

REGIONALISM AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AMERICA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FOR UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONALIZATION

REGIONALISMO Y EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR EN SURAMÉRICA: UN ANÁLISIS COMPARADO PARA ENTENDER LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN

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ABSTRACT

Current region-building projects are crafting higher education governance around the world. In fact, almost every regional scheme has launched programs and policies to promote the coordination, cooperation and/or integration of higher education systems and institutions. This paper focuses in the South American region and develops a comparative analysis of regional schemes, focusing on four cases: the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America – People’s Trade Agreement (Alba-TCP), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Pacific Alliance (AP). These regional projects – regardless its ideological orientation– are delivering policies to promote university cooperation, coordination and/or integration. We argue that at least three trends of internationalization of the university are being diffused and consolidated through regionalism: first, a *status-quo internationalization* (hegemonic); second, a *revisionist internationalization*; third, a *counter-hegemonic internationalization*. The Pacific Alliance reveals the first type; Mercosur is the revisionist case; and ALBA-TCP represents an attempt of a counter-hegemonic process. UNASUR is an “in-between” case, as the Atlantic versus Pacific divide has not yet been resumed. We unfold the argument by pursuing a comparative approach.

Key words: regionalism – higher education governance – internationalization of the university – regionalization of higher education – Mercosur – ALBA-TCP – UNASUR – Pacific Alliance – Comparative Studies

RESUMEN

Los actuales proyectos de construcción de región están generando modificaciones en la gobernanza de la educación superior en todo el mundo. De hecho, casi todos los esquemas regionales han puesto en marcha programas y políticas para promover la coordinación, cooperación y / o integración entre sistemas e instituciones de la educación superior. Este documento se centra en la región de América del Sur y desarrolla un análisis comparativo de cuatro regionalismos, a saber: el Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur), la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América - Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (ALBA-TCP) , la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR) y la Alianza del Pacífico (AP). Estos proyectos regionales, independientemente de su orientación ideológica, están encaminando políticas para promover la cooperación, coordinación y/o integración universitaria. Nuestro argumento es que al menos tres tendencias de la internacionalización de la universidad se difunden y se consolidan a través del regionalismo: primero, una internacionalización status-quoísta (hegemónica); segundo, una internacionalización revisionista; tercero, una internacionalización contra-hegemónica. La Alianza del Pacífico revela el primer tipo; el Mercosur es el caso revisionista; y el ALBA-TCP representa un intento de un

proceso contra-hegemónico. UNASUR es un caso “en el medio”, en tanto presenciamos una división entre un eje Atlántico y otro Pacífico. Desarrollamos nuestro trabajo a partir de un esquema de regionalismo comparado.

Palabras clave: regionalismo – gobernanza de la educación superior – internacionalización de la universidad – regionalización de la educación superior – Mercosur – ALBA-TCP – UNASUR – Alianza del Pacífico – Estudios Comparados.

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INTRODUCTION

Current region-building projects are crafting higher education governance around the world. In fact, almost every regional scheme has launched programs and policies to promote the coordination, cooperation and/or integration of higher education systems and institutions. The most visible –and studied– case is the regionalization of higher education in Europe through the “Bologna Process”, an inter-governmental initiative of many European countries that is strongly supported by the European Union. North and Latin America, Africa and South East Asia have also promoted several initiatives to contribute to the regionalization of higher education. Nevertheless, the rhythms and dynamics have followed differential paths. As a result, regionalism is contributing to the diffusion of norms and ideas about the internationalization of the university (Perrotta, 2014a).

This paper focuses in the South American region and develops a comparative analysis of regional schemes, focusing on four cases: the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America – People’s Trade Agreement (Alba-TCP), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Pacific Alliance (AP). These regional projects – regardless its ideological orientation– are delivering policies to promote university cooperation, coordination and/or integration. Thus, regional norms are by-passing the domains of the State and introducing domestic change (institutional change and/or policy change) (Hameri, 2009; Hameri & Jayasuriya, 2011). We argue that higher education governance is far from being crafted solely by national regulations: both regional schemes and international organizations are key actors to understand how policies are shaped and delivered and how actors and institutions change their activities and expectations to other centres (Perrotta, 2013a, 2014d). The concept of regulatory regionalism (Hameri & Jayasuriya, 2011) is pertinent to comprehend how regionalism does contribute to the diffusion of the internationalization of the university in South America.

As regions are social constructions that are politically contested (Hurrell, 1995a) –varied political projects of region-building are persistently in competition–, the landscape of South American regionalism is far from being homogeneous. In fact, the continuum of regional schemes moves between market-led to State-led initiatives, whose results are visible in the overall political orientation of the regionalism, the institutional design, the actors that benefit the most and the range of agendas that are tackled by regional policies (among other characteristics). Briefly, South American regional projects are to be considered as post-liberal (Sanahuja, 2008, 2012), post-hegemonic (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012a) and post-commercial (Tussie & Trucco, 2010), as well as a case of reloaded new regionalism (Quiliconi, 2014). In this regards, many scholars are trying to unfold this complex phenomena by addressing a so-called divide between the Atlantic and the Pacific (Serbin, Martínez, & Ramanzini Jr, 2014).

Consequently, as several regional projects are developing in South America, different (complementary, overlapping and/or contradictory) internationalization projects are introduced by those schemes. We argue that at least three trends of internationalization of the university are being diffused and consolidated through regionalism: first, a *status-quo internationalization* (hegemonic); second, a *revisionist internationalization*; third, a *counter-hegemonic internationalization*. The Pacific Alliance reveals the first type; Mercosur is the revisionist case; and ALBA-TCP represents an attempt of a counter-hegemonic process. UNASUR is an “in-between” case, as the Atlantic versus Pacific divide has not yet been resumed. We unfold the argument by pursuing a comparative approach.

This paper consists of four main sections: first, we provide some analytical and conceptual tools that would allow unfolding regionalism and the internationalization of university. Second, we present the four selected regional projects to compare regional policies of higher education. The

idea of this section is to provide information to a non-fully specialized public. Third, we describe the regional policies delivered for higher education in the four cases. In the fourth place, we develop the three models of internationalization of higher education. Overall, we aim to contribute to the field of study of university in the region and nurture international debates on comparative education by including the assessment of regional integration projects.

1. ANALYTICAL CLUES FOR UNDERSTANDING REGIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Region, regionalism, regionalization and regional integration are complex concepts and its differentiation is one of the most important issues under debate of the field of study, alongside the need to better grasp region-building processes. In this paper, we consider that regions are social constructions that are in permanent political contestation (Hurrell, 1995b). This definition allows us to assess regionalism in terms of the different political projects that are pursuit.

Secondly, even though there is an array of literature for developing a comparative regionalism approach, we selected the framework of regulatory regionalism to assess how several regional projects is affecting regulations at the domestic policy level. Briefly, as Jayasuriya and Robertson (2010) pinpoint, regulatory regionalism stresses how national agencies are crafting a softer way of governance as a result of the connections and exchanges they are developing with their foreign counterparts. Therefore, regulatory regionalism does not necessarily lead to uniform and homogeneous regulatory standards; on the contrary, it is a useful tool to assess the way in which regulatory regional projects occur in layers, even overlapping ones. This approach allows us the analysis of contesting situations that transform the territorial space within the State by means of the incorporation of regional agendas within the domestic institutions. Additionally, Hameri and Jayasuriya (2011) defined it in terms of the institutional spaces of regional regulations within national policy and political institutions. Thus, the focus of inquiry is no longer placed on the creation of supranational rules and institutions; instead, attention is paid to the political process of region building, which is national and regional simultaneously. This point of view allows us to overcome the traditional division (quasi antagonistic) between Nation States versus supranational regional institutions that is posed by both the neo-functionalist and intergovernmentalist literature (Perrotta, 2013b). Moreover, it allows us to move away from narrow studies that are focused mainly on the commercial aspects of the integration to proceed with the study of social policies at the regional level. Indeed, according to Phillips (2001) emerging forms of regional regulation, aiming at strengthening the, rely more on the active participation of national agencies in regulatory practices rather than in formal treaties or international organizations.

Third, to understand the three proposed models of internationalization of higher education, we delimit the most salient characteristics of the current internationalization project, the *hegemonic internationalization*, as well as diverse proposals to balance that model (Perrotta, 2012, 2014c). To begin with, it could be argued that the international dimension of the university has been present since its inception. In fact, the medieval university was an institution of the whole Christian world, where the degrees were recognized as valid between regions and this was a result of cosmopolitanism characteristic of the social life of the Middle Ages (Durkheim, 1992).

However, the current process of internationalization does not refer exclusively to that cosmopolitan feature. Instead, internationalization (the act or process of making something international) relates to a particular scenario modelled since the beginning of the nineties:

- a common academic model worldwide arising from the medieval European university;
- a global and growing academic market for students, teachers and researchers;

- the use of English as internationally accepted language for communication of research and teaching;
- distance education and the use of Internet and the new technologies of information and communication;
- the tendency to form partnerships among institutions from several countries, the creation of campuses abroad and the opening of franchises;
- harmonization and/or convergence of degree structures, courses, credits and other mechanisms for evaluating and measuring academic progress (Altbach, 2006; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Knight, 2006).

According to García Guadilla, three processes led to the internationalization of higher education: first, the increasingly important role assigned to knowledge globally; second, a labour market for increasingly qualified individuals; and third, increased interconnectivity between producers and consumers of knowledge given the rise of new technologies of information and communication. As a result, a new global geopolitics of knowledge has arisen (García Guadilla, 2010).

In this context, the hegemonic internationalization is rooted in the rise of Neoliberalism and the promotion of deregulation of educational services and investment at the multilateral level, while facilitating relocation strategies for the provision of higher education services (within the World Trade Organization, WTO). This situation threatens the ideals of university, institutional cultures and national interests. In terms of Altbach (2001), norms, values, language, scientific innovation and knowledge products of the core countries displace ideas, values, language and practices, among other issues, of the periphery. This is because developed countries benefit from the most prestigious universities and have better facilities and infrastructure for research, but are also home to powerful multinational corporations in the global knowledge system (particularly in the areas of biotechnology, information and communications technology, pharmaceuticals, etc.). This raises questions about the autonomy of States in the regulation of higher education governance, but also in terms of university autonomy. The puzzling situation is illustrated as:

Educational products of all kinds would be freely exported from one country to another. Copyright, patent, and licensing regulations, already part of international treaties, would be further reinforced. It would become very difficult to regulate the trade in academic institutions, programs, degrees, or products across international borders. Those wishing to engage in such imports and exports would have recourse to international tribunals and legal action. At present, the jurisdiction over higher education is entirely in the hands of national authorities.

[...] How would countries, or individual universities, maintain their academic independence in a world in which they had minimal practical and legal control over the import or export of higher education? How would accreditation or quality control be carried out? [...] Would wealthy profit-driven multinationals force other higher education institutions out of business? [...] One thing is very clear—once the universities are part of the WTO jurisdiction, autonomy would be severely compromised and advanced education and research would become just another product subject to international treaties and bureaucratic regulations (Altbach, 2001, p. 3).

Such an internationalization process has an inherent commercial bias: emphasis on easily marketable products (programs taught in English, the predominance of master's in business administration, compacted computing courses); spoliation of foreign students; prioritizing selling knowledge product to trying to build bridges of mutual understanding with international institutions and actors; and the growth of for-profit institutions that offer programs of dubious quality (Altbach & Teichler, 2001).

In contrast, there are alternative experiences of internationalization, whose salient features are: the deepening of international cooperation and solidarity actions, the search for complementarities

between institutions and countries, the principle of reciprocity and the goals of mutual understanding, dialogue and formation inter-subjective bridges of understanding (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001; Naidorf, 2005; Perrotta, 2012).

This type developing internationalization has as one of its main tools the formation of academic networks. The creation of university networks guided by the principles of solidarity, dialogue, reciprocity and search for consensus has beneficial assets: permits greater interaction between academic institutions and communities, contributes to leverage and share available capabilities, enhancing individual strengths and gives room for further integration and coordination (Zarur Miranda, 2008). Additionally, according to Pedro Krotsch (1997), these new forms of inter-university cooperation requires the creation of synergies and complementarities, which, in turn, challenge the identities of universities. As a result, international cooperation of universities allows knowledge to be shared horizontally and vertically (between universities and between them and the most disadvantaged sectors of society) and strengthen regional integration processes in Latin America (Gazzola & Goulart Almeida, 2006).

Cooperation networks could be defined as stakeholder partnerships aimed at achieving jointly agreed outcomes through participation and mutual cooperation, supported by the responsibility of each partner with respect to a plan of action (Sebastián, 2004). Such a definition could be applied broadly to a wide variety of organizations, including academic networks. These tend to focus on higher education, and involve the mobility and exchange of students, professors and researchers, as well as exchanges of experience and models of university management. However, it may happen that university institutional networks become a single space for the international relations of the academic authorities. Instead of being a space for cooperation in which interactions, joint activities and financial support are guaranteed. Universities have a natural tendency to organize into networks, that is part of the university *ethos* and the way universities have behaved and acted along the ancient history (Altbach, 2002).

In Latin America, there are several types of networks and most of these initiatives were promoted by the universities. However, during the last decade, governments (and regional arrangements) have increasingly designed policies and instruments to stimulate and support academic networks as a strategy for deepening internationalization to the Latin American region and with certain characteristics: symmetry (which is also linked to South – South cooperation), autonomy in the choice of subjects, material support, and deepening.

As proposed in this paper, we could apprehend these two processes in terms of a hegemonic and an alternative counter-hegemonic model of internationalization of the university. The idea of hegemony we build it from a neo-gramscian perspective in the field of International Political Economy. According to Cox (1981, 1983), hegemony is a structure of values and understandings about the nature of order that permeates a whole system of States and non-state entities. In a hegemonic order, these values and understandings are relatively stable and unquestioned. They appear to most actors as the natural order. Such a structure of meanings is underpinned by a structure of power, in which most probably one State is dominant but that State's dominance is not sufficient to create hegemony. Hegemony derives from the dominant social strata of the dominant States as far as these ways of doing and thinking have acquired the acquiescence of the dominant social strata of other States.

This corpus of theory has been used to assess not only hegemony, but also the world order and the historical change. The main idea is that the patterns of the social production relations are the starting point for the analysis of world orders. Production is understood in broader terms as the production and reproduction of knowledge and social relations, the moral and institutions as

preconditions of the production of material goods (Robertson, 2014). By understanding the reciprocal relation between power and production, we could apprehend how power in social relations of production leads to certain social forces and these, in turn, may become in the base of power of the State and other powerful global actors and consequently transform the world. Hegemony prevails when there is a coherent attachment between a material configuration of power, a set of ideas about world order and the institutions that manage that order (Robertson, 2014). This corpus is used by Robertson to analyse how the World Bank shapes regulations, norms and values to legitimize a private sense of higher education.

We agree with the perspective as international organization –such as the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) among others– as well as regional organizations –such as the European Union (EU) –, are the actors behind the creation of diffusion of a particular model of internationalization of the university, rooted in the market.

The possibility to develop a counter-hegemonic process is by a new globalisation embedded in society (Cox & Sinclair, 1996):

The challenge to globalization, if it is to become activated, would require the formation of a common will, a vision of an alternative future, and the transcendence of the manifold divisions of ethnicity, religion, gender and geography that cut across the three-level social hierarchy being created by globalisation. (Cox, 2001, p. 49).

We argue that alternative views to globalization have been crafted by different social and political movements. In this regard, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003) comprehends globalization as a field of conflict between social groups and hegemonic interests, on the one hand, and social groups, States and subordinate interests on the other. Thus, he argues that “the characteristics of globalization” are “the features of the dominant form of globalization”: the neoliberal consensus, together with other consensus covering the economy, politics, society and culture, form a picture of the world which is “irreducible”: the disappearance of political differences, interdependence, cooperation, regional integration, etc. However, alongside this hegemonic globalization, there is a counter-hegemonic globalization. There are four ways of producing globalization, which allows us to visualize the possible strategies for different stakeholders. The two hegemonic forms of producing globalization are the globalized localism and the localized globalism. The two counter-hegemonic forms are the cosmopolitanism and the common heritage of humankind.

First, globalized localism is the process by which a local phenomenon is successfully globalized. Some examples are the global activity of the multinationals, the transformation of the English language in lingua franca, the globalization of American fast food or its popular music or the worldwide adoption of the same laws of intellectual property rights promoted by the United States. What is globalized, then, it is the winner of the struggle for the appropriation or valuation of resources or the recognition of difference. The victory translates into the power to dictate the terms of integration, competition and inclusion. In the case of difference, the globalized localism implies the transformation of the victorious difference in universal condition, and the consequent exclusion or subordinate inclusion of alternative differences.

The localized globalism relates to the specific impact on local conditions produced by transnational practices and imperatives, which arise from globalized localisms. To respond to these transnational imperatives, local conditions are disintegrated, broken and eventually restructured in the form of subordinate inclusion. Some examples are the creation of free trade enclaves or zones, deforestation and massive destruction of natural resources for the payment of external debt,

conversion of family farming into agriculture for export as part of structural adjustment, ethnicization of the workplace.

Cosmopolitanism refers to the transnational organization of the resistance of nation States, regions, classes and social groups victimized by the unequal exchanges resulting from the globalized localism and localized globalisms. Resistance consists of transforming unequal exchanges into exchanges of shared authority, and translates into struggles against exclusion, subordinate inclusion, dependency, disintegration and disqualification. Cosmopolitan activities include: movements and organizations within the peripheries of the world system, transnational solidarity links between workers' organizations, international networks of alternative legal aid, transnational human rights organizations, global networks of feminist movements, transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) anticapitalist militants, movements and associations networks indigenous, ecological or alternative development.

The common heritage of humankind is formed by transnational struggles to protect the commodification of resources, entities, artefacts, and environments considered essential for the dignified survival of humanity, whose sustainability can only be guaranteed on a planetary scale. For example, environmental struggle that refer to resources that should be managed with a logic different to the predominant one of unequal exchanges.

Both cosmopolitanism and the common heritage of humankind have transnational mission, but are anchored in a specific place. In this sense, the idea of counter-hegemonic localization is introduced, which implies a greater emphasis on local sociability. The local and global must be consolidated so that the resistance is stronger. Therefore, Sousa Santos proposes a theory of translation between the struggles of each group to generate alliances and enhance their capabilities that can seep through the cracks in the hegemonic globalization.

As we argue in this paper, regionalism is an instrument to promote these different forms of tackling globalization and this relates to the different models of pursuing the internationalization of the university.

Finally, in another level of analysis, we built our study on how regional policies are introduced by regionalism by a framework that includes the understanding of asymmetries among parties. In the case of higher education, we refer to acknowledge the varied ways in which the policy attempts to tackle structural and regulatory asymmetries between the higher education systems; the different academic cultures and university traditions of each country and the divergent capacities of the governmental agencies.

The discussion about asymmetries has been a fruitful one regarding industrial and productive regional integration: asymmetries are to be tackled in order to distribute more equitably the benefits of regionalism and contribute to the economic and social development of the member countries (Bouzas, 2011; Ferrer, 2008; Inchauspe, 2009; Porta, 2006). Within this literature, Fernando Porta(2006) pinpoints that structural asymmetries consist of the differences between the countries regarding the sizes of the economy and population as well as dissimilarities in the levels of income per capita and the diversification of their productive structure; while regulatory asymmetries are those created by explicit policies or regulatory interventions of governments: for example, exports' promotion policies, investment policies, various types of industrial support, etc.

Similarly, we argue that structural asymmetries in higher education refer to the size of the national systems (institutions, students, professors, etc.) and the amount of public expenditure on higher education as part of overall public expenditure and the gross domestic product (GDP). Regulatory

asymmetries in higher education relate to the divergent policy instruments and regulations regarding the provision of education –accession, permanence and completion conditions via scholarships, quotas for minorities, etc.– as well as scientific and technological development – priority areas, policy promotion instruments and supports, intellectual property rights regulations, etc.–(Perrotta, 2013a).

Besides these two types of asymmetries, we add a third dimension that relates tightly to the regulatory framework of States: the different academic cultures and university traditions that predominate in each country. We adopt Naidorf’s definition of academic culture(s): the space where discourses, representations, conceptions and institutional practices about the goals that guide the work of teaching, research, extension and university transfer are shaped. Institutional practices have an open, active and conflictive character, which leads to the development of divergent and contesting academic cultures (Naidorf, 2009). As noticed, many academic cultures are present simultaneously at the same micro, meso and macro level (agents, institutions and higher education systems). We argue that because of the socio-historical development of the higher education systems, we can address general trends that relates to a national position about the university tradition. Shortly, we highlight two broad topics, of many, that form peculiar university traditions: the defence of public higher education and guarantee of the right to education, on one hand, and the strong defence of university autonomy, on the other

2. THE REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DELIVERY OF HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES

2.1 MERCOSUR

The Common Market of the South (aka Mercosur) was created in 1991 with the signature of the Asuncion Treaty between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. It was built upon the rapprochement of the political and economic relations between Argentina and Brazil since the mid-eighties. Mercosur’s development during the nineties could be assessed through the lenses of new regionalism, also called open regionalism. Nevertheless, there was room for the establishment of non-trade policies. This is the case of Mercosur’s Educational Sector (aka SEM).

By the end of the decade, strong both economic and political crises affected the countries and, as a consequence, the regional integration process. The new Century –that also inaugurated a new Millennium– began with new political and social coalitions at the head of the government that claimed Welfarist projects. The change at the national level had direct effects at the regional level. In the case of Mercosur, this represented a re-launched towards a social, productive and citizenship-centred integration scheme.

In 2012 Mercosur entered a new stage –still on-going– that challenges the dynamics the process would adopt. The main changes are the first accession process of Mercosur –a new member State, Venezuela– together with a shift in the national political projects in most of the countries.

Mercosur’s second stage, even if it could be framed under the categories of post-liberal and/or post-hegemonic regionalism– was conceptualized as “inclusive regionalism”. Mariana Vazquez. Vazquez (2011) analysed the creation and development of a regional agenda for social development policies and argues that the process shows the creation of a conceptual identity of the Social Mercosur by the priority given to social justice, social inclusion and the need to tackle socio-economical asymmetries.

2.2 THE BOLIVARIAN ALLIANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF OUR AMERICA – PEOPLE’S TRADE AGREEMENT (ALBA-TCP)

ALBA-TCP is the result of the relations between Cuba (Fidel Castro) and Venezuela (Hugo Chávez) and their need to create an alternative to the negotiation of the Free Trade Areas for the Americas (FTAA) and the signature of (asymmetric) Free Trade Agreements (FTA). Thus, ALBA-TCP represents a contesting project towards the strategy of the United States of America.

This regional project is the most radical one, in terms of the challenges that poses to the hegemonic “paradigm” of regionalism. Maribel Aponte has developed the concept of new strategic regionalism (Aponte García, 2014) to address ALBA-TCP’s complexities and rationales. It refers to three features: first, an emphasis on the elements of the old strategic regionalism, especially the creation of strategic enterprises and trade and industrial alliances with the State –considered as a strategic actor–. Secondly, the notion of multidimensionality that allows moving beyond the analysis focused in economic development by adding the assessment of common elements that arise from the socio-economical model of ALBA-TCP. Third, the economic policies articulated with the concept of sovereignty and the resulting creation of regional policies to tackle three crises: food safety, energetic deficits (oil) and financial breakdowns.

2.3 THE UNION OF SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS (UNASUR)

The creation of UNASUR relates mainly (but not solely) to Brazil’s foreign policy tradition to seek for autonomy and achieve to become a regional and global power (Sanahuja, 2011). By pursuing, the creation of a regional space in South America, Mexico was left aside as it is framed under the USA hegemony. At the same time, and because of Venezuela’s (Chávez) participation in the making of UNASUR, the regional project installed a new narrative (discourse) of Latin American unionism (“Bolivarian”, “*unasuriana*”).

The background of UNASUR dates from the nineties: in 1993, Brazilian former President Itamar Franco launched the Free Trade Area of South America (FTASA or ALCSA) in order to counterbalance the “Initiative for the Americas”. Since the year 2000 the process of South American Summits started. During the first Summit, Guyana and Suriname join the process, the need for convergence of the two regional agreements (Mercosur and the Andean Community) was agreed and the Initiative for Integration of Regional Infrastructure (aka IIRSA) was launched. In 2007, the South American Community of Nations adopted the name of Union of South American Nations. In 2008, the Constitutive Treaty was agreed and in 2011, it entered into force.

UNASUR attracted the curiosity of scholars since its creation and there are two main concepts to assess UNASUR: post-liberal regionalism (Sanahuja, 2008, 2011, 2012) and post-hegemonic regionalism (Riggirozzi, 2013; Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012b). The notion of post-hegemonic regionalism is useful for understanding current processes, including ALBA-TCP and Mercosur. These processes should not simply be regarded as *ad hoc* sub-regional responses to the various crises of Neoliberalism and the collapse of hemispheric leadership of the United States. On the contrary, they should be understood as the visible manifestation of a re-politicization in the region that is giving birth to new ways of doing politics and regional projects in which States, social movements and leaders interact and build new understandings within the frame of the regional space.

2.4 THE PACIFIC ALLIANCE (PA)

The newest region-building project of Latin America is the Pacific Alliance. The PA is an ideological project that aims to counter-balance the regional integration agreements that have been questioning the paradigm of new regionalism, even if these contesting projects –as we have unfolded in the previous three cases revisited– diverge in the intensity of the changes to fulfil an alternative model.

The Pacific Alliance was proposed by Peru to Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Panama in 2011(Declaration of Lima) in order to join forces and create a bloc with the aim of deepening trade relations with the Asia Pacific. Panama became an observer State and the remaining four formed the Alliance: the Alliance Framework Agreement was signed in June 2012. Currently, Costa Rica is in the process of accession.

The Alliance was built upon the existing trade relations between the four countries but also advanced in formulating the creation of a Latin American Integrated Market (aka MILA) without Mexico's participation. It launched a trade liberalization program that exempts the agricultural sector. Advances have been made to create the visa of the Pacific Alliance to promote tourism of third countries and the establishment of a cooperation fund (with identical contributions of each partner).

The establishment of the Pacific Alliance has been analysed as a case of “new new” regionalism, or a “reloaded” open regionalism; that is to say, an accentuation of the commercial features. In terms of Quiliconi (2014) the dispute is more political than economical: regarding the leadership of the region in terms of the ideological project. Additionally, as the main differential aspect is ideological, it has initiated both a political and academic debate under the frame of the “Pacific versus Atlantic” divide (Serbin et al., 2014). The dispute is now between the Alliance and Mercosur.

The presentation of the main characteristics of the four regional agreements allows us to continue with the presentation and analysis of regional policies for higher education governance as we argue that those policies relate to the main rationales of the regionalisms.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONAL POLICIES IN SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONALISM

This section is devoted to the analysis of the higher education agenda in the four regional integration agreements. The institutional framework, the policies or initiatives settled and how they were developed would give room for further discussion on the selected paths for fostering the internationalization of higher education.

3.1. MERCOSUR

The Educational Sector of Mercosur (aka SEM) was created in 1991 and ever since, it has consolidated a solid institutional framework to fulfil the goals of educational integration. It could be pinpointed that SEM's functioning recognizes at least three phases (Perrotta, 2011a, 2013c): the first (1991-2001) aimed at building its institutional structure, establishing bonds of trust among the governments officials through the exchange of information about the characteristics of each national educational system and creating common indicators to obtain comparable information from the different systems. During the second phase (2001-2008), SEM implemented the first regional programmes. The greatest political achievements were the establishment of protocols for the recognition of qualifications (for academic purposes) and the implementation of the first regional policy in the field of higher education (quality assessment). Within the period, other areas

started designing and implementing policies: mainly, in secondary education. The third period began in 2011 with the implementation of the latest working program, which modified the institutional structure, implemented regional policies in various areas of action, and created a new policy line (teacher training). During this stage, Paraguay was banned from political participation for a period and Venezuela incorporated as a full member. Also, UNASUR started to discuss A detailed analysis of the regional policies in all the areas could be found in: Perrotta and Vazquez (2010) and Perrotta (2013c).

As for the institutional structure, the decision-making body is the Meeting of Ministries of Education (RME), followed by the regional coordinating Committee (CCR), composed by officials (politicians and technicians) from the ministries. The CCR, in turn, is assisted by four regional commissions for the coordination of areas (CRC) in four working areas: basic education (CRC-EB), higher education (CRC-ES), teacher training (CRC-FD) and technological education (CRC-ET). Finally, there are temporary bodies like project management groups (GPP), which are called by the CCR for the development of approved actions. The information and communication system (SIC) provides connectivity and communication among national delegations. In 2002, the Meeting of National AQA Agencies (RANA) was created. The institutional map is completed with a body in charge of MERCOSUR's educational fund: advisory committee for MERCOSUR's educational fund (CAFEM).

Within the institutional structure of MERCOSUR, SEM is subordinated to the Common Market Council (CMC, the top decision making body of MERCOSUR). This situation suggests that non-trade agendas have a peripheral position within the policy-making arrangements of the agreement. Another element to highlight refers to the composition of the bodies: they are purely intergovernmental and national delegates (officials that represent member States interests) are in charge of the process. For further data on the institutional dynamic of SEM, see: (Perrotta (2010), 2011a), 2011b), 2013a), 2013c)).

Provisions for the regional integration of higher education are subject of three policy lines: accreditation, mobility and inter-institutional cooperation. According to SEM's working plan, each area refers to:

- a) *recognition and/ or accreditation*: a system of career recognition as a mechanism for the approval of qualifications in order to facilitate academic mobility in the region, stimulate the process of evaluation to improve the quality of education and facilitate comparisons of the academic quality of programs;
- b) *mobility*: the creation of a regional common space for higher education is a cornerstone in the development of mobility programs. This program focuses on projects and activities of academic and institutional management, student mobility, credit transfer system and exchange between teachers and researchers;
- c) *inter-institutional cooperation*: universities are the key actors of the regional integration process.

SEM launched policies in the three policy areas based upon an incremental path: the first policy was the quality assurance of selected programs, followed by the academic mobility program for those programs and finally, the promotion of cooperation between universities is the most recent initiative.

The first regional policy was in the field of accreditation and quality assurance (AQA) of undergraduate university programs, which was implemented in two phases. The pilot phase was launched in 2002: the experimental mechanism for the accreditation of undergraduate university programs in MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile (aka MEXA; the programs under the AQA mechanism were Medicine, Engineering and Agronomy). The experimental mechanism ended in

2006 and was submitted to an evaluation process in order to assess the possibilities of implementing a permanent system. After two years of negotiations, the second phase was agreed in 2008 with the creation of the accreditation system of undergraduate university programs for the regional recognition of their academic quality in MERCOSUR and Associated States (aka ARCU-SUR; the programs added to the AQA system were Veterinary Medicine, Architecture, Nursing and Dentistry). The original demand (posed by the CMC to SEM) was to generate a mechanism of recognition of degrees that would lead to an automatic recognition of labour skills and, therefore, would lead to labour mobility. Such a mechanism would affect not only university autonomy – because universities are the institutions that certifies degrees/programs– but also professional associations, the agencies that delivers the certifications for work of “professional programs”. Thus, the final formulation of MEXA was to move the goal of recognition for professional practice to the generation AQA. The creation of ARCU-SUR consolidated the focus of regional policy on quality assurance and definitely left aside the original goal of recognition of qualifications for mobility of workers.

As for the salient characteristics of the AQA regional policy, for the purposes of this paper we highlight: first, the “club logic” (Perrotta, 2013a, 2013d). The original goal had shifted towards a more practical –and competitive– one related to improve the recognition of undergraduate diplomas within the region. Consequently, this allowed strengthening a regional market for the provision of higher education and enhancing on the global market, quotas per country were established. There are two reasons that explain why not all higher education institutions could apply for the regional AQA procedure. On one hand, alike the functioning of a club –in this case, a group of institutions that share certain characteristics and whose organization reports them benefits–, there are conditions for membership and not every university was able to apply to the mechanism. Only the most prestigious universities could obtain *MERCOSUR’s quality stamp* and therefore fulfil with the goal of improving the prestige of some top higher education institutions to compete in the global market. On the other hand, the establishment of quotas also worked as an instrument to deter a massive participation from Brazilian institutions: as the higher education system is the biggest, the interest of the other countries was to stop Brazil from obtaining all the benefits from the quality stamp and leverage the distribution of benefits per country. This was the main concern of the Argentinean delegation: how to avoid Brazil from taking all the credit of the regional scheme. Therefore, the distribution of quotas per parties relates to a competitive bias intrinsic to the regional AQA mechanism.

However, the “club logic” had a positive consequence in terms of regional cooperation: a club is also based on the principle of solidarity. The “value” of MERCOSUR’s quality stamp relates to the fact that all the parties comply with the procedures, especially during the experimental mechanism –because all the undergraduate programs under assessment were subject to a regional discussion and the dictum of experts was decided within that space–. As a result, the more developed members (in terms of technical expertise, material resources and institutional capacities) ended contributing to the less developed ones in order to implement the procedures. Such contributions resulted in transferring expertise, financing the visits of the peers or the fees of the experts and organizing the regional meetings in particular locations.

A second distinguished feature is the influence of the regional policy on domestic policy (Perrotta, 2014a, 2014b, 2014d) (see Table 1). In fact, AQA policy –that was built by mimicking the Argentinean regulation– diffused to domestic regulatory frameworks, especially in the case of Paraguay and partially in the case of Uruguay. Thus, it showed that dissimilar starting conditions –regarding structural and regulatory asymmetries, diverse university traditions and state’s capacities– resulted in two different types of domestic change. Paraguay passed a new law and created an AQA Agency while in Uruguay, no change was practicable because of the pressures exerted by the

University of the Republic, and, therefore, different policy frameworks coexist across the varied levels of governance. Additionally, these differences also explain how the country that had previous regulation in AQA (Argentina) was able to shape the regional policy, diffusing the domestic norm to the regional level whereas the other country with similar regulations (Brazil) –but not strictly AQA– just accompanied the regional policy without promoting neither normative nor institutional change (Perrotta, 2014d).

Table 1: Policy diffusion and domestic change regarding Mercosur’s AQA policy

| | Argentina | Brazil | Paraguay | Uruguay |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Articulation between national framework and regional AQA | Diffused national model of AQA to the regionalism | Accompanied the regional model of AQA with no important changes of domestic structures through the coordination of policies | Domestic change (institutional and policy change) because of the regional regulatory framework: creation of a national agency. Harmonization. | Implemented regional AQA regulation by creating an ad hoc institutional framework. No changes at the domestic level despite the incompatibility. |

Source: elaborated by author

The second policy area –academic mobility– was developed after the first implementation of the regional AQA mechanisms in order to promote the mobility of students of accredited programs. the regional academic mobility program for the courses authorized by MEXA (aka MARCA) was designed in 2005 and first implemented in 2006 –57 students participated–. After the establishment of ARCU-SUR, the programme continued under a new denomination: regional academic mobility program for accredited courses under the accreditation system of university programs in MERCOSUR and Associated States (but still called as MARCA). The EU has been close to the implementation of the mobility policy: actually, it has funded many actions and set some requirements (like the need to have free visas for students’ mobility).

Until 2011, the places available for mobility were 985. However, the number of students effectively mobilized was significantly lower (580 in total, representing an occupancy rate of 59% of places available). The latest available data of mobility flow (2014) draws the attention to a difficult situation: 444 places were agreed but these do not include all Mercosur members. Indeed, there is no mobility flow neither in Paraguay nor in Venezuela. The country that mobilizes the most is Argentina (38.5%), followed by Brazil (37.4%), Bolivia (18.2%), Uruguay (4.1%) and Chile (1.8%).

After MARCA, mobility policies have been strengthened in several directions: a) mobility of teachers from courses that have been accredited by ARCU-SUR; b) a broader mobility policy that includes Social Sciences and other university programs, “MERCOSUR Mobility Program”, supported by the EU; c) mobility within post-graduate courses.

MERCOSUR Mobility Program (MMP) is co-funded by the European Union (EU). The goal is to generate a sense of belonging and regional identity as well as to achieve a common educational space (aka ERES). The PPM contributed to the formation of academic networks, the implementation of a pilot program for students of non-ARCU-SUR programs and the

dissemination of information through campaigns. PMM performed two types of action: promotion of academic mobility for teachers, students and officials in charge of international cooperation and creation of academic networks (8 in total).

Two other exchange programs are: first, university partnership program for the mobility of Mercosur's undergraduate professors in all areas of knowledge, aimed at stimulating the approximation of the curriculum frameworks and fostering mutual recognition, and secondly, an academic exchange program of Portuguese and Spanish.

Regarding the third policy area of inter-institutional cooperation, although all the previous initiatives indirectly created linkages and cooperative bonds among actors and institutions, there were specific programs to foster cooperation. The core policy in this field is the creation of Mercosur Centre of Studies and Research in Higher Education (aka NEMES). It was established in 2011 in order to: encourage reflection and knowledge production related to the regional integration process; promote research on the contributions of higher integration to Mercosur; propose initiatives and actions that contribute to strengthening the process of public policy making and guide decision-making in higher education in Mercosur. NEMES attempts to systematize and analyse information about higher education in the countries, and to disseminate that knowledge to policy-makers. In order to fulfil these goals, NEMES created a digital journal (open access), organized seminar and events for the exchange of information and funded the creation of research networks. These networks are assessing and proposing policy instruments in the areas of: internationalization of higher education, academic mobility and regional networking; quality assessment and evaluation policies and practices; diversification and differentiation of higher education; linkages between the university and the productive sector; university extension policies and practices; distance education; recognition of diplomas and academic qualifications; democratization; sustainable development.

Educational Mercosur has managed to design, implement and evaluate policies and programs and sustain them over time.

3.2. ALBA-TCP

The initiative of the Bolivarian Alternative for higher education is part of *ALBA grand-national Education project*, ratified in the Declaration of Cochabamba in 2008. The program aims to provide universal access to higher or university education through the adoption of common policies in this area and the complementarity of the respective educational subsystems. In order to eradicate exclusion, during the VI Extraordinary Summit of ALBA in Maracay, in 2009 the University of the Peoples of the ALBA-TCP (UNIALBA) was created. UNIALBA's efforts have been devoted to the creation of a curriculum common and momentum of a comprehensive school system; in addition to the signing of an agreement of approval of university degrees among member countries of the Alliance. Likewise, it was created a program of international scholars in which, for the moment, the participating countries are Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia.

UNIALBA has a network structure based on nodes in each of the countries. It is a platform for exchanges and mobility of students, teachers and university officials based on the principles of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity; defence and respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples; respect and defence of nature and its biodiversity. The First Meeting of National Nodes to the constitution of the UNIALBA Network was conducted in June 2011. ALBA the countries have also stated that the commodification of education promoted by the North was rejected; reaffirming that education at all levels should be regarded as a social public good, a right basic human and fundamental duty of the State.

Additionally, the National Experimental University of the Peoples of the South (aka UNISUR), created by the Resolution No. 3,722 of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is also part of ALBA Grand-national Education Project. UNISUR rests on the special structure of Venezuelan higher education system, the so-called *Alma Mater* Mission.

Finally, as part of ALBA's initiatives in the field of public health, two higher education programs were implemented:

- University of the Health Sciences: created during the Second Extraordinary Summit of ALBA and PETROCARIBE (December 17, 2013), to train professionals, technicians and specialists in the various disciplines of health; strengthen the universalization of the right to public and quality health; and generate humanistic, scientific and technological solutions that contribute to social development and unity of Latin America.
- University of the Health Sciences Salvador Allende: the University of the Health Sciences operates as an articulated network of universities in all member countries that established nodes. However, the headquarters will be in the Latin American School of Medicine Dr. Salvador Allende (ELAM), which opened in Venezuela in 2007. Cuba and Nicaragua have been designated as regional areas of the university to the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM-Cuba) and the Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN).

We argue that much of ALBA's strategy for higher education depends on Venezuela's national policy, especially within the framework of the missions aimed at promoting the inclusion of higher education and the resources available from the Oil industry. Nevertheless, it is based upon the principles of solidarity and reciprocity; therefore, Cuba is a key partner because of the solid higher education system, especially in the field of Medicine.

3.3. UNASUR

The recent history of UNASUR in shaping institutional spaces for the formulation of regional policies for higher education accounts for an erratic path as it was first included in a Council that also dealt with culture and science, technology and innovation policies. In 2013 that broad Council was split and Education is now a specific body: the South American Council of Education (aka CSE). The thematic (ministerial) councils have to implement the mandates and recommendations of the competent bodies. The Council of Heads of State and Government is the highest organ of UNASUR. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs assists it, which concentrate many attributes. The last assisting body is the Council of Delegates. The General Secretariat is the body that, under the leadership of the Secretary General, executes the mandates conferred upon the organs of UNASUR and representation by delegation thereof. It is based in Quito, Ecuador. Similarly to Mercosur's case, decisions adopted by South American thematic Councils (such as CSE) are passed to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and this last body has the prerogative to elevate it to the Council of Heads of State and Government or not.

During the first years, the "broad" Council of Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation (aka COSECCTI), in the area of higher education, replicated Mercosur's agenda. The analysis of the minutes of the meetings of ministers and national delegates, shows that the Culture agenda was the one that concentrated regional discussion, a position that was contested by the agenda of CTI. However, in the first meeting, officials proposed the creation of an Agency for the Certification of University Quality and the higher education working group was instructed to develop a System Improvement and Certification of University Quality (Act the First Meeting of

Ministers of COSECCTI, April 14, 2010). In 2011, a proposal to create a network of institutions of UNASUR that provides scholarships was also included.

During those initial years, national representatives (which were –at the same time– the participants in charge of SEM’s bodies) posed the need to articulate efforts with the policies and programs developed under Mercosur’s framework. There was a demand not to replicate agendas, especially because almost all UNASUR members were Mercosur’s full member or associated ones (the only two countries that were full members of UNASUR but were not in Mercosur’s agreement are Guyana and Surinam). As a result, UNASUR’s representatives (such as the General Coordination of COSECCTI) participated in Mercosur’s meetings and vice-versa. In 2011, regarding AQA policies they agreed that they “should not be discussing the homogenization of diplomas/programs, instead they ought to be discussing the *homogenization of accreditation systems*. If UNASUR parties endorse the accreditation systems of other countries, recognition of qualifications will be much more effective [...] There was a huge emphasis of all delegates in the sense of *converging agendas between Mercosur and UNASUR* [...] and promote joint projects” (UNASUR-CS-CSC-INF-11-003, p.2-3, emphasis corresponds to the original).

Alongside the need for convergence, COSECCTI split into three Councils. The Council of Heads of State and Government by the decision number 12 of 2012 created the South American Council of Education (CSE). The first meeting of Ministers was in 2013: the approved its statute, a working plan for 2013-2017 (organized in the dimensions of quality and equity, citizenship and right to social and regional integration) and two projects for the Common Fund Initiatives (one on South American citizenship and the other on comparative educational systems) (UNASUR-CS-EDU-DEC-13-001). The statute defined principles and objectives.

As for the operating structure, the Council of Ministers of Education (or highest national authority on education) is the decision-making organ; followed by an executive body made up of delegates appointed by the national authorities and working groups to develop specific actions. The presidency of the Council is exercised by the country that holds, in turn, UNASUR’s *pro tempore* presidency.

As for the agenda of regional policy for higher education, advances have remained in the field of proposal and have not yet moved towards effective implementation of broad programs. The discussion focuses on the need to converge with the Mercosur’s agenda.

3.4. THE PACIFIC ALLIANCE

The instance responsible for the coordination of actions in the agenda of higher education is the Technical Cooperation Group (Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the four Foreign Ministers in Merida, Yucatán, Mexico in 2011). There are two initiatives. First, a Platform for student and academic mobility: a scholarship program established by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru in order to “contribute to the formation of advanced human capital through scholarships on a reciprocal basis and on equal terms among the four countries, to exchange undergraduates, doctoral and professors to initiate studies or teaching activities” (Pacific Alliance, 2014).

Each national agency responsible for promoting scholarships (or more than one), as management team, headed the organization of the calls. The scholarships provided are of three types: scholarships for undergraduates for a semester mobility among the participating institutions of the program, scholarships for doctoral students and scholarships for academic stays for visiting lecturers. In the case of the latter two, the mobility can reach up to two semesters. The priority programs (undergraduate) are business, finance, international trade, international relations, public

administration, political science, science and technology and engineering. At the postgraduate level and research, the focus is placed in sciences, economics, environment, climate change, social and human sciences, and science and technology.

By 2014, 444 scholarships have been awarded mobility, distributed as follows: 127 in Mexico (29%), 156 in Chile (35%), 80 to Colombia (18%) and 81 to Peru (18%). 87% was spent on mobility grants for undergraduate students, while the remaining 13% on research visits and doctoral mobility.

Secondly, the Alliance created a Scientific Research Network on Climate Change. The goals are to exchange experiences and progress in research, identify and monitor future collaboration opportunities, explore the application of scientific knowledge and develop capabilities in managing climate change. The Network is organized from a Scientific Committee composed of two members from each country and chaired by a coordinator and a deputy head. According to information available, the first action is to map research in climate change by making a directory of specialists in the field and developing a state of the art in the member countries. The aim of this is to identify mechanisms to promote joint research.

Thus, the Alliance pursues a strategy of grouping unilateral actions in a regional framework, which does not involve the joint construction of a regional policy but, solely, the construction of a block opposed to Mercosur and in line with a dominant market-centred ideology. Indeed, if addressing the case of Mexico, this country has an offensive (and energetic) strategy of internationalization by the granting of a significant number of scholarships for graduate (masters and doctorate) as well as various possibilities for research stays in Mexican institutions. Therefore, the Alliance is a “tag” for the gathering of unilateral policy of international academic mobility.

3.5. SOME COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2 highlights selected features of the four regional schemes regarding the delivery of policies for higher education.

Table 2. Comparative features of Mercosur, ALBA-TCP, UNASUR and Pacific Alliance

| | Mercosur | ALBA-TCP | UNASUR | Pacific Alliance |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Institutional framework for educational agenda | Mercosur’s Educational Sector (SEM) – has developed several agencies for higher education policies. Functions via working plans | Social Council of ALBA-TCP. Has established a <i>grannacional</i> for Education. | South American Council of Education – recent creation. Has developed regional working plans. | Top Level Group in Education, dependent to the Council of Ministries |
| Participants of the regional initiatives | Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Ecuador Paraguay | Antigua and Barbuda Bolivia Commonwealth of Dominica Cuba Ecuador. | Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Ecuador Guyana | Chile Colombia Mexico Peru |

| | Peru Uruguay Venezuela | Granada Nicaragua St. Kitts and Nevis St. Lucia St. Vincent and the Grenadines Venezuela | Paraguay Peru Surinam Uruguay Venezuela | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Initiatives and/or policies for higher education | <p>Developed policies and programs in the three areas: accreditation of quality, academic mobility and inter-institutional cooperation. The most advanced policy is the creation of a regional quality stamp for university programs (selected). Case of policy diffusion and regionalization. Creation of a Research Platform to discuss the role of university cooperation in regional development.</p> | <p>The <i>Grannacional</i> for Education focused in processes of academic mobility to foster capacity building in the countries upon de principles of reciprocity and solidarity. The goal is to tackle the deficits in illiteracy and contribute to development.</p> | <p>Tightly linked to Mercosur's agenda for higher education. Demands for convergence. Challenges to compromise positions between Pacific axis and the Atlantic axis. Rooted in dispute about higher education as a private good (commodification) or a public good (right to education)</p> | <p>Focused in academic mobility that may lead to labour mobility. Depending on national programs that are coordinated at the regional level. Willing to include the discussion of higher education services.</p> |
| Challenges | <p>Coping with asymmetries. Need to overcome the overlapping agenda with UNASUR. However, this relies on how the differences with the Pacific Alliance are narrowed.</p> | <p>Coping with asymmetries. Strongly dependent on the material resources of Venezuela (oil industry, now with problems, and political leadership, lost after Chavez death).</p> | <p>Need to overcome the overlapping agenda with MERCOSUR. The conflicts related to ideological conceptions about university and higher education provision.</p> | <p>Convergence with Mercosur. Deepen the array of initiatives and move forward, beyond merely academic mobility.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | Questions about the new role of Cuba in the region after rapprochement with the USA | After the last political changes at the governments' level, the pro market group gains visibility. | |
|--|--|---|--|--|

Source: elaborated by author

We would advance in the following section with the characterization of the models of internationalization of university.

4. ANALYSIS: THREE MODELS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH REGIONALISM

In this final section, we assess the forms and strategies of internationalization of the university that are promoted by regionalism in Latin America. Before starting, it is worth noting that nowadays all the regional schemes of South America have an agenda for the delivery of initiatives of higher education and this is a significant fact that has been poorly analysed both in the field of studies of the university as well as the field studies of regional integration. This is not a minor situation, as previous waves of regionalism did not consider regionalizing higher education. Moreover, in the so-called “most advanced” regional scheme in the world –the EU– the regionalization of higher education was introduced in the late nineties by an intergovernmental program aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area. One of the most important instrument is the establishment of the Bologna Process. This produces in parallel as the diffusion of the hegemonic vision to promote internationalizations. Thus, we argue that regionalism is a vector to promote the internationalization of university (Perrotta, 2014a). If the political projects supporting region-building processes diverge, the diffusion of internationalization models would also vary between the regional agreements.

Having presented the main characteristics of the selected regionalism and analysed the delivery of regional policies for higher education, we argue that at least three models of internationalizing higher education could be pinpointed: first, a *status-quo internationalization* (hegemonic); second, a *revisionist internationalization*; third, a *counter-hegemonic internationalization*. The Pacific Alliance reveals the first type; Mercosur is the revisionist case; and ALBA-TCP represents an attempt of a counter-hegemonic process. UNASUR is an “in-between” case, as the Atlantic versus Pacific divide is not resumed. The dimensions we used for the analysis were: first, weather higher education is taken as a private good or as a public good and, secondly, the main rationale behind the need to cooperate on a regional basis, weather it is a defensive or offensive action to compete within a highly profitable market or, instead, it is guided by the principle of solidarity to tackle diverse problems (asymmetries, underdevelopment, heteronomy, etc.).

In order to grasp them, we depart from considering that there is a *continuum* with two ideal-types in each extreme: a hegemonic internationalization linked to the commodification of education and the privatization of knowledge, prompted of international organization powerful States and networks of services companies. The alternative internationalization, a model of solidary based on education as a right and the enhancement of inter-governmental and inter-institutional linkages that are horizontal, reciprocal and with no impositions. Each model includes international organizations and States (or coalitions of States), groups that mobilize, corporations, advocates,

sets of ideas, etc. In a previous paper we defined these models in terms of *Phoenician* and *Solidary* internationalization (Perrotta, 2012). Of course, these categories as ideal-types (following Max Weber) attempt to highlight salient characteristics and elements of the given phenomena, while we do not mean to correspond to all of the characteristics of any one particular case.

The Pacific Alliance has provided a regional framework for the unilateral policies of Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Peru in attracting students to their higher education markets. The themes chosen for the mobility of students are linked to the market orientation. The Pacific Alliance is a label to “regionalize” national policies that were coordinated and, by doing so, to promote an offensive view of internationalization. The idea is to attract students, investors and to promote linkages with other States or regions. These countries, as well, have the most privatized higher education systems; and have included provisions for the liberalization of higher education services.

ALBA-TCP is a disruptive experience of internationalization because their purpose is radically different. The regional policy of the *Grannacional* in Education aims to reduce one of the largest deficits of higher education in dependent and unequal contexts: to achieve inclusion and massification of higher education; to strengthen a model of university linked to solving social problems and achieving development of the region and foster democratic practices. The actions of ALBA-TCP in higher education are based on reciprocity and solidarity exchange. It is the case of a solidary internationalization that is settled on the mutual understanding and joint interest of the parties, sustained in the ability of the university to be a space for long term reflection so to develop critical thinking and create shared projects, involving a beneficial interaction in the form of building bridges for knowledge and understanding (Naidorf, 2005). ALBA-TCP’s project is alternative to the regional projects presented here; there is no surprise to affirm that is a counter-hegemonic or disruptive model of internationalization. Of course, this relates to the fact that the governments that support (and are part of) ALBA-TCP have challenged the Neoliberal order and have implemented major political reforms in order to fulfil the right to higher education. This is especially the cases of Cuba (after the Revolution of 1959), Venezuela (Chávez), Bolivia (Morales) and Ecuador (Correa).

Mercosur has created a revisionist pattern of internationalization because, in essence, it is not fully disruptive with the elements of the hegemonic model. Nevertheless, alternative paths have been modelled when initiating and establishing regional policies in order to defend regional autonomy (of countries and universities) and try to promote regional and national socioeconomic development. Three are the areas of revision.

First, without discussing the prevailing scheme, SEM seeks to enhance the position of higher education institutions of each country by pursuing a regional strategy. This strategy is based on conforming regional space characterized by solidarity bonds, respect and mutual understanding. The solidification of the space allows achieving a better international insertion of higher education institutions and improving countries’ indicators. In addition, it allows gaining actorness and having an amplified voice in some multilateral forums.

Secondly, much of the regulatory agenda of higher education is the traditional one, focused in academic mobility, accreditation, and inter-university cooperation. While the other and newer part targets at increasing autonomy and visibility by fostering cooperative mechanisms, such as the creation of a research centre, and strengthening networks with the goal to promote public policies. Nevertheless, even in the case of the traditional agenda, the actions undertaken by Mercosur accounts for an autonomous path of pursuing them. The paradigmatic case was the negotiations of AQA policy and the failed attempt of the EU to establish the transferable credit system, which Mercosur rejected. In the case of non-traditional agendas, although progress is shallow, it has

generated a powerful forum for discussion on how to regulate the internationalization of university. Namely, the goal of the research centre and the policy of promotion of research networks is to assess the challenges of higher education in the region in general, and especially in the field of internationalization in order to foster autonomy and development. In this regards, we argue that through this regional policy of generating research networks we could revert the trend resulting from the imposition of research topics by the international funding. Mercosur's research centre is, indeed, contributing to the creation of a specific field of study –internationalization and regionalization of university–.

Third, as the networks are generated between institutions of Mercosur's countries, this instrument gives room for an internationalization towards the Latin American region; instead of traditional “destinations” (mainly Western Europe and the United States). This allows to create linkages of horizontal cooperation and solidarity. Similarly to ALBA-TCP, this is possible because of a long tradition of public and excellent higher education in Argentina and Uruguay, a solid system (but of elite) in Brazil and the political cycle that was initiated after the crisis of Neoliberalism by the end of the nineties. The governments that came to power afterwards have introduced major policy programs for enhancing higher education, especially to democratize access of traditionally excluded sectors.

Finally, UNASUR is considered here as an “in-between” case. Its goals are similar to Mercosur's action but without the contesting component. The main challenge of UNASUR is how to cope with what scholars call the “Atlantic versus Pacific” divide. In other words, how to make converge (or not) Mercosur and the Pacific Alliance into UNASUR. As we have presented, both schemes represent contesting regional projects. However the problem is much complex because (excepting Mexico) the members of the Pacific Alliance are also part of Mercosur's educational policies. The dispute is ideological. Current changes in some Mercosur countries are to be taken into account when analysing how the divide would be closed.

Regarding the challenges ahead, we summarize in two the situations that would demand further analysis. First, the persistence of strong asymmetries within the regional schemes as well as between them, especially as there are few countries that have a preponderant position: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. Regionalism is an instrument that promotes development bur that also, unless asymmetries are part of a regional program, those differences could widen through regionalization –in this case– of higher education policies. This is worse in the cases where the regional strategy reinforces a national strategy of a *status quo* internationalization. The second challenge is how to overcome the situation of overlapping –both complementing and contesting– regional integration schemes and the divide produced by current tendencies reinforcing the commodification of the university. The answer to this question depends on how the States that have a deep university tradition rooted in the idea of public university, would lead the region-building processes and how the lack of participation of the university actors (yes, a huge deficit of all the regional schemes) would be channelled. Now that the political cycle appears to be moving further to the Right (to a liberal and conservative position about access to higher education), the most progressive regional schemes have three main challenges. First, how to anchor regional policies in a regulatory standard about certain principles (democratization, quality, solidarity, critical thinking, autonomy, development). Secondly, how to habilitate the participation of university actors and social movements in order to promote a legitimate basement for regionalisation. Third, how to develop a mature debate regarding regionalization of the university and labour mobility, a critical issue that has been left apart for the last decade and needs to be included.

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