**Mexico’s foreign policy towards Latin America in the AMLO era**

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Mexican foreign policy towards Latin America in the 21th Century has been oriented by a more general convergence of three different administrations with a global agenda of liberalization in finance, trade and investment. Trade agreements with regional partners are seen as a tool to open markets for Mexican exports and companies, as well as to reaffirm a broader commitment to the creation of good environments to foreign investments. The idea of Mexico as a “bridge” between developing southern countries and the U.S. market has been translated in a two-fold regional approach in which Central America has been seen as a platform for the expansion of infrastructure projects and investments, while South America is a place for “strategic partnerships” in a selective bilateral basis. Within this “neoliberal” approach, inter-governmental coalitions confronting developed countries in certain issues are avoided or embraced with marginal enthusiasm by Mexican policymakers and a limited engagement is devoted to regional political networks. In 2018, the election of a new government presided by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), widely recognized as having a left-leaning profile, arose relevant questions about how this domestic move is having an impact in Mexican foreign policy orientations towards Latin America. What is the project of the new government for this region? How the current regional political environment is challenging AMLO’s foreign policy towards Latin America? The Venezuelan crisis and the Central America-Mexico Comprehensive Development Plan offer two interesting cases of important regional issues in which the AMLO government has been compelled to take a position during his first six months in office. This presentation offer a preliminar assessment of the way those issues have been treated by the new administration. Considering both international and domestic factors, I identify a set of elements to assess to what extent the initial steps of AMLO’s foreign policy towards Latin America indicate a relevant move away from the neoliberal era.

**Bio**

Fidel Pérez Flores is a professor and researcher at the Institute of International Relations (IREL) from the University of Brasilia (UnB). He holds a PhD in Political Science by the Institute of Social and Political Studies (IESP) in the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Dr. Pérez Flores is also a collaborator of the South American Political Observatory (OPSA), where he produced research and analysis on Venezuela’s domestic political processes and foreign policy from 2005 to 2015. His research focuses on foreign policy domestic cleavages and coalitions, U.S. - Latin America relations and the politics of asymmetry in international relations in a comparative perspective.