

large and the justifications used to legitimise political action. In the Latin American context, the volume provides a rich contribution by documenting the marked transformation in legal culture that has taken place over the past generation and the vital changes this has caused in the way law and law-like discourse shape societal priorities.

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Mónica Serrano and Vesselin Popovski (eds.), *Human Rights Regimes in the Americas* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2010), pp. xii + 268, \$35.00, pb.

This interesting book is the product of a joint research project between the Colegio de México, the United Nations University and the Oxford University Centre for International Studies. It examines the chiaroscuro of human rights regimes in the Americas from three basic areas of interest: the operation of regional mechanisms for the protection of rights in general and their influence in the countries of the Americas; progress and setbacks in democratic regimes; and the political agenda of the United States in relation to democracy and rights in the region.

The work consists of 11 chapters. While each chapter is independent of the others, one can identify some recurring themes: ratification of international treaties by states, and their domestic implementation; characteristics of the state and its legal institutions; convergence (or divergence) between democracy and human rights; the position of political parties and civil society; and, last but not least, the foreign policy of the United States with regard to the topic. As part of the diversity that characterises the work, it is worth mentioning the thematic coherence in the selection of the contributions that allows the reader to have an overview of the highlights and shadows of the region's regimes.

The book has an introductory chapter written by Mónica Serrano and a concluding one authored by Nicholas Turner and Vesselin Popovski. Its main body consists of nine chapters, with contributions that can be divided along two lines: those that refer to the operation and institutions for the protection of rights in the region and the particularities of states and the rights agenda (chapters 2, 5 and 10), and those that are organised around national case studies (chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

In chapter 1, Mónica Serrano develops several themes. She begins with an overview of the history of human rights in the Americas and the evolution of human rights instruments, highlighting human rights' transition from a national concern to an international one in its contemporary version. The author also looks at some of the tensions which are currently under discussion and reflection: the emancipatory character or power character of rights; the sovereignty and internationalisation of rights; and human rights and national security. Serrano argues that the development of a culture of human rights and their discursive power is a key factor in the effectiveness of human rights regimes. This account recognises the relevance of internal systems of conformity and socialisation for the implementation of human rights standards. Finally, deserving of attention is the process of democratisation in the region and its impact on rights. In this regard Serrano stresses the weight of authoritarian enclaves such as military and security forces and the dissociation between the functioning of electoral institutions and respect for rights.

In the second chapter, one of the most suggestive contributions, Andrew Hurrell and Par Engstrom wonder why human rights regimes in the Americas matter. Based on the premise that the proliferation of standards and international human rights mechanisms has affirmed the idea that the relationship between rulers and ruled is a matter of interest to the international community, the chapter takes three issues into account. The first is the changing legal landscape from the greater intrusiveness of the legal norms of the Inter-American system to the growth of pluralism in the creation of standards and tighter enforcement mechanisms. The second is the growing importance of the influence of the human rights movement's political actors, which manifests in new forms of juridification and prosecution of human rights claims. Thirdly, the chapter identifies new challenges for the regional system, including new patterns of rights violations associated with the weakness rather than the strength of the state, the relationship between democratisation and human rights abuses, and United States foreign policy.

In the third chapter, Tom Farer reviews US foreign policy in terms of democracy and human rights, with particular emphasis on disputes among elite groups concerning the country's role in the world. The chapter is illustrative of the influence of changing ideas and actors on the agenda of US foreign policy, but it does not analyse the domestic dimension of the country's human rights regime. The author starts with the Carter administration and identifies variations between an internationalist position and an inclination to use force. It is interesting to note that the review in this chapter presents clearly the strategic factors that led US policy from support for military dictatorships and, with it, the tacit tolerance of rights violations, to a pro-democratisation policy.

In the fourth chapter, Bernard Duhaine analyses the case of Canada within the Inter-American system of human rights. He suggests that with its extensive experience of supporting the human rights movement, Canada's position has become blurred in the system, and he identifies strategic opportunities that could be harnessed to improve its situation. As in the previous chapter, virtually no reference is made to the domestic dimension of the human rights system.

Ramesh Takur and Jorge Heine, in the fifth chapter, deal with changes in the state's role toward human rights in Latin America, with special attention given to policies of truth and justice regarding human rights violations by dictatorships. They identify three possible variations of the relationship between the state and human rights: the state as a perpetrator of rights violations, as an actor and institution unwilling to prevent violations, or as a body unable to prevent violations of rights. They highlight the moralistic component of a policy that involves the incorporation of a rights discourse when demands for rights intersect with the process of democratisation in the region. They also analyse the characteristics of dictatorships, transitional governments and post-transitional governments associated with human rights violations in the past.

In chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, Fiona Macaulay, Felipe González, Ana Covarrubias and Alejandro Anaya respectively analyse the processes of political and legal changes with regard to rights in Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Mexico. The chapters analyse these changes in the light of transitions to democracy or, in the case of Cuba, as a result of changing domestic and international policy. Beyond their different approaches, each illustrates the recent history of human rights discourses and institutions with special emphasis on the interaction between international and domestic processes, particularly the influence of transnational human rights networks and the Inter-American system of rights, and their relation to national actors.

In chapter 10, Jose Miguel Vivanco and Daniel Wilkinson analyse human rights in the Americas from the perspective of the human rights movement. In a context characterised as a reversal, mainly after 9/11, they review the region's various human rights problems, such as public safety, performance of law and order institutions, and poverty. They conclude that all these challenges must have an impact on the human rights movement's agenda.

Chapter 11, by Nicholas Turner and Vesselin Popovski, serves as a conclusion. The authors identify some of the new features of human rights in a region with a recent past marked by massive human rights violations. Inter alia, they call attention to the weak state as one of the factors that explain new types of violations, deficiencies in the justice system that lead to an overload of the Inter-American system, and the political difficulty for democratic governments of conducting reforms in a context where claims for law and order, primarily public security, are central to the political agenda. At the movement level, they highlight that after achieving success in terms of civil rights it seems important that the human rights movement becomes involved in establishing effective economic, social and cultural rights in the region. In short, what seems clear is that in Latin America the problem is not the legal consensus, but a consensus over state action.

This work has undeniable strengths but some weaknesses too, probably derived from the polyphony of academic, political and activist voices involved. Among these weaknesses one might highlight two: the absence of explicit author approaches and debates that contribute to the work, and the lack of explanation for the choice of case studies, which leaves the reader unclear as to why some countries and not others deserve our attention.

Without doubt this book is an interesting reference material for researchers, officials and activists who want an overview of the institutions and actors involved in national and international human rights regimes in the Americas.

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Eduardo Silva, *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. xviii + 318, \$85.00, \$26.99 pb; £50.00, £16.99 pb.

Eduardo Silva's *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America* seeks to explain how and why opposition to market-oriented policies gradually emerged in the region. It argues that the initial opposition to these reforms, which came mostly from traditional labour unions, was relatively weak and ineffectual. Beginning in the 1990s, however, a variety of social movements, including neighbourhood groups and organisations of indigenous people, pensioners and the unemployed, joined forces with new labour movements and political parties to present a much stronger and more effective resistance to neoliberalism. These movements were not successful everywhere, but in some countries they managed to stem and even reverse the tide of neoliberal reform.

Silva argues that the rise of powerful opposition movements was a response to the social, economic and political exclusion that accompanied efforts to create what Karl Polanyi referred to as a market society. According to Silva (p. 3), neoliberal policies