

1990, Russia itself and other European and Eurasian parts of the former Soviet Union, with exceptions such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, have created their own regional initiatives on Europe's eastern fringe and these continue to evolve.

Is Europe a Model for Other Regions?

Theories of regional organization have been heavily influenced by the European experience and European integration theory. The EU has served as “a laboratory in which to investigate a series of common political phenomena developed further in Europe than elsewhere on the globe” (Moravcsik 1998: 500). There is no question that countries in other regions of the world have often viewed developments in Europe as a potential model to follow. In 2015, with the EU in mind, for example, the Eurasian Union became operational with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan as members. Yet the circumstances that supported the development of European regional governance, and particularly European integration as it progressed from the ECSC to the EU, cannot be duplicated elsewhere. In fact, many Asian leaders strongly reject the European model as inappropriate. Nevertheless, people in many regions of the world continue to use the European experience as a benchmark and guide to one model of regional governance even as ferment in Europe itself challenges that model.

Regional Organizations in the Americas

Evolution of Regionalism in the Americas

Some of the oldest regional initiatives took place in the Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century. In 1889, the first of nine International Conferences of American States created the International Union of American Republics (later renamed the Pan American Union). The last of these conferences, in 1948, established the Organization of American States (OAS) as the primary forum for inter-American cooperation. In a separate initiative, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) was signed in 1947. This is a far more limited collective defense arrangement than NATO, because the Latin American governments refused to accept joint command of military forces or any binding obligation to use force without their explicit consent (Article 20).

There have also been a variety of initiatives for subregional economic integration among groups of states in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean to promote development. The Summit of the Americas process, begun in the 1990s, attempted to reinvigorate hemispheric regionalism and had some success in enhancing the OAS's authority and providing impetus for reform (Rosenberg 2001: 80).

These various initiatives embody two approaches to Latin American regionalism. One is the idea of hemispheric regionalism or pan-Americanism, encompassing the entire Western Hemisphere (or, with more recent initiatives, the Latin Americans alone). The other has promoted subregional cooperation and economic integration among Latin American countries as a strategy for development. Both approaches have eschewed EU-style supranationalism in favor of intergovernmentalism. Both are marked by the differing visions of the United States and the Latin American states. Whereas the United States has historically been interested in the security of its backyard, Latin Americans have seen unity as the most effective way to secure their interests, including protection against US dominance. Many Latin American nations historically opposed ceding any authority to an organization in which the United States was a member. The coexistence of these two approaches reflects the most significant characteristic of the Americas: the enormous disparity in size, power, and economic wealth between the United States and all other states—a disparity that has diminished in recent years with economic growth throughout much of Latin America and the rise of both Mexico and Brazil as significant regional if not global actors.

Regionalism in Latin America made a strong comeback with the Cold War's end, settlements of the Central American conflicts of the 1980s, and the end of ideological conflict. Key factors included the move from authoritarian regimes to democracy in all Latin American countries except Cuba; the acceptance by most governments of neoliberal market capitalism; the effects of globalization, including Latin American countries' fear of being marginalized in the world economy; and a new security agenda of transnational problems, including drug trafficking and environmental concerns. We look first at the hemispheric approach embodied in the OAS, then at the integrationist approach associated with subregionalism in NAFTA and Mercosur.

Hemispheric Regionalism

Key to inter-American hemispheric regionalism has been the amount and type of attention given by the United States to Latin America. Historically, periods of US interest in the region have been followed by periods of neglect, when the United States put global interests above Latin American concerns. US hegemony was greatest during the 1950s and 1960s, when the United States got the Latin Americans to accept its anticommunist agenda and used the Rio Treaty to legitimize actions in Guatemala, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. The United States supported many Latin military regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. Political and economic changes in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s were seen as positive developments by the United States, leading to new hemispheric initiatives in the 1990s, particularly linked to democracy promotion. Since 2000, US atten-

tion to Latin America has been diverted, however, by the wars on terrorism and in Iraq and Afghanistan, with hemispheric concerns rarely getting high-level attention.

The Organization of American States. In 1948, twenty-one countries in the Western Hemisphere adopted the Charter of the Organization of American States and simultaneously signed the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the first international document devoted to human rights principles. Fourteen other nations joined subsequently, including the Caribbean island states and Canada. Cuba was excluded from participation between 1962 and 2009 for its adherence to Marxist-Leninism and its alignment with the communist bloc. No other regional organization in the world includes as strong a North-South dimension as the OAS. The OAS Charter includes provisions for strengthening regional peace and security, common action against aggression, and limiting conventional weapons. It also calls for promoting representative democracy, seeking solutions for political, juridical, and economic problems, and promoting economic, social, and cultural cooperation, as well as for eradication of extreme poverty. In recent years, the OAS has devoted more attention to transnational criminal threats to hemispheric security (e.g., drugs, arms, terrorism, human trafficking, money laundering).

The primary organs of the OAS include the General Assembly, the Permanent Council, the General Secretariat, and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development. There are a variety of committees and other organs, including the Inter-American Committee on Terrorism, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (discussed further in Chapter 10), and the Inter-American Development Bank (discussed further in Chapter 9).

The General Assembly, which meets annually and, when requested, in special session, is considered the OAS's highest decisionmaking body, with each member state having one vote. Like the UN General Assembly, it may consider any matter relating to friendly relations among American states, and most decisions are made by consensus or when necessary by majority vote, with certain matters such as approval of the budget requiring a two-thirds majority. The Permanent Council conducts much of the day-to-day business of the OAS, meeting regularly at headquarters in Washington, DC. Its activities include assisting in peaceful settlement of disputes and undertaking diplomatic initiatives under the Inter-American Democratic Charter in the event of an unconstitutional change of government. Permanent Council decisions require a two-thirds majority, but most decisions are taken by consensus. The council is alternately known as the Organ of Consultation under the Rio Security Treaty. When it meets in this mode, its members are usually the foreign ministers.

The OAS General Secretariat supports the work of the organization, including technical assistance projects. Since the mid-1990s, it has also served as secretariat for the Summit of the Americas process, even though the summits are not officially part of the OAS. The OAS secretary-general has traditionally come from one of the Latin American states. The election of Chilean José Miguel Insulza in 2005 signaled the erosion of US influence, however, as he was the first secretary-general not endorsed by the United States. The breadth of the OAS's agenda has severely strained its resources, with persistent budget shortfalls, staff cuts, and difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified personnel (Meyer 2014: 25).

The OAS, like the UN, has several specialized organizations, including the Pan American Health Organization, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, and the Inter-American Indigenous Institute. The Inter-American Commission on Women, established in 1928, was the first IGO in the world to work for women's political and civil rights and support women's participation in governance. Today, it continues to support women's movements at the governmental level, through NGOs, and at the grassroots level, with a focus on the full range of women's rights.

The United States has historically viewed the OAS as an instrument for advancing its interests in the hemisphere and is the organization's largest financial contributor (41 percent in 2013). During the Cold War, the United States used the OAS to counter communist subversion and, after 1960, the spread of Cuba's communist revolution. In 1962, the Cuban government was excluded from participation and sanctions were imposed; however, in 2009, in a major shift, the OAS lifted the suspension, subject to conditions that Cuba must meet before it can return. (A 1975 resolution had released OAS members from their obligation to enforce the sanctions.) Latin American support for the US anticommunist agenda waned after the mid-1960s. In 1979, the United States failed to get OAS support for blocking the leftist Sandinistas from taking power in Nicaragua. In 1983, the United States invaded Grenada without consulting the OAS, but under the pretext of the Eastern Caribbean Defense Treaty. Since the Cold War's end, collective defense against aggression from outside has been less central to the OAS agenda, and US influence has declined. Particular concerns for the United States continue to be the reintegration of Cuba, the application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (discussed later), reform of the human rights system, newer security issues such as counterterrorism and antidrug efforts, and the need for OAS reform. The US decision in late 2014 to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba after more than five decades was widely welcomed in Latin America, and is likely to affect the dynamics within the region and the OAS in coming years.

With regard to peaceful settlement, the OAS has played a role in numerous regional border and other disputes, such as the 1995 border war between

Ecuador and Peru, a dispute between Belize and Guatemala (2003), and another between Colombia and Ecuador (2008), but it had little success in dealing with Colombia's long-running civil war. Ad hoc groups such as the Contadora Group (Mexico, Venezuela, Panama, and Colombia) and the Rio Group (Mexico, Venezuela, Panama, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay), which helped secure peace in Central America's conflicts in the 1980s, however, have often been more effective than the OAS. The OAS has undertaken joint peacekeeping missions with the UN in Haiti, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and been involved in various peacebuilding activities such as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, truth and reconciliation, and electoral assistance in Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Suriname.

Democratic government has been a goal of peoples in the Americas almost since independence. It was endorsed in declarations of inter-American conferences beginning in 1936 and incorporated into the Charter of the Organization of American States and into the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, yet the OAS was largely silent during the 1960s and 1970s when right-wing dictatorships became the norm in most countries. The wave of democratizations throughout the region in the late 1980s and 1990s led the OAS to assume a major role in defending and promoting democracy.

The first step toward this new role occurred in 1979 with a resolution condemning the human rights record of the Anastasio Somoza regime in Nicaragua. From the mid-1980s to 2001, the OAS approved a set of legal norms and procedures for the defense of democracy. Promotion of democracy was declared "an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region" in the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias (1985), a revision of the OAS Charter. The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy was established in 1990 to assist with elections, and in 1991 the OAS General Assembly approved a resolution (1080) requiring its organs to take "immediate action" in the event of a "sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic institutional process" of any member state. Such threats to democracy include military coups or leaders' self-coups to stay in power past a constitutional term limit, as well as flawed elections and constitutional crises. That resolution, Craig Arceneaux and David Pion-Berlin (2007: 4) conclude, "made longstanding commitments to democratic defense operable." Six years later, the 1997 Protocol of Washington gave the OAS the right to suspend a member whose democratically elected government is overthrown by force (with a two-thirds majority voting in favor). And in 2001, the General Assembly adopted the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which proclaims the peoples' right to democracy and their governments' obligation to promote and defend it (Article 12); governments failing to uphold this obligation can be suspended from the OAS. The charter

was drafted and approved in a remarkably short period of time (nine months) for an organization noted for its slowness (Cooper 2004: 96–97).

Under the democracy mandate, the OAS has acted against coups or self-coups on ten occasions: Suriname (1990), Haiti (1991–1994, 2004), Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993), Paraguay (1996, 2000), Ecuador (2000), and Venezuela (1992, 2002). It has acted against election failures in four instances: the Dominican Republic (1994), Peru (2000), Haiti (2001), and Honduras (2009). These actions have included diplomatic, financial, economic, and military sanctions on Haiti, a mission to Venezuela headed by the OAS secretary-general, and the unprecedented step of suspending Honduras from membership following the 2009 coup in that country, with that suspension lifted in 2011.

Overall, however, the OAS’s record on defending democracy is mixed, particularly since 2002. In many cases, it has taken weak or no action, leading Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin (2007: 24) to conclude that the OAS “remains reluctant to condemn democratic deficiencies when faced with either threats that are ambiguous or domestic constituencies united and adamant in their defense of sovereignty.”

Inadequate resources limit what the OAS can do, just as limited finances have always constrained its role in fostering economic and social development. The Latin American countries, for example, have long sought more attention to development needs and preferential treatment in trade and finance, while the United States has preferred that the OAS not be heavily involved in development activities. As a result, the UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and other forums have played key roles in regional development, as discussed in Chapter 9. Liberalization of most Latin American countries’ economic policies in the 1980s, however, led to the creation of the Council for Integral Development and other OAS initiatives to promote new and better cooperation among members to overcome poverty, benefit from the digital revolution, and advance social and economic development. The alternative subregional integration approach is still the dominant one for promoting development, however. Subregional organizations also have the advantage of promoting economic integration and political cooperation without the United States and Canada—their response to the persistent perception that the OAS is US-dominated. Yet the OAS “is unlikely to disappear any time soon. The OAS is still equipped to take on critical issues . . . that newer multilateral mechanisms seem years away from being able to handle adequately” (Shifter 2012: 61).

Subregional Integration

The diversity of the subregions within the Americas, along with the small size and low levels of economic development of many countries, has long