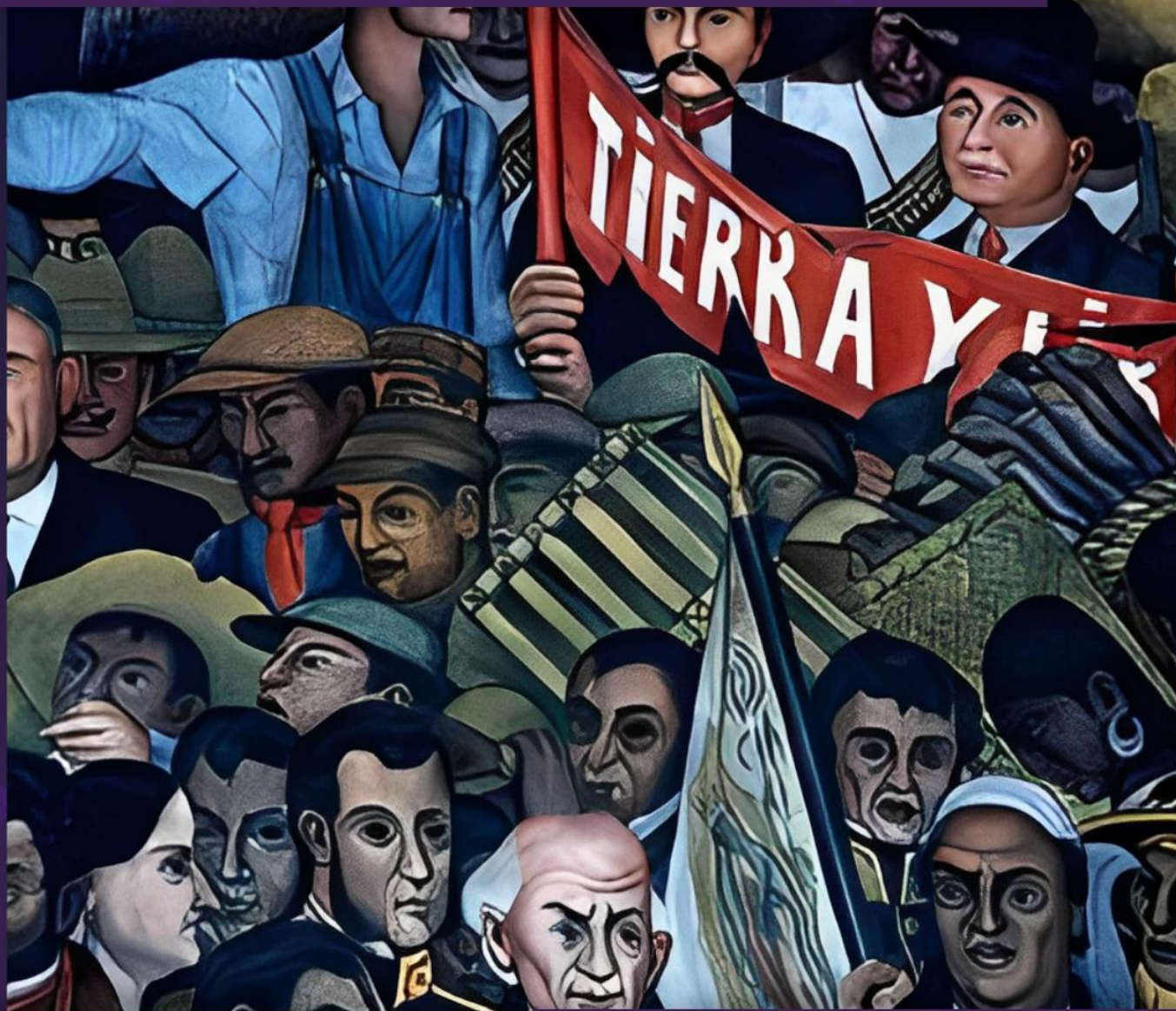


24° EDIÇÃO

MINIONU

REVOLUCIONANDO O FUTURO



OAS (2023)

INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE
ON DEMOCRACY AND
SOVEREIGNTY

**STUDY
GUIDE**

DIRECTOR
CAMILA SALES DA COSTA

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
ALICE DE MAGALHÃES NEPOMUCENO
FERNANDO CAVALCANTE BRAGA



MINIONU



PUC Minas

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1. TEAM PRESENTATION

1.1. Camila Sales - Director

Hello, delegates! My name is Camila, and I will be your director in the 24th edition of the MINIONU, welcome to OAS (2023). This will be my third committee, I headed the OUA (1999) and the AGNU (2022). In my experience this project is a beautiful way of learning, meeting new and different people, and a fully wonderful experience. I absolutely love romantic movies, the sillier, the better and all kinds of music. I really enjoy reading, even though I have developed the habit of having a collection of books I have never read, that inspired me to write. In the end, I am passionate for justice and equality, and my goal in life is to make sure the largest number of people possible have access to a fair world.

MINIONU awoke in me an endless passion for Human Rights, and it showed me what path to trace in life. My goal as director is to give you all access to a current and extremely important theme. Making me able to help you learn in a fun way, where you have the voice and the ability to express yourselves in any way. And further, my goal is to provide a comfortable environment, where no one feels judged and everyone feels the liberty to express themselves.

I hope you all have a wonderful experience! Above all, make sure you have fun, and I hope you feel free to express yourselves and all that you think. Welcome to OAS (2023)!

1.2. Alice Nepomuceno - Director Assistant

Hello Dear Delegates! My name is Alice and I am in the 6^o semester of International Relations at PUC Minas. My first participation in MINIONU was in 2021 when I was a volunteer on the Logistics Committee. I also joined the project in 2022 as an Assistant Director on the Paraguayan War Committee. Finally, this year, 2023, I am an Assistant Director to the OAS Committee for the Inter-American Conference on Democracy and Sovereignty.

I am exceptionally interested in this theme and so much so that my Final Paper theme borders the important matters we are going to discuss in the simulations this year. Moreover, English has been part of my life since I was a teenager, and I greatly enjoy speaking and studying the language. With all this said, I saw on this amazing committee the opportunity to unite those two things I am passionate about.

I hope you have the most brilliant experience in the project and that the subjects debated on the simulations bring you all enlightenment and knowledge. Further, I hope you meet great people and have a lot of fun while in it. And at last, I am looking forward to meeting all of you in October!

1.3. Fernando Cavalcante - Director Assistant

Hi delegates! My name is Fernando and I'm on my way to the 4th semester of International Relations. I first participated in MINIONU last year, but it wasn't my first time in a UN simulation. I have participated on several simulations in México, since I lived there for 4 and a half years. This year, I had the opportunity to be an Assistant Director to the OAS Committee for the Inter-American Conference on Democracy and Sovereignty.

This theme is highly important for us as our history is based on democratic values, and having an opportunity to work closer to this topic will help us open our minds and inspire us to seek change. I hope you enjoy it the same as I do, and that everything that you learn turns out useful and helpful for your future! We are looking forward to meeting you!!

2. Theme Presentation

America - as a continent - and **Democracy** have a complicated relationship. In the past, foreign interference and the international political and economic constraints have directly affected the state of legitimacy of Latin-American Democracies, and the consequences are felt to this day. Democracy is unfortunately not stable and the American continent must unite in order to analyze the current situation of democracies in its territories.

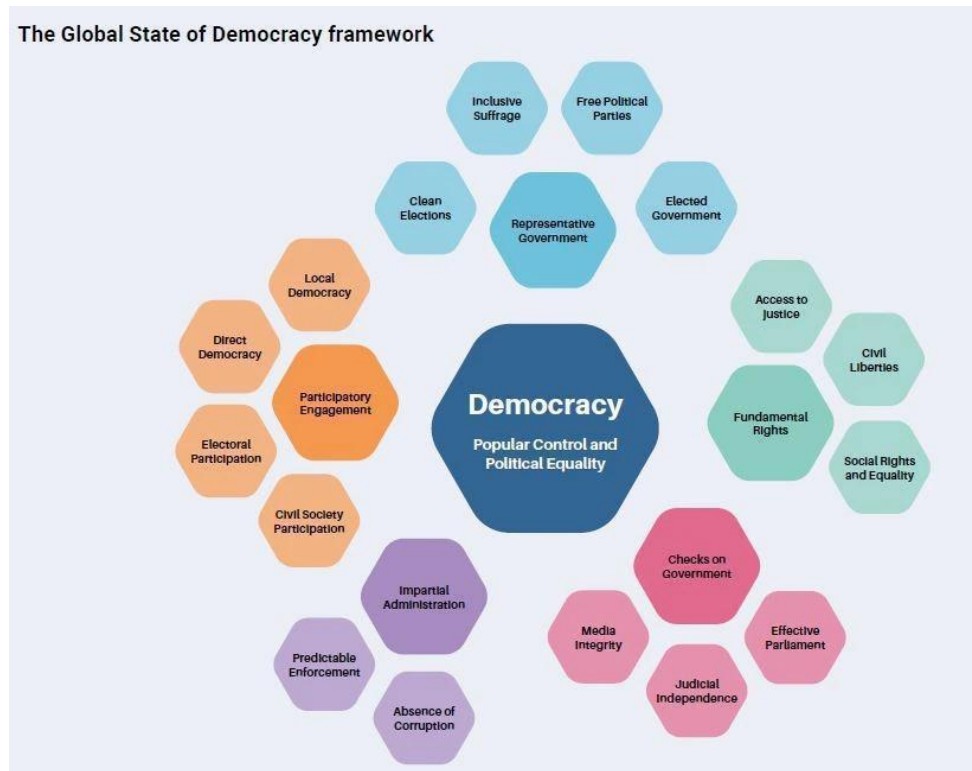
2.1. Democratic Governments

First of all, we must begin by discussing what democracy is. The word in its most literal definition comes from the Greek words "Demo" meaning people, and "Kratos" meaning power, so its literal definition is "Power of the people". However, **democracy** comes in so many formats that it is adequate to define it for what it isn't; democracy isn't a form of government where one single person rules. There is in fact a head of government but there is a need for control mechanisms, such as laws or other governmental bodies that are able to keep them in check. A democratic government must also always be elected, and above all, it must listen to the voice of the people. It is important to note that a democracy isn't an oligarchy - where a small group is responsible for decision making - and that it isn't even the rule of the majority. A democracy is the **rule of all**, with no exceptions (ANNAN, 2018).

Democracy is represented mostly by voting through general elections that occur within varying intervals according to each country's constitution. However, it is important to note that without participation, and the voicing of concerns between election periods, democracy cannot be truly achieved. According to Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations,

democracy is the only form of government aligned with Human Rights, and one cannot exist without the other, as they are “dependent and incomplete without the other” (ANNAN, 2018).

IMAGE 1 - Framework: The Global State of Democracy



Source: Global State of Democracy Report 2022, International IDEA

A democracy is incomplete without respect for the **people’s liberty** because it is based on the people’s will. Therefore, along with its principles, a democracy is not complete without the Human Rights principles of: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (UDHR, Article 18); Freedom of Expression (UDHR, Article 19); and Freedom of peaceful assembly and association (UDHR Article 20). Of course, we must remember, any type of freedom always comes with the responsibility to respect other people’s freedom and respect the peace and safety of others (ANNAN, 20-).

2.2. Autocracy and Dictatorship

Unlike a democracy, where the principle of the people deciding for themselves the way the government is going to go and who is going to govern is key, in an **autocracy**, a single person (the autocrat) or party (small group) makes all decisions. In an autocracy, the head of government holds absolute power, their decisions and the determinations of who rules are outside of the population’s reach. In an autocracy though there might be some restraints, there

are few organisms of control regarding the executive power, the autocrat is someone who has considerable freedom to rule all things (ECPS, 2023).

In the past, autocracy was seen as a positive characteristic for governments, and the focalization of power on a single ruler was highly valued. For example, the emperor of Russia was titled “*Autocrat of all the Russias*” still in the 20th century as a high praise (LINCOLN, 1981). Earlier than that, in the work of Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, individual concentration of power was portrayed as an extremely positive thing. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, a political treaty focused on advising a single ruler on how to concentrate and maintain power, which the author dedicated to Lorenzo de’Medici, then ruler of Florence (MACHIARELLI, 1532).

The titular prince did not care greatly for its people, who were voiceless and without personality, therefore, *The Prince* can be seen as a work focused on autocracies, not republics. Despite that, Machiavelli’s advice was taken without a grain of salt for a long time, being seen as a “how to govern” guide by some. However, *The Prince* can be an excellent guide to show when governments indicate signs of becoming an autocracy (MACHIARELLI, 1532).

Thomas Hobbes wrote *Leviathan*, in which, although not explicitly referencing an authoritarian state, he describes a society led by the titular Leviathan, a sovereign that retained all power and all force. This was the only form to organize society according to Hobbes, since humanity was in nature corrupt and violent, and therefore needed to concede part of its freedom in order to avoid war and maintain peace. The author described the existence of a social contract, by which society agrees to have the Leviathan take power and organize the population as it sees fit. This dynamic was portrayed as positive, even though it took all power from society and concentrated it in the hands of one individual or entity, so that the Hobbesian State can be read as a voluntary autocracy (HOBBS, 1651).

These are very old pieces, but still highly valued in political theory and studied throughout all social and political studies, as well as used as groundwork to understand the strategies and courses of action of current autocrats. However, autocracies are fortunately not the most popular forms of government nowadays, and that is why autocratic governments have the tendency to create structures that help them mimic democracies. They might use the same language as democracies, or even create organisms that are similar to democratic ones, such as: parliaments, assemblies, elections, parties, courts, legal codes. These may be very similar in formulation and structure to democracies, but have no real impact on policy making and popular representation, and in the same way, the language of a constitution may be even tailored to look like it contains the elements of a democracy, but essentially:

The difference is that in totalitarian regimes neither the institutions nor the constitutional provisions act as effective checks on the power of the single center: They are essentially facades for the exercise of power through hierarchical procedures that subject all the officials of the state to the commands of the ruling individual or group (ECPS, 2023).

But essentially, it is important to speak on the difference that exists between an autocracy and a full-on dictatorship. A **dictatorship** can be defined as the government of a person or group that holds extraordinary amounts of power, with very few considerable constitutional and institutional restraints. Dictators often resort to the limitations of civil liberties, terror, violence and fraud, and power is often obtained and maintained by unconstitutional means. Though autocracy is an element of dictatorship, it can exist by itself in different levels, and often, the power of the autocrat is not absolute in the law, unlike that of the dictator may be (BRITANNICA, 2023a).

There has been a reinvention of the autocracy. For example, some countries exist currently in what can be considered an “**Electoral Autocracy**”, that is the case with Vladimir Putin in Russia, who has created a system with regular elections that are not fair and stray from the freedom principle. There is evidence that autocracies have become increasingly more creative and flexible, making themselves each time more capable of selling the illusion of a democracy, which inevitably blurs the line between what we perceive as freedom and repression by making liberty restraints subtler (INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY COMMUNITY, 2022).

Another tool that has become increasingly popular among autocrats is misinformation, and what has become commonly known as “**Fake News**”. Misinformation can be understood as false, inaccurate or deliberately untrue statements about events or occurrences, and in a political spectrum, this can be especially harmful. These can include the spread of baseless claims on the results of elections – to cast doubt on the legitimacy of recently elected governments – and the spread of plain lies regarding oppositional governments (SULLIVAN, 2022).

Misinformation is largely influential because of its adaptability; it can fit within particular fears and cultural interests of specific communities and thrive there, increasing its spread. The fear of communism, for example, is largely common in Latin America and in the United States. Before Joe Biden’s election, for instance, he was accused of cooperating with communists from Cuba, with the spread of a picture that seemed to show he maintained relations with Fidel Castro in an attempt to smear his image (LAST WEEK TONIGHT, 2021).

This phenomenon has also been potentialized by social media and especially private messaging apps, like Telegram, Whatsapp, Facebook, which have become a gateway for fake news. Despite this spread, *fact-checking* – the act of verifying information online – has become

more accessible and simpler, but in countries such as Brazil, online connection can take up to 15% of a household's income, making it more practical to trust information received on messaging apps and harder to use the internet to fact-check information you may receive (LAST WEEK TONIGHT, 2021).

Misinformation is an important element for the construction of autocracy, because it builds distrust in existing structures of power in previous government systems - most famously democracies. Autocracy is built step by step, and questioning the powers that be open the first window to install a different model of government, be it legitimate or not, democratic or not. When the people do not believe the institutions which govern them, they are naturally inclined to request change, be it legitimately justified or baseless, as is the case when distrust is guided by misinformation (SULLIVAN, 2022).

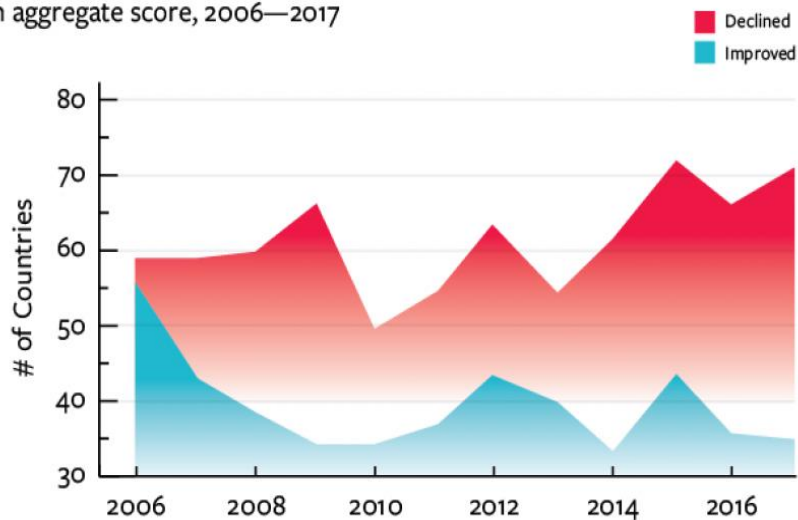
2.3. Democracy at Risk in America

A common measure used to evaluate levels of democracy in each country is called Freedom House, a ranking-type indicator that considers aspects such as economy, political rights, civil liberties, and military powers in States all over the world, has reported in 2018 that democracy faces a brick wall, stating that simple civil liberties such as guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law, came under attack around the world (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2018). The index also reported in 2018 that since 2006, democracy suffered a steep decline.

IMAGE 2 - Twelve Years of Decline

Twelve Years of Decline

Number of countries that declined and improved in aggregate score, 2006—2017



www.freedomintheworld.org

Source: Freedomhouse.org (2017)

Freedom House pointed out in 2018 that the last 12 years saw democracy have a steep decline, and unfortunately, that tendency did not change. Democracy is currently stable, but shaken up, with external and internal factors contributing to America's older and younger democracies' instabilities, intensifying political divisions and putting some democracies at risk. Inability to tend to population needs and demands in a uniform manner have made talks of conciliation difficult throughout the American continent, causing a division that is dangerous for democratic societies (GARCIA, 2022).

One such occasion where the discontent with democratic structures was put to practice was in the assassination attempt of Argentine Vice President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, in September of 2022. The attacker shot a loaded gun at the politician outside her home, but the gun did not properly work. Kirchner is a notoriously divisive political figure, and political tensions have been rising in Argentina due to economic conditions (GARCIA, 2022).

In Brazil, in the runup to the 2022 elections, two politically motivated killings happened in the endless tug of war between candidates Jair Bolsonaro and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the dangerous polarized atmosphere that exists between the left and right political movements in Brazil. In Colombia, leftist president Gustavo Petro faced violent threats soon after his election, even though elections were peaceful (GARCIA, 2022). His Vice-President, Fernando Márquez, also received three threats from the right-wing group the Black Eagles, showing the

ease in which violence has been used against political and democratic decisions as of late (GARCIA, 2022).

In 2021, encouraged by former president Donald Trump, far-right protesters stormed the Capitol building, home to the legislative power of the United States of America, alleging that that year's election had been rigged. The rioters vandalized the Capitol building and as a result there have been 900 arrests so far, and the event took such a proportion that it demanded the largest US based investigation in all of its Justice Department's 153 years of history (ESTADÃO, 2023).

In El Salvador, President Nayib Bukele threatened an attempt at reelection - which is illegal in the country. In addition, Bukele established a state of emergency to fight street gangs: within nine months, the regime killed 90 prisoners that were in State custody and committed over a thousand Human Rights violations. Bukele has openly said that he "does not care" what International Organizations say:

Rights activists say young men are frequently arrested just based on their age, on their appearance or whether they live in a gang-dominated slum. The country's human rights official, Raquel Caballero, said 2,100 people have been released after arrest because they had no ties to the street gangs (ALEMAN, 2022).

In the case of El Salvador, Francisco Goldman, a Guatemalan American author was quoted by Reuters saying: "El Salvador is a dictatorship, a populist, beloved dictatorship, but it's a dictatorship". These are just some examples that highlight how fragile democracy is in current day America. They represent how even with elected governments democracy might be at risk, when politicians do not respect democratic institutions in today's climate (ALEMAN, 2022).

3. Democracy and History

3.1. The Cold War

From 1947 to the 1990s, the USA and the Soviet Union (USSR) were engaged in the **Cold War**, a period of hostile relations that has impacted the world's political outlook up until today. The confrontation began in the period that followed the Second World War, in which the USA and the USSR had been unexpected allies. Throughout the Cold War, despite the absence of direct armed confrontation, the dispute for influence between socialist and capitalist forces affected the entire world. During its first years, the disputes focused on the eastern parts of the world and Europe, but that was about to change (JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 2022).

With the actions developed by the July 26th Movement, led by Fidel Castro in Cuba, the country became closer to socialist views, taking down former president Fulgêncio Batista and installing the government of the proletariat (BRITANNICA, 2022). This was a troubling occurrence for the United States' Government since this was the first instance of an American government aligning itself with the Soviet Union in an official capacity, especially since America has historically been a secured influence zone for the United States. From 1954, the attention of President Eisenhower's administration turned to Latin America, with a worrisome one-sided action capacity (COATSWORTH, 2015).

After World War Two - and after the 1953 July 26th insurrection in Cuba - The United States' Government's interest took a turn directed towards the Global Strategy Effect, which is defined by a larger perspective of global affairs and a particular interest in the domestic and international engagements of other countries. This was done by the USA throughout the 20th century through the focus on the Global South - in this case with a focus on Latin America and the goal of expanding their zone of influence and stopping the advance of the USSR's ideology (COATSWORTH, 2015).

The period was marked by an attempt at formalization of a collective security regional treaty, which was highly favored by the United States, since it secured its position as "leader" of the American continent and drew away Soviet influences. The Intra-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) assured mutual support in case of an invasion or armed attack, but as quick as it was established, the poor use of this institution and as collective security became a justification for violations of the UN Charter, the regional influence of the United States grew, and the extent of its influence became worrisome (BARROS, FILHO, 2022)

In this instance, with the purpose of assuring the United States' regional influence, the possibility of direct intervention in left-oriented governments in Latin America was raised many times. This would not have been the first time the United States used its own resources to intervene in other American countries' local matters. Also in 1954, the Guatemalan Government had been deposed with the full support of the United States due to corporate disputes. The intervention was made possible due to high North-American investment in the "*United Fruit Company*", which displayed a clear economical interest in Guatemala's internal affairs. The coup of 1954 was orchestrated by CIA organized forces, which deposed legitimately elected president Jacobo Arbenz. Later on, in 1963, the U.S. government would once again intervene in Guatemala, inciting a military coup to overthrow president Miguel Ydígoras. This was done to prevent the possible victory of leftist former President Juan José Arévalo (COATSWORTH, 2015).

During the 1960s, the United States deposed nine governments, averaging one every thirteen months; until 1994 they intervened in Latin America a total of 41 times, with 17 direct interventions. The justification was often related to security, despite Latin America not having

posed a threat to the United States during the 20th century. Furthermore, CIA experts assured decision makers that Latin American States posed no immediate threat, with or without intervention: “In no case do insurgencies pose a serious short run threat...revolution seems unlikely in most Latin American countries within the next few years” (COATSWORTH, 2015).

Since then, the United States have been directly and indirectly involved in interventions and state coups, and despite most operations having been carried out by local actors, experts argue that without the support of the United States, the chance of success on most if not all coups would have been minimal (ESEN, 2019). Despite external incentives having been essential for the success of the coups that took place between 1955 and 1990, locally, their effects were brutal on each respective population. In Nicaragua, in 1979, the fall of Antonio Somoza’s dictatorship shook North American authorities, leaving an uneasy feeling. Then president Jimmy Carter attempted to handle the situation with diplomacy and economic tools, but his successor, Ronald Reagan, chose violence. What followed were eight years of military attacks, massacres, executions, arrests, and torture (SAUNDERS, 2007).

IMAGE 4 - The War in Nicaragua



Source: William Gentile (1979)

In Chile, in 1973, the United States took down Salvador Allende, and they did this through a campaign of misinformation and bribes, which resulted in the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. During the coup, Salvador Allende lost his life, and what followed were 17 years of brutal dictatorship under Pinochet’s rule, which was also accompanied by murders, persecution, and torture. The death toll, added to the number of disappearances under the government of Pinochet – which would not have come to be without U.S.A’s support – comes to 40.018 (CBC, 2011).

IMAGE 5 - Pinochet's Regime



Source: STR/Reuters (2022)

Still in 1964, the leftist government of João Goulart was overthrown in Brazil, the coup was domestically led by the military, and followed conservative, authoritarian values, lasting until 1985 (NAPOLITANO, 2018). The United States were openly fearful of Goulart's leftist views, and according to disclosed U.S. government documents Lincoln Gordon, then Ambassador to Brazil, made a point to cause fear mongering and generate the belief that a communist threat was near under Goulart. On the eve of the coup, Gordon suggested the implantation of weapons in Brazilian territory in case of violence, pointing out how unlikely forming a link to the U.S. intelligence it would be: "risk of later attribution to U.S. government covert operations seems minor to us in relation to positive effects if the operation is conducted with skill". He also openly suggested a Civil War with the possibility of U.S. direct intervention (CIA, 1975) and that "Revolution will not resolve quickly and will be bloody". As a result of the Brazilian dictatorship, 434 people have been reported killed or missing by the Truth Commission, and thousands were tortured (CIA, 1964).

In 1970, Henry Kissinger - then Councilor of United States National Security - appears in a recording giving his official authorization to the Argentinian Minister of International Relations to start a war against leftist dissidents. It is estimated that between 1975 and 1983, 30.000 political activists have disappeared in this war. In this and other cases, the lack of transparency and the prioritization of the interests of the United States hit civilians, families,

and inevitably affected the future of the Latin American countries that suffered interference. The United States has a long history of manifesting support and a preference for democratic States, however, when considering the relationship of the United States with Latin America from 1954 to 1990, this comes into question. When considering this period, the focus of efforts from the United States were directed to the destitution of legitimately elected governments, rather than the restoration of legitimately elected ones (COATSWORTH, 2005).

3.2. From 1991 to 2023

Due to the large interference coming from the United States until the 80s, Latin American entered the 90s with shaken structures of power in varying levels, the public's trust in their leaders was not the same due to years and years of persecutions, unlawful arrests, torture, killings and disappearances. Whole generations lived their lives under dictatorships, having never experienced democracy (MCCLINTOCK; LIBOVIC, 2002, p.30).

Happily, fully authoritarian governments made themselves scarce during the 90s in Latin America, although considering the perspective of "democracy levels" not all countries experience full liberties just yet. The idea of "**democracy levels**" is not based on extremes, but rather on the gradual transition between what makes a democracy and an autocracy, it analyzes political rights and civil liberties, considering countries partly free or free. The indicators used are: "social trust, democratic values, and education" (MCCLINTOCK; LIBOVIC, 2002, p.30).

The 90s brought a major transition in Latin America from military governments to majorly democratic, civilian-led governments, which caused a shift in political power to civilian leftist governments. This wave began in the 80s, but was established during the 90s, with many elections taking place for the first time in years in 1988 and 1989. Argentina, for example, held their first elections in 61 years, Paraguay ousted the Stroessner regime after 35 years of rule and held elections in May 1989, Bolivia held their first presidential elections in 25 years of dictatorship (MOFA, 1989).

However, not all was going well in Latin America, as the elections of Panama were declared invalid in 1989. According to onlookers from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs this indicated "that Latin America as a whole is still in a transitory stage of democratization" (MOFA, 1989). Aside from that, high levels of terrorism, drug trafficking and social issues became deterrents to the restitution of fully stable democracies, also according to the Japanese officials.

The struggles in Central America were also a bad indicator for the democratic efforts being made, it was only in 1987 that Nicaragua managed a ceasefire between the USSR, supported Sandinist government (that took power in 1979) and the U.S. backed Contras, and

peace in Nicaragua and El Salvador were only accomplished in 1989. The Civil Wars deeply affected the locals and resulted in some 2 million refugees and displaced persons accounting for 10% of the region's total population. Though by 1990 peace had been achieved, the instability of a post-conflict Central America and the lack of international support for peacekeeping – the stage after peace is established where structure is provided to “keep the peace” – despite international parts having contributed for negotiations, made conditions difficult for the creation of a democratic environment (MOFA, 1989).

Another important factor for the establishment of a democratic environment is the **economy**, arguments have risen those high levels of economic development and growth point to more democratic governments (MCCLINTOCK; LIBOVIC, 2002, p.29). During the 90s, the economic situation in Latin America was dire, as Latin American countries had accumulated debts up to

[...] four times as much as their annual exports or to about 60% of their gross national product. In spite of interest payments totaling \$150 billion to \$200 billion the countries made between 1982 and 1988, their outstanding debts actually rose by \$109.3 billion to total \$442.5 billion at the end of 1987 (MOFA, 1989).

In terms of growth, the 90s saw the region's GDP fall to 0.7% in 1988 from 2.5% one year before. Inflation rose to 470% from 200%, which, combined with the extensive debt, is concerning. The economic scenario in the 90s was not conducive to a good environment for the reconstruction of democracy, which needed to be rebuilt by each country most times due to past interventions and dynamics related to the Cold War. Reconstructing governments is not a simple activity, especially when a State is recovering financially, has debt, or is healing the wounds caused by conflict (MOFA,1989).

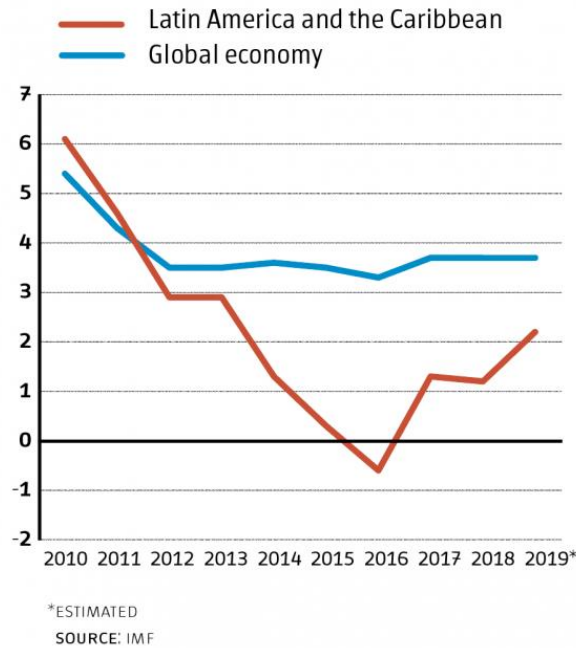
Evidence shows that GDP was directly related to the Freedom House qualification of a given country. This indicates that during the 90s, despite progress being made towards democracy, the economic context and current reality of Latin America was an obstacle to the establishment of stable governments. (MCCLINTOCK; LIBOVIC, 2002, p.47).

Progressing slowly but steadily, the 2010s saw an increase in the stability of democracies in Latin America, the levels still varied in accordance to location but the situation was optimistic, and during this period, two thirds of people agreed that democracy was the most preferable form of government according to *Latinobarómetro*, reaching 63% of the population by 2010 (SONNELAND, 2022). Many said this would be Latin America's decade, however, there was a turn for the worst, the economic boom experienced in 2008 during the rise in commodities was lost and the decade ended with an insignificant economic growth, dissatisfaction and lack of trust in democracy (WINTER, 2019).

IMAGE 6 - Falling Behind the Rest of the World

FALLING BEHIND THE REST OF THE WORLD

Real GDP growth, 2010-19



Source: IMF (2023)

The decade also ended with the election of Brazil's new president, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, who despite being democratically elected, took a toll on Brazil's democracy indicators, setting the country as a democracy at risk and partially free according to analysts and Freedom House (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2018). Bolsonaro was a former federal deputy that represented the views of ultra-conservative politics in Brazil, he was elected in 2018 despite having praised the Military Dictatorship of 1964, going on to administer the pandemic in such a fashion that resulted in 700 thousand deaths, and rule over a meteoric rise in deforestation.

In January 2023, Jair Bolsonaro's supporters invaded the government buildings in a similar way to the Capitol uprisings. The invasion resulted in destruction of property, cultural treasures and the arrests of 1300 people (PRAZERES, 2023). The argument was that the elections had been rigged, which was allegedly proved by Bolsonaro's defeat, and the former president had declared previously that his future posed three alternatives: prison, death, or victory, in a clear attack to election authorities and democratic institutions (MENDES, 2021).

The democracies that currently survive in Latin America do so despite economic, social and historical challenges, which need to be addressed. The legacy of the work of the United States' government during the Cold War and the lack of reparations afterwards have not contributed to promoting a democratic and sovereign region. Therefore, there is a need for

joint work and dialogue to promote democratic values in Latin America, in order to make sure the people's voice is always heard.

4. The Committee

The history of the Organization of American States (OAS) begins in 1889, having been originally known as the *International Union of American Republics*, becoming the world's first regional organization. The birth of this organization eventually progressed to a network of institutions that makes up for the oldest international institutional system. The establishment of the OAS as it is known today takes us back to 1948, soon after the creation of its charter. Since then, the institution has been through six reforms (OEA, 2022).

The OAS encompasses 35 American States, with 70 additional permanent observers and the European Union. The activities of the OAS include judicial, political, and social matters of events relevant to all American States, operating in a recommendatory and impartial merit (OAS, 2022). Amongst the values highlighted by the Charter of the OAS there is the statement:

The American States establish by this Charter the international organization that they have developed to achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence (OAS, 1948).

Considering the political and social merits of the OAS, there is a great concern emerging among the American States regarding the persistence of autocratic governments and tendencies throughout the continent. This phenomenon finds itself directly opposing the political values mentioned on the organization's Creation Letter preamble, where it clearly states:

Convinced that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region; Confident that the true significance of American solidarity and good neighborliness can only mean the consolidation on this continent, within the framework of democratic institutions, of a system of individual liberty and social justice based on respect for the essential rights of man [...] (OAS, 1948).

The value of democracy is considered invaluable for the maintenance of the popular wellbeing in the continent by the OAS, and the tide of autocratic leaderships, especially considering the past experience of Latin America and its impacts in the security and wellbeing of its populations has further proved it. The international intervention and the actions of the United States have had a large part in teaching the know-how on taking down democracies, and even aside from that, they have been responsible, directly or not for the deaths of millions of Latin-Americans. With the current outlook, it becomes clear that the reality experienced

during the Cold War has left strong marks in the present. There is international responsibility, however, the OAS recognizes the instability (or rather absence, in cases) of democracy, as a systemic issue.

The OAS democratic Charter states the importance of democracy within an American State both for freedom and Human Rights purposes. It figures democracy as integral in the struggle against poverty and defines a *modus operandi* on elections and how to verify their legitimacy. Among their values there are:

Respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; periodic free and fair elections; transparency, probity, and respect for social rights; exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, separation of powers and independence of the branches of government; elimination of all forms of discrimination; the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development (OAS, 2001).

Furthermore, still in its preamble, the Cartagena Charter of 1985 states “Convinced that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region” (OAS, 1985). Democracy can be seen as a cornerstone of the OAS, guiding all of its main documents and established as one of its principles ever since the organization’s birth.

That said, and given the value democracy holds in the heart of the organization, the OAS invites its members to discuss democracy, responsibility, and the future of the American continent. This assembly general of the OAS shall comprise 35 delegations, in a **traditional debate** setting, by oratorie’s list. The official language shall be English.

5. Main Positions in the Debate

This section will present a short definition of the three main points of view that will come up during our discussion. However, it is important to note that every State has their own story and context. Therefore, it is important to always see their positions and thought processes in light of their journeys so far.

5.1. Non-Democratic States

Amongst the non-democratic states, there is a consensus that there should not be any interference in the way each state conducts its way of governing. States with a low level of democracy are currently under governments that deny illegality, having ascended to power through elections – be it legitimate or not – or other means. Despite that, there is a high tendency of persecution of the opposition in states that follow these models of government,

with varying levels of intensity. The governors in these models claim that they can do what democracies cannot and frame it as a very positive outlook, painting themselves as saviors, sent to rebuild the glory of their States, and that is especially common amongst populist autocrat leaders.

5.2. Democratic States

Amongst democracies there is a great concern with the ascendance of autocracies. These states desire that, as a group, the American States may be able to work together in breaking the increase of autocratic tendencies in all of America for the creation of a fully democratic government. The absence of a democratic government takes away the power of any citizen from interfering in their own future as well as their present, and despite autocrats claiming that they deliver better results, the tendency is the accumulation of power and better results only to themselves or the classes that back them. Despite that, democracies show flaws that are exploited by autocratic leaders, concerns and management difficulties in democracies are currently focused on: “the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty and inequality”.

5.3. At Risk Democracies

The pandemic, public dissatisfaction, and social and economic crisis made it so that some states in the American Continent got dangerously close to an intense political extremism, something that can be dangerous in the most unequal continent in the world. Violence as an answer to political decisions has become a tendency in those states that found themselves in the edge of democracy, with polarization putting political stability and the achievement of political decisions at risk. States that fall under this situation seek solutions for the abyss that has formed itself within their population, besides from methods to reconstitute the stability of their democracies, both in the present and in the future.

6. RELEVANT QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

- Democratic Stability During the Cold War and International Affairs in Latin American Democracies
- Past Interventions and the Current State of Democracy in America
- State Cooperation and Democracy
- Social Wellbeing and Forms of Government
- Rights of the Minorities and the Will Expressed Through Vote
- Collective Safety and Freedom of Expression Related to Forms of Government

- What constitutes a Democratic State?

7. DELEGATIONS

IMAGE 07 – OAS Members



Source: OAS, 2023

- International Press Committee
- International Press Committee

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