

THE FUTURE OF LATIN AMERICA: CAN THE EU HELP?¹

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ABSTRACT

THIS book: (i) assumes that a) corruption, patronage and clienteles imbedded for centuries in Latin America's culture are at the root of Latin America's economic, social and political problems, together with b) systematic failure to grasp reality. (ii) On those assumptions² it discusses the creation of a supranational Inter-American State comprising those Latin

¹ Of course, I cannot hope to try to encompass *all* Latin American countries in a one size-fits-all category. However, quite a few do fit, and most certainly my own, Argentina, does. I have had the input of information, criticism and suggestions of many friends and colleagues of different nationalities and countries of residence: some living in my country, some not; some nationals of my country, some Europeans, some Americans, some pertaining to international or supranational organizations. I have not made any attempt at classification, but I feel that nationals living in Latin American countries in more obvious state of disaster take rather kindly the idea of this book, in the exasperated sense that whatever, "something has to be done". It is the Europeans and Americans, plus Latin Americans living abroad, who express the most skepticism to this work. A possible explanation, at least in Argentina, is that Argentine culture has always included "the metaphor of endemic incurability": SHUMWAY, NICOLAS, *The Invention of Argentina*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p. 166. Those who manage to leave the country for developed societies seem to improve in their sense of hope for the land they have left. Those who stay behind surely do not. SHUMWAY says that we have a literary genre: "the explanation of failure" to the point of "obsession" (*op. cit.*, p. 112). As we shall see in this work, there is much contradiction and fiction within that. Another comment we received of this draft was that it seemed unwillingly to evoke the genre of "symbolic realism" in Latin American novels. See for instance LEVINE, SUZANNE JILL, *The Subversive Scribe. Translating Latin American Fiction*, Saint Paul, Minnesota, Graywolf Press, 1991.

² The colleagues who have kindly read the various drafts of this work have not challenged these two assumptions, only the proposals I later draw to try and correct them.

American countries willing or in need to participate, with the added minority vote and participation of representatives of both the European Union and the United States. The idea takes elements from the EU project and the decision-making participation of the Inter-American Development Bank and international collegial tribunals, which the Author suggests studying for this purpose, although he does not delve into it. *(iii)* Its aim is to obtain mutual and external aid in good public governance in an open and more controllable way by the public opinion of the EU, the US and Latin American countries that would wish or need to participate. It is suggested that the two superpowers join forces in helping Latin America to achieve good governance, being aware of the very sensible differences that exist, and will continue to exist, between the two. Those differences between the EU and US, when confronted with the voting criteria of individual Latin American countries in a supranational Latin American entity, would provide the discussions and the decisions with a new strength and richness that the Author believes would better assist regional governance. *(iv)* This would help, in his view, not only participating Latin American countries, but also the more developed societies that coexist in the modern world: the EU and the US. *(v)* It would further be a step to a different world order in the distant future, just like the proposal for an international bankruptcy system for States. *(vi)* The “suggestions” from the developed world to developing countries should not come directly from the inside of such bigger machineries of government. The superpowers should appoint public officials with a full-time dedication to a specific job over a period of time, with public accountability. *Those officials* would have to deal with the participants from bigger countries in other international organizations, try to convey a unified approach, and be responsible for its consistency and results. *(vii)* If this proposal were not viable at the moment, then the Author would suggest the creation, at the very least, of supranational Inter-American Tribunals, with the same minority EU and US participation.