that CSOs were soundly prepared and more than able of presenting proposals and recommendations to the governments. During the fruitful dialogues and exchanges between CSOs and governments, these recommendations and proposals reached the heads of state and officials[123] attending the governmental Summit, to the extent that some analysts[124] do not hesitate to point out that the organization, program, results, and activities of the Social Summit turned out to be more effective and assertive than those of the intergovernmental Summit.

In any event, since the Brasilia Summit, Social Summits were included as part of the CSN's structure as a previous step to institutionalized dialogue and exchange mechanisms between civil society and governments. Nevertheless, this mechanism was limited to the sphere of the Summits and does not necessarily allow for the development of institutionalized and sustained exchange and advocacy channels at the regional level or the establishment of mechanisms to monitor and follow up the agreements that were reached. Instead of permanent mechanisms for civil society participation linked to the regional organizations, this mechanism rather aimed at holding such exchanges and dialogues in forums in between the Summits, at the national level, according to the level of receptivity and acceptance of each government.

However, the creation of UNASUR in 2008 seems to have put even an end to Social Summits. After the marathon intergovernmental Summit in Costa do Sauípe held in December 2008; currently the different intergovernmental Summits and technical meetings do not include preliminary Social Summits and interaction spaces between civil society and governments. Despite the fact

that UNASUR Constitutive Treaty repeatedly refers to the participation of civil society, as an essential element for sustaining and strengthening democracy, it does not create institutionalized spaces and mechanisms for such participation as part of UNASUR's structure, neither during presidential summits nor within the framework of the different Councils created by the Treaty, including the South American Defense Council.[125]

Apparently, since the Social Forum for the Americas held in Caracas in January 2006 to the most recent Social Forum held in Asunción in 2010 the proposals made by civil society networks and organizations and by social movements, especially with regards to regional integration, have been displaced to the Americas Social Forums, held in different locations and separately from intergovernmental meetings and Summits.

Given the predominance of democratic regimes in the area, within the UNASUR, probably the most advanced mechanisms of consultation – but not of participation and empowerment - of civil society[126] have developed within the scope of the MERCOSUR, both in terms of the presence and possible advocacy of civil society and citizen networks and organizations, and the creation and development of regional parliamentary mechanisms. In this regard, in addition to the mechanisms we have mentioned before, such as the Economic and Social Forum, we can find the MERCOSUR Social-Labor Commission, the Work Subgroup No. 10 on Labor, Employment and Social Security Affairs, the Specialized Meeting of Women (REM), the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming of the Common Market of the South (REAF) and the Specialized Meeting of MERCOSUR Cooperatives (RECM) within the Common Market Group; and the High Level Group for MERCOSUR Employment Growth Strategy (GANEMPLE) and the Meeting of High-Level Authorities in Human Rights of MERCOSUR and Associated States (RAADDHH) within the Common Market Council.[127] Together with these mechanisms, the inclusion of a social agenda in the MERCOSUR by member states' progressive governments, created the conditions, within the 2004-2006 Employment Program promoted by Brazil, for the Common Market Council to choose to "foster an increase in the participation of civil society in the integration process".[128] It was within this context, during the XXX Summit of MERCOSUR Heads of State, held in Córdoba

in July, 2006, that the forum SOMOS MERCOSUR was created, as the result of a series of prior meetings with a group of social actors engaged in these groups and commissions, as well as in other organizations. SOMOS MERCOSUR is a public initiative launched during Uruguay's *pro tempore* Chair of MERCOSUR in 2005, with the support of FESUR. SOMOS MERCOSUR aims at engaging citizens in the regional integration process, creating new spaces for civil society and governments to be able to debate, raise claims and take part in decision-making processes.[129]

Nevertheless, such participation is coordinated by the focal points of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each MERCOSUR member country,[130] which means that "this channel for civil society participation is still organized by the governments of the five countries".[131] However, this initiative allowed the first MERCOSUR Social Summit, promoted by Brazil, held in Brasilia, on December 13th and 14th of 2006, during Uruguay's *pro tempore* Chair of MERCOSUR, with the aim of increasing civil society participation and promoting a political, productive, and cultural MERCOSUR[132] within the framework of the XXXI Summit of MERCOSUR Heads of State. A participative methodology similar to the one adopted in the CSN Social Summits was applied and various actors, through different working groups, were able to elaborate a series of recommendations in a report submitted to the intergovernmental Summit.

Together with SOMOS MERCOSUR and the formal implementation of the Social Summit as an essential component of communication and interface between governments and civil society regarding regional agenda topics, MERCOSUR encompasses the MERCOSUR Consultative Forum of Municipalities and the MERCOSUR Parliament,[133] established in Montevideo in May 2007, with 81 representatives appointed by the governments of the member states. During its first session, the Parliament declared Social Summits and Productive and Social MERCOSUR meetings[134] to be of "regional interest", reflecting the growing concern of political actors to achieve a consistent and fluent relationship with social actors.

In spite of its limitations, this complex structure for civil society participation in MERCOSUR is not matched by other regional organizations.[135] However, as mentioned above, in previous years

there was a noticeable trend towards allowing Social Summits to periodically become the forum of choice for interlocution and dialogue with governments and, together with regional Parliaments, an important component of the structure of regional organizations. Nevertheless, the effect these mechanisms may have in terms of advocacy and participation in and monitoring of regional agenda decisions and the development of the resulting public policies is still to be assessed, particularly regarding regional Parliaments, whose decisions are generally not binding unless a supra-national judicial structure is developed, such as in the case of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), which, in fact, is not very effective.[136] The monitoring and follow-up by civil society networks and organizations of the decisions and agreements reached at these Summits remains an unresolved issue, and the sustainability and conti-nuity of these efforts is strongly conditioned upon availability of resources, thus favoring some trade union organizations and cooperatives, but not the totality of civil society networks and organizations, many of which depend on external funding from cooperation agencies or INGOs.

Nevertheless, MERCOSUR's civil society partici-pation structures and the CSN in general have been widely criticized from more radical points of views. Some claim that they answer to specific national interests; pointing out, for example, that despite the fact that the implementation of FTAA has been prevented, it was not merely due to the actions of social movements, but because "ultimately, it is also a consequence of the fact that Brazil and Argentina could not obtain enough concessions for the exports of their agricultural in-dustries".[137] From a more extreme position, some claim that the CSN's neoliberal origins should be rejected, and more importantly, that the CAN/ MERCOSUR convergence and the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) should be contested, as they favor the interests of transnational capital and the deepening of social divisions.[138] These same critics dispute both MERCOSUR and CAN civil society participation mechanisms, and the Cochabamba Social Summit itself.[139] From their point of view, both MERCOSUR and CAN are viewed as "dominant class'" programs, lack-ing social legitimacy, regardless of the fact that some activists promote a "MERCOSUR with social content".[140] Likewise, activists from other social movements claim that, within the regional

integration process, "social movements must remain independent from any government, even those which are the result of such movements' efforts".[141]

Finally, it is noteworthy, as we have already stressed before, that the MERCOSUR structures have not yet found a match in terms of citizen par-ticipation within UNASUR's emerging structure. Since the establishment of the latter, its evolution shows that this is mainly an intergovernmental body, with a clearly political focus, in which greater importance is given to the decisions and performance of the governments of the member states, despite the many references made in its documents and statements about the need to promote a social agenda and a renewal of devel-opment strategies, together with an increasing citizen participation.[142] In fact, in UNASUR there are still no established mechanisms for citizen par-ticipation, while the Social Summits had become a marginal and non-influential space, eventually dissociated from the inter-governmental Summits and meetings.

When compared to the experiences mentioned in terms of civil society participation in South America, during its fifth Summit in Venezuela, ALBA conducted the first ALBA Encounter with Social Movements and incorporated a Social Movements Council into its formal structure. A second meeting of the Council was held before the sixth Summit in January 2008,[143] as well as the first ALBA-TCP Social Movements Council Summit, held in Cochabamba, on October 15-17, 2009, where no role was assigned to parliamentary bod-ies at the national level or within the framework of a regional structure.[144] Actually, despite the fact that the organization openly accepts proposals from social movements, the most important deci-sions are still made by governments and especially by their respective heads of state, while the Social Movements Council is subordinated to them.

As stated in a report "the ALBA-TCP Treaty was negotiated without the participation of civil society (...) Energy-related projects, such as the South Gas Pipeline (Gasoducto del Sur) are car-ried on without public participation. Whenever social movements are asked to submit proposals, such as the creation of a regional network of re-covered companies, it is because such proposals present no potential conflict. Thus, ALBA still pays very little attention to the proposals of civil

society".[145] Especially regarding the South Gas Pipeline, several environmental organizations have reported damages to the Amazonian area and demanded the suspension of the project to the governments of Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. In fact, and despite the 2007 Social Summit, as we have already pointed out, ALBA has assimilated several important proposals submitted by social movements and networks such as the Hemispheric Social Alliance, but has not taken into account criticisms made by some social movements or the participation of its citizens in the implementation of inter-governmental agreements. As pointed out in the same report, "especially regarding energy-related projects —which are essential for the ALBA— there is a series of critical voices that should not go unheard".[146]

Additionally, the VI ALBA Summit, held in Caracas in January 2008, where Dominica became the fifth member of the body, was preceded by a social movements meeting, which included representatives from countries that are not members of ALBA. However, there is no evidence that this broadened Social Movements Council participated in the Summit's decision-making process.[147]

More recently, and according to Silva, the Social Movements Council has been structured into national chapters, usually promoted by the governments of the different member states, although it is also important to take into account the participation of regional networks, such as the Bolivarian Congress of Peoples and the Bolivarian Continental Coordination.[148] The first ALBA-TCP Social Movements Council Summit, held in Cochabamba on October 15-17, 2009, was aimed at "allowing the direct participation of social movements in the various cooperation and solidarity mechanisms", and was in line with ALBA-TCP main goals and principles as an integration process. Moreover, it stated that every national coordination chapter within ALBA-TCP member states will "establish its own dynamics to operate and interact with governments" and will be linked to the Social Movements Council. The activities of each national chapter will be coordinated with those of social movements within other countries, which need not to be members of ALBA in order to strengthen development, participation and assistance programs through social movements.[149] However, this declaration failed to clearly state the way in which ALBA decision-making mechanisms should be coordinated.

Basically, within this context, social proposals connected to ALBA are usually launched or made public by President Chávez through different governmental, intergovernmental or social meetings and forums, eventually capitalizing on the proposals made by some social movements in the region.

Ultimately, and despite the fact that ALBA, as a project under development, appears to be a scheme receptive to proposals by regional social movements, especially in connection with the possibility to pursue "other integration"[150] or an alternative integration, based on principles other than those of the commercialist and neoliberal rationale followed by prior programs, in practice it still remains, at least up to this date, an inter-state cooperation initiative. And more precisely, an inter-presidential one, that shows the persistence of the same limitations and a democratic deficit similar to those of other integration processes.

Nevertheless, when comparing the social participation mechanisms existing within UNASUR/MERCOSUR with those existing within ALBA, some similar traits can be found. One of them consists in the way in which these organizations structure their links with civil society networks and organizations through national chapters, which are usually surpassed by the development of broader regional or sub-regional networks. In ALBA's case, the civil society participation mechanism —the Council of Social Movements— has a broader approach and includes extra-regional social networks and movements. The differences in the language used by both integration schemes when referring to civil society are particularly revealing; while the UNASUR/MERCOSUR refers to citizen participation, without differentiating specific actors within civil society organizations and networks, ALBA refers specifically to social movements, as well as to their struggles and mobilizations. This is an important difference, as the way in which social movements are viewed and perceived within ALBA is strongly linked to the different campaigns and social mobilizations against the FTAA, globalization, neoliberalism, and militarism, while the citizen participation referred to in UNASUR documents, as well as in the MERCOSUR experience, seem to aim to the effective participation of a broad spectrum of citizen networks and organizations, including the different social movements, without any ideological qualification.

Paradoxically, and despite the limitations of its institutional structure, the schemes that supported the CSN and especially the development of MERCOSUR seem to include social participation mechanisms that are clearly more institutionalized and tends to better facilitate dialogue and interface between governments and civil society, which does not mean that the democratic deficit evident in the decision-making process, the monitoring of integration processes, and the lack of empowerment of civil society is effectively overcome. However, in spite of all of its defects and limitations, up to this date, these institutionalized mechanisms, in connection with both civil society and existing or emerging parliamentary bodies, seem to be better aligned with a democratic approach.[151]

5. Post-liberal regionalism, civil society and "regionalitarian" approaches

In sum, beyond FTAA's dilution,[152] several Latin American integration proposals compete in this new stage of regionalism, each of them characterized by different components.

On the one hand, with a more complex and decanted conceptual and operational structure, which does not make it more efficient or institutionalized, CSN/UNASUR initiative develops, based on the MERCOSUR/CAN convergence, with the adscription of other countries, such as Chile, Guyana and Surinam. On the other hand, in the form of an incipient but innovative and ambitious sketch, ALBA is launched on the basis of more concrete ideological conceptions, a high level of cooperation, and an openly anti-US standing. Paradoxically, some of ALBA members are also full or associated CSN/UNASUR, MERCOSUR, and CAN members. The hope that ALBA will become the "hard core" of UNASUR does not seem to prosper beyond the already established ideological borders,[153] but its innovative experiences affect the entire South American agenda, especially with regards to social, energetic, and financial aspects.[154] Nevertheless, and until new political changes take place in the area, other members of UNASUR show no intention of joining ALBA and despite its institutional deficiencies and limitations, MERCOSUR actually appears to have became South America's integration "hard core".[155]

In fact, the struggle over UNASUR's future is linked to MERCOSUR and ALBA's contrasting models. Both models include specific topics in their regional agendas (from industrial production and the insertion into the international market, to energy-related, financial, infrastructure and South-South cooperation issues) under different ideological conceptions. Citizens from Latin American countries should have, as potential beneficiaries of these integration processes developed in a democratic environment, some degree of influence on the decisions taken regarding the promotion and defense of regional public goods. While the trade agreements based on the convergence of CAN and UNASUR remain as relevant reference, and mega-projects such as IIRSA, are developed to favor regional and extra-regional trade, UNASUR/MERCOSUR's characterization as a clearly post-liberal process raises several questions, particularly regarding economic and commercial dimensions. Similarly, the exclusion of the United States from UNASUR does not necessarily indicate a movement towards a post-hegemonic regionalism[156]. Brazil maintains a balanced relationship with Washington in the context of a greater regional autonomy, and the eventual reaffirmation of the United States' influence in Latin America is not excluded. Especially in terms of US security agreements existing with several countries in the area, which not only include allies such as Colombia, but also Brazil. Also, despite the fact that the FTAA project has faded away, several UNASUR member states maintain or seek to sign free trade agreements with the United States.

Despite the fact that there is an obvious political estrangement from the "Washington Consensus" recipes, especially in order to promote a greater role for the State and as the result of the importance given to the social agenda, the process of reconfiguration of regional relationships within the framework of UNASUR and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CEALC, according to its Spanish acronym) does not permit to draw early conclusions on the development of a post-hegemonic regionalism. Nevertheless, within the framework of a greater autonomy from the United States, it is possible to argue that post-liberal regionalism is developing as a general trend in the region, in terms of the strong re-politization of relationships between Latin American countries, the renewal of the central role for the State and the return to a neo-

developmentalist agenda, as the main traits of a new stage of regional integration.

Provided it develops a more structured institutional scheme and a sustainability that is not dependent upon international oil prices and the problems that can arise in Venezuela's domestic politics, ALBA may qualify as an attempt to advance a post-hegemonic regionalism modality, both as a result of the exclusion of the United States and of an aggressive contestation to US politics in the region (which were just temporarily tempered by Obama's administration). Nevertheless, it also shows post-liberal traits similar to UNASUR, while adding cooperation and trade components based on different principles and values.

However, despite the differences and competing regional leaderships within ALBA and UNASUR's initiatives, it could be argued that Latin American regionalism is undergoing a transitional stage which, nevertheless, allows the identification of several common trends and characteristics addressed above, in terms of the three "returns" mentioned —that of the State, the re-politization of regional relationships, and the neo-developmentalist approach.

Paradoxically, within this framework social development policies have frequently been adopted by States at the expense of the previous performance of social networks and citizen organizations which used to have a more central role in their implementation during the '80s and the '90s. When the State regains a central position amongst other social actors,[157] it reactivates the establishment "from above" of social agendas, without the participation of civil society both at the national and the regional level.

In fact, the tension existing between the participation of citizens organizations (both NGOs and social movements) in integration processes, and the unilateral decision-making by governments, have grown as the result of the new political traits of the different governments in office, while the democratic deficit in emerging regional organizations deepens instead of losing its strength and fading away as a consequence of the eventual increase and the development of social participation mechanisms.

Despite the fact that the first manifestations of an active participation of citizen networks and orga-

nizations at the regional level can be found during the 80's and the 90's linked to the inter-American system and the Summits of the Americas,[158] since the Mar del Plata Social Summit in 2005, held in parallel with the official Summit of the Americas, the evolution of citizens´ organizations interface and dialogue with governments regarding regional processes, repositioned momentarily social movements. Social movements were able to gain a significant relevance up until the CSN Cochabamba Summit, where important exchanges between citizen organizations in general and social movements in particular, and the governments attending the official Summit took place. However, following this participation peak, after which no sustainable participation and advocacy channels and mechanisms were institutionalized, the participation at and planning of parallel social Summits decreased substantially, as well as civil society capacity to interact with governments regarding different issues of the regional agenda.

During the marathon succession of Summits held in Bahia, in December 2008, only the Summit of the People of the South, held separately in San Salvador de Bahía, showed the ability of social movements and NGOs to attract attendance, mainly restricted to MERCOSUR social actors, as well as a certain degree of communication with this integration structure[159]. This was the consequence of a follow-up process of increasing citizen organizations participation within MERCOSUR, originally initiated by trade unions and followed by initiatives such as SOMOS MERCOSUR. Nevertheless, the meetings held by UNASUR, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Rio Group and the emerging CEALC in Costa do Sauípe on the same dates did not allow a similar communication and were in fact held behind closed doors, without the participation or presence of civil society organizations.[160] Nevertheless, the Summits of the People of the South, together with MERCOSUR, continue to promote an autonomous space for debate and exchange activities and for the articulation of proposals that currently find no match within UNASUR, ALBA, or CEALC.

On the other hand, despite the fact that the Social Movements Council has been integrated to ALBA's emerging structure, it did not become an effective participation mechanism. The Social Movements Council has no direct influence on presidential decision-making processes, and tends to act more to legitimize the initiatives adopted by

governments and intergovernmental bodies, both in the political and ideological spheres and in the social and economic ones. Regardless of the fact that, as we have already mentioned in connection with the HSA, some of the proposals made by social movements have been incorporated into ALBA's agenda, actually the relationship between social organizations and ALBA's decision-making bodies, as showed in its organizational chart, are vague, and restricted to the convening of meetings to be held before presidential or ministerial Summits. Furthermore, the incorporation into the Council not only of member countries' social and political movements and organizations supporting their respective governments through national chapters (where the original MERCOSUR participation scheme for the Economic and Social Forum is replicated, although excluding private sector associations), but also of ideologically similar networks and associations, both regional and extra-regional, broadens the number of social and political actors involved and the legitimacy these organizations bring to the intergovernmental body, but does not necessarily reflects the eventual influence that these social actors can have on decision-making and policy-formulating processes, which are still controlled by the governments. In this regard, it is paradoxical that, particularly in terms of the social agenda —materialized, together with other social initiatives, in the social missions (Misiones Sociales)— it is still formulated and implemented vertically and "from above", and the active participation of citizens is eventually only allowed at community or local levels.

Finally, we must point out that both within UNASUR[161] and ALBA,[162] as stated in a document recently published by social organizations, "in spite of the differences and variations existing amongst the diverse integration initiatives under analysis; we must acknowledge that all such initiatives allow a restricted space for participation and advocacy by social and political actors other than the States themselves. Differences are mainly linked to the degree of democratic institutionalization reached through spaces in which governments can create and promote dialogue and consult with civil society organizations and through the creation of institutionalized mechanisms allowing their participation. It seems that, until such spaces and mechanisms are expanded and improved, the historical democratic deficit in regional intergovernmental processes will challenge the possibility of "other integration" as proposed by civil society

(…). Whether this new integration will finally reflect governmental interests and junctures (even in the case of progressive governments) or it will be developed in accordance with the interests of their peoples and allowing them to participate in debates on such integration's political meanings" still remains to be seen.[163]

Such questions cast doubts on the statements made over the last decade by social organizations on the "possibility of a different integration", outlined in the Social Forum of the Americas, held in Caracas, in January, 2006,[164] and on the effective overcoming of the growing democratic deficit in emerging regional institutions. Notwithstanding the fact that during the last two decades some left-wing parties and political groups have been in office in several Latin American countries, revisiting a characterization made by Ignacio Ramonet of the vertical and exclusive nature of globalization processes and world governance in terms of being "globalitarian", we must wonder whether we are experiencing a "regionalitarian" process in this new post-liberal regional stage. In this regard, decisions on the regional agenda are taken by governments with very limited or without any citizen participation, and the attendance of civil society organizations to different regional forums merely legitimizes this process instead of allowing their actual participation and empowerment.

In a long term scenario, the effective participation and consequent empowerment of civil society at the regional level depends on a joint effort on the strengthening, within a democratic framework, of the institutional architecture both of the State and of intergovernmental organizations, as well as the development and advancement of civil society organizations and networks, overcoming their intrinsic weaknesses and imperfections.[1] Within this framework, it is evident, as we have already argued before, that to a greater democratic process of institutionalization corresponds a more vigorous development of citizen organizations, a crucial factor when deciding whether or not current integration projects and initiatives are to survive if they seek to represent their societies' legitimate claims and interests.

Currently, many initiatives such as the Citizens Diplomacy Forum, the movement for the "Other integration is possible", the *Mesa de Articulación de Organizaciones y Redes Sociales*", the Hemi-

spheric Social Alliance, with increasingly weaker influence on intergovernmental Summits and Forums, are not able to foster an actual change of citizen participation and empowerment levels in regional integration processes and the overcoming of the existing democratic deficit. This situation affects both the drafting of their agendas and the outlining and implementation of public policies at the regional level, particularly when related to the two new post-neoliberal and post-hegemonic bodies UNASUR and ALBA, not to mention CELAC currently a work in process. The interface of citizen organizations with these emerging organizations is either scarce or nonexistent, and issues related to regional or global public goods are dealt with within different spheres and intergovernmental meeting spaces, not necessarily linked to regional integration or emerging forms of regionalism, as it is the case of environmental issues or indigenous claims. Furthermore, disappointment of citizen organizations regarding the possibility of influencing these processes seems to match the growing frustration of civil society with predominantly political multilateral spaces such as the UN.

The proliferation of Summits and integration initiatives and models, the abundance of discourses, and the absence of efficient institutional constructions regarding regional integration contrasts with the increasing fragmentation of the region. This fragmentation reflects distinctive integration models and paradigms and an increasing geopolitical polarization, as well as the failures and limitations of citizen movements to influence the regional agenda and to articulate and to foster alternative or complementary proposals.

Beyond the generic statement of the possibility of an alternative integration —*"otra integración es posible"*— no proactive agenda or strategy based on citizens´ interests exists, nor are there any institutionalized democratic mechanisms for civil society participation being developed to overcome the current democratic deficit within the regional integration architecture. Despite the fact that issue-focused and sectional-related initiatives exist within the structure of some of the integration initiatives – as the cases of inter-cities links and agreements and university exchanges show –, there are is no noticeable development of a regional democratic governance structure that might be able to channel, through institutional mechanisms, broader citizens´ aspirations and demands. Within the current political juncture,

the combination of the increasing frustration and demobilization of CSOs and networks and the reluctance of some governments to allow them a more active role in the new post-liberal regionalism process deepen the democratic deficit in the regional inter-governmental realm. Moreover, at the same time, it poses serious questions on whether such deficit can be transcended at the domestic level, within the processes of consolidating and deepening existing democratic systems and of negotiating and developing new social contracts within the region.

Governments' lack of political will, both at the regional and national level, to foster the growth and development of autonomous spaces and mechanisms for citizens' participation finds match in the weaknesses and demobilization of many regional civil society organizations and networks. As a result, intergovernmental organizations, especially the ones associated to this new phase of post-liberal regionalism, rather than closing the gap between their democratic performance and the aspirations and demands of citizens all over the region, tend to exacerbate and deepen the existing democratic deficit.

NOTES

1. While in the process of writing this document, both the Colombia and the Panama free trade agreements are still undergoing a difficult process of approval at the United States Congress.

2. Cf. Valladao, Alfredo (2007) "La nueva línea de Tordesillas. La actual gran línea divisioria entre el Este y el Oeste en Latinoamérica", in Serbin, Andrés; Pavel Isa-Contreras y Lázaro Peña (eds.) Anuario de la Integración Regional de Améiica Latina y el Gran Caribe 2007, Araquara/Buenos Aires: CRIES, pp. 135-147.

3. Serbin, Andrés (2007ª) "Entre UNASUR y ALBA: ¿Otra integración (ciudadana) es posible?, in Serbin, Andrés; Pavel Isa-Contreras y Lázaro Peña (eds.) Anuario de la Integración Regional de América Latina y el Gran Caribe 2007, Araquara/Buenos Aires: CRIES, pp. 7-36.

4. Cf. Altmann, Josette (2007) Dossier ALBA: Alternativa Bolivariana para América Latina, San José de Costa Rica, FLACSO; Altmann, Josette (2011) (ed.) América Latina y el Caribe: ALBA: ¿Una nueva forma de integración regional?, Buenos Aires: Teseo-FLACSO, and Serbin, Andrés (2011) (coord.). De la ONU al ALBA: prevención de conflictos y espacios de participación ciudadana, Barcelona-Buenos Aires: CRIES – Icaria – GPPAC.

5. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2011) Chávez, Venezuela y la reconfiguración política de América latina y el Caribe, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editora Iberoamericana – Plataforma Democrática.

6. Cf. among others,, Gratius, Susanne (2007) Brasil en las Américas: ¿una potencia regional pacificadora?, Working Paper No. 37, April 2007, Madrid: FRIDE; Soares de Lima, Maria Regina (2009) "La política exterior brasileña y los desafíos de la gobernanza global", in Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica (México D.F.: ITAM), vol. 9, No. 2, 2009, pp. 25-32; and Hurrell, Andrew (2009) "Brasil y la tormenta que se avecina", in Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica (México D.F.: ITAM), vol. 9, No. 2, 2009, pp. 41-54.

7. Cf. on this subject Valls Pereira, Lía (2009) "Los acuerdos comerciales regionales en la agenda brasileña", in Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica (México D.F.: ITAM), vol. 9, No. 2, 2009, pp. 67-78; Sennes, Ricardo y Ricardo Mendes (2009) "Inserción económica brasileña en América del Sur", in Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica (México D.F.: ITAM), vol. 9, No. 2, 2009, pp. 79-86, and Serbin, Andrés (2010b) Regionalismo y soberanía nacional en América Latina: los nuevos desafíos, Buenos Aires: CRIES/Nueva Sociedad, Documento CRIES No. 15.

8. Since the seventies, English-speaking Caribbean countries often mentioned the "subimperialist" role of Venezuela in the region and the use of oil resources to promote it. Cf. Lanza, Eloy (1978) El subimperialismo venezolano, Caracas: Centauro.

9. Hegemonic aspirations that currently depend of the evolution of the internal political and economic situation in Venezuela and the ups and downs of international oil prices.

10. Serbin, Andrés (2007ª): op. cit.

11. Serbin, Andrés (2010b) "Los desafíos del multilateralismo en las Américas", in Martinez, Laneydi; Haroldo Ramazzini y Mariana Vásquez (eds.) Anuario de la integración regional de América Latina y el Gran Caribe 2010, Buenos Aires: CRIES, pp. 7-38; (2010c) "De despertares y anarquías", in Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica (México D.F.), vol 10, No. 3, pp. 6-11, and (2010d) "Old Factors and New Challenges in Regional Multilateralism: A Latin American Idiosyncracy?", in Latin American Multilateralism: New Directions, Compilation of Articles, Ottawa: FOCAL, September 2010, pp. 8-12.

12. Cf. Domínguez, Jorge (comp.) (2003) Conflictos territoriales y democracia en América Latina; Buenos Aires: Editorial siglo XXI/FLACSO/Universidad de Belgrano.

13. Cf. Lagos, Ricardo (comp.) (2008) América Latina: ¿Integración o fragmentación?, Buenos Aires: EDHASA.

14. Cf. Podestá, Bruno; Manuel Gonzalez Galán y Francine Jácome (Coordinators) (2000) Ciudadanía y mundialización. La sociedad civil ante la integración regional, Madrid: CIDEAL/CEFIR/INVESP; Serbin, Andrés (1997) "Globalización y sociedad civil en los procesos de integración", in Nueva Sociedad (Caracas), No. 147, January-February, and Jácome, Francine and Andrés Serbin (comp.) (1998) Sociedad civil e integración en el Gran Caribe, Caracas: Nueva Sociedad – INVESP – CRIES.

15. The notion of democratic deficit refers to the gap between citizens´ expectations and aspirations and the performance of democracy or of democratic mechanisms to satisfy these expectations and aspirations. This notion emerged as a result of the debates on the legitimacy of the European Union (EU), as the emerging decision-making institutions failed short of the standards of accountability and transparency that existed at the national level of each of the members states. The notion not only applies to inter-governmental organizations but also to the States. Cf. Norris, Pipa (2011) Democratic Deficit. Critical Citizens Revisited, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, especially pp. 4-5. For a more detailed discussion in the framework of democratic systems Cf. Schmitter, Philippe (2009) "Defects and Deficits in the Quality of

Neo-democracy", in Bland, Gary and Cynthia Arnson (eds.) Democratic Deficits. Addressing Challenges to Sustainability and Consolidation Around the World, Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and RTI International, pp. 19-36.

16. And possibly with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States —CELAC, to be formally established in 2012.

17. Sanahuja, José Antonio (2010ª) "La construcción de una región: Sudamérica y el regionalismo posliberal", in Cienfuegos, Manuel y José Antonio Sanhauja (eds.) Una región en construcción. UNASUR y la integración en América del Sur, Barcelona: Fundación CIDOB; and Sanahuja, José Antonio (2010b) "Estrategias regionalistas en un mundo en cambio: América Latina y la integración regional", in del Arenal, Celestino y José Antonio Sanahuja (Coordinators) : América Latina y los Bicentenarios: una agenda de futuro, Madrid: Fundación Carolina – Siglo XXI Editores.

18. Rigirozzi, Pia (2010ª) Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America: Towards a New Synthesis, Buenos Aires. FLACSO, April 2010.

19. And conceived as a "visible manifestations of the re-politization of the region, creating foundations for new politics in which citizens, social movements, political parties, and government leaders interact and construct new understandings of regional community", in Ibidem, p. 2.

20. Serbin (2010b), Regionalismo y soberanía nacional. op. cit.

21. Cf. Riggirozzi, Pía (2010) "Crisis, resilience and transformation: regionalism beyond Europe", paper presented at the symposium El regionalismo en América del Sur: ¿globalización desde el Sur o continuación de la política nacional por otros medios?, Buenos Aires, FLACSO, June 29; Sanahuja, José Antonio (2010ª) "La construcción de una región: Sudamérica y el regionalismo posliberal", en Cienfuegos, Manuel y José Antonio Sanahuja (eds.) Una región en construcción. UNASUR y la integración en América del Sur, Barcelona: Fundación CIDOB; Sanahuja, José Antonio (2010b) "Estrategias regionalistas en un mundo en cambio: América Latina y la integración regional", in del Arenal, Celestino y José Antonio Sanahuja (Coordinators): op. cit.

22. Cf. Serbin (2010b), (2010c) and (2010d), op. cit.

23. As mentioned by Cooper and Heine "...anxiety about US coercive power —whether it is acting alone or through proxies— remain implanted in the collective mentality of the region", in Cooper, Andrew and Jorge Heine (2009) "Introduction —The effect of national and global forces on the Americas: Tsunami, tornado or just a mild breeze?", in Cooper, Andrew and Jorge Heine (eds.) Which way Latin America? Hemispheric politics meets globalization, Tokyo: United Nations University, p. 303.

24. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2010) "Obama y América Latina y el Caribe: a más de un año después", in Pensamiento Propio (Buenos Aires), No. 31, January-July 2010.

25. Beyond the rhetoric and makeup of "consultation mechanisms", which do not monitor or follow up the commitments made by the governements.

26. Cheresky (2010) op. cit., p. 16.

27. Ibidem, p. 14.

28. Foster, John (2010) "Obama, Canada and civil society South and North", in Canada Watch (Ottawa), Fall 2010, pp. 1-6.

29. Cf. http://cmpcc.org

30. Serbin (2010b), op. cit.

31. As argued in the same report: "This reformulates the role of the CSOs: it is one thing to act in a context where the State is absent and in retreat than to act in a context where the State is the very center of social investment. It is, rather, the exercise of a wide and diverse set of roles which help, supplement, control or require the State to fulfill its duties: as organized levers of society to claim rights, demand adequate service quality and coverage, participate in the design of public policies which properly channel public resources, design and test innovations for the resolution of problems, etc. (...) In this regard, it is clear that the CSOs claim a role as players and partners of development. Their capacity and skills are considered to be impoverished when they are only perceived as operators for the implementation of policies and projects designed by others", ALOP (2010)

Consultas nacionales a organizaciones de la sociedad civil de América Latina y el Caribe. Síntesis de conclusiones y debates (National consultations to civil society organizations. Latin America and the Caribbean. Summary of conclusions and discussions), Mexico D.F.: ALOP/Mesa de Articulación/Coordinadora Civil/Unitas, p. 12.

32. Zibechi, Raúl (2009) "Gobiernos y movimientos: entre la autonomía y las nuevas formas de dominación", in Viento Sur (Montevideo), No. 100, January 2009, p. 254.

33. But not by plebiscites. See, among others, Cheresky, Isidoro (comp.) (2010) Ciudadanos y política en los albores del siglo XXI, Buenos Aires: Manantial/CLACSO/IDRC.

34. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2001) "Globalifóbicos vs. Globalitarios. Fortalezas y debilidades de una sociedad civil emergente", in Nueva Sociedad (Caracas), No. 176, November-December, and Serbin, Andrés (2003) "Desafíos y obstáculos políticos al ALCA", in Nueva Sociedad (Caracas), No. 186, July-August;

35. Cf. ibidem and Saguier, Marcelo (2007) "The Hemispheric Alliance and the Free Trade Area of the Americas Process: The Challenges and the Opportunities of Transnational Coalitions against Neo-liberalism", in Globalizations, vol 4, No 2, June 2007, pp. 251-265; and Saguier, Marcelo (2008) "Movimientos sociales transnacionales y la democratización del comercio en las Américas", in Pensamiento Propio (Buenos Aires: CRIES), No. 28, 13, July-December 2008, pp. 81-112.

36. Cf. Equipo de Sociedad Civil (2007) Gobernabilidad incluyente. Empoderar a los pobres y promover la auditoría social en América Latina y el Caribe. Washington D.C.: Banco Mundial/Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe.

37. Cf. Arnson, Cynthia et al. (2007) The "New Left" and Democratic Governance in Latin America, Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, y Cameron, Maxwell and Eric Hershberg (eds.) (2010) Latin America´s Left Turns. Politics, Policies and Trajectories of Change, Boulder-London: Lynne Rienner Publ.

38. Grugel, Jean (2002) "El retorno del Estado al activismo transnacional", in Pensamiento Propio (Buenos Aires), No 16, July-December 2002.

39. Deacon, Bob (2001) The Social Dimension of Regionalism, Helsinki: GASPP.

40. Estevadeordal, Antoni; Brian Frantz and Tam Robert Nguyen (eds.) Regional Public Goods. From Theory to Practice, Washington: Inter-American Development Bank/Asian Development Bank.

41. Cf. Podestá, Galán y Jácome (2002), op. Cit.,.

42. At the initiative of the Venezuelan delegation, during the XXXIV regular session of the OAS General Assembly in 2004, the Permanent Counsel and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) were called to prepare a draft Social Charter of the Americas and an Action Plan that ought to be offered to citizens in the region as "opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion." A report by the CEPCIDI of September 2, 2010, stated that progress had been made in the completion of the normative section of the Social Charter, a proposal for a Preamble and a proposal of guidelines for action and implementation of the Charter with the intent to have it approved before the end of 2010, in "Informe Final del Presidente del Grupo de Trabajo conjunto del Consejo Permanente y la CEPCIDI sobre el Proyecto de Carta Social de las Américas", CP OEA/Ser G, CP/doc.4510/10, September 9, 2010.

43. Cf. www.buenastareas.com/ensayos/...Unasur/82730.html

44. The Social Charter definition on the different websites related to the Bolivarian government and ALBA states that the Charter was approved in 2007 and that its purpose "is for OAS member states to assume a binding relationship toward Social, Economic and Cultural Human Rights as rules that will govern the purpose of public policies designed to advance in the strengthening of collective rights, the preservation of interculturality, the recovery of the values of our Peoples and the creation of sustainable development strategies to achieve social peace ." Cf. www.

rnv.gov.ve/noticias/?act=ST&f=&t=22495 y www.aporrea.org/medios/a16303.html

45. Mols, Manfred (1993) "The Integration Agenda: A Framework for Comparison", in Smith, Peter (ed.) The Challenges of Integration. Europe and the Americas, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

46. And where even the outgoing UN Secretary General himself, who a couple of years back did not hesitate to describe global civil society as the greatest counterbalance to hegemonic players in the international system, progressively diluted his references to these new international actors.

47. Kaldor, Mary (2003) Global Civil Society. An Answer to War, Cambridge: Polity Press.

48. As argued by Bobes, "Many Latin American NGOs are part of international networks such as Amnesty International, Oxfam or Greenpeace. This means they are part of global civil society and that, therefore, the selection of and emphasis placed on goals and objectives (together with funding) are often decided based on interests that are not necessarily national. Other NGOs, though committed to local projects, are fully dependant on international cooperation agencies to perform their activities, especially in Central America," in Bobes, Velia Cecilia (2010) "De la revolución a la movilización. Confluencias de la sociedad civil y la democracia en América Latina", in Nueva Sociedad (Buenos Aires), No. 227, May-June 2010, p. 46.

49. Cf. Sorj, Bernardo (2010) "Introducción: (de) construyendo la sociedad civil en América Latina", in Sorj, Bernardo (comp.) Usos, abusos y desafíos de la sociedad civil en América Latina, Buenos Aires: Ed. Siglo XXI/Plataforma democrática, pp. 5-16.

50. At least that was the case until the recent change introduced, over a decade ago, by the IADB in promoting citizen involvement at different levels, particularly regarding the formulation, monitoring and management of social policies.

51. Cf. Agg, Catherine (2006) Trends in Government Support for Non-Governmental Organizations. Is the "Golden Age" of the NGO Behind Us?, Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

52. The CSI Civicus project defines civil society "as the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests", in CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Framework and Research Methodology, ms., 2006.

53. For a more detailed analysis of the rise of civil society in Latin America, see Hengstenberg, Peter; Karl Kohut y Günther Maihold (eds.) (1999) Sociedad civil en América Latina: representación de intereses y gobernabilidad, Caracas: Friederich Ebert Stiftung y Nueva Sociedad.

54. Cf. Jelin, Elizabeth and Eric Hershberg (eds.) (1996) Constructing Democracy. Human Rights, Citizenship and Society in Latin America, Boulder: Westview Press.

55. Kaldor (2003), op. Cit,

56. Kaul, Inge; Isabelle Grunberg and Marc A. Stern (eds.) (1999) Global Public Goods, New York: UNDP.

57. This trans-nationalization of civil society was favored by the development of new communication technologies that have helped build broad online de-territorialized communities and social networks based on the use of the Internet and to create new interaction and mobilization spaces. See Bobes (2010), op. cit., p. 48

58. Cf. Dagnino, Evelina (2006) "Sociedad civil, participación y ciudadanía: ¿de que estamos hablando?", in Isunza Vera, Ernesto y Alberto Olvera (eds.) (2006) Democratización, rendición de cuentas y sociedad civil: participación ciudadana y control social, México D.F.: Porrúa et al., pp. 223-242.

59. Garretón, Manuel Antonio (2006) "Sociedad civil y ciudadanía en la problemática latinoamericana actual", in Cheresky, Isidoro (comp.) Ciudadanía, sociedad civil y participación política, Buenos Aires: Miño and Dávila, p. 147.

60. Hengstenberg, Peter; Karl Kohut y Günther Maihold (2002) "Estado y "sociedad civil" en América Latina. En busca de un nuevo equilibrio", in Desarrollo y Cooperación, No. 1, January-February 2002, p. 9.

61. Cf. Sabatini, Christopher (2007) "Democracy Assistance in Creating Citizenship" and Boyte, Harry (2007) "Citizenship as Public Work",

in Tulchin, Joseph and Meg Rutheburg (eds.) <u>Citizenship in Latin America</u>, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 187-197 y pp. 235-252, respectively.

62. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2006a) "El díficil tránsito hacia una ciudadanía regional", in <u>Revista del Sur</u> (Montevideo), No. 164, March-April 2006; Serbin, Andrés (2006b) "Regionalidad y ciudadanía: retos y dilemas de la sociedad civil en América Latina y el Caribe", in Dello Buono, R.A. and Diana Avila (eds.) <u>Diálogo Sudamericano: otra integración es posible</u>, Lima: Consejería en Proyectos; Serbin, Andrés (2007b) (coord.) <u>Paz, conflicto y sociedad civil en América Latina y el Caribe</u>, Buenos Aires: Icaria / CRIES / IDRC; Serbin, Andrés (2007c) "El Índice de Sociedad Civil (CSI) de CIVICUS: Un balance de los resultados para América Latina", in <u>Pensamiento Propio</u> (Buenos Aires), No. 26, 12, July-December 2007, pp. 177-198, y Serbin, Andrés and Lorenzo Fioramonti (2007) "Civil Society in Latin America: Between Contentious Politics and Participatory Democracy", in Heinrich, Volkhart Finn and Lorenzo Fioramonti (eds.) (2007) <u>CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society. Comparative Perspectives. Volume 2</u>, Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, Chapter 8.

63. Wils, Frits (1995) <u>NGOs in Latin America: Past Strategies, Current Dilemmas, Future Challenges</u>, Oxford: INTRAC.

64. Sorj, Bernardo (2010) "Introducción: (de) construyendo la sociedad civil en América Latina", en Sorj, Barnardo (comp.) <u>Usos, abusos y desafíos de la sociedad civil en América Latina</u>, Buenos Aires: Plataforma Democrática – Siglo XXI.

65. Ibidem, p. 6.

66. Deacon (2001), op. Cit, and Pachano, Simón (2010) "Estado, ciudadanía y democracia", in del Arenal, Celestino y José Antonio Sanhauja (coords.) América Latina y los Bicentenarios: una agenda de futuro, Madrid: Fundación Carolina y Siglo XXI de España Editores, pp.1-33.

67. Kaldor, Mary (2003) <u>op. cit.</u>

68. Serbin, Andrés (2001) "Globalofóbicos vs. Globalitarios" in <u>Nueva Sociedad</u> (Caracas), No. 176, November-December; Serbin, Andrés (2003) (comp.) <u>Entre la confrontación y</u>

el diálogo. Integración regional y diplomacia ciudadana, Buenos Aires: Editorial Siglo XXI; and Serbin (2006ª) y (2006b), op. cits.

69. Garcés, Mario (2006) "La democracia, la ciudadanía, las políticas públicas y los movimientos sociales en la región MERCOSUR", in Garcés, Mario et al. <u>Democracia y ciudadanía en el MERCOSUR</u>, Santiago: LOM Ediciones, pp. 597-637.

70. Cf. in this regard two relevant documents of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) – Bendaña, Alejandro (2006) <u>NGOs and Social Movements. A North/South Divide?</u>, Géneve: UNIRSD, Civil Society and Social Movements, Programme Paper No. 22, June 2006, y Mejido Costoya, Manuel (2007) <u>Toward a Typology of Civil Society Actors</u>, Géneve: UNIRSD, Civil Society and Social Movements, Programme Paper No. 30, October 2007.

71. Cf. in this regard, the differentiation on the regional level, between "insiders" and "outsiders" in Korzeniewicz, Patricio y William C. Smith (2003ª) <u>Mapping Regional Civil Society Networks in Latin America</u>, Report to the Ford Foundation, February 2003, and (2003b) "Redes transnacionales, diplomacia ciudadana y proyectos de integración económica en América Latina", in Serbin, Andrés (comp.) <u>Entre la confrontación y el diálogo. Integración regional y diplomacia ciudadana</u>, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores Argentina, pp. 119-176.

72. Dello Buono, R.A. and Diana Avila (eds.) (2006) <u>Diálogo Sudamericano: otra integración es posible</u>, Lima: Consejería en Proyectos.

73. <u>Op. Cit</u>.

74. Cf. also Garcés (2007), <u>op. Cit.</u>

75. Dagnino (2006), <u>op. Cit</u>.

76. Cf. Icaza Garza, Rosalba; Peter Newell and Marcelo Saguier (2006) <u>Reporte Taller de Diálogo y Reflexión "Movilización Social y Políticas Comerciales. Aprendiendo de las Experiencias de la Sociedad Civil en América Latina</u>, Diciembre 2006, www.flacso.org.ar/uploaded_files/Publicaciones/serie.rrii.docs_saguier_taller.cochabamba.pdf

77. Cf. International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and World Movement for Democracy

Secretariat (2008) <u>Defending Civil Society. A Report of the World Movement for Democracy</u>, Washington D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy, February 2008.

78. Calderón, Fernando (2006) "Tiempos de agitación, tiempos de cambio. Sociedad y democracia en los países andinos meridionales", in Sorj, Bernardo y Miguel Darcy De Oliveira (eds.) <u>Sociedad Civil y Democracia en América Latina: crisis y reinvención de la política</u>, Sao Paulo/Río: Instituto Fernando Enrique Cardoso y Centro Edelstein de Pesquisas Sociais, pp. 155-203.

79. Kruijt, Dirk y Kees Koonings (2007) "Actores armados y ciudades fragmentadas", in <u>Foreign Affairs en Español</u> (México: ITAM), abril-junio 2007, vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 11-21. Cf. also Schünemann, Julia (2007) "Cohesión social y violencia urbana", <u>Foro Europa-América Latina</u>, 24 de octubre del 2007; http://eurolatin.fride.org/2007/10/24/cohesion-social.y.violencia-urbana.html

80. Moreover, citizen mobilization in the region tends to increase in times of social or political conflict or social and economic crises, to rapidly decrease during political stabilization. Cf. Serbin and Fioramonti (2007), <u>op. cit.</u>

81. Cf. Oliveira, Anna Cynthia (ed.) (1997) <u>Marco Regulador de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil en Sudamérica,</u> Washington D.C.: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo ——Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo (PNUD).

82. Cf. Emiliozzi, Sergio (2006) "La construcción de ciudadanía en el MERCOSUR", in <u>Kairós</u> (Universidad de San Luis), año 10, No. 17, February 2006.

83. As pointed out by Pachano quoting Torres Rivas (2010:13), op. cit.

84. As pointed out by Zibechi for 2009, "With the sole exception of Chile, where social movements are significantly growing since Michelle Bachelet took office, in other countries governed by leftist or progressive forces, social movements swing between an unconditional support for governments ——from which they receive material benefits—— to more or less open opposition, with little convening power," in Zibechi (2009), op. cit. p. 248.

85. Serbin (2007b) and Serbin and Fioramonti (2007), ops. Citadas.

86. Serbin, Andrés (2006b), op. Cit., Saguier (2007), op. cit., Saguier (2008), op. cit.

87. Edwards, Michael (2001) "*Introduction*", in Edwards, Michael and John Gaventa (eds.) <u>Global Citizen Action</u>, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publ., p. 5.

88. Edwards, Michael (2010) <u>Civil Society</u>, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2nd. Edition, pp. 96-97.

89. Cf. among others, Walzer, Michael (ed.) (1995) <u>Toward a Global Civil Society</u>, Providence: Berghahn Books; Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) <u>Activists Beyond Borders</u>, Itahaca: Cornell University Press; Shaw, Martin (1994) <u>Global Society and International Relations</u>, Cambridge: Polity Press; Salamon, Lester and al. (1999) <u>Global Civil Society</u>, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies; Edwards, Michael and John Gaventa (2001) <u>Global Citizen Action</u>, Boulder. Lynne Rienner; Clark, John (2003) <u>Worlds Apart. Civil Society and the Battle for Ethical Globalization,</u> Bloomfield: Kumarian Press; Kaldor, Mary (2003) <u>Global Civil Society. An Answer to War</u>, Cambridge: Polity Press; Batliwala, Srilatha and David Brown (eds.) <u>Transnational Civil Society</u>, Bloomfield: Kumarian Press.

90. Cox uses this term to refer to a form of multilateralism that attempts to reshape civil societies and political authorities on a global scale, building a global governance system from below, in Cox, Robert (ed.) (1997) <u>The New Realism: Perspectives on Multilateralism and World Order,</u> Basigstoke: MacMillan/United Nations University Press, p. XXXVII. Similarly, O´Brien *et al.* introduced the idea of the development of complex multilateralism in the late '90s, including among its distinctive traits, the broadening of the international agenda to include social matters, in O´Brien, Robert and al. (2000) <u>Contesting Global Governance. Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements,</u> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 5-6.

91. As Edwards adds "It is not that these commentators question the principle of civic engagement; they worry, rather, that the practice of civic engagement may be distorted in favor of

organizations with greater resources and more access to decision makers in capital cities", which in fact differentiates the role and performance of the NGOs from the North and the NGOs and social movements from the South, in Edwards (200l), op. cit., p. 5.

92. Cf. Martins, Jens (2006) <u>The Future of NGO Participation at the United Nations after the 2005 World Summit</u>, FES Berlin: Briefing Papers, Dialogue on Globalization. Jens points out that the attempts to increase NGOs opportunities for a more active participation at the UN have not been successful, and despite the recommendations made by the Cardoso Panel Report, they have not resulted in greater participation of civil society in the 2005 World Summit. On the very contrary, in that opportunity, NGOs were excluded both from the preparation of and the participation in the Summit.

93. Cf. Newman, Edward and Ramesh Thakur (2006) *"Conclusions: Multilateralism under challenge or in crisis?"*, in Newman, Edward; Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman (eds.) <u>*Multilateralism Under Challenge? Power, International Order and Structural Change*</u>, Tokyo-New York-Paris: United Nations University Press, pp. 531-540.

94. As Smith points out in more detail on the crisis of multilateralism: "Third generation activists seem to be devoting less energy and attention to the United Nations (…) The most recent generation has pounded down the doors to demand a seat at —if not to overurn— the table. As governments have moved away from the UN conference process, and as activists have come to question the effectiveness of those mechanisms, some are now looking outside of formal institutional processes to affect change. Little of the expanding energy of third generation activists seems to be devoted to thinking how to improve multilateralism" in Smith, Jackie (2006) "Social movements and multilateralism", in Newman, Edward and alt., op. cit., pp. 402-404.

95. As shown by an analyst, even in the eleventh edition of the WSF in Dakar, "(social) movements have been moved to a third place, behind governments and NGOs. They are protagonists since the first edition and governments have

gained more space as participation opened (…) Apparently, social forums have completed their cycle and they are no longer spaces for exchange and networking for grass-root movements and activists"; in Zibech, Raúl (2010) *¿Es necesario un foro social en América Latina?*, in <u>http://www.forumdesalternatives.org/ES/readarticle.php?article_id=24049</u>

96. "The early years of the new century may represent a reversal of many of these trends. International funding agencies currently face growing fiscal constraints due to stock market losses and the broader economic slowdown experienced in many of the wealthier countries, and their priorities have shifted elsewhere in the world as a result of the end of the Cold war and the new national security concerns following September 11 2001. Concomitantly, the economic crisis in Latin America has undermined the "Washington Consensus" and altered the political agendas of multilateral agencies and national governments. Furthermore, new forms of social and political mobilization in the region might challenge the ability of alternative civil society organizations to provide effective channels of mediation in the region. In sum, although it is too early for a definitive judgment, these recent trends represent a significant challenge to regional networks in Latin America", in Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003, op. cit., p. 48.

97. **As pointed by the document: "CSOs are tolerated and supported by Governments as long as** they do not give their opinion or criticize the ruling authorities. The progressive trends voiced by certain governments do not translate into more fluent relations with CSOs"; in ALOP (2010) <u>Consultas nacionales a organizaciones de la sociedad civil América Latina y el Caribe. Síntesis de conclusiones y debates</u>, México D.F.: ALOP/Mesa de Articulación/Coordinadora Civil/Unitas, p. 11.

98. Ibidem, p. 14.

99. Karns, Margaret and Karen Mingst (2010) <u>*International Organizations. The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*</u>, Boulder-London: Lynne Rienner, p. 247.

100. Ibidem, pp. 250-251.

101. It is important to stress, in this regard, that

legal frameworks approved by governments can favor or can restrict the activities of CSO, particularly when they are perceived as critical of those governments. Cf. International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and World Movement for Democracy Secretariat (2008), op. cit.

102. http://www.asc-hsa.org

103. http://www.mesarticulacion.org y http://www.alop.or.cr

104. http://www.forodiplomaciaciudadana.org

105. http://www.minci.gov.ve/noticias-prensa-presidencial/28/9866/manifiesto_del_congreso_bolivariano

106. http://www.ccsica.org

107. http://www.somosmercosur.org , cf. also http://www.mrecic.gov.ar

108. Cf. Norris, Pipa (2011) Democratic Deficit. Critical Citizens Revisited, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

109. Another issue at least as important refers to the conceptions of these networks and organizations at the regional level regarding power and governance, covering a broad spectrum of positions, from the relations that should be established with political parties to new approaches to power building based on diversity and plurality. However, all of them relate to the same problem: CSOs' capacity to assume their role as non-partisan political actors and the difficulties inherent to their relation with the State, even when it is ruled by left-wing or progressive governments. Cf. Icaza et al. (2006), op. cit.

110. Altinay, Hakan (ed.) (2011) Global Civics. Responsabilities and Rights in an Interdependent World, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, p. 2.

111. Statements by the Venezuelan Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations Rodolfo Sanz, Cf. www.mci.gob.ve

112. Serbin, Andrés (2006ª): "Cuando la limosna es grande…El Caribe, Chávez y los límites de la diplomacia petrolera", in Nueva Sociedad (Buenos Aires), No. 205, September-October 2006, pp. 75-91. Cf. also Serbin, Andrés (2011) Chávez, Venezuela y la reconfiguración política de América Latina y el Caribe, Buenos Aires: Editorial Siglo XXI Iberoamérica y Plataforma Democrática.

113. Acuña Montero, Ernesto (2007) "Al ALBA con energía", in Prensa Latina, www.prensa-latina.cu

114. The question is whether the HSA was actually the main factor that influenced, through social mobilization and the regional plebiscite organized regarding the FTAA, the decision adopted by the governments of Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina to question the hemispheric initiative during the Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata, in November, 2005, or if the decision was made by the Brazilian and Argentine governments as a result of the discrepancies with the United States regarding trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

115. Which did not happen at the IV Summit of the Americas held in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009. Cf.

www.movimientos.org/iv-cumbre-pueblos

116. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2006a) op. Cit., pp. 81-114; (2004) "Entre la globalofobia y el globaritarismo: sociedad civil, movimientos sociales y globalización en América Latina y el Caribe", in Gómez, José María (comp..) América Latina y el (des)orden global neoliberal, Buenos Aires: CLACSO; and (2003) "Entre la confrontación y el diálogo: diplomacia ciudadana, sociedad civil e integración regional", in Serbin, Andrés (comp.): Entre la confrontación y el diálogo. Integración regional y diplomacia ciudadana, Buenos Aires: Editorial Siglo XXI.

117. In this regard, it is particularly important to take into account the uneasy relationship of the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) with the Venezuelan government. At the beginning of the decade, the HAS issued a document titled "Alternatives for the Americas", which became an influential sources for most of the ideas materialized in the creation of ALBA. However, the relationship between the ASC/HSA and ALBA, and, especially, the Venezuelan government, was recently strained and has given rise to much debate and criticism, regarding mainly the possible co-optation and neutralization of the coalition. Cf. Icaza et al. (2006), op. cit.; Saguier (2007) op. cit. and Saguier (2008), op. cit. Cf. also the cirticisms made in de la Torre, Verónica (2009) "De las Alternativas para las Américas, de la

Alianza Social Continental, a la Alternativa Bolivariana", en Argumentos (México: UAM-X), 22, No. 59, January-April 2009, pp. 187-198, and in Harris, David and Diego Azzi (2006) "ALBA Venezuela´s answer to "free trade": the Bolivarian alternative for the Americas", Ocassional Paper No. 3, Sao Paulo: Focus on the Global South/Alianza Social Continental, October 2006. Harris and Azzi point out that "…there is a certain degree of dissonance between discourse and practice in the construction of ALBA, given that the official proposal present it as coming "from the people", but in practice what represents the concrete existence of ALBA are the intergovernmental agreements signed by the (…) heads of state, with Little visible and direct popular participation in the process of developing these actual accords", p. 13.

118. Which is also a feature showed by several regional governments.

119. Ruiz Marrero, Carmelo (2011) "The New Latin American "Progresisimo" and the Extractivism of the 21st Century", in CIP. Americas Program, in www.cip.americas.org/archives/4025

120. As mentioned with regards to the relationship between the HSA and the Venezuelan.

121. Cf. "Manifiesto de Cochabamba. Declaración final de la Cumbre Social promovida por la Alianza Social Continental y el Movimiento Boliviano para la Soberanía y la Integración Solidaria", http:// www.integracionsur.com , Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social (CLAES), Montevideo, and www.comunidad-sudamericana.com/cochabamba

122. CSI-ORIT (2007) "Cumbre Social inaugura nuevo momento en el diálogo entre gobiernos y la sociedad civil", available at http:// www.cioslorit.net

123. CSI-ORIT (2007) "Cumbre Social inaugura nuevo momento en el diálogo entre gobiernos y la sociedad civil", available at http:// www.cioslorit.net

124. Gudynas, Eduardo (2006) "Buscando otra integración sudamericana", in Peripecias No. 27, 13 December 2006, http:// www.peripecias.com/integración

125. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (2010) OEA y UNASUR: Seguridad regional y sociedad civil en América Latina, Buenos Aires: CRIES, Documento CRIES No. 14. Cf. also Gilberto Rodrigues y Thiago Rodrigues (2010), "A Uniao das Naçoes Sul-Americanas (UNASUL) e os novos temas de agenda regional de paz e segurança: papeis e mecanismos de participaçao da sociedade civil", paper presented at the conference "Multilateralismo, sociedad civil y prevención de conflictos", Buenos Aires: CRIES/CARI, 27 y 28 de julio 2010, published in Serbin, Andrés (coord.) De la ONU al ALBA: Prevención de conflictos y espacios de participación ciudadana, Buenos Aires: Icaria – CRIES –GPPAC, 2011.

126. As Alemany y Leandro (2007) point out, "A more comprehensive view of participation is an operational view, where civil society actors are not consulted on specific issues, but rather became part of a system of monitoring, of decision making, that is to say, of influencing decisions on regional policies", in Alemany, Cecilia y Beatriz Leandro (2007) "Análisis y propuestas para la participación ciudadana en el MERCOSUR", in Revista Argentina de Economía y Ciencias Sociales (Buenos Aires), No. 16, vol. XI, Summer 2007, pp. 135-160. Cf. also Alemany, Cecilia (2008) "La participación ciudadana en el MERCOSUR: Algunas ideas para la reforma institucional pendiente", in Pensamiento Propio (Buenos Aires: CRIES), No. 28, 13, July-December 2008, pp. 113-135.

127. Ibidem, pp. 139-144.

128. Ibidem, p. 145.

129. http:// www.somosmercosur.org

130. In Argentina a Consultative Civil Society Council was created and coordinated by a special office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

131. Alemany y Leandro (2007): op. Cit. P. 147. It is worth noting that, in the framework of the admission the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, this space orginated strong discrepancies and confrontations, particularly with regards to trade union accreditation.

132. http:// www.somosmercosur.org

133. Cf. for a more detailed account of its establishment and evolution Vázquez, Mariana (2005) "De la Asamblea Parlamentaria de la CECA al Parlamento del MERCOSUR", in Agenda Internacional, Visión desde el Sur, Buenos Aires.

134. http:// www.somosmercosur.org . Cfr. also "Debuta el Parlamento del MERCOSUR", in La Nación (Buenos Aires), May 6 2007, p. 18.

135. In the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) a Labor Consultative Council, the Business Consultatiive Council, the Simón Bolívar Andean University, the Andrés Bello Convenant for integration in education, culture, science and technology, and the Andean Parliament. Cfr. Silva, Esteban (2006) ¿¿Qué está ocurriendo en el Sur? En Dello Buono, R.A. (ed.): Op. Cit, pp. 33-45.

136. Podestá et al., op. cit.

137. Fritz, Thomas (2007) ALBA contra ALCA. La Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas: una nueva vía para l integración regional en Latinoamérica, Berlin: Centro de Investigación y Documentación Chile Latinoamérica (FDCL), April 2007.

138. Valencia, Judith (2006) "Un camino hacia el ALCA: Comunidad Suramericana no puede ser mas de lo mismo", ALAI, November 20 2006, http://www.bilaterals.org

139. Ibidem. By the way, Judith Valencia is one of the well known personalities supporting ALBA in Venezuela.

140. Katz, Claudio (2006) El rediseño de América Latina. ALCA, MERCOSUR y ALBA, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Luxembourg, p 64., who also notes that MERCOSUR re-structuring threatens ALBA development. (p. 98).

141. Fritz (2007), quoting Mexican activist Alberto Arroyo, op. Cit. p. 7.

142. Cf. Tratado Constitutivo de la UNASUR

143. http://www.telesurtv.net/secciones/noticias/nota

144. As pointed out by one of the participants to a conference held at the Latin American System (SELA, according to its Spanish acronym), in Caracas on August 20 2007, "initiatives such as ALBA, which are not regional integration processeses in clasical terms, are still lacking intitutional mechanisms that can be follow up", in Márquez, Humberto (2007) "Integración con agenda social ausente", Interpress Service, August 20 2007, http://www.ipsterraviva.net

145. Fritz (2007), p. 24,

146. Fritz (2007), p. 13.

147. Cf. Declaración Política del Consejo de Movimientos Sociales del ALBA-TCP, http://www.cubainformacion.tv , 30 de enero de 2008, and htto://economiasocialista.blogspot.com

148. Silva, Cristina (2011) "La Alianza Bolivariana para las Américas (ALBA): aspectos de seguridad y defensa y elementos de participación social", in Serbin, Andrés (coord.) De la ONU al ALBA: Prevención de conflictos y espacios de participación ciudadana, Buenos Aires: Icaria – CRIES – GPPAC, pp.239-287.

149. Manifiesto General de la Primera Cumbre de Consejos de Movimientos Sociales del ALBA-TCP, in El ALBA de los Movimientos Sociales, Sumario de Noticias, October 20 2009, in www.movimientos.org/noalca/albasi/show_text.php3?key=16092

150. "Other integration is possible" is a slogan coined by social movements in their contestation to the FTAA and to commercialist and neoliberal approaches which were predominant in the previous stages of regional integration.

151. However, these thoughts may also apply, within the context of the heterogeneous nature of civil society networks and organizations, to internal differences existing in terms of democratic institutionalization, accountability and effective empowerment of social organizations and movements.

152. The FTAA still exists in the forms of different bilateral trade agreements between the United States and some countries in the region, and in the CAFTA-DR treaty, despite the fact that some have pronounced its death in South America.

153. With an additional ingredient: president Chavez's growing focus on the forging of the "21st century socialism" in his country, to the detriment of his regional initiatives. In Paz Rada, Eduardo (2011) "Peligros para la integración latinoamericana", in Foro Mundial de Alternativas, http://www.forumdesalternatives.org/ES/readarticle.php?article_id=24042

154. Notwithstanding some obvious overlapping, such as the Banco del Sur, created in 2007, despite Brazil's reserves, and the ALBA Bank, created during the sixth ALBA Summit, in

Caracas, in January, 2008.Cf. for more a more detailed analysis Serbin (2010a) and Serbin (2010b), op. cits.

155. Peña, Félix (2007) "La gobernabilidad del espacio geográfico sudamericano: ¿una cuestión en procura de un liderazgo político colectivo?", Newsletter mensual, August 2007, http:// www.felixpena.com.ar

156. Within this context, we conceive as post-hegemony the overcoming of the hegemony of a global superpower, as it is used within the discipline of International Relations and, in the case of Latin America the weakening of the hegemony of the United States in particular. A more detailed discussion of the concept regarding the relationship between civil society and the State and the development of cultural studies can be found in Beasley-Murray, Jon (2010) Poshegemonía. Teoría política y América Latina, Buenos Aires: Paidós

157. As stated in the same report: "This questions the role of civil society organizations: it is not the same to act when the state is absent and in retreat and to act when the government is at the core of social investment. The idea is to have a wide and diversified amount of roles to help, supplement, monitor or demand the State to fulfill its duties: as socially organized levers to claim rights, demand quality, participate in the creation of public policies that direct public resources in an adequate manner, create and experience problem-solving innovations, etc. (…) Thus, it is clear that civil society organizations vindicate their roles as social actors and partners of social development. We believe that their capacity and talents depreciate when they are merely viewed as political operators for policies and projects prepared by others", ALOP, op. cit., p. 12.

158. Cf. Serbin, Andrés (comp) (2003) Entre la confrontación y el diálogo. Integración regional y diplomacia ciudadana, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores Argentina, and (2009) La Organización de Estados Americanos, las Naciones Unidas, la sociedad civil y la prevención de conflictos, Buenos Aires: CRIES, Documentos CRIES No. 11.

159. The Summit of the People of the South was held not only in parallel with the official Summits, between December 12 and 15, 2008, but also in parallel with the trade union Summit and the MERCOSUR Social Summit, where the conclusions and recommendations reached during the Summit of the People of the South and the trade unions Summit were presented. Cf. http://www.mopassol.com.ar/Images/Images/bahiainfo.htm

160. Cf. statement by the Foro Social Americas (FSA), Programa Mercosur Social y Solidario (PMSS) "Panel debate. La integración regional: balance y desafíos para los movimientos sociales", September 22 2010, http://mercosursocialsolidario.org/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5

161. "Unfortunately, the process of consolidation of UNASUR did not aknowldge (…) the importance of social actors, and didn´t consider until recently citizen participation" in Ramis, Alvaro (2009) "UNASUR ¿de espaldas a la ciudadanía", in ALAI, May 23 2009, http://alainet.org/active/30523&lang=es

162. "…we must attune the official dialogue process for social movements within ALBA's process. We have been able to organize public meetings and activities, sometimes sporadically, which generally coincide with Presidential Summits or Social Forums, and which have allowed us to strengthen ties, but have not been very efficient to discuss these topics in depth," in Programa Mercosur Social y Solidario (2010), op. cit.

163. In Programa Mercosur Social y Solidario (2010), op. cit.

164. Cf. "Declaración de Caracas: Otra integración es posible", issued at the World Social Forum held in Caracas, in January 2006, and supported by severeal regional networks such as ALOP, PIDHH, CRIES and others, and currently advanced by the Mesa de Articulación de Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de ONGs.

164. Serbin, Andrés (2007b) op. Cit.