Abstract: A lively and interesting literature exists on contemporary Latin American regionalism and regional integration in the context of globalization. Much of this literature emanates from Latin America and Europe in languages other than English and is under-represented in the mainstream IR literature. Much of this literature takes globalization as a given, a relatively under-theorized concept. At the same time, alternative and sometimes competing regionalisms of various kinds (e.g., intra- and inter-regional partnership agreements, regional or sub-regional economic integration efforts, regional or sub-regional security cooperation plans, and sub-regional political integration schemes) involving Latin American states complicate the intriguing question of whether the proliferation of Latin American and Caribbean regional cooperation and integration experiments constitute counter-hegemonic steps toward a “new” Latin American vision of regional unity in hemispheric and international relations or only limited efforts to survive in a neoliberal hegemonic structure of globalization and/or neo-Pan-Americanism. Meanwhile, United States-based scholars and policy makers seem largely marginal to these interesting debates. This paper seeks to review the relevant literature, privileging non-English language scholarship, and inquire into its theoretical and policy implications.
Contending (with) Latin American Regionalisms: Theoretical and Policy Implications from a North American Perspective

<<...asistimos a una sucesión de cumbres, tantas que parece una cordillera (...), Cumbre de Unasur, Cumbre de Mercosur, Cumbre Iberoamericana, Cumbre de la OEA. Tenemos muchas instituciones, pero falta la verdadera voluntad de integración de nuestro continente.>>
Former Chilean President Sebastián Piñera, 2011 (quoted in Comini and Frenkel 2014, p. 74)

There has been a proliferation of regional cooperation and integration schemes in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent years. There is also a lively and interesting literature emanating mainly from scholars based in Latin America (and Europe) focused on the so-called “new regionalism” of Latin American states. Unfortunately, it is a literature that is largely ignored in the North American and English language IR literature in general and in the IR literature on regionalism in particular. For example, major introductory IR college textbooks in the US well as more advanced collections on IR theory rarely mention Latin American states or their behaviors at all, much less their current and proliferating regional cooperation and integration experiments (see e.g., Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2014; Dunne, Kurke and Smith, 2013; Reus-Smit and Snidal, 2010). Even English language college texts that are more specialized on inter-American or US-Latin American relations seem to ignore all but the most well-known recent regional economic experiments such as NAFTA, Mercosur, and the Andean Community while taking a mainly US interests-oriented perspective on these organisms (see, e.g., Weeks, 2008). Peter H. Smith (2008) is an important exception insofar as he takes care to incorporate Latin American voices and perspectives while drawing from multiple disciplines to understand the patterns and paradoxes of inter-American relations.
The more specialized literature in English on regional economic integration experiences is located within the IR subfield of international or global political economy (see Hülsemeyer 2010), but this literature also largely marginalizes most Latin American regional experiments -- and non-English language and Latin American scholarship-- while taking the EU and countries of the Global North as the paradigmatic examples of regional cooperation and integration (see e.g., Hülsemeyer (2010), Mansfield and Milner (1999) among others). Mansfield and Milner’s (1999) important article on the emerging “New Wave of Regionalism” in the international system has surprisingly little to say about Latin American regional experiments or its proliferating preferential trade agreements.\(^1\) Amy Below (2010) offers an otherwise excellent review article on Latin American foreign policy that includes attention to recent Latin American regionalism but focuses only on the English language literature for the English language publication of the *International Studies Encyclopedia* (a.k.a., The ISA Compendium). In short, much/most of the non-English language Latin American and European scholarship on Latin American regionalism seems to be woefully under-represented in the US-centric and English-language-centric world of mainstream IR.

This apparent linguistic divide is also an economic, social, intellectual, and ultimately political one that structures --partitions off-- the specialized scholarly markets in the field of IR into separate geographical regions. This ironic situation invites North-American-based IR scholars (like myself) to challenge these regionalizing structures and separations and try to help connect these separate literatures. Scholars like Arlene B. Tinker (2008), Tinker and Blaney (2012) and others are beginning to make some headway in challenging the “Western core

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\(^1\) Mansfield and Milner’s (1999) article focuses on preferential trade agreements (PTAs) as a catch-all term for various kinds of regional economic integration schemes, from the Prussian Zollverein during the first wave of regional agreements to the EU to ASEAN. Their examples from Latin America include brief mentions of the Andean Pact, the Caribbean Basin Initiative, NAFTA, and Mercosur. Significantly, there are no Spanish-language sources cited in their bibliography, and there is only one source that specifically mentions Latin America in its title.
dominance” of IR; Tinker and Wæver’s new series with Routledge titled “Worlding Beyond the West” promises to “explore the role of geocultural factors in setting the concepts and epistemologies through which IR knowledge is produced” (Routledge series marketing blurb). Such work is important so that we can begin to challenge our own partially-formed knowledge and engage in a more comprehensive, transversalist and cosmopolitan research project.

In this spirit, this paper seeks to review the recent, representative, and relevant scholarly literature on Latin American regionalism, privileging non-English language sources from Latin America and Europe, to inquire into its strengths and weaknesses as well as its key theoretical and policy implications, and to begin to connect it with the predominant English-language-based literature on regionalism. Such an exercise can reveal a number of interesting conceptual questions, theoretical and practical debates, and alternative visions of regionalism in and from the Western Hemisphere. Such a project can offer a broader and deeper understanding of the theories and political practices of regionalism in Latin America and can inform the broader and increasingly worlding discipline of IR/international studies.

**Problematizing “Regions” and “Regionalism” in “Latin America” (and the Caribbean)**

A fundamental starting problem concerns how terms like “region” and “regionalism” and even “Latin America” should be conceptualized. Mansfield and Milner’s (1999) brief discussion of regionalism as “an elusive concept” notes that both economists and political scientists have grappled for definitional clarity without much success. Although earlier scholars tended to use geography or geographic proximity as essential elements to defining a “region,” other scholars

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2 Much of this literature is drawn from work I have done as the Section Editor on Latin America’s International Relations –General for the Handbook on Latin American Studies. See Meyer McAleese, 2014, 2012, and 2010.
pointed to such criteria as language, culture, religion or level of development. However, social constructivists and critical theorists reject such criteria, asserting that geographic designations and communal identities are socially constructed (Mansfield and Milner 1999; Katzenstein 2005). Hülsmeier (2010) adds that terms like “region,” “regionalism,” “regional integration” and even “regionalization” “are often used synonymously” in the literature without adding much definitional clarity. Part of the problem may be that economists and political scientists generally have different questions in mind, with the former focused more on studying the concentration of economic flows and the latter focused more on studying the foreign policy coordination and/or power considerations of states (Mansfield and Milner 1999).

In the recent literature focused on Latin America, economic and political criteria are both at work in discerning regions and regional integration, but so are the geographic and other criteria questioned by others. For example, several scholars who explore the so-called “new regionalism” unfolding in the Western Hemisphere hold that processes of globalization are producing new geographies based on new regional centers of economic, political, and normative power (see Taglioni and Théodat 2008; Gamblin 2005; Gireault 2004; see also Grabendorff 2005; Rivarola Puntigliano 2007). NAFTA encompasses a powerful North American center or “zone” dominated by the United States in the Western Hemisphere; however, other counter-hegemonic centers and sub-regions have emerged, particularly Mercosur in the southern zone and a semi-peripheral Andean sub-region. The Central American and Caribbean sub-regions constitute dependent peripheral spaces pivoting toward the Northern zone but are susceptible to counter-hegemonic forces (Gireault 2004). The contemporary economic and political processes that define these zones, regions and subregions, and the emerging Braudelian and constructivist
discourses about them, are interesting contributions to the field, even if their “newness” can be questioned.³

Of course, a second problem in studying regionalism in Latin America is that the very idea of “Latin America” must also be problematized as a social construction imbued with economic, social, cultural, and political meanings and complexities rooted in a long history of conquest and colonialism and the expansion of capitalism from the early Modern period to the present (see Guardiola Rivera, 2010). We shall not dwell on the full import of this question here other than to note the following. First, the historical construction of the “Western Hemisphere” and the “Americas” as a separate (Other) region of the world by European colonial powers still inflects our discourse and our thinking (see Guardiola-Rivera 2010). The further historical constructions of separate geo-cultural and geopolitical regions in the “Americas” into “North,” “Central,” “South,” “Caribbean,” “Spanish,” “Portuguese,” “English,” “French,” “African,” etc., etc., represent a hemispheric dis-integration wrought by the history of colonialism and, starting with the late 18th and early 19th centuries (and beyond) the formal decolonization and the birth of new nation-states. In other words, for many of the Spanish-speaking continental states (at least) in the Western Hemisphere, formal Independence meant the disintegration of the macro-colonial economic, political and administrative divisions imposed by the Spanish (and Portuguese).⁴ Poignant examples of such disintegration include the break-up of Gran Colombia after a decade-long struggle for union after Independence from Spain, and the separation of the United

³ This paragraph draws from Meyer McAleese (2010).
⁴ Of course, separate pre-Independence national identities had been forming for a long time.
Provinces of Central America from Mexico in 1824 and the disintegration of that union into five separate states in 1838.5

Economic and political processes of re-configuration and re-integration into states and new economic regions and sub-regions unfolded through the 19th and 20th centuries under aegis of new hegemonic competition among European powers and (increasingly) the United States. Simón Bolívar’s (and others’) calls in the 1810s and 1820s for regional political unity in the face of European threats to Spanish American states’ independence were a counter-hegemonic effort to preserve national independence and autonomy. That is, Bolívar’s political strategy and discourse of a united Spanish America in the face of European threats was inspired partly by the example of the Congress of Vienna, but it was also the first Spanish American use of a regionalist foreign policy aimed at guaranteeing the sovereignty and autonomy of individual Spanish American states. Regional unity of several states in the face of foreign threats became a key element of the Spanish American diplomatic style throughout the 19th century, as demonstrated through the 19th century Congress movement (Heredia 2006; see also Meyer 1996). Regional cooperation and confederal unity would become and remain an ideal for achieving development, security, and autonomy for individual states in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cavieres Figueroa (2009), de la Reza (2009), Santana Castillo (2008), and Heredia (2006) offer interesting intellectual histories of these ideals of Latin American unity and integration (see also Guardiola Rivera 2010). One might object that there is also an important history of competition or rivalries between states in the Southern Cone sub-region (for example); however, Latin American diplomatic history also shows the rise of the more cooperative6 “condominium hegemony” of

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5 Central American states, particularly leaders associated with the Liberal parties, kept the idea of a federal union alive throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries, although Conservative leaders typically opposed such an idea.

6 At least vis-à-vis US interventionism in the circum-Caribbean region at the time and later during the Chaco War.
the ABC powers by the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Meyer 1992). The point is, there is a rich diplomatic and intellectual history about forging regional identity and unity based on geographic proximity, cultural and linguistic ties, and similar political aspirations (if not institutions) that is often overlooked by contemporary scholarship on Latin American regionalism. Indeed, there may be important clues in that history for theory building or for finding deeper bases in current regionalist economic and political practices than the current scholarship seems to appreciate.

In any case, there has been an impressive growth in the number of Latin American and Caribbean regional integration experiments since World War II. Paez Montalban and Vazquez Olivera (2008) present a very helpful reference work identifying and describing the region’s various economic integration and political cooperation agreements and organizations since 1945. However most of the current literature on Latin American regionalism comes from the subfield of political economy and focuses more on post-World War II examples of primarily regional \textit{economic} cooperation efforts and regional \textit{economic} integration schemes centered in various parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. This literature generally divides the post-WWII period into two timeframes and regionalism into two types. The 1950s through 1970s is considered the phase of the “old regionalism,” when economic integration experiments like the Andean Pact or the Central American Common Market were the focus of state-centric regionalism and were modeled on or compared to the European Economic Community’s experience. The second timeframe is the post-Cold War period, from the early 1990s to the present day, when the so-called “new regionalism” brought the proliferation of regional, sub-regional, and inter-regional preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and bilateral or multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs such as NAFTA) in the context of neoliberal globalization. Gambrill and Ruiz Napoles (2006) bridge these timeframes with a collection of essays reviewing old and
new theories of integration and featuring case studies of NAFTA, CAFTA and the Andean Community from the 1970s through the 1990s. The “lost decade” of the 1980s represents a turning point in regional economic integration models and processes, as debt and economic crises lingered across Latin America and the Caribbean (and beyond) and the United States and Great Britain pushed a neoliberal economic model on vulnerable states around the world. This neoliberal economic agenda ushered in (or accompanied) the current phase of economic and technological globalization.

By the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union had brought the end of the Cold War and the United States’ its “unipolar moment.” This dramatic change in the structure of power in the international system seemed to seal the triumph of neoliberal capitalism framed by the market fundamentalism of the “Washington Consensus” and the new WTO free trade rules. This in turn fed the proliferation of preferential trade agreements around the world and in Latin America since the 1990s with the aforementioned “new wave of regionalism”. However, 1993 brought the Maastricht Treaty and the Single Market of the European Union, perhaps the international system’s best example yet and Latin America’s most important model of regional integration. The phase of the so-called “new regionalism” in Latin America has unfolded in this international context.

With these admittedly brief and incomplete points, we now turn to look at the recent literature focusing on four primary types of regionalism evident in the practices of states in Latin America and the Caribbean since the end of the Cold War: Economic regionalism, political-diplomatic regionalism, security regionalism, and other kinds regional cooperation projects in functional areas (such as infrastructure, health, environment, gender justice, and crime prevention). Perhaps a fifth type of regionalism, one that is more transnational in nature, has

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7 I leave the question of causality here to another time.
emerged involving regionalized criminal networks and presenting states across the Americas with unprecedented economic, social and political challenges. The following sections will consider these various types of regionalism and the questions they have generated among scholars.

**Contemporary Economic Regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean:**

**Cooperation, Integration or Fragmentation?**

Most scholars under review see contemporary practices of regionalism around the world as a part of the current phase of neoliberal globalization; for many, globalization is taken as fact, an untheorized given, or starting point. As Godoy G. (2008), 194) put it, “*para América Latina, la globalización es un dato de la realidad. Constituye el contexto en la que está inmersa, y es dentro de éste que deberá buscar las soluciones a sus necesidades de desarrollo.*” However a number of scholars (e.g., Herrera Valencia 2005; Guadarrama González 2004; Katz 2006) offer more theoretical discussions of globalization, usually from a critical or historical structuralist (Dependency and/or World Systems Theory) approach before or as part of their discussions of regionalism. Scholars differ on the question of whether Latin American practices of regionalism and regional integration efforts are a necessary consequence of globalization or a concerted state strategy to try to tame it. Most Latin American writers tend to favor the latter position, holding the state as an agent of its own development even with a structural condition of dependency (see Stuhldreher 2004; Preciado Coronado 2010; Arashiro 2010; see also Gálvez Valega 2008; Cardoso and Faletto 1979). Cancino Cadena and Herrán (2007) nicely frame the predominant Dependency Theory argument that the dependent condition of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the global economy makes regional integration an important option or instrument of
states to achieve development. Arashiro (2011) makes a similar argument for the agency of states but does so from a non-dependency theory perspective, critiquing assumptions by some that the “new regionalism” is an automatic or necessary state strategy within a determined or fixed international structure of globalization. Rather, the author shows that elite ideas and ideologies as well as material interests underlie policy choices in international trade negotiations.

However, writers differ in their estimation of the nature, scope, and depth of the regionalization that has occurred, of states’ strategies or capabilities in pursuing different forms of regionalization, and of the presumed benefits of regionalization *cum* globalization. While many scholars are critical of neoliberal globalization processes (e.g., Barbosa 2005; Herrera Valencia 2005; Guadarrama González 2004; Rocha V. 2004) and their links to U.S. free trade policies (e.g., Brunelle 2006; Prevost & Weber 2005) or transnational investment patterns (e.g., Deblock, Brunelle & Rioux 2004; North, Clark & Petroni 2006), others are more interested in studying the econometric or structural details, the practical challenges, or the strategic alternatives that Latin American states face in dealing with globalization through a regionalist agenda.

Thus several scholars have been interested in examining the specific regional economic integration experiments recently undertaken by Latin American states, adapting the European Union’s example as a model (the so-called “old regionalism”) against which to assess their depth, breadth and prospects for success. These contemporary Latin American regional (or sub-regional) economic integration experiments include Mercosur, the Comunidad Andina de Naciones (CAN), the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA, the successor to the Central American Common Market [MCCA]), Caricom, etc. Particularly strong works or edited collections studying these organizations include Lagos (2008), Solís and Rojas Aravena (2006),
Altmann Borbón and Rojas Aravena (2008), Jaramillo (2008), Gambrill and Ruiz Nápoles (2006), Stuhldreher (2004) and Preciado Coronado (2010). Several of these scholars also have important government experience and approach the question from a problem-solving, policy making perspective in which regional economic cooperation and integration are key strategies for Latin American states’ ability to manage, limit or even escape the condition of economic dependency in the global capitalist system and the neoliberal economic agenda and political hegemony of the United States. Despite this more practical or policy-oriented approach, many remain critical of the actual progress of regional integration, as indicated by such titles as América Latina: ¿Integración o fragmentación? (Lagos, 2008) or América Latina y el Caribe: ¿Fragmentación o convergencia?: Experiencias recientes de la integración (Altmann Borbón and Rojas Aravena 2008). Drawing from this literature and applying neofuntionalist theory, Ahcar Cabarcas, Charris and González Arana (2013) find that ideological and structural fragmentation weakens the overall success of regional integration processes in Latin America. Rivarola Puntigliano (2007) offers a more positive assessment: Not only does he explore the “new regionalism” in Latin America as the other side of globalization in the post-Cold War period. He argues that Latin American regionalism serves as a “countercenter” in the emergence of new normative rules in the international system more generally (infra).

Some scholars (economists in particular) have been interested in offering more narrow econometric case studies of regional economic integration. For example, Bittencourt and Domingo (2004) study the effects of regional integration processes on foreign direct investment

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8 Richard Lagos Escobar served as President of Chile from 2000 to 2006 and a leading Socialist Party member since the 1970s; he earned his PhD in economics from Duke University in 1966 ("Richard Lagos" 2014). Luis Guillermo Solís is now the President of Costa Rica. His career has also spanned both academia and government service and is a member of the center-left Citizens’ Action Party. He served as Chief of Staff of the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry and special advisor to Oscar Arias during the Esquipulas Peace Process in the late 1980s. In his presidential campaign, he pledged to avoid signing new free trade agreements and instead improve the administration of those already in force (Aarón Sequeira 2014). Another scholar-diplomat familiar to students of Latin American foreign policy is Heraldo Muñoz, currently serving as Chile’s Foreign Minister.

Alongside the more formal (“first generation”) regional economic integration experiments modeled on the European Union’s earlier phases (e.g., customs union to common market), a “new wave” (“second generation”) of regionalism based on preferential trade agreements (PTAs) among two or more states has spread around the world since the end of the Cold War (see Mansfield and Milner 1999; Quiliconi, 2014). As noted above, the United States fanned this wave at the global level in the 1990s through GATT/WTO negotiations and, in the Western Hemisphere, through NAFTA and the US proposal for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) at the first Summit of the Americas in 1994. However the FTAA negotiations eventually failed, and by 2005 were pronounced dead. Unlike most of the literature on the demise of the FTAA, Arashiro (2011) sheds light on policy makers’ thoughts and actions in the negotiations, which were co-chaired by the US and Brazil. Using a multi-theory and multi-level approach that draws from IPE, policy studies and constructivism, the author shows that a lack of political commitment by the US as well as Brazil explains the failure. Foreign policy elites in both countries preferred bilateral trade deals to multilateral approaches. Consequently, the United States and Latin American states increasingly turned to bi- and multi-lateral PTAs. The result was the so-called “spaghetti bowl” effect of regional trade agreements in the hemisphere
(see Figure 1) as well as two competing models of trade regionalism in the Americas, the free trade model and the customs union/common market model. De la Reza (2010) highlights what he sees as a disjunction between the theory and practice of integration in Latin America since the 1980s and the Washington Consensus reforms and argues that the “spaghetti bowl” of regional trade agreements make Latin America’s “open regionalism” an obstacle to meaningful regional economic integration and a messy compromise between liberalism and protectionism.

(Figure 1 about here)

Economists debate whether these PTAs actually promote or stifle trade and development (see e.g., Creamer 2004), a discussion beyond the purview of this paper, and politicians debate
whether these agreements signal greater autonomy or dependency. Moreover, the emergence of leaders like Venezuela’s Chavez, Bolivia’s Morales and Ecuador’s Correa in the early and mid 2000s helped articulate and push forward a more critical, counter-hegemonic (viz., anti-US and anti-neoliberal globalization) vision of regional economic and political integration for Latin America and the Caribbean while other leaders maintained either more pragmatic (e.g., Brazil) or more neo-liberal approaches to the global political economy (infra). Yet even as a political and ideological rift emerged across the Americas, the hemispheric “spaghetti bowl” or patchwork of free trade agreements cobbled together since the 1990s and especially since the demise of the FTAA signaled a widespread recognition by many Latin American states of the pressures to open up regional and sub-regional trade and investment flows in the face of globalization. The “open regionalism” of such FTAs along with the more closed regionalism of common markets like Mercosur or CACM9 participated in a further proliferation of preferential trade agreements not just between countries but also between regional blocs.

Indeed, as Latin American states pursue more intra- and sub-regional cooperation and integration schemes in navigating globalization, they are also participating in growing inter- and trans-regional ties spanning oceans. A 2004 special issue of Chile’s Revista de Estudios Internacionales explores Latin American relations with APEC and the Asia-Pacific Region (see Gálvez 2004; Gutiérrez B. 2004; Pérez-Le Fort 2004; Saavedra Rivano 2004; and Scollay & González-Vigil 2004). However, the EU is seen as the preferred inter-regional partner for many Latin American states because the promise of preferential access to the Single Market offers a material and symbolic counter-hegemonic alternative to continued dependency on the US/North American market. Thus numerous studies have appeared analyzing Latin American states’

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9 According to the SICA website, the “CACM is presently somewhere between an almost perfect free trade area and an imperfect customs union” (See http://www.sica.int)
bilateral or multilateral relations with the EU (e.g., Díaz Barrado et al., 2008; Beneyto & Argerey 2006; Escribano Ubeda-Portugués 2007 and 2005; Fazio Vengoa 2006; Van Klaveren 2004) or emergent trans-regional relations, such as Mercosur’s relations with the EU (see Ramírez Díaz 2002; Saraiva 2004; Faust 2004). Osterlof Obregón’s (2008) edited collection examines the EU’s proliferating bilateral and sub-regional partnership agreements with Mercosur, the Comunidad Andino de Naciones (CAN), and the Central American Common Market/SICA as well as bilateral partnership agreements between the EU and Mexico and Chile. Díaz-Silveira Santos (2009) offers a highly detailed description of bi-regional agreements between the EU and Mercosur, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and Central America, with the EU as the (rather idealized) animator\(^\text{10}\) of the process. Likewise, Martín Arribas’s (2008) anthology offers an optimistic Spanish view of cooperation between the EU and Latin American sub-regional organizations such as Mercosur, the Andean Community, etc.

EU partnership agreements (often called “strategic partnership agreements”) have been attractive to Latin American states since the 1990s because they go farther than US-sponsored free trade agreements. The former include three dimensions or “pillars”: a free trade pillar, a political dialogue pillar, and a development cooperation or aid pillar (Osterlof Obregón 2008). Ulloa Rivera (2010) takes a closer look at the growing EU development cooperation and partnership agreements with Latin America generally, offering interesting examples in specific policy areas (e.g., poverty reduction, financial and technical cooperation, food aid, environment, gender, etc.). Martín Arribas’s (2011) edited volume focuses on EU development cooperation in Central America, where the EU and its member states surpassed the US as the subregion’s largest aid donor after the mid-1990s.

\(^{10}\) Díaz-Silveira Santos (2009) presents the EU as the leader in the development of a multiregional international system in which “neo inter-regionalism consolidates regionalism” and complements globalization (p. 52).
However, not all scholars are optimistic about the prospects for successful inter-regional cooperation between Latin America and the EU. Díaz Barrado et al.’s (2008) extensive anthology offers a more realistic assessment both of Latin American integration efforts and of EU-Latin American inter-regional cooperation. Trein and Guerra Cavalcanti (2007) were disappointed by what they perceived as the EU’s empty rhetoric at the 2006 Inter-regional summit in Vienna rather than substantive progress in building a meaningful strategic partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean. Gratius and Sanahuja (2010) point to stasis in EU-Latin American inter-regional strategic partnership projects by the May 2010 Madrid Summit (see also Cumbre América Latina y el Caribe-Unión Europea... 2011). Of course by that time, the recent global financial crisis was in full swing. Moltó (2010) explains how Spain’s two-track efforts to play a leading role in forging a strong Ibero-American relationship and productive EU-Latin American relations were losing effectiveness by 2010, as absenteeism of Latin and European leaders and lack of real progress have increasingly characterized inter-regional summits. Fazio Vengoa (2006) questions the “EU-foria” of the early 1990s about cultivating new inter-regional relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean and argues instead that it has given way to indifference and skepticism today (see also Martins 2004).

**Political-Diplomatic Regionalism: Cooperation or Concertación**

Scholars are divided on whether this new regionalism constitutes an opportunity or a challenge to Latin American states and whether these states are merely reacting to larger processes or are successfully influencing them; but most see Latin American states as active agents in this process. And insofar as several states are seizing the opportunities to pursue an assertive regionalist and/or sub-regionalist agenda with the goal of lessening dependency and
promoting development, the new forms of regionalism have political and strategic as well as economic forms. Complementing or enhancing the economic integration experiments of Mercosur, the Comunidad Andina de Naciones (CAN), the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), Caricom, etc. are new regional organizations of political cooperation, coordination, and integration, most notably UNASUR (created in 2008\footnote{However UNASUR’s roots go back to 1993 (infra).} and led by Brazil), ALBA (Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestro América, created in 2004\footnote{Its original name was Alternativa Bolirariana Para América Latina y el Caribe, but its name changed after June 2009 to reflect more clearly its break with neoliberalism and with UNASUR’s more pragmatic approach.} and led by Venezuela), and more recently CELAC (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños, created in 2010). For some observers, these organisms represent new counter-hegemonic resistances to the United States’ “neo-pan-American” FTAA project and the neoliberal agenda of the “Washington Consensus” (see e.g., Brunelle 2006; Giacalone 2006; Katz 2006; Rocha V. 2004). For others, they represent new branches of an older, more pragmatic diplomatic effort to advance or deepen regional autonomy as a strategy to overcome structural dependency.\footnote{According to the UNASUR website, its vision “es el desarrollo regional sostenido por la union de sus partes soberanas: naciones en paz, prósperas, con sentido de pertenencia y ciudadanía suramericana” (http://www.unasursg.org/inicio/organizacion/historia).}

Indeed, regional political cooperation, coordination and integration efforts have deeper historical roots that are sometimes overlooked by the contemporary literature. Not only do their roots stretch back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Bolivarian project of unity in the face of foreign threats (supra). These contemporary regional political groupings sprang from the political and diplomatic regionalism of the 1980s, when the Contadora Group\footnote{Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela formed the Contadora Group in 1984 as a political, diplomatic, and security response to militarized US policies toward Central America, a sub-region gripped in horrible civil wars and political violence in the 1980s. The Group was later joined by Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, known as the Contadora Support Group, thus strengthening regional political and diplomatic unity of eight important states in Latin America against US policies. In 1986, the eight countries took the name Rio Group.} and later the Rio Group challenged US military interventionism in Central America (Meyer 1992; Cepedo Ulloa and...
García-Peña 1985). Practicing what was called at the time at the “new Latin American foreign policy” (see Tokatlian 1983; Drekonja-Kornat 1983), the Contadora/Rio Group states firmly called for “regional solutions to regional problems” in Central America and an end to militarized US interventionist policies there. The end of the Cold War, the changed global political and economic context, the election of Left and Center-Left leaders in several Latin American countries, and the distraction of the US by its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have all helped fertilize the opportunities for deeper regional political cooperation and coordination to occur. One measure of this is the growth of the Rio Group to include 24 Latin American and Caribbean states as it continued to meet in annual summits through 2010. In 2011, the Rio Group created CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States/Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños), which now boasts 33 member countries across the hemisphere but excludes the United States and Canada. CELAC is not only a successor to the Rio Group; it is seen as an alternative to the nearly moribund Organization of American States (Kellogg 2013).

Another measure is the emergence of the new organisms of political regionalism, such as UNASUR and ALBA. Briceño-Ruiz (2010) focuses on the development of UNASUR, which arose from a process he dubs “strategic regionalism” led by Brazil. It originally grew out of Brazil’s strategic decision to promote “greater interdependence between South American countries as a mechanism to improve the bargaining power of the region in Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations….It was entirely consistent with the strategy of promoting ‘autonomy for integration’ fostered by Brazilian diplomacy since the mid-1990s” (Briceño-Ruiz 2010, 209). UNASUR’s predecessors were the South American Free Trade Area (SAFTA), launched in 1993 by Brazil’s President Itamar

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15 Briceño-Ruiz (2010, p. 210) adds that strategic regionalism “is a process resulting from an alliance between nation states and multinational or national companies that have begun the internationalization of their economic activities.”
Franco with the aim of linking Mercosur and the Andean Community, and the South American Community of Nations (SACN/CSN), proposed by Brazil’s President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 2000 at the Brasilia Summit and finally created in 2004 (Briceño-Ruiz 2010).

Briceño-Ruiz holds that the Brazilian shift from SAFT to CSN in 2004 and especially from CSN to UNASUR in 2008 was an explicit response to criticism by Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez and his rival ALBA16. “UNASUR became a maximalist project that completely overturned the original Brazilian project of building a new South American regionalism” (209), incorporating a much broader social, political and even security agenda than the economic one originally envisioned.

UNASUR (and ALBA) has attracted a great deal of political and scholarly attention and fueled interesting debates about its staying power and relevance. Time and space preclude a deeper discussion at this time; however, Pereira de Lima (2011) provides a detailed description of the emergence and political, juridical and institutional development of UNASUR while asserting its relevance as an actor on the global stage (see also Preciado Coronado 2010; Rivarola Puntigliano 2007). Comini and Frenkel (2014) provide an excellent analysis of its rise as well as its deceleration after 2011, paying attention both to international and domestic factors. Several works have highlighted the sub-regional leadership rivalry between the Brazil-led UNASUR and Chavez’s ALBA, but since Chavez’ death, it is not clear whether that rivalry will continue in any meaningful way. Instead, Comini and Frenkel (2014) point to the creation of the Alianza del Pacifico (AP) by pro-free trade states Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico in 2011 as the newest rival to UNASUR’s strategic regionalism. More specifically, they analyze the emergence of UNASUR and the Alliance of the Pacific as the latest manifestations of two long-standing and competing approaches to South American integration projects. The UNASUR “concentric” model encompasses a longer-term and multidimensional integration project based

16 Time and space considerations preclude a discussion of ALBA here.
on broadening concentric circles of regional cooperation and integration, starting with Mercosur (and the Brazil-Argentina nexus) to wider circles of economic, social, political, security, and environmental integration across South America, ultimately linking a united continent into the global system. The “polygramic” (many-pointed or star-like) model exemplified by the Alliance of the Pacific embraces a more short-term, one-dimensional, state-centric and ad hoc approach to regional economic cooperation through limited preferential trade agreements. Their analysis of the external/international and especially the internal/domestic factors at work lead them to question the long-term viability of UNASUR (Comini and Frenkel 2014).

**Regional Security Cooperation**

Much of the scholarly and political interest in UNASUR stems from its efforts to promote South American security cooperation and integration through its Defense Council (Consejo Suramericano de Defensa, or CSD). Aránguiz (2013) provides an excellent discussion of the CSD, noting its emergence and the political and security questions it raises in the context of new security threats in the Americas. In particular, he addresses such questions as Brazil’s bid for regional leadership and its “responsible pragmatism,” the promotion of the region’s defense industry, and the “Venezuela/Chavez” factor as interrelated aspects of the CSD’s creation. He also discussed the exclusion of the US from the CSD, due in part to alternative definitions of “security” between North and South (e.g., national security versus human security). After weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the Council, he appears optimistic that it can help South America respond to the new security threats that globalization has wrought, such as crime.

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17 Others have made much of the “two Latin Americas,” one bloc on the Atlantic side favoring state controls and the other facing the Pacific and embracing free markets (Luñnow 2014).
18 UNASUR is structured into a dozen or so Councils focused on different sectoral or functional areas, such as Defense, Health, Education, Energy, Science, Technology & Innovation, etc. See [www.unasursg.org](http://www.unasursg.org)
trafficking, etc. (Aránguiz 2013). Likewise, del Pedregal (2009) sees the CSD in a very positive light as a political effort and an important step by a Brazil-led UNASUR toward deeper integration in South America. However, Spain’s Ministry of Defense published an anthology that examines UNASUR and considers its potential for addressing security challenges in South America through the CSD. However, individual chapters in this anthology also point to a recent regional arms race, underlying territorial disputes and bilateral tensions, and leadership rivalries that weaken the prospects for closer security cooperation in South America (Ministerio de Defensa 2010). Likewise, Tokatlian (2010) raises important concerns about the growing militarization in the internal and external political relations of states in the region while Cheyre (2009) discusses recent increases in military spending in Latin America in terms of legitimate national defense and security interests.

**Other Functional or Sectoral Areas of Regional Cooperation and Integration**

Through its various sectoral Councils, UNASUR seeks to promote regional cooperation and integration in such functional areas as infrastructure, energy, environment, science and technology and much more. Some of those Councils predate and were subsumed into UNASUR. More studies are needed on the progress of regional integration in these areas, however a few studies have appeared. Pereira de Lima’s (2011) study of UNASUR gives attention to three general areas or “pillars:” political, social and cultural cooperation; economic, financial and commercial integration (including Mercosur); and energy and infrastructural integration (including IIRSA). Dijck (2008) critically evaluates the political, social and environmental problems of IIRSA with an econometric lens. As noted previously, Ocampo (2006) studies regional financial cooperation; Mayobre (2006) studies energy cooperation.

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19 IIRSA = Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional de América del Sur
Transnational Regionalization: Crime

At the edges of scholarship focusing on regional cooperation and integration by Latin American states are investigations into the transnational networks and processes creating other kinds of regional integration in the hemisphere. If the Washington Consensus advocated neoliberal policies that rolled back the state to encourage economic globalization, the irony (or contradiction) is that transnational actors and networks have proliferated and increasingly challenge the “effective sovereignty” of states (Emerson 2010).

Alcañiz (2010) uses network analysis to study cooperation and knowledge-sharing among nuclear scientists in Latin America. However, most scholars examining the region’s transnational networks focus on the criminal networks that produce new forms of violence and thus new security challenges. Mattar Nassar’s (2010) anthology offers chapters that include attention to regional security governance, security issues relating to economic and natural resource issues, transnational crime, and the effect of armed violence on women’s lives as they privilege human security over older notions of national security. Gonzáles Placencia and Arce (2009) and Carrión M. and Espín M. (2011) focus on citizen security programs in the face of transnational criminal activity and violence, both inside major cities and in remote border regions across Latin America. Maihold (2011) calls for a transnational plan of cooperation between the US, the EU and Latin America to combat transnational organized crime, including the increased sharing of financial intelligence. Camacho Guizado (2007) brings together leading analysts from the same three regions to review and evaluate the development of anti-drug and anti-trafficking policies in Colombia, Mexico and the Andean region with a view to coming up with more effective alternatives.
Finally, Mace and Loiseau (2005) provide a helpful discussion of the emerging Summit of the Americas machinery compared to the older OAS machinery while testing the concept of “cooperative hegemony.” It remains to be seen whether these parallel structures of hemispheric institutions are competing with or complementary to each other and what the newer forms of Latin American regionalism mean for them. Although often scorned, the OAS still offers important governance machinery to the Americas. Herz (2011) provides an overview of the role of the OAS in providing regional governance structures in the areas of security, development, democracy promotion and human rights. Others remain hopeful about the role of inter-American institutions in cooperation in health (Carrillo Roa and Santana 2010), promoting democratic norms (Sánchez Flores 2004), fighting corruption (Vargas 2004), curbing arms trafficking (Carlson 2010), or developing soft law in the areas of workers’ rights and freedom of association (Citroni 2004) or indigenous peoples’ rights (Ponte Iglesias 2004; see also North, Clark & Petroni 2006).

Conclusion and Questions for Further Research

Richard Rosecrance (2014, 200) has asserted that “broader so-called regionalisms like that of Latin America or East Asia are generally vacuous.” Others have considered Latin American regionalism as merely “ad hoc” in nature. Peter H. Smith (2008) finds “centrifugal political forces throughout Latin America and rivalries for subregional leadership that make regional solidarity “more elusive than ever” (p. 414). Russell (2006) remains skeptical that Latin America and Caribbean countries will be able to translate their regional cooperation and integration ambitions into effective instruments for greater regional autonomy. Many point to
the economic and geopolitical fragmentation of Latin America along the fault lines of NAFTA and Mercosur (e.g., Grabendorff 2005).

This review of the recent literature on regionalism in Latin America indicates a very mixed picture. On the one hand, the long and persistent history of regional unity and cooperation, the material conditions and geopolitical structures that point to regional integration as a key strategic alternative to dependency, and the leadership of key political and economic actors in Latin America at important moments, all point to the salience of regionalism as a core feature of Latin America’s international relations. Yet, despite the history, the rhetoric, and the political ideals and ideological commitments, the recent proliferation of regional cooperation and integration organisms along competing economic and political rivalries suggests a hyper-regionalism in the Americas that defies theoretical clarity. At the very least, it defies definitional clarity: economic regionalism, political regionalism, strategic regionalism, neoliberal regionalism, integrationist/protectionist regionalism…the literature is reflecting the material reality of states’ choices today. That is, this hyper-regionalism seems to be an effect of the current phase of neo-liberal globalization and of a changing geopolitical power structure since the end of the Cold War and especially the so-called War on Terror. The political space opened up by the US preoccupation with its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has helped to generate the competing material/economic, political, and ideological regionalisms in the Americas. But increased trade (and investment) is considered a key to economic growth in both the polygramic neo-liberalist and concentric integrationist approaches to regionalism. In this sense, the UNASUR and ALBA alternatives to FTAs are not so much “post-liberal” “firewalls of resistance” to the diffusion of US-led neo-liberal PTAs (Quilicconi 2014) as they are strategic alternatives by state actors to better manage, limit and perhaps eventually overcome the
condition of dependency. The concentric model of UNASUR draws from the EU’s experience but adds a Latin American twist that acknowledges different positions in the global political economy. Guadarrama González (2004) has called for a new, *sui generis* Latin American theory of regional integration, just as Latin America has contributed Dependency Theory as its own to the world. But it seems that Dependency Theory has already indicated the counter-hegemonic strategies that can lead to greater development and autonomy for states. As one writer put it, regional autonomy is a key for finding greater state autonomy.

These rough ideas are offered as a starting point for continued research on the contending regionalisms in Latin America. Theoretical pluralism should be valued in this project without litmus tests or polemics. For the IR scholar, Dependency theory and World Systems Theory remain important frameworks through which to study and understand the contending regionalisms Latin America. Structural realism and liberal institutionalism, also well represented in the existing literature, are also important and helpful. Newer frameworks such as constructivism and post-colonialism should be developed and explored for studying the hyper-regionalism of the Americas. The rivalries between states and their leaders vying for regional leadership cry out for the application of feminist theory and gender analysis in the theoretical mix.

In the end, as Tinker (2008) has noted, the international relations of Latin American states is, by necessity, more focused on the question of “*lo práctico*”. The challenges of poverty, income inequality, and underdevelopment across the hemisphere demand a focus on policy and practical solutions rather than esoteric or ideologized exercises. The challenges faced by the geographic region we call “Latin America” (and the Caribbean) continue to demand practical regional solutions to regional problems, as they have since the early 19th century. Indeed, the
myriad challenges of globalization call for continued problem-solving approaches and effective policy-oriented responses in Latin America and beyond.
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