Explaining Latin American Regionalism in a Changing World

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1. Introduction

How and why has regionalism changed in Latin America? This paper explores a variety of theories and empirical studies that seek to answer this question. It concentrates primarily on regional initiatives in these countries. In so doing, the paper focuses on literatures in international relations, international political economy and comparative politics given the vague distinction between the international and the national levels that have pervaded the regional literature (Tickner, 2008).

The scholarship in question here is largely a product of the last more than 60 years. Still despite the long history of regional cooperation, theoretical analyses have remained minimal until the 1990s, when the study of regions and regionalism came to prominence. Whereas regional projects in Latin America date back to the late 1940s and economic cooperation gained momentum during the following two decades, as these were marred by problems and contradictions because of conflicting interests and expectations, these initiatives faced political deadlocks, did not get off the ground or even collapsed at an early
stage. The 1990s, by contrast, witnessed the resurg ence of intraregional relations and cooperation.

As regional activism deepened and broadened, scholars became interested in investigating and theorizing the conditions under which these new regional impetus had emerged and the extent to which it entailed or not a rupture with the past. The ‘left turn’ and the implementation of new regional initiatives and models starting in the 2000s would only reinforce such interest.

To develop the argument, in section 2, I begin by defining Latin America as a region, the period of analysis and the historical and empirical antecedents of this scholarship. I then examine and discuss the theoretical and empirical analyses deployed to understand how regionalism has advanced in the region. I present them in chronological order to further underscore how debates have evolved, and the ways in which indigenous and foreign approaches have interacted. Section 4 addresses their differences and similarities in terms of the drivers underlying these processes, their institutional outcomes and their impact (if any) on the domestic level. The final section concludes and presents a few remarks about where the study of regionalism in Latin America seems to be headed.

Before concluding this introductory section, I would like to highlight in advance some of the more important points made here. First, far from being a linear or uniform process, regionalism in Latin America is described as proceeding in waves or stages. Second, as new organizations were created, old ones were recreated and reframed to the extent that regionalism can be defined by the pluralism of regional organizations, both complementing and competing ones, and overlapping memberships. Third, European Union (EU) theories seem inadequate to understand similar developments in Latin America mainly because while in the latter regionalism has advanced through waves or stages; the EU constitutes a rather unique process of progressive enlargement.
2. Setting the context

Before delving into the particular ways in which regionalism has advanced in Latin America, a question is worth asking: what defines it as a region?

The characterization of Latin America as a region relies on a clear geographical basis, namely the Rio Grande as the demarcation line, and the relative geographical proximity and contiguity of its territories. Still, understanding regionalism in Latin America requires moving beyond issues of geography (Hurrell, 1995a) and mutual interdependence (Nye, 1968). As a socially constructed and politically contested space between the national and global levels, the region builds on relevant historical, cultural and linguistic traits, on the one hand, and an early idea of regional unity and solidarity, on the other. However, while political unity has remained a myth, regional cooperation has not resulted in a single common project. Furthermore, two competing visions span the history of regionalism in the Americas (Hurrell, 1995b).

A first vision can be traced back to the calls for Latin American political unity that began to be heard already during the wars for independence in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Mace, 1988:404), being Simón Bolivar the most fervent advocator. Despite acknowledging the contentious factors underlying such enterprise, namely, natural and administrative hindrances, apart from divergent interests among countries, Bolivar envisioned the creation of a political bloc to bring together the new countries and assure thus their independence. Several attempts were made to promote political unification between 1820 and 1870. While they failed to produce any form of institutional political cooperation at the regional level as opposing preferences and rivalries deepened, still they planted the seed of regional unity, an idea that have since permeated the intellectual community in Latin America (Mace 1988). This would imbue the cooperation schemes established after II World War even if these entailed a dramatic turn as the focus was now on economic rather than political cooperation.
A second vision of regionalism was encouraged by the United States (US). As played out during the long series of Pan-American conferences (1889-1930), the objective was to promote hemispheric wide-regionalism. This entailed the establishment of formal multilateral institutions to address a wide range of issues – namely, democracy, human rights, trade, development and security among others (Mace, 1999). Additionally, this contributed to Latin American solidarity by adding a new component: anti-imperialism (Dabène, 2009b) as reflected in the Monroe Doctrine. In 1948, it gained institutional expression with the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS).

In sum, two competing visions framed regionalism in Latin America, leading in turn to different institutional forms, either hemispheric or regional. Though divergent, these concepts led Latin American countries to develop a unique and own idea of regionalism based on independent statehood and anti-imperialism (Fawcett, 2005).

3. **Across empirical waves in Latin American regionalism**

Regionalism has been an enduring feature of Latin America. However, rather than through enlargement, the pervasiveness and cast of Latin American regionalism has changed over time. As new organizations were created, old ones were reconstructed and reframed, leading in turn to different waves or stages of regional cooperation (Rosenthal, 1991:10) and to the superposition of various layers (Bull and Boas, 2003). Regionalism is hence best portrayed as a complex and non-linear process, shaped by a mix of internal and external variables (Mansfield and Milner, 1999, Fawcett, 2013).

After failed attempts at promoting political cooperation, the years after World War II brought two relevant innovations: the creation of the OAS at the hemispheric level, and a dramatic change in the concept of cooperation and how to achieve it at the regional level.
From its foundation, the OAS has been captive of the conflict between two paradigms, that of an organization controlled by its member states and that of one deploying an active role as an international actor in its own right (Legler, forthcoming 2014). Several factors account for this. First, in a context of high power asymmetry between the US and Latin American member states, the organization has faced the dilemma of fulfilling their competing visions of regionalism (Grabendorff, 1982). Second, the OAS was intended to contain and fend off global rivalries in the context of the Cold War, and promote – together with the Rio Treaty – regional security through pacific settlement procedures and collective arrangements. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, the conflict in Central America revealed its limited capacities to play an effective political role, and the OAS entered a period of decline. While this severely questioned its future role (Tokatlian, 1984), the organization was perceived as inefficient and irrelevant (Herz, 2011).

Also framed by the rationality of the Cold War, but with the decisive thrust of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) II (Wionczek, 1970, Mace, 1988), different sub-regional initiatives flourished in the 1950s and 1960s. The main objective was no longer political unity but rather economic cooperation, namely to promote the constitution of a regional market to allow thus for the enlargement of national markets and the development of national industries, while at the same time reducing the region’s economic and political dependence on advanced industrial economies. Within this consensus, two different cooperation schemes were set up in 1960: the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) and the Central American Common Market (CACM). Whereas the first one was of limited scope as it just sought to establish free trade and achieve sectoral complementarity agreements, the CACM envisaged the establishment of a common market, including special treatment for particular sectors or less developed member states. However, this first wave of economic regional projects was short-lived. As they fell short of expectations in terms of the distribution of costs and benefits (LAFTA)
or the scope of trade liberalization and the degree of industrialization (CACM), the first one did not get off the ground and the second one collapsed at an early stage. Disenchantment with the first wave of regional cooperation did not prevent yet second attempts in the 1970s and 1980s, when new institutions were also set up to replace older one, as in the case of Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA). The creation of the Andean Group in 1969, a direct to response to the failure of LAFTA, established an innovative and far-reaching cooperation scheme that went well beyond trade liberalization, and envisaged a common external tariff, the coordination of industrial policies and cooperation in relevant social agendas, namely, education, health and labor.

Nevertheless, the 1970s and 1980s were years of crisis and stalemate, equally affecting economic cooperation and wider hemispheric frameworks under the OAS. However, as countries underwent democratic restoration and embarked on deep structural adjustment programs, intended to promote deregulation, privatization and trade liberalization, including tariff reduction and the elimination of subsidies, the 1990s saw the relaunching of old regional schemes and the setting up of new ones. Apart from the dense intraregional activity initiated from the South, this third wave of regionalism introduced North-South agreements as the most innovative feature of inclusion (Fawcett, 1995), being this inconceivable within the previous paradigm and as late as the mid-1980s.

In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) set a precedent for the Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) and later bilateral and plurilateral agreements promoted by both the United States and the EU. The FTAA was supposed to create a free trade area from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego by 2005, within the wider framework of the process of the Summit of the Americas (SOA), which certainly reinforced the process of modernization and reactivation of the OAS as a relevant actor in regional governance (Bianculli, 2003).
Within this new paradigm, labelled as ‘new regionalism’ (see interalia Gamble and Payne, 1996a, Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998) or ‘open regionalism’ (CEPAL, 1994), regional cooperation pursued export promotion and market competitiveness. Thus, the advent of new regionalism dramatically reshaped the global political economy in the 1990s, transforming the North-South architecture in the process.

By the 2000s, as the neoliberal model exhausted and many countries turned to the left (Castañeda, 2006, Levitsky and Roberts, 2011) and sought a national development strategy, a fourth wave of regionalism emerged, which has been labeled as strategic (Briceño-Ruiz, 2001, 2007), post-liberal (Veiga and Rios, 2007, Sanahuja, 2008, SELA, 2010) and post-hegemonic (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012), among others. Despite the various denominations at play, a common thread runs through these analyses: these initiatives are portrayed as moving from an exclusive focus on free trade and economic objectives to cooperation in a wide range of areas, from macroeconomic and industrial cooperation, especially in infrastructure, to energy, monetary, social and development cooperation. Once again, and to the extent that these new regional projects coexist with previous ones, (empirical and theoretical) plurality turns out to be the main characteristic of regional cooperation in Latin America.

4. **On theoretical debates and concepts**

The EU has traditionally and maybe naturally, monopolized the literature on regionalism and regional cooperation. Even if the first attempts at regional cooperation in both regions emerged rather simultaneously during the postwar years, as initiatives in Latin America stagnated or collapsed, Europe remained as the intellectual laboratory for the study of regionalism and regional integration (Breslin et al., 2002).
From a theoretical standpoint, the first wave of regional cooperation was thus the focus of (neo) functionalist approaches that promoted comparative analyses (Haas and Schmitter, 1964, Haas, 1967). Nevertheless, as (neo) functionalism found that the two main factors leading to political integration were missing in Latin America, namely spillover and build up (Schmitter, 1969), this approach found its (temporal) death.

Regional cooperation in Latin America has also offered space for the development of relevant indigenous theories, being this specially marked during the early years of old regionalism. Against modernization theory, the structuralist school attempted at analyzing how to encourage and sustain development. Through ECLA – under the lead of Raul Prebisch – and the Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) iii, this strand showed the strong connection between the region’s underdevelopment and its insertion in the global capitalist system, which produced asymmetrical relations between the core and periphery (ECLA, 1950). To change the unequal terms of trade between primary products and manufactured goods and make thus the region less vulnerable to shifts in global markets, the organization advocated state-led industrialization to promote import substitution, together with the creation of enlarged domestic markets. Within this strategy, economic regional cooperation and the articulation of regional markets were fundamental to achieve development and autonomy, on the one hand, and to surpass Latin America’s dependent position within the international system, on the other. In turn, ECLAC also influenced dependency theory as formulated by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979), among others; the first genuine local approach interrogating the region’s international insertion and its impact on political, economic and social development. Still, the structuralist school faced increasing criticisms given that regional economic cooperation did not follow its original assumptions (Rosenthal, 1991). In practice, the result was closed regional schemes unable to compete in international markets, even if already in the late 1960s, CEPAL scholars were critical of the
excess of the strategy and advocated a ‘mixed model’, to combine import substitution industrialization (ISI) with export diversification and regional cooperation. Intellectual opposition came from both economic orthodoxy and the left (Ocampo and Ros, 2011). Neoclassical and economists criticized the inefficiencies created by trade protection and the anti-export bias and advocated instead an outward oriented strategy as that of East Asian countries. The left focused on the inability to change the unequal social structures while also leading to new forms of dependence on foreign capital and technology. Political opposition came from liberal middle classes and those sectors relying heavily on primary goods exports (Bresser Pereira, 2011).

In all, analyses dealing with the specificities of regionalism and regional cooperation under the ISI model remained rather minimal and, together with dependency theory, neglected thereafter. Nevertheless, they would set the connection between regional cooperation and international political economy (IPE) as a trait of regional theories in Latin America (Bianculli, 2010), being this reinforced by the failure to distinguish between international relations and IPE in indigenous international relations studies (Tickner, 2003).

The revival of regionalism in the 1990s saw similar theoretical disputes, though in this case, between EU theories and new regionalism approaches. In fact, the intense regional activity was accompanied by a variety of studies and approaches informing research on regionalism and regional cooperation, which were characterized by attempts at moving beyond – and sometimes complementing – EU studies and integration theory on the basis that these could not fully account for these new phenomena.

With a focus on Latin America, new or open regionalism offered fertile ground for the development of different theoretical approaches intended to apprehend the particularities of these new empirical realities. Three questions have guided the study of regional cooperation in Latin America thereafter. In the light of the shortcoming of preceding experiences, studies first asked why regional cooperation was back and looked
thus into the endogenous and exogenous drivers underlying this intense regional activity. A second line of enquiry dealt with the outcomes, that is to say, how these processes evolved, and finally, analyses have delved into the impact of this regional activity on the domestic arena, being a recurrent interest in indigenous approaches given their focus on the domestic consequences of Latin American countries’ insertion into the global scenario.

4.1. Why is regionalism back?

The literature has underscored different drivers – both endogenous and exogenous – as underlying the intense regional activity of the 1990s in Latin America.

Among exogenous drivers, the end of the Cold War and the increasing integration and globalization are usually portrayed as the dividing line between the old or first waves of regionalism and the so-called ‘new regionalism’ (Fawcett, 1995). Thus, whereas the ‘old regionalism’ of the 1950s and 1970s was a devise to promote industrialization through high tariffs and protectionist measures and reduce thus dependency on the international economy, the new regional schemes were part and parcel of the effort to open national and regional markets in response to the accelerated transnationalization of trade and production processes.

Within this global context, and as countries undertook thorough structural reform programs and opened up their economies after almost 50 years of sealed markets and high protectionism, regional cooperation appeared as the most viable option for Latin American countries to incorporate effectively in global markets (Gamble and Payne, 1996b). Regionalism was thus conceived as building block to global liberalization through the interplay between state-led processes of liberalization and (de)regulation, on the one hand, and informal and bottom up processes of regionalization as promoted by non-state actors, on the other (Hurrell, 1995b, Boas et al., 1999, Hurrell, 2005). In sum, new regionalism is portrayed as extroverted rather than introverted, reflecting thus the deeper interdependence
of the global political economy and the relationship between globalization and regionalization (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000).

Within this more general framework of policy reform, North-South agreements appeared to be a ‘rational’ policy choice for Latin American countries. First, and in compensation for the adoption of structural reform programs, these agreements allowed the possibility of winning stable access to Northern markets which at least the South wished for but was never able to get through multilateralism (Tussie, 2003). Second, Latin American would thus signal the rationality and predictability of their policies and their long-term commitment to remain on track with this reform process (Wyatt-Walter, 1995). Finally, credibility, stability and predictability appeared as key elements to attract foreign direct investment in a global context wherein bilateral cooperation and financial assistance were ever scarcer (Phillips, 2003b).

In a similar vein, research has also claimed external actors – namely the US and the EU – as playing a relevant role in shaping regional cooperation in Latin America. On the one hand, the EU is portrayed as offering a model for the development and consolidation of Latin American regionalism through cooperation and trade (Söderbaum and van Langenhove, 2006, De Lombaerde and Schulz, 2009), but also by forcing Latin American blocs to speak with one voice, which certainly contrasts to the ‘divide to reign’ strategy of the US. Not surprisingly then, the US and the EU strategies have led to different regional governance patterns, having in turn a differential impact in the way actors define their interests and collective action strategies both at the domestic and regional levels (Grugel, 2004, 2006). Nevertheless, when negotiating with Mercosur, for example, they have both established increasing procedural and governance demands on their Southern partners (Botto and Bianculli, 2009a). On the other hand, the US has been key in explaining the success of the CACM (Schmitter, 1970, Mattli, 1999), and the 1990s attempts through

Clearly, these analyses more strongly revolved around the imperative of becoming competitive in an international economic system characterized by accelerated globalization. Economic endogenous factors were underscored as the potential engines for regional cooperation. Whereas intra-Latin American regionalism was ushered by the need for major markets to build up economies of scales, open or new regionalism was directed towards the opening of domestic markets and increased trade liberalization to ensure entrance to markets in the North and attract foreign direct investments. However, regional cooperation is not only about the economy; and arguments solely relying on economic variables miss the political impetus supporting regionalism in Latin America. Regional cooperation is perceived as a way of building and retaining power not only at the regional level, but also in multilateral and global arenas (Tussie, 2009a). North-South initiatives might also be used as way of enhancing these countries’ regional voice in the wider global scenario (Hout and Grugel, 1999). In sum, even if limited to free trade, regional cooperation is always about promoting political objectives as well.

Among the many political factors, democracy is portrayed as a significant factor triggering regional cooperation in the 1990s (Dabène, 2009b, Gardini, 2010) and neutralizing democratic reversal (Steves, 2001). The specific legal system has also been described as a relevant element to explain regional cooperation, namely, whether the domestic legal system relies on common or civil law (Duina, 2006, 2010). In terms of actors, presidents and presidential diplomacy are taken as the most relevant drivers of regional cooperation in Latin America (Malamud, 2005, Merke, 2010). To a certain extent, recent initiatives are explained by the central role played by left-leaning presidents (Veiga and Rios, 2007), on the one hand, and the competition between Brazil’s Lula and Venezuela’s Chávez for regional leadership, on the other (Burges, 2007, Giacalone, 2013).
While the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) – which offers a single umbrella for various sub regional schemes in South America – builds on Brazil’s geopolitical designs, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA) is a tool to promote Venezuela’s influence in the region by making oil available at discount rates, being this especially attractive for smaller economies in the region (Briceño-Ruiz, 2010).

Without fully rejecting the relevant role of presidents, and while acknowledging that states sit in the driving seat of regional cooperation processes, studies have argued that this has not prevented the participation of other actors as these processes advanced (Tussie et al., 2004). Still, within the projects starting in the 1990s, non-state participation remained largely limited to business actors, especially multinationals and ‘multilatinas’ (Gardini, 2006, Bianculli, 2010), who attempted to minimize thus the risks associated with regional cooperation (Phillips, 2003b). Scholars have also underscored the extent to which these cooperation processes have promoted non-governmental participation, in countries where the decision-making process has been traditionally characterized as elitist and hermetic (INTAL-ITD-STA, 2002). To disentangle the complex and multiple domestic determinants of regionalism, studies have assumed a broader conception of the state: as an actor having preferences and interests, and also as an (institutional) arena for the articulation of political preferences coming from business and civil society actors (Tussie and Trucco, 2010). This confirms in turn, the idea that within each regional project there are several competing actors (Marchand et al., 1999), including academia and research as these attempted to promote consensus and a shared understanding of the effects of cooperation, together with a definition of preferences (Botto, 2009a, Tussie, 2009b).

Political factors can also account for the demise and failure of regional schemes, starting with the old regionalism. Taken to the initiatives of the 1990s, to the extent that the FTAA revolved around the US aspiration for wide-hemispheric unity, this initiative fell victim of the conflicting visions of regional cooperation held by the US and Latin
American countries. Not surprisingly, the failure of the FTAA led to a series of bilateral agreements between the US and particular Latin American countries. Additionally, it triggered the formation of new schemes – the Pacific Alliance and ALBA – and the reinvigoration of already existing initiatives in the Southern Cone as in the case of Mercosur, all of which has resulted in three different models or axis of economic cooperation (Briceño-Ruiz, 2014). Rather simultaneously, the stagnation and demise of the SOA and the FTAA affected the OAS. Analyses however, underscore that the regional organization will still be a relevant actor in the region. Even if it will have to share such role with new comers, namely UNASUR and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which is now replacing the Rio Group, it is in a better position to do so since it is the only forum for dialogue between the US and Latin American countries (Legler, 2013, forthcoming 2014).

From the perspective of Latin American countries, as these acknowledged that free trade was insufficient to promote regionalism, they more directly promoted non-trade agendas, including production issues, cooperation in social policy and defense agreements, as shown by the broadening of the agenda of Mercosur starting in the 2000s, but also by the creation of UNASUR (Briceño-Ruiz, 2010, Diamint, 2013). In sum, economic and political factors underlay the attempts at regional cooperation in Latin America, and recent initiatives are not an exception.

4.2. Institutions of regional cooperation in Latin America

Consensus on a common conceptual understanding and terminology of regionalism and regional integration still lags behind (Mansfield and Solingen, 2010). Regionalism can be placed in a continuum ranging between two extremes: cooperation and integration (Börzel, 2011). Whereas regional cooperation refers to the joint exercise of state-based political authority through intergovernmental instances of decision-making in economic, political or
security issues, regional integration involves binding decisions in both negative and policy integration issues at the supranational level (Börzel, 2011:10).

Even if there is a strong and rather continuous trend towards regional cooperation in Latin America, institutionalization has remained weak, showing a large gap between an oversupply of laws and a low degree of compliance, and a divergence between scope and level of integration (Dabène, 2009b:23). Furthermore, attempts at regional cooperation have not led to the creation of supranational institutions, with the only exception of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Andean Community Court of Justice who do rely on supranational powers. These remain as clear outliers within Latin America given that regional cooperation projects have consciously avoided ‘the institutional and bureaucratic structures of traditional international organizations and of the regionalist model represented by the EC’ (Fawcett and Hurrell, 1995:3). This seems paradoxical given the EU’s (political and economic) efforts to promote its own model of institutional model of integration in Latin America (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano Rivarola, 2009), being Mercosur an example in case (Sanchez Bajo, 2005). To account for this, the literature has deployed different explanations.

From a historical and path dependence approach, the lack of articulation of supranational bodies relates to the process of state building, which did not rely on a nation. The first calls for political unity took place just when the process of both state and nation building were still undergoing, and in turn, this prevented the identification with a supranational polity (Roy, 2012). Institutional accounts refer to governments’ reticence to surrender political sovereignty and keep strict control over the cooperation process. This reliance on presidents for the negotiation and implementation of regional strategies would allow enough flexibility to push forward the projects, avoid possible paralyses and deadlocks, and can also work to defuse crises on particular events (Dominguez, 1998,
However, the lack of a solid institutional setting may have a negative impact on the longevity of regional cooperation (Emerson, 2014).

Such reluctance and the leading role played by presidents relates to domestic characteristics, namely presidentialism and the fact that other actors – e.g. Parliaments – play a negligible role in the formulation of regional and international policies. In this respect, regional institutional developments and dynamics very much resemble those in member states (Duina, 2006:185).

Despite this consensus, differences emerge in the ways in which this lack of supranationality affects Latin American regionalism. Whereas regional cooperation and integration can be viewed as a continuum (Dabène, 2009a), they can also be considered as two opposite and contending approaches to regionalism. Maybe because of an underlying bias towards the EU model (Malamud, 2004, Malamud and Schmitter, 2011), scholars contend that regionalism has reached its peak and that there is no place for regional integration (Malamud and Gardini, 2012) whereas other regional initiatives are just a ‘just a subset of cooperation – and not the most successful or even the most frequent’ (Malamud, 2013:2).

These visions and assessments contrast to studies delving into recent regional cooperation strategies in Latin America. These initiatives remain as state-led processes and though lacking the transfer of sovereignties – the main requirement of regional integration – they attempt at providing a space for the provision of public goods in various areas, including infrastructure (Briceño-Ruiz, 2010) and soft policy fields: health (Ventura de Freitas Lima, 2011, Riggirozzi, 2012), education (Bianculli, 2013) and migration (Margheritis, 2013). While the statist and intergovernmental character of regional initiatives remains unaltered, they promote the participation of networks of state and non-state actors, leading to innovative formulas of cooperation.
In fact, the opening of channels to allow the participation of citizens either through the establishment of parliaments or direct mechanisms, as in the case of consultative councils and forums, was one of the features brought about by new regionalism initiatives in the 1990s. Until then, the Andean Pact was the only regional organization relying on a Consultative Council, an Economic and Social Advisory Committee and a regional parliament. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of similar developments in the CARICOM and the newly created Mercosur. Thus, regional cooperation processes were not only conceived as devices of democratic consolidation, but were also intended to promote their own democratization to cope with the ‘democratic deficit’. Nonetheless, results remained limited. The opening of channels has been modest and the participation of societal actors, mainly business, in the construction and evolution of the regional projects has been through state-led institutional frameworks (Grugel, 2004, Gardini, 2006, Botto, 2007).

Despite the varying assessments of the level of ‘institutionalization’ of regional strategies in Latin America, keeping supranationality and the EU as the frame of reference ‘precludes by definition any comparison with other regional institutions’ (Börzel, 2011:8) and prevents hence for unraveling the ways in which regionalism is built and developed beyond Europe. Additionally, analysis underscoring supply and demand conditions are also too focused on the experience of the EU and expect regional integration processes to follow a similar path or trajectory. The more recent initiatives show that the traditional categorization between formal and informal, state and non-state may be insufficient to account for the various regional paths and strategies currently taking place in Latin America (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012). Moreover, what recent regional developments bring to light is the fact that membership is no longer exclusive. On the contrary, Latin America regionalism is increasingly characterized by overlapping memberships and strategies (see Annex 1), an issue that demands greater scrutiny.
4.3. The regional and the domestic: Levels, boundaries and lines

The extent to which regional cooperation in Latin America has an impact on domestic governance requires further exploration. Building on the idea of Europeanization, and despite the low level of institutionalization of NAFTA, this process has been portrayed as leading to the strengthening of capacities – institutional, legal and civil society – in Mexico while also promoting domestic adjustments in technical and specialized areas (Aspinwall, 2009). Similarly, though not explicitly acknowledging this notion, scholars have underscored similar transformations in Southern countries. Despite the lack of supranationality, regional cooperation seems to have elicited different developments at the domestic level.

Dealing with simultaneous cooperation initiatives in the 1990s increased the need for expertise and effective coordination among public agencies. In this respect, the regular patterns of interaction at the regional and hemispheric level promoted enhanced enmeshment and provided a space of learning and socialization for public officials and bureaucrats (Gómez Mera, 2005). In time, this has certainly contributed to deepening the commitment of bureaucrats and technical cadres to cooperation projects. Still, differences and contrasting objectives persisted among relevant political actors, especially during the early 1990s (Botto and Bianculli, 2009b). Additionally, and once set in motion, regional processes triggered close policy networks between state and business actors, based on expertise and mutual personal trust (Bull, 2008). In this respect, the articulation of networks bridging the gap between North and South, and bringing together state and public officials (Jordana and Levi-Faur, 2007), and business and civil society actors (Tussie and Botto, 2003, Grugel, 2006, Botto, 2009b, von Bülow, 2009, 2010) has been underscored as one of the factors leading to these domestic changes, showing in turn the increasing interconnectedness across regional and domestic politics.
In time, countries evidenced a slow and gradual reorganization of the domestic political and institutional mechanisms established, while enacting new forms to allow non-state actors’ participation (Jordana and Ramió, 2003, Bouzas, 2004, Tussie et al., 2004, Botto, 2007). However, analyses highlight that given that such mechanisms have been more permeable to business actors, they have contributed to the de-facto exclusion of wider societal actors.

Overall, and despite this common trend, national variation persists in terms of domestic trade governance mechanisms. Based on the idea that national and regional governance are not antinomies (Weiss, 1999), the ways in which state and non-state actors respond to different regional challenges depend heavily on each country’s institutional, political and social configurations.

5. By way of conclusion

This paper asked how and why regionalism has changed in Latin America. Though an enduring feature of Latin American history, regionalism has not converged in a single initiative. Hence, rather than through enlargement, regionalism has evolved through the creation and recreation of regional schemes, and has undergone distinct phases showing variation across space and time. This has given rise to a vast and dense literature, especially in the late 25 years. On either a case study or comparative basis, studies have mainly attempted at disentangling what new regionalism brought as novel and unique, hence differentiating (and maybe superseding) the old schemes, while also discussing vis-à-vis EU approaches.

The region seems now to be entering a phase of increasing proliferation of regional forms of cooperation, showing overlapping memberships and addressing both complementing and competing political, economic and social agendas. If the UE is taken as
benchmark, this complex mosaic may be viewed as dysfunctional as it prevents integration and unity under a grand ensemble. Still, a more comprehensive understanding of the current reconfiguration of the regional scenario in Latin America today requires combining and complementing theoretical insights and approaches.

First, and given that the literature has neglected the study of regionalism in Latin America as waves of agreements, rather than analyzing each of these stages as standing on their own, and further promoting this Babylonian mix of concepts, understanding the resilience of regionalism in Latin America requires looking into it as a process. Exploring the institutional dynamics and constellations of actors, their ideas, preferences and strategies in a particular historical context is fundamental to unravel the evolution of these waves and explain the current regional configuration.

Second, while new regionalism studies emphasized the role of non-state actors, these seem to have underestimated the role of the state in Latin America. State preferences, political considerations and formal institutions are relevant elements to account for regional cooperation in Latin America, being this especially true today when ‘the state is back’ and regaining spotlight in political and academic debates. Nevertheless, rather than taking the state as a monolithic and autonomous entity, focus should be on how state capacities are constructed through various mechanisms of political interaction and coordination with societal actors both at the domestic and regional levels.

Third, rather than measuring the success of current processes according to the degree of formalization of regional institutions, analysis could assess to what extent original objectives are met. Given the current emphasis on social development, both through the implementation of programs and the promotion and negotiation of norms and standards, it is worth measuring whether this mosaic of regional forms allow for solidarity and economic and social development. In so doing, academic thinking could contribute practical knowledge susceptible of being translated into concrete policy formulations.
Finally, and as portrayed by new regionalism, it is fundamental to account for the factors outside the region that influence regional cooperation and how these interact with internal influences, namely domestic constellations of actors and dynamics, and in turn how this regional cooperation impacts on the region’s insertion in the global arena.

In all, a more nuanced understanding of regional cooperation in Latin America calls for a combination of theoretical perspectives to examine the ways in which regional governance arrangements help states respond to domestic and global challenges. Furthermore, in so doing, to what extent do these responses open a window of opportunity for the region to act as norm-maker rather than norm-taker? The latter appears to be a more relevant issue in the context of the current global order marked by emerging powers, changing political and economic balances and competing patterns of regional cooperation.
### Annex 1. Regional cooperation in Latin America (1948-2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regional organization</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Organization of American States (OAS)</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada (full member in 1990), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela * Cuba was excluded in 1962 and invited to join the OAS in 2009 but refused to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Organization of Central American States (ODECA)</td>
<td>Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Central American Common Market (CACM; created by ODECA)</td>
<td>Costa Rica (joined 1962), Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA)</td>
<td>Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA)</td>
<td>Antigua, Barbados and British Guiana; in 1968: Antigua, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana; Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and Jamaica; Belize (1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Andean Pact</td>
<td>Bolivia, Chile (left 1976), Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (joined 1973)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market (In fact, CARIFTA turns into CARICOM)</td>
<td>Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad &amp; Tobago; in 1983 the other eight Caribbean territories joined CARICOM; Bahamas (1983) became member state of the Community, but not of the Common Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) (replaced LAFTA)</td>
<td>Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba (joined 1999), Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Panamá (2011), Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)</td>
<td>Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Anguilla and British Virgin Islands (Associated members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Group of Eight (based on Contadora Support Group, 1983)</td>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Group of Rio</td>
<td>Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Surinam, Uruguay, Venezuela and CARICOM member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Common Market of the South (Mercosur)</td>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela (2012) and Bolivia (accession process), Chile, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Guyana and Surinam (in process of ratification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central American System of Integration (SICA) (reformed ODECA)</td>
<td>Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá; Belize (joined 2000), Dominican Republic (joined 2013); Regional observers: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, EU,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event/Institution</td>
<td>Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Association of Caribbean States (ACS)</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela; Associate members: Aruba, France (on behalf of French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique) and the Netherlands Antilles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)</td>
<td>Canada, Mexico, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Group of Three</td>
<td>Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela (left 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Summit of the Americas</td>
<td>OAS member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Andean Community (CAN) (replaced the Andean Pact)</td>
<td>Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela (left 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)</td>
<td>OAS member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA)</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Commonwealth of Dominica, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC)</td>
<td>Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá and Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)</td>
<td>Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela; Observers: Panamá and Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Santa Lucia, Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Pacific Alliance</td>
<td>Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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i I include the Caribbean when using the term Latin America.

ii In 1984, ECLA was extended to include Caribbean countries, and became ECLAC.

iii The INTAL is a unit of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Since its creation in 1965, it has supported the IDB’s cooperation strategy and has contributed to the formulation and dissemination of ‘knowledge on the benefits of integration processes’.

iv These include the New Regionalism Approach (Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998), the world order approach (Gamble and Payne, 1996b, Grugel, 1996), the humane global governance
approach (Falk, 1995) and the new regionalism/post-modern approach (Marchand et al., 1999).