

TOWARD A POLITICAL COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION: BEYOND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

A political community in North America has been a possible future vision for at least 150 years. If one takes into account the millenarian visions of the puritan settler colonists it is possible to extend the temporal range to some 350 years. If judged from this point of view it does not matter much whether one finds a possible North American macro-regional political community a positive or a negative future prospect. Depending on our normative judgment and valuations North American political community – which can be realized in various emancipative or non-emancipative ways – can be judged either as a lamentable result of the historical US territorial and other kinds of expansion, or, in more possibilistic terms, as a new transnational and post-national frontier to be conquered and as a pluralistic community to be constructed in order to resolve and undo the historical intra-territorial and open up possibilities for more equal economic and sociopolitical development, social solidarity and democracy.

In this article my aim is to continue the contemplation on what kind of a community could and should the future North American community be¹. According to the rational judgment that is based on the historical and critical research con-

ducted in the context of what I have chosen to call Critical Research of Open Historical Contexts (KAKTUS, its shorthand in Finnish) and Transformative Politics (TRAP), a developmental and socially oriented democratic community constructed in the context of what I democratic regionalism can and should be seen *not* that much as a possibility closing and destructive future prospect – though it would be extremely easy to construct a model for an anti-utopian North American community – *but* instead as a possibility-opening future prospect for the territorial North America despite the fact that the historical relations between Mexico, Canada and the United States and especially those between Mexico and the United States have been quite problematic and filled with multifaceted conflicts.

The development of the future relations between these countries is not made easier by the fact that the individual and collective mental structurations or national mental prisons – historically and socially constructed stereotypical collective imaginations that presuppose the existence of certain kinds of national particularities and national exceptionality myths with regard the inhabitants of these countries and of these counties as such – which tend to be contradictory, loaded and biased and which set the framework for the perceptions we have of the *others* and which are supposed to give

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¹ Minkinen, Petri, “NAFTA and the Possibility of an Alternative Development Strategy in Mexico”, in *Yearbook of the Finnish Society for Development Studies*, VII (1998-1999), 169-193 (for a preliminary version see <<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/LASA98/MinkinenPetri.pdf>>). Some ideas presented in this article have previously been published in Minkinen, Petri, *KAKTUS, Bush ja Pohjois-Amerikan tulevaisuus. Kriittinen avointen historiallisten kontekstien tutkimus ja muutoksellinen politiikka*. Helsinki, Like, 2004.

us more or less correct image of *them*. It is probable that these images – which however do, as stereotypical images about the others tend to – have at least a minimal grain of truth built in them, at least in a historical sense of an image of past occurrences and happenings. Moreover, these mental prisons tend to be very durable and extremely difficult to change; it is much easier to reinforce them as has happened globally in the context of the global war on terror and non-white others².

However, there are many examples that suggest that such mental prisons can be surpassed both at the individual and at the collective level. For example, despite many problems and contradictions of the European integration, the sole existence of the European Union as political and economic community – and, more importantly at least from the point of view of the present world political situation, a pluralistic security community within which the conflicts can be resolved peacefully – between various European countries that have historically been almost constantly fighting each other in varying coalitions, supports the idea that the mental prisons can be broken down and that varying forms of cooperation and communities between them are possible. In this article I claim, that various unfolding and emerging tendencies seem clearly to suggest that the deepening of the integration between these countries, societies and civil societies is not only a possibility but also a necessity. A stronger claim of this article is that the formation of at least a developmental and more social community but possibly also a democratic community is not only a possible future prospect a socio-political necessity.

To begin with, the most obvious facts are territorial, geopolitical and geoeconomical: the inhabitants of these three countries are – depending on our particular values and worldviews – doomed or blessed to live together in the context of geographical North America. Despite the setbacks caused by the post-bubble world economic slump and the S-11-2001 – even if it is historically and logically

incorrect to claim that the so-called process of globalization is natural, inevitable or irreversible – it seems to be the case that our common world is steadily moving toward and possibly beyond the practices and the flows and the forms of politics and regulation that are strictly limited to the national states and to the state-system. It is quite unintelligible and unviable to believe that the United States, Canada and Mexico or North America as a whole could make a difference with this respect.

It is probable that this idea is most difficult to accept and swallow in the United States and especially among the elites or the ruling classes of the United States due to the fact that after the Second Eurocentric Civil War the ruling classes of the US got used to idea that they can transform other societies while it is possible to preserve and strengthen their values, practices and social structures and transform them only at their own will³. Now the situation has changed and all the countries of the geographical North America should be prepared for making things social and political differently. If this claim is accepted, and when we realize that the unfolding tendencies toward the emergence of a North American community are strong, it is possible to engage in serious discussion about the future alternatives and possibilities and in intentional transformative action and politics that would make a democratic and livable North American community possible.

There is, however, a darker and more questionable side in this macro-regional coin: that of territorial expansion and ideas of superiority based on race and ethnicity in relation to the internal others of this geographical unit. For example, during the US – Mexican War of 1846-1848, which can be conceived as one starting point for the emergent political community, when the United States conquered a considerable part of Mexico's territory – even if it is possible to say that these territories actually belong to the pre-colonial native communities – there were discussions in the US “as to how much territory the United States ought to take,

² On the latter see e.g. Minkinen, Petri; 2004. “New Imperialism and Beyond. Why the New Imperialism Will Fail and Unseat the Bush Administration?”. *Historia Actual On-Line*, 4 (primavera 2004) [article on-line] Available from Internet at: <<http://www.hapress.com/haol.php?a=n04a07&cid=es>>.

³ On my claim that what are traditionally called First and Second World Wars and Cold War can and should be renamed as First, Second and Third Eurocentric Civil Wars and that the global war on terror and non-white others and related internal civil wars against others, difference and dissidents can be analysed as the first real World War, see Minkinen, Petri, *KAK-TUS...*, op.cit.

public opinion ranging from all of the Mexico to merely San Francisco Bay”⁴. John O’Sullivan, who coined the term *manifest destiny*, and who believed in the legitimacy and justification of the US expansion, was of the opinion that Mexico would eventually “become integral portion of these United States at some future point”. However, this was not yet possible in the mid-19th century because “the entire Mexican vote would be substantially below our national average both in purity and intelligence”. Sullivan – and many of his pro-NAFTA compatriots in the 1980’s and 1990’s – supported the idea of pacific penetration through commercial means that would allow them to offer moral education to the Mexicans and eventually “the whole of this vast continent is destined one day to subscribe to the Constitution of the United States”. However, because “the degraded Mexican-Spanish” could not possibly be in a position to absorb the “virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race”, it was impossible to talk about a “political union”⁵. In other words, paraphrasing Sullivan, it is right to exploit Mexicans commercially as “an integral portion of these United states” but it is not possible to give them voice and say in the common affairs of the North American continent.

Despite these highly biased if not openly racist attitudes – still present though often vested in other dressing⁶ – Mexico and the United States, the United States and Canada and to a lesser degree Mexico and Canada have for some time been in a historical process of the integration of their respective national economies, histories, cultures and populations. The claim presented here is that there are several cumulative tendencies – latent and actual – in process that suggest that the deepening of integration between these countries will continue and eventually a political community, possibly a democratic community, becomes a practical though not a historical necessity in North America. In other words, these three countries are growing together and it is unlikely that any government would possess tools that would allow it to stop or reverse this process without serious social, political,

economic and human costs though they do can steer and construct it and make it possible according their political agendas.

Given the disparities of economic development between these countries and regions within them it is probable that the adjustment costs will be considerable, as they have already been especially in Mexico. Therefore, given a situation in which the political and economic decision-makers of these countries find it more useful and beneficial to engage in regional development, instead of subjecting poorer peoples and economically developing areas to draconian structural adjustment and economic “development” and “reforms” based on neo-classical marginalist economics – which necessarily produces social and intra-regional polarization and marginalization as well as socio-racist and racist segregation and negative socio-political outcomes of varying severity – the adjustment would be less painful if the emerging North American community would adopt alternative methods and policies for the purposes of the regional integration. One though insufficient possibility would be to adopt redistributive funding and compensation mechanisms similar to those of the European Union, preferably in more developmental manner. In other words, it is necessary to rethink these policies along with the lines of radical reformist thinking and practice, and consequently, as purified as possible of their present neoliberal objectives of semi-forced modernization, privatization, intentional social polarization and concentration of economic activity.

However, despite the fact that these intra-regional tendencies that for substantial part take place in the context of broader global transformations, part of which promote also the deepening of the North America’s integration, there are also many less promising trends. The most worrying trend has been the shift from the policies promoting neo-liberal capitalist globalization toward the policies promoting the new imperialist capitalism and its globalization in the context of with aggressive nationalist and socially regressive framework.

⁴ Stephansson, Anders, *Manifest Destiny. American Expansion and the Empire of Right*. New York, Hill and Wang, 2000, 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-46. On these racist attitudes see also Vázquez, Zoraida, *México y el Mundo. Historia de sus Relaciones Exteriores. Tomo I*. México, Senado de la República, 1990.

⁶ It is not, however, always easy to separate “normal” witty or less witty remarks of the habitants of the neighboring countries from the real nationalist and racist attitudes. Also the Mexicans and Canadians are quite good in pointing at the not always so nice features and habits of their US neighbors.

Even though the neo-liberal policies were by no means socio-politically progressive they still opened up possibilities for a change of course and transformation toward alternative and more humane practices. On the other hand, in the context of the new imperialist capitalism and the socially and ethnically regressive and reactionary worldview that constitutes and promotes these policies, it is evident that the US and especially her new imperialist ruling classes cannot be considered a cradle of Western or Global Civilization in any meaningful sense, despite the fact that the historical US exceptionalism myths could allow for such misinterpreted ideas and practices. The undeniable fact is that in the contexts of the new imperialist policies the US and her new imperialist ruling classes have emerged as a cradle of global reaction and repression and promote forms of global governance based on aggressive nationalism, militarism and direct rule based on physical presence and repression⁷.

I have shown elsewhere that this reactionary tendency can be reversed in cooperation between the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist and progressive opposition of the United States and progressive states (or at least their anti-imperialist populations) and the global civil society. This would require a regime change in the United States and a guarantee that the new administration will not adopt similar new imperialist policies and is willing to re-engage the US in the world politics as a cooperative and progressive actor. This would also open up possibilities for a move toward the alternative and more developmental and democratic forms of regional integration in North America. It is possible that in such a case a new drive and political moment could be found for the renegotiation and reconstruction of NAFTA and for the development of the transnational cross-border civil society and a democratic community based on the ideas suggested by democratic regionalism in the case of North America. Indeed, if analyzed from the point of view of undoing new imperialism and the global war on terror and non-white others, a democratic regional community could also develop

into a regional network of checks and balances that could prevent the re-emergence of regressive and new imperialist policies also in the future⁸.

According to a related argument presented here, it is now the turn of the United States to follow the lead and example of the Rest of the World – and not vice versa as has been the case at least since the end of the Second Eurocentric Civil War and again in the context of neoliberal-neoconservative globalization. Moreover, with respect to regional integration, the US should follow the best socially and democratically sustainable traditions of the European Union – as should indeed the European Union itself because she has in recent years, and indeed decades, followed the lead of the United States and allowed for excessive neoliberalization of the Union. Consequently, as reader clearly sees, my purpose is not to claim that the European Union is an ideal regional community in all or even most respects. Moreover, it is also true that the prospects for a more emancipative European Union are not necessarily promising. Despite these, it is possible to utilize, develop and go beyond the best parts of the European experience, especially those related to the structural and development funds and other redistributive mechanisms, the methods of transnational decision-making that are slowly getting more democratic and the initiatives and practices that open possibilities for civil societies and their organizations to the making of the agenda and to the decision-making.

What I do claim is that we and our common world cannot afford Bush administration's new imperialist, militarist and confrontation-seeking policies that promote and sustain the vicious circle of revenge and violence. In other words, our common world would be better off without the governments, policies and practices that are based on the idea that violence, coercion and repression are best possible methods for the construction and transformation of the worldwide social practices. It would therefore be advisable that the present and the incoming US administration's would adopt

⁷ Minkinen, P., *KAKTUS...*, op.cit.

⁸ Ibid. However, despite the strong evidence that can be presented in favour of the claim on the failures of new imperialism and ways to undo it, in a social world in which solid, necessary certain claims about the uncertain future are not possible, one must, however, take into account the possibility of the continuity if the present regressive trend. In that case, it is possible that the underlying tendencies become dysfunctional – with serious social costs – or they lead to a regressive regional community that cannot be attractive to the Mexicans and the Canadians.

more reformist or radical reformist policies aiming at non-violent resolution of conflicts, global solidarity and the democratizing reforms at the different levels of international organization, supported by the open minded and reformist circles of the European Union and the countries of the South and the majority of global civil society⁹. Hence, it is argued here, that a North American democratic community that would be more inclined to sustainable social development and solidarity would be compatible with these alternatives. Moreover, it is important to underline, such transformed and more sustainable policies would also be in the interest of the Mexicans, the US citizens and the Canadians.

Before the S-11-2001 attacks and the following war on terror and non-white others, many positive – though insufficient from the point of view of emancipative radical and radical reformist transformative politics – signs, propositions and initiatives emanated from the administration of Vicente Fox. These initiatives were at least partly based on the related research and activity of Jorge G. Castañeda, and they were very influenced by the idea that it would be in the interest of North American countries to adopt integration policies that would be closer to the practices and guidelines of the European integration. Their so-called NAFTA Plus plan suggested, among other things, improvements to the situation and legal position of the Mexican migrant laborers working and living in the United States and the development of European style structural and development funds for the NAFTA-community. It seemed – despite the fact that even the Bush administration's pre-S-11-2001 policies complicated the international relations – that due to the fraternal relations between presidents Vicente Fox and George W. Bush there could be possibilities for more human-faced and developmental regional development in North America than that allowed by the twin processes of neoliberal-neoconservative capitalist globalization and the draconian structural adjustment required by present NAFTA. Though both were and are presidents of conservative right-wing parties there seemed to

open up certain possibilities due to the open-mindedness of centre-right president Vicente Fox and his administration's centre-left professor turned foreign minister Jorge Castañeda.

However, after S-11-2001 the priorities of the Bush administration went through a radical transformation. The new imperialist policies in general, the War on Terror and Non-White Others and related repressive Law and Order policies inside the US and in the border zones of the US turned the prospects of the North American regional development up-side down. Despite this negative turn, there are however various reasons to be relatively optimistic with regard to a policy change and a democratic regime change in the United States. It is evident that such a democratic transformation would enhance the possibilities of more human and peaceful development in the world *and* in North America. Even if it is not possible to tackle these reasons here¹⁰, except those relating directly to the community formation in North America, one can agree with Perry Anderson that the "War on Terror" phase of US administration is most likely a temporary one before a return to pre-S-11-2001 policies¹¹ at least in a sense that the incoming US administration – and due to the failures of new imperialism also the Bush administration – will find it necessary and beneficial to co-operate with the global community.

However, it is evident that a return to previous pre-S-11-2001 is not possible in practice. As Antonio Gramsci put it in the context of the fascist Italy of 1920's and 1930's, in his discussion about progressive and reactionary Caesarism and the dialectics of revolution and restoration, "[...] it is certain that in the movement of history there is never any turning back, and that restorations *in toto* do not exist"¹². Because of and despite that one agrees with Perry Anderson that this phase in the US politics is likely to be transitory, it is neither logically nor practically viable to believe that a return to a pre-S-11-2001 world would or could be possible. What is possible, and even probable, is the negation of the policies of the present Bush administration.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Anderson, Perry, "Editorial. Force and Consent". *New Left Review*, 17 (September-October 2002), 29.

¹² Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, 219-220 (Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith).

tion will not lead us toward the past things and practices but instead, as simple and straightforward dialectic would suggest, toward a new synthesis which is, possibly and even probably more emancipating, socially oriented and democratic that during the present administration and its new imperialist practices.

In other words, even if it were possible – which is not the case – to aim at the restoration of the past practices, it would not be sufficient because they are in themselves, at least partly, to blame for the global developments leading to the vicious cycles of terror and new imperialist practices¹³. It is thus necessary to go beyond the new imperialism as well as beyond the neoliberal-neoconservative capitalist globalization. The possibilities of this emancipative development are enhanced by the fact that both, the neoliberal-neoconservative capitalist globalization and related economic, political and organizational practices and the new imperialist policies have been discredited and de-legitimized both in theory and practice and in moral-ethical terms.

1. INTEGRATION IN NORTH AMERICA

There is a clear historical, cultural, economic, political and demographic background and indeed foundation for the further development of the integration in North America. Due to the practical necessities it is also probable that these trends will lead to the deepening of the community development in North America. Despite the fact that all these countries want to defend and promote their particularities and exceptionalisms, it is claimed here that it is in the interest of the populations of these countries to proceed with the community development on North America – but neither with all kinds of integration develop nor at all costs. The tendencies toward deeper economic integration have been present at least from the times of *Porfiriato* from the 1870's and 1880's. After the Mexican revolution Mexico entered the era of national economic development, as did other countries both in the industrialized North and in the poorer South by the 1930's and the Second Eurocentric Civil War.

That period was fruitful to the economic and political development of Mexico because this new situation gave her a possibility to develop her national economy in the context of partial de-linking from the world-economy and the US economy. This was also a period of political unification and federalization-centralization of the country, which opened the possibility for more coordinated national development. In other words, in this narrow historical context poor countries like Mexico had a possibility to develop their national economies with the help of similar protectionist methods that had successfully been used by the rich countries in order to create and foment the basis of their national economies during their preliminary stages in the paths of economic-industrial capitalist development.

After the global crisis period of 1914-1945, which included, among other things, two European Civil Wars, a major economic crisis and a period of genocide – but which offered at the same time a possibility of national economic development to the peripheral countries – the integration of Mexican economy to that of the United States intensified because of the new phase of transnationalization of the production of US corporations¹⁴. Moreover, the agreements of economic cooperation codified and helped the fusion of these economies. For example the war-time *Bracero* program allowed Mexicans to work in the United States at the time when a considerable number of factory workers had to wage a war. When the *Bracero* program came to an end by the decision of the US in 1964, the Mexican government proposed a new *Maquila* Program aiming at the industrialization of Mexico and to employ those Mexicans that were now free from their *Bracero* obligations. The *Maquila* program allowed the US corporations to establish in-bond assembly factories to Mexican side of the border. These *maquiladoras* combined cheap Mexican labor and imported tax free US semi-products and components and exported the final products free of customs fees back to the US market¹⁵. Such programs and the consequent transnationalization and macro-regionalization of economic activity of these countries at

¹³ As happened in the previous narrow historical context of capitalist globalization and imperialism in the ways explained by Karl Polanyi in his 1944 book (my edition is 1957) *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1944.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Huerta, Arturo G., *Economía Mexicana. más allá del milagro*. México, Editorial Diana, 1991, 28-32.

¹⁵ Cockcroft, James D., *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1983, 159-160.

the floor level steadily integrated the economies even if officially Mexico practiced economic policies of economic nationalism.

During this period of national capitalism the economies of these countries continued to merge though at slower pace than before the Mexican revolution or in the context of the neo-liberal *sexenios* beginning from the debt crisis of 1982, and more precisely at the mid-term of the *sexenio* of president Miguel de la Madrid¹⁶. However, political integration of these countries has been slow and hindered due to the very different power positions, national sovereignty discourses and national exceptionalism myths of these three countries. This is especially evident if one compares the political integration of these countries to that of the European Union¹⁷. On the other hand, due to the debt crisis and structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the private and public creditors of Mexico's, and increased economic dependence and the dismantling of the welfare system in Canada, and the fears of the loss of cultural identity, autonomy and national sovereignty in Mexico and Canada did threaten these countries.

In other words, the national autonomy and sovereignty have already become more relative in the context of neoliberal-neoconservative globalization and integration processes in which the Augsburgian principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* has been cancelled in a sense that each country with different economic and political situations and histories are expected to follow similar euro-ethnocentric economic and development policies. Because these transformations have already taken place in the context of the social ontology, and it is doubtful that a return to previous national alternati-

ves could be viable *per se*, it is rational, progressive and emancipative to contemplate alternatives that would take place in the macro-regional context of North America and that one possible outcome of this is a democratic regional community in North America.

In the pre-ratification debates Andrew Reding suggested that NAFTA forces us to expect and prepare for something that would go beyond an economic integration agreement. According to him "it is time to begin preparing for its inevitable political implications. If NAFTA passes muster, it will signal the formation, however tentatively, of a new political unit – North America"¹⁸. During the 1990's both the NAFTA critique of different intensity and proposals to cancel, renegotiate, transform and develop this agreement beyond its present form and practices become commonplace. However, especially when one analyzes the situation from the European viewpoint, one is surprised how little there has been discussion about the possibility and various modalities of a political community in North America.

Accordingly, the majority of the discussants did not consider NAFTA as a stepping-stone as a platform for the political integration, that is, for a North American political community, let alone a democratic political community¹⁹. Moreover, it is clear that due to the fact that NAFTA was not negotiated in legitimate political conditions, there is a justified base for renegotiating the treaty. Mexican PRI-president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who became a poster boy of neo-liberal reforms for the neoliberal administrations of the Northern capitalist countries and international organizations such as International Monetary Fund, was elected in fraudulent elections²⁰ and the negotiation pro-

¹⁶ Cf. Meyer, Lorenzo, "The United States and Mexico: The Historical Structure of Their Conflict". *Journal of International Affairs*, XLIII-2 (1990), 251-271.

¹⁷ Here one should remember that the European integration did not emerge from *ex nihilo*, there were historical precedents and in the context of ideological struggles of the Third European Civil War the world political interests of the leading state of the capitalist West, that is the US, did play a role in the formation of this still ongoing process.

¹⁸ Reding, Andrew, "North American Free Trade: Trading away democracy? The new deal highlights the need for a continental parliament". *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 September 1992, A13.

¹⁹ I think it is not viable to refrain from this discussion even if one considers NAFTA as a poor and dangerous investment agreement that favors the interests of the transnationally oriented ruling classes and the interests of the corporate capital and globalization in general. In the European context many have been highly critical of the form of the European integration at least from the Maastricht agreement but have, despite this, contemplated and worked for the transformation of the EU. Neither is the dominant macro-regional position of the US as sufficient cause for not thinking non-national alternatives.

²⁰ Cf. Castañeda, Jorge G., *Perpetuating Power. How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen*. New York, The New Press, 2000. More over, ex-president Miguel de la Madrid – who selected Salinas as his successor through the traditional practice of *dedazo*, has admitted in his memoirs that the ruling party PRI declared Carlos Salinas winner before the results from the fear that he could not win ("Los tiempos peligrosos de Miguel de la Madrid. En sus memorias, reconoce que Salinas se declaró triunfador sin datos". *La Jornada*, 7 de marzo de 2004).

cess itself was highly unfavorable to Mexican trade negotiators²¹. Thus being, it is reasonable and legitimate to contemplate and demand more democratic, social, developmental and sustainable futures for the North American Community, not only from the point of view of Mexico, but from the point of view and the future of the majorities in Mexico, USA and Canada.

Even if the world political situation has changed considerably since I made my first tentative proposals for the future development of North America²², that were intended to develop further and go beyond the discussion on alternative NAFTA along with the path opened by Carlos Heredia and Jorge G. Gastañeda²³, among others, and the recent discussions on post-national democracy in the context of European Union, cosmopolitan democracy, global democracy and various academic and practical proposals to promote more direct, radical and participatory democracy. However, even the militarist and repressive policies of the Bush administration push forward the deepening of the North American community. This takes place through the deepening of the security community; in the context of the War on Terror and Non-White Others it was suggested that Mexico should be incorporated to the NORAD²⁴ and even before the security cooperation in the name of the national security doctrine has been quite active in the context of different but complementary wars on drugs, illegal immigrants, rebels and dissident-activists. It is evident that this part of the development is neither democratic nor emancipative.

Despite this, the formation and deepening of the security community supports the argument presented here that the deepening of North American integration is taking place at different levels and it is very difficult if not impossible to halt or reverse by the supporters or by the opponents of this process. Even if this development has not promoted alternative and emancipative visions and practices in this stage, it is claimed here that it is in the interests of all, even the ruling classes, to support this due to the fact the underlying trends and tendencies toward it are strong and it is a probable outcome of this process in the middle and long term; and because the present forms of the deepening increase the vulnerability and internal weaknesses of North America and consequently also the position of the North American ruling classes. Thus, even if it may sound contradictory and counterintuitive, research based on the reflexive and historical analysis of the Critical Research of Open Historical Contexts²⁵, suggests that there are such strong social forces, trends and tendencies in action that even the new right and new imperialist Bush administration cannot reverse them, though these tendencies may arouse negative and nostalgic reactions in some conservative writers²⁶. Quite the contrary, even their regressive policies promote the deepening of the integration in North America. Thus, even if the regional and global political processes proceed toward a non-emancipating direction at the moment, it is also in the longer term interest of the North American ruling classes to promote more social, developmental, and democratic integration.

²¹ See e.g. Cameron, Maxwell A.; Tomlin, Brian W., *The Making of NAFTA. How the Deal Was Done*. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2000.

²² "NAFTA and the Possibility of an Alternative Development Strategy in Mexico", presented in the *Congress of Latin American Studies Association* in Chigaco, USA, September 24-26 1998 and published later in *The Yearbook of Finnish Society of Development Studies*, 1998-99 (Helsinki, Finnish Society of Development Studies).

²³ Castañeda, Jorge G.; Heredia, Carlos, "Another NAFTA: What a Good Agreement Should Offer". *World Policy Journal*, IX-4 (1993), 673-685.

²⁴ *La Jornada* (Carlos Fazio, translated from Spanish by Gene Ventura), 4 February 2002. "The Pentagon Plans to Create a Military Force with Mexico and Canada" [document on-line] Available from Internet at: <<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/jornada020402.html>>.

²⁵ See Minkinen, P., *KAKTUS...*, op. cit.; id., "New Imperialism...", op. cit.

²⁶ Huntington, Samuel P., "The Hispanic Challenge". *Foreign Policy*, March-April 2004, 30-45. For Huntington the Cuban immigration to Miami has brought in "good" Latinos with upper class origins whereas the immigration of poorer Mexicans brings in "bad" Latinos. However, in the end he suggests that despite the inevitable transformation of the United States "we have known for more than three centuries" there will not be separate Hispanic "Americano Dream" but only the Anglo-Protestant American Dream. Huntington is wrong: the US and the North America as a whole will change beyond that steadily antiquating dream.

Moreover, in historical turning points, when old practices and solutions do not work properly, new solutions are needed and typically applied. The present turning point is a combination of an economic crisis resembling hubris of the 1920's and the post-1929 Stock Market Crash uncertainty over the possibilities of recovery, stagnation and oil crisis of the 1970's, legitimacy crisis of the global and US capitalisms, increasing migratory movements and a tendency toward regionalization of the world economy – though not necessarily in similar destructive ways as in the 1930's – and a World War on Terror and Non-White Others, that is – if not reversed – dangerously undermining the civilizing and regulating norms of international and national political behavior world-wide. I have no reason not to believe in the desire of self-preservation of the peoples around the world: the world has been since the bursting the new economy bubble and 9-11-2001, and still is, on the brink of falling into barbarism and avoiding this and turning the tide requires rapid non-military solutions that promote solidarity and cooperation between peoples, also in North America.

2. THREE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

NAFTA is an international agreement that has promoted and produced an internationally agreed social closure. As a product of neoliberal transformative and especially consolidating policies it represents an attempt to impose and eternalize the neo-liberal and neo-conservative economic and social policies in the NAFTA area, whereas a more political and open integration process in Europe has at least in principle opened up possibilities for a political community between different countries and nationalities and for social and democratic regionalism. However, despite these formative differences, it is claimed here that a similar emancipative political community is possible and even probable in North America. NAFTA is – despite its nature as a social closure and an economic constitution benefiting first and foremost the interests of internationally oriented fractions of capital – a socially constructed process and changeable “within the limits of possible” that can be broadened in any given historical situation and in any given narrow

historical context even if the odds were against such a transformation at that particular historical point. As I have suggested before, the likelihood of emancipative transformation increases in the situations in which the destructive consequences of the neoliberal-neoconservative globalization hit also the United States and not only the poorer countries of the world, as has happened after the burst of the bubble and 9-11-2001. I think there are at least three conditions for such a possibility to emerge²⁷.

1) Constant thinking and rethinking of the possibilities of “another” NAFTA, or more generally in that parlance that has become familiar through the World Social Forum process, how to make Another North America Possible. Contemplation of new social practices in the exclusive national context is becoming increasingly unproductive and even counterproductive. Therefore, it is necessary to create, recreate and deepen the international and transnational cooperation progressive and emancipative social movements and civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations. Academic world must be incorporated in the contemplation of the alternatives and academics as well as other kinds of intellectuals have an important task to contemplate realistic and practicable but at the same time radical reformist and radical democratic alternatives. It is also important to broaden the networks of cooperation toward labor unions, political parties, churches and those sectors of economic actors – and indeed all social actors – in favor of more equal, decent and emancipated social practices and in the strengthening of the civil society and in the democratic development of the communities.

It is essential to produce new and viable alternative social solutions. This has been the standard practice of, for example, the Mexican NAFTA critical civil society organizations. In the context of neoliberal-neoconservative and capitalist triumphalism early 1990's the ranks of alternative producing communities were in disarray but today the situation has changed diametrically: the civil society organizations are very active and increasingly successful in the production of more or less viable alternative proposals and practices and the *status quo* – organizations are on the defensive – up to the point of violent repression of the dissidents in the context of the internal civil war component of the

²⁷ Cf. Minkkinen, Petri, “NAFTA and the Possibility...”, op. cit.

War on Terror and Non-White Others. Furthermore, it is important to engage in enduring public relations work and public education in order to give the so-called ordinary people a possibility to find out the unsustainable nature of the present order of things and to realize that there are viable alternative possibilities and to open up political spaces for the promotion of these alternatives. It is almost as important to address formal policy makers and economic actors at all levels, local, national, regional and global. This is important in itself but critical in a sense that if and when a political moment opens up for the promotion and realization of the alternative practices, it is important that there are already existing viable alternatives to replace the unviable ones and a positive response from broad social sectors which is possible only if constant public relations work and public education has been properly carried out.

2) Deepening of the present and *still* ongoing global recession. In the context of neoliberal-neoconservative globalization and the revolution from the Right, the severity of the economic crises has deepened and especially the trans-national spreading effects of the financial crises have become serious – despite the claims of the “neo-economy” apostles claiming the end of the fluctuations of capitalist economies. Mexican peso crisis of 1994 spread rapidly to other Latin American economies and the Asian crisis proliferated from Asia and Russia to Latin America and eventually threatened the financial stability of the rich economically developed countries as well. Already at that time the global financial system came close to collapsing. Along with the burst of techno bubble and speculative bubble brought the global economy entered a recession and certain country specific crises such as that of Argentina were exceptionally severe²⁸. The US economy entered into a recession and her economic prospects remain uncertain and the costly new imperialist policies and related military adventures are pushing the public indebtedness of the US economy beyond the sustainable level – not to mention excessive private indebtedness.

The economic policies of the Bush administration are thus unsustainable and threaten the middle and long term economic prospects not only the US but also the global economy. Therefore, it is possible and even probable that “discursive shift” will emerge in this situation. The Bush administration engaged in the new imperialist transformative politics which, for the economics part are based on unsustainable military Keynesianism, updated Reaganomics and direct appropriation and pillage in the occupied countries in which new markets are opened and monopoly rights given militarily to the members and the business partners of this new imperialist administration²⁹. This combination of excessive indebtedness, military Keynesianism and external pillage has proved to be unsustainable. The failure of these policies and the loss of legitimacy and criminal practices of the neoliberal-neoconservative capitalism are creating room for the emancipative transformative politics, and in the context of NAFTA area, in combination with certain underlying trends (see below), may open up possibilities for socially and ecologically more sustainable and developmental policies in the context of North American community. Given the fact that the US economy is central in the North American political economy, the possibility and increased probability for another NAFTA and emancipative transformative politics can emerge only if the practices of the neoliberal-neoconservative political program affect negatively the US economy, too, as they clearly have done from the beginning of the Millennium.

3) External example and influence. If the monetary union of European Union succeeds and improves the Unions position in the global economy and global power relations, and the Union continues with more social forms of market economy – which is by no means certain, even this is exactly what separated European integration from the Soviet state communism and Anglo-American capitalism – there is a possibility that EU’s example becomes more attractive despite the current econo-

²⁸ In the beginning of the 21st century, for the first time since the 1970’s all main economic areas, Japan, EU and the US were in recession and the situation looked very much like that of 1930’s and some countries were actually worse of than in the 1930’s.

²⁹ When these policies are combined to internal repression, the strengthening of Law and Order machinery and increased surveillance of others and dissidents and intolerance toward difference it is possible to talk about neo-fascist market economy – or even fascist market economy or fascist capitalism (here one should remember the clear differences between market economy and capitalism).

mic problems of the Union³⁰. The possibilities of more social and post-neoliberal models of European Union in the competition of the different models of capitalist market economy will improve especially if the Anglo-American model continues to increase the social polarization of the societies where this model is applied. External example, not only for North America but for European Union as well, could come also from the fringes of or outside the Eurocentric sphere of global domination. In this context the most prominent example are the radical democratic modes of political participation developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and the related model of participatory budgeting which aims at opening up the decision-making over the use public finances with a combined direct-representative decision-making model and, at the same time, public popular education the aim of which is to elevate our capabilities of political participation. These are examples of possible radical reformist alternatives that could be promoted and applied also in North America in the context of renovated transformative Third Way politics.

3. SOME POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT PATHS IN NORTH AMERICA

As history and future and consequently the historical contexts are open, and social history is being made by human beings and their associations, within the limits of the possible and in the context of limited voluntarism, it is essential to contemplate alternative development paths and thus participate intellectually in the making of history also in the context of NAFTA area, or in North America. Human global community and the social and power relations constituting it are highly complex, and since it is not possible to discuss thoroughly here – or at all – the infinite variety of historical probabilities and possibilities, I have made a

rational and normative choice to point at the following four at least partially overlapping possible development paths.

1) *Reconquista*. Mexican immigration to the US is likely to continue as long as deep economic asymmetries exist³¹. Therefore, we may assume that this slow but difficult to resist process may eventually produce *de facto* re-Mexicanization of the territories expropriated by the US either by steady immigration and political maneuvers (Texas), 1846-48 war (e.g. California etc.) or various semi-forced “purchases”. Bearing this in mind, *reconquista* can be seen as a “natural” and more importantly, a *legitimate* possibility. Depending on viewpoint this can be considered either as a threat or alternatively as a necessary part of the community development in North America in a sense that it would develop the multiculturalism and pluralism of the United States and North America. Immigration has already had, will certainly have multiplying political consequences in the United States, both in attitudes and everyday practices as well as in political life, that is, in relatively conventional representative sense, in local, state and increasingly also in federal elections. In the near future immigration and its economic, political and cultural consequences may and probably will promote, besides deeper integration of economic life, deeper social and political integration in North America. *Reconquista* may also make real the so far quite superficial notion of the United States as a “melting pot”, especially from the point of view that the ethnic composition of the ruling or dominant classes may change. Moreover, despite Samuel Huntington’s counter-claim, *American Dream* will nest in the United States and transform also the meaning and the contents of the *American Dream* from within³².

³⁰ This could be a suitable context for coining a new meaning for the concept Third Way. If in the context of the Third Eurocentric Civil War it was possible to refer to European model as a third way between US capitalism and Soviet state communism (state capitalism), or as Scandinavians and the Finns preferred, Nordic welfare state was *the* Third Way alternative, and during the 1990’s Third Way was captured and re-coined by Anthony Giddens to mean less that conservative-neoliberal but still neoliberal social democratic neoliberalism, now, in the context of new imperialism and the War on Terror and Non-White Others, Third Way could mean emancipative transformative politics aiming at the negation and going beyond both the neoliberal-neoconservative capitalism and the new imperialist market fascist capitalism and the attempts to globalize them, in order to create room for social solidarity, more developmental global economy, democratization of decision-making and participation at all levels and a new Homo Sapiens Sapiens – nature relation that would be based on cooperation instead of pillage and exploitation.

³¹ This basic fact is acknowledged also in Washington (see e.g. *Proceso* 20.8.2000), though there has not been serious attempts to undo and negate this unwanted situation in any meaningful and emancipative way.

³² Huntington, Samuel P., “The Hispanic...”, op. cit. See also Minkinen, Petri, “New Imperialism...”, op. cit.

2) Deepening of the economic integration in the North American political economy. It is very difficult to imagine any other realistic possibility with this respect. Despite constant efforts of Canada and Mexico to diminish their economic dependency from and the interpenetration by the US economic forces, the deepening and widening of trans-territorial economic activity between these neighboring countries and their respective economic actors is probable. It is altogether different issue whether Mexico will remain an “internal periphery” marked by continuing *maquiladorization* or are there possibilities for more equal economic and social development. It is probable that the first option will be the dominant given the possibility of continuity of the market fundamentalist tendency³³. Another possibility could be a discursive and practical shift toward macro-regionally implemented sustainable alternatives, renovated transformative Third Way or New Deal politics, that can consist of some variety of socially and ecologically sustainable and more developmental neo-Keynesianism, or some other forms of emancipative transformative politics that would eventually lead to post-neoliberal or even post-capitalist and post-Eurocentric alternatives³⁴. This could mean a macro-regional renovated “New Deal” inspired by the example of the best tradition of the European integration as well as other emancipative and progressive alternatives. A possibility for this can open up in a situation in which the negative consequences of the neoliberal-neoconservative political project have their impact also for the US economy and the US citizens – as clearly now has happened and will continue to happen – *and* when the US citizens (and also the Canadians, but in a bit different way) understand the well-being of the Mexicans is

in their and in the US interest as well. Because the roll back of the present stage of North American integration would have quite serious consequences within areas societies, the recognition of these things could open up possibilities for a more democratic and social community in the North America. In other words, it would open up possibilities for the democratic regionalism in North America.

3) North America as a pluralist security community. A political community may be a logical, though not necessary, continuation of a security community³⁵. It is more than interesting that in Karl Deutsch’s original proposition that the networks of interrelations between Mexico and United States was seen for constitute a security community, clearly before than the emergence of the security community between original Six of the European Communities, which did not take place before the end of the Second Eurocentric Civil War. According to Deutsch a security community between United States and Canada has *de facto* existed since 1815. On the other hand, a security community between the US and Mexico emerged later, according his judgment, not before the 1930’s³⁶. However, recent studies have suggested that requirements of “trust and common identity” are not strong enough in the bilateral US-Mexico relations and their conclusion is that they are still far away from a pluralistic security community³⁷. However, as the European example shows, deepening and the creation of trust takes time but the combination of external necessity and internal maturation may increase tolerance towards the “internal others” within the emerging North American community.

4) Common interests of Mexico and Canada. Canada and the US integrated their national eco-

³³ I have in my previous texts about NAFTA applied the discussion on internal periphery of Mike Davis, by which he explained the emergence of the US Sunbelts economic significance, to analyze Mexico’s incorporation to the North American political economy (Davis, Mike, “The Political Economy of Late-Imperial America”. *NewLeft Review*, 143 (1984), 6-38).

³⁴ On these see Minkinen, Petri, “New Imperialism...”, op. cit., and my “The Makings of Post-Neoliberal World”, presented in the *New York City Social Forum*, 28-30 October 2004, New York, USA.

³⁵ Especially, but not only from the viewpoint of functionalism developed for analyzing European integration, but also in the historical view of North American integration in which such economic functionalism has clearly been important.

³⁶ Deutsch, Karl W. et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, 29 and 65. There is an inconsistency in Deutsch’s work. In page 29 he claims that a successful pluralistic security community between United States and Canada emerged from the 1870’s, in page 65 “since somewhere between 1819 and 1870’s” and in page 115 from 1815. However, despite the inconsistencies, a security community between the US and Canada emerged before a security community between US and Mexico.

³⁷ Gonzalez, Guadalupe; Haggard, Stephan, “The United States and Mexico: A Pluralistic Security Community”, in Emanuel Adler; Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 295-332.

nomies formally through a free trade agreement in 1987. This agreement was also the base for the North American Free Trade Agreement³⁸. In Canada this bilateral agreement was criticized of quite similar reasons as the later NAFTA criticism by the Mexicans despite the fact that Canada's national economy was more competitive in the globalizing economy than Mexico's that had been more detached from the world economy. Both countries were however in the 1980's in a situation in which they had to choose between adjusting in the macro-regional and global competition and the development of national economy and internal socio-political complex that was becoming increasingly difficult. The Canadians were especially worried about the loss of their cultural particularity, about the destruction of national economic activity and they feared that the more neoliberal-neoconservative model of the US capitalism would eventually replace their more socially oriented market capitalism – as happened to Mexico's national development model that was for some time based on industrialization via import substitution³⁹. The Canadians, who already had their FTA with the United States, were reluctant to join the free trade negotiations between Mexico and the US because they feared they would lose the advantaged they succeeded to negotiate in the bilateral negotiations⁴⁰.

More generally, the economic relations between Canada and Mexico were relatively thin. However, it can be said that NAFTA and its (insufficient) institutions have developed in limited spaces in which the Canadians and the Mexicans can join their forces and form a stronger counterweight to the US positions than they could do alone. Moreover, independently of their relative levels of economic development and the differences in their respective capitalisms, Mexico and Canada are united by the fact of the dominant position of the US

and their willingness to limit it. Even within the existing limited conflict resolution organs of NAFTA these countries can promote their common interests. A political community constructed along the lines suggested by my discussion on democratic regionalism could improve these possibilities significantly – even if Mexico and Canada would in this situation have to sacrifice at least partially of the national sovereignty and autonomy they have traditionally defended fiercely. However, in a rightly organized organizational situation this loss would not necessarily be as grave as it otherwise could be.

5) Democratic regionalism in North America. This option would promote a particular kind of North American political community that would include elements of the recent discussions on emerging post-national, cosmopolitan, radical democratic and transnational democratic communities. In the recent discussions these qualities have typically been connected to cosmopolitan or global democracy and the European Union has been considered as *the* regional entity which would have possibilities to evolve into a post-national democratic community⁴¹. Could some kind of post-national or transnational political community – with gradually merging civil societies – emerge in North America, too? Based on the reflexive and historical analysis of Critical Research of Open Historical Contexts, it is evident that the underlying and cumulative trends point at the deepening of the regional integration in North America, and thus it is probable that some kind of political community will emerge also in North America. The interpenetration at economic, cultural and civil society levels is relatively high already.

Especially the immigration of the Mexicans will force the national political systems and political landscapes to change and this transformation has been evident already for some time. Mexicans

³⁸ See e.g. Castañeda, Jorge G.; Pastor, Robert A., *Límites en la amistad. México y Estados Unidos*. México, Joaquín Mortiz – Planeta, 1989.

³⁹ Cf. Deblock, Christian; Rioux, Michèle, "NAFTA: The Trump Card of the United States". *Studies in Political Economy*, 41(Summer 1993), 7-44; Cameron, Maxwell A.; Tomlin, Brian W., *The Making...*, op. cit.; Minkkinen, Petri. *Meksiko ja Pohjois-Amerikan vapaakauppasopimus. Semiperifeerinen valtio muuttuvassa maailmanjärjestelmässä*. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, 1994.

⁴⁰ Cameron, Maxwell A.; Tomlin, Brian W., *The Making...*, op. cit.; Vernon, Raymond, "Multinationals and Governments: Key Actors in the NAFTA", in Eden, Lorraine (ed.), *Multinationals in Canada*. Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 1994.

⁴¹ As discussed for example by Habermas, Jürgen, *The Postnational Constellation. Political Essays*. Cambridge / Oxford, Polity Press, 2001 (translated, edited, and with Introduction by Max Pensky).

living in the US can already vote in Mexican elections, and similar gradual developments are most likely to continue. The continuing economic integration is an additional push factor towards the situation in which political integration will increasingly be seen as a practical necessity, even if one would not accept as such the claims of traditional functional and neo-functional integration theories.

Democratic regionalism would empower the citizens of this community and give them a possibility to participate in the promotion of the common (and also particular) interests and would open up possibilities of the democratic decision-making and participation. At the same time it would be possible to approach a situation in which it would be possible to enhance the possibilities of national, state and local level decision-making and democratic political participation by democratizing the decision-making at the macro-regional North American level⁴². On the other hand, the differences of the sizes of the populations of Canada, Mexico and the United States are so large that it would probably be necessary to develop some kinds of new variations of confederal or federal institutions and systems. Moreover, and this is especially relevant in the present context of new imperialism and the War on Terror and Non-White Others, in the context of democratic regionalism it would be possible to open up enhanced possibilities for the Mexicans, the Canadians, The US citizens to participate in macro-regional and global democratic politics that would oppose, undo – and in the future, preempt – this unjust war and the related internal civil war in the context of which a frontal attack on civil rights, human rights and personal and intimacy rights is waged inside the US and around the world. In other words, as the development of the macro-regional security community, the democratic regionalism would enhance the possibilities to preempt the possibilities of the new imperialism in the North American context with the democratic tools and methods⁴³.

North American democratic regionalism could consist of the institutions and spaces of democratic politics at least at three levels that can be called *official representative*, *new indirect* or *new participative* and *new direct*. A new macro-regional

compact of the North America could emerge as a combination that would consist of:

- 1) Transnational representative democracy.
- 2) New indirect organs or forums for the participation of the civil societies, civil society organizations and social movements.
- 3) New direct spaces and methods of participation. The starting point must be as complete subsidiarity principle as possible. In other words, the aim must be that all the decisions that can be decided at the lower levels of the decision-making hierarchy, that is, as close to our everyday life as possible, must be decided at that level. On the other hand, all the decisions made at the higher levels of the decision-making hierarchy must be accountable to the lower levels of the decision-making hierarchy, and in the last instance, to the populations of this macro-region.

1) Depending on the different political systems and the sizes of the populations of the countries of North American macro-region, some kinds of confederal or federal systems or at least features of them are probably necessary. All of these countries, Mexico, Canada and the United States are federal states consisting of states or provinces. A North American macro-regional compact could be a sort of macro-regional meta-federal state (or integration entity if one desires to refrain from the use of state vocabulary) or meta-confederal state which would have its own representative organ or forum, a North American parliament. This would allow us to approach the objective that in the questions that are related to the macro-region, all countries and their citizens could participate in the decision-making. At the same time it is essential to inhibit the possibility that the smaller states could be subjugated to the domination and arbitrary power of a stronger state. It is also essential to find out possibilities to develop procedures for the common decision-making between the North American parliament and national parliaments, possibly so that also the state level representative organs are connected to the decision-making at that level. It is also important to contemplate the common decision-making procedures for the states or provinces separated now by national borders: later it would

⁴² Cf. Minkinen, Petri, "La democratización de México en el contexto mundial". *Relaciones Internacionales*, 72 (Octubre-Diciembre de 1996), 33-47; id., "Kansalaisjärjestöt Meksikon vaalien tarkkailijana". *Kosmopolis*, XXXI-4 (2001), 49-67.

⁴³ Cf. id., *KAKTUS...*, op.cit; id., "New Imperialism...", op.cit.

also be possible to contemplate procedures that would move forward toward even more emancipative and democratic cross-border democratic decision-making.

2) Essential parts of the future democratic regionalism are the new indirect or new participative organs or forums for the participation of the civil societies, civil society organizations and social movements that would combine representative democracy and direct democracy. They must be enduring but at the same time reflexive in order to allow the inclusion of new and possibly surprising events, things and developments. The purpose of these organs is to build bridges between the official and unofficial actors and at the same time open up room for real democratic participation and decision-making, in ways that integrate indirectly unofficial actors representing the civil society and the official decision-making organs such as parliaments, governments and also ministries and civil services.

The organs and the actors of the civil society can bring about on the agenda questions that are considered important and relevant by various sections and parts of civil society. On the other hand, the civil society organizations do not represent “the people” as a whole. Therefore it is important to have direct participation to decision-making in order to complement (and in the future possibly in order to surpass) the official representative and new indirect participation to the decision-making.

3) Direct participation of the citizens and civil societies can be promoted and realized through the utilization of various methods and channels of direct democracy and participation. One possibility would be the binding or advisory referendums at different levels of decision-making that could be organized on the questions that are considered important at local, state, national or macro-regio-

nal North American level. Another possibility would be different methods that would make possible the direct decision-making or direct participation to the decision-making and the making of the agenda, such as participatory budgeting applied for example in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Participatory budgeting makes possible the direct participation of the citizens to the budgetary decision-making and to the planning over the use of public funds *and* performs at the same time the function of popular education as a learning process of political citizenship.

Political integration will probably proceed gradually from below from the spheres of integrating civil societies –and possibly also from above⁴⁴– but it requires changes in the national, federal and regional levels as well. The existing dispute settlement mechanisms can be developed into functional and thematic and democratic forums. Cooperation between of national parliaments can be increased and a macro-regional North American parliament can be created. In that situation national and regional parliaments can cooperate and some forms of confederal or federal structures are necessary, especially in North American context in which the weight and position of the United States is so overwhelming. It is also possible to develop co-decision procedures between state level organs of democratic representation and to connect these to national and regional democratic decision-making organs. Moreover, it is possible and desirable to turn these further developed NAFTA forums into sites of trans-national decision-making in which also civil society organization can participate. Moreover, it is possible to create new regional democratic forums and political spaces allow citizens of North America to participate in more direct way in the creation of agenda, negotiation and decision-making in North America. There are also other possibilities that will be developed further in other articles.

⁴⁴ To a certain degree in similar way but much more conventional ways than what I wrote in my original paper to the *XXI Congress of the Latin American Studies Association* (LASA 98, Chicago, United States, 24-26 September 1998): “NAFTA and the Possibility of an Alternative Development Strategy in Mexico” (<<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/LASA98/MinkkinenPetri.pdf>>). Pastor, Manuel (*Toward A North American Community: Lessons from the Old World for the New*. Washington, Institute for International Economics, 2001) who has at least previously worked with Jorge G. Castañeda, has presented his vision of the North American community for the Trilateral Commission (<http://www.trilateral.org/napg/regmtgs/pdf_folder/pastor02.pdf>). The Trilateral Commission promotes global governance based on consent (understood in the context of Antonio Gramsci’s understanding of the hegemony) detachment, economism, and latent military coercion whereas the new imperialist Bush government prefers global governance based on aggressive nationalism, coercion, direct physical rule, militarism and global police operations (cf. Minkkinen, Petri, *KAKTUS*... , op.cit.). My view of the future North American political community based on democratic regionalism and emancipative transformative politics should be separated from both previous modalities of governance.

To conclude, if we accept Karl Deutsch's idea that there in fact exists a security community between the US and Canada and between the US and Mexico, then we may suggest that there is at least an emergent pluralistic security community in the making in North America⁴⁵. Even if history is open and events and tendencies tend to unfold in different ways than originally expected, it seems to be the case – despite the regressive lapse to new imperialism – that there is a strengthening a tendency toward enhanced global cooperation and democratic regionalism. Moreover, it is possible, and historically sustainable to think that regionalism may

survive even if the globalization process falters in one way or another. In both cases it is quite possible that North America evolves first from a security community to an economic community and then to a political community. I think that it is not premature to suggest that the overlapping tendencies above, among others, may eventually produce a community of democratic regionalism in North America, despite the fact that some of these projections may seem to be more readily emergent than others and despite the strong intuitive belief that an idea of North American democratic community stretches too much the limits of the possible.

⁴⁵ In fact, despite various unpleasant consequences of the S-11, border cooperation has increased between these counties and the United States is keen to strengthen border and immigration control in Mexico's southern borders as well.