International Organizations Fostering Democracy 'at Home': From Silent Players to Salient Players?

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Abstract

The international dimension of democratisation is a major concern in the study of contemporary political systems. The analysis of domestic political transformations in which International Organisations (IOs) may be salient actors compromises the traditional inward-looking approach of comparative politics that holds democracy to be a domestic affair par excellence. Nevertheless, the maturity of any process of democratisation relies upon the establishment and sustainability of institutions that genuinely reflect the interests and socio-political identity of the citizens of that polity. The role of external influence, whether progressive or abrupt, is clearly limited in constructing and sustaining this process. However, the relevance of international variables in influencing the renaissance or enhancement of democracy has not been overlooked by either scholars or politicians over the past fifteen years. As a number of political systems went through

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what became known as the third wave of democratization, the role of IOs in breaking down undemocratic strongholds and in neutralising possible reversals began to gain momentum. Contending approaches and controversial case studies alike appear to elicit very different conclusions concerning the legitimacy and the effectiveness of international actors in this field. This analysis addresses the rationale underpinning the deployment of multilateral external actors as agents of democratisation. Drawing on an integrative theoretical approach and a comparative case study involving the democratisation agendas of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN) in Latin America (LA), contrasting international models of deployment are assessed. It is argued that IOs' democratisation strategies are based on institutional roadmaps leading towards the attainment of targets which vary according to three key 'guidelines': how democracy is conceptualised, what cooperative strategies are used, and what frameworks for democratisation are adopted.

Key words: *International Organizations, Democracy, Democratisation, Institutional Roadmaps, Democratic Consolidation.*

Organizaciones internacionales: de actores silenciosos a sobresalientes al traer la democracia "a casa"

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Resumen

La dimensión internacional de la democratización representa un fenómeno importante de los sistemas políticos contemporáneos. El hecho de que la transformación política interna sea incluida bajo el título de organizaciones internacionales (OI) indica un rompimiento con el enfoque tradicional de observación interna de la

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política comparativa, si se parte de la suposición de que la "democracia" es un asunto interno por excelencia. Hay procesos complejos que limitan la viabilidad de la fortuna democrática en la política interior, los cuales dependen de las estructuras representativas del poder que fluye de la legitimidad nacional y la identidad política. No obstante, los estímulos internacionales que sostienen a los sistemas nacionales de gobierno, estructurados alrededor de la construcción y la consolidación de la democracia, están en el centro de la política comparativa contemporánea. Cuando varios sistemas políticos atravesaban la tercera ola de democratización, las OI asumieron rápidamente una posición significativa como agentes que neutralizaban los miedos a la inversión de políticas, rompiendo lazos con formas antidemocráticas de gobierno y eliminando las normas informales de los juegos democráticos. Las dinámicas mencionadas dan fundamento para abordar el debate sobre los modelos externos de apoyo. Mediante un enfoque teórico integrador y un estudio comparativo de casos de las agendas de democratización de la Organización de Estados Americanos y las Naciones Unidas dirigidas a la problemática democrática latinoamericana, se aclaran modelos internacionales "ocultos" de despliegue. Se argumenta que las estrategias de las OI para democratizar se fundamentan en que los planes de desarrollo institucionales para la democratización lleguen a los objetivos democráticos a través de tres "guías" multilaterales: conceptualización de la democracia, estrategias de cooperación y marcos de referencia especiales para la democratización.

Palabras clave: *organizaciones internacionales, democracia, democratización, planes de desarrollo institucionales, consolidación democrática.*

Introduction

The role of international actors in advancing democratisation processes of a number of political systems has been increasingly salient since the late 1980s. The *third wave of democratisation*, together with a revitalization of IOs as external drivers of regime change, shaped domestic politics in 2/3 of the existing democracies back in 1990 (Whitehead, 2001: 9). The upgraded status of multilateral frameworks for action in the aftermath of the Cold War, allied to the normative triumph of democracy as a political stamp distinguishing civilized nations from others, encouraged two particular dynamics: the existence of democratic institutions ensured approval for membership of inter-governmental organisations, and IOs' legitimacy in introducing democracy to a number of culturally different polities across the world became a key phenomenon of international politics.

The fact that "121 countries – with 68% of the world's people – had some or all of the elements of formal democracy in 2000 [as compared to] the 54 countries with 46% of the world's people, in 1980" (Ponzio, 2004: 208), indicates the magnitude of the 'domino' progression towards democratic rules. However, by 1999 "only 30 transitions out of the 85 authoritarian regimes, [had] resulted in surviving and mostly quite stable democracies; [and] 9 democracies [had] lasted only a very short time before being overthrown" (Geddes, 1999: 115). This scenario reveals a major paradox: the fall of authoritarian regimes was not necessarily matched by sufficient political commitment to effectively 'lock in' sustainable democratic institutions.

The existence of democracy in a given country, in other words, guaranteed neither its continuity nor its consolidation in that country, and IOs were called to recognise this. Thus, the need on the part of the IOs for undertaking a dynamic role aimed at implementing mandates to ensure the continuity of democratization in countries prone to experience political turbulence became critical. As a consequence the footprints of IOs on regime changes were necessarily structured around institutional road maps for democratization that were complex, long-term, and adapted to the specific country.

It is argued in this paper that these institutional roadmaps or models of deployment are comparable through analysis of the concepts of democracy that IOs adopt, the multilateral strategies they employ to promote democracy, and the dominant schemas of democratisation. The analysis of the relationship between these concepts, strategies and schemas is structured around three key variables: the *horizons of potential influence* on immediate and complex scenarios of democratisation, the *institutional schemas* determining the extent to which democratisation is substantial to the achievement of the goals and mandates of IOs, and the political tensions triggering international action. To test this core argument, this paper engages in a comparative analysis of the institutional roadmaps drawn by the OAS and the UN regarding Latin American politics after the third wave of democratisation.

Setting up the theoretical and analytical essentials…

Analysis of the logics underpinning the role of IOs in promoting democratisation processes[1] is built on the study of intermestic interactions together with a "comparativist approach". The inevitable relationship between international and domestic factors by looking at modes of influence flowing from the former to the latter (Gourevitch, 1978: 893) is crucial to this analysis. The focus on internal political structures affected by international factors as explanatory variables (Almond, 1989) is at the heart of the *why* and the *how* of the role that IOs are given in democratising processes.

The development and maturity of institutional structures at the national level depends on endogenous ethos and socio-political identities. However, insofar as regime type and coalition patterns are particularly sensitive to interdependent political and economic dynamics, external agents have a significant potential for bringing alterations in domestic structures. Thus, the fall of undemocratic forms of governance may substantially be influenced from outside "because complex interdependence (at the international level) entails shifts in power away from central governmental institutions"

[1] "As a movement towards establishing a popular political regime, democratization involves holding free elections on a regular basis and determining who governs on the basis of these results (...) It is a complex (socio-political and) historical process…" (Shin, 1994: 143).

(Gourevitch, 1978: 893-893). The extent to which decision-making processes are freed from undemocratic political patterns as a result of these intermestic stimuli is at the heart of the IOs' ability to influence regime change.

First analytical Pillar: IOs' horizons of potential influence

IOs' horizons of influence are informed by the debate over the international dimension of democratisation. These horizons determine the key modalities whereby IOs engaged with democratisation processes, along with the potential for altering the trajectories of such processes (Farer, 2004; Pevehouse, 2002a). Bearing in mind that the question of whether the external context significantly impacts democratic regime change or whether it remains essentially secondary -and nearly negligible- is at the core of the classic debate on international dimension of democratisation (Pridham, 1994; Whitehead, 2001 & Schmitter, 2001), three variables are particularly relevant for discerning IOs' horizons of influence: the stage of democratisation –either transition or consolidation[2]-, the progression of democratisation as a chain of intertwined components, and the regional context. The first two are briefly assessed in the next paragraphs, and the last is extensively analysed so as to develop the case study.

In line with the key insights emerging from this debate, IOs' horizons of influence are expected to be wider at the democratic consolidation stage than in transition phases. Based on empirical evidence, it is argued that "*transitions* and immediate prospects for political democracy are largely to be explained in terms of national forces and calculations…" (O'Donnell, *et al.*, 1986: 5); and that "external intervention will have a greater and more lasting effect upon *consolidation* of democracy than upon the transition to it" (Schmitter, 2001: 40).

The use of (convincing) gradual formulas of accommodation instead of sudden modes of transformation accounts in large part for a high

[2] Though democratisation is no longer considered linear, four basic stages are identified: 1) Decay of authoritarian rule, 2) transition, 3) consolidation, and 4) the maturation of democratic political order (Shin, 1994: 143).

level of sensitivity to external forces during democratic consolidation. Yet, this lasting effect at the consolidation stage is called into question by Pridham (1994). According to his 'decoded' approach, external cooperative strategies have low marginal effects, since the role of IOs is circumscribed to scattering the democratic seed, whilst the (longer-term) tasks of properly sowing and subsequently cultivating belong to domestic forces.

This decoded approach not only discloses the intertwined dynamics shaping democratisation, but also suggests the dimensions in which IOs might engage in supportive action. Although democratisation is often envisaged as a process of overlapping stages and volatile dynamics, the main phases paving the way towards full democracy "can be separately theorized, analyzed and compared" (Whitehead, 2004: 141). Thus, the political spheres where political change takes place, as well as the institutional actors driving it (Encarnación, 2000: 480), allow us to identify two core dimensions in which the influence of IOs can be analysed. These are the *contextual dimension* and the *complex dimension*, and are explained below.

The volatility of ill-structured democracies essentially stemming from the vulnerability of electoral processes to authoritarian and other subversions sets out the *contextual dimension.* The propensity for these democracies to face early departures of presidents and temporary shifts back to authoritarian rule, as well as the regular pattern in them of oscillation between elections and breakdowns, provide substantial space for the involvement of IOs. Although the mapping out of criteria to rank political systems is a highly contentious issue, it is widely acknowledged that the existence of an electoral machine is not sufficient, but yet essential, to ensure democratic structures of power (Schedler, 1998: 91)

The development of periodic and accountable electoral processes is a condition for democratisation to take place. IOs would therefore be granted the mission of supporting the initial normalisation of this environment by re-installing the electoral machinery. Their mandates would therefore cast a critical eye on how the power of voting is ex-

ercised as far as it is regarded as a starting point, as a nascent source of legitimacy for a new regime, and as a potential catalyst for the development of further institutions of democratic governance (Rally, 2004). Subsequently, as "the mere survival of democracy doesn't signal that it is consolidated" (Encarnación, 2000: 487), there remains ample room for IOs to have a role in the much more 'complex' long-term dimension of democratisation.

The *complex dimension* consists of the principal challenges posed by 'institutional' and 'attitudinal' democratic deficits. The former suggest 'informal games' evolving into dysfunctional republican principles (O'Donnell, 1996). The latter is associated with societal disillusion with democracy, which manifests itself through the absence of "a strong majority of public opinion holding the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life…" (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 6).

These contrasting dimensions lead to different approaches whereby IOs foster a *democratic fortuna* within political systems. With regard to the instabilities arising in the contextual dimension, a *formal approach* would prevail. In parallel, the use of a *comprehensive approach* would be more likely in tackling the threats facing democracy in the complex dimension.

The *formal approach* is based on a modus operandi that aims to neutralise the 'reversal scare'[3] and maintain the electoral machinery in operation so as to prevent democracy from political *regression* (Schedler, 1998: 100). Since this task principally involves a top-down approach –a focus on basic institutional architecture and process in order to reach a minimum threshold of political legitimacy (Newman, 2004: 190)- IOs may act as 'external *preventors* of reversals'. The advocacy of both *soft stimuli* and *hard incentives* becomes essential to this role (Pevehouse 2002a: 611-626).

[3] This concept defines a persistent predisposition of regressions towards authoritarian forms of government, activated at times of democratic breakdown or political crises compromising constitutional democratic order. The concept resembles the simultaneous reverse trends that followed the first and second waves of democratization "in which some but not all of the countries that had previously made the transition to democracy reverted to non-democratic rule" (Huntington, 1991: 15-16).

The spill-over dynamics derived from the membership of IOs comprised of democracies – the extent to which actual or desired membership of the IOs elicits compliance with democratic norms - allied to the provision of resources relevant for the (re)emergence of democracy, account for the *soft stimuli*. The heightened awareness of the political costs derived from regressive waves, as well as the "transmission of a restless underlying pressure on unresponsive and unsuccessful regimes" (Whitehead, 2001: 22), underpins these stimuli.

A 'domino effect' of democratisation is likely to happen through the membership of IOs with high democratic density. Involvement in and by multilateral frameworks of action tend to be a seal of legitimisation on new political structures, and these multilateral institutions also constitute forums facilitating socialisation of democratic practices (Pevehouse 2002b). In parallel, integral to *soft stimuli* is the provision of political and technical resources according to the context as well as the most desirable modus operandi chosen by certain IOs. In states stricken by conflicts the establishment of peace agreements and field-based tasks related to peace-building are the key modus operandi sponsored by IOs (Russett & Oneal, 2001). In other non-conflict, but still politically volatile contexts, the deployment of technical assistance is critical resource enabling the restoration and/or maintenance of democratic mechanisms.

With regards to *hard incentives*, conditionality of membership, imposition of sanctions, and the threat or use of force comprise the main modus operandi employed by IOs. Major tensions concerning the legitimacy of these measures and, in particular, the controversy associated with the use of force to deter regressions, are at the heart of these incentives. Conditionality of membership and warnings over restriction of rights derived from membership are likely to become effective when states belong to IOs with high democratic density. However, the extent to which the sanctions are effective is still called into question (Whitehead, 2001: 19).[4] On the other hand, the threat or

[4] Although lending activities led by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) conditional on compliance with policies affecting democracy became more salient over the 1990s, policies of allocative conditionality have been called into question as a genuine instrument with which to encourage democratization (Shin, 1994; Pevehouse, 2002a).

use of force to restore democratic order, given certain conditions, has also been envisioned as a democratising tool (Farer, 2004). However, IOs have less room for manoeuvre to rely on this modus operandi as its very legitimacy becomes open to question.

The *comprehensive approach* relates to long-term endeavours fostering regime persistence, persistence that is only guaranteed when "democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life" (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 5). The ultimate goal of IOs' action in this regard is therefore to support the sociocultural entrenchment of democratic practices. Special programs aimed at strengthening democratic practices are the prevailing modus operandi for dealing with challenges arising in the *complex dimension*. A bottom-up approach is at the core of this type of assistance, as IOs focus on driving the democratic experiment towards "*valued horizons of attainment"* (Schedler, 1996: 100).

Second analytical Pillar: Institutional schemas (Organizational goals)

'Institutional schemas' account for distinctive maps driving IOs` conceptualisation of democracy according to their 'organisational thinking' (Mohl, 1973. Whether democracy itself and the strategies to promote it are acknowledged by IOs on substantive or instrumental grounds; and whether these components are explicitly or implicitly claimed, depend on the extent to which these aspects are entangled with the IOs` organisational goals. Although IOs are what states make of them, multilateral cooperation transcends mere logics of aggregation insofar as it provides constructive forums to reinforce common understandings and principles upholding democracy.

The institutional schemas driving IOs' activities are largely articulated through a variety of goals that, to a certain extent, pursue democratisation. This means that supportive actions presuppose the recognition of democracy and related cooperative strategies attached to "Goals…occurring within the organization and its auspices whose direct referent is either the organization itself as an institution or some aspects of the organizational environment" (Mohl, 1973: 475).

Furthermore, bearing in mind that "*transitive goals"* constitute "an intended impact of the organization upon its environment" (Mohl, 1973: 476) and that "*reflexive goals"* are internally oriented goals concerning the principles of IOs, the conceptualisation of democracy and the related democracy-promoting modus operandi of IOs can be categorised as follows:

- Institutional schemas guiding IOs' agendas are substantial and explicit when both democracy and the means to forge it fit within the matrix of transitive organizational goals as intentions to achieve political outcomes central to the IOs' mandate.
- An instrumental and implicit conceptualisation prevails when both of the aforementioned components are set out as transitive goals, but are subordinated to reflexive goals (i.e. legitimacy, credibility or prestige).
- An instrumental conceptualization is also more likely when democracy and the means to support democratisation are regarded as sub-objectives of transitive goals, in terms of "instrumental conditions; pre-requisites that must be attained in order that the program objective maybe attained" (Mohl, 1973: 474).

Third analytical pillar: Political tensions

Two major tensions relevant to IOs' goals ultimately determine the scope of *institutional roadmaps* for democratization. *Self-determination v/s universal defence of human rights* is certainly a key tension at the heart of global IOs whose political mandates demand universal representation. Likewise, *Non-intervention v/s multilateral cooperation* becomes critical to IOs with a regional-based membership embedded in a particular geopolitical situation or regional security complex. As is argued below, these tensions may eventually evolve into significant risks as they compromise the legitimacy –at the global level-, and the credibility at the -regional level- of IOs credited for promoting democracy.

Self-determination v/s universal defence of human rights

This tension arises from the following contradiction: on the one hand, the right of a people to decide their own fate as part of a sovereign polity, free from external pressures, presupposes a conception of democracy as one of the available alternatives to structure the exercise of power. On the other hand, however, the respect of human rights involves the observance of a universal principle, and as "the

spread of active belief in the rules and principles of human rights has imposed normative constraints on national discretion" (Farer, 1993: 723) the freedom to choose amongst alternatives is significantly circumscribed. As this principle is based upon liberal values, as hallmarks of Western societies, democracy is widely regarded as the natural regime through which this principle may be held. A global mandate for defending democracy and human rights becomes therefore highly controversial.[5]

Contending positions about the extent to which political sovereignty might be at risk when the UN promotes democratisation is at the core of this tension. Advocates of an active role for the UN in the promotion of liberal democracy argue that the efforts undertaken across the globe by the UN in this regard " …should not be viewed as a disavowal of respect for state sovereignty nor a repudiation of Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, which upholds the principle of non-intervention. To the contrary, the UN endorsement of democracy reflects a commitment to popular self-rule, guided by the principle of self-determination" (Joyner, 1994: 350). Arguably, in this interpretation, self-determination is conceived of as that of the citizenry rather than that of the state or the executive.

Nonetheless, a contending position holds that "It seems that effective UN involvement requires an excessive degree of intrusion into the domestic political affairs of member states" (Whitehead: 1996: 261). As a result, a potential perception of IOs as vehicles to spread liberal democracy is conducive to the hindering of their role as founts of legitimacy for the actions and policies of states (Claude, 1966: 367).

Non-intervention v/s multilateral cooperation

The tension between non-intervention and a commitment to multilateral cooperation is also relevant to this analysis. On the one side, experiences of democratisation driven by the strategic concerns of

[5] This democracy-specific tension is of course a subset of the wider tension relating to non-intervention vs. human rights in general. As human rights violations occur more frequently in authoritarian regimes, however, it occupies a prominent position in concerns over non-intervention.

power politics in the second half of the XX century[6], and the growth of international intervention "in the furtherance of both democracy and human rights…over the past 15 years" (Burnell, 2006: 553), have been the catalysts for recognition of the need to embed principles of non-intervention into the mandates of IOs. On the other side, multilateral cooperation (as a cornerstone of governance in complex interdependent contexts -LeRoy, 2002: 16) has long stood as a critical political device for the bestowal of legitimacy on the promotion of democracy (Pevehouse, 2002b: 523; Schmitter, 2001: 42).

The relative asymmetries of power of states as members of IOs, which are conceptually an association of equals, lead to the occurrence of actions that cast doubts over their legitimacy. On the one hand, these actions were regarded as involving unfair trade-offs between soft stimuli and hard incentives by other (usually weaker) members. On the other hand, some of these actions, carried out by powerful states (as part of a multilateral alliance), were interpreted as the instrumental use of IO democratisation mandates in order to fulfil other strategic aims.

The risk of diminishing *credibility* is therefore ever-present for IOs, as pursuit of the expected relative gains of 'cooperative transactions' (LeRoy, 2002: 17) encourages the use of these hard incentives to trigger democracy in certain weaker states. With regards to Latin American countries, it is argued that a permanent apprehension towards multilateral manoeuvres involving strategies of enforcement "is not inexplicable: after all over the past four decades, they have noted how, in the name of democracy, superpowers many times pursue narrow strategic interests" (Farer, 1993: 722). Thus, an IOs' inner fear of being perceived as an intrusive actor may operate, at the same time, as an integral risk threatening their credibility. However, crucial to this argument is that this kind of constraint correlates inversely with the power and the status of the states within the region from which the IO members are drawn, since a medium-strength state would have much

[6] In this case the dominant purpose behind the promotion of democracy was to "create an international environment that would be relatively less threatening to a former great power in decline in the longer run" (Whitehead, 2001: 11).

more to lose from being perceived as the interfering force inside the IO, than would a strong state.

Based on these analytical pillars, Diagram 1 shows the model framing the study of the OAS and the UN's *institutional roadmaps for democratisation* in Latin America. This comparative study allows us to analyse the core democracy-specific actions of two different IOs in a region where, despite the establishment of democracy as the normative end-point for regimes during the Third Wave of Democratization, sustainable democracy continued to remain in question. The fact that, out of 22 Latin American states studied in 1994, only 4 countries ranked as democracies and none was in the highest rank of 'liberal democracy' revealed this *status quo,* and implied great potential for international actions in support of democracy.

Diagram 1. Analytical model of IOs' institutional roadmaps for democratization

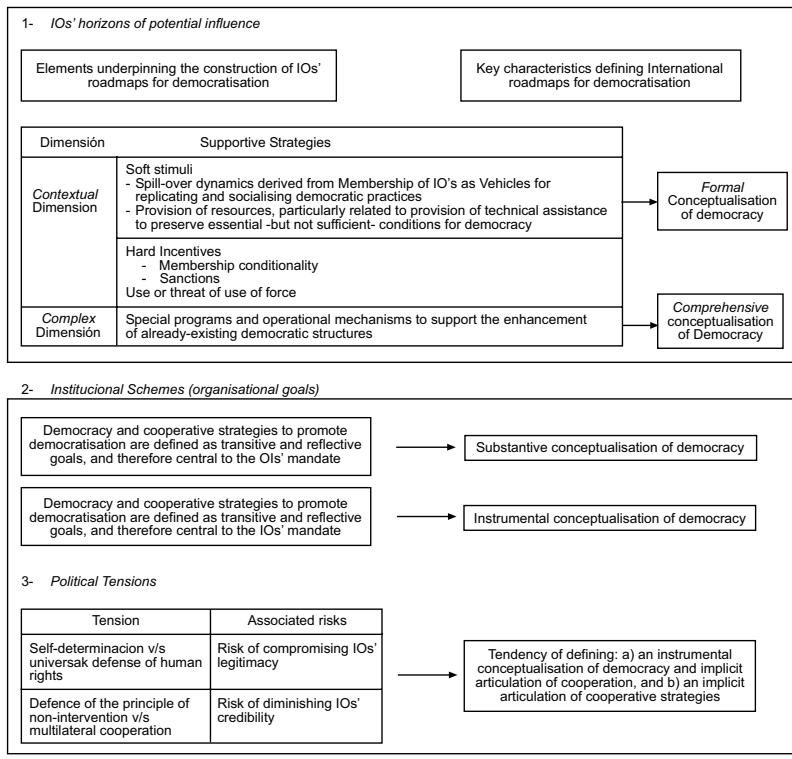

Diagram designed by the author.

The OAS's and the UN's institutional roadmaps in Latin America

The OAS's institutional roadmap for democratization

Representative democracy constitutes the central principle determining the role of the OAS. In fact, the conceptualisation of representative democracy as a purpose (Art. 2b), as a principle (Art. 3d), and as a condition of membership (Art. 9)" (OAS, 2006a) underpins the mandate of this regional organization. Likewise, the fact that "there is no mention of 'popular' or 'participatory' democracy in the OAS's constitutive and legal documents, which discuss the OAS democracy standard as the 'effective exercise of representative democracy" (Lagos & Rudy: 2002: 179), makes of this form of democracy and no other the target to be attained. Although it is sometimes argued that there is no "universally accepted definition of democracy in the inter-American System" (Cooper & Legler, 2001: 108), an understanding of a *liberal democratic norm* is at the heart of the role played by this organisation (Dahl, 1998: 221; Lagos & Ruddy, 2002: 179).

Liberal democracy, in other words, is one of the central axioms defining the nature of the OAS's activity in support of democratisation, as is the liberal peace paradigm essential to Inter-American system logics. No mention of liberal democracy is in the hemispheric official records and no consensus as to the relevance of human rights to conceptualising democracy (Lagos & Rudy, 2001: 180[7]) has been reached (although social and human development are acknowledged as integral to democratic consolidation (OAS, 2001: Art. 12). However, the promotion of the liberal democratic norm inside the member states, as well as its collective defence by them, is regarded as the formula for maximising the probability of sustained regional peace (Parish & Peceny, 2002: 229). This view of democracy as a condition for regional security (Peceny, 1994) indicates the centrality of its conceptualisation inside the OAS.

[7] "Not all member states have ratified all of the regional human rights instruments, or agree that 'second-generation' human rights are entitled to the same level of protection as 'first-generation' civil and political human rights" (Lagos & Rudy, 2001: 180).

A paradigm of collective promotion of democracy is, therefore, decisive in guiding the OAS's with regard to democratisation. Based on the obligation to promote and defend democracy (OAS, 2001: Art. 1), an evolving *Inter-American pro-democracy doctrine* (Cooper & Legler, 2001) highlights the substantial potential for this IO to undertake these tasks. Table 1 shows the repertoire of benchmarks locking in this doctrine -from the Santiago Commitment to the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC). However, a three-cornered problem calls into question the extent to which this representative democracy can be effectively defended by the OAS.

Ineffective institutional interconnectedness, significant financial constraints, and persistent silence with regards to specific strategies, are the three factors limiting the OAS's actual potential for supporting the refashioning of political systems in LA. In fact, although the ambition of achieving "cooperation by the UPD with the various organs, agencies, and entities of the OAS" (OAS, 1993), has long been claimed, unclear ties between the mandates of the OAS organisational bodies and the inter-American agencies relevant to democratisation, prevent the organization from deploying a holistic approach. Likewise, it is widely acknowledged that "the Organisation is too under-funded to satisfy the expectations of its member states…" (Spehar, 2006: *Personal interview*).[8]

The gap between aspirations and real achievements as an inevitable consequence of this financial mismatch is made even wider by the regular practice of giving a plethora of political mandates to the organisation in the absence of concrete specific guidelines and courses of action. Because the OAS's democratisation remit has developed "through practice" (Cooper & Legler, 2001: 107), essential elements of preparedness and planning are overlooked. Although relevant criticisms have been offered over the failures of the OAS in carrying out an effective mandate, a particular form of democracy - representative democracy - continues to be pre-eminent among its concerns. Argu-

[8] The budget of the UPD was just U$3,5 million in 1999 with external supplementary funding of U$10 to US15 million (Cooper & Legler, 2001: 112).

ably, these failures might act, paradoxically, to reinforce this particular conceptualisation. An analysis of the performance of the OAS in the contextual dimension of democratisation (as defined above) allows us to develop this argument in more detail.

Table 1. Benchmarks towards an Inter-American pro-democratic doctrine

Political and legal commitment	Contribution to the construction of an Inter-American
Resolution condemning the record of human rights violations during the Somoza regime (OAS, 1979)	The OAS is credited for undertaking a task of de-legitimisation
The Protocol of Cartagena de Indias (1985) – Amended by the OAS Charter	The promotion and consolidation of democracy is stated as a *regional obligation*
Santiago Commitment to Democracy and Renewal of the Inter-American System (1991)	A rapid response procedure to carry out collective tasks in the event of democratic breakdowns is designed
The Washington Protocol (1992)	The suspension of rights to participate in OAS committees is included. (Representative Democracy becomes a condition of recognition as a full member of the hemispheric organisation and the overall inter-American system)
The Managua Declaration for the Promotion of Democracy and Development (1993)	Links of interdependency among democracy, peace and development are officially recognised. The OAS is granted the responsibility of prevention of democratic reversals.
Declarations and Plans of Action of the Summit of the American Process (as "the pinnacle of policy-making for issues related to democracy in the region – Cooper and Legler, 2001: 111)	The OAS is given an inter-governmental political mandate to strengthen mechanisms for the collective defence of representative democracy
Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001)	"It defines the kind of democracy that the hemisphere aspires to and the ways to promote and defend it" (OAS, 2006a)

Table drawn by the author of this article based on: Cooper & Legler, 2001, and Inter-American States official documents.

The role of the OAS regarding the contextual dimension of democratization

Electoral assistance is primary among the pro-democratisation *soft stimuli* strategies deployed by the OAS in LA. In a region where democracy and electoral *trauma*[9] have co-existed, the use of Electoral Observation Missions (EOM) and Technical Assistance Missions constitute a relevant contribution aimed at countering periods of interregnum which occur at the expense of democratic stability. The number of forces and events that have put democracy under great pressure across Latin America, particularly since 1990, – for example presidents leave office early and are prosecuted, deadlock develops between the executive and the Congress or the Judiciary, or large sectors of the political elite or the populace refuse to accept the results of an election – are, to a significant extent, telling with regard to the dimension of the challenges that the OAS is called to tackle.

Cases relating to claims of fraud in Haiti's 2004 presidential election, accusations of statistical anomalies in the Venezuelan referendum in 2004, or the scrambled circumstances surrounded presidential elections held in Peru in 2000, suggest the crucial role that these missions have in seeking to correct serious democratic deficiencies experienced at the national level, particularly as regards technical assistance and the legitimation of election results through observation. Although international observers and donor institutions support this activity, the potential for these *soft stimuli* is nonetheless limited by the reliance upon voluntary contributions (OAS, 2006a) - (*Benamor,* 2006: *Personal*).

The increasing role of the OAS in advancing democratisation is tied to the proliferation of multidimensional EOMs. The number and range of the electoral monitoring tasks carried out by the hemispheric organisation have certainly expanded dramatically since late 1980s: between 1962 and 1989 only 25 electoral missions were active, whereas between 1989 and 2005, the grassroots presence of the OAS was represented by 94 missions (OAS, 2006b). As during this last period

[9] Electoral *trauma* involves both irregularities of electoral processes as well as the need to hold them as a consequence of early departures of presidents, in a number of countries.

EOM covered nearly the entire electoral process (Diagram 1), in a large number of situations -from general elections through referendums to municipal and legislative elections- the OAS has become naturally affiliated to this type of *soft stimulus*.

The acceptance of international monitoring backed up by the OAS in the field is vital for its legitimacy. The perception of the IO as a welcomed guest with expertise in democratisation issues is as important as questions about *what the next step is* in the aftermath of the deployment of EOM are. A careful analysis on a case-by-case basis to address these questions is certainly crucial in order to scrutinise the OAS's effectiveness regarding the refashioning of political scenarios or systems or the recrafting of democratic processes at post-EOM stages. Although this is a topic for a further paper, any analysis of this nature must involve both intrinsic and extrinsic variables. Thus, the *inherent* nature and quality of the implementation of IOs democratisation policy (intrinsic variables) must be considered alongside endogenous/national or even other international dynamics *out of the control* of an IO (extrinsic variables).

In line with this distinction, the considerable difficulties experienced by the OAS in exerting robust political pressure on problematic but powerful regimes rooted on popular hyper-presidentialism, is one of its most relevant flaws as regards its (intrinsic) effectiveness. However, the role of the OAS in the promotion of representative democracy is by no means constrained to EOM. The performance of this IO in the *complex dimension* of democratisation and the provision of *hard incentives* to accomplish its purposes will be scrutinised below.

A number of cases involving the implementation of *hard incentives* sponsored by the OAS in early 1990s reveal critical lessons to be learnt. The need of setting up effective equations of means and ends, based on careful political calculation, is a major legacy of the experience of imposing sanctions. The negligible effects of the sanctions imposed against Haiti in 1991 to deter the intransigent regime, the initial permissive attitude towards the dire circumstances faced by Peruvian democracy in 1992, and the superficial stabilisation in Guatemala in

1993 (see Table 2) highlight the risks derived from overlooking the limits of sanctions in different contexts.

Diagram 2. Electoral Process and International Monitoring

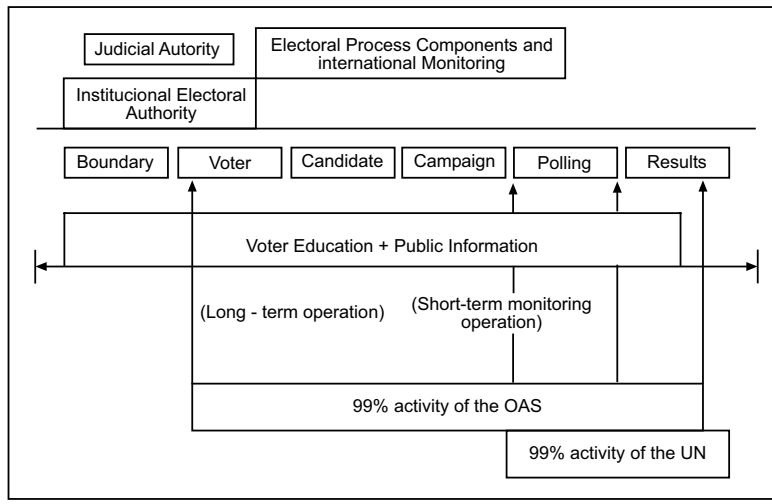

Diagram outlined by the author, and based on material supplied by Morrice, 2006: Personal Interview.

Exclusion from the OAS is also among the repertory of *hard incentives* led by the regional organization. Established by the Washington Protocol back in 1992, the rationale of submitting continuity of membership to a democratic test is informed by not only the pro-democratic agenda of the OAS as regards individual states (as sketched above), but also, as in any given case this condition acts as a deterrent to other regimes, by a latent fear of facing the high political costs of a potential replication of democratic disruptions. Nonetheless, "significant controversy sets limits to the implementation of this last resort mechanism, because the cohabitation of asymmetrical ranks of power, enables the most powerful members to be targets of dissuasive tools" (*Spehar, 2006: Personal interview)* Ultimately, in light of Pevehouse's arguments (2002a, 615), the political will to *set* conditions on membership is far from being sufficient to support democratisation, insofar as strategies of compulsion lack the political will for *implementation*.

A number of dilemmas cause substantial apprehension with regards to the threat or use of force as an alternative course of action. A historically rooted principle of non-intervention, particularly by the Rio Group (Cooper & Legler, 2001), precludes the OAS from enforcing democratisation by military means. Furthermore, the organisation lacks the logistical and military capabilities required to even consider carrying out enforcement operations of this nature. However, this modus operandi still lurks in the shadows of the Permanent Council (PC) as an unused option, and is regarded by some scholars as a feasible strategy (Farer, 1993).[10] Nonetheless, two major dilemmas narrow the path towards the adoption of resolutions that incorporate the "by all appropriate means" wording, even in cases where democracy is subject to violent overthrow.

[10] Further responsibilities for re-democratisation emerge as the epilogue of such a strategy. "Where democratic institutions in the country where the force has been applied have a history of fragility, their reconsolidation may require time and protection. Thus if collective action is to achieve its broader objective, the OAS may have to maintain a presence beyond the time required simply to displace an illegal regime" (Farer, 1993: 741-742).

Table 2. Precedents for the OAS´s "soft compulsion" strategies in the contextual dimension of democratisation

Political shifts back detrimental to democratisation	OAS´s operational response	OAS´s modus operandi (brief assessment)	Political events making the case for a complex dimension of democratisation
Haiti (1991)			
President Jean Bertrand Aristide is overthrown by military forces and forced into exile.	• Political declaration calling for the immediate restoration of democratic rule and recommending measures to provoke diplomatic isolation • Sanctions: OAS member states are required to suspend economic and financial relationship with Haiti, and provision of arms is forbidden • Diplomatic measures: a special mission headed by he Secretary-General is dispatched (failure of diplomatic pressures) • Further sanctions: the OAS´s mandates all its member states countries to freeze the Haitian regime's assets.	The sanctions were ineffective as regards the goal of restoring democratic institutions. On the contrary, this type of hard incentive aggravated the conditions of poverty and stagnation. In Farer´s words: "the mix of sanctions and appeasement has proven to be a recipe for impotence" (Farer. 1993: 737)	By 2002 the country had experienced "Its first peaceful transfers of office from one freely elected president to another under the US/UN mandate. (Parish and Peceny, 2002: 245). However, by 2004 the political system is struck by the rebellion that forced president Aristide to exile. Presidential elections were held in February 2006 after being previously postponed four times. Violence and extreme conditions of poverty still conspire against the stabilisation of democratic governance, despite the efforts made by the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

Political shifts back detrimental to democratisation	OAS´s operational response	OAS´s modus operandi (brief assessment)	Political events making the case for a complex dimension of democratisation
Peru (1992)			
A self-coup is staged by president Fujimori, and the government is accused of compromising not only political, but also fundamental rights.	• Political declaration urging the re-establishment of the democratic order -in particular the "release of political leaders-, as well as the complete restoration of civil liberties. • Sanctions: the OAS´s demands the suspension of financial assistance to the regime. • Diplomatic manoeuvres: two missions were dispatched to facilitate and mediate dialogue between president Fujimori and the opposition leaders. • Further actions: an EMO composed by 230 electoral personnel monitored the electoral process of an Assembly for constitutional revision held in November 1992.	Decisive pressure to reduce the level of political turmoil , derived from the international financial institutions (in particular the suspension of the World Bank's economic aid and programs)	"International pressure compelled Fujimori to restore at least limited democracy to Peru with elections for a Constituent Assembly in 1993 and relatively free and fair elections in 1995" (Parish and Peceny, 2002: 246) Furthermore, Peru has the lowest score on popular satisfaction with democracy in Latin America, equivalent to 7% of the population. (Inter-American Dialogue, 2006)

Political shifts back detrimental to democratisation	OAS´s operational response	OAS´s modus operandi (brief assessment)	Political events making the case for a complex dimension of democratisation
Guatemala (1993)			
President Serrano's attempted self-coup led to democratic disruption.	• Political declaration demanding the normalisation of fundamental and political rights • A fact-finding special mission is deployed to gather evidence of the prevailing conditions in the field, and assess the magnitude of the institutional instability. • Diplomatic measures: a delegation headed by the SG failed to set condition for stabilisation. • Further measures: international channels for Serrano to claim legitimacy for his actions are restricted.	Domestic pressure and US economic sanctions were more decisive than was the OAS´s package of measures. It is argued that "US was especially significant, as the US was the primary market for Guatemalan products, many of which owed their existence to the favourable treatment under the Caribbean Basic Initiative…" (Parish and Peceny, 2002: 243)	Democratic Transition has been decisive to lead the country out of its decades of civil war. (Parish and Peceny, 2002: 243). However, lack of working majority in the legislature, institutional weakness, and fragile public finances account for the massive challenges faced by President Oscar Berger who took office in January 2004. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country report, 2006)

Table drawn by the author, and based on Farer, 1993: Parish & Peceny, 2002; and material published by the IDEA, 2006; The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Reports, 2006; Inter-American Dialogue, 2006.

a. Enforcement measures would eventually be considered insofar as the need to avoid setting a precedent of permissiveness is recognised. In other words, measures lacking sufficient dissuasive muscle would hypothetically be considered as blank cheques for the regional proliferation of democratic reversals. Material breach of human rights, allied to previous failures of *soft stimuli*, might therefore constitute the threshold for the legitimate use of force. However, the probability of a positive vote by member states for this option is considerably low, making the blocking of the deployment of military means likely. This scenario stems not only from the fact that this is by far the harshest response among the options available (and implies very high costs for those involved in the deployment), but also from each individual state's fear of subsequently becoming a target, and being more constrained in its domestic policy to avoid this occurring, once the precedent is set (*Spehar, 2006: Personal interview).*

b. The threat or use of force might also be considered as a means to avoid the need for unilateral military actions. However, the very substantial asymmetries of power between OAS member states suggest another reason for political opposition to legitimising the use of force by the OAS. Although the inter-American *institutional memory* recalls that "consistent strong leadership from the United States in any case where the threat/ use of force were involved -was necessary" (Millet, 1994: 17), the role of the OAS as a mechanism for legitimising unilateral military actions led by a powerful member state in the past is also an enduring feature of this same *institutional memory.*[11]

The OAS's role in the complex democratising dimension

The nature of the OAS's understanding of democratic deficiencies in LA determines the nature of the policies most appropriate for impelling democratic consolidation. The OAS's recognition of the

[11] In particular, the authorisation of the OAS to launch a military action in the Dominican Republic in 1965 is cited as a key precedent where no genuine multilateral legitimacy existed. (Farer, 1993: 745).

non-traditional threats faced by democratic regimes, and the strategic scope of its programs addressing democratic values, indicate that the Latin American democratic *problematique* has been appropriately acknowledged by the OAS. As one of the senior officials of the organization points out: "classic *coups d'etat* are not longer the main concern of the OAS, and instead early departure of presidents, progressive deterioration of democratic institutions and social disillusion with democracy[12] in a number of LA states clearly indicates the magnitude of the current threats" (*Spehar, 2006: Personal interview).*

A comprehensive formula for tackling some of the complexities attached to the strengthening of democracies has been developed through a number of programs launched by the OAS. Under the aegis of the DPD, young Latin American leaders have joined 22 national courses on democratic institutions, values and practices (CALIDEM) developed over the last 5 years (*Zuniga, 2066:Personal Interview).* Likewise, political parties have been targets of legislative reforms that emphasise transparency of political funding (*Griner. Personal Interview, 2006*). Most recently, since 2001 municipal and local leaders have attended seminars sponsored by the OAS in line with the goal of promoting decentralisation across the region (*Spehar. Personal interview, 2006)*

An approach focused on 'instilling' rather than 'installing' democracy underpins the OAS's democratisation agenda. It is hoped that emphasising the mainstream construction of democratic culture, particularly through higher education, along with a philosophy of 'teaching by assisting,' will help to incorporate the attitudinal sociopolitical characteristics that consolidated democracies rely on. The formal and informal programs on education of democracy (aimed at developing focused leadership and promoting civil education), the reinforcement of programs on conflict resolution and decentralisation (*Spehar, 2006: Personal interview)*, and the "particular interest of the current Secretary-General in enhancing civil society" (*Zuniga.*

[12] "Only 53% of the regional population is reported to support democracy, and a meagre 29 percent is said to be satisfied with how it is functioning" (IDEA, 2006a).

Personal Interview, 2006), constitute the OAS's plans for the promotion of democracy in the cultural mainstream.

However, despite institutional commitments to launch a wide range of programs focused on the promotion of democratic values, critical drawbacks compromise their effectiveness. Regarding the programmes on education of democracy, resistance by government elites to their actual implementation, and the subsequent absence of feedback to OAS experts, even when programmes are established, signal grassroots obstacles, as well as organisational vacuums (intrinsic-related effectiveness), both of which substantially limit in the real world the scope of ideals. On the other hand, the lack of synergies between Inter-American instruments –in particular the Inter-American Convention against corruption– and the programs to reinforce political parties add further institutional constraints to the OAS's role (*Griner; Spehar; Zuniga: 2006 Personal interviews).*

Ultimately, efforts to overcome the intrinsic flaws that diminish the OAS's effectiveness in instilling democratic culture would contribute to offsetting its traditional *firefighter* profile (in other words, its focus is on "extinguishing threats to democracy […] when they ignite rather than preventing crises before they flare up" (Cooper & Thomas, 2001: 104). A comparative perspective on the challenges of fulfilling an assertive role to promote democratisation, using the case of the UN, will now provide substantial opportunities for drawing relevant inferences.

The UN's institutional roadmap for democratisation

The foundational doctrine of the UN has remained officially silent on the subject of democracy. A primary clue to this silence is that "it is not one of the stated purposes of the UN to foster democracy (or) to initiate the process of democratisation, or to legitimise other actors' efforts in this field" (Rich & Newman, 2004: 5). A second clue is that "The UN has embraced no particular model or system of democracy (and) it is not a strict model to be copied, but a 'goal' to be attained" (UN, 1996a: 3). However, the absence of an official concept of 'democracy' is by no means evidence of political vacuums

(at least unintended ones) inside the engine of the global multilateral organisation.

Examination of the 'democratisation rationale' underpinning the core purposes of this IO reveals an instrumental, yet substantial conceptualisation of democracy. This rationale is based on the historical fact that "within the original framework of the Charter democracy was understood as essential to efforts to prevent future aggression and to support the sovereign state as the basic guarantor of human rights" (UN, 1996b: 9). Beyond this alignment with political rights and liberties, Joyner's argument that "a new, revised recognition of democracy as a process through which economic and social development can be promoted toward the goal of securing peace and security… undergirds the UN's strategy toward democratisation" (Joyner, 1999: 334), suggests the existence of a substantial conception of democracy in the organizational thinking of this IO.

The UN Secretariat's concept of democracy is essentially paradigmatic and non-prescriptive with regard to institutions, placing instead more emphasis on a process-based or 'electoralist' view: the official definition of democracy held by the UN is that it is "a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people" (UN, 1996b: 3). However, because this concept of democracy also states that it should be a guarantor for the exercise of individual and collective rights, it also appears to encourage the pursuit of effective and accountable public policy agendas and thus, potentially, implies that a comprehensive and far from insubstantial range of policy options should be available to the UN in promoting democratisation (UN, 1996b: 8; UN, 1998:3).

As in the case of the OAS, the conceptual architecture of democracy at the heart of the UN is permeated by the 'liberal vein' derived from this emphasis on human rights and secular forms of civil authority (Joyner, 1999; Newman, 2004). Although the global organisation affirms repeatedly that a unique definition of democracy is "counter-productive to the process of democratisation" (UN, 1996a: 3), its stance of avoiding international consensus over a common definition,

perhaps indicates that the democratic formula supported by the UN is neither universal nor neutral.

Although it is claimed that "it is not for the United Nations to promote democracy" (UN, 1996b: 5), its traditional silence on the topic of democracy is nevertheless matched by its salient role in democratisation-related tasks. The renaissance of this role, back in the mid-1990s, consequent on the publication of *An Agenda for Democratization,*[13] indicates that, although democracy is not an 'issue on the UN's agenda' (UN, 2006a), cooperative strategies to promote *processes* paving the way towards it do nevertheless rank highly among the UN's priorities. Indeed, although explicit strategies to promote democracy remain excluded from the political language of the UN's main bodies, it is clearly included in the operational frameworks of some of these bodies, as well as in those of a number of its specialised agencies.

The UN's not committing to any particular model of democracy operates as a means of preserving the legitimacy of its mandate as a whole. Assertive policies aimed at transforming polities in line with specific institutionally- or process-prescriptive norms of democratic governance would be conducive, to a certain extent, to a risk of ideologisation of this mandate (Newman, 2004: 194). Paradoxically, this kind of risk-averse behaviour for the sake of legitimacy then threatens this legitimacy when the organisation shows itself impotent before the manoeuvres of its powerful members in the name of liberal democracy. Nevertheless, the interrelationship between peace, security and development as a platform on which to participate in international affairs as a pro-democratic actor, was originally chosen as, and continues to be, the most acceptable stance that is, as far as possible, risk-averse. Analysis of the UN's role in managing democratisation in its contextual and complex dimensions allows us to support this argument.

[13] This document became a benchmark of the UN's role as an international political institution assisting processes of democratization, and complements *An Agenda for Peace* (A/47/277 - S/24111 17 June 1992) and *An Agenda for Development* (A/48/935, 6 May 1994).

The UN's role in the contextual dimension of democratisation

The provision of support for new democracies has marked out a route for the UN to attain expertise in the field of democratisation. The UN's sponsorship of political transformations in LA has been informed – as has been the OAS's - by *soft stimuli* and *hard incentives*. Since a substantial involvement of the UN in the management of Central American peace processes in the 1980s overlapped with the onset of the wave of democratisation in the region, its *modus operandi* was essentially moulded by the relationship between pacification and democratisation. Thus, *hard incentives* activated through the deployment of peace-keeping operations, the imposition of sanctions, and the threat or use of force, at this time eclipsed the use of *soft stimuli*, such as electoral assistance.

Electoral assistance now accounts for the most assertive method whereby the UN engages with an agenda of democratisation. The UN's deployment in this area marked the actual immersion of this IO in the field of policy aimed at ensuring the consolidation and sustainability of democratic structures of power.[14] Ever since, this modality has remained the bedrock of the UN's formulas in pursuit of this goal. The fact that over 89 requests for electoral assistance were received by the Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) between 1991 and 1999 (Ponzio, 2004: 213) reveals a growing awareness among LA political elites of the UN as an agent of democratisation.

With regards to LA, the goal of inducing genuinely free and fair elections formulated in New York was transformed into policy in twelve countries across the region between 1989 and 1996 (Table 3). However, requests for assistance made by LA countries to the EAD have long been relatively insignificant given the region's size and democratisation-related needs, bearing in mind that this region only represented 13% of the total requests made by the UN member states during this period (UN, 1996a. Annex 2).

[14] The first experience was in Korea in 1949. During the 1960s and 1970s electoral observation became a central part of referendums for de-colonization. By the late 1980s, there was a transition towards a less central role of the UN in the field of electoral observation. (*Dunne. Personal interview, 2006*).

Table 3. UN electoral assistance deployed in Latin American countries (1989-1996)

Member State	Date of Request	Period during which electoral assistance was provided	UN response
Argentina	September 1992	November 1992 – June 1994	Technical assistance was provided to hold elections in October 1993
Brazil	November 1993	December 1993 - 1996	Technical assistance was provided to hold elections in October 1994 Special support was also provided to improve electronic electoral system.
Colombia	February 1993	June 1993 – December 1994	Technical assistance was provided
Dominican Republic	April 1996		The request to provide observers to monitor presidential elections taking place in May 1996 was denied. The UN argued that there was not enough time to make appropriate preparations and deploy.
El Salvador	June 1992 – January 1993	April 1993 – March 1995	Technical assistance and verification tasks were provided in the general elections held in March and April 1994.
Guyana	June 1992	June – October 1992	Technical assistance was provided in the elections held in October 1992.
	February 1996	March 1996	Technical assistance was provided during the 1997 electoral year.
Haiti	July 1990	November 1990 – January 1991	Technical assistance and verification tasks were provided in the general elections that took place in December 1990 and January 1991.

Member State	Date of Request	Period during which electoral assistance was provided	UN response
	September 1994	October 1994 – January 1996	Technical assistance provided for legislative elections held in June and September 1995, and during the presidential elections held later on in December.
Honduras	March 1994	June – March 1995	Technical assistance provided.
Mexico	April 1994	June 1994 – May 1995	Support provided to national observers to monitor elections held in August 1994.
Nicaragua	March 1989	August 1989 – March 1990	Technical assistance and verification tasks were provided during 1990s elections.
	November 1993	December 1993 – March 1994	Coordination and support to run electoral process in February 1994. A special group of observes was dispatched from the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).
Panama	November 1993	December 1993 – February 1996	Technical assistance was provided. Technical assistance and international observation were provided during the general elections in May 1993.
Paraguay	April 1993	May 1993 – June 1996	Technical assistance was provided.
Peru	1992	July – December 1995	Technical Assistance was provided.

Table drawn by the author, and based on official documents UN, 1996a. Annex 1.

Apprehensions related to the principle of self-determination are one of the main factors involved in political resistance to a broader scope of UN electoral assistance (Ludwing, 2001: 3). The content of resolutions dealing with both the effectiveness of *electoral processes*, and respect for *sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs* (UN, 1991; UN, 1992)[15] reveals that the organisation must walk a fine line between defining its role as a promoter of self-determination, and being perceived as transgressing the principle of non-intervention. The requirement of attaining acceptance by polities of UN presence in the field, and the setting out of limits to deployment in terms of time and scope, account for the ways by which this global organisation seeks to be on the former side of this line as a promoter of self-determination (*Morrice, 2006: Personal Interview)*.[16]

Bearing in mind that the "UN supports electoral processes because this support enables mechanisms that favour the decision of self-determination" (*Dunne, 2006: Personal Interview*), a dual conception of electoral assistance ultimately lies at the heart of the UN in deploying this kind of *soft stimulus*: the visible hand promoting self-determination, and the invisible hand promoting democracy.

On the side of *hard incentives*, UN democratisation policy is not necessarily immune to the use of force. Although peace-enforcement operations are usually appealing only as a strategy of last resort, Chapter VII of the Charter was in fact invoked in 1994 in one notable instance to restore democratic standards in Latin America. After the imposition on Haiti of an embargo on oil and arms and a naval blockade failed to restore the regime of Jean Bertrand Aristide, this country became the target of the "by all necessary means" (S/Res/940) wording. This experience notwithstanding, it is widely acknowledged that "the UN has no legal right to use force to impose democracy" (Burnell, 2006:

[15] This 'method' was suggested by a UN official expert of the EAD *(Dunne, Personal Interview, 2006)*.

[16] b)"The EAD focus on short-term operations concentrating over 90% of its activity on the polling stage… (furthermore) the provision of technical assistance and coordination of observers is favoured by EAD over the other four types of assistance…" (*Morrice, Personal Interview, 2006)*. These types are: the Organisation and Conduct of Elections, Supervision, Verification and Observation. (UN, 1996a: 3, and Ludwig: 2004: 173-176).

560), and that the adoption of a coherent doctrine for doing so is still a long way out of the UN's current political winset (Farer, 2004: 25). Nonetheless, the past reveals that where violent democratic crises are considered by the Security Council as material breaches of human rights, the probabilities for 'all necessary means' to be interpreted as coercive are high – but all too subject to the power politics inherent to the decision-making processes of this body.

In the past 'Democracy to pacify' and 'pacification to democratise' defined the formula by which the UN sought to exert influence in LA to address democratisation-related matters. A traditional conception of the peace/democracy relationship, holding that "elections were conceived as a tool to neutralise conflicts, as well as an exit strategy… (and that) the UN support was instrumental in demonstrating that something was being done to manage crises" (*Morrice, 2006: Personal Interview*), underpinned the expression of this formula. The temporal coincidence of armed conflicts in Central America with the desire of sectors of political elites in these countries to make their states members of the club of democracies represented a major opportunity to test this conception. Joint deployment of missions with the OAS, and the establishment of eight peacekeeping operations in six Latin American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti) between 1989 and 2006 (UN, 2006b) constituted evidence of this formula in action.

The UN's role in the complex democratising dimension

The UN's acknowledgement of the critical challenges faced by incipient democracies – such as corruption, vacuums of accountability and public policy mismanagement - extensively evokes the Latin American *democratic problematique* (UN, 1996a; UN, 1997: 3-15). Action in the *complex dimension* of democratisation offers the UN the possibility to maximise this convergence between its view and the political realities of (un)democratic games across the region. Nonetheless, the deployment of Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs)[17] –as

[17] The design of UN peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building mandates 'to support a culture of democracy to assistance in institution-building for democratization, national reconciliation and democratic consolidation' (UN, 1996b:14).

the traditional operational instrument of the UN- is unsuitable for fulfilling the promise to assist "processes which lead to more open, more participatory, less authoritarian societies" (UN, 1996b: 3).

Two key reasons account for this unsuitability: a) the scant probability that in strategic terms the primary consideration of countering threats to democracy in LA would outweigh the primary examination of situations widely acknowledged by this body as threats to the international peace and security; and b) the fact that multidimensional mandates advocating the UN's role as a transitional authority (Chesterman, 2004: 83) are designed for (re)crafting failed states in post-conflict situations, rather than for supporting already-existing democracies in fragile political systems. However, as it is analysed below, although LA is now necessarily barren ground for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in terms of substantial pro-democratisation activity, it is fertile soil for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in these same terms.

The UN's democratising role in LA rests in large part on the shoulders of the UNDP. The emphasis on the building of institutional capacity as a key strategy outlined by this agency throughout the 1990s (Ponzio, 2004: 225) created significant room for manoeuvre in support of democratic consolidation in Latin American countries. The fact that under the label of 'democratic governance', 45% of the total UNDP program expenditure in 2001 was allocated to programs on democratic institutions (Ponzio, 2004: 211) signalled the fact that the development of more appropriate approaches was underway to tackle the region's political complexities. Two types of programs provide empirical evidence of the comprehensive agenda for democratisation of the UN in this region: electoral assistance and socio-institutional programs.

The provision of assistance to enhance permanent and independent electoral systems represented the 'entry point' of the UNDP in support of democratic longevity, particularly in the 13 Latin American countries where these *soft stimuli* were deployed between 1991-1999 (Ponzio, 2004: 215). However, as "[the] strengthening of democratic

governance requires more than well functioning elections" (UNDP, 2006: 5), complementary programs encouraging development constitute a major tool of UN democracy promotion.

The UNDP's expertise in carrying out development programs is central to the UN's democratisation agenda. Since the UNDP's portfolio is informed by the goal of mainstreaming democratic culture, adherence to a comprehensive approach defines the profile of this agency in enhancing democracy. Although this portfolio incorporates a wide range of priority areas,[18] recent experiences of assistance in Central America (IDEA, 2006a) highlight 4 critical targets: political parties, accountability, conflict management and youth (UNDP, 2006). Despite the fact that the horizons of IOs' influence depend on governmental hierarchies of priorities, the enlargement of the activities undertaken by the UNDP aimed at tackling complex challenges in LA, from a bottom-up perspective, signal a robust potential for the UN to advance its *roadmap for democratisation*.

Preparing for sending democratising toolkits. Comparative Analysis

As discussed earlier, the agendas of the OAS and UN regarding processes of democratisation in Latin American political systems are driven by particular *institutional roadmaps*. Peculiar patterns in the conceptualisation of democracy, heterogeneous articulations of cooperative strategies to promote democracy, and different scopes for establishing strategies whether in complex or in consolidating dimensions, feature in these roadmaps. A comparative analysis of these, the three axes of *institutional roadmaps*, is provided in the last part of this article.

[18] This agenda is comprised of: political support for governance, parliamentary development, electoral systems, justice and human rights, E-government and access to information for citizen participation, decentralisation, local governance and urban/rural development, and public and administrative reform and anti-Corruption (UNDP, 2006).

Where does democracy fit in the institutional schemas of the OAS and the UN?

The paradigmatic personalities of the OAS and the UN concerning democratisation emerge in their dual conceptualisations of democracy. From the doctrinal perspective, democracy is a foundational reflective and transitive goal of the OAS. A prevalent inter-governmental understanding among the Latin American governments has gravitated towards the adoption of a concept of *representative* democracy. In contrast, a formal concept of democracy is not officially registered in the UN's organisational thinking.

Relevant contrasts emerge concerning the ideational or the pragmatic perspectives on which each organisation's concept of democracy relies. From the ideational perspective, an irreconcilable disparity between the neutral and universal personality of the UN, and the different types of democracy safeguarded by the principle of self-determination prevails. This contrasts with the liberal democratic norm conceptualised by the OAS and locked into inter-American dynamics. From the pragmatic viewpoint, a shared conception of democracy as interdependent with peace and security has led to an unofficial but substantial adoption of this by the UN, and an implicit instrumental one by the OAS.

How are cooperative strategies to promote democracy inserted in OAS and UN canons?

An ambiguous articulation of cooperative strategies to promote democracy prevails at both the global and the regional level. The OAS's collective defence paradigm contrasts with the UN's risk-averse behaviour. Nevertheless, a three-cornered problem constituted by organisational deficiencies, financial constraints, and insufficient precision of strategies calls into question the extent to which cooperative strategies to promote democracy are genuinely articulated in the OAS. In a parallel view, the UN's self-recognition of its responsibility to assist democratisation turns into a *de facto* promotion of the components of such a process.

Major political implications derive from a shared ambiguity in the articulation of the OAS and UN cooperative strategies. Regard-

ing the former, since "[t]he collective defence of democracy was designed to stop military coups and blatant violations of the norm that Latin American leaders should be selected through free and fair election…" (Parish & Peceny, 2002: 246), a *formal approach* tends to prevail. In contrast, the UN's *comprehensive approach* tends to be more clearly delineated than does its formal approach, bearing in mind the number of operational constraints experienced in deploying in the *contextual dimension* of democratisation.

IOs' roles in the democratising dimensions of LA. Parallel efforts or mutually reinforced strategies?

Analogous performances of the OAS and UN in the *contextual dimension* would appear to reflect similar formal concepts of democratisation. Both IOs have deployed similar *soft stimuli,* allied to *hard incentives*, to tackle the democratic breakdowns that have manifested as a persistent pattern in Latin American politics. Joint deployment of peace-keeping operations, networked-decisions to impose sanctions and legitimise the use of force, and the division of competences regarding electoral assistance (i.e. electoral observation on the OAS's shoulders and technical assistance in UN hands), account for a shared lens through which democracy is conceptualised. However, the absence of democratic conditionality in the UN, and the revival of democratic clauses in the OAS, reveals the importance of regional contexts regarding the diffusion of liberal ideational settings.

The range of pro-democratisation policies in Latin American states supported by the OAS and UN suggests a comprehensive approach. Appropriate views of the Latin American democratic *problematique* and the development of socio-cultural target programs offer the potential for both IOs to play an assertive role in democratisation processes in the region. Further steps toward inter-level cooperation are critical to build up synergies across IOs supporting democratisation.

Conclusion

The widespread irruption of democratisation activity into the sphere of IO action is a phenomenon of great significance in the development of contemporary political systems. Although the goal

of strengthening democratic institutions and deepening democratic practices depends largely on domestic conditions, the dominant 'outward-looking' personality of the process of democratisation since the late 1980s marks the critical and increasing importance of *institutional roadmaps* for IOs developing their democratisation agendas.

Horizons of IOs influence, institutional schemas and political tensions lie beneath complex multilateral action to promote democracy. The responses of the OAS and UN to the Latin American democratic *problematique* illustrate the relevance of this threefold architecture in tackling the increasing challenges to democracy. Although heterogeneous patterns of IOs' agendas come with different *modus operandi*, the widely acknowledged arguments holding that genuine progress towards democratic consolidation relies on the citizenry 'at home', and that strategies to 'lock in' this process are only partially contingent on international decision-makers, are essential to the understanding of these *modus operandi*. Ultimately, the arguably as yet unresolved challenge of achieving a model of multilateral support of democratisation coming from the 'outside' that retains the potential for the promotion of democracy forged on the 'inside' is at the heart of this phenomenon.

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