

ANALYTICAL ESSAY

International Relations from the South: A Regional Research Agenda for Global IR

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Mainstream international relations (IR) has been built as an extension of imperial concerns. Thus, a restricted focus, even a self-styled demarcation was born: *letat c'est moi*. This organizational boundary-setting left behind a good deal of the way the discipline evolved in other areas of the world. In this sense, Latin America has been caught between North–South and Western–non-Western traditions, emerging with questions, problems, and challenges different from those of European and North American scholars. Throughout history, Latin-American IR studies have been marginalized from Western mainstream IR approaches, being a theory adopter but not a theory exporter. However, Latin-American IR is not new. We can trace its roots to the nineteenth century when the processes of nation-building arose as a result of the end of the European occupations. Since then, an idea of *region* started to develop and, with it, several shared approaches to IR emerged. This article aims to bring the Latin-American IR agenda on regionalism into light both in terms of issues and traditions, challenging the conventional wisdom about the sources of IR theory and proving evidence that Latin-American scholars and policymakers made notable contributions that flourished on the edges of the mainstream.

Keywords: international relations, periphery, Latin America, global IR, Regionalism

By definition, the international relations (IR) discipline has been considered a *Western* social science and, even more specific, an American one (Hoffman 1991). This assumption marked not only who was going to dominate the field but also how and with which tools. A lot has been said on the lack of inclusiveness and narrowness of this approach, neglecting voices, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives outside the west.¹ IR theories and methods developed by western scholars have not been able to explain the realities of those in the periphery, leaving behind a good deal of the way IR evolved in other areas of the world. As a result, recent years witness a lot of reflexivity among critical IR scholars in an attempt to bring in a new agenda for research that could put other IR perspectives in the picture and discover different approaches from those imposed by the west. The

¹See Waever 1998, Tickner 2003b, Thomas and Wilkin 2004, Bilgin 2008, Tickner and Waever 2009, Acharya and Buzan 2010, and Acharya 2011, 2014.

emergence of studies on the place that regional and national schools of IR had in the discipline brought together the work of many scholars around the world to delineate a Global IR (GIR) agenda. As Western IR theory has proven its failure in covering the questions of relevance for IR scholars around the world, Global IR brings non-western² approaches back in, in a call for a more inclusive and universal IR agenda, transcending binary distinctions and recognizing the discipline's multiple foundations. As Acharya pointed out in his ISA Presidential Address, Global IR constitutes "an aspiration for greater inclusiveness and diversity in our discipline" (Acharya 2014).

GIR puts regions in the center of the scene, calling for the importance of conceptualizing and investigating forms and functions of regionalism in an attempt to bring non-European experiences into light. The last decades witnessed the emergence of new regional processes, where the state is no longer the only actor or driver of integration and a variety of issues accompanied—and sometimes resist—the traditional economic-driven blocs. The end of North–South and East–West governing principles have led to an increasingly decentralized system setting, the stage for a new geography, and the reconfiguration of political—diplomatic strategies. Regions became arenas of contestation, articulation, competence, and interstate coalition building. "Regionalism is both policy and project" (Tussie 2009, 169) constantly shaping and reshaping IR. Regions are not defined by the international markets, "but by social and heterogeneous historical constructions with unclear and active margins, shaped by processes of regionalization or different configurations of forces which generate diverse projects of regionalism" (Vivares 2014, 11). Regionalism and regionalization (Schulz, Soderbaum, and Ojen 2001) both explain the case of Latin America.

Regions and regionalism have been central to Latin-American IR, as several Latin-American scholars approached IR theory through the lenses of regionalism, building a research agenda better suited to explain their realities and rejecting the European-led approach to regionalism (Börzel and Risse 2009). Theoretical debates on Latin-American IR have been mainly built on the various approaches to regionalism, focused on the idea of gaining a better position in global affairs while maintaining their autonomy. Most approaches to regionalism argued about the success or failure of non-European integration processes by applying the European model as a yardstick. However, European theories of regionalism (functionalism, neofunctionalism, and transactionalism) followed the evolution of the European integration process, explaining and understanding a reality distant to any Latin-American experience. In this sense, in order to advance in the project of GIR, Latin-American regionalism cannot be ignored both in terms of its early history and its various approaches and conceptualization. Bringing in the ideas and experiences of regionalism developed by Latin-American scholars allows new approaches to the same research agenda but seen from a different point of view, that of developing countries.

This article addresses the contributions of Latin-American regionalism to the construction of a GIR project describing and conceptualizing alternative forms and functions of regionalism and regionalization processes emerging from Latin-American knowledge and experience. It will focus on three visions on how regionalism has been approached by Latin-American scholars, mostly inspired by the Dependency Theory, "celebrated as the first genuine peripheral approach to development and international insertion" (Tickner 2003a). As a result, the first relevant theoretical approach to regionalism was presented by intellectuals and

²As Acharya pointed out, the idea of "non-Western" is used as the more convenient definition, representing the noncore mainstream north and western theoretical developments in IR. In the case of Latin America, the term might not be as adequate as the Asian case but serves for analytical purposes to define the "outsiders" in mainstream IR research agenda.

politicians that marked Latin-American International Political Economy (IPE). Raul Prebisch and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) school addressed regionalism in terms of instruments for enhancing economic performance and international insertion through *economic development* and founded the Latin-American structuralist school. Inspired by these schools of thought, regionalism was later addressed as a platform for foreign policy *autonomy* and a way of resistance to foreign interference in regional affairs by Juan Carlos Puig and Helio Jaguaribe, two of the most relevant IR scholars in the region. Third, new conceptualizations and approaches to Latin-American regionalism will be addressed.

This article will explore these three dimensions of Latin-American regionalism and regionalization taking into account their theoretical foundations, actors, issues, agendas of research, and implications. First, it focuses in the peculiarities of Latin America as a region that led to the many processes and initiatives toward regional cooperation driven by a variety of actors, issues, and agendas. Second, it analyzes the theoretical developments of Latin-American roots that served as the basis for the further conceptualization of IR in general and regionalism in particular. Third, it addresses the forms and functions of Latin-American regionalism and its conceptualization, identifying the approaches to regionalism that nourished alternative ways of conceiving continental cooperation to that of the European Union (EU). In the last decade, as many Latin-American governments moved to the left, new regional projects emerged, and with them, a novel set of literature aimed to conceptualized and explain the new process. Finally, conclusion will follow.

Regionness³ before Nations and the Roots of Latin-American Regionalism

Latin-American ideas on regionalism have a long-standing history, being pioneering, both as an expression of autonomy and as a way of resisting great power interventions. In this sense, regionalism is not much of a European invention and hence not the ideal as it has been conceived in most of the studies and theoretical developments on this issue. In fact, we can trace the roots of Latin-American regionalism to the nineteenth century when the processes of independence and nation-building arose as a result of the end of the European colonialism and intervention. Since then, an idea of “region” started to develop and, with it, several approaches to IR emerged. “This is a distinct birth mark, which also helps to explain regionalism’s trajectory, and its mix of contestation, adaptation and pragmatism to a number of *realpolitik* dilemmas. The time frame, together with the exposure to a particular set of influences, distinguishes the Americas from other expressions of regionalism around the world” (Tussie 2009, 170).

Latin America conceived itself as a region, even before the constitution of its members as independent nations, through the will and thought of its independence leaders and thinkers (Fawcett, 2012). The Viceroyalty of the River Plate and Alto Peru extended along most of the region’s territory and showed both economic and military interdependence. Trade stimulated the flow of goods and people between them, and roads became the nexus that gave access to ports on both sides of the continent to the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. Geographic and cultural settings allowed a peaceful coexistence without any major conflict affecting the region before and after the independences took place. Despite their differences in size, population, ethnicity, natural resources, climate, and the level of development, the republics were held together by much more than geography and their Latin-derived language. The pattern of development based on the export of natural resources to industrialized countries reinforced this sense of shared past. In addition

³See Hettme and Söderbaum (2000).

to the political ideas influenced by the French Revolution, the search for free trade was one of the main pillars guiding Latin-American revolutions at the beginning of nineteenth century. During the viceroyalty era, the Spanish crown controlled trade between the colonies and the metropolis, resulting in a high flow of illegal trafficking with other European markets. Independence from Spain and Portugal and the ensuing free market resulted in an exponential conquer of the commercial structure by British businessmen that sent the surplus of their production to South America. In many senses, Great Britain was Spain's inheritor, enforcing its condition as a monopoly supplier more on economic than legal means (Halperín Donghi 1998). Yet, the union of the continent involved political and economic interests in a search for autonomy and markets.

The ideological roots of regionalism had certain precedents that could be traced back to the internationalism thought of the independence leaders and thinkers, such as Simon Bolivar and Jose de San Martin. During the independence revolutions, *continental unionism*—what today we might call regionalism—was incorporated in many diplomatic declarations, and the idea of region that moved ahead together took shape. After the fall of the Spanish domain in the hands of Napoleon in 1808, the idea of independence was conceived as a continental goal and so was the struggle for it, which was based on the union and coordination of its members. Many intellectuals and men of action, such as Francisco de Miranda, Miguel Hidalgo, Francisco Bilbao, Andres Bello, Jose Maria Samper, and the aforementioned Bolivar and San Martin, contributed to the idea of a united continent. The shared colonial experience and separation from Spain and Portugal were crucial in shaping the economic and political destinies of the new republics after independence (Rivarola Puntigliano and Briceño-Ruiz 2013).

In this sense, it can be argued that Latin America has been one of the first regions in the world to think itself as a whole, sharing the same concerns and also the same identity and cultural ties. Latin-American intellectuals seek to establish the foundations for an original and independent tradition of theorizing in and about the region. The boundary-setting established since independence allowed Latin-American nations autonomy when defining their internal organization. International law was the mechanism that Latin-American leaders and thinkers found to assert sovereign autonomy and counter foreign intervention in the region. In conflicts affecting the region, they no longer sought foreign help or allowed indiscriminate interference of the United States but looked for solutions intended for the region itself and based on a unionist precept. “The idea of international regionalism was a response to security problems in the immediate aftermath of Spanish American independence in the 1820s” (Domínguez 2007). Successive principles exemplify the quest for maintaining the union of American nations and developing an idea of region that served as the basis for future progress in regional integration. In fact, the membership of the Latin-American club has been fairly stable since independence in terms of borders changes, secessions, or annexations (Bulmer-Thomas 2014), and regionalism was maintained and built on the ideas of its founding fathers of the independence.

Regionalism and Regionalization in Latin-American IR

There is a lively debate and intense academic research concerning Latin-American regionalism. A lot has been said on the scarcity of endogenous theoretical developments in the region (Tomassini 1991; Russell 1992; Tussie 2004; interview with Roberto Russell 2014; interview with Carlos Escudé 2014), although notably, the most relevant Latin-American IR theories approached regionalism within its postulates. Following the distinction made by Schulz, Soderbaum, and Ojen (2001) between regionalism and regionalization, Latin-American theoretical developments have been mainly focused on the former, while regionalization has been at the top

of the most recent academic debates in an attempt to conceptualize the new processes that the region has experienced in the last decades. As Schulz, Soderbaum, and Ojen put it: “*regionalism* represents the body of ideas, values, and concrete objectives that are aimed at creating, maintaining or modifying the provision of security and wealth, peace and development within a region, i.e. the urge by any set of actors to reorganize along a particular regional space. *Regionalization* denotes the (empirical) process, which can be defined as a process of change from relative heterogeneity and lack of cooperation towards increased cooperation, integration, convergence, complementarity and identity in a variety of fields, such as culture, security, economic development and politics, within a given geographical space” (Schulz, Soderbaum, and Ojen 2001). This process can promote formal integration and, at the same time, strengthen from it; however, its main driver is not the state but the market and civil society (Malamud 2011). Both terms are necessary in order to understand Latin-American approaches to regionalism.

There are several ways to address regionalism since theories of regionalism are marked by the context in which they emerged and the historical processes that they are trying to explain. Structural conditions, such as resources, political instability, and economic crisis, have influenced the development of social sciences broadly and of Latin-American IR in particular. Scholars trained in either international public law or economics approached international politics and the development of a regional agenda addressing these issues. Enabled by the creation of the United Nations and with new concerns over broad issues of backwardness and development, the years after World War II brought about a fundamental change both in the concept of integration and in the strategy to achieve it. Regionalism emerged within Latin-American IR as the reflection about the possibilities and challenges of development and autonomy. The next section will address Latin-American theoretical approaches to regionalism and its conceptualization in order to assess the possibility of bringing these concepts and approaches into a GIR agenda that could explain other regionalist projects in the world through the lenses of Latin-American experiences.

The Forms and Functions of Latin-American Regionalism

Regionalism as Economic Development: ECLAC and the Structuralist School of Thought

The first relevant theoretical approach to regionalism has been developed by the structuralist school of thought, led by Raul Prebisch, Argentina’s Central Bank manager, and subsequent Secretary General of the newfound ECLAC.⁴ Regionalism in this phase was driven by the economic ideas of two international organizations, part of what has been called the first *voluntarist* (Rosenthal 1991) wave of regional integration in the continent: ECLAC and the Latin-American Free Trade Agreement (LAFTA).⁵ Under the leadership of Prebisch and a coalition of technocrats and reformist politicians, “the Commission was the most vocal proponent of economic integration in the region during all of the 1950s and most of the 1960s” (Mace 1988, 408) under the conviction that economic cooperation was the only means to reduce traditional dependence on primary commodity export trade (Malamud 2010). In his “manifest”—as Albert Hirschman (1968) called it—“Latin-American Development and its principal problems,” Prebisch

⁴Raul Prebisch (1901–1986) arrived at ECLAC shortly after its creation in 1948. He established the framework for theoretical thinking that would guide the work of some of the most brilliant Latin-American intellectuals of the time. ECLAC emerged as a powerful think tank, a forum for dialogue and negotiation, a platform for cooperation and cohesion, and a source of information and consultancy for Latin-American governments (Dembicz 2004). See <http://prebisch.cepal.org/en/prebisch-and-ECLAC>

⁵LAFTA was the first regional integration project including Latin-American countries. It was later replaced by the Latin American Integration Area with the signature of the Montevideo Treaty in 1970.

(1950) contributed with an original analysis of the international system that would mark Latin-American IPE and set the basis for the structuralist and developmentalist schools of thought in the region (Briceño Ruiz 2012).

Prebisch put forward the first theoretical development calling for regionalism making a bold leap from the political identity-bond unionism of the past to the large-scale projects of national economic development based on industrialization and import substitution policies through the lenses of core-periphery tensions. These core-periphery tensions clearly set out a new understanding of regionalism that translated to regional economic integration. The nineteenth-century idea of a federation of states gave way to a new conceptualization of regionalism: *regional economic development*.

The structuralist and dependency theories weighed the place that Latin America should adopt in the international system, in terms of political alliances, international insertion, and strategies of economic development. These closely knit schools of thought emerged as a reaction against the US-produced theory of stages of development and modernization theory (Lipset 1959; Gunder Frank 1970; O'Donnell 1973; Cardoso and Faletto 1979) although only ECLAC structuralism developed a conceptualization of regionalism (Prebisch 1950).⁶

For the structuralist school, the concept of region brought with it the notion that endogenous industrial expansion could emerge from designated growth poles strategically located with regard to urban centers and logistics networks (Scott 2009). Yet, regionalism was understood during this period in terms of *instruments for enhancing economic performance and awareness of the fact that the formation of economic blocs in other regions of the world could threaten the future of Latin-American countries* (Mace 1988; Briceño Ruiz 2007). The structuralist project conceived regionalism as shaped by economic principles and driven by the search for a fairer insertion in the global economy and its postwar institutions. In a way, while the European regional integration theory is rooted in the Social Sciences, the Latin-American regional integration theory is rooted in Political Economy (Perrotta 2014) and more specifically in a regional vision of IPE (Tussie and Riggiozzi 2015).

Prebisch's (1950) theoretical approach putting economic development at the forefront of international negotiations has been a fundamental pillar in Latin-American IR and IPE, as it considers development (or the lack of it) as the reflection of the international structure. Countries in the center organized the whole system in order to fit their own interests while the periphery remained passive, connected to the center due to the demand for their natural resources. Regional integration was conceived as a way to overcome structural weaknesses and the limitation of small domestic markets. The idea was to expand industrial planning to a region-wide scale level, to remove barriers to mutual trade while keeping high levels of external protection to serve as an incentive to industrialization, economic growth, and investment (Tussie 2009). In its role, ECLAC led the quest for a new conceptualization of "region" and regional development based on the enlargement of national markets through the constitution of a common market and with "the aim of sustaining the integration effort in Latin America for the next twenty years" (Mace 1988, 408). Prebisch sought to explain underdevelopment as a result of international division of labor. Due to secular decline in the terms of trade, mere export-led growth was no longer viable so he advocated inward-looking development and industrialization to reduce the vulnerability of the Latin-American economies. Furthermore, Prebisch asserted that integration of markets could yield productivity gains and accelerate industrialization, provided it was protected by high tariffs. The

⁶The *dependency* school held on the neo-Marxist precepts, affirming that the extension of capitalism was hindering the development of the most relegated countries and that this could only be reverted through a socialist revolution. They criticized the notion of regional integration as an instrument for development of Latin-American countries (Cocks 1980).

recommendation was to launch a strategy of import-substituting industrialization on a collective regional scale (Dabène 2012). As synthesized by Mace (1988), ECLAC's thesis proposed "to consider the world economy as a structure composed of a center and a periphery essentially linked by commercial relations characterized by the deterioration of the terms of trade. This state of affairs was the factor most responsible for the uneven development in the world economy and particularly for the dependence of Latin America. To free itself from this constraint, the region had to industrialize and the best way to do this was to adopt a policy of import substitution. But import substitution had proved inadequate on a national level because of the limited scope of most domestic markets. Integration—by offering larger regional markets—was therefore the most useful device to achieve import substitution and, ultimately, industrialization in the whole of Latin America" (Mace 1988, 408).

The region was delineated as an economic unit, the underdeveloped periphery. All countries faced the same challenges emerging from the asymmetrical relations between the large-core countries and the nations of the periphery that resulted from the expansion of capitalism, the international division of labor, and the insertion of the Latin-American economies into the global system as a provider of commodities (which suffered from declining terms of trade). ECLAC's regionalism has been conceptualized by much of the classical bibliography as "closed regionalism;" however, that argument has been rejected by this school as it aimed to intensify inter-American trade without prejudice to the expansion of trade in other areas in order to increase world trade in general. Although at the beginning, the plan was to protect the regional production in order to augment competitiveness through regional trade and competition among equals, the opening to the titans in world markets was expected in later phases (Dosman 2008). Briceño Ruiz (2007) called this phase of Latin-American regionalism, "autonomic regionalism," where in a political context marked by the emergence of a new Latin-American nationalism and technocratic fixes, the goal was to increase regional autonomy in respect to world power centers. Latin-American regionalism, then couched in economic language through the seminal thoughts and strenuous action of Raul Prebisch and ECLAC, moved from its roots in a federation of states to laying pillars in economic development for a peripheral region in its search for autonomy and resistance to great power intervention.

Regionalism and Autonomy: Foreign Policy and External Sovereignty

Along with an economic strategy for development and external insertion, regionalism has also been conceived within one of the most relevant Latin-American IR theories: the theory of autonomy. Mainly based on nationalist, developmentalist, and dependency analysis and US IR theories, as classical realism and interdependence, the autonomy approach led to a whole new body of literature between the late 1970 and mid-1980s (Tickner 2008). Juan Carlos Puig from Argentina and Helio Jaguaribe from Brazil delineated a vision of a stratified international system based on structural components and Latin-American processes where they identified the most relevant actors and their behavior.⁷ They "established a conceptual

⁷They established four levels of international stratification with decreasing self-determination capacity: At the highest level, *general primacy* was characterized by the full control of the territory and possession of a vast nuclear arsenal (the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War); *regional primacy* marked by the impenetrability of their own territory combined with an hegemonic role over certain areas and preponderance over others (the USSR in Eastern Europe and Asia); *autonomy (regional or sectorial)* by countries that have the means to impose severe material and moral sanctions to an aggressor. They also have a wide margin for self-determination in the conduct of their internal business and a good capacity to act independently in the international arena. Finally, *dependence*—they are nominally sovereign states with their own governments and credited as independent interlocutors among other states but subject to the control and subordination of some of their decisions to the will of other powers with general or regional primacy (Jaguaribe 1979).

bridge between dependency analysis and mainstream IR theory, particularly classical realism and, later, interdependence, while transcending the pessimistic conclusions derived from these theories in terms of the possibility for autonomous international action on the part of peripheral countries” (Tickner 2008, 741). This theoretical framework conceived development as a multidimensional concept addressing a social global process that includes economic-, politic-, and socio-cultural elements.

Puig delineated a foreign policy strategy to maximize Argentina’s international room to maneuver through the diversification of political and economic external alliances (Corigliano 2006). This is what he would later call “heterodox autonomy” (Puig 1975). This concept is based on the idea that a State can accept the strategic leadership of the dominant power of a bloc (the United States) and, at the same time, differ with it in three main points: its internal development strategy, its foreign relations with nonstrategic partners, and in its demarcation between the national interest of the dominant power and the strategic interest of the bloc (Jaguaribe 1969; Puig 1975). As a result, autonomy scholars emphasized the need to complement external sovereignty with an enhanced capacity for decision making in the international system (Simonoff 2012; Briceño Ruiz 2014).

In this framework, regionalism had an instrumental role in the path from dependency to autonomy, conceived as a broad concept involving not only the economic dimension but also the social and political ones. It was defined as “*the social phenomenon in which two or more human groups adopt a permanent regulation of certain matters that until then were of their exclusive domain*” (Puig 1986, 41). Regional integration was understood as a social phenomenon, “a group of behaviors within a group of humans.” This conceptualization entails a broad definition of regionalism, where the *actors* were not only “states” but also other “micro (societies and companies) and macro (international community) groups” driven by autonomous conducts, not by coercion. In a later work, Puig criticized the unidimensional character adopted by Latin-American regionalism because of its single focus on economic and state-led integration instead of an “integral” conception of “integration” (Puig 1986). In theory, regionalism transcended the idea of market-led integration to incorporate other actors and issues, and autonomy was the point of convergence among Latin-American countries sharing common values and identity.

Regional integration was seen as an instrument for autonomy and emerged as an alternative conceptualization of regionalism (Acharya 2015). The transit from dependency to autonomy was only possible if countries advance in their *viability*,⁸ implying not only enough resources but also the existence of functional elites willing to follow the path of *autonomization*. If the objective of autonomy is clear, regional integration is the means to that end. Latin America needs congruent internal development models, based on strategic solidarity with other countries with the same objective (Puig 1980). Any attempt to surpass dependency isolated from the region was not viable. He called for a *solidary* integration that could be reached by the celebration of strategic alliances, sectoral political action, signature of bilateral or multilateral agreements, and the promotion of cooperation policies among Latin-American countries (Briceño Ruiz 2014). This kind of integration focuses on cultural and political spheres as an instrument to gain autonomy on the basis of recognizing their shared values and shared status in the international system.

⁸Jaguaribe established two conditions for autonomous development: *national viability* and *international permissibility*. National viability of a country involves the minimum human and natural resources needed to overcome dependency; whereas international permissibility is related to the possibility of a country neutralizing the advance of third countries with the capacity to act coercively based on its own relative situation in the international system (Jaguaribe 1979).

The main challenge to regional integration lies in Latin-American societies themselves where nationalisms and the so-called regional nationalisms coexist, but not with the same intensity. In order to overcome this dilemma between nation and region, there has to be a passage from the Nation-State to the Region-State, where the development of a regional state becomes central for regionalism. In this vision, regional integration needs both the development of a regional nationalism by the elites and civil society, as well as correct political decisions (Simonoff 2015).

“Post”-regionalisms and a New Agenda for Research

The third wave of regionalism (Malamud 2010; Dabène 2012) brought new developments in the study of Latin-American regionalism. The flourishing of academic works along the issue was remarkable during this period and continues nowadays.⁹ The vast literature on the rise and fall of the regional blocs, the new agendas for regionalism, cooperation, and comparative approaches (Quiliconi 2014) are hard to cover within the scope of this work. However, these approaches set the ground for the emergence of a new agenda and conceptualization of regionalism in Latin America. This “posthegemonic” moment led to the emergence of a whole new set of literature on regionalism from Latin-American authors, conceptualizing the moment but also the historical legacy of the studies on regionalism. As the neo-liberal era came to an end, and as various countries in the continent moved to left-center governments, trade-driven integration was subject to strong criticism (Dabène 2012). The United States failed in its attempt to constitute a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) due to the resistance of many Latin-American leaders and of transnational social movement coalitions advocating against a free-trade agenda of regional integration (Saguier 2007). The United States continued pursuing a free-trade agenda thereafter the demise of FTAA in 2005 by signing bilateral trade agreements as substitutes (Quiliconi and Wise 2009).

New agendas and approaches to Latin-American regionalism emerged in the post-FTAA context, as seen with the creation of new regional organizations such as the Bolivarian Alliance of the People of Our Americas (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). These emerging regional groupings are characterized as postliberal (Sanahuja 2012; Chodora and McCarthy-Jone 2013), posthegemonic (Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012; Legler 2013), and posttrade (Dabène 2012) forms of regionalism. Delineated a new set of approaches to explain the turn in policy. The middle way between deregulation and a statist political economy has gone hand in hand with programs to enhance social inclusion (Grugel and Riggiozzi 2012). ALBA includes Trade for the Peoples Treaties accompanied by supplies of oil below market costs. UNASUR and CELAC have a rich agenda of functional cooperation, ranging from defense and security (Battagliano 2012) to infrastructure and environment (Dabène 2012; Saguier 2012; Saguier and Brent 2015).

This new set of regional arrangements and the variety of issues and agendas bringing them together led to the debate on what kind of “new–new regionalism” (Quiliconi 2014) are we witnessing? Since the early 2000s, ideological polarization and different approaches to hemispheric governance have meant that new regional institutions are reclaiming the region and rebuilding Inter-American relations while forcing Washington and Washington-based institutions to

⁹In fact, during the last Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO) Conference held in Buenos Aires in 2014, regionalism was one of the issues that convened the greatest number of academics, reflected in the amount of proposals received, and the high percentage of panels that focused on its different aspects.

accommodate to the changed conditions and juggle on the sidelines to retain some influence. The challenge is not merely one of symbolic politics led by left-leaning presidents railing against US domination. US–Latin-American relations face a profound change in the coordinates of regional power, diplomacy, and cooperation. With this passing reference to new projects that contest the erstwhile close nexus between American hegemony and regional order, it is now evident that there is a perceptible decline in the ability of the United States to shape regional orders and institutions. There is now a genuine opportunity to transcend the idea of regionalism imposed *from the outside*, overcome the judgment in terms on how well other regional projects achieve EU-style integration (Acharya 2014), and see how Southern regionalisms become analytical spaces where debates are redefined and global political economy reworked. Changes in the political economy of Latin America must be seen as an invitation to engage afresh with the role of regions, and regional actors, as they become part of what defines the rules of and in IPE (Tussie and Riggiozzi 2015).

The region and its regional powers (Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico); (Quiliconi, Kingah, and Soko 2015) have entered into the scene not only as an object but also as a subject. Regionalism came to be seen as the fundamental, even driving force, of world politics. Although not yet a theoretical framework, the conceptualization of posthegemonic regionalism leads to the possibility of explaining the new phenomenon and applying this experience to other latitudes of the world. The agenda of posthegemonic and postliberal regionalism seeks to understand the scope of regional cooperation beyond trade while highlighting the political spaces from which to rework regional normative frameworks and practices of governance. Accordingly, new areas of regional cooperation have substituted trade as the integration area *par excellence*, like security and defense, energy, infrastructure, and financial cooperation. Politically, the repolitization of regional cooperation in general meant that reclaiming the region as a political space was matched by the rebuilding of a developmentalist agenda (Sanahuja 2012). Finally, from an IR perspective, these initiatives are driven by the conscious search for greater autonomy in the international arena and in development policies particularly in respect to the United States (Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012). Regionalism is fundamentally reenacting state–society relations at a different scale, capable of shaping policy preferences in areas of policy beyond trade and finance. And these issues are at the heart of research in an effort to deliver relevance to the new moment. As in the previous phases, thinking and research are problem and change oriented, never sealed off from the real world outside the ivory tower.

Conclusions

Theorization from the South has tended to be constructed in a defensive manner, either as a form of resistance or as a way to fit into a pattern of “normalcy.” In this sense, the Latin-American experience has a lot to add to the regional approaches to GIR. This article unearthed the pioneering agenda of Latin-American regionalism in order to bring it into the forefront of what IR studies have missed. Although the United States was “bound to lead” (Nye 1991), the region was always caught between its search for geographic and political autonomy and economic development. Region building and region thinking have been marked by structuralist and anti-imperialist theoretical frameworks while holding on to a strong pragmatism.

Broadly speaking, the regional milieu is, in some ways, unique because of its shared beginnings in the system of states and commonality in terms of Iberian as well as indigenous culture (Fawcett 2005). This is a distinct birth mark, which also helps to explain regionalism’s trajectory and novelty. The independence and nation-building time frame, together with the exposure to a particular set of

influences, distinguishes the Americas from other expressions of regionalism around the world (Tussie 2009). The common aspects are stronger than those that bind the countries of Africa, Asia or Europe, being a region even before the independence of its nations. Ideationally, juridical and economically, Latin-American countries needed to think about themselves as a unique entity in order to guarantee their autonomy and counter the legacy of foreign interventions, either for debt collection in the early twentieth century or in the context of the Cold War demons. This common factor affected and influenced the way the region related to the world, developing a defensive strategy against foreign interference manifested on the formulation of a strong set of theoretical frameworks on dependency and autonomy.

The development of a core-periphery approach introduced an idea of how the developing Latin-America and Caribbean countries could carry out a strategy to make the most of their asymmetric position in the international distribution of wealth and power in global economic governance. Although this line of analysis marched on at the level of the system, but closer to foreign policy studies, the theory of autonomy conceived regionalism in an instrumental and broad perspective in order to acquire more autonomy in the relations with global powers. If technocrats then ruled the day, today new regionalist projects in Latin America and their study bring the opportunity for a new agenda on regionalism that is currently flourishing, conceptualizing not only the moment but also the legacy of the studies on regionalism. The understanding of these region-grown processes have nuggets for the building of GIR, holding to the idea that the region is where countries are situated, live, and carry out intense IR, quite often influenced but also detached from the diffusion or projections of external models.

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