

**Forum:** Advisory Panel

**Issue:** The rise of nationalism within Latin America

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## Introduction

Through the last 5 years, nationalism has begun to dominate the face of global politics and international relations. It has especially taken the lead in countries where the government has failed to adequately satisfy the needs of its people. Latin America is one of the key regions in the world which is subject to constant political change. Having gone through a long period of colonialism and multiple armed conflicts, most of which were internal, the region is extremely unstable in terms of politics and economics. This has been a key factor in the popularity of nationalism in Latin American countries in the last decade. Since nationalist leaders and political parties promise national growth, stability, sustainability, and even glory of the state to some extent, Latin American populations have started to align with such leaders to ensure the security of their countries' future, in terms of political prominence.

However, the abrupt emergence of nationalism in this already-conflicted region after the Mexican War of 1910 and the economic burdens that WWI brought only set out for more conflict. The economic, political, and social repercussions of the radical changes in Latin American regimes are already showing as most of these countries' citizens align further right every day. Although promising stability, most nationalist movements in Latin America today have led to furthered complications and outrage within the population as ideologies clash and government systems fall apart.

With the recent political fluctuations and leadership changes in the Latin American continent, the region is facing serious threats to its internal political stability in the 21st century. Although the democratic left has been on the rise since 1999, the continent has been quite shaken up with nationalist movements from Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela (Tuser 1).

In regards of the theme of the conference, nationalism poses a serious threat to modern globalized politics, as it influences the political sphere as a whole to diverge from being a more united community. As new political leaders in the region continue to lean to more nationalistic agendas as we speak, international relations and the strength of diplomacy experiences its downfall of the 21st century.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Nationalism

Nationalism is a common political ideology that asserts that the individual should be fully loyal and devoted to the nation-state, without prioritizing other groups or ideologies. It is thought to have first arisen in the 17th century with the French and American revolutions where the public defended the nation over the government. With the influence of European countries, the ideological wave manifested in Latin America in the 19th century starting with the Mexican Revolution and the economic repercussions of WWI, which will be outlined further later on (Tuser 1).

Nationalism also includes the belief that states are created by consideration of ethnographic principles, which are mostly based on race and other forms of ethnic background. This eventually led to the delineation of minority groups within nationalist states, such as in the case of Nazi Germany during WWII. Today, nationalism has begun to retake its prominent role in governance and global politics, despite the fact that globalization had rendered it ineffective for a brief period with the advancement of international communications and industries (Kohn).

### Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism advocates that nations are formed by cultural heritage patterns and common historical backgrounds. Cultural nationalists defend the unity of all members of the same cultural community as a state. This is the most prominent type of nationalism in Latin America, which emerged due to US intervention around the Caribbean and Mexico after WWI.

### Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the political principle which states that a state has independence upon its internal decision making processes. It is an ideology that has permitted kings to tear down feudalism and assert their authority as the keeper of the state. Today, sovereignty is an important factor to be considered within state-to-state relations, as sovereign states claim the right to be the judges of their own actions within the global political sphere. Sovereign states as of today do not have the absolute power over decision-making that they used to have within international relations, which was established by The Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907, which established ground rules for declaring war on land and sea.

The principle of sovereignty asserts that other states cannot impose any new rules on a sovereign state without its consent. Although this may sound like a pillar that can be manipulated by nationalists into malpractice, which would be absolute sovereignty in this case, the UN charter guarantees equal rights of sovereignty to UN Member States, which is presented as the principle of "sovereign equality" ("Sovereignty") in the Charter.

This ideology is constantly being used by nationalists as a means of propaganda, such as the

incident where the son of the President of Brazil, Eduardo Bolsonaro, where he advocated for “a populist nationalist agenda for prosperity and sovereignty” (AFP and TOI Staff) for Brazil. In diplomatic terms, Brazil already has its sovereignty secured as a state by the UN Charter, which renders Bolsonaro’s aim in his agenda repetitive (“Sovereignty”, AFP and TOI Staff).

## **Self-determination**

In contrast to sovereignty, self-determination is more related to human rights concerns. It is the principle that a specific group of people can assert their right to decide over the state that they belong in. Being one of the pillars upholding the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. It is a different political term as it gives the power to a specific group rather than the state as a whole (Chapter 8a).

## **Populism**

Populism is one of the political ideologies that is most associated with nationalism, as it asserts that the usually charismatic leader is one of the people. It is a movement that puts “the common person” (Munro) in higher regard than the elite as the ruler. Today, the populist movement is mostly centered around authoritarian principles, in which a charismatic leader is promoted over political parties and the existing governmental order as the representative of the people and the ruler of the government at the same time. In other words, elections are aimed to confirm the leadership of the charismatic leader rather than to elect the representatives of the political party (Munro).

## **Economic Nationalism**

Economic nationalism is the political prospect that favors state intervention over other methods of economic stabilization. It includes policies such as domestic control of the economy, labor, and capital formation, even if this requires the imposition of tariffs and other restrictions on the movement of labor, goods and capital. However, it is essentially a modern form of economic protectionism, which favors national economic growth and national selfishness in terms of resources and production. Most economic nationalists are thus against globalization and unrestricted free trade (Pryke). In the last decade, most Latin American nations have begun to follow economically nationalistic policies.

## **General Overview**

### **Historical Background**

An outline of the recent history of Latin America and the power dynamics within the region and the world is essential to understand what caused the nationalist backlash in the region in the 20th century. Most of the events that occurred in the 20th century have led these states to seek

self-determination and independence (although highly economic at the time).

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Latin American countries were still European colonies, thus having no exposure to democracy. Being dominated from every aspect by their colonizers, these states started to get their independence much later than the rest of the world. After gaining their independence in the beginning of the 20th century (Tuser 1), however, political stabilization and economic growth presented themselves in the region, making Latin American nations stronger in the global political arena. This was also accelerated by the steady population increase in these states and their better incorporation in the global economy (Lockhart et al).

## **Mexican Revolution**

Although occurring much later than all of the independence movements in Latin America, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 can be considered as the key event that set out the flame of nationalism in the continent of Latin America. The revolution described as the bloodiest conflict of the 20th century was caused by entrenched social and economic problems in Mexico, which was mostly comprised of the exclusion of the expanding middle class from power and privilege.

The revolution was started by Francisco Madero in 1910, who was a member of the large land-owning middle class of Mexico. He challenged the current president, Porfirio Diaz, for reelection (Lockhart et al). Diaz, a high-ranking military officer, was elected as the president during the early 20th century, and his rule was quite dictatorial. He favored the military elite and had economic ties to foreign enterprises, especially those of the US, during his term. Due to his biased policies and dictatorial rule, he lost the support of the rest of the military and the peasant workers. In addition, his American-enterprise-boosting policies sparked anti-Americanism among the commoners (Tuser 2).

Madero promised the Mexican nation genuine democracy and proper representation of the masses, which led to him being favored both by the land-owning middle class, laborers, and the peasants of rural Mexico. With this large-scale support from the undervalued, underrepresented, and oppressed commoners, Madero gained the strength to start a brutal armed rebellion against Diaz. Although the conflict started out as a political controversy, it evolved into a broader need for social change within Mexico. It resulted in the creation of a new political system in Mexico, one that was built solely around an all-powerful party named the Institutional Revolution Party (IRP). By boosting labor and peasant organizations, Madero's IRP managed to stay in power (Lockhart et al).

The importance of the Mexican Revolution is that it proved to be a model of political stability across Latin America. After the revolution and the land reform initiated by Madero in 1917 which gave the middle class and the peasants proper ownership of their land, democratic rule and political participation broadened in some regions of Latin America (Lockhart et al). In addition, the revolution succeeded in unifying national sentiment across racial and social borders by its call for just elections and constitutional rule. It was the primary creating of a national political ideology that

succeeded in uniting the majority of the population. This was the key factor that led to the rise of nationalism in the region once it began experiencing social and economic decline in the 21st century.

## **The Impact of WWI**

The spark of World War I shifted the overall dynamics for Latin America and between it and the world completely. Most Latin American states remained neutral; however, the effect of the conflict presented itself in economic terms. The global conflict had caused the complete shutdown of European markets and factories, making these states dedicate all of their overseas productions to the war. This caused the manufacture of imported goods to decline, which led to the decline of Latin American industries which were the primary source of import for European markets at the time (Lockhart et al). The repercussions of European scarcity impacted Latin American nations vastly, as their economies experienced steep declines with the lack of significant income and had to rely on American loans for recovery after the war ended (Tuser 3).

Once the war was over, the European economy began its paced recovery process, which led to fluctuations in the global market, causing instability in the Latin American economy. This only displayed the region's "increased dependence on the world economy" (Lockhart et al). As production exceeded both regional and international demand for Latin American goods, economic conditions of the global market proved unfavorable for Latin American states.

Despite these, the region experienced a period of growth and optimism in the 20s. With pursuing outward growth strategies, most Latin American nations focused on increasing their exports and becoming more prominent players in the global economy. With its primary production industry still in play, the region attracted significant foreign investment, especially from the US whose net investment reached \$5.4 billion in 1929 during this period. In addition to increased capital flow, most productive industries in the region also saw growth at this time, such as the Venezuelan petroleum industry. Controlled by the USA, UK, and the Netherlands, the industry rose to become the lead exporter (not producer), in the 20s. These were the primary factors that helped Latin American Member States in the process of paying off their loans from Wall Street banks back from WWI (Lockhart et al).

The prosperity of the economy in this period brought about economic and diplomatic strength to Latin American countries to some extent. However, this prosperousness was completely dependent on foreign sources. The fact that foreign capital was more important than the national economy in terms of economic growth and sustainability led to a nationalist backlash in the continent, which was perhaps the first one to collectively occur within the region. It is also significant because it most probably became one of the pillars of Latin American nationalism, which is purely economic.

Thus, economic nationalism became predominant in the region. In addition to the dependency on foreign capital, the world economic depression of 1929 played an important role in the spread of

economic nationalism among Latin American nations. As foreign capital inflow rapidly decreased, Latin American countries started to raise their tariffs to protect the price of their products. Although making important gains from domestic production and export in the depression era, most Latin American products saw all-time-lows in their prices. Another effect of economic nationalism at the time was on the job sector, as most Latin American nations started to prioritize employing their own citizens and limiting the number of immigrants that could come in the country.

### **Challenging the Political Order**

With the economic changes occurring in the region at the time, Latin Americans started demanding social reform as well. Having an example such as the Mexican Revolution close by, most Latin American nations started demanding better constitutions and representation. Many nations at the time were ruled by civilian oligarchies, some of which were Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia. Most of these governments used “electoral manipulation and restricted suffrage” (Lockhart et al) to keep the power at the hands of a select group that sided with the commercial elite. Failing to represent the majority of the population, these regimes were doomed to fall. With democratic revolutions in Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, people proved that they prioritized their collective national benefit in a political sense by overthrowing the elite and replacing the government with one that better represented themselves. This led to the expansion of the role of the state in many Latin American Member States since it had much more civilian support than it did in the early 20th century.

However, the state did not become more democratic in most Latin American nations. The world depression in 1929 had impeded democratic progress in most of these countries, as emergency measures were needed to restabilize the economy and ensure state welfare. In addition, to promote stability within the state, Latin American leaders believed that “social ills” (Lockhart et al) should be eliminated to prevent any revolutions from lower classes. Large-scale state interventions in Latin American economies also took place at this time. With the influence of American and European politics, socialism and authoritarianism was introduced to the region (Lockhart et al).

### **The Impact of WWII**

As WWII approached, Latin American nations were in good relations with the US due to Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy “to help hemispheric neighbors prepare for the emergency” (Lockhart et al). This not only tightened the relations between Latin America and the US but also promoted American hegemony. Mexico loyally cooperated countless times with the US during WWII. In addition, after the war, all Latin American nations broke their relations with the Axis powers as a whole.

In the duration of the world war, the repercussions of the conflict were nearly the same as that of WWI. Economic declines occurred and Latin American governments had to intervene in the economy to safeguard prices and ensure that the national economy did not collapse. However,

after the war ended, Latin American expectations of economic development were not to be fulfilled. Latin American production and trade declined greatly, which led to the rise of nationalist leaders, especially military dictators and Marxist revolutionaries. This led to more nationalistic economic policies to be implemented within Latin American states to promote internal development in contrary to the outward economic strategies followed ever since these countries gained their independence. Economic autonomy was prioritized and most Latin American leaders called for economic integration within the region as a whole. Thus, while most industries were nationalized by the government, such as the oil industries in Brazil and Mexico, Latin American enterprises started gaining some degree of economic power. The Latin American Free Trade Association was established in 1960 to protect Latin American interests in the global economy and uphold regional economic integration. It is evident that although economic strength was limited, economic patriotism still existed (Lockhart et al).

### **The Cuban Revolution**

Amidst the 20th century, Cuba was one of the most developed Latin American states. However, WWII had brought economic stagnation and political corruption here, too. The democracy that was set up by Batista was turned into a dictatorship by the same person. In 1959, the highly renowned communist revolutionary Fidel Castro overthrew Batista and started “to turn the island into the hemisphere’s first communist state, in close alliance with the Soviet Union” (Lockhart et al). Although achieving impactful social reforms, Castro’s socialist Cuba faced serious economic deterioration, which was mostly compensated for by the Soviet Union. Soon, Communist Cuba became a model for the rest of the Latin American nations due to the political stability and prosperity its pillars promised. While rural conflicts arose in the region and the US took countless preventative measures towards insurgency, Cuba supported guerilla groups within itself both by training and by material to uphold the national spirit. However, when the Soviet Union crumbled, Cuba found itself in drastic economic difficulty, which proved how dysfunctional Castro’s economic management was (Lockhart et al).

### **The Cold War Era**

There is not much to say about Latin America’s role in the Cold War. Most Latin American countries sided with the US to keep the Good Neighbor Policy going and to not piss off this authoritative neighbor. However, the aftermath of the Cold War left important effects on Latin America in political, social, and economic terms. Most Latin American nations had put in place trade protection measures to prevent the economic impact of the Cold War from affecting them, but “trade barriers [fell] like dominoes, and state enterprises [were] everywhere up for sale” (Golden). Political prosperity also continued to decline, as democracy and free economy failed to triumph over despotism and the command economy. It seemed that democratic systems had nearly completely shut down because of the inherently corrupt governmental systems, the unjust judicial system, and the self-concerned presidents. In economic terms, most Latin American governments had succeeded to some extent to keep inflation low and restore economic growth

during the Cold War; however, economic adjustments were only beneficial to those who had well-paying jobs. The loophole that the Cold War created in Latin America was that the poor remained poor, which eventually led to decreased national support for the government. This was caused by the fact that Latin American government institutions withered while social, economic and environmental challenges grew. Having this beside the decrease of US aid to Latin America by 27% due to the isolationist propaganda of the 1992 presidential campaign, Latin American states fell in ambiguity over how to ameliorate the poverty and injustice in the nation.

The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 was probably the most significant event that occurred in the region during the Cold War. The world had never been closer to nuclear war before, which made the region and the country be taken so much more seriously than they had ever been. When this proved wrong once the tension had decreased, nationalist rage sparked in Latin America, especially in Cuba. As the Soviet Union started to secretly finance Latin communist parties and strengthening its diplomatic and economic relations with them, the economic model of state ownership, intervention, and trade protectionism continued to deteriorate. The countries who were the predominant producers of the world at some point in history had now become dependent on import for primary goods.

## **The 21st Century and the Status of the Nationalist Movement Today**

The end of the 20th century was marked by economic crisis, domestic mismanagement, and endless debt for Latin America. However, the 21st century seemed more optimistic for most of these states. Having learned their lesson from the 21st century, most Latin American states turned to neoliberalism for a cure to their economic downgrade, meanwhile promoting democracy as the means of political rule. Even communist Cuba sought for neoliberal measures to ameliorate its economy. Trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Mercado Comùn del Sur ("Common Market of the South, Mercosur in short) proved beneficial for economic progress as state-owned businesses continued to decline. However, social equality and the need for social reform persisted (Lockhart et al).

In the last decade, the world has seen an uprising of the nationalist wave in Latin America once again. As criminal organizations continue to rule the poorer regions of many Latin American countries and with economic prosperity and development at stake, nationalist leaders have found the opportunity to rise up and sway the public vote by promising economic and political stability in their agenda.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **Venezuela**

Venezuela has been experiencing political distress since 2016 when the Supreme Court suspended the election of four opposition legislators, which led to their takeover of the National

Assembly due to contempt. This sparked wide-scale protests throughout Venezuela, which lasted until the court reversed its decision on April 1, 2016. In the meantime, hyperinflation and food and medicine shortage also prevailed in the country. The country has also been facing problems such as large decreases in oil output, foreign debt refinancing, and the rise of crime and poverty (“Venezuela’s crisis explained”). Ever since Nicolás Maduro was elected as the President of Venezuela in May 2018, social and economic conditions in Venezuela had been deteriorating. More than three million Venezuelans have fled the country so far due to these conditions.

Maduro’s socialist party had taken power in 1999 with Hugo Chavez as president. At the time, Venezuela was facing vast inequality, which made the equality promises made by these socialist leaders attractive. However, most of their policies did not produce the wanted results. For example, legislation for price control was aimed to reducing the price of daily commodities for the poor, but it caused many Venezuelan businesses to decrease production and harmed the economy eventually. Foreign currency controls have also backfired, leading to hyperinflation of the country’s currency, the bolivar.

The political climate has been conflicted since Maduro’s reelection in May 2018. On January 23, 2019, the leader of legislature Juan Guaido declared himself interim president and said that he would take on the executive branch’s power, which directly challenged the democratically elected Maduro. Guaido does not see the highly controversial 2018 elections as democratic since many opposition candidates had been barred from running while others were imprisoned or fled the country in the fear of it, making the elections not fair. This fraudulence has caused national uprisings through Venezuela in the past couple of months, advocating for free and democratic elections and protesting Maduro’s rule. In addition, the opposition-controlled National Assembly does not recognize the reelection of Maduro due to the unfairness of the elections. In the assembly’s opinion, the position for president is currently vacant, which justifies Guaido’s self-declaration of presidency. According to the Venezuelan constitution, in such cases of vacancy, the head of the assembly takes over as interim president, which is Guaido in this case.

Guaido has called for protests against Maduro and his government “until Venezuela is liberated” (“Venezuela crisis”), which hits quite a lot of nationalist points. Having the support of the US, Guaido has already adopted US-leaning campaign styles and strategies. He was personally impacted by the socialist government of Chavez and Maduro and was frustrated at the lack of governmental effort to respond to the economic and social downgrade of the nation. Currently, he is organizing humanitarian aid missions to Venezuela from Colombia, Brazil, and the Caribbean. In short, he is truly a populist.

“The United States, much of the European Union, and most countries in South America have recognized Guaido as the legitimate interim president, and called for new elections in Venezuela. But Guaido has so far failed to secure the support of the armed forces, at least in public. Meanwhile Maduro, who enjoys the backing of the Supreme Court, has rejected demands for new presidential elections, offering "dialogue" instead. So far, that suggestion has been brushed off by Guaido's

camp.” (Kiley)

## **Brazil**

Until the election in 2018, the Brazilian community faced serious declines in their social and economic status. In October 2018, Brazil elected nationalist former army captain Jair Bolsonaro as its president for a seven-year term. Bolsonaro, who fervently supports the period of dictatorial rule in Brazil and has called it “20 years of progress” (Anderson), is quite enthusiastic about torture and violence and has threatened to murder and imprison those who oppose him. He is also known to be very discriminative towards the poor, minorities, the LGBT community, and women. He believes that Brazil needs to cleanse itself from the decades of socialism the Workers’ Party has brought to the nation (Anderson). Some of his policies to be implemented include making Brazil more capitalist by privatization, raising the retirement age, and reducing pension benefits besides ending policies creating protected land reserves for indigenous populations and easing Brazil’s gun laws.

Bolsonaro’s policies pose serious threats to Latin American democracy and stability, as his nationalist ideology has taken over one fourth biggest democracy in the world and the one with the largest population in Latin America. Also being the continent’s biggest economy and home to the world’s largest rainforest, Bolsonaro’s so-called transformation policies can transform the country even into military rule let alone fascism (Sims).

## **Mexico**

In the recent years, Mexico has also seen a nationalist backlash, with a focus on populism. Mexico had a quite harsh term from 2012 to 2018. The president during that term, Enrique Peña Nieto, had an approval rating below 12% in 2018 before leaving office. This was caused by a 20% hike in gas prices due to the government-set gasoline prices and the fall of the peso by 20% in 2016 (Agren), which has proven Peña Nieto’s inability to broaden development, lift the Mexican poor out of poverty, power down on corruption, and ensure the rule of law in insecure regions.

All of these events led to the Mexican nation replacing Peña Nieto with populist Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly known as AMLO) in 2018. Coming to power in his third try by a landslide of 53% of the votes, AMLO has promised in his election campaign a more state-centered and “self-contained Mexico” (Martinez), one that values the people over the elite. During his inauguration, he said that he was taking power to represent Mexico’s powerless millions left behind by rapid modernization. However, he is determined to regather the power of the Mexican presidency and to champion “the disaffected left” (Martinez). His policies, although highly nationalistic, are quite liberal: he is aiming to legalize euthanasia and same sex marriage, cracking down on corruption, and selling the property of the presidency. His biggest ideal is to close the gap between the “First World modernity” and the “Third World inequality” (Martinez) within Mexico. In this retrospect, AMLO has cancelled the plans for a new \$13 billion international airport in Mexico City, to be able to ground the Mexican elite until concrete change occurs within the country,

although it was quite a necessary project. Overall, AMLO advocates for a more autonomous Mexico that solely depends on itself for development and is self-sustained. He wants the nation to move forward as a whole, not in parts. His nationalist policies are yet to show their effects on Mexico, while analysts expect two outcomes: either Mexico will enter rapid decline, or become more powerful than ever (Martinez).

### **Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)**

UNASUR is one of the fundamental non-governmental bodies in South America, established in 2008 and comprised of 12 countries. It was founded during the rise of the left in Latin America, which almost led to a coup in Bolivia in 2008, but successfully stabilized the region by supporting Evo Morales who soon became president. The common ideology of these 12 nations was to create a new bloc in the Western Hemisphere to “promote South American integration, though with no long-term goals and little structure other than the ideological views of its members” (Sanchez). The group also aimed to distance itself from everlasting US influence. However, UNASUR is not regarded as an effective of an organization as it was when it was first established. Having no official Secretary-General since 2017, the bloc is voluntarily being led by Bolivian president Evo Morales at the moment. In addition, the bloc remains silent on the issue of Venezuela, which can easily be interpreted as support for Maduro. In addition, the bloc has lost 6 of its members in August 2018: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Paraguay leaving Venezuela and its siders Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Guyana, and Suriname alone. Evidently, the future of the bloc is not bright (Sanchez).

### **Prosur**

As UNASUR proved its inefficiency, Colombian and Chilean presidents Ivàn Duque and Sebastian Piñera have decided to launch a new bloc in Latin America under the name of Prosur. It is said to serve as a “pragmatic replacement” of UNASUR, which has lost 6 of its members in 2018. The group will be launched by these two Member States in March 2019 and will be open to membership by any Latin American country except Venezuela. Many of the aims of this soon-to-prevail bloc are parallel to those of UNASUR: promoting economic integration and political coordination in the region while ensuring regional stability to some extent. However, Prosur does not see the alienation of the US as a primary prospect. However, having such a similar organization to one that is already failing is not an effective means to stabilizing and/or unifying Latin America (Binetti).

### **Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

ECLAC is the only official UN body concerned with Latin America and the Caribbean. It was established in 1948 to contribute to the economic development and promote the economic stability of Latin America and the Caribbean. It also reinforces economic ties among global markets and Latin America (About ECLAC). ECLAC is an important party to the conflict as it is the only UN

agency that can act upon the resource-nationalist policies that most Latin American states have started to follow in the last couple of decades. By upholding economic cooperation, ECLAC can promote a better integrated regional market and strengthen the economic scheme of Latin America to be resistant to political fluctuations.

### **Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA)**

LAFTA is a free trade organization composed of eleven Latin American nations. Established in 1960, is dedicated to increase economic integration within the continent. The general aim was to reduce the trade barriers between member nations, which reached a conclusion of completely free trade in 1973. LAFTA aided its members compile and sign the Caracas Protocol in 1969, which extended the deadline for free trade to 1980 ("Latin American"). LAFTA can be a beneficial organization in mediating regional economic relations as more Latin American states start following economically nationalistic policies by upholding the principles of free trade.

### **United States of America**

The US has had high influence over the politics and economics of the region for decades now. Until J.F. Kennedy's Good Neighbor Policy of 1961, US and Latin American relations were quite tense. Kennedy wanted to strengthen the relations between the US and Latin American Member States, which ended US military intervention in the region and resulted in the establishment of two-sided economic exchange between these neighbors. However, it can also be inferred that the policy was in effect to dissuade Latin American countries from becoming socialist (Lockhart et al.).

Rather than talking about the US's individual relations with countries on the matter, it is more beneficial to analyze the situation in a regional sense. The US has been pursuing a policy that benefits its own interests in the region for decades now, which has led to shifts in Latin American politics. Since they are close trade partners, none of the Latin American Member States want to upset the US. This has permitted the rise of nationalism to some extent in Latin America, as the US government boosted nationalist leaders for the economic benefits they promised and brought. Leading the region itself into scramble has caused economic problems in most countries, especially in Argentina and Venezuela, from which US markets and traders have benefited vastly from.

Today, the US still continues to impact Latin American politics due to its economic ties to the countries. President Trump was the first to recognize Guaido's presidency in the globe, which only made the issue even more complicated in terms of diplomacy. Maduro can be considered as the only dictator that Trump has not supported. He is presumed to have recognized Guaido to protest socialist Maduro's rule of Venezuela and the impact of Venezuela's tolerance of drug trafficking and guerilla presence in its land, which have a direct impact on the US. With the election of Donald Trump as president, the US does not seem to be upholding the principles of democracy anymore anyway ("Donald Trump").

## Timeline of Events

<b>1910</b>	The Mexican Revolution begins.
<b>1948</b>	ECLAC is established.
<b>March 4, 1933</b>	Roosevelt announces the Good Neighbor Policy.
<b>February 18, 1960</b>	LAFTA is signed.
<b>May 23, 2008</b>	12 Latin American countries founded UNASUR.
<b>April 2013</b>	Civil unrest prevails in Brazil due to lack proper public services and the widespread corruption.
<b>January 2016</b>	The Venezuelan Supreme Court suspends the National Assembly meetings due to contempt.
<b>April 1, 2016</b>	The Venezuelan Supreme Court reverses its decision to suspend the National Assembly.
<b>March 30, 2017</b>	In Venezuela, the court takes over the national assembly and the constitutional crisis begins.
<b>May 20, 2018</b>	Maduro is elected President of Venezuela.
<b>July 1, 2018</b>	AMLO is elected by 53% of the votes as the President of Mexico for a 7-year term.
<b>August 2018</b>	6 countries suspend their UNASUR memberships.
<b>October 28, 2018</b>	Nationalist former military leader Jair Bolsonaro is elected as President in Brazil for a 7-year term.
<b>January 13, 2019</b>	The UN General Assembly passes a resolution on the disarmament and development of Latin America.
<b>January 23, 2019</b>	Juan Guaido declares himself President of Venezuela.
<b>January 24, 2019</b>	Trump recognizes Guaido as the President of Venezuela.
<b>March 2019</b>	Prosur will be launched by Colombia and Chile.

## Relevant UN Documents

General Assembly Resolution on Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Jan 13, 2019, A/63/390),

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/63/74](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/63/74)

ECLAC input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (2014, E/2014/CRP.2),

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4334CRP2%20ECLAC.pdf>

### World Economic Situation and Prospects (2018)

This is the global report of the United Nations on the economic status of its Member States. Experts can find the section relevant to Latin America on page 149. While describing the economic status of the region in 2018, the report outlines the impact of nationalism and the lack of political stability on Member States.

[https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESP2018\\_Full\\_Web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESP2018_Full_Web.pdf)

### UNDP - Our Democracy in Latin America (2011)

This is a regional report that includes vital information on the democratic system in play in Latin America. It was compiled by the UNDP to help Latin American Member States achieve their goal of a more democratic society and government. The validity of the document today is up to the interpretation of the panelists.

[http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/UNDP-OAS\\_Our\\_Democracy\\_in\\_Latin\\_America.pdf](http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/UNDP-OAS_Our_Democracy_in_Latin_America.pdf)

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Although having passed a few resolutions concerned with the stability of the region, the UN has not been able to take concrete action on the issue of nationalism in this region. By the UN Charter, the organization is not authorized to intervene in the domestic affairs of any of its Member States, which was previously explained as the principle of sovereignty. So it is quite reasonable that the UN is rendered ineffective in this case. The best that the UN can do in this scenario is to promote regional cooperation and bring its mediators in play to preserve regional stability and somehow strive to improve the social welfare in the states. The fallacy in this scenario is to believe that the UN can solve such a highly political and nation-specific issue.

## Possible Solutions

To combat the threat of the nationalist wave to political stability in Latin America, strong regional policies need to be established. It is clear that the region lacks proper cooperation today as most

collaborative agencies have either failed —such as UNASUR— or become highly polarized —such as Prosur. Experts can collaborate and bring together a UN sub-body of Latin American countries with a certain focus on regional stability.

The issue also needs to be addressed from an economic aspect, as most Latin American economies are failing due to nationalist-caused mismanagement and inflation. In this regard, ECLAC and LAFTA can cooperate with these Member States to reduce resource and economic nationalism within the region to somehow ensure economic integration within the region. Financial stability might somehow lead to better public conditions.

In the meanwhile, good governance should be established no matter where the government leans on the political spectrum. Although nationalist leaders promise more governmental stability, their idealistic and self-centered policies are prone to deterioration both in the short-run and the long-run. It is important to understand why governance fails in these countries and provide these countries with adequate guidance on good governance.

It is also important to solve disputes between individual states to ensure that nationalist policies do not lead to larger regional problems. For this, the panelists can consider preparing a mediation strategy for state-to-state disputes and have an impartial UN-body supervise the mediations.

Whatever solutions the experts come up with, they should be aware that it should be inclusive of all of the region and aim to decrease polarization as much as possible. There are no specific measures that can be taken for such a specified issue; however, regional strategies for mediation and preservation can prove beneficial for overall stability and security.

## **Notes from the Chair**

Since the issue is highly region and country-specific, experts should consider the democratic systems of and the recent developments in the concerned Latin American Member States, as well as those who are influential in the region. Considering that the nationalist tendency in the region has grown vastly in the last decade, experts should remember to mediate the issue diplomatically with utmost respect to both international political stability and state sovereignty.

Experts should also be aware that political stability is not directly linked to economic development, which is the common belief among UN Member States. Although economic stability brings social welfare to some extent, it does not solve the political problems a Member State has. The United States is the primary example. Although economic problems need to be addressed in Latin America to tackle the negative impact of nationalism, economic development would not directly tackle the concerned agenda item.

Since the issue is not defined with clear borderlines, experts have to come up with measures that are respective to all aspects of the issue. On the other hand, it is evident that the main threat that nationalism poses to this region is to its integrity and stability. While considering while nationalism persists in the continent in a century of globalization, experts should be aware that Latin America is

a region that is highly prone to change and instability. Thus, experts have to take holistic measures that provide means of regional stability to the region without interfering in state sovereignty. However, if not tackled, the issue of nationalism poses serious threats to the future prosperity of Latin America as a continent, market, and as individual countries.

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