PATHWAYS TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM ALBA, UNASUR AND CELAC

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled *"Pathways to Regional Integration: Theoretical Insights from ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC"* submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ALADI/LAIA	Latin American Integration Association
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America
BRICS	Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa Group
CACM	Central American Common Market
CALC	Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development
CAN	Andean Community
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARIFTA	Caribbean Free Trade Association
CECLA	Special Latin American Coordinating Commission
CSN/CASA	Southern American Community of Nations
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
ECLA	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Area
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
G-3	Group of 3
G-4	Group of 4
G-77	Group of 77
IBSA	India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum
IIRSA	Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America
IR	International Relations
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
LAFTA	Latin American Free Trade Association
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NAFTA	North Atlantic Free Trade Area
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
OAS	Organization of American States
SAFTA	South American Free Trade Area

SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SELA	Latin American Economic System
SFP	São Paulo Forum
SICA	Central American Integration System
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USMCA	United States-Mexico- Canada Agreement
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Latin America has been marked by a persistence of efforts at regional integration. The region is a complicated geographical and cultural entity, with a continental reality often conceptualised as a 'jigsaw puzzle'. While mainstream theories have been quick to predict the failure of regionalism in Latin America, the constant mushrooming of regional organisations is emblematic of the fact that the will to integrate remains very strong in Latin America (Ekmedjian1991).

Despite the general theoretical predilection in trans-Atlantic scholarship to dismiss integration efforts in the region as being both mimetic and perfunctory, going as far as to say that Latin American states are takers rather than makers of global rule (Keohane 2001), regionalism has a long, varied and ever evolving history in Latin America. The impulse to integrate is historical, dating back to the continental nature of independence movements, where the slogan of *solidaridad continental* had driven the revolutionary struggle for freedom and was followed by an enunciation of a regional vision by the *Libertador* Simon Bolivar, when he convened the Panama Congress in 1826. These historical expressions of the intent to integrate help explain why despite lacking a significant founding trauma (Dabène 2009) as was a prerequisite in the case of European integration, there has been a constant mushrooming of regional arrangements and agreements in the region. In Latin America, it is particularly true then, that a "regionalized world is not a novelty, but an integrated part of human history" (Bøås, Marchand and Shaw 2003:199).

While several attempts have been made to typify Latin American regionalism, mostly because its dogged pursuit of integration has disallowed the academic discipline to ignore it, not only are mainstream theoretical models found unsuitable for such typification, they are also party to the act of reducing an ideologically diverse and ontologically complex phenomenon to a mere footnote in a study on US foreign policy. While there is no doubt that the United States and its policy preferences for Latin America have been an important modulating counterpart to the so-to-say, 'home-grown' responses to regionalism in Latin America, the predominance of the US in the

English language literature on the same has led to a "silencing of Latin American initiatives" (Fawcett 2005:29).

Latin America therefore, has struggled not just against the history of its actual colonisation and underdevelopment but also, the political, cultural and epistemic imperialism of the United States. The *orient* has subsequently been reduced to the status of the *subaltern* in the narratives of American regionalism. Add to this the pressures of economic liberalisation, the importance of trade and the new global security agenda in recent decades, it consequently becomes easy to understand then, why the ideational component of Latin American regionalism has been pushed to the bottom of the research agenda. This is further exacerbated by prominence of the European Union (EU) experience which has dominated theorization on regional integration.

The present academic context, however, is plural and the ideational realm no longer remains unimportant. A study of Latin American regionalism and its trajectory has much to offer not only towards providing a better understanding of integration processes in the region itself, but also promises to add interesting theoretical insights to the concept of regionalism as well. As Fawcett (2005:29) explains:

> In a more liberal era, where ideas are not held captive by power, this record (of material, Euro- and US-centric explanations of Latin American regionalism) can be set straight by a fuller exposure of the Latin American contribution to the development of continental regionalism.

The present doctoral work does not claim to fill all the gaps in the comprehensive scholarship on Latin American regionalism. It however makes a modest effort to understand and delineate the genesis, evolution, trajectory and growth of three contemporary integration schemes viz. the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and, equally significantly, develop and identify ideas and insights from their practices that might prove useful for a comparative study of the theories of regionalism and regional integration.

Spread over six chapters, the present introductory chapter of the doctoral monograph traces the trajectory of the growth and development of the regional idea of 'Latin

Americanness'; its institutionalisation and the varied forms it has assumed over the decades, especially as a dichotomy exists in Latin America between the idea and the reality of regionalism in Latin America. Functioning along this dichotomy, are the dual organising principles of the US-led, hemispheric integration efforts under the rubric of *Monroeism,* and the Latin American attempts at organising regional integration on the principles of *Bolivarismo*. This duality however, is tenuous, plurally defined and manifests itself variously. Scholars like Fawcett (2005) argue that these multiple manifestations of regionalism in Latin America also owe their present formulations to 'distinctive ideas' that continue to shape the evolution of Latin American regionalism. The actual manifestation of this duality in the myriad forms and institutions that intra-Latin American regionalism and the US-sponsored inter-regionalism took in the past seventy years is the crux of the present chapter.

The present chapter describes and discusses the historical evolution of regional integration in five sections. The first section traces the idea of regionalism as it emerged from the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Latin America. It seeks to capture and analyse the meaning and nuances of the all-encompassing idea of 'Latin Americanness.' The second section offers a systematic and chronological overview of the imperatives and different forms of institutionalisation that have occurred post the European Union model at both the intra-Latin American and inter-American levels. The third section concentrates on the decade of 1990s which constituted an important watershed in the idea and institutionalization of regionalism in Latin America. No less important, the decade saw the flourishing of theoretical literature on New Regionalism, propelled by the post-Cold War world order and the acceleration of globalisation and regionalisation processes. This section ends with grounding the post-liberal integration regime in its historical and ideological context. The fourth section identifies the research questions and hypotheses and delineates the rationale and methodology undertaken for this study. Using this Constructivist approach and combining insights from others including the New Political Economy (NPE) approaches, the final section identifies and explains the recurring patterns in the processes of regionalisation in the region in the twenty-first century.

'LATIN AMERICANNESS': IDEA AND THE IDENTITY

Latin America has a long, varied and diverse history of regional integration (Gomez-Mera 2018). Tussie (2009) has gone so far as to say that Latin America has a tradition of regionalism and variously defined regional associations. A disparate geographical entity, with various sub-regions that boast their own particularities of distinct ancient civilizational pasts, disparities in colonisation patterns, geopolitical motivations as well as different levels of dependence on the United States as an economic partner, Latin America "does not readily correspond to the image of popular caricature" (Fawcett 2005:28).

Even if the imposition of pre-independence imprints on the landscape of the realities of colonisation, settlement patterns and province building are not considered, the history of regionalism in Latin America dates to the independence movement during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century where, the independence struggle itself had been continental in nature. Dabène (2009:3) explains, "the reference to an imagined united Latin America has been recurrent ever since the continent gained its independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century." The slogan of *solidaridad continental* drove the independence struggle and from the very beginning, there was this sense among the leaders of the independence movement that a united Spanish America could better withstand the threat posed by the *peninsulares*, that is, the Spain-born White bureaucratic ruling elite. This two-hundred-year-old history of regionalism alone, differentiates Latin America from other regions in the world, for example South Asia, where the nationalist idea clearly trumped the regionalist one.

Within this two-hundred-year period, there exist a plethora of writers and thinkers who have contributed to the development of the idea of a Latin American regionalism, and their ideas and policies "are an integral part of the story of regionalism" (Fawcett 2005:29). However, the contribution of Simon Bolivar and his influence remain unparalleled in the history of Latin America regionalism, with a near constant invocation of *Bolivarismo*, a harking back to the vision of the *Libertador* for a united Spanish America, best exemplified in the formation of Gran Colombia[1]. Bolivar

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[1] Gran Colombia comprised the present states of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

convened the first Conference of the American States in 1824 and apart from Brazil, Haiti and the United States, who were not invited, he envisioned bringing together the rest of Spanish Latin America under the banner of his Congress for Liberty. This eventually led to the convening of the Panama Congress in 1826 with the hope of the creation of a Latin American Federation as well as a measure to underline and emphasize the region's independence from Spanish rule and ward off threats from the United States of America which had made its hegemonic intentions clear in 1823 through the statement of President James Monroe.

Despite its noble intentions and notwithstanding of the US declaring Latin America as its sphere of influence, the Panama Congress failed to achieve the objectives it had set out to meet with abstentions, absentee organisers as well as the fizzling out of the regionalist idea that had been nurtured by the independence struggle. There were new political realities of nation building and particularistic identity formation which resulted in the carving of separate nations. In 1829, with the break-up of Gran Colombia, the death knell of Bolivar's regional project sounded loud and clear. In the words of Fawcett (2005:30):

> Ultimately neither the recognition of independence, nor the pursuit of commercial interests, were enough either to stabilize the new states or to act as an effective counterweight to an increasingly powerful north.

Though his project may have failed in terms of achieving any of the objectives he had enumerated, the legacy of Bolivar has since then, captured the imagination of Latin America and come to define a glorious vision of unity which emphasizes autonomy, unity and development. The movement from Bolivar's actual historic achievements to the solidification of *Bolivarismo* as the defining norm of Latin American regionalism has encapsulated the concept of Latin American regional identity. As Fawcett (2005:31) puts it, "popular mythology in Latin America celebrates the name of Bolivar," where, "in the realm of ideas, Bolivarian-as-Latin American imprint remained salient, if fragmented."

The development and enunciation of *Bolivarismo* however, did not happen in a vacuum. The counterpart to this Latin American quest for autonomy has been the US-led project of hemispheric integration, defined by the principle of Monroeism. With the

promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine,[2] the United States marked Latin America as its sphere of influence. A deliberate attempt was made by a country with grand plans and great geostrategic ambitions but little capacity to openly challenge European colonial masters at that moment of time, to eke out its zone of influence under the guise of the idea of the Americas being a distinct and different people--*a la* New World as against the Old World. It is interesting to note that Bolivar's first enunciation of the Conference of American States roughly coincided with the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine. He was prescient enough to warn Latin America of the hegemonic designs of the USA as well as the perils of their own disunity. Since then, the two competing ideas of the Americas have co-existed, reinforced as well as competed against each other. The Ibero-American, distinctly Hispanic America that defines itself in opposition to the United States as well as the idea of a united continental geographical entity, the Americas, which is clearly an expression of its power and influence in Latin America by the United States, emblematic in the idea of 'Manifest Destiny'. The latter identity, of a united American hemisphere, is best captured under the term 'Pan-Americanism' a movement that also originated in the nineteenth century.

Coupled with these two opposing ideas of the Americas was also the influence of the European powers that be. Great Britain had been extended an invite to attend the Panama Congress by Bolivar. Other European powers retained their colonial enclaves and vied for influence in the region. This contest between the US and Europe occasionally afforded Latin America a regional space, which continues to this day, as evidenced by the region-wide trade agreements and summit diplomacy between Latin America and the European Union.

It is not surmisable however, that the two American regional projects have always been in opposition or have always been clearly separated from each other. Latin American

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[2] The Monroe Doctrine stated that any attempt by any European power to control or interfere in any matters of any free state in North or South America would be viewed by the United States as an act of aggression against itself. It added however, that the United States would refrain from interfering in the functioning of any existing European colonies in the region. The Monroe Doctrine had been preceded by the No Transfer Resolution in 1811, which prohibited the transfer of territories in the Western Hemisphere from one European power to the other.

Both these combined, represent the doctrine of 'Manifest Destiny' which offers a justification for the expansionist and imperialist policies of the United States, terming these actions as just and valid.

states have frequently, eagerly participated in US-led hemispheric initiatives, albeit, with their own reformulations of the idea first posited. Thinkers, like Andres Bello in the nineteenth century, contributed greatly to the idea of 'Latin Americanness' with an emphasis on equality, non-intervention and sovereignty of statehood, allowing Latin America to navigate the newly developing inter-American system. His espousal of the need for an American Congress as a provider of political stability to newly emerging and developing states as well as a forum to discuss their common international concerns emphasises the agency that Latin American states have often displayed in navigating the inter-American system. This regional body, therefore, would function as a source of stability in a region marked by great instability in the middle of the nineteenth century when he was writing.

Bello's contribution to the idea of 'Latin Americanness' has been fundamental, including but not limited to the importance of trade as a vehicle for development, a disavowal of armed intervention as well as an awareness and acceptance of the dangers of hegemony. Bello's ideas have lived on, evidenced from Latin America's active commitment to multilateralism, inter- and intra-regional trade leading to integration, non-intervention, and peaceful resolution of disputes. Bello's idea of 'Latin Americanness' then, may be understood and summed up as the search for autonomy via the conduit of trade-related development and manoeuvring of the international system through the channels of international cooperation and diplomacy.

How did the inter-American system proceed to develop? The 1823 statement of President James Monroe had warned European powers against any colonial designs over Latin America, thereby locating Latin America in USA's sphere of influence. Around the 1850s, the term 'Monroe Doctrine' began to be used to refer to the US wars for territorial expansion and other policies to exert commercial control over Latin America and the Caribbean. Under the banner of Monroe Doctrine, the US also began setting up inter-American institutions and mechanisms. The first important step in the history of inter-American regionalism was the convening of the First Inter-American Conference in 1889. Pan-Americanism had admittedly edged out *Bolivarismo* in the face of the geopolitical reality of a more potent and assertive United States. However, it is interesting to note that the conference nevertheless, invoked the tonality of *Bolivarismo*, no matter how distinct its aims and objectives were from the first

enunciation of the concept. It was at this conference when the US formally stated that it shared a 'special relationship' with Latin America. Under the umbrella of Pan-Americanism, the US advanced an economic and security rationale that Latin America found itself accepting. Pan-Americanism and its conceptualisation of an integrated hemisphere left little room for indigenous Latin American efforts towards intra-regionalism. Mace and Migneault (2011:161) note

> In addition to the focus on commercial matters, the main observation concerning the 1889 Conference is that it not only created a region-wide system of cooperation but that, in so doing, it prevented the establishment of a concurrent Latin American system, thereby securing the US's role as hegemon.

The conference however was not as complete a triumph of one America over the other, as many states in Latin America viewed this development and the subsequent imperial shift of power from Europe to the USA with apprehension and distrust.

Writers like the revolutionary José Marti (1853-95) of Cuba, reflected this distrust in their work, laced with warnings about the growing influence of the United States as well as its expansionist and interventionist political bent. Though not a formal expression of *Bolivarismo*, Marti's writings brought back to the fore the importance of an autonomously defined Latin America that kept the United States out. No one has written as strongly about the Latin American identity as when Marti spoke of *el hombre del sur* ('the man of the South') to refer to Latin Americans whom he exhorted to choose their own distinct path of development. He called upon Latin American nations to build institutions and laws that matched the natural elements of each country. This exhort to Latin America to unite was further given impetus by a renewal of the language and cultural-based Spanish movement of *hispanismo.*

The Pan-American conferences that followed, established a variety of institutions but the unilateral and heavy-handed policies of the USA, such as the occupation of Cuba under the Platt Amendment in 1901, the severance of Panama from Colombia in 1903 and the Roosevelt Corollary[3] in 1904, did not create the sense of regional unity that

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[3] The Roosevelt Corollary, 1904 was an addition to the Monroe Doctrine and was articulated by US President Theodore Roosevelt. This was a part of Roosevelt's 'big stick diplomacy' and through the use

mainstream literature denotes should follow increasing institutionalisation. As one scholar explains, "although the inter-American system had institutions, these were unsatisfactory to the Latin Americans, who were beginning to demand changes" (Connell-Smith 1966:54). In other words, institutionalization of the US-led Pan-American project caused fear and disunity, instead of some expected euphoria and unity, among Latin American nations.

By 1910, the Pan-American Union had been established. The Pan American Union became a political forum for discussion of matters on peace and trade (Mace and Migneaulti 2011:161) but there was increasing dissatisfaction with the US and much criticism of the country in Latin American literature. Coupled with these intellectual and cultural undercurrents of resentment, the very real actualized fears of US intervention in Cuba, Panama and Nicaragua and ultimately, the signing of the Platt Amendment restricting Cuban sovereignty, documental evidence was further provided to underline the very valid fears and distrust of the intentions of the United States in Latin America

With the coming of the twentieth century, Latin American fears about the United States and its activities in the region found expression in their own documental overtures, namely the Calvo and the Drago Doctrines. The spirit of Bello was reinvoked in these doctrines, with the principles of non-intervention and sovereign jurisdiction to settle disputes related to foreign debt. The Estrada Doctrine of recognition of a de facto government completed the legal trio of Latin American defence against American interventionism. However, with the publication of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904, the United States reutilized the threat of European aggression as a justification for intervention in Latin American states. The 'big stick' policy was viewed in an extremely negative light by Latin Americans who expressed their revulsion against both the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, adding to the growing resentment against Pan-Americanism. Another revival of the idea of a Latin American Union or *Unión Latino Americana* was articulated in the region with the Argentine social philosopher José Ingenieros (1877-1925) terming the Monroe Doctrine as nothing more than a 'declaration of intervention.'

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of the same, the US justified interventions in Latin American affairs and an exercise of its 'international policing power.'

It may be concluded then that Pan-Americanism at the turn of the century, continued to be viewed with apprehension in Latin America, especially considering the US manoeuvrings in the region, its near constant interventions, particularly in Central American states as well as the utilization of the platform for setting an agenda that hardly took Latin American interests into account. Though it yielded an institutional arrangement in the form of the Pan-American Union, the duality between Monroeism and *Bolivarismo* was firmly entrenched and constantly emphasised in the literature. It may be asked then, why did Latin America continue to participate in such an organisation? There seems to be no other answer other than the fact that Latin America understood the importance of having a seat at the table and as the promulgation of documents like the Calvo Doctrine and the Drago Doctrine prove, it used the platform to challenge and question the motivations and policy preferences of the United States. Their own nascent nation building processes as well as the lack of *Unión Latino Americana* did not leave them with many other options. Fawcett (2005:35) captures the reality succinctly:

> In some ways, these states lacked the wherewithal to affect a common policy, weak and internally divided as they were. Yet the very presence of an institution like the Pan-American Union, and meetings and activities it supported, was important, providing a seat at the table, and hence an opportunity to influence the agenda, to apply part of the complex web of legal norms and practices that had already evolved between Latin American states. Their positions hardened, as their statehood was consolidated, and they became more significant actors on the world stage.

The first half of the twentieth century saw a steady increase in the development of multilateral fora as well as the successive growth in the power and influence of the United States. Latin American states participated or remained neutral in the First World War depending on their allegiance to the United States, but what united them was their active participation in multilateral fora, especially the League of Nations. Latin America actively participated in the League of Nations but with the failure of the League to address certain conflicts within the region, faith in its leadership was shaken. With the end of the Second World War and during the formation of the United Nations (UN), Latin America was once again, a most active participant in the proceedings, with twenty-one Latin American states being the founding members of the UN. This has been a characteristic feature of Latin American international outlook so much so that

Heine (2006:481) concluded that Latin America has always supported a "regulated international order" and "drawn strength from numbers."

However, the unprecedented increase in the power and international status of the United States post the Second World War as well as the provision of veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), created well founded anxiety and apprehension about the ability of the United Nations to champion the regional concerns of Latin American states. With the ensuing power struggle of the Cold War, the inter-American defence treaty, called the Rio Treaty[4] was signed in 1947 which was soon followed in 1948 by the Ninth Conference of American States where the Pan American Union was transformed into the Organization of American States (OAS) – and inserted in the UN Charter as the regional collective security mechanism. In view of the ever-solidifying hegemony of the United States as well as cutting Latin America of its UN succour, Latin America viewed the OAS as "a vehicle for containment" and as an opportunity to "maximise their bargaining power" (Fawcett 2005:36).

The US however, took a different view of the OAS and under the bipolar rivalry of the Cold War, it became an important foreign policy tool for the containment of communism – a euphemism for American interventionism through the years of Cold War. Many a conservative authoritarian government in Latin America also subscribed to this view. Thus, as Mace and Migneault (2011:162) explain the OAS was "based on a historical compromise between the Latin American countries and the US." Thérien, Fortmann and Gosselin (1996:232) have further expounded on the nature of this compromise explaining that while, "from the Latin American viewpoint, the OAS was supposed to be a shield against US whereas for the United States, the organisation was perceived as a vehicle for its foreign policy interests."

Nevertheless, with the signing of the Charter of the Organization of American States, the idea of hemispheric regionalism was formalized in a binding agreement. OAS was an effective enunciation of 'executive sovereignty' (Mace and Migneault 2011) and

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[4] The Rio Treaty or the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance outlined a collective security regime in the post war world, where conflict had become global. The other important event at this conference was the adoption of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, an agreement often called the world's first general human rights agreement.

even though in the next few years it established several important inter-regional mechanisms like the Inter-American Development Bank in 1959, it had little effect on the nature of the relationship between Latin America and the United States. This relationship remained one marked by a severe asymmetry of power and "the establishment of the OAS did not necessarily modify the relations between the US and its Latin American counterparts, although it certainly institutionalised them" (Mace and Migneault 2011:163).

However, Fawcett (2005:36) advances that "such reservations notwithstanding, the war and immediate post-war period represented a high point in Pan-Americanism." Although not all Latin American states shared the US view of the threat of communism, or indeed its preoccupation with security to an extent that social and development goals were buried at the bottom of the agenda, the OAS led to two important developments. Firstly, the institutional structure of the organisation brought with it an implicit understanding that members would be needed to be brought around to the agenda. The very functioning of the OAS allowed for Latin American states to become active stakeholders in the decision-making process, no matter how diminished. Secondly, the marginalization of Latin American interests at the OAS brought to fore growing voices that demanded a different form of regionalism, expressed dissatisfaction with the idea of hemispheric America as "the Cold War and the Rio Treaty, left little room for manoeuvre beyond muted protest and sporadic rebellion at OAS forums" (Fawcett 2005:39-40). The formation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (UN-ECLA) in 1948 and its proposed format of closed regionalism to promote the development of Latin American economies, served as the base for the subsequent development of a 'second form of Latin Americanism' that Fawcett (2005:37) describes as "a resistance from below linked to a bigger Third World Movement."

As the next section details, with the formation of the ECLAC and the mounting disappointment with the OAS as well as US-led hemispheric integration efforts, the stage was set for the institutionalisation of the other idea of regionalism in Latin America, one marked and defined by a search for autonomy and development. 'Latin Americanness' finally found room to express itself. Thus, dissatisfaction with the lack of visibility of the Latin American agenda at international and hemispheric fora, a slowly evolving South-South cooperation movement as well as a new model for

regionalism to be inspired by, along with home-grown recommendations of the ECLAC to be put into action, finally enabled the institutionalisation of intra-regional integration in Latin America. As this expression of intra-regionalism was not unitary or monolithic either in its conceptualisation or implementation, the divergent expressions of this intra-regionalism bear academic interest.

Notwithstanding this variance, it is useful for the purpose of a methodological evaluation, to employ Hurrell's twofold distinction of Latin American regionalism. Hurrell explains, "in the context of Latin America, 'regionalism' has historically meant two very different things – intra-regional cooperation between the countries of Latin and Central America themselves, and inter-American or hemispheric cooperation involving the United States" (Hurrell 1992:121). This simple categorization further reinforces the duality in the regional idea in Latin America that has been discussed in the present section. The next section attempts a two-fold task: tracing the trajectory of institutionalisation of intra-regionalism and delineate its frictions with US-led and US-dominated inter-regionalism. The section limits itself to enunciating the institutionalization of intra-regionalism, inspired by the developmentalism enunciated by ECLAC, the most influential intellectual body that gave a solid structural shape to the idea of *Latin Americanness* in the second half of the twentieth century.

LATIN AMERICANNESS: THE IMPERATIVES AND THE INSTITUTIONALISATION

The present section follows Hurrell's classification of a 'home-grown' intra-regionalism inspired by the developmentalist ideas which emanated from ECLAC and inter-regionalism which was led and sponsored by the northern hegemon. The focus in the following is more on intra-regionalism and its interaction, including frictions, with inter-regionalism. While the first took the path of economic integration, the later remained mired in the Cold War related interventionism of the US.

The regional idea in Latin America has a long history, as has been established in the previous section. It germinated for long, since the wars of independence, and went through a winding and torturous path where it interacted and even got overwhelmed by

the other idea of inter-regionalism. Moreover, "without a doubt, Latin America is the "other" continent with a long tradition of modern regional integration, dating back to the post–World War II era" (Dabène 2009:3).

As the first section has demonstrated, intra-regionalism and inter-regionalism were not mutually exclusionary. Rather the early institutionalization of inter-regionalism under US hegemony gave a flip to Latin American regionalism in the form of multilateralism. What emerged from the idea of 'Latin Americanness,' and something which has remained paramount in intra-regionalism, are the principles of autonomy, unity, development and non-intervention.

As discussed, and analysed in the following section, the institutionalisation of the same however, has remained an arduous task. Institutionalisation of the idea of 'Latin Americanness', or Latin American regionalism, has faced impediments over the decades in the form of state-building projects, the imposition of hemispheric organisation by the United States as well as the lack of ability or expression of concrete will on the part of the Latin American states themselves to unite. These impediments aside, the setting up of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)[5] in 1948 was, without doubt, the most significant step in the process of institutionalisation of intra-regionalism in Latin America. The present section, therefore, discusses and delineates at some length the process of institutionalization of 'Latin Americanness' under the aegis of the UN-ECLAC.

Under the leadership of Nobel Laureate Raúl Prebisch, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America was established in 1948 to encourage economic cooperation for development among the Latin American countries. ECLA forwarded a set of radical measures to address the continued underdevelopment in Latin America that had been severely brought to the fore during the period of the two World Wars and the Great Depression.

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[5] ECLA in 1984 included the Caribbean countries into its fold and transformed to the United NationsEconomic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC). It is also termed as CEPAL in Spanish and Portuguese.

Prebisch diagnosed the adverse terms of trade as the root cause of regional underdevelopment and backwardness. Resource-export dependent economies have historically been selling cheap and buying dearer manufactured goods from the industrialised world. This global division of labour between the *periphery* and the *core* is perennially set to perpetually reinforce underdevelopment in the periphery even when the price of resource exports remained stable over a long period of time. The terms of trade worsened as the purchasing power of the Latin American exports continued to fall, compared to the import of manufactured goods from the core. The Prebisch-Singer thesis, recommended the path of Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) as the way out of these historic conditions of underdevelopment and its attendant social, cultural and regional manifestations.

ECLA recommended the strategy of Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) to boost national industries as well as to radically alter the trade structure of Latin America. This logic went against 'comparative advantage' which advocated that Latin American countries should continue to specialize in the production and export of primary products as the path towards growth and prosperity. Baer (1972:95) has described ISI as "an attempt by economically less-developed countries to break out of the world division of labour which had emerged in the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century," where "domestic production facilities" were established to locally produce commodities that were previously imported. Baer (1972:97) explains

> It was thought [ISI] would introduce a dynamic element into the Latin American economies and their rates of growth. It was also thought that ISI would bring greater economic independence to Latin American countries: self-sufficiency in manufactured goods would place Latin American economies less at the mercy of the world economy.

The process of ISI progressed firstly, with setting up of consumer goods industry followed by the intermediate goods industry which, required more sophisticated technology and foreign capital. The belief was that ISI would eventually transition to the stage where Latin American countries would have capital goods industry of their own (Felix 1970). To set this policy into motion, countries utilized policy instruments such as:

Protective tariffs and/or exchange controls; special preferences for domestic and foreign firms importing capital goods for new industries; preferential import exchange rates for industrial raw materials, fuels and intermediate goods; cheap loans by government development banks for favored industries; the construction by governments of infrastructure especially designed to complement industries; and the direct participation of government in certain industries, especially the heavier industries, such as steel, where neither domestic nor foreign private capital was willing or able to invest (Baer 1972:98).

The strategy of ISI was enthusiastically embraced by Latin America especially during the 1950s and the 1960s "as their principal method to achieve economic growth and socio-economic modernization" (Baer 1972:95). The idea of regional economic integration was inherent in the ISI strategy of development and "regional integration was the main foreign policy application of this intellectual and practical approach to development" (Tickner 2015:75). Scholars of the neofunctionalist school, especially Ernst Haas posited the concept of 'spillover[6]' where, the process of integration once initiated, propelled by 'spillover', would eventually become self-sustaining (Malamud 2001). The ISI-led integration efforts were inward-looking, state-led and protectionist in nature, moulded by the search for industrialisation and hoped to generate the much touted 'spillover'. The logic was simple: once ISI brims to the national boundaries, it must expand at the regional/sub-regional levels. The regional level was accessed necessarily to promote the national as well as to afford protection from the rigours and uncertainties of the global level. An inward oriented, state-led, protectionist project with preferential treatment and protection offered to domestic industries hoped to ultimately increase the industrial and manufacturing capacity of individual participants with regional markets hoping to absorb and abet the increased productivity via increased demand. As Bond (1978:402) explains, "through regional integration, it would be possible to expand the market for industrial output and to realize economies of scale."

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[6] Spillover, is the process whereby "a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more, and so forth" (Lindberg 1963:9).

It was with this hope that the Treaty of Montevideo was signed in 1960 by the nations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. In 1961, the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) came into being. A US Docket file (1962:6) explains the objectives of the members of LAFTA as such:

> The participating members hope that the trade liberalization program of the Montevideo Treaty will encourage the establishment of new industries and bring about a more fruitful exploitation of available domestic resources. The development of wider markets among the LAFTA countries is expected to attract new enterprises and to reduce costs of existing enterprises through facilitating mass production and distribution, and specialization.

An ambitious project, LAFTA was described as "a remarkable stimulant and catalyst to regional economic and legal thinking" (Nattier 1966:515). Another important development during the 1960s was the creation of the Central American Common Market (CACM) with similar objectives as listed for LAFTA. This was followed by a flurry of regional activity where in 1964 Latin American states participated in an informal manner in the Special Latin American Coordinating Commission (CECLA) for the purposes of "collective economic bargaining with external countries and international organizations" (Bond 1978:402). An idea was floated by the end of the sixties to create a Latin American Common Market in the upcoming decades, effectively combining LAFTA and CACM. This was followed by the Caribbean states forming their own Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) in 1968, leading to the formation of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in 1973. Finally, as the fertile decade of regional integration was coming to a close, in 1969, the Andean nations of Chile, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador formed the Andean Common Market, known as the Andean Pact, with Venezuela joining in 1973.

It hardly needs stressing here that the developmentalist philosophy of ISI underwrote all these regional integration schemes; and as the ISI process brimmed, it spilled over national borders to integrate neighbours. Though rewarded with increased trade and success initially, the oil crisis during the decade of the seventies, lagging growth in intra-regional trade, inter-state conflicts and disputes as well as the evident dangers of state protectionism rendered the many schemes redundant. Less developed and less industrialised economies complained of LAFTA benefitting the relatively more developed and more industrialised economies, such as those of Brazil and Mexico.

Further, it was found that economic complementarities were limited; countries were found competing for the same markets abroad. Ideological differences and diverse regime character soon put paid to these efforts at regionalism, "undeniably, the economic integration schemes launched optimistically in the 1960s were largely moribund in the 1970s" (Bond 1978:402).

In a never-say-die spirit however, several Latin American and Caribbean states got together yet again, and launched another endeavour in 1975, called the Latin American Economic System (SELA). It was envisaged as a multipurpose organisation combining both intra- and extra-regional objectives. The perennial search for regional development and region's autonomy vis-à-vis rest of the world were etched in sharp relief in the goals set for SELA. Bond (1978:403) defines its twin goals as:

> Its two general stated goals are (1) to promote regional cooperation for the purposes of accelerating the economic and social development of its members; and (2) to establish a permanent system of consultation for the adoption of common positions and strategies on economic and social matters vis-'a-vis third countries, groups of countries, and international organizations. In pursuit of its intra-regional goal, SELA will support existing economic integration organizations, establish Latin American multinational enterprises (*multilatinas*), and conclude agreements on technology, raw materials, and trade among interested countries. All agreements are entered into on a voluntary basis. At the extra-regional level, SELA will assume the former role of CECLA as a Latin American caucus on international economic issues.

Though enthusiastic and ambitious, in hindsight, it was evident that the project of ISI had its structural limitations. The heavy protectionism involved in the process was exacerbated by the oil crisis and the promised spillover was lost as the region faced domestic crises, increasing difficulties in achieving targets and ultimately, finding the spillover logic unsuitable to its particular context.

Were these integration efforts a failure? ISI-inspired regional integration schemes were economic in content and produced limited results. Many analyses described them, by and large, as having failed in achieving their fulsome results, for a variety of reasons, both internal and external. Their achieved modest outcomes apart, these experiments nevertheless established the truth: regional integration could be the path out of historic

conditions of dependence and underdevelopment. Moreover, integration enhances regional capability to be an autonomous actor in global political economy. As Lubbock and Vivares (2021:4) explain, "early calls for regional integration in Latin America were most forcefully made by political leaders themselves, painfully aware of the geo-economic competition stemming from continental powers such as the US, Europe, USSR, and China."

Most Western theoretical analyses, disregard these experiments as being mimetic and inconsequential. However, scholars like Fawcett argue that even though European thinking and writing on integration influenced these regional enunciations in Latin America, foremost, they were necessarily home-grown and built on the importance of collective bargaining as a diplomatic and political tool in the international affairs of Latin America. 'Latin Americanness' as resistance from below, that found an expression in ever increasing participation in the G-77 at the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the 1970s, was expressed at the regional level in these integration schemes. Besides, Bello's articulation of trade as the path to achieve social and economic parity was further validated in these economic integration schemes that sought to understand and resolve the problems that Latin America faced, a situation that went beyond the Cold War-oriented security concerns of the OAS and the interventionist agenda of the US. Finally, as Fawcett (2005:39) suggests, regionalism "had an emotional appeal as an 'independence' movement, it reinforced the notion of parity, of dealing with the US as an equal" as well as "became a point of reference for later institutional development."

This 'triumph' of intra-regionalism over inter-regionalism was also partly a product of the Cold War preoccupations of the United States. The period 1960-1985 was marked by heightened American interventionism and Latin America's disdain for the OAS. The Cold War and other considerations had clearly stymied the OAS; the inter-regional mechanism was caught between the devil and deep blue sea. Carolyn Shaw (2004:86) captures the dilemma:

> Latin American disinterest toward the OAS during this period can be explained by three main reasons. First, by acting outside the hemispheric regional architecture, countries could bypass the formal binding procedures of the OAS that greatly slowed negotiations, thereby gaining more flexibility. Second, some states believed that the OAS could too easily be controlled by the US through

direct and/or indirect pressure, which rendered negotiations worthless. Third, and surprisingly, the US was also hesitant to use the OAS as a negotiation forum because it feared an anti-American sentiment and lack of support from Latin American states.

Not surprisingly, the US acted unilaterally on occasions bypassing the OAS in its interventions or when working out trade and aid arrangements in the region. USA made some feeble attempts at regional partnership, offers which were clearly not rejected by the Latin Americans. One such offer of partnership was the short-lived Alliance for Progress in the early 1960s. Shaken by the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and fearing the spread of communist ideology in the region, the US administration of President John F. Kennedy launched the much celebrated 10-year, US$10 billion programme of aid and investment in the region. The unilateral nature of the package and Kennedy's assassination however, put paid to this venture.

US-led inter-American regionalism nevertheless, met a measure of success through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in 1967, which established Latin America as the first nuclear weapon free zone in the world. Though affected with US intervention and assistance, this nuclear non-proliferation regime had far-reaching consequences in terms of the creation of a security community in a region which today, boasts extremely low instances of inter-state conflict. Further, this treaty helped resolve one of the most important rivalries that could have potentially been dangerous to the stability of the region as well as established patterns of cooperation between Brazil and Argentina that had far reaching consequences in the newer formats of regionalism, yet to emerge.

The OAS, under the aegis of the US supported several right-wing authoritarian governments in Latin America and this in turn, did not help the negative perception about its efficacy and un-biasedness in the region. The 1970s were marked by the rise of military-authoritarianism in the region; and hemispheric regional efforts were put on the back burner for the most part. As Mace and Migneault (2011:163) put it, "the logic of power prevailed over the principles of international law for US authorities" and "distrust toward the US led to a loss of consensus that, in turn, engendered a paralysis of the inter-American system."

Be that as it may, Bulmer-Thomas (1994) lists these varied attempts at intra- and inter-regionalism as constituting the "first phase" of regionalism in Latin America. The phase was marked by the state-led ISI model of economic integration. The assumption was that economic integration would produce conditions for deeper and multifaceted integration in the region and the rise of Latin America as an autonomous actor in external affairs. The largely home-grown model came closest to the Bolivarian ideal of *solidaridad continental*. The other plank of regionalism in this first phase was overtly political, driven by US' Cold War considerations. Nevertheless, inter-regionalism proved more stable and succeeded in creating the inter-American system of institutions, but US interventionism frustrated the Latin American goals of solidarity, autonomy and development.

'NEW' REGIONALISM, LIBERALISATION AND GLOBALISATION

The jigsaw puzzle of Latin American regionalism became more complex in the 1990s; in fact, it looked more like a 'spaghetti bowl.' New issues joined pre-existing ones, looking for explanations as innovative integration mechanisms proliferated. Bulmer-Thomas uses the expression "first phase" to describe the regionalism of the 1960s which was state-led and ISI-inspired. It is also often described as 'old' regionalism, an essentially home-grown regionalism with incomplete institutionalization. With the onset of the debt crisis in the 1980s, 'old' integration suffered a huge setback in the region. As Bulmer-Thomas (1994) explains, with the need to generate large trade-surpluses quickly, heavily-indebted Latin American countries cut down on imports which had a debilitating impact on the regional integration schemes. Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were negotiated and implemented nationally leaving little to no scope for any common region-wide response.

What ECLAC has called the 'new' regionalism began in the context of domestic economic liberalization and globalization processes that gathered pace as the region jettisoned the ISI model of development in favour of neoliberal growth model. Was 'new' regionalism a neoliberal attempt to access the market of the neighbouring

country? Was 'new' regionalism the 'building block' or the 'stumbling block' of globalization?

The lag in hemispheric integration efforts led scholars to describe the decades of the seventies and the eighties as being the *lost decades* of Latin America, especially in light of US apathy to the economic needs of Latin America, its support to military-authoritarian regimes and especially its interventionist agenda in Central America. With the ISI strategy in disuse in the 1980s, was Latin American integration really doomed? Scholars like Fawcett (2005:40) have argued against this abject victimhood ascribed to Latin America in the face of US hegemony and regional economic disarticulation of the 1980s and argues:

> The picture was perhaps not so bleak as it seemed. In their varied responses to the decade of crisis Latin American states were not always the helpless pawns they are often portrayed to be. For some states there was a relatively robust return from economic crisis, and an emerging liberal consensus which included political reform. The long-standing commitment to the containment of US power within an institutional and legal framework remained. On this base, the seeds of a renewed regional order were sown.

If the development of 'open' regionalism is considered, Fawcett's argument finds weight. Throughout the decade of the eighties, support for 'old' regionalism waned but with the subsequent democratisation and economic liberalisation that the region underwent, in part because of the rules laid out by international financial regimes regarding the region's debt repayment structure, a new, vastly different project of regionalism was embraced by the region. What ECLAC termed as 'open' regionalism was characterised by the economic liberalisation. Unlike the ISI era, it was not designed to promote any state-led scheme, nor did it suggest high tariffs on trade with the world. The 'open' regionalism did not limit itself to manufacturing and did not discriminate against extra-regional exports either (Bulmer-Thomas 2001). It was in fact, as Bulmer-Thomas (2001:361) puts it, "a whole range of novel issues designed to prepare LAC countries for the challenge of globalisation and to encourage integration of the LAC economies into the world system of trade and payments."

This is why Fawcett (2005) equates 'open regionalism' with 'neoliberal regionalism.' A more detailed definition of 'open regionalism' in Latin America came from Sanahuja (2012:11):

> Open Regionalism in Latin America was based in regional trade agreements with low external tariffs and trade barriers and broad intra-group liberalization, aimed to give markets a bigger role in promoting efficiency and international competitiveness.

Scholars have argued that globalization represented challenges for all players of the international system and even though, theoretically, it was possible for nation-states to carve out individual responses to the phenomenon, "almost every country in the world has chosen to meet the challenge of globalisation in part through a regional response" (Bulmer-Thomas 2001:363).

It is at this point of time again that the two Americas manifest themselves at a near similar juncture in time. Hemispheric integration found a new expression in the creation of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA)[7] as well as the most ambitious proposal of hemispheric integration, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). On the other hand, Brazil and Argentina together with the other *Rio de la Plata* (River Plate) countries of Uruguay and Paraguay, formed the Southern Common Market or MERCOSUR – a customs union to allow free trade among member-countries and with a common external tariff against outside imports. At the Latin American regional as well as inter-American level, it was obvious, that 'new' regionalism was seen as the 'building block' of globalization.

Though NAFTA and MERCOSUR represent two opposing integration methodologies, in that one aligns its interests with the US and one attempts to define itself and its region autonomously, both represent different roads taken by two Latin American giants, namely Mexico and Brazil, towards regionalism. This has to be viewed in the context of the end of the Cold War which presented the developing world with new opportunities. Regionalism represented a method to improve one's bargaining position,

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[7] The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) entered into force on July 1, 2020 and has substituted the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

where it "became a means to check marginalization" (Fawcett 2005:41) in a globalizing world. With regionalism sweeping Europe and the East and Southeast Asia, a liberalizing Mexico had little option other than to lock in with the US market for its exports and attract the much-vaunted foreign capital. MERCOSUR had a slightly different logic to its formation viz. the sub-region of South Cone hoped to join the globalized world economy from a position of autonomy.

It is interesting to note the contrasting pathways adopted by the two states, adding another duality to the analysis here, inherent in which was also the ambition for regional leadership to better understand the manifold character of 'open' regionalism exhibited by Latin America.

Dabbling with this 'new' regionalism, one, in fact, comes across its interesting political and diplomatic manifestations during the economically 'lost decade' of the 80s. The process may have said to have started in the eighties itself when a slowly democratising Brazil began its uphill climb towards establishing itself as a regional leader. The first step in this direction was the transformation of the Latin American Free Trade Area into the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI or LAIA) in 1980. ALADI identified its purpose as to become a driver of socio-economic development with the ultimate goal of establishing a common market. It hoped to evade the pitfalls of LAFTA; and bilateral negotiation was the key word. With ALADI in the background, there were also several diplomatic agreements signed between Argentina and Brazil that eventually led to the formation of MERCOSUR in 1991. Earlier, Brazilian governments had gone out establishing infrastructural and energy connectivity in the sub-region and the scores of bilateral and multilateral companies, the *multilatinas*, had brought in considerable economic and business integration – which made MERCOSUR the next logical step.

Moreover, also for the first time, a formal institutionalized political response to the interventionist United States was formulated in the region in the form of the Contadora Group that met for the first time in 1983. Its members were Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela. Formed in opposition to the US interventionism, Contadora represented a regional response to find a regional solution to a regional crisis minus the US. The Reagan administration had revived the Cold War and saw the civil wars in Central America as a Cuban-Soviet conspiracy to install communist governments and

destabilize the region and, in domino effect, to eventually threaten the security of the US itself. The Contadora group saw the roots of the Central American crisis in the persistence of centuries-old structures of domination and violence. In its view, Central America needed to reform by overthrowing these oppressive structures.

The Contadora group thus espoused support for democratization, economic development, regional security and the creation and maintenance of regional peace. However, it also prohibited unilateral action by the United States and was consequently not recognised by the same, even as the US went about finding its own militaristic solution to the crisis in Central America – a policy whose consequences continue to beleaguer Central America to this day. Be that as it may, the idea of Latin American solutions to Latin American problems is a legacy of the Contadora group.

This attempt towards formally defining the need for regional autonomy found favour with other states in the region, culminating in the formation of the Contadora Support Group, with the membership of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Peru in 1985. The conflict over the Islas Malvinas/ Falkland Islands between the UK and Argentina in 1982 as well as the blatant disregard by the US of the terms laid under the Rio Treaty to come to the aid of a member-country under external attack were an important catalyst for the formation of the same. US sympathy and support lay with Great Britain. British deployment of a nuclear-powered submarine in a nuclear free zone, in violation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, came as another rude shock to Latin America. These experiences were the precursors to the formation of the Rio Group in 1986. The two mechanisms viz. the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group merged to form the Rio Group. The imprint of Brazilian regional leadership in the formation of the Rio Group could not be missed. The Rio Group was seen by many as an alternative to the OAS. While there was little to no institutional structure, the Rio Group started a summit culture in Latin America which was exclusively open to only member states. As Andrew Hurrell (1992:132) explains:

> The first wave [of 'new' regionalism] was essentially political in nature. The regional attempts to secure peace in Central America through the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group were examples of this, as were moves towards increased political consultation and coordination in such forums as the Group of Eight and its successor, the Rio Group, and the improvement in the political relationship between Brazil and Argentina from I980 and particularly from I985.

With Cold War waning, a new era was about to dawn. The Warsaw pact had integrated and eventually the Soviet Union itself collapsed. There was an ideological and political vacuum. Countries and regions were assessing their own positions in the global power hierarchy which was highly unsettled and fluid. Globalisation, turbo-charged with Information Technology (IT) and the new transport and communication technology, had in its own way, accelerated these trends. In these fluid and uncertain global circumstances, the Rio Group stood out as representative of a stable and united Latin America ready to negotiate the position of the region in the post-Cold War world from a place of strength and autonomy. The Rio Group was the "regional version of the Non-Aligned Movement in the altered context of economic globalization and post-Cold War US-based unipolarity" (Nafey 2004:51).

The end of the Cold War also marked the phase where the US embraced regionalism as a valid foreign policy tool as opposed to its earlier treatment of the phenomenon as a safety measure and subsequently, pushed hard for the acceptance of the principles of the Washington Consensus – a consensus arrived at between the US Treasury Department, multilateral financial institutions and private international lenders to push Latin America towards embracing neoliberalism. The Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) by President George Bush in 1990 was the most ambitious proposal to date of hemisphere-wide free trade in lieu of some debt reduction to Latin American and Caribbean countries. The proposal of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) hoped to create incentives to reinforce Latin America's "growing recognition that free-market reform is the key to sustained growth and political stability" (Bush 1990). With *trade not aid* as the mantra of this initiative, the US did stress on important issues to Latin America namely debt restructuring, greater foreign investment and the need for the protection of the environment. US policy had definitely taken a regionalist turn and it had consequently employed new variables into its old national security agenda, namely those of free trade and open economy. The first instantiation of this renewed project of hemispheric regionalism was NAFTA. Negotiations that had begun in the Reagan administration with Mexico had finally led to the formation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) comprising the US, Canada and Mexico, and came into force in 1994.

The creation of NAFTA and the consequent processes of liberalization led to a flurry of bilateral free trade agreements being signed between Latin American countries and the United States. The 1990s also saw the revitalization of old trade blocs as well as creation of important new integration mechanisms. MERCOSUR came into being in 1991 with the signing of the Treaty of Asuncion and included Uruguay and Paraguay into what had been a culmination of the diplomatic endeavours of a decade between Argentina and Brazil. Further negotiations led to the proposal of a South American Free Trade Area (SAFTA) in 1993 which in 2000 led to the creation of the South American Community of Nations (CASA/CSN); The Central American Common Market countries formed the Central American Integration System (SICA) in 1993; The Andean Pact was transformed to the Andean Community (CAN) in 1996; Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela formed the Group of 3 (G-3) in 1995. Hurrell's formulation that regionalism in Latin America at the end of the twentieth century was necessarily focused on "proposals for economic cooperation and integration" (Hurrell 1992:132) is quite apt.

The plethora of bilateral free trade agreements[8] between Latin American states like Colombia, Chile and Peru and the United States however, somewhat complicated the character and purpose of several regional initiatives which had been designed to be an expression of the Latin American search for autonomy. Sanahuja (2012) has called attention to the ability of trade negotiations to 'disperse' regional integration intent. Venezuela officially left the Andean Community in 2006 as a mark of protest when Chile signed a free trade area agreement with the US in 2005. It also redacted its membership from the G-3. The old rhetoric was difficult to reconcile with the present international and regional reality and Venezuela under the leadership of Hugo Chávez called for the establishment of 'Our America' which eventually led to the formation of the Bolivarian Alliance of Our America (ALBA) in 2004.

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[8] Several Latin American countries signed FTAs with the United States in the years following NAFTA. These include - the Chile-USA FTA in 2004, the Dominican Republic- Central America- USA FTA (or CAFTA-DR) in 2005 (includes Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic), the Peru -USA Trade Promotion Agreement in 2007, the Colombia – USA FTA in 2012 and the Panama – USA Trade Promotion Agreement:2012

The attacks on 9/11 marked yet another policy change in the United States. The 'benign hegemon' of the Clinton years was to be no more. Scholars have often called the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 as defining the 'unipolar moment' for United States foreign policy. With the agenda of the US Global War on Terror (GWOT), Central American states and the Caribbean were officially understood as part of the US sphere of influence and came under the area of responsibility of the newly-established US Northern Command (USNORTCOM). The presence of a hegemon that no longer wished to remain benign, the rise of charismatic leaders like Chávez, as well as the rise of several leaders who were sympathetic to the ideas of '21st Century Socialism' (and consequently promoted a developmental agenda) like Lula da Silva of Brazil, Nestor Kirchner of Argentina, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador, along with the dissatisfaction with the US position on intellectual property rights and the issue of agricultural subsidies in WTO negotiations, all culminated in the demise of the FTAA negotiations in 2005.

From the above analysis, it may therefore be concluded that with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent democratisation and liberalisation in the region, there was an emergence of what has been called 'open regionalism'. As opposed to the 'closed' nature of integration before, states actively employed the neoliberal logic and markets were opened to non-member countries. The economic logic of the ISI which had essentially been socio-politically driven changed to the neoliberal trade logic, where the understanding of trade and integration as two separates blurred, especially for the United States (Fawcett 2005). Exemplified best by the US-led NAFTA (North American Free Trade Area) and home-grown, Brazil-led MERCOSUR, states used integration to sell newly enacted neoliberal norms to their domestic economies even as integration was touted as a democracy-preserving and furthering mechanism. This 'wave' of regionalism reached its peak with the Enterprise for the Americas initiative that was quickly followed by the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations.

Coinciding with this wave was the development of the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) to studying regionalism where the multi-actor, social model of region building was promoted with an increased understanding that regions should be treated as emergent, socially created phenomena as well as an acceptance of the importance of

pathways of development, permeation of ideas as well as the role of identity. The 'constructivist' turn (Guzzini 2000) that the discipline of International Relations (IR) had taken, problematised easy acceptance of the structural, teleological model of integration arguing instead, a wider conceptualisation of the project of regionalism.

It was during the FTAA negotiations that the waning of the neoliberal trade regime could be felt in the region. MERCOSUR was pitted against the FTAA even as most Latin American states bemoaned the open market logic and voiced the need for an alternative model of development. Even as the US signed a host of free trade agreements with several countries in the region like with Chile, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic-Central America agreement (CAFTA-DR) and Colombia, the 2000s were marked by an enunciation of the need for a different logic that went beyond trade. This marked what the scholars have termed as the beginning of the 'third wave' of regionalism in Latin America, or 'post-liberal' regionalism, or 'post-hegemonic' regionalism, necessarily characterized by a 'return of the state.' The regional integration projects of Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA, 2004), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR, 2008) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, 2011) reformulated development goals, enunciated new goals of socio-economic parity as well as redefined what is meant by 'Latin Americanness' (Riggirozzi 2010). Heine (2012) has a slightly different take when he highlights the flurry of free trade agreements in the 2000s. Compared to the 'old' regionalism of the 60s and the 'new' regionalism of the 90s, the so-called 'globalised' regionalism of the 2000s was actually a call to raise regional indicators of social development and to make the region ready to face a more competitive global economy – centred in Asia Pacific.

The success of MERCOSUR and a result of the deliberations and discussions held during the negotiations for FTAA provided confidence to the regionalist enterprise in Latin America. Combined with the developmental agenda as mentioned above, the State was being 'brought back' into economic development and regional integration processes; and there was a definite movement towards post-liberalism in Latin America. Led by Venezuela, the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America or ALBA came into being in 2004 and was posited by the member states as an alternative to the OAS. In 2008, CASA was transformed to the Union of South American Nations

or UNASUR and the organisation united the whole of South America into one regional organisation. Finally, in 2011, the Rio Group was transformed and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) came into being. Given the confidence and strength of the regionalist enterprise at the turn of the century, several scholars even speculated that the absence of the United States and Canada in these mechanisms could potentially "diminish the role of the present regional system of the OAS or possibly even replace it" (Grabendorff 2010:110). Intra-regionalism in Latin America seemed to have edged out inter-regionalism between the Americas at this juncture of time.

Scholars have underlined not only the categorical difference in the format of regionalism underway in Latin America, but they have also been careful to define this difference as being beyond the 'post-hegemonic' rationale. Regionalism in Latin America has undergone a socio-political transformation where historical processes and pathways of integration are informing present reformulations. ALBA, championed by Hugo Chávez and promoted by the petroleum wealth of Venezuela posited itself as necessarily ideologically opposed to the neoliberal, US-led model. UNASUR was the culmination of the concerted policies of the Lula da Silva government in Brazil, the crowning glory of its intense region-oriented politics. CELAC represented a re-articulation of hemispheric regionalism axiomatic of the 'will to integrate' in the region as well as a forum that attempted to define Latin American regional space in a new format. Serrano (2005), has argued that Latin American states are deeply aware of trans- and even sub-regional identity. This period of 'post-hegemonic' regionalism represents such a confluence of history, the invocation of multiple and at times simultaneous identities as well as ideological underpinnings.

It is an understatement therefore, to suggest that regional integration in Latin America is a complicated, complex but nevertheless dynamic process. With the guiding principle of social, political and economic development, Latin American states have attempted to utilise the regional sphere not only to manoeuvre the global system but also to eke out an autonomous existence in a system shaped and influenced by alternating bouts of close personal attention by the global hegemon as well as periods of policy neglect. While much has been written about the motivations for regional integration in Latin America, it is safe to conclude that regionalism is "both policy and project" in Latin America (Tussie 2009). It bears weight then, to analyse this resurgence also in terms of

the actors who shaped this project. Brazil under Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva as well as Venezuela under Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías enunciated two models for regional integration. While scholars underline the shared pathways of integration in shaping an agenda beyond mainstream integration logics, Brazil's agenda for regional leadership under Lula also fitted neatly under great power aspiration arguments; whereas Venezuela under Hugo Chávez picked up the Bolivarian banner of Latin American 'unity' and 'autonomy' and José Marti's revolutionary credo of a distinct Latin American 'identity'.

In sum, there is much to be explored in deconstructing the theoretical vagaries of the most recent integration attempts in the region even while deciphering the character of regional projects which "must at least be conceived as visible manifestations of the re-politicisation of the region, creating foundations for new polities" (Riggirozzi 2010:2). Heine quotes the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda that "Latin American is very fond of the word 'hope'. This hope is really like a promise of heaven, an IOU whose payment is always being put off." He argues that "one of these eternal hopes has been regional integration" (Heine 2004:8). Yet, despite an inability to fully realize integration, it has not been due to a lack of trying.

DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of this study, regional integration in Latin America is understood to be the attempts made by Latin American countries (or intraregionalism) to integrate as a geographic and cultural region on the basis of a shared cultural past, civilizational history as well as *mismo* conceptualization of national goals and international position. US-led hemispheric regional integration efforts (or inter-regionalism) have been excluded from the purview of this study as an attempt has been made to differentiate the neoliberal trade logic from the development oriented, socially motivated economic logic of intraregionalism.

Further, regionalism is not conceptualised as existing in distinct, discreet and differentiable 'waves' but rather as the idea put forward by Söderbaum and Van Langenhove (2005), of existing in the form of 'generations' of regionalism which understands different strands of regional processes as co-existing and overlapping.

Though the existence of interdependent, contrasting even competing visions of the Americas (Fawcett 2005) is acknowledged, a distinction is implied in the present form of regional integration underway in the region as demonstrated in the regional arrangements of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC.

There is little doubt in scholarship that the present wave of regionalism in Latin America represented a change in the format of regionalism as well as a re-articulation of goals. It cannot be lumped together with anti-hegemonic or anti-imperialistic earlier impulses not only because of the ideological strength of its reformulation but also because it reconstituted and reimagined regional space in the region in several different forms.

Moreover, despite acknowledgement of difference in the most recent attempts at regional integration, there has not been an adequate extrapolation on the nature and character of this difference, especially as concerns the questions of a discernible vision, motivation and leadership.

Historical analyses of regionalism in Latin America have concluded that there is a regional identity and a regional option readily available and regularly exercised by Latin American countries – often where the economic logic is employed to further social goals. There exists however the matter of Brazil, a country which has remained more peaceful, can boast of a long tradition of diplomacy and more importantly which was separate from the colonial matrix which formed the continental identity of most Spanish speaking states – a region where it hopes to establish its prominence. Similarly, Venezuelan conceptions of its role as regional leader are marked by a sense of exceptionalism, which is distinct from Brazilian exceptionalism. This duality between regional integrationist impulses and exceptionalist national grand strategies is difficult to reconcile but important to elaborate on, nevertheless.

There is also something to be said about the regionalizing actors in the present spate of regional arrangements. Why are the expressions of continental solidarity so significantly attached to particular leaders in Latin America? There is a need for further elaboration on the same.

Regional integration in Latin America has been said to have categorically changed post the rise of the 'pink tide' in Latin America, expedited by the charisma and leadership

of Lula da Silva and the ideological rhetoric (supported by the petroleum wealth of Venezuela) of Hugo Chávez. The most current expression of *Bolivarismo* manifests itself in the regional arrangements of ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas), UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) and CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States).

These two leaders supported a distinctly identity driven programme of socioeconomic development guided by their individual national political goals. Further, they emerged as the primary regional actors who often, though not always, bore economic, political as well as diplomatic costs to further the project of integration. A theoretical study of the same, informed by a critical reading of constructivism promises further insight.

The temporal scope of this study may be located in the period between 1990-2013, the incidence coinciding with the first meeting of the São Paulo Forum and the culmination with the death of one of the primary protagonists of this integration regime, Chávez. However, given the overlapping and intermingling nature of regionalism in Latin America, this analysis has been grounded historically with a view to identifying insights for the present context.

Following a social constructivist approach, the primary variable of this study is leadership, particularly the leadership projects of two primary actors of this integration regime, Lula-led Brazil and Chávez-led Venezuela. It critically employed discourse analysis, especially of the two identified leaders of the project in conjunction with a contextualised reading of the foreign policy goals of both states in order to understand their construction of a shared regional space as well as the methodologies employed to enact their regional vision, with a focus on the formation of ideas, identities and interests.

Research Questions

1. How do we reconcile Brazil's separate history with the notion of historical regional identity in Latin America?
2. Can Chávez 's leadership project be seen as complementary while competing with Lula's?

3. Why is the state the predominant actor in regional integration efforts in Latin America?

Hypotheses

1. Integration in Latin America remains a socially constructed project rather than an economically-driven process.

2. Individual leadership visions and efforts have driven and sustained contemporary cases of intraregional integration in Latin America.

Research Methodology

The study employs a historical and teleological approach to the study of regional integration in Latin America; its more contemporary manifestations called post-liberal regional integration. It seeks to identify and delineate the patterns, processes and features of regionalism and attempted to situate the three specific cases of regional integration - those of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC - within the broader historical and international context, with a view to critically analyse claims of difference, explore path dependencies and evaluate embedded significances.

The research deploys extensively but critically Constructivist theoretical framework into the understanding and analysis of the above mentioned three schemes of regional integration. Efforts were made to source all relevant material from the relevant available sources in English as well as available translated documents. The official reports released by the UN-ECLAC on regionalism in Latin America along with digitally available repositories of the reports and declarations of the São Paulo Forums, the People's Trade Agreement 2006 and other ALBA Constitutive Documents, the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty 2008, the Declaration of Unity Summit 2010, the Caracas Declaration 2013, the CELAC Action Plan 2011 were important primary documents that aided this analysis.

This study is primarily a theoretical study, employing a social constructivist approach, with a view that "regions are human constructs" (Van Langenhove 2003:5) and that

regions are always in the making "constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through social practice and discourse" (Bull and Bøås 2003:245). Moreover, analysis of pre-existing research was extremely important for the stated purposes of this study, guided by the notion that study of regions and region building processes, especially in the published academic research is also part of the construction of regions, where "to observe and describe regionalisation is also to participate in the construction of regions" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2006:460). The research by scholars like Luk Van Langenhove, Fredrik Söderbaum, Björn Hettne, Sergio Caballero Santos and Olivier Dabène was found to be particularly significant in this study.

This process was aided by a field trip in Brazil where interviews and discussions were conducted with Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim in the Lula government, important Brazilian academics on regionalism like Monica Herz, Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann, Mauricio Santoro, Haroldo Ramanazini Junior, Janina Onuki and Pedro Feliú Ribeiro and academic-activist members of the Workers Party like Tiago Nery. The visiting scholarship stays awarded to the researcher at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) further supported the process of discussing the aims and goals of this study with Brazilian experts. Moreover, important correspondences online with Venezuelan scholars like José Briceño-Ruiz and Argentinian expert on regionalism Andrés Serbin further aided collection of both empirical and theoretical data, in order to offset the difficulties with conducting field work and other limited resources of funding, language and time.

The research aimed to reconcile the complex processes of regionalism in Latin America into identifiable patterns with firm rooting in theories of IR including theorisations on contemporary regionalism.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES AND TRENDS IN LATIN AMERICAN REGIONALISM

There is an ideational opposition between *Bolivarismo and* Monroeism. While both may be understood as ideational influences, the more important aspect of this dichotomy is their function as regional integration ordering principles. Further, an

increased intensity in hemispheric attempts towards integration has a counter effect on intra-regional efforts in Latin America. Though both principles coexist, the trajectory of regional integration mechanisms shows that concerted efforts towards hemispheric regionalism produce an opposite reaction in terms of intra-regional efforts in Latin America. Increased activity in hemispheric regionalism is followed by a period of stagnation which forms the bedrock of intra-regional agreements within Latin America. Thus, Latin American regionalism validates the fact that "all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested" (Hettne 2005:554).

The movement in regional integration in Latin America has been from 'old' inward-looking protectionist regionalism of ISI model of development, to 'open' regionalism which reconfigured and upgraded regionalism in the era of economic liberalisation and globalization. The chapter also explains the movement of regionalism finally to its 'post-liberal' and 'post-hegemonic' axis, which offers a critique of the practices of neoliberalism and marks a 'return of the state'. Despite this qualitatively different movement, there are no clear breaks in regional integration in Latin America as regionalism here is characterised by the constant evolution of the past into present, context specific formulations and overlaps. Therefore, the several mainstream theoretical accounts that conclude that a particular Latin American regional project has failed are often premature and found to be fallacious. Old regional integration mechanisms are constantly being transformed into newer arrangements to suit new challenges. As Hettne explains (2005:548) "since regionalism is a political project, created by human actors, it may, just like a nation-state project, fail"; but this 'failure' adds to the repertoire of knowledge and customs which inform the next effort of regionalism. Regionalism in Latin America therefore, is a representation of a historical past. This is what precisely Kalman Silvert had said about half a century earlier: here in Latin America, the old does not disappear, rather the new ideologies and structures get grafted onto the old ones producing in the process complex and intractable political and social realities.

In light of this mutation, regionalism in Latin America also rejects the constraints of the 'old' and 'new' timelines devised to distinguish between regional projects. Guided by cultural and socio-political motivations, regionalism in Latin America is simultaneously contemporary and historical, emblematic of a multiplicity of interests.

To overcome the challenge, Söderbaum and Van Langenhove have put forward the idea of 'generations' of regionalism which understands different strands of regionalism as co-existing and overlapping. The present forms of regional integration in Latin America then necessarily represents the 'third generation' of regionalism, with an acceptance of the co-existence of multiple formats of regionalism in the region.

Finally, the purpose for regionalism in Latin America is informed by the concerns of autonomy (both regional and international), development, domestic stability, and a product of the context of its civilizational past. The modes and methods of the United States have ensured that Latin America has constantly struggled to define its identity. In light of the changing identities of the various sub regions in Latin America, it is quite remarkable the intensity with which regionalism has persisted in Latin America. This persistence underlines the fact that regional integration in Latin America is a form of diplomacy, not merely in its efforts to navigate the uneasy reality of existing in the neighbourhood of a global hegemon but also as a method to reconcile its colonial past and its rich ideational traditions with its geopolitical context.

The 'third wave' of regionalism in Latin America, represented by ALBA, CELAC and UNASUR is emblematic of this cultural shift in regionalism in Latin America. All three have responded to developments in hemispheric regionalism, all have displayed a certain level of reformulation of the past and all have attempted to define a more a plural agenda for regionalism. Therefore, all these three mechanisms are the focus of this monographic study which seeks to identify and present theoretical insights from their functioning – a sort of *praxis*. Chapter II elaborates the theoretical framework and primary variables of analysis employed in this study. Chapter III offers a detailed overview of the development trajectories of the three organisations under evaluation with a view to distinguish their processes and practices. Chapter IV explores the motivations that guide the regional leadership projects of Brazil and Venezuela and an analysis of their discursive construction of the region. Chapter V analyses the processes of the post-liberal integration regime and theoretically delineates patterns, contradictions and surmisations on the same, with a view to resolve the main research questions of the study. Chapter VI summarises the preceding chapters and concludes with the findings of the study.

CHAPTER II

LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Regionalism is theoretically vast, multifaceted in its scope and myriad minded in its forms. The rationale for regionalism ranges from material variables such as trade and security to ideational aspirations of community building. It is no mean task then, to attempt to distil its 'true' essence. The discipline of International Relations however has taken a 'constructivist turn' (Guzzini 2000). Combined with the development of new theoretical frameworks like the New Regionalism Approach (NRA), the 'diffusion' of regionalism after the end of the Cold War (Börzel 2016) as well as the widening and deepening of regionalism as a category in the world, more varieties and perspectives on regionalism have entered the foray of theorization on the same. As Van Langenhove (2011:55) explains, the world today is "characterized by a complex landscape of hundreds of regional groupings" and this landscape "does not resemble a jigsaw puzzle, but looks more like a spaghetti bowl as the regional groupings are overlapping and sometimes nested."

Regionalism in Latin America has been particularly puzzling for mainstream theoretical analyses of the phenomenon. States which freely enter into binding regional arrangements with the United States reject the chance of being members of the largest trade arrangement. One organisation replaces the other, even as the academic community is barely done pronouncing its demise. This continuous and enthusiastic exercise of regionalism however, underlines the significance and importance of evaluating Latin American regionalism. It is precisely because of this inexhaustible ability of the region to embrace different conceptualisations of regionalism and its enthusiasm to try out all available formats, that the question of regionalism and its persistence has been more fascinating for theorists compared to attempts geared towards the explanation or classification of the phenomenon.

Although the plurality of constructivist analyses on regionalism have attempted to salvage the significance of Latin American regionalism from the complete disavowal it regularly faced earlier at the hands of mainstream theorisation, the present formulations

of regional integration within the region feature several contradictions that do not allow for easy summations. The emphasis on the 'retreat of the state' as well as the understanding that regionalism today is necessarily a diffuse, bottom-up, ongoing process are only some such contradictions. Historicity of ideas, the pathways of earlier regional impulses guiding present formulations as well as the reduced importance of institutionalisation are some tenets that support and validate the category of regionalism in Latin America under which organisations such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) emerged.

This chapter elucidates the theoretical framework for the analysis. The first section offers a survey of theoretical approaches to studying regional integration. It attempts to conceptualise the variety of theoretical nomenclature in the literature on regionalism and situates the chosen terminology in its historical context. The second section offers an elucidation on the vagaries on Latin American regional integration. Divided again into two subsections, it attempts to distil the difference in Latin American integration, especially the most recent integration regime which is the focus of this study. The third and final section offers an analysis of the place of state leadership particularly when a charismatic leader drives up the agenda of regional integration. This section draws from the experiences of Brazil and Venezuela in the preceding decade under Lula and Chávez. It enumerates the two-tier leadership analysis of this project, namely, state-level regional leadership and statesmen-level led presidential leadership projects.

A SURVEY OF THEORIES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Regionalism and the study of it is not by any means a new project. With the end of the Second World War, the consequent establishment of important international institutions like the United Nations, the Bretton Woods system combined with the completion of the decolonisation process, as well as the slowly building crescendo of globalisation, regionalism remained on the research agenda, especially in political economy approaches to IR.

Different motivations and purposes have been put forth by various scholars belonging to different theoretical disciplines to explain the persistence of regionalism. In the last several decades however, this understanding has become paramount that "a regionalized world is not a novelty but an integral part of history" (Bøås, Morten and Marchand 2003:3). There has been therefore, a monumental shift not only in the conceptualisation of the terminology of regional integration processes but also a significant change in the idea of what constitutes regionalism.

Due to the pervasive character of research on regionalism, especially in light of its present resurgence in a post-Cold War, globalised world order, there has been a very complicated debate regarding categories, types and theories of regionalism. This present section is divided into subsections and attempts to (i) establish a clear trajectory in the mutation of terminology in regional integration; (ii) delineate developments in theoretical approaches to regionalism; and (iii) finally underlining the primacy of a constructivist approach to studying regional integration.

Contextualizing the Concepts, Processes and Types of Regionalism

Scholarship on regionalism can said to have begun in earnest with the end of the Second World War and the start of the European Union experience. From the 1950s onwards to the present resurgence of regionalism in the international system, regionalism has been the battleground of several competing ideas about everything from its form to the concept itself. Out of the various developments in the last several decades, a few are crucial to the present analysis. These are: (a) the mutations in the concept of regional integration; (b) the categorical distinctions made between forms of regionalism; and (c) finally, the purposes for regionalism.

Regionalism as conceptualised in the present context, often as a complementary process to globalisation, is mired in a multiplicity of couplet terminology ranging from globalism-regionalism, regionality-globality, to regionalism-regionalisation. While the distinctions are important, especially because of the contribution they make towards defining the categories of both the processes of regionalism and globalisation, the most important result of the same has been to underline the multiplicity of meaning in the processes of structural reconfiguration at work in the present international system. It

has been established as well that this multiplicity of meaning is to be embraced as it offers greater insights than all-encompassing definitions. As Marchand, Bøås and Shaw (1999:898) explain:

> In our view, there does not exist any single hegemonic definition of any of these concepts. Instead, we are confronted with a multitude of competing genres and approaches, which should be cherished rather than perceived as problematic. It is a sign that there exists a lively debate about the future direction of the global political economy. Consequently, we prefer to celebrate difference rather than trying to come up with 'catch-all' concepts that opt for hegemonic status.

However, for the sake of clarity, the distinction between regionalism and regionalisation is useful. Hveem (2003:83) defines regionalism as "a programme, an ideology, to a situation where there exists a clear idea of a region, a set of goals and values associated with a specific project that an identifiable group of actors wish to realize." Regionalisation on the other hand is defined as, "the actual process of increasing exchange, contact and coordination within a given region" (Hveem 2003:83).

Depending on the variable being considered for study, the definitions of regionalism may vary and so may the typology of regionalism. For example, Hurrell (1992:125) defines regionalism by using the variable of policy and distinguishes between hegemonic and uncoerced regionalism:

> A set of policies by one or more states designed to promote the emergence of a cohesive regional unit, which initiates the patterns of relations between the states of that region and the rest of the world and which forms the organising basis for policy within the region across a range of issues.

 This distinction is important because it ties in with the distinction made between two types of regionalisation viz. the formal and informal regionalisation. Regionalism is an idea-centric 'project' whereas regionalisation is a 'process' which may or not succeed the idea (Ibanez, 2003). This is not to suggest that regionalization is necessarily the formal, institutionalized aspect of the process of regional integration. As Hurrell (1995:39) explains, regionalisation refers to "the growth of societal integration within a region and the often, undirected processes of social and economic interaction." Alternatively, Fawcett (2016) argues that while regionalism refers to policies and

projects, regionalization refers to processes of regional cooperation. Van Langenhove (2011) offers another interesting distinction between regional projects, regional processes and regional products. Regional projects are conceptualised as dreams, processes as the acts that put the dreams into practice and regional products as the institutionalisation of the integration into treaties and organisations as well into flow of goods, capitals, services and people (Salleslaghs and Langenhove 2020).

It is abundantly clear therefore that present scholarship has moved much beyond the early functionalist distinctions made between the categorisations of regions and the processes of regionalism (such as 'hard' and 'soft' regionalism[9]). The understanding of regions itself has mutated from being geographically limited and functionally defined to the present acceptance of their character as being anything but natural or objective. The earlier distinctions made between 'formal' and 'informal' integration therefore have become redundant because there is a clear consensus on the plurality of the regional process. It is because of this 'pluralistic' (Söderbaum 2003) character of regionalism that scholars of the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) have advanced cooperation as a better alternative to the old functional terminology of integration which implied a state-led, top-down agenda. Scholars like Van Langenhove (2011) have underlined the importance of distinguishing between the concepts of regionalism, regional cooperation and regional integration. Unlike the earlier understanding as proposed by Nye, where regional integration was seen as the "end process" and "terms and concepts such as regional cooperation, organisation, regional systems, and regional subsystems may help describe steps on the way towards regional integration" (Nye 1968:856-858), Van Langehove (2011:48) argues that regional integration is "a concept used by policymakers and social scientists to refer to the strengthening of interconnections between neighbouring states." This movement in the definition of the process, where a new terminology of integration-cooperation is often used interchangeably, further complicates the exercise of distinguishing between the two. The concept of regional integration therefore, due to the dynamic nature of the

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[9] Sergio Santos (2008 :02) distinguishes between hard and soft regionalism as soft regionalism implying a community awareness and hard regionalism referring to international/regional treaties, though both forms would share the same objectives.

phenomenon it signifies as well as the on-going processes it attempts to explain, remains "under construction" (Bolaños 2016:4).

As states continue to remain relevant (and in the Latin American case, primary) actors in the integration process, the loss of sovereignty has been posited by scholars like Kritizinger-van Niekerk as an important distinguishing factor between regional integration and regional cooperation. Kritzinger-van Niekerk (2005:6) trifurcates the processes of integration on the basis of the scope of activities undertaken in the integration scheme and the degree of loss of sovereignty, in the forms of namely, regional cooperation, regional harmonization and regional integration. Regional cooperation is conceived as "issue-focused arrangement" and knowledge and best practice sharing; regional harmonization is intended to address inconsistency in policy content and approaches; while integration, as the end product in this scheme of things, implies a loss of sovereignty and has a broader scope in terms of policy.

The other important distinction accorded to explaining regional integration has been the one made on typology of integration. The older formal hierarchical division has been reinterpreted by Heinonen (2006) in terms of issue-areas covered by agreements where the distinction between free trade area, customs union, common market and economic union remain intact. A free trade area ensues when trade restrictions between party member states are removed. If member states also institute a common external trade policy towards third parties, it is followed by a deepening of integration and in this process, a customs union is established. Further, when removal of trade barriers is accompanied by a free movement of services, capital and labour between member states, a common market is achieved. Finally, when both economic and monetary policies are decided upon by a supranational institution, an economic union is achieved.

However, regional integration schemes within developing countries rarely follow this scheme of things. Especially in the case of Latin America, an unwillingness to cede sovereignty is coupled with an unwillingness to enter binary institutional frameworks (Jenne, Urdinez and Schenoni 2017) which have traditionally disallowed Latin American integration processes either from achieving definitional validation or at times, theoretical attention. The fluidity that has been introduced in the definitions of regional integration and its various processes along with the understanding that the

construction of both the region and its processes are shaped from within than without as well as by the very act of speaking about them, scholars have underlined the continuous use of the terminology of integration by Latin American leaders to underline the importance of the concept for studying processes of regionalism. For the purposes of this study however, the definition proposed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean which defines regional integration as "the process by which diverse national economies seek mutual gains by complementing one another more" (ECLAC 2009:1-4) seems most unproblematic.

This fluidity of terminology further connects with the distinctions made between 'old' and 'new' regionalism by scholars of the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) scholars like Hettne who have acknowledged that temporal distinctions made between the types of regionalism were an overstatement and that a holistic, historical and contextual analysis of regionalism is better suited for analysis, especially to understand responses from outside Europe.

Though research on regionalism is considerable, especially since the end of the Cold War, there has been a dearth of clear theoretical analysis of regionalism, especially on the regionalisms of the developing world. This is reflected in the purposes ascribed to the phenomenon itself. While liberal institutionalists and 'world system' theorists have ascribed regionalism to the middle tier of a multi-tier conceptualization of the international system, others have reduced its functionality to security alliances while some have defined the regional level as the possibility for the developing world to cushion themselves against the pressures of globalisation. Best and Christiansen (2008:250) have identified three purposes for regionalism: "management of independence, management of interdependence and management of internationalization."

They define the difference between the three categories, where "management of independence" refers to settling down by newly independent states in their relations between themselves, with the former colonial power and with other powers. "Management of interdependence" translates to the development of regional mechanisms to guarantee peace and security, responses to 'regionalization' and promotion of cooperation and/or state-led integration. "Management of

internalization" requires regional negotiations in the multilateral system and basically, refers to regional responses to globalisation.

The most recent cycle of regional integration schemes in Latin America has complicated this neat understanding of the purposes of regionalism further adding to the understanding that "regions should be treated as emergent, socially constituted phenomena" (Jessop 2003:183) and this different integration project of the developing world has prompted the development of "alternative approaches to regional integration" (Bolaños 2016:4).The need to understand how actors "perceive their reality and how they seek to deal with it" (Söderbaum 2003) has directed regional integration analysis away from easy economic and political rationales and towards constructivist analyses of agency and identity formation. The next subsection aims to trace this trajectory in the theoretical analysis of regionalism.

Trajectory of Theoretical Perspectives on Regional Integration

Regional integration has been more of a liberal concern and consequently early theorisation on the same was heavily influenced by liberal ideas which emphasized the potential for political cooperation if efforts were made to sync economic and security concerns. Cox (1996) traces this link to David Mitrany's conceptualisation of functionalism. Much in line with the constructivist idea of reflexive modernity, Mitrany also theorized about the eroding effects of modernisation and technological progress on the sovereignty of the state. Cooperation between states was then envisaged as a method to overcome the paucity of authority in view of a punishing modernity. The state remains the purveyor of regional cooperation however, despite its decreased authority (Santos 2009).

Functionalism framework was developed further and improved on by the first serious theorist on regional integration, Ernst Haas. Haas's framework of neofunctionalism birthed the concept of 'spillover' which was largely responsible for the policy preference displayed towards regional integration in most developing states, especially

in Latin America. Haas also provided the distinction of 'voluntary' regionalism[10], mostly to distinguish regional integration as a separate phenomenon from earlier efforts at empire amassing. Haas was writing in the backdrop of the start of the processes that ultimately led to the European Union and was critiquing the pessimism of Realism as well as the almost other worldly conceptualisation of cooperation envisaged by Liberalism. Haas provided a rationale which was grounded in the firm social experiment of the European Union as well as an idea of cooperation which made sense, policy wise. The 'spillover effect' was the idea that as interdependence increases in certain areas, this very process would generate proximity and a 'spillover effect' in other areas. Due to this organic, structural follow through, the idea of a region with supranational institutions becomes real and the integration process therefore becomes not a state led project but an impulse echoed in policy and polity. As Santos (2009:05) explains:

> Haas built the idea of spill over not on economic determinism, but on changes in the attitudes and behaviour of governments, parties, and, especially, labour and business interest groups. His key conclusion was that group pressure will spill over into the federal sphere and thereby add to the integrative impulse.

Another important contribution of neofunctionalism was the introduction of the plurality of actors at work in any regional project. Haas acknowledged that the state elite had a major role to play in the processes of integration along with the statesmen "the characteristic rationality associated to statesmen becomes blurred among a plurality of actors who search for the same objective – integration – but through different strategies" (Santos 2009:5) The importance of the idea of regionalism to be accepted and promoted from the bottom-up and the multiplicity of regionalizing impulses ties in with the present discourse on regional integration.

Neofunctionalism however, envisioned a highly institutionalised regional apparatus for the generation of 'spillover'. It was heavily criticised for trying to mimic the European experience and its relevance was questioned in light of new regional arrangements that

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[10] This distinction has been undermined by constructivist scholarship which emphasizes the informal processes of regionalism which are sometimes inter-subjective but contribute to creating 'we-feeling' and 'a sense of region-ness'

had cropped up in the rest of the world. Latin America, especially, embraced regional integration whole heartedly but found the rationales justified under functionalism scarce and hard to reproduce within its own context. The European experience was a product of their own particular context of having lived through two devastating wars, charged and determined by nationalism and therefore, sovereignty was not of paramount importance in Europe during region building exercises. The developing world, however, was undergoing the rigours of the decolonisation processes, nation- and state-building, the difficulties in reconciling arbitrary new boundaries and hoping to rise up to the challenge of development. Even if we go so far as to suggest that nationalism did not reign supreme in the developing world, there can be no doubt that the state certainly did.

The contributions of peace studies were the next important step in conceptualising regional integration. The context of the Cold War induced bipolarity and the subsequent nuclear arms race it launched placed security on the ideological forefront as nothing before it ever had. Karl Deutsch's (1968) concept of 'security community' was an important step in forging the link between regional integration and security. Deutsch brought the variable of identity into regional integration analysis. He explained that through the processes of integration, states could create not just a stable order but "a stable peace" (Adler 1998). The 'security community' approach highlighted how integration could cause modification in behaviour by establishing norms which thereby regulate behaviour. As Deutsch (1968:159) put it, "integration, then, is a relationship among units in which they are mutually interdependent and jointly produce system properties which they would separately lack."

Deutsch explained how a community formed to enable more coordinated decision-making could ultimately lead to the development of 'we-feeling' which introduces an organizing principle among the so coordinated states based on an identity they both recognize and consciously reproduce. This idea has been instrumental in the development of constructivist research.

Two important theoretical treatises that emerged in the 1970s must be mentioned here, for though they do not directly theorize on regional integration, the ideas they put forward have immensely helped the cause of regionalism and helped establish it as a viable variable for further analysis, namely Michael Doyle's 'democratic peace thesis'

and Keohane and Nye's 'complex interdependence approach.' The democratic peace thesis basically explains that as democracies do not go to war with each other, if democracy were to spread worldwide, the possibilities for peace would greatly increase. Complex interdependence on the other hand, stresses the crucial connection between the domestic and the international and because of this ever-increasing interdependence, the fortunes of all are tied together. Both ideas are important because they undercut the self-help character of the international system by emphasizing the role that liberal ideas may play in creating a more stable international system. Regional integration is therefore a 'stepping stone' (Bhagwati 1991) to this stable world order.

With the subsequent establishment of regionalism as a phenomenon worthy of academic research, the Realists were forced to react to it. Realist conceptualisations of regionalism however leave much to be desired. Neorealists grudgingly accepted that regionalism exists, but their focus remained on treating it as a method to form alliances and regionalism remained muted in the discourse of balance of power politics. As Hurrell puts it, "for the neo-realist, the politics of regionalism and the emergence of regionalist alignments have much in common with the politics of alliance formation" (Hurrell 1995:47).

The subsequent hegemonic stability theoretical approach introduced the variable of the hegemon as the provider and purveyor of the regionalizing impulse. Regional power therefore became another variable introduced to define the efficacy and sometimes even possibility of a regional arrangement.

The liberal camp on the other hand, countered with Stanley Hoffman's intergovernmentalism. This was later developed into liberal intergovernmentalism by Moravcsik. The most important contribution of the same was bringing the domestic back into the discussion of inter- and supra- national. Scholars such as Moravcsik (1998) reformulated neorealist characteristics and tried to explain integration underlining the role of the state and the importance of national interest rejecting any possibility of supranationality or even cooperation politics if they weren't subordinated to intergovernmental necessities.

With the end of the Cold War and the meta theoretical turn that all social sciences had taken, two new approaches were developed which described the complicated nature of

regionalism and the intricacies and complexities of the processes involved, especially in the regional projects of the South. The New Political Economy (NPE) approach and the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) advanced an agenda for emphasizing the plurality of the processes in regionalism. The new political economy approach stressed the need to understand the 'globalisation-regionalization nexus.' The most important idea that emerged here was the insistence on the local component in global restructuring. As Marchand, Bøås and Shaw (1999:908) explain:

> If regional organisation is to play a real role in the economies of the South, it has to be embedded in the real-life context of these economies. What is needed, therefore, is a strong commitment to re-attachment between state, market and (civil) society at the national and regional levels… it means that the study of regional organisation in the South will need to set aside universalistic approaches to regionalisation, and start to accept that regional organisations and regional-isms are not developed within the framework of just one rationality, but in several localised ones.

The most important development in regional integration theorization however, may said to be the emergence of the New Regionalism approach (NRA). Led by Bjorn Hettne, the NRA emerged in the 1990s. Responding to the almost global move towards liberalisation as well as the certitude of the existence of globalisation, NRA scholarship provided an important distinction between 'new' and 'old' regionalism. Old regionalism was necessarily state-centric, a product of a bipolar world order, was state-led, inward-oriented and protectionist as well as specific and limited in its contents and objectives. New regionalism on the other hand, emphasized the multiplicity of actors, was a product of a multipolar global world order, was driven by the 'urge to merge', outward-oriented and emerged from "a comprehensive and multidimensional societal process" (Hettne 2003:23).

NRA rejected the criteria established by old theories of regionalism for defining regionalism and accepted that regions were 'processes'; secondly, they espoused a complete disavowal of state-centric approaches; thirdly, NRA emphasized "the focus on the real region in the making rather than the formal region defined by the member states of a regional organisation" (Hettne 2003:24) and lastly, NRA suggested the study of globalisation as an exogenous factor to regionalism. NRA rejected unilateral explanatory frameworks and embraced multiple perspectives to explain the decidedly

'new' form of regionalism that had emerged in the post-Cold War world order. This emphasis on new regionalism being a qualitatively different variable than old regionalism has been the stress point of NRA scholarship.

Despite the strides made in terms of the multiplicity of perspectives, the identification of the complexity of the regionalism process and the avowal of the importance of identity, the NRA has been criticised for its focus on highly institutionalised forms of regionalism. Moreover, the distinction made between 'old' and 'new' regionalism is itself problematic, and Hettne himself has retraced the distinction and explained how "the identification of new patterns of regionalisation (co-existing with older forms)" (Söderbaum, 2003:4) is more relevant. It is because of this return to contextuality and the debunking of the distinction between 'old' and 'new' regionalism that constructivist perspectives are optimum for analysis of regional integration processes, especially in under-institutionalised, community-driven states of the developing world.

Given the multiplicity of perspectives employed by NRA scholars, it is not a big leap to suggest that there is an overlap between ideas expressed by NRA scholars and constructivist research. As Fabbri (2005:05) explains however, constructivist precepts have been "thinly applied" in NRA discourses.

The major constructivist idea utilized within the NRA corpus is the redefinition of regions namely, the idea that - "regions must not be taken for granted; that they are not 'natural', objective, essential or simply material objects" (Söderbaum 2003:7) or as Hettne (2003:7) puts it, "regions are processes; they are in the making (or un-making), their boundaries are shifting - in the constructivist approach regions come to life as we talk and think about them."

While this categorization is both apt and useful for understanding the complex structure of regions in the developing world, the distinction made between old and new as already discussed, is problematic. This distinction is problematic because it establishes an arbitrary timeline[11] and runs the risk of becoming ahistorical and therefore, ignoring important patterns. Constructivism emphasizes that the old is very much a part of the new forms of regionalism. Fawcett's definition is useful here: "regionalism should be

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[11] NRA scholars recognize regional arrangements post the 1980s as 'new regionalism.'

understood as an evolutionary and cumulative process which has grown and expanded over time to take in new tasks and new domains (Fawcett 1996:431).

Constructivism "insists that all data must be contextualised, must be related to, and situated within, the social environment in which they were gathered, in order to understand their meaning" (Hopf 1998). A historical and contextual analysis therefore has a lot of potential to reveal insights about patterns and practices of regionalism within a region.

Constructivist readings of regionalism were first undertaken in Europe. As Fabbrio (2005:6) explains:

> While constructivism does not represent a theory of regional integration per se, it has contributed new insights to our understanding of regional integration… by drawing attention to the importance of studying processes of interaction, socialization and learning.

The focus remains on identifying collective meanings and norms shared by the community which birthed the intersubjective context leading up to the realization of regionalism. Important variables therefore remain identifying 'worldviews and pervasive norms. In the words of Wendt (1992:397) – "structures which organize our actions are constituted by collective meanings and actors acquire and redefine their identities and interests by participating in these collective meanings." As an actor's identity is directly related to the behaviour displayed by the actor, any factor which can be ascertained to affect identity becomes capable of enabling predictability, which for constructivists is the ordering principle of the international system.

Further, constructivism underscores the importance of language and discourse and therefore the subsequent interaction is a fundamental factor in the collective action undertaken. Constructivism offers the opportunity to understand and explain how the various regional projects came to be which were relegated to the realm of failure by mainstream theories. The wide scope of constructivism promised to reveal insights which can never be uncovered by rationalist theoretical frameworks. This has been aptly interpreted in new theoretical categories of regionalism such as 'declaratory regionalism.'

The old-new binary therefore has been replaced by a new conceptualisation of 'waves of regionalism'. Dicken (2007:189) has charted the genesis of regional integration systems and theorization on the same as four distinct waves. The first wave of regional integration began before the onset of the 20th century and lasted until the First World War. A large variety and typology of regions and communities were tied to each other by the means of alliances, pacts and unions. This was followed by the second wave that lasted upto mid 1960s dominated by "material calculations, the power balance, security and pursuit of (state) interests" (Fawcett 2009:18). Van Langenhove (2020) argues that three distinct integration efforts can be identified in this period, necessarily multipurpose institutions, regional security alliances motivated by the logic of the Cold War and those that were economic in nature. Further, the reality of the existence of colonial powers allowed European powers to utilize the integration methodology to further entrench their spheres of influence (Söderbaum 2016).

The third wave argues Van Langenhove (2020), was the first integration system that mounted a resistance to the Westphalian system. The category of 'old regionalism' is said to be situated in this period where an attempt was made to find solutions to economic development in regional cooperation schemes, especially in Latin America. The challenge to the established order lay in the starkly different motivations of the developed world in undertaking said cooperation, not to avoid war as was the concern in Europe but to find a route to economic development and cooperation.

Subsequently, the fourth wave corresponds to 'new regionalism' which most importantly, was no longer Eurocentric, was broader and more comprehensive in its aims beyond defence and economic rationale, articulated political, cultural and social aspects and was necessarily more a bottom-up process than a top-down process (Van Langenhove 2020).

A fifth wave has been added to this list by Söderbaum (2016:30) and he has termed it "comparative regionalism." The defining characteristics of this wave according to him are:

> The war on terror, the responsibility to intervene and protect, changing understanding of government and governance, a multilayered or multiplex global order, the rise of the BRICS and emerging powers, recurrent financial

crises and a persistent pattern of overlapping and crisscrossing regional and interregional projects and processes in most part of the world.

Van Langenhove (2020) underlines the multidimensionality and multi-layered reality of the world that comparative regionalism attempts to acknowledge. The multilevel interactions between an increasing number of actors on an ever-widening policy scope are the crux of new regional integration exercises in the international system.

Ultimately, the 'plural' character of regionalism and the fact that new forms of regionalism are "determined more by agency and less by structure" (Hveem 2003:81) underline the importance of identifying "how interests, ideas and identities are formed" (Söderbaum 2003:10). In the case of Latin American regionalism, where the impulse to regionalize has been historical as well as the regional level being a common policy preference and a means to traverse the international system, theorisation has heartily embraced constructivist frameworks to define and explain the extremely tenuous and complicated nature of Latin American regionalism. Moreover, despite the multiplicity of perspectives introduced in general theoretical overviews of regional integration in the discipline, there remains a strongly defended notion that during the 2000s, Latin America underwent a transformative experience as far as regional integration exercises are concerned. The growth of the regional integration schemes like ALBA, UNASUR, CELAC as well as the developments within 'new' MERCOSUR and Pacific Alliance prompted theoretical exercises indigenous to these homegrown institutions. The next section attempts to unpack the specificities of theorization on Latin American integration and the difference in the Latin American context.

THEORISING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Regionalism as an idea in Latin America is as old as the region itself. Theorisation however, has been a difficult task especially as most mainstream theories of integration dismiss Latin American attempts towards cooperation as either mimetic or label them as failures, due to their non adherence to the laid out 'method' of integration, predicated on ceding of sovereignty. The persistence and fertility of the regional endeavour

however, has continued undeterred, as "forces pushing for convergence have existed in the region since its very conception." (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:1). The contradictions and difficulties in reconciling the reality of the region with theoretical worldviews is not due to lack of trying. As Dabène (2009:5) suggests, "all these ups and downs make the exercise of theorisation and prediction very risky and are an invitation to modesty."

As has already been elaborated in Chapter I, Latin American regionalism has a long and colourful history and consequently there emerges "a loose and open subregionalism with blurred edges, overlaying agreements and varying commitments" (Van Klaveren 2000:140) so much so that Latin American regionalism appears as "an alphabet soup." Scholars like Dabène (2009:40) have pointed out that these constant "crises and reactivations and recurrences" do not just exist to create a theoretical nightmare, but also leave behind traces of earlier motivations, ideas and the evolving institutions carry the history of their previous maker, so much so that "an integration process can contribute to standardization of political values" by sheer force of path dependency and "regional integration processes are not mere institutional arrangements designed to achieve technical goals such as free trade," and thus, their "purpose, scope and level cannot be apprehended without a precise understanding of the historical context that characterised their negotiations and first steps."   It is in this backdrop that the present section attempts to discuss perspectives of present theorizations on Latin American regionalism.

Determining the Difference in Latin American Regional Integration Processes

Latin America is a difficult region to situate in the international system. While it is a part of the developing world, it differs from Asia and Africa because of its significantly earlier decolonisation processes. Though vast differences abound in the multiple sub regions within it, there is also a shared colonial past which culturally ties the region together and is often invoked by statesmen and leaders. Further, Latin America's geographical position places it squarely within the ambit of the United States' zone of influence which makes the search for autonomy both difficult and at the same time much yearned for. It is precisely because of the threefold concerns of development,

autonomy and cultural consonance that regional integration has received so much support from all states in the region (Puntigliano 2013).

The regionalizing impulse in Latin America is also multi-fold depending on the identity of the state – from the ideas of Pan-Americanism to the ideas of regional autonomy to global power aspirations and economic rationales. The multiplicity of regional goals is precisely the reason for the ensuing confusion whenever an attempt is made to label regionalisation processes in Latin America. Further, the colonial creations of provinces, the continental movement for independence and the new competing state-imposed goals for integration emphasize that regionalism in Latin America is not only interconnected but that it cannot be conceptualised in an ahistorical space. As Dabène (2013) points out "the consistency despite instability, resilience despite crisis" is "one of the mysteries any inquiry about integration in Latin America should try to unveil."

Dabène (2012:3) argues that Latin American regionalism is "characterized by a succession of waves that saw the signing of several agreements launching or reactivating several distinct integration processes" and different waves come together to "weave a complex patchwork quilt." The constant mutation of one regional arrangement into another therefore, undermines any attempt at studying regional integration in isolation. To give an example, if the security backed rationale for regional integration in Latin America is analysed, it becomes evident that security based regional arrangements in Latin America are difficult because of the problems in identifying a clear security threat or a clear security provider. The majority of the conflicts in the region in the last several decades have been internal and not inter-state. Even this conceptualisation of conflict is problematic because the reasons for conflict in Latin America remain narcoterrorism, environmental issues and political and ideological struggles which place these internal struggles within the ambit of the United States global security doctrine. Besides, history bears witness that many of the conflicts were engineered by external actors, including importantly, by the US which resulted in interventions, regime overthrow and political and economic destabilization.

Latin America therefore, is embroiled in a constant struggle of competing definitions. It is precisely because of this complexity of issues in Latin America that grounding any regional arrangement to material variables becomes not only difficult but redundant.

How do Latin American experiments in integration stack up against the general theoretical analyses proffered by the literature on integration? The first item of note is that "both development and regionalism have been embedded in historical patterns of national and inter-American politics" (Riggirozzi 2012:19) where the "uniqueness" of the Latin American case, is driven by its particular context of responding to local political and economic conflicts, as well as balancing the "steady assertion of US global and regional hegemony" (Riggirozzi 2012:19). This search for development, while finding a way to preserve autonomy has therefore, also been preoccupied with "questions about the role and the weight of the state versus the market at the national level, and the potentials of the region as a platform of a better insertion in the global economy" (Riggirozzi 2012:20). Importantly, this autonomy is not isolationist and is jointly conceptualized, as a "joint strategy of Latin American countries to enhance their position in the international structure of power" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:5). Autonomy and development therefore, are historical prerogatives of Latin American regional integration effected through and within an interdependent political environment "including mutual political influences and common parallel adjustments to modifications of the international context, deriving from parallel historical trajectories" (Dabène 2009:10). The state-market binary is continuously negotiated in defining regional integration logic, where development and autonomy are the final goals.

Evidences from the three waves[12] of integration in Latin America identified in the first chapter may assist in elucidating this assertion. During the first wave of integration, a compromise was affected "between the prevailing development policy of import-substitution industrialization and the new paradigm of integration into the world economy" (Riggirozzi 2012:20-21) where, an equivalence was posited between integration and development (Hettne 2002), furthered in the format of "closed regionalism." The ability of the states to act as purveyors of rules and provider of

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[12] An important caveat must be introduced here, acknowledging the confusion of the terminology of waves. While there have four, and if comparative regionalism is included, five waves of theorization on the concept of regional integration, most scholarship on Latin American regional integration, that is the practice of it, identifies three waves, as detailed in Chapter-I.

subsidies was assumed as paramount for the logic of closed regionalism to function. As Riggirozzi (2012:21) puts it:

> At its center was the notion of bounded sovereign states, largely able to control the nature of regional commitments and protect via subsidies and tariffs their domestic producers from external competition.
> Ultimately, economic nationalism framed a new way of thinking and speaking about politics, economics, and culture, while regionalism became a generalized reaction to the liberal, oligarchic rule in many countries in the region.

The ensuing political and economic crisis during the 1970s and 1980s, bolstered the cause of the market over and above the ability of the state. Stalling growth in integration attempts, high fiscal debts accrued to propel the developmentalist state and the failures of these integration projects to generate successful 'spillover' that would propel industrialization were pointed out as the reasons behind this shift, "in essence the regionalism of the 90s is an integral part of the broad-based structural reforms that have been underway in Latin America since the mid-1980s" (Devlin and Estevadeordal 2001:6). The developmental state found itself less relevant for a new globalized world and free markets were not just an answer to undo the miseries of the lose decade, but also a means to foster the stronghold of democracy in the region. As Riggirozzi (2012:22) explains, the agenda for this second wave of integration, or new regionalism, was "dominated by trade and financial liberalization and underpinned, politically and ideationally, by an acceptance of the perception of an "unavoidable reality" of the market-led globalisation."

The nature and character of regional integration changed during the second wave. As Briceño-Ruiz and Morales (2017:3) explain, "regional integration was no longer conceived as a mechanism to help achieve autonomy and industrialization and became a policy tool to contribute to structural adjustments of national economies and to foster a better insertion into the world market." The understanding of free trade itself changed, with the new governments of the second wave, distancing themselves from the protectionism of the earlier wave (Dabène 2009). The presence of the US was palpable as was the understanding that this new form of integration was not a mere adoption of neoliberalism but "a straightforward capitulation to the United States" (Riggorizzi 2012:23) which necessarily carried within in processes of rejection of this model,

especially in light of the damages wrought within the region as a consequence of the adoption of these policies.

Thus in 1998, with the coming to power of Hugo Chávez on the scene, "a silent contestation of the hegemonic model of open regionalism" began (Briceño-Ruiz and Morales 2017:4). A shift in perception about the role of the state was underway in the region, where the idea was that "the state should have a responsibility toward rights of citizenship" (Riggirozzi 2012:24). The 'pink tide' and the consensus on the role of the State were important factors in reshaping the agenda of integration, underlining that "agency matters, in the case of Latin American regionalism" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:5). As Riggirozzi and Tussie (2012:2-3) expound on the new process of regionalism and regionalisation in South America:

> These processes must not simply by seen as ad hoc sub-regional responses to the many crisis of neoliberalism and the collapse of the US-led hemispheric leadership but rather, we argue, as the visible manifestation of a repoliticization of the region giving birth to new politics or regional projects in which states, social movements and leaders interact and construct new understandings of the regional space.

The second important point of note is the heterogeneity in the regional agenda, especially due to the importance of individual actor choices and agency in the integration process. As Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano (2021:6) explain "the strategy followed by nation states and societies and their agents is crucial to understanding regionalism in Latin America." This reinforces how important ideologies are in the Latin America case, where Orjuela and Chenou (2018:44) have made a case for a focus on presidential ideology, which "allows for an articulation of both political and economic domestic factors of integration" and in regional integration, elucidates "the balance between the pursuit of political autonomy and the pursuit of development and economic insertion." Thus, even though the very region-ness of Latin America is derived from the fact that "different countries share a lot of common features, and the waves of political change have always been the product of convergence and/or diffusion" (Dabène 2009:10), the foreign policy choices made by individual actors are dependent on "internal frameworks, self-perceptions of capabilities and the priorities and ambitions set for the country's foreign relations" (Burges 2018:65). Thus, even

during the era of open regionalism, as evidenced in the case of MERCOSUR, its interpretation, interacting with who are the principal actors and what are their motivations has a bearing on the shape of the regional project. Consequently, one of the major interpretations of post-hegemonic, in the most recent integration regime was precisely this fluidity of regional agenda, which signified the lack of a hegemonic paradigm, allowing theorists to explain the existence of a Pacific Alliance along with UNASUR, ALBA and CELAC. As Briceño-Ruiz and Morales (2017:1) put it:

> After more than a decade of a hegemonic model based solely on free-market principles, the regional and global transformation that occurred in the first decade of the new millennium modified the way of understanding economic development and the insertion of regional blocs in global affairs. Old initiatives have been reconsidered, new schemes have emerged, and new principles going beyond trade issues have modified the norms and processes of regional economic integration.

An additional layer of complexity further exists in Latin America. As Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano (2021:3) explain, "regionalism is made up by independent states, to which processes of colonization and decolonization have been pointed out as contributing elements." Despite the primacy of the nation-state as the purveyor and pursuer of integration, this agency is not unbound and responds in convoluted, path dependent ways to "the idea of a shared identity and the belief of considering the region as a broken nation" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:5). Thus, in a region even though "every act of regionalisation if a political act committed by regionalizing actors who seek to promote their vision and approach on to the regional agenda" (Bull and Bøås 2003:258), it is impossible to "completely detach" a region from its current imagination and promotion from its past experiences and "the way a region is invented cannot be detached from its 'objective' existence" (Dabène 2009:10). "Agency and structure" in Latin America, especially, "are mutually constituted" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:6). This search for striking an equilibrium between national and regional autonomy explains the other resounding feature of Latin American integration, the refusal to take the supranational route and cede sovereignty. It also entails the intergovernmental structure of the regional organisations within the region. Mijares (2018) has called this the "paradox of autonomy" where the search for national

autonomy is pursued through regional autonomy and in turn, thwarted by it. As Mijares explains (2018:276):

> First, the structural causes that create conditions to facilitate national autonomy are the same as those that incentivize cooperation in terms of regional autonomy or in a bloc. Second, intra-regional cooperation is one of the strategies used to achieve greater national autonomy, through diversification (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007), but the natural trajectory of cooperation for regional autonomy would ultimately result in the emergence of supranationality, regional hegemony, or both, limiting the maneuvering room of the national elites in secondary powers regarding domestic and foreign policy.

Identity, agency and action are thereby curtailed in the matrices of the search for autonomy, development, in turn shaped by nationalist aspirations and community identity. It is important therefore, to analyse Latin America contextually. The multiplicity of interests and identities make easy generalizations difficult which is why the several 'failures' ascribed to regional processes in Latin America are fallacious at best. The need to unearth the ideas underpinning regionalism as well as the mutation of different regional arrangements have made constructivism the preferred methodology of several new theorizations on the same. As Dabene (2009:9) puts it, "the constructivist approach is the one that has proven to be the most innovative and capturing genuinely new dimensions of regionalism," especially in order to give cognizance to the importance of "shared narratives" and the "common image of Latin American self-representation" that serve as a "guide for the principles and social practices that shape its foreign policy" (Sanahuja 2012:1).

Common Conundrums of Theorization on Latin American Regionalism and Their Resolution

In terms of Latin American regionalism, Fawcett's (2005:57) formulation that "although their impact is hard to measure, ideas matter in the history of regionalism, and there is a rich Latin American dimension to explore" mirrors the objectives of most the present research agenda on the matter. Most mainstream theories emphasize the development of institutional structure within regional organisations in order to categorize them as successful, precisely because as opposed to ideas, they are easily identifiable. Latin American regionalism is often found wanting in this category. While

scholars elaborating the efficacy of regional projects based on the European experience are quick to predict the death of Latin American initiatives, there is now an understanding that "even frail institutions do not freeze asymmetry, they work towards equalization" (Serrano 2005:266). Further, as another addition to this very constructivist understanding of the importance of path dependency and historical structures is the idea that "regionalism in the Latin America is not a new issue but an ongoing process with roots back in the colonial formation and independence of states on the American continent" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:2) which only widens the context that need must be considered and evaluated to situate integration processes in Latin America. Moreover, the perceptions of actors add yet another dimension to explain these inconsistencies between theory and practice. For example, an explanation for the low levels of institutionalization in the regional arrangements in Latin America is that states like Brazil have attempted to create a viable safety valve of escape for themselves by not allowing for the creation of binding institutions, for even though the regional level remains of paramount importance for the realization of Brazil's global aspirations, the lack of recognition of its leadership makes it imperative for the nation to have a failsafe (Malamud 2012). Whatever the logic might be, there is a consensus that the argument which has historically denied the legitimacy of Latin American regional arrangements is not attuned to the context it claims to denounce. Even if we assume the states to be unitary actors, there are multiple and competing identities which do not allow regional arrangements in Latin America to fit into existing theoretical categories – "Latin America does not readily correspond to the image of the popular caricature" (Fawcett 2005:57).

Even as the current theorization emphasizes the retreat of the state as the primary regionalising actor, the most recent regional integration efforts in Latin America have been leadership dependent and state led. As Riggirozzi (2012:18) has explained:

> Prevailing arguments seem to characterize regionalism as a dichotomy between "old" and "new" regionalism. But these categories that nest mainly within the regionalism-neoliberal globalisation relationship are insufficient to explain how states are currently responding to their own national commitments and to new region-building, a project that contests the politics and policies of established neoliberal architecture.

Regionalism is after all in Latin America "both policy and project" (Tussie 2009). This resurgence of the state in Latin America though problematic, is as much a part of its history as is regionalism. Further, Caballero (2008) has argued that the ISI model of regional integration though state led was 'depoliticised' due to the diversity of regimes which explains why the economic logic trumped the communitarian identity logic. It seems to follow that the rise of the 'pink tide' and consequently like-minded political regimes in the preceding decade had been responsible for the rise of a nationalist state promoting regional endeavour. Despite the easy parity that may seem apparent, there was great divergence in ideological motivations, national interests and even decision-making mechanisms between different state actors. Also, though much has been said in NRA scholarship about the multiplicity of regionalisation actors, there seems to be little evidence of such easily graspable complexes in Latin America where the state has replaced the logic of the market of 'open' regionalism of the 1990s.

The one identifiable constant in the case of regional integration in Latin America is the persistence of regionalism. Despite several failures, no state in Latin America has ever taken a stance against regionalism (Putigliano 2013) despite the assertion that the main characteristic of Latin American integration is "its instability and the gap between objectives, means and outcomes" (Dabene 2009:4). This commitment to regionalism therefore becomes an important starting point in an analysis of various regional arrangements in Latin America. Furthermore, this common stand is a valid theoretical question where a constructivist analysis could explore the patterns that have ensured this persistence as well as identify the factors which have thwarted particular visions and may help "explain the totality of interactions in the Americas, where "powerful currents," patterns of consensus and conformity repeatedly recur" (Fawcett, 2005:58). The distinction between regionalism and regionalisation seems an important one to make here. Regionalism is an idea-centric 'project' whereas regionalisation is a 'process' which may or not succeed the idea (Ibanez 2003). While the project of regionalism seems to mirror the continuities of historic expressions of 'solidarity', the present regionalisation process is new in its conception of the goals it wants to achieve, the posturing it has adopted and the actors who lead it. Lula da Silva and his prolific espousal and policy commitment to regional integration seem as good a point as any to elaborate on the actors who drive this post-hegemonic regionalism drive.

Further, scholars like Borzel (2016) have argued that all theoretical approaches including NRA approaches even in their outstated commitment to move beyond the state, have necessarily failed to do so, including constructivist analyses, "studies of region-building that are less theory-driven and analytically eclectic in their approach, often adopt a perspective that is centered on the state, too." Coupled with this insistence on non-state actors being the untapped potential in theorization on regionalism, is also a disavowal of politically-led, geopolitically motivated regional projects. The current crop of regional organisations in the region then, necessarily find themselves caught in the flux of being socially driven in that regionalism as a concept in itself is historical and in their practice of regionalism to further foreign policy and national goals. Leadership and state leadership at that, beyond the economic rationale remains under-theorized in the current literature.

The next sections offer an elaboration on a two-tier system of leadership at work in Latin America- the first is individual state level leadership of Brazil and Venezuela understood theoretically in the variables of regional power and regional leadership; the second, explores the historical role that charismatic statesmanship and individual leadership has played in the formulation and furthering of regional endeavours in Latin America, through an exploration of the concept of *presidencialismo*. The section attempts to theorize leadership at the state level by offering an elaboration on the theoretical category of a regional power and the stateman level by elucidating theoretically on the historical practice of presidencialismo in Latin America, especially in Latin American regional integration.

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Leadership is a "behavioral concept" where different leaders have "different resources" and is acted out "in context" (Thiébault 2018:23). In the context of Latin American integration, agenda setting is by consensus and agenda forwarding by state leadership. A unique matrix of balancing domestic constraints and managing international aspirations all via the regional route has a long-standing history in the region, prompting Tussie's (2009) estimation that regionalism is both policy and project in Latin America.

Hurrell (2010:15) explains that regionalism is "an unstable and indeterminate process of multiple and competing logics with no overriding teleology or single-end point," where regions, especially those with competing meanings, are "inherently unstable with little possibility of freezing the status quo." Leadership is an important variable to explain these inconsistencies, competition and shifts both in the elaboration of the region, the intersections of regional integration processes and the logic behind the construction and destruction of meaning.

This section elucidates a two-tier elaboration of Latin American leadership in regional integration. The first subsection explains state-level leadership by offering an elaboration of the concepts of regional power and regional leadership. It explains the importance of followership in order to underline the importance of "contested leadership" arguing that the gap between aim and result in regional integration projects can be explained through this contestation between regional powers and secondary powers and the role that secondary powers play in the "regional acceptance of a leadership claim" (Flemes and Wojczewski 2010). The second subsection elaborates the historical practice of *presidencialismo* in Latin America and identifies its theoretical importance in Latin American integration.

Theorizing the Nebulous: Regional Power and Regional Leadership

Nolte (2010) argues that the research question of regional power is a 'complex one.' Given the difficulties that scholars have regularly faced in defining the terms 'region' and 'power', in that they are defined in multiple ways with no clear emergence of an overarching definition, it is understandable how a concept which combines both the vagaries of the world of IR might be a little difficult to pin down. Moreover, the swishing pendulum of categories as far as state categorization and behaviour are concerned, freely swinging from 'great' to 'middle' and often times landing at 'regional', the problem of definition becomes even more acute.

In light of the difficulties in analysing 'how' regional powers influence their regions, to what extent this influence extends as well as, the impossibility of stacking hierarchically the influence that different regional powers exert make the study of

regional powers necessarily interdisciplinary and a combination of approaches. As Nolte (2010:884) explains

> Most approaches to conceptualising regional powers combine elements of different IR approaches; they include the internal power base (liberal), the power resources (realist) and their application (realist), role definitions and strategies (constructivist), and interaction patterns in the region with a special emphasis on the role of regional institutions.

It is useful to take a look at a few of these varied definitions. One of primary ways of defining regional powers is to locate them in the power distribution matrix of the international system. Martin Wight (1946) has forwarded the concept of 'regional great powers.' These regional great powers are distinct from middle powers, where in the hierarchy of power distribution, middle powers outrank regional great powers in the international system. This power is conceptualized in terms of military power and regional great powers are potentially in the wings to become middle powers in the international system.

Alternatively, Lemke's reformulation of Organski's Power Transition theory offers another categorization of regional powers. According to Organski, the international system is hierarchical with a dominant power at the very top and great powers, middle powers and small powers below it in the hierarchy, where this distribution of power serves the interests of the dominant power. Lemke (2002) reconceptualizes this framework to explain the existence of regional powers wherein, the international system is divided into a 'multiple hierarchy model.' The international power hierarchy is not singular or monolith but consists of a series of parallel and superposed power hierarchies (Lemke 2002). In each hierarchy – or rather regional or sub regional system, lies one dominant state at the top and each of these regional and sub-regional power hierarchies are subordinated to the global power hierarchy. The different systems are not insular and are prone to the interference of the global dominant power as well as other great powers of the system, especially "if the local status quo is at odds with the global dominant power's preferences or the global patterns of political and economic resource allocation" (Nolte 2010:886). There is a division of responsibilities betwixt these systems and the global systems where much like the federal political structure of

a state, certain disputes and the power to resolve them lies with the regional dominant powers.

Bringing the ability to influence the power structures of the international system into the fore, Buzan and Weaver posited their Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). In the RSCT explanation matrix of power distribution, regional powers are states that may boast significant influence in their own region but are unable to make systemic impact, as opposed to superpowers and great powers that have the potential to make global impact. This distinction between regional and great powers is made on the basis of their material capabilities as well as, importantly, the recognition of their status in the international system. Regional powers function to define and sustain any regional security complex. However, even if their power capabilities are considerable, the projection of the same remains limited to the regional level. Global decision-making by powers higher in the hierarchy does not take regional powers into account.

Another method of attempting to define regional powers is by the means of focusing on the importance of 'region' and that too in its particular geographical context. The power struggle and insecurity that guides and defines the international system, according to the Realist school of thought also manifests itself at the level of regional powers. With the end of the unipolar moments, several scholars like Acharya (2011) have talked about a 'world of regions' where regional hegemonies will supplant the global one of the United States. The flipside to this power argument is that the struggle for balancing at the global level may also be replicated at the regional level where the regional power may find itself being actively balanced again by states within the ambit of its domain.

Mearsheimer adds to this idea by introducing the concept of 'zone of reference' where even though a regional power will attempt to solidify its position in its own region, it makes attempts to prevent such solidification of regional power happening in other regions of the world. This very fact has been a reason for the positing of ideas like the 'Beijing Doctrine' by political pundits in Washington against the closer cooperation between China and Latin America. As Nolte (2010: 888) explains:

> The growing economic presence of China in South America is perceived as a challenge to US security. This is especially the case with regard to access to scarce raw materials (first of all oil). On the other hand, there exist suspicions

that some Latin American countries, while playing the Chinese card, could steer a more independent course in their relations with the US. The Chinese presence in the western hemisphere is perceived as a sign of the erosion of both the power and the geopolitical position of the US in the region.

Theoretically, the category of regional power therefore is nebulous. Destradi (2010) has offered a distinction of commonalities in the literature on regional powers which is meaningful, especially when the strategy of action of regional powers is to be evaluated. She explains (2010: 905)

> Among the few aspects concerning regional powers which seem to be uncontested in the literature are the following assumptions: a) that these states belong to the region considered; b) that they display a superiority in terms of power capabilities, that is, that they possess the largest power share in the region and, c) that they exercise some kind of influence on the region.

However, why must the strategy of regional powers be worthy of consideration and what is their role in the international system? Regional powers (Cline et al. 2011) have a "dual role" in the international system. Driven by their search for status in the international system, in turn fuelled by their sense of "entitlement to a more influential role in world affairs" (Hurrell 2006: 2), regional powers are "global power aspirants" (Cline et al. 2011: 134) and "powers can use their geographic base to develop alternative systems of rules and norms that may challenge salient aspects of the international status quo" (Cline et al. 2011:133). On the other hand, regional powers are creators and providers of regional governance where they "vie with challengers within the region as well as states outside of the region to establish mechanisms for governance, as they seek to create order in accordance with their policy preferences" (Cline et al. 2011: 133). These system changing properties are especially relevant in the global South where these 'emerging powers' or 'new regional powers "are assumed to strongly influence the interactions taking place at the regional level," and in turn, calibrating "the degree of cooperation or conflict or the level of institutionalization in their regions" (Destradi 2010: 904). It is worthwhile to ask if a definition on the functions regional powers serve in the international system lends itself to more clarity.

Nolte distinguishes between the functions of a middle power and a regional power by suggesting that while a middle power may have immense prestige in terms of diplomacy

and international arbitration functions in international and multilateral fora, a regional power must combine these diplomatic functions with power capabilities and security keeping functions. Schoeman (2010: 383), identifies certain characteristics which help clear this distinction between a regional and middle power, where in the case of a regional power its internal political environment should allow it to play a stabilizing and leading role in its region, after it has duly indicated and demonstrated its willingness, along with capacity to assume the role of regional leader, stabilizer and peacemaker. Moreover, its neighbours must be accepting of this self-conception for the regional leadership to actually be enacted.

In order to facilitate the discharge of its many functions, many regional powers like many middle powers, employ the use of multilateral and regional institutional frameworks. The main difference between a regional power and a middle power includes a regional power's 'self-conception' and willingness to lead. For example, in the case of Brazil, much has been written about its own conception of its 'grandeza' and the position it is deemed to occupy in the region first and then, in the international system. This self-conception of leadership, differentiates regional powers from middle powers. In the words of Nolte (2010: 892):

> The difficulty of classifying a state as a regional power is related to the fact that this status has to do not only with power resources (hard and soft power or smart power - the right combination of hard and soft power) but also with perceptions about the configuration of global and regional power hierarchies. It also has to do with the role definitions of political elites regarding a country's position within such power hierarchies. Therefore, self-conception is important for the classification as regional power.

Thus, it is clear that the category of 'regional power' has been defined variously and is mired in the confusion of terminology and nomenclature. However, certain characteristics seem to be paramount for a state to define itself as a regional power – a state which conceives itself of occupying a leadership position in a region that is "geographically, economically and political-ideationally delimited" (Nolte 2010:893). It displays the material, organisationorganisational and ideological resources for regional power projection and boasts of a real influence in regional affairs. It is also expected that the region is economically, politically and culturally interconnected with the region and influences in a significant way the geopolitical delimitation and the

political-ideational construction of the region. It exerts this influence by means of regional governance structures and defines and articulates a common regional identity or project. It also provides a collective good for the region or participates in a significant way in the provision of such a collective good. Further, it defines the regional security agenda in a significant way and its leading position in the region is recognised or at least respected by other states inside and outside of the region, especially by other regional powers. Finally, it is a state which is integrated in interregional and global forums and institutions where it articulates not only its own interests but acts as well, at least in a rudimentary way, as a representative of regional interests.

It is in the notion of regional leadership where these perpetrated strategies of cooperation and conflict are enacted. Malamud (2011) defines regional leadership "as the capacity to win and influence followers." The notion of followership is intrinsic to leadership where neighbouring states must "sign up to the lead" of regional powers so as enable them to have "the power base necessary for regional as well as global power projection and international coalition building" (Schirm 2007:6). The exercise of leadership is constrained by the regional power's ability to "engage" other states so that they may "adopt the goals of the leading state as their own" (Malamud 2011:3). Regional cooperation therefore, is dependent on the ability of regional powers to "obtain regional followership" (Ebert and Flemes 2018:2).

Schirm (2010:200) defines followership as "supporting the goals and positions of another country which were not shared previously and/or as accepting a relative loss of status and power vis-à-vis the emerging power," where leadership, is essentially "consensual" and "benign" and thereby includes "committing to common positions, building coalitions and refraining from acting unilaterally" (Schirm 2010:200). When a regional leader is unable to include the interests of its followers in its vision, it cannot ensure followership which explains "the gap between their aspirations and their ability to reach their goals" (Schirm 2010:198). However, leadership is not always benign or consensual.

Destradi (2010:907) has argued that it is flawed to assume benevolence on the part of the regional powers and conceiving them "as states pursuing exclusively benevolent, leading, integrating strategies" and instead, analyses should "conceive a much broader range of strategies regional powers can pursue in their relations with neighbouring

countries" (Destradi 2010:907). Destradi argues therefore that the strategies pursued by regional powers are "located on a continuum" (2010:908) ranging from "a unilateral, highly aggressive and coercive strategy," or "imperial strategy," to an "extremely cooperative one, aimed at reaching common goals" (Destradi 2010:904) or a "leading" strategy. As Destradi (2010:921) explains:

> there is a fundamental difference between hegemony and leadership, which lies in the goals pursued by the dominant state: while the hegemon aims to realise its own self-interested goals by presenting them as common with those of subordinate states, the leader guides – 'leads' – a group of states in order to realise or facilitate the realisation of their common objectives.

Nolte and Schenoni (2021:2) explain that conceptually, the term regional power "refers to a superiority in capabilities, which is at least implicitly recognized by other states in and beyond a region as structurally determining a regional power's higher social standing." The recognition of a state as regional power does not automatically translate into active regional leadership, which is "a goal a regional power can pursue" as an "auxiliary goal within the context of its overarching foreign policy strategy." Therefore, it is in the notion of regional leadership where these perpetrated strategies of cooperation and conflict are enacted, which may falter, not merely be being contested by followers, but may also be a result of "regional power detachment" (Nolte and Schenoni 2021:2) were it unwilling to exercise the option of regional leadership as part of its larger strategy, denoting changes in the "domestic economy and politics, including ideational shifts, which lead to an adjustment in the grand strategy of a regional power" (Nolte and Schenoni 2021:10).

Leaders may choose not to lead and it is precisely this onus on recalcitrant leadership, that understanding the motivations of primary actors, in the Latin American case, presidentialism, that has immense analytical value. The next subsection explains the concept of *presidencialismo* or presidentialism in Latin America and identifies the theoretical concepts that explain why presidentialism remains an important part of the regional integration process.

Theorizing Agency in Latin American Integration: *Presidencialismo*

Latin America "features the world's strongest presidentialist tradition" (Neto and Malamud 2019:813) and this preference for the presidential format of governance is historical, so much so that "from the times of Bolivar, the region has been identified by its propensity towards the accumulation of power in the top executive office" (Malamud 2015:112). Peterson and Somuano (2021:358) have defined presidentialism "as a form of government in which the president as the chief executive is elected by popular vote, either directly or indirectly, and both presidential and legislative terms are fixed."

Particularly for regional integration, both in the form it has taken in Latin America, in that it is thinly institutionalised and intergovernmental, as well as the efficacy of its decision-making, in that effective summit diplomacy is an important tool for the setting of agenda in regional institutions, presidentialism is the carrier of regional agency, precisely because "national presidents have been perceived as more able- more accessible, more responsive, more effective, faster--than any other actors to reach decisions" (Malamud 2005:139). Presidentialism defines functionality in Latin American integration. As Malamud (2003:51) explains

> The coexistence of progress in integration with a minimum set of regional institutions has been possible due to the local shape of one national institution, that of the executive format…presidentialism, has managed to act as a functional equivalent to regional institutions.

It bears weight therefore, to unpack the category of presidentialism in Latin America, especially in how it differs from the archetypal US presidentialism and identify why presidential leadership is so important for the progress of regionalism in Latin America and how it may in turn, stymie this progress. What are the characteristics of presidentialism in Latin America?

Latin American presidentialism is a traditional and characteristic feature of the polity of the region where, since independence itself, the region has been "dominated by the presidential model" and is "very much its own breed" (Cheibub, Elkins and Ginsburg 2011:3), due to a function of "institutional and cultural" factors (Malamud 2015:112). Prompted by concerns of maintaining internal stability, nascent Latin American states

bolstered the powers of the executive, especially their law-making powers like veto and governing by decree, a feature that continues to differentiate Latin American presidentialism from other presidentialisms globally, and, these legislative powers have continued to remain relevant to ensure political stability and democracy. The legislative powers accrued to the executive have only intensified and consolidated across the region, so much so that it is not a stretch to suggest that "the executive is the legislative leader in Latin America" (Cheibub, Elkins and Ginsburg 2011:27). Sondrol (1990:419) explains executivism or *ejecutivismo* as a "device to guide and control the extremist and centrifugal forces characteristic of the region, and to forge unifying symbols essential to nationalism in lands rife with separatist tendencies and political factions."

The *ejecutivismo* that was birthed in the region as presidentialism drew on traditions of 'personalismo,' 'caudillismo' and 'elitism' (Sondrol 1990). While caudillismo refers to a "system of political and social domination, based on the leadership of a strongman," (Thiébault 2018:24), personalism implies "the identification of the caudillistic leader with the state itself, thus erasing any difference between the person and the institution, paving the way for clientelism as a social structure founded on a personal and asymmetric exchange relationship" (Malamud 2015:115). Elitism on the other hand, employed the rationality argument to further entrench the particularism inherent in rule of reason rationales that entrenched these traditions in nascent polities through elite support. Thus, the idea of strongman politics is a deeply rooted and dominant tradition in Latin American politics (Thiébault 2018:23) so much so that Malamud (2015:112) posits that modern populism in Latin America, despite the changes wrought by urbanization and industrialization is merely a modern form of *caudillismo* where the "government of men rather than government of laws" continues to be prevalent and reliant on "the charismatic personal rule with strong executive institutions."

This concentration of power rather than separation, in opposition to traditional presidential systems has been called "hyper-presidentialism" (Nino 1992) and "coalition presidentialism" in Latin America. It is precisely because of the paramountcy of the executive in governance in Latin America that it is more "prone to breakdown" as "direct elections" in the region "do not consistently give presidents legitimacy that lasts as long as it should" (Hochstetler 2006:401). As Hochstetler (2006:414) explains:

In a presidential system, presidents inevitably stand apart and above other political actors because of their special powers and special sources of legitimacy.

At the same time, the regular challenges to presidents show how vulnerable they are to the withdrawal of their special legitimacy. Populations evidently can and do withdraw their mandates for presidents to rule them, and few presidents have survived large and violent mobilizations against them.

This inherent instability emphasizes the need for presidents to build consensus, mobilize support domestically and abroad and exacerbates the personalist as well as paternalistic tendencies of presidential politics. The contest between strength and wavering legitimacy has shaped presidential leadership in specific ways. Presidential leadership is dependent on "traditional personal politics," the "different resources" available to political leaders and their "context"- both institutional and environmental (Thiébault 2018:24). Analysing presidential leadership along the matrix of "skills, relations and reputation," Thiébault has elucidated a variety of factors that contribute to the shape and nature of presidential leaderships in Latin America. The major skills for active and successful presidential leadership are the presidential ability to set and identify goals, mobilize support domestically and abroad and "have to be more in the field of cooperation and negotiation" (Thiébault 2018:27) especially domestically, as well as "the ability to produce a consistent narrative and to provide a discourse," developing "a vision in foreign affairs." Given this insistence on building overarching visions and cohesively communicating them to a variety of actors domestically and internationally, especially to ensure consistency in ideology and policy in order to entrench legitimacy, presidential leadership is also dependent on the successful maintenance of "complex relations with a larger number of actors at different levels of the system" (Thiébault 2018:35). The centrality of this nexus between legitimacy, public support and authority are reliant on a president's "personal contacts rather than institutional means" where "developing and maintaining close relationships with decision makers at various levels, at home and abroad" is a "principal resource" of the president (Thiébault 2018:35). A president may accrue a positive reputation when his political action gains them the support of public opinion at home. However, presidential reputation is also dependent on how a president is perceived abroad as "presidents operate in a political environment that included other actors within the country and abroad" (Thiébault 2018:40). Thus, a president's popularity is dependent on his ability

to deliver in policy the weight of their promises and successfully traverse constraints that hamper their ability to take action. Their unique legislative powers to govern by decree and veto are important resources to enable this which nevertheless remain dependent on the positive translation of these actions both at home and abroad to buoy this unilateral power with international reputation and positive public opinion. A president's success therefore, is a function of this dance between action and optics. As Orjuela and Chenou (2018:43) put it

> presidentialism is the most common system in Latin American countries and it is characterized by the concentration of substantial powers in the hands of the Executive, including this organisation's broad-ranging discretion in defining the direction foreign policy should take.

What are the theoretical contours of Latin American presidentialism in regional integration? Malamud (2015:114) has identified a particular theoretical category of concentrationist presidentialism when defining presidentialism in the context of regional integration. He argues that essentially, the fixed term caveat of presidentialism coupled with the enlarged executive authority accrued to Latin American presidents in the concentrationist model of presidentialism is especially effective in the domain of regional integration where this blend of "executive concentration of power, has allowed for a higher probability that decisions regarding foreign issues would be made without facing institutional blockades" as well as "provided relevant actors with direct access to top decision makers and had permitted a rapid response from the latter." Thus, "concentrated rather than separated power has proved well suited to deal with integration, at least in its first stages, because it managed to overcome obstacles presented by legislatures, cabinets, and regional institutions."

Combined with the fact that the exercise of foreign policy, allows for even "greater room for manoeuvre from both institutional and political constraints" (Malamud 2015:113), "interpresidentialism" (Malamud 2015) is the form that intergovernmentalism takes in regional integration, a resultant "combination of a domestic institution, that is, concentrationist presidentialism, with an international strategy, that is, presidential diplomacy" (Malamud 2015:121). The goal is simple, to ensure the straightest route to political action to ensure domestic legitimacy at home, dismantle any constraints in the taking of such action and ensuring promptness of

suitable action to account for the fixed term of presidency. As Llanos and Nolte (2016:2) explain:

> Latin American presidentialism is like a chameleon: it changes its colours in response to its political environment. But it is still the same political animal. While the institutional configuration may be prone to producing political stalemates, political actors are responsible for creating and resolving these stalemates. Moreover, they do not act in a socio-economic vacuum.

Thus, leadership both at the state and statesman level, whether as the pursuit of regional powerhood by individual states in Latin America or the actionability of presidential actors within these organisations is an important variable to explain the motivations, development and functioning of the current regime of regional integration. The next chapter attempts to unravel the processes of construction and development of the three different regional organisations ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC in an attempt to situate and contextualise the theoretical approaches discussed in the present chapter.

CHAPTER III

ALBA, UNASUR AND CELAC: ANTECEDENTS, STRUCTURES AND GOALS

Regional integration in Latin America presents itself variously, often leading to convoluted if not confusing trajectories of formation, purpose and even at times, vision. Chapter I attempted to delineate the patterns and forms that regionalism in Latin America routinely presents itself in as well as the forms in which these patterns are reshaped by the region. The two distinct, though overlapping strains of regionalism have been situated between the dichotomy of the "old" and the "new." The post 2000 wave of regionalism however, or better described as "post-liberal regionalism," "post-hegemonic regionalism" or even "post-trade regionalism" cannot be adequately represented in these binaries of 'old' and 'new'. Most scholars agree that not only was this wave of regionalism a comment on the failure of neoliberalism and the trade logic of regional integration, but also simultaneously a product of all the previous 'failed' attempts at regionalism. As Tussie (2014:110) puts it:

> Whatever one's views, South America became a ready platform for the reignition of regionalism incorporating the normative dimensions of a new era moving beyond American-led patterns of trade integration and that cannot be dismissed as passing.

Several factors had to come together for the formation of these organisations including but not limited to the commodity boom which induced China to occupy a larger market share, the 2008 financial crisis, the severe dissatisfaction with the neoliberal trade regime, the resurgence of South-South cooperation mechanisms and ultimately, the homegrown crop of left-leaning political regimes who imagined development in a manner that went beyond trade.

Th present chapter attempts to sketch the growth of the three regional organisations of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). It will also attempt to situate the development of these organisations in their socio-political and economic context and identify the differences amongst them. It does so by looking into their antecedents, structure and goals. Divided into four

sections, the first section unpacks the development trajectory, institutional formation and performance of ALBA; the second section offers an elaboration on the structures, processes and peculiarities of UNASUR; the third section attempts to elaborate the processes of formation of CELAC as well as underlining its difference and significance. The last section offers a summative analysis of post-liberal and post hegemonic regionalism, identifying key rationales for the development of this integration regime.

THE BOLIVARIAN ALLIANCE OF THE PEOPLES OF OUR AMERICAS (ALBA)

Regional integration processes are not "mere institutional arrangements" directed towards a particular aim and "their purpose, scope, and level cannot be apprehended without a precise understanding of the historical context that characterizes their negotiation and first steps" (Dabène 2009:40). Given that ALBA too was "launched in a specific context" (Dabène 2018:33), an elaboration of the processes that led to its birth have immense value in aiding the bridging of the antipodal distance in its conceptualisation from being an "irresponsible adventure" to representing the region's "anti-hegemonic struggle" (Briceño-Ruiz 2014:170).

The third wave of Latin American integration in its "post-liberal" and "post-hegemonic" *avatar* was axiomatic of the 'left turn' in Latin American politics and therefore, the origins of the various enunciations it took may be traced back to the early 1990s. The acute political changes in the region from authoritarian dictatorships to nascent liberal democracies, where the immensity of the debt crisis as well as structural reforms imposed on the region by international financial institutions prompted an enthusiastic embrace of the neoliberal trade regime. Latin American polities advocated for a reduced role for the state where liberalisation reforms necessitated reduced welfare spending, more open economies and a valorisation of neoliberalism. Even as several free trade area agreements, most famously the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) enacted between the USA, Canada and Mexico as well as the Southern Common Market or MERCOSUR, came into being, simultaneously the region was manoeuvring adjustments to these developments and attempts to formulate an oppositional regional response were fomenting.

It is interesting to note that the era of "open regionalism" simultaneously prompted the resistance paradigm that would birth the new wave of regionalism in the 2000s. On 27 June 1990, George Bush Senior announced the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative that ultimately aimed at building upon "a new convergence of values and interests in the western hemisphere and to resuscitate the project of a continental free trade area" (Dabène 2018:34). This newest articulation of Monroeism prompted an immediate Latin American response when on 4 July, left-leaning political parties and organisations came together in São Paulo for the first São Paulo Forum (SPF). The spirit of Pan-Americanism therefore, prompted a Latin American response, as old in its posited oppositional binary as the scenario succeeding the first Pan American conference held in Washington in 1889 that perpetuated Pan-Americanism in the region.

What was the most interesting thing about the São Paulo Forum was that "beyond resistance, the Left constructed an alternative project during the 1990s not exclusively centred on trade" (Dabène 2018:34). The final declaration of the Forum made specific references to "a new concept of unity and continental integration," (SPF1 São Paulo 1990) and emphasized the need for the "reaffirmation of sovereignty and self-determination," "the full recuperation of our cultural and historical identity" as well as the "spur of international solidarity of our peoples."

By the third São Paulo Forum in 1992, concepts such as "alternative integration" as well as "people's integration" were already being debated along with the need to create "networks of exchange, co-ordination and complementarity of productive, financial and social policies" (SPF3 Managua 1992). As Dabène (2018:34) puts it, "a new integration paradigm was being developed and a resistance strategy emerged."

The movement from this still developing nascent integration paradigm to the enunciation of the "alternative" espoused in organisational and ideological terms with the creation of ALBA, received its primary motivation when in 1994 the first Summit of the Americas held its meeting in Miami, backed by the US and articulated the need for developing a trade centric model of integration, namely, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This announcement hastened the mobilization of the Latin American Left which had already been underway in the region and integration became an important concept as well as a tool for the mounting of a counter hegemonic challenge to US hegemony as a means to allow the formal espousal of greater autonomy

for Latin America. At the Fifth São Paulo Forum in 1995, the Latin American Left laid down the basis of its model of integration which it claimed should aim towards "joint and complementary development of productive sectors and services of all countries in the region" particularly, to "avoid the negative consequences of a world dominated by grandnational corporations" (SPF5 Montevideo 1995).

Over the next few years, two more Summits of the Americas took place along with five more São Paulo Forums. In 2001, a few months after the third Summit of the Americas in Québec, at the tenth São Paulo Forum, that significantly, was held in Havana, the idea of a Latin American Community of Nations was invoked as a proposed alternative to FTAA. This invocation was followed by the idea of ALBA at the third Association of Caribbean States (ACS) summit again, held in Margarita, Venezuela.

It is important to note that the revival of the Left as well as the formation of ALBA owes a lot to the leadership and strong political and ideological stance taken by Hugo Chávez, then president of Venezuela. After coming to power, Chávez vociferously supported the need for Latin America and the Caribbean to define an alternative model of development and integration. The FTAA negotiations, what he famously called the United States' "annexation project" provided an important inflection point in the development for an alternative integration paradigm in the region as the existing integration mechanisms were "no system of integration" (Chávez 2000). This regional leadership by Chávez-led Venezuela manifested in a variety of ways, as Muhr (2011:103) explains included:

> LAC leadership exercised by the G-3; Venezuela's full membership in MERCOSUR; geographical extension of the 1980 San José Agreement, through which Mexico and Venezuela supply eleven Central American/Caribbean countries with 160,000 barrels of oil and derivatives per day under a cooperative financing scheme, accompanied by the creation of a 'University of the Caribbean'; a 'Petroamérica' project, envisaged to integrate the leading oil producers Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, alongside 'Telesur' and a 'University of the South'; a political, social and military 'Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean States'; a 'Latin American Monetary Fund' and a 'Bank of the South', discussed both at Andean Community and MERCOSUR summits; and a Social Charter of the Americas within the Organisation of American States.

ALBA officially came into being with the signing of the agreement between Cuba and Venezuela in 2004. This agreement was Venezuela's first attempt to invoke and apply

the principle of complementarity, where the strengths of one would function to support and mitigate the weaknesses of the other. A new development schema was thus forwarded, harking back to the ISI era and its rejection of the comparative advantage model.

Envisaged as a mechanism to promote horizontal development, President Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chávez (2004) explained that they were in agreement that "the ALBA will not become a reality under mercantilist criteria or based upon the selfish interests of private profit; or for one nation's benefit at the expense of the others." Novelty and the desire to articulate its difference with disruption were grounded in the historical traditions of resistance embedded in the emphatic usage of *Bolivarismo*. The two nations attempted to fill the blanks, adopting the ideas promoted by the various anti-FTAA social movements (Saguier 2007) and adapting them to the spirit of the Integral Cooperation Convention (2000) signed between the two states.

This agreement was also the first instantiation of the term "cooperative advantage" or "collaborative advantage." As opposed to liberal economic ideas of absolute advantage forwarded by Adam Smith, of Ricardian theory of trade that predicates such relationships between countries on "comparative advantage," in this version of "cooperative advantage", states could come together to solve problems without entering into exploitative partnerships that promoted the growth of one by impeding the growth trajectory of the other. It aimed therefore, to promote a new understanding of development that considered not just the economic but also the cultural and political dimensions of development (Muhr 2011). Principle of complementarity and cooperative advantage were thus identified as the two principles founding principles of the alternative integration model being envisaged. Further, not only was ALBA's founding agreement emphatic in its espousal of the notions of solidarity, cooperation and fairness, especially in the trade regime, it also redefined them to suit the reality of its member states – thus the notion of flexibility was built in the idea of 'integration from below'. In sum, ALBA's rejection of the competitive principle underlying traditional FTA's as well as the commercial focus of most regional arrangements was both ideologically driven and conceptually delineated (ALBA 2004). As Cusack (2018: 29) highlights, 'mutual benefit' was the third identifiable salient principle of this

alternative model as envisaged through ALBA. This "mutual benefit" had several components to it:

> Thus, the agreement's main body refers repeatedly to "mutual benefit" in terms of "economic and social needs" and incorporates policies as diverse as cultural plans to reinforce identity (ALBA 2004, Article X), exemption of state investment from local taxes (Article VI), elimination of illiteracy (Article V), and prioritisation of "useful employment" (Article III) all within one wide-ranging agreement that viewed all aspects of politics, economics, and society as potential means to achieve cooperative development.

Even though the emergence of ALBA was heavily context dependent, especially its primary enunciation as an alternative, where "this multidimensional regionalism based on cooperation, complementarity, and solidarity sought to provide a real alternative to the competitive economic integration implied by the FTAA" (Cusack 2018:1), its survival and transformation from Bolivarian Alliance to Bolivarian Alternative, post the lagging of FTAA negotiations in 2005, underlines the powerful contribution it made to the development, purposes and conceptualisation of integration in Latin America. As Dabène (2018: 34) explains, "this change from 'alternative' to 'alliance'" reflected the will underscored in ALBA "to embody a new form of regionalism" as well as that "there was more to it than a simple strategy to balance US hegemony." The geostrategic underpinnings as well were brought to the fore of the idea of integration – an aspect described in some details elsewhere in this chapter.

The reconceptualization of regionalism coincided significantly with the reconceptualization of development, towards which an important contribution was made by the Latin America's so-called 'Left Turn' (1998-2015). As Cusack (2019:3) explains, the Left attempted to manoeuvre regional governance in order to "reinforce common preferences for endogenous developments, reassertion of autonomy and empowerment of long marginalized communities."

Endogenous development was marked by the same "returns" that post-liberal regionalism was centred and developed on, namely the 'return' of the state, of politics, of the development agenda, and of sovereignty as a valid means and ends of regionalism (Sanahuja 2008). This endogenous development was premised on taking into account a country's development potential and the productive resources at hand (such as capital, labour, natural resources, technology, knowledge and skills) as the defining criteria for

deciding the long-term, strategic orientation of said country towards specific foreign and domestic markets (Sunkel 1993).

There was already an existing model of endogenous development and attempts to effect it via regionalism in the import substituting industrialization (ISI) model proposed by ECLAC during the 1960s. The main difference remains in the outlook of development. Where ISI was necessarily inward looking, limited in its development agenda to promoting industrialization and directed towards promoting and supporting large scale domestic and foreign owned capitalist enterprises, the endogenous development enunciated by ALBA proposed a global outlook. Grounded in the ideological and historical background of *Bolivarismo*, ALBA combined a globalist approach and nationalist base in its articulation of endogenous development where the idea was of the 'community transcending the local towards the national, regional and global.' As Muhr (2011:106) explains, Bolivarian endogenous development sought to "balance out the socio-spatial inequalities (uneven development) produced by capitalism," hoped to counter "neoliberal, deregulatory state reform" and curb "mono and oligopolistic power of multi- and transnational corporations" while seeking to "resuscitate production for food sovereignty and security by supporting small and medium-size farmers."

Therefore, though ALBA was a regional governance project that was grounded in its ideological opposition to the FTAA, after the stalemate in 2005, it "morphed into an attempt to reinforce member-states' pro-social, autonomist, state-led development strategies through the cooperative pooling of regional strength" (Cusack 2019: 4).

The composition of membership of ALBA is another instantiation of its difference where it has argued for a differentiated approach that recognizes the diversity of its members. Its "flexible attitude to participation" (Cusack 2019: 5) functions alongside open criteria for membership that do not necessitate the removal of protective barriers, tariffs or subsides and does not enforce compulsory adherence to ALBA programmes as criteria for membership. The aim of the ALBA Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) was to "mutually reinforce endogenous development, promote multipolarity, minimize intraregional imbalances, and empower the poor and the marginalised" (Cusack 2018:20). The membership of ALBA, increased to three with Bolivia's participation in 2006 coinciding with its transformation from "alternative" to "alliance." The three countries came together to form TCP in 2006, extending the principles of the

earlier agreement between Venezuela and Cuba. This 2006 version would soon be replaced by the 2009 enunciation of Peoples Trade Agreement, an initiative geared towards promoting an alternative multilateral trade agreement for ALBA in order to put into practice ALBA's vision of an "economic zone of shared development" (Cusack 2018:93) and so essential to the character of the organisation that it would necessitate a change in the name of the organisation, from ALBA to ALBA-TCP.

Membership grew to include eleven countries of Central and South America as well as the Caribbean, namely Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia (2006), Nicaragua (2008), Dominica (2008), Ecuador (2009), St Vincent and the Grenadines (2009), Antigua and Barbuda (2009), St Lucia (2013), Grenada (2014) and St Kitts and Nevis (2014). Explaining ALBA-TCP's membership structure, Muhr (2011:106) explains that "the ALBA-TCP regional space is defined by the shared territoriality, that is, the geographical boundaries of Central America, South America and the Caribbean" as well as by "the people's historical and cultural roots, their common interests, needs and personalities." ALBA attracted the less developed economies of the region to its shores, hoping to support a productive transformation in their structures of production, assisting and collaborating to initiate a movement from primary sector production to secondary sector. ALBA-TCP, therefore, attempts to "replace the locational advantage with cooperative advantage" (Muhr 2011:105) by following an approach based on promoting endogenous development within the economies and societies of its member states.

Structurally, as per agreement among members, the highest body of ALBA is the Presidential Council, instrumental in announcing and launching new initiatives as well as the settlement of policy whenever summits are convened. The Presidential Council is supported by Social, Economic and Political Councils comprised of ministers in these specific areas as well as the Social Movements Council. The Executive Secretariat supports the Councils and is based in Caracas. It is charged with the execution, coordination and monitoring of decisions forwarded by the Councils. There are other committees like the Women and Equal Opportunities Committee, Defence of Nature Committee, Permanent Defence and Sovereignty Committee and the International Law, Self-Determination, Sovereignty and Human Rights Working Group. However, even though structurally ALBA appears to follow similar delineation of responsibilities amongst executive, councils and committees, their working is more diffuse and the

diversity of programmes employed under the cultural and social banner seems to have added more to the "brand governance" (Cusack, 2018) of ALBA than organisations which rarely convened and were institutionally amorphous. Cusack explains (2018:35) "within ALBA, the trappings of regional integration often adorn silent, empty rooms."

However, membership of ALBA has not always been a requirement to avail the benefits of the programmes created and forwarded under ALBA. The inherent flexibility in participation allows for the "proliferation of initiatives at all levels of governance" and extends even to non-members (Cusack 2018:3). Cusack (2018) calls these initiatives as the twentieth century's "most influential challenge to neoliberal governance" effected via its uniquely collaborative regional social programmes where people are the "ultimate stakeholders." This bottom-up decision-making was supposed to promote a form of social protagonism in governance and economy it was hoped would spark subjective revolution within the citizens (Cusack 2019). The counter-hegemonic and ideological challenge to neoliberalism therefore went much deeper than a mere opposition to the FTAA or even the neoliberal trade regime.

This challenge to neoliberalism may be understood at two levels - firstly, in the actual metrics of the core initiatives promoted by the organisation, namely regionalised social programmes in health and education in the form of social missions, a loan scheme called Petrocaribe for energy-dependent states of the Caribbean basin, an alternative trade framework proffered under the People's Trade Agreement, grandnational enterprises, the promotion of a virtual currency called SUCRE (or, the United System of Regional Cooperation) to allow for intra-regional trade without the use of the US dollar, the ALBA Bank to provide productive investment for development and finally, a region-level Social Movements Council allowing for bottom-up involvement in regional governance (Cusack, 2018; Cusack, 2019). Secondly, these metrics may be understood in the vision promoted by ALBA that envisages the construction of an alternative political economy, involving a transnational chain of people, policies, and prospects. This alternative political economy that aims to replace multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) with Grand National Enterprises (GNEs) is ideologically grounded in Bolivar's "Grand Homeland" (Patria Grande) which would entail, as Muhr explains (2011:106):

creation of a regional needs-based social and popular economy oriented towards the production of use value, i.e. goods and services that satisfy basic human needs, by creating production chains and networks that integrate state, private (e.g. cooperatives) and social (e.g. community-owned) forms of organisation, including small and medium sized enterprises and direct social property enterprises (DSPEs).

Intergovernmental alliances like PETROSUR support PetroCaribe, demonstrating that ALBA functions in different sub-regions. PETROSUR was an alliance between the state-owned *Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A* (PDVSA) of Venezuela, *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPF) of Argentina (YPF) and Brazilian *Petrobras* and the focus remained on promoting social welfare as well as securing funding for said projects. The focus on social welfare is evident in the Grand National Projects (GNPs) that function jointly between two or more states, are state run undertakings and operations are handled by Grand National Companies (GNCs) (Hirst, 2011). The *'Yo, si puedo'* "Yes. I Can" literacy programme launched with the support of Cuba is one prominent example that made a significant contribution to reduce illiteracy across the region. In fact, education remained a particular focus of the organisation and was targeted by various means and to an unprecedented level compared to any other integration scheme (Artaraz 2018). Nicaragua implemented the *Programa Hambre Cero* or the Zero Hunger Programme to tackle malnutrition.

Cultural programmes like TeleSUR have complemented these GNPs, where Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua all came together to form a news network for ALBA nations. Other programmes like literacy fairs, fellowships, literature prizes, movie screenings and ALBA Games were similarly, other ventures in cultural cooperation. Another remarkably effective social welfare scheme was ALBA Health which facilitated consultations, operations and visits by Cuba-trained community health workers. The relationship between the petroleum wealth of Venezuela and the services sector of Cuba came together to effectively support the vision of ALBA. As Hirst and Sabatini (2011:6) put it:

> President Chávez uses Venezuela's windfall oil profits to fund these projects and significant logistical support and knowhow for the implementation of the ALBA infrastructure comes from the well-trained agents of the Cuban government.

These projects and programmes however, are ideologically grounded and politically relevant, especially for Venezuela's regional leadership agenda. For example, Dabène (2018:35) explains how ALBA has worked towards creating an innovative regional agenda as well as maintaining this innovation. He speaks of TeleSUR:

> Over the years, TeleSUR fulfilled its mission, broadcasting throughout Latin America and providing information about social movements and progressive governments. It accompanied the policy changes introduced by many leftist governments, challenging the usual conservative press monopolies.

The purpose was simple. Cultural and diplomatic efforts were meant to both promote and create legitimacy for the actual workings of ALBA as well as deepen the ideological agenda prompted by its leaders, thereby enforcing the validity of "its driving force" (Cusack 2018:3), Venezuela in the region. This further manifested in the vigilant and active political participation of ALBA in the diplomatic sphere. The regular holding of summits, allowed for the deepening of "summit diplomacy" and "declaratory regionalism" where the meetings allowed for improved coordination and cohesion between member states, allowing them to assume "marginal political control over the Organization of American States" (Hirst and Sabatini 2011:8). This resistance to the US and the OAS continued to be a part of the legacy of ALBA even after the death of the FTAA negotiations when member states addressed traditional concerns of regional security for the region, including voicing support for states demanding removal of American military bases from their territories, refusals to cooperate with the drug policing efforts of the US as well as the negotiation of a defence pact in 2007 and putting forward the idea of a Regional Defence School. As Dabène (2018:35) summarizes:

> In short, compared to other Latin American integration processes, the Alliance clearly represents an innovation, as its promoters managed to set an agenda that had an impact on the whole region. By advocating for post-trade regionalism in a multipolar world, ALBA acted as a whistle-blower warning of the externalities of free trade agreements.

ALBA emerged a source of inspiration for some and a source of apprehension for others. For supporters of the left-of-centre governments, it represented a revival of *Bolivarismo* within in the region as well as a strong political support for said leaders.

For others, it was "a vector for Cuban communism and the clientelistic practices of messianic, authoritarian firebrands" (Cusack 2018:6). It forwarded a supranational initiative that attempted to resolve social problems of long standing while proffering a robust challenge to the neoliberal trade regime by its promise of "genuinely fair trade" where it hoped to "create a zone of relative economic calm and predictability" that could challenge "disaster capitalism" (Klein 2007:456). Betwixt these debates, lies a complicated story of ideology, politics and economics. Though so much may be contested, analysing Chavismo and Venezuelan agency seems to be the simplest path to understanding ALBA.

THE UNION OF SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS (UNASUR)

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), no gainsaying, is "by far the most ambitious" (Mosing 2012:163) regional integration scheme as well as the "most significant" (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2015:782) form of varying iterations of regional governance amongst the collective regional projects of post-neoliberal states (Cusack 2018) that represent the distinct wave of regional integration underway in the region since the onset of the 2000s. UNASUR was emblematic of a nuanced and evolved expression of South American integration as well as South American identity, where the geographical reality of South America as a sub-region was formulated into a distinct regional expression, denoting a movement away from the earlier cultural solidarities of IberoAmericanism and instead, articulating a composite South American identity that embraced different colonial and cultural pasts into its folds. Sanahuja (2012:08) elaborates this facet: "traditional unionism and aspirations of Latin American regional integration are redefined in a South American geographic and ideational framework in UNASUR."

The formation of UNASUR, like ALBA is contingent on historical developments initiated especially by the Brazilian Itamaraty. Though officially formed by the Constitutive Treaty in 2008, the first iteration of UNASUR may be traced back to the 1993 proposal for a South American Free Trade Area (SAFTA). This proposal was responding to the proliferation of such agreements within the region, being concluded either bilaterally or plurilaterally within the larger framework of Latin American

Integration Association (ALADI) (Sanahuja 2010). Negotiations were helmed by the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) in Brazil, with the larger geopolitical motivation to carve a South American subregion where Brazil would emerge as the obvious candidate for regional leadership and effectively, allow it to distance itself from the larger Latin American region and its closest regional competitor, Mexico. Thus, at the First South American Summit held in Brasilia in 2000, an attempt was made to broaden the political agenda of the previously slow and laborious process of trade negotiations as well as to broaden the cooperation agenda. With the inclusion of Suriname and Guyana in the process, nations traditionally closer to the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the South American geographical reality was manifested as a distinct category from the larger Latin American one. At this Summit, the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) was launched. IIRSA was emblematic of the desired convergence between the two major trading blocs in South America, namely the Andean Community (CAN) and MERCOSUR. It also brought back Chile into the fold of South America which had renounced its membership of the Andean Pact as far back as 1976. Through SAFTA, on the one hand the historical baggage of IberoAmerican history was discarded by the inclusion of Suriname and Guyana and on the other, it brought together differing economic logics into a regional conversation. The SAFTA process, therefore, was very much the "backbone of South America" (Sanahuja 2012:17). These objectives were reiterated at the Second South American Summit held in Guayaquil, Ecuador in 2002.

At the Third South American Summit held in Cuzco in 2004, the first formal iteration of the shape that UNASUR would ultimately take, manifested in the form of the South American Community of Nations (CSN). The project acquired a clear political vocation, drawing inspiration from the EU and was based on a common identity and shared values. The CSN was envisaged as an organisation comprising the following - firstly, as a facilitator of agreement and coordination of foreign policies with the specific political purpose of consolidating and projecting a clear South American identity, especially as a regional group on the international stage; secondly, CSN would entail a convergence of CAN, MERCOSUR as well as Chile , Guyana and Suriname under SAFTA; and finally, CSN would promote physical integration as well as integration in energy and communications in South America, within the framework of IIRSA. The agenda was further broadened by emphasizing promotion of participation

and cooperation of businesses as well as civil society. These interests were read as a convergence of common interests of all members which could be best achieved via the means of a regional framework (Cardona 2005).

A UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC) report of 2008 explains that "the aims of UNASUR go beyond the combination of infrastructure and trade integration that has characterized South American schemes since 2000" (ECLAC 2008:104). If the charismatic protagonism of Venezuela was central to the functioning and development of ALBA, Brazilian geopolitics, long standing foreign policy goals and political manoeuvrings were central to the development of UNASUR. Already in the CSN, Brazil found a ready space for the exercise of its regional political leadership (Sanahuja 2010), access to expanded markets for its manufacturers, greater access to energy sources, availability of ports and markets of the Pacific all the while strengthening and legitimizing its South-South cooperation agenda on the international stage.

When so much of CSN ultimately became UNASUR, the question begs to be asked: was this change in nomenclature of any significance? Or, instead, it represented the continuous morphing, mutating and conversion that characterizes Latin American integration? The significance of this evolution from CSN to UNASUR may be found in the defined scope of the organisation. In 2004, cooperation and coordination efforts in the region were responding to the nationalist rationales of different members. For example, while Brazil saw the organisation as a culmination of its foreign policy goals to define a leadership role for itself in the region, add prestige to its international status as well as increase its market share in the region, Venezuela saw UNASUR and the underlined energy cooperation scheme as important to its economy as well as a space for furthering the developing project of *Bolivarismo*. Chile and Peru hoped for an increase in their economic fortunes as well as achieving energy security, while Bolivia viewed the same to gain support and advance the social reform project underway within its borders by the Evo Morales government. For Colombia, UNASUR represented an opportunity to reduce its dependence on the USA as a trade partner. States like Uruguay and Paraguay hoped that UNASUR would correct the trade asymmetries that made MERCOSUR increasingly hostile to their interests and along with Ecuador, improve their insertion into the international economy. Finally, it was hoped that the

organisation would contribute similarly to the solidification of democracy and political stability in the region much like MERCOSUR had caused among its members (Riggirozzi and Grugel 2015). The hope was that a new regional agenda for regional integration might develop, ensconced by the contours of the South American identity. This hope had some justification especially given the successes of the CSN in its goal to project the South American region internationally in its Summits with Arab states and the African Union, bolstered by the leadership of President Lula of Brazil.

Nevertheless, the logical conclusion seems to be that the major motivation for CSN was economic, girded by the political objectives of regional leaders, especially Brazil and Venezuela. As Sanahuja (2012:20) explains the "low demands and flexibility in terms of trade and development" combined with an inclusive and non-discriminatory participation agenda, entailed that CSN emerged as the "lowest common denominator of Summit diplomacy" in South America. The CSN was essentially a project that hoped to utilize the trade achievements of two decades of trade-based integration between the CAN and MERCOSUR. It responded to the need to simplify and fast track trade within the region, still grappling with the hangover of open regionalism.

Yet, UNASUR like ALBA, emerged from the same source. The founding treaty of UNASUR much like ALBA is firmly based in the principles of solidarity, cooperation and complementarity emphasized during the São Paulo forums. As Dabène (2018:35) explains, "both are politicised, as they consider trade not as an end in itself but as a means of development and a vector for protection of the sovereignty of the region against imperialist threats."

This congruence in purposes and paradigm was clearly evident when in 2005, South American presidents created a Strategic Reflecting Commission on the South American Regional Integration Process. In 2006, the Commission released its report, titled *A New Model of South America's Regional Integration: Towards a Union of South American Nations*. Not only was the influence of the Forums clear in this new model, especially as many of the leaders of said forums were not in positions of political leaderships in their respective countries but this coherence was also emblematic of the "network of sociability" (Dabène 2018:35) that had developed in the two decades of meetings,

united by their commitment to oppose neoliberalism, ultimately helping a common concept of regionalism to emerge.

This new model broadened the scope of issues. Trade remained important but its articulation shifted from the earlier version of CSN. Now, it was important only due to its potential to improve the wellbeing of people. This mirrored the signing of the ALBA-TCP in the same year between Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba, emphasizing complementarity, collaboration and autonomy. The movement from CSN to UNASUR therefore, was not a mere changing of names but involved the rearticulation of trade, integration and development within the region. The easy uncontested leadership that Brazil had envisaged for itself also became increasingly dubious. As Riggirozzi and Grugel (2015:781) put it:

> contemporary region-building in South America is firmly political and intergovernmental in character. It bypasses questions of trade and investment in order to focus on shoring up democracy, managing the social deficit and buttressing regional security. The key idea underpinning regionalism now is to provide a space above the state for debate, knowledge-sharing and the promotion of new practices and methods of regional policy formation, and to provide democratically elected governments with some external support mechanism to which they can turn when faced with internal and external critics.

Though the charismatic leadership of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva in Brazil did much to further the development of this new model of integration, it also represented the biggest hurdle in the successful deployment of these principles. An ideological dissonance between the two presented itself in practice even when they agreed on the need for inclusive development policies. The ALBA nations were opposed to the models of MERCOSUR and CAN, remnants of the neoliberal trade regime. They envisaged UNASUR as an alternative to neoliberalism, while for other members, MERCOSUR and CAN were processed that could be situated under the umbrella of UNASUR. It came to be seen as an ideological tiff between the 'radical', represented by Chávez, and the 'moderate', as symbolized by Lula, versions of the 'pink tide' that had swept South America in the 2000s. An ECLAC report from 2008 explains, "its limitations aside, the Economic Complementarity Agreements deposited with LAIA, MERCOSUR and the Andean Community are probably the most suitable institutional basis on which UNASUR can build" (ECLAC 2008:105).

However, this economic rationale seems lost in the principles of the organisation where it was envisaged as a regional endeavour that went beyond trade and a means of fostering political cooperation. "It is telling, however, that the Treaty makes no reference to free trade areas, customs unions or convergence of existing trade agreements between South American countries" (ECLAC 208:105). This seems a paradox as the genesis of UNASUR was from SAFTA. However, if the question of protagonism is evaluated in light of this shift in organisational objectives, it is clear that UNASUR, though it may owe a lot to Itamaraty and Brazilian foreign policy goals, was a product of deliberation and contestation among competing ideologies, most significantly between the goals of Venezuela and Brazil. Dabène (2018:35) however, suggests, "the Alliance and UNASUR differ because they are driven by rival promoters, but they share a common approach to post-trade integration." Trade and its conceptualisation is simultaneously evidence of contested leadership within UNASUR but also its complementarity with ALBA in its larger regional agenda.

The process of institutionalization of UNASUR continued, despite the clashes already evident. At the First Energy Summit in 2007, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs were entrusted to prepare a draft Constitutive Treaty for UNASUR, which would be presented for ratification by the presidents of member states in the following year. In the following year, during the Third South American Summit in 2008 held in Brasilia, the text of the Constitutive Treaty was approved by the twelve member states, underlining the political character of the organisation as well as to the adoption of common policies and cooperation in non-commercial policy areas.

The Constitutive Treaty (2008 Article 2) laid down the main objectives of UNASUR as follows:

> The objective of the South American Union of Nations is to set up, in a participatory, agreed manner, a space for integration and union among its peoples in the cultural, social, economic and political fields, prioritising political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among others, with a view to eliminating socioeconomic inequality, in order to achieve social inclusion and citizen participation, strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of bolstering the sovereignty and independence of the States.

In this very broad agenda of objectives, the economic and commercial goals of UNASUR appear greatly reduced. There is no mention of economic integration.

However, the asymmetries of trade, inequality of access and complementarity are mentioned as follows under specific objectives:

> Economic and commercial cooperation to achieve progress and the consolidation of an innovative, dynamic, transparent, equitable and balanced process, envisaging effective access, promoting economic growth and development to overcome asymmetries through the complementarity of the economies of South American countries, as well as the promotion of the wellbeing of all sectors of the population and the reduction of poverty (UNASUR Constitutive Treaty 2008: 4).

The characterization of UNASUR as a "political umbrella" (Peña 2008) is more accurate than any attempt to characterize it as a framework for economic integration. An ECLAC report states that "a certain degree of frustration at South American experiences of integration is part of the legacy inherited by UNASUR, although its very creation reflects the political will to push ahead with integration" (ECLAC 2008:104). This 'political will' is "manifested in a long list of objectives although the general nature of the objectives poses a serious challenge when it comes to defining the concrete actions needed to achieve them" (ECLAC 2008:104-105). Riggirozzi and Grugel (2015:782) argue that UNASUR eschewed the economic integration logic, especially as defined in MERCOSUR in order to "develop a deeply political badge of identity."

The 'political will' to establish a permanent structure to promote dialogue and policy coordination, in the long traditions of political concert in Latin America is evident in the legal personalist and capacity of UNASUR to adopt binding standards, though by consensus. The institutional structure of UNASUR though often termed insufficient and paltry, has often been the focal point of criticism of its inefficacy as a regional organisation (Mosing 2012). The main organs of UNASUR consist of a Council of Heads of State and Government, the highest organ in UNASUR's structure its purpose was to establish and consolidate political congruities, action plans as well as develop programmes needed for South American integration. The executives of each member country in UNASUR serve together on the Council. Decisions are arrived at collectively, deciding the fate of the proposals submitted by minister-level councils. A post of a President *Pro Tempore* has been created and duties entail representation of UNASUR at international forums and events. The person holding the post was

nominated annually. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the primary executive body of the organisation, was a group composed of foreign ministers from UNASUR member countries and was responsible for implementing the decisions made by the Council of Heads of State. The ministers who served on the Council worked together to coordinate policies on the key areas of South American integration. They had the power to create task forces on specific policy issues and areas. A Council of Delegates composed of representatives from each member country was in charge of implementing and adopting the resolutions reached by the other two councils. It was also responsible for promoting public dialogue to help maximize citizen participation in the process of South American integration. The Secretary General, elected for a two-year term completes the organisational structure of UNASUR. The Treaty also provided for the establishment of ministerial councils and the most important of these is the Council of South American Defence established in 2008. The Treaty of UNASUR allowed for the possibility of the creation of a Parliament (Flannery 2012). ECLAC (2008:105) explained that "in terms of institutional design, UNASUR is more deliberative than executive." This deliberation, dependent on political coherence and ideological consonance seems precisely to also be the primary reason for the collapse of the organisation.

'Presidentialism' in UNASUR, as in post-trade regionalism, is front and centre of decision-making. In attempting to mitigate the dangers of an inflated bureaucracy, member states agreed upon an almost vacuous institutional structure. Though institutionalisation was never entrenched, UNASUR effected several important measures like the creation of the South American Defence Council (SADC), South American Institute of Government in Health and the proposal for the creation of the Bank of South in 2009. These measures, like similar initiatives under ALBA, were an attempt to reduce South American dependence on the US for conflict resolution, the dependence on international financial institutions and to promote an agenda for social welfare in line with the goals of UNASUR, specifically for instance, to ensure "social and human development with equity and inclusion in order to eradicate poverty and overcome inequalities in the region" (UNASUR Constitutive Treaty 2008).

The creation of the Electoral Council in 2012, composed of four representatives from each member country was another step towards defining regional autonomy. The

council was tasked with visiting countries before elections, communicating with candidates, parties, and monitoring the election process. The Electoral Council and the electoral monitors it appointed were a conscious attempt to replace similar appointed councils by the OAS.

Further, UNASUR has bolstered its international profile by participating in regular Summits with other regional organisations like the African Union and the Arab League. In 2011, UNASUR was given observer status at the UN General Assembly, barely three years after its creation. These processes, Sanahuja (2012:21) suggests, "have attempted to increase South America's international stance within a multi-polar system and to speed up South-South trade relations."

The contribution made by UNASUR to the development of peace and stability was underlined in its charter—"strengthen political dialogue between Member States in order to reinforce the South American integration" (UNASUR Constitutive Treaty 2008). The first crisis it faced was the 2008 Bolivian crisis [13] when a conflict ensued after the referendum victory of Evo Morales. A *mesa* ('discussion table') was organized by UNASUR comprising the heads of member states, resolution achieved directly a result of the legal character of the organisation as granted to UNASUR by the Treaty of UNASUR which makes its decisions and agreements, once agreed upon by all, binding. This event was extremely important in terms of its ability to resolve disputes and crises within the region without the involvement of the OAS. Though the composition of the mesa was criticised, Mosing (2012:165) explains:

> In any case, UNASUR's very presence indicates a growing political will throughout South America to distance the US from regional affairs, as well as the US' waning hegemonic influence in the continent. However, in displacing Washington from regional governance, the organization has delivered more domestic authority to the presidents of member states, who have driven the process of integration from the beginning.

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[13] In 2008, a political crisis played out in Bolivia where conflict broke out between the president, Evo Morales and members of eastern provinces as well as their calls for autonomy. These protests, sparked in reaction to the redistribution of petroleum wealth and the increasing popularity of Evo Morales social reformation project results in violent clashes and deaths. UNASUR expressed full support for the president and offered mediation.

UNASUR mediated several others crises in the region, including a conflict between Colombia and Ecuador in 2008, of which, the *New York Times* said that "the biggest winner appears to have been the region itself, which resolved its own dispute without outside help and without violence."

Regionalism as a state-led project is an idea inimical to theoretical conceptualisations of the phenomenon, which UNASUR has not proven to be the exception to, though initially, it gained legitimacy by virtue of having created a regional space for dialogue amongst separate sovereignties. The idea remained that despite disparities and differences, all member states had a plethora of common interests, facilitating possibilities of cooperation. Agreements on energy cooperation, on infrastructure projects under IIRSA, on health and social welfare, on defence were emblematic of the efforts by UNASUR to employ regionalism is a shifting level in domestic policy making. As Tussie (2009:188) explains, "the interaction between the domestic political economy and the regional economy is a two-way street with constantly intense traffic." However, given the high degree of presidentialism as well as the necessity to arrive at decisions by consensus, in a changed political and economic climate, UNASUR stands dismantled as of 2018, when, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru announced their decision to leave UNASUR after failure to reach an agreement on who should be the next secretary general of the organisation._As Binetti and Raderstorf (2018) put it, "the unravelling of UNASUR-- perhaps the most ambitious attempt at Latin American integration in recent times-- is another sign that Latin America's much-vaunted solidarity has splintered."

Nevertheless, UNASUR represented a transformative moment not just in how interstate cooperation and regional integration were conceptualised in Latin America, but also in the identity it attributes to the geographical subregion of South America on the international stage. Eloquently put by Ricardo Patina, an erstwhile foreign minister of Ecuador "the history of South America is no longer the same, it is a history of permanent engagement... I feel that we are a single country, a regional citizenship" (Prensa Web RNV/Prensa Latina 2011).

THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC)

Most discussions on the emergence of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) along with ALBA and UNASUR, underline the importance of the role played by social movements, civil society associations, the crisis of representation in traditional political parties, where this moment of political flux emboldened new political movements, which brought traditionally underrepresented groups into the fore of regional decision-making. These changes in the demography of political consultations and public decision-making at the national level manifested at the regional level in particularly innovative and inclusive ways, supported by the growing prosperity and economic growth of the region due to the commodity price boom (Pereira 2017).

However, the role played by material factors, namely the commodity boom in the development and emergence of new forms of cooperation in various economic and political integration schemes, is only one of the factors that led to the unique decision-making process of the CELAC. In fact, scholars like Pereira argue that the commercial prosperity of the region during that time is not even the most relevant factor in explaining the emergence of CELAC, especially given the unprecedented membership of the organisation, where it brought together all of Latin America and the Caribbean nations together in the same organisational space.

When one considers the importance of this historic coming together of all of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially given that the membership of CELAC has prompted several assertions by different political leaders of its character as a 'counter-hegemonic' organisation to the OAS, its significance is underscored when the historical character of its emergence is taken into account. Though the newest of the three organisations, the least institutionalized, often termed as a dialogue forum rather than a regional organisation, its history is much older and may be traced back to the Contadora Group (comprising Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela) and the Contadora Support Group (comprising Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay) of the 1980s that eventually became the Rio Group, whose membership soon grew beyond that of these groups. Not only is it important to emphasize the opposition mounted by these organisations to US hegemony, especially regarding the right to self-determination of

Latin American countries, the member countries of these groupings, like in the enunciation of CELAC, came together despite their disparate national, ideological, economic and social logics.

Cooperation under CELAC therefore, did not spring merely from increased capital flowing into the region but rather, boasts path dependencies of historical articulations against US interventionism in the region as well as formal enunciations of the region's search for autonomy. Moreover, continuing in the tradition of political concert, CELAC successfully established mechanisms to develop and articulate regional dialogues especially with important non-regional actors like the European Union and China. There is some weight, therefore, to the assertion by Gardini (2015:2010) who terms CELAC as a "platform" that allowed "the continent to speak with one voice in major international venues."

Scholars like Merke (2015) have successfully employed the practice of concertation or *concertación* to explain the format of regionalism that emerged under the auspices of CELAC. *Concertación*, can be defined as "a loose form of (regional) international organisation based on consensus-seeking and peaceful settlement of disputes" (Merke 2015:185). This institution is particularly useful in the Latin American context where the impulse for regionalism co-exists with a search for autonomy, often directed not inwards but towards the United States, a strong developmentalist focus girded by a preference for securing national interest and distaste for giving up sovereignty as well as a disavowal of any ambition towards supranationalism. *Concertación*, depicts Latin America as a "continental community, sharing a language, a religion and a homogenous cultural trait" (Merke 2015:186) and the "underlying assumption in this narrative is that a region possessing a thick diplomatic culture enjoys a backdrop of trust, shared ideas and linguistic understandings that provides the cement to avoid escalation and allows more space for prudence and pragmatism" (Merke 2015:186).

This dialectic between national interest and solidarity integration (Gardini 2011) is at the heart of *concertación* which attempts to balance the notional solidarity of language, shared history and culture with the very real systemic pressures of global capitalism and US hegemony by utilizing the unique diplomatic culture of the region that is based in its legalistic traditions and respect for non-aggression, non-intervention and international arbitration. This diplomatic and legal tradition girded by the language of

linguistic, cultural and political solidarity allows *concertación* to function without ceding the supremacy of the nation-state and sovereignty and creating the much-needed space for the region to negotiate breathing room for member states in the international system, particularly against the preponderance of the United States, by arriving at a consensus. The function that CELAC fulfils by creating a dialogue forum, working as a consensus building mechanism is therefore, both reflective of the rich traditions of political *concertación* in the region as well as a way to generate a common position especially in negotiations with external actors while maintaining room for different national projects, ideological and political leaderships and doing all of this, without ceding sovereignty. This has resulted in understandably negligible institutionalization. Pereira argues that this low institutionalism further emphasizes the importance of studying the development processes of earlier low institutionalized regional organisations in LAC that, nevertheless, emphasized the importance of political consultation both as an objective and means (Pereira 2017).

The larger developments in the so called "third world" in the seventies, especially the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), had repercussions in the regional formations in Latin America as well. The earlier formations premised on the logic of import substitution industrialisation, geared towards the goal of developing intra-regional free trade markets, for example the Latin America Free Trade Association (LAFTA) in the 1960s, transformed themselves into newer iterations, like the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) in 1980s where the earlier objective of establishing free trade area was abandoned and greater freedom was afforded to member states to enter into bilateral negotiations. This dilution in the character was a result of a movement away from the narrow definition of economic integration, which had been unsuccessful in meeting its objectives, to advocating for greater political freedom and flexibility in regional organisations. Similarly, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) formed in 1975 also did not have a character of a commercial bloc but worked towards assisting in the development of coordinated responses among its member states (Souza 2012). Thus, as Souza argues, these changes in the character and meaning of regional organisations resulted in a new articulation in the 1980s in the region, where this business of developing coordinated responses lent itself marvellously to the articulation of new regional formations, especially during the Central American crisis

where organisations like the Contadora Group and Contadora Support Group attempted to solve regional problems.

The Contadora Group formed in 1983 was a regional initiative to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing civil wars in Central American republics. It aimed to create a platform for political dialogue in support of the much-needed structural changes and to avoid possible US military intervention in the region. It worked towards strengthening consensus among its members, generating international support for their consensually arrived at position and build a framework that would work towards the development of peace and economic prosperity in Central America. It was the first time that Latin American countries came together to coordinate their responses to crises autonomously, without involving the intervention by any third party (Pereira 2017). This entire exercise was also important towards building an environment of trust and cooperation. Support came to the four-nation Contadora group which led to the formation of the Contadora Support Group in 1985, adding to the emergence of concerted political consensus in the region. Both groups merged to form the Group of Eight or Rio Group, in the enunciation of which, a mechanism for permanent political consultation was formalized in the region where the need to define and find solutions to their own problems and to do so without the interference or intervention of the US was articulated. Consolidating democracy in the region was another important facet of these processes, adding legitimacy of political stability to their project of autonomy and self-determination.

The institutional mechanisms of the Rio Group were informal, with no specified headquarters or permanent bodies. Meetings of Heads of State and Government were organised and coordinated on a rotating basis and the mechanism of Rio Group Troika with the preceding, current and succeeding Pro-Tempore Secretariat countries was created for collaboration. This mechanism has been inherited by CELAC. The Rio Group, therefore, was very much a precursor of what is presently termed "summit diplomacy" or "presidential diplomacy" (Aravena 1999). It also functioned as an international interlocutor with third countries and regional blocs (Pereira 2017), a system that has also been inherited by the CELAC. In over two decades of its functioning, the Rio Group discussed a wide variety of issues as they gained preeminence in the region and worked towards developing a consensus among its

member states and through its function as an interlocutor and dialogue mechanism, it attempted to consolidate a democratically arrived at, widely discussed Latin American position on matters deemed of importance by and to the region. Though its efficiency in dispute redressal may be questionable, it managed to create a forum for political consultation and in several instances, through the opinions, statements and proposals of member countries reached a successful consensus (Pereira 2017).

The other development of great significance that birthed or rather, coalesced into CELAC was the Latin American and the Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC). In 2008, an ECLAC report forecasting trends for the region in 2008 argued that "the governments of the region need to agree on positions and speak with one voice in international negotiation forums" (ECLAC 2008:93). This report was published when the intention to hold CALC I had been announced by Brazil, but the summit had yet to be concluded. The first summit of CALC took place in December 2008 with the promised intention to provide Latin American responses to Latin American problems. President Lula in his speech underlined the necessity of remaining non-confrontational with everyone while emphasizing how the region could contribute to the new multipolar and multilateral world.

The political will to discuss issues of regional interest in the face of rising international challenges, exacerbated by the onset of the global financial crisis was paramount. Integration was widely conceptualised as something beyond the economic matrix, which was widened to include social and developmental concerns and girded by the necessity of reaching consensus and forming cooperative political alliances. The Declaration of the I CALC Summit emphasized the potential and importance of cooperation and dialogue among the countries of the region to generate tangible results and mutual benefits, especially to meet their aspirations for development and prosperity (Serbin 2008).

The agenda for discussion was wide and the ultimate aim was to achieve a common agenda at the regional level on multiple issues like cooperation and exchanges between the various regional and subregional mechanism of integration, combating the effects of the international financial crisis, energy, infrastructure, reduction in poverty and hunger and social development to name some. South-south cooperation was

emphasized, not only as a problem-solving mechanism but also as an important tool to aid the international projection of Latin America and the Caribbean.

What seems dubious is Lula's emphasis on confrontation with no one and the counter hegemonic character that CELAC ultimately assumed, already present in the communications prepared post CALC I, which included a request to end the US blockade of Cuba. In 2009, the CALC Plan of Action was established and was followed in the succeeding year by the II CALC Summit, jointly held with the XXI Summit of the Rio Group in Mexico. The discussion for the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) took place at what was later termed the Unity Summit. The Declaration of Unity created CELAC as its own regional space bringing together all Latin American and Caribbean States, formally espousing the region's decision to create a Latin American regional forum, excluding the USA and Canada as well as including Cuba as a full member.

As Pereira (2017) explains, the declaration espoused CELAC's goal to be a privileged regional forum with the aim to consolidate the Latin American and Caribbean identity and projecting this shared identity globally. The Declaration of the Unity Summit 2010 (2010:3) laid down that this consolidated identity was based on:

> the respect for international law; the sovereign equality of States; the non-use nor the threat of use of force; democracy; the respect for human rights; respect of the environment, taking into consideration the environmental, economic, and social pillars of sustainable development; international cooperation for sustainable development; the unity and integration of Latin-American and Caribbean countries; an ongoing dialogue that promotes peace and regional security.

Further, CELAC's work would be based on "solidarity," "social inclusion," "equity and equal oportunities," "complementarity," "flexibility," "voluntary participation," "plurality" and "diversity" (The Declaration of Unity Summit 2010:3). Moreover, the organisation recognised its inheritance of a well-established history of dialogue between the different countries as well as the contribution and legacies of the Rio Group and the CALC in the search for autonomy by the region.

In 2011, the XXII Rio Group Summit and the III CALC took place in Caracas and CELAC was officially founded. The Caracas Declaration (2013:1) stated that CELAC's

mission would be to achieve "the purpose of progressing in the political, economic, social and cultural unity and integration of our region." It emphasized, "the unity and integration of our region must be built gradually, with respect for pluralism and the sovereign right of each of our peoples to choose their manner of political and economic organization" (The Caracas Declaration 2013:3).

The inclusion of Puerto Rico, urged at the behest of ALBA nations, further emphasized the counter hegemonic character of the organisation as well as the political will to create an autonomous regional forum for LAC (Pereira 2017).

The CELAC Action Plan (2011:3), approved at the 2011 summit, laid down ten major topics for discussion and deliberation under the new organisation, namely:

> International financial crisis and the new financial architecture; complementarity and cooperation between regional and sub-regional integration mechanisms; Energy; Infrastructure for the physical integration of transport, telecommunications and border integration; Social development and eradication of hunger and poverty; Environment; Humanitarian assistance; Protection of migrants; Culture; Information and communications technology.

At the same summit, the document of procedures for the functioning of the new entity's organic structure was approved. CELAC consists of six bodies, or rather levels of decision-making, namely, the Summit of Heads and Heads of State and Government; Meeting of Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Presidency Pro-Tempore, Meeting of National Coordinators and the Troika.

Conceived as a dialogue forum, CELAC is uniquely positioned to propagate the "summit diplomacy" of Latin America. Presenting a position of consensus, the hope behind the organisation was to acquire visibility, a reputable international standing and coordinate the various regional interactions among the region as well as with the European Union, China, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Turkey, Japan, and India – its first dialogue partner.

CELAC emerged as a post-Washington Consensus mechanism, espousing what may best be described as "declaratory regionalism" that is state-led and directed towards

generating consensus. Cintia Quiliconi and Raúl Salgado Espinoza (2016:28) explain, "CELAC has become the new organisation that encourages 'unity in diversity' for all Latin American states, establishing a common framework for cooperation and consultation." It has initiated several dialogues since its formation and is mandated by the Heads of State and Government, to be the unified voice of the region on issues of consensus.

CELAC was envisaged as a regional forum for developing political consensus among Latin American and Caribbean States. It has no defined permanent bodies on which to rely, no legal personality and no budget. It has been assigned the role of a coordinator and consensus generator both within the region as well as presenting a unified position on matters of common concern with external partners. Encouraging unity in diversity, its amorphous institutional structure, commitment to political pluralism and consensus-building mandate underline its forum over regional organisation character.

Representative of the culmination of the "dislocation of the Latin American economic integration agenda" (Quiliconi and Espinoza 2017:18), CELAC was formed with the objectives of promoting social, cultural, political and economic integration in the region as well as peacekeeping diplomatic duties. It has been termed as a post-liberal regional organisation due to its non-trade-based agenda, scholars like Quiliconi and Espanoza (2016) have argued that the "summit diplomacy" presidential culture of the organisation makes it a representative of "multilateral or diplomatic" regionalism.

It seems uniquely fitted to the realities of the region, as decision-making is by consensus, membership is broad and diverse, and institutionalisation remains non-existent. This lack of institutionalisation and consensus-based decision making does not allow for the taking of substantial decisions but lends flexibility and strength to whatever is consensually agreed upon. Given the differences in the goals of the members, many scholars have argued that the organisation eventually suffers from a lack of institutional structure and the absence of neutral decision makers hampers the efficacy of the organisation. As Segovia (2013:104) explains, "the importance and influence of CELAC is limited by the diversity of its membership and by the natural difficulty of being able to identify mutual interests among more of its participant." Others, argue that this lack of institutions may even be considered strategic, as it is an

indicator of an attempt to mitigate the costs generated by physical, bureaucratic or even political bodies that States would not be willing to pay at the moment (Pereira 2017). This view suggests that these very characteristics plausibly resolve the peculiarities of Latin American regionalism processes, namely excessive presidentialism, distrust of thick institutionalisation by members due to fears of entrapment, desire for autonomy in decision-making as well as plurality of political ideologies and active civil society participation, at least allowing for a healthy dialogue to take place.

Some have hailed CELAC as the most important regional occurrence in two centuries in the region (August 2012). Former President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, as part of his opening remarks during the first Summit of CELAC (2011) said:

> The Organization of American States, has been historically trapped by the interests and visions of the United States; and its accumulated bias and atavisms render said organization inefficient and unreliable for this new era our America is going through.

CELAC, in its counter hegemonic enunciation, has attempted to embrace a wider understanding of democracy, opposing the criteria established by the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter. CELAC has adopted a plural definition of democracy in its founding charter, providing a wider conceptualisation what is meant by the autonomy of Latin America. As August (2012:3) puts it:

> The thrust of CELAC's definition of democracy and constitutional order is to allow and protect the right of each of the 33 member states to establish its own constitutional order. Moreover, all CELAC members are obliged to defend their right against any attempt to disrupt a member state's respective system. There are no conditions or preconceived notions on what democracy is or should be.

This anti-OAS understanding promoted by ALBA members has been questioned right from the formation not just by countries like Colombia who have signed FTAs with the USA, but also by the original stance enunciated by Lula during CALC I, where he shared his vision of building a regional organisation that did not confront anyone. Prompted by common concerns of defending territorial integrity, respect for state sovereignty, development and defending autonomy, "CELAC has emerged as a mechanism for dialogue and agreement aimed at coordinating efforts for integration,

cooperation and development both at the Latin American and Caribbean levels"
(Segovia 2013: 101).

CELAC has been very active since its formation and has initiated several dialogues as
mandated by its founding charter. These dialogues include the EU-CELAC dialogue,
the Forum of CELAC-China dialogue, engagement with the Russian Federation as well
as the Republic of Korea, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as well as engagement
with Turkey and Japan. At the third summit in 2013, EU-CELAC replaced EU-LAC
which was a definite acknowledgement of the same as a regional organisation. Further,
CELAC has come up with several proposals for socio cultural projects like the
Affordable Housing Programme (which it hopes to develop with technical cooperation
from Turkey), education and the provision of ICT (information and communication
technology) to students, the modernization of railways from Mexico to Argentina and
the proposal for a high speed train between them, improvement of agriculture by
modernisation, CELAC scholarships and initiatives in health with cooperation from
Cuba, to name a few. CELAC has also outlined a commitment to preserve and protect
the cultural heritage of Latin America as well as to promote sustainable development.

The global importance of the organisation, therefore, was acknowledged by the
international community. The undercurrent of conflict ever present, the lack of formal
recognition by the US as well as the widespread political disenchantment with this wave
of regionalism has manifested in a stalemate that persists since 2018, though the
pandemic has again revived hopes of the possibilities for cooperation, where as recently
as December, 2021, the meeting of the China-CELAC forum has been termed as
symbolic of Latin America's active non-alignment (Osborne 2021) in the ongoing US-
China turf war, especially as pertains global supply chains.

It bears to be asked, what was the significance of the post-hegemonic and post-liberal
integration regime and what do these commonalities in formation, similarities in
function and departures in vision entail as far as the efficacy of the regional integration
project is concerned? The next section offers a summative analysis of the features of
these regional organisations.

SURMISING THE RELEVANCE POST-HEGEMONIC AND POST-LIBERAL REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The previous sections have offered an elaborate analysis of the historical context of the three hallmark organisations of the post-hegemonic, post-liberal integration regime. They attempted to delineate specificities in formation and purposes of the three organisations as well as delineate the motivations for the trajectory of these organizations. They also elucidated important cooperation projects undertaken in each organisation. This section attempts to analytically summarize these processes, trajectories and path dependencies in order to underline, firstly, the difference in the post-hegemonic regime; secondly, to emphasize the performance and reception of these organisations; thirdly, to situate this regime of integration in the larger context of this study, emphasizing actorness of the two chosen states, namely Venezuela and Brazil.

Decoding the Difference: Characteristics of Post-Liberal and Post-Hegemonic Regionalism

The previous sections have laid out the development trajectories, peculiarities and specificities of the three organisations under evaluation in this study, namely ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC. Despite differences in motivation and function, all three are clubbed together as being post-liberal and post-hegemonic. What are the features of this form of regional integration?

Sanahuja (2012:7) explains that these organisations are post-liberal as "neither" could be considered "an integration initiative in the standard meanings of the term, whether in its economic, political or legal content." The regional agenda is clearly, post-trade where "none come close to, nor try to adapt to, the traditional economic integration stages or taxonomies" and do not have "any supranational design or purpose."

This post-trade agenda "does not mean that capitalism, liberalism and trade-related forms of integration" have "ceased to exist," rather that their "centrality" has been displaced (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:35). Post-hegemonic regionalism therefore, is post-hegemony in that it describes "regional structures characterized by hybrid practices as a result of partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neo-liberal governance, and in the acknowledgement of other forms of organization and

management of regional goods" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:12). As Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffmann (2015:7) put it:

> Despite the differences among the organizations concerned, all of them are part of a narrative in which regionalism does not consist simply of free trade and economic liberalization as mechanisms to deal with globalization. The concept of post-hegemonic regionalism shows that new values (or some values discredited in the 1990s) and ideas about the nature of regional economic integration and political cooperation are being diffused in the region. Such principles and ideas have permeated the Latin American system of states and non-state actors and have given new traits to the regionalist processes.

The novelty lies in the "plurality of models" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffmann 2015:6), and post-hegemonic regionalism conceptually, is inclusive of the overlaps in mandates and memberships, especially as "new modes of mobilization and coordination" allowed Latin American states "to redefine the nation state in terms of peace, security, social justice and development, with inter-state coordination functioning to create a sub-regional political identity," finding room for manoeuvring away from the influence of the US and "bringing politics back into the ambit of democratic government rather than mere following of market needs" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2018:168). This definition also explains the emergence of alternative arrangements like the Pacific Alliance which were post-hegemonic, if not necessarily post-liberal.

Sanahuja (2012) identified commonalities in the three organisations under survey, where these organisations were marked by a return of politics to the regional agenda and post-trade agenda, especially in their reduced insistence on economic liberalization. Sanahuja (2012:7) argues that this was "largely a result of the emergence of leftist governments, its nationalist discourses, and the Brazilian and Venezuelan attempts to exert their leadership throughout the region," where a "development agenda" was forwarded, which entailed a distancing from neoliberalism and open regionalism, essentially marked by a "return of the State to politics, particularly in foreign relations and economic and social development" and included "the appearance of a renewed agenda in issues like peace, security and defence, crisis management and foreign policy coordination." This agenda attempted to undo "development bottlenecks" especially the "lack of regional infrastructure." This "positive" agenda of integration emphasized the "creation of institutions and common policies and an increase in cooperation in non-

trade issues," girded by the rubrics of South-South cooperation as well as cooperation in fields like "energy security, macro-economic coordination, monetary issues and development finance." New actors were involved in the regionalism processes, where aiming to "socially legitimize integration processes," greater attention was accrued to "social issues and the reduction of development asymmetries" and "poverty and inequality reduction" as well as other cooperation programmes became part and parcel of the function of regional cooperation, denoting the increased importance of "social justice" in the "region's political agenda."

The rise of the Left, therefore, had an important role in terms of the redefinition of the regional space, the reimagination of the regional agenda and the articulation of the format of cooperation institutionalized within these organisations. As Riggirozzi and Tussie (2018:169) put it:

> Post-hegemonic regionalism has allowed a redefinition of social activism and political practices broadening the arena of action beyond their own communities and nation states, relocating the focus of regionalism as an extension of domestic rather than the by-product of global politics. From such a perspective, regions must be seen as social and political constructions, and hence areas which themselves produce a dynamic that affects the corridors of norm creation and diffusion.

How do we define these organisations in their institutionalisation and functioning if they cannot be conceptualised as an "integration initiative in the standard meanings of the term" (Sanahuja 2012:7)? The next subsection offers an elaboration on the functioning of these organisations, explaining their intergovernmental nature.

Intergovernmentalism and 'Lite' Institutionalisation

Sanahuja (2012:5) explains that Latin American integration is characterized by "the primacy of intergovernmentalism" and "the entrenched rejection of supranationalism." This has resulted in "the lack of common legally binding rules and bodies with the power to adopt them," "the weakness of decisions, rules and dispute-settlement mechanisms" and a "refusal to set strong institutions." As has been detailed in the previous sections, in all three organisations, decision-making is by consensus. Ruling

by consensus, however, ensures "very low effectiveness, lack of credibility, and legal uncertainty" (Sanahuja 2012:5). Thus, institutionalization remains "lite".

However, the post-liberal turn offered an important understanding of why intergovernmentalism is a deliberated policy choice in Latin America. The excesses of neoliberalism showed how "regional integration had gone too far curtailing state power in favour of regional institutions, especially in terms of the 'loss of sovereignty' to markets" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2018:160) and this "diminution of state power" not only meant that "authority" was removed from the state domain but also from "societal influence."

Therefore, in a means to facilitate a "coordinated construction of sovereignty" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2018:160), this construction did not "rest upon the delegation of sovereignty to supranational communitarian institutions" which were as prone to the tyranny of unequal power structures as any multilateral regime that included external actors, nor did it rest "on the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions." This constructed sovereignty instead, drew power from "inter-governmental institutions and agreements" where consensual decision-making addressed the inequalities within the bloc as well, to ensure cooperation for all.

Intergovernmentalism in the post-liberal regime has not been the issue with stalled decision-making. The problem instead lies in the shifting priorities of actors where "frequently priority has been placed in domestic agendas, priorities and interests" (Sanahuja 2012:5). To accommodate these shifting interests, an overlapping of regional mandates and institutional structures only further "erodes the legitimacy and credibility of regional institutions" (Sanahuja 2012:5).

Understanding the power play between different actors and identifying who leads the vision to fruition are therefore paramount to detangle the motivations of different actors that support these overlapping mandates, especially as "regionalism in the South is about political pragmatism, and thus integration should be understood not as an end in itself, but a tool for resolving challenges faced by member states" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2018:160). The next subsection offers a brief overview on the rise of 'pink tide' in Latin America and their contribution to the development of the post-hegemonic rationale.

The 'Pink Tide': Consequences for Autonomy and Development

As has been laid out in the previous subsection, the three surveyed organisations are all post-liberal as well as post-hegemonic. This implied a rejection of both the US hegemony in international and financial affairs as well as a rejection of the neoliberalism and its assorted model of development. The rise of the Left, as evinced by the 1998 election to presidency of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, had an important role to play in format regional integration took in the region and the structure and content of the regional agenda. The new integration regime, therefore represented "the visible manifestation of a refreshed politicization of the region, giving birth to new polities or regional projects in which states, social movements and leaders interact and construct new understandings of the regional space' (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:2–3).Sanahuja (2012:1) explains how Latin American regionalism has a unique trajectory that "takes root in the identity and values that have traditionally defined politics throughout the region," where "it combines, the Unionist and regional integration aspirations" with "the traditional Latin American activism in universal organizations and in international law rule making." Thus, the regional realm has always been political in the region. However, there were two factors which allowed the 'pink tide' politicians to forge a region-wide consensus, namely, the "political vacuum" (Burges 2007) in the region after Latin America lost priority on the US agenda which provided a fertile arena for the acting of different regional leaders and their visions for autonomy, and the weaking of "full blooded commitment" to neoliberalism, which in turn directed the political mandates on which these leaders came to power. Sanahuja (2012:6) explains, paradoxically, the combination of global US unilateralism, its neglecting attitude towards the region, and the emphasis in a "neoliberal" agenda of FTAs has created both the necessary conditions and incentives to encourage the search of greater autonomy, specifically for South American countries with progressive governments.

The previous sections on ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC have sketched out in detail how the Sao Paulo Forums, the Summits of the Americas along with a host of other Summits and Meetings helped coalesce ideas about what regional integration should be, what purposed it could and should serve and the methodology to achieve it. It was via this summitry, that different actors participated in a socialization process, which was "prompted by the convergence of ideology and discourses" (Sanahuja 2012:10).

This socialization process could only be begun by a widespread disavowal of neoliberalism, with variation in degrees, where this anti-neoliberal stance formed the political mandates of new political leaders who later formed governments, were both critical of the neoliberal project and willing to search for political and economic alternatives to it (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2009). Riggirozzi and Tussie (2018:169) explain:

> The change in the political orientation in many countries in the region since the early 2000s was not simply rhetorical. The shift in economic and social approach was due to the need to reverse a long record of unequal distribution of income and access to public services that was deepened by the effects of neoliberal reforms. In many ways, the critical problem of neoliberal governance was one of insufficient governance and disputed capacity to deliver inclusive democracy. Neither (global) markets nor national government sufficed to give response to the social gaps that were created as a consequence of neoliberal reforms across South American economies.
> Of course, the intensity of resistance for an end to neoliberal governance varied across the region.

Thus, in light of the above, Riggirozzi's (2014:2) assertion that "regionalism can be seen as the place 'where politics happen,' a space for policy deliberation and action," where through the re-politicization of the region, it has simultaneously been "reclaimed" as "a political space for re-enacting state-society relations at a different scale." As Riggirozzi and Tussie (2018:169) put it:

> It is in this way that regionalism can be conceived as a useful tool for providing public goods or solving collective action dilemmas. It lays out a set of mutual expectations, rules and regulations, organizational plans, energies, and financial commitments. It is also a site of power which reflects power hierarchies and interests where the weak or under-represented seek opportunities to coalesce in order to trim and reshape rules and reduce pressure for policies they wish to evade or delay.

Post-hegemonic regionalism therefore "attempts to reassert the autonomy of the region vis-a`-vis the U.S. and the global economy, while simultaneously pursuing a more ambitious, state-led developmental project with a social dimension" (Chodor and McCarthy-Jones 2013:211). However, all of the Left was not equal or same. Different leaders had different motivations and different goals. Its "true nature" is "far from settled" (Chodor and McCarthy-Jones 2013:215) and different regional actors and "contrasting and at time competing projects seek to define what the region is and what

it is for." In light of this variance, Riggirozzi and Ryan's (2021:8) assertion bears weight that, "the move to the Left across Latin America must not be simply seen simply as a political ideological swing but a recognition of political opportunity for new leaders to synchronize governmental policies." While ideological affinity was important, the categorical factor that helped in the construction of consensus as well as prioritisation of policy actions and regional agenda were the choices made by the relevant political actors.

Leadership, therefore, is an important variable to understand the motivations and trajectories of the different regional integration processes. What was the role of the left-leaning leaders in shaping these contrasts and competitions? How did these leaders interact with their domestic contexts and in what ways did they use the regional level to shape the regional level to achieve desired outcomes? What were their strategies? The next chapter offers an elaboration of the two main regional leadership projects that heralded the post hegemonic and post liberal integration regime, namely, Lula-led Brazil and Chávez-led Venezuela to explain where, the projects of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC "contrast" and where they might "compete."

CHAPTER IV

REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND LEADERSHIP: IDENTIFYING ACTORS AND DEFINING MOTIVATIONS

Latin America offers several worthy contenders for the role of regional leader. With the lowest incidence of inter-state violence, the oldest nuclear free zone as well as being, by far and large, a region with peaceful borders along with a long history of diplomacy, participation in international and multilateral fora, the first indicators of signaling out a regional power are not much use in the case of Latin America. In fact, *Latin Americanness* itself signifies a firm belief in non-intervention in the matters of other states, a championing of equality of status as well as respect for individual states' autonomy in the matter of internal affairs. These are the principles which have for long featured in Latin American criticisms of US excess as well as advocated strongly for at various international fora.

Even as the international context has changed and grown, despite all the fluctuations in the region, one thing has remained constant and that is Latin America's energetic participation in international institutions, its desire to participate in the setting of the international agenda as well as its contribution in the development of various international regimes, especially the climate change regime. Regional contenders have been many, variously positioned on the matter of regional leadership and differently aligned in terms of their interpretation of *Bolivarismo* and the regional vision they hope to realise. For instance, during the formation of Mercosur and the creation of NAFTA, both Brazil and Mexico completely altered their position with regard to their stand vis-à-vis the United States. Mexico let go of years of animosity in accepting the economic gains that NAFTA boasted while Brazil that had been a historical supporter of Pan-Americanism, throughout the decade of the eighties, slowly carved out its own position as a regional leader, based on visions of autonomy, necessarily from the US, though not in opposition to it, as was the case incidentally, in the Venezuelan visions for regional leadership under Chávez.

The post 2000 integration schemes of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) are emblematic of two clear enunciations of *Bolivarismo,* one based on an ideological rejection of the neoliberal world order as advanced by the United States and the other based on the age old principle of using greater trade, more cohesion in the region to enable effecting a Latin American mooring of the international affairs of the region. Though variously defined even among these dualities, conditioned by state specific politico-economic realities, it is surmisable that Brazil and Venezuela led two distinct, often complementary but at times, contrasting regional projects in Latin America.

Both states have denied the existence of two different projects and have near continuously reaffirmed their work being directed towards achieving the same goals namely "the creation of an integrated South American space that will provide opportunities to all for economic, social and cultural advancement" (Burges 2007:1343). However, several scholars have argued that even if the desired end may appear to be similar, the regional projects are in competition and the vision of regional integration being forwarded by both states differs in terms of "how the regional geopolitical, geo-economic, and ideological space should be organised and directed" (Burges 2007:1343).

Burges (2007:1344) argues that "The contest between Brazil and Venezuela can be neatly encapsulated in a divide between the overt importance placed upon policy pragmatism and attempts at ideological purity." He argues that Brazil is looking towards creating opportunities for itself, guided by its own sense of 'grandeza', which in turn, might offer opportunities to its regional compatriots. The aim is to convert South America into a vibrant market for Brazilian products. However, though guided by trade, Burges warns that the Brazilian position though it may appear self-interested and pro-market is far from being neoliberal as "at its core, it deploys the state in support of national firms exploiting regional and global opportunities" (Burges 2007:1344). For Venezuela on the other hand, its international policies "seek minimum and maximum objectives: defense of the revolution at home and the reordering of the international system into a multipolar world" (Trikunas 2011:18). Trikunas has also argued that though notions of novelty have been embedded into Venezuelan leadership,

"Venezuela's foreign policy is revolutionary not for its methods but for its objectives. It is driven by a profound departure in its leader's strategic analysis of the international order (Trikunas 2011:17).

Nevertheless, the Brazilian regional project differs greatly with the "avowedly socialist vision" advanced by Venezuelan Hugo Chávez. Burges (2007:1344) suggests that:

> The Venezuelan president is rapidly taking his country down a statist path that will concentrate economic decisions in the hands of the state. Everything is to be subsumed to the prerogative of human and societal development according to a socialist ethos as understood by Chávez.

This chapter attempts to analyse and understand the differences in the regional projects of Brazil and Venezuela during the period of post-liberal regionalism. This period was characterised by the presence of Chinese investment, a boom in commodity prices, a disavowal of neoliberalism post the 2008 financial crisis as well as the presence of supportive leaders in Latin America and a resurgence in the South-South cooperation movement. Guided by the charismatic leadership of Luiz Ignacio 'Lula' da Silva of Brazil, who followed in the footsteps of earlier regionalist leaders like Fernando Henrique Cardoso as well as the dynamic leadership of Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, backed by the petroleum wealth of Venezuela, this period was the most fertile expression of Latin American regionalism post the 1960s and with a completely new, anti-trade character.

The first section attempts to disentangle the Brazilian leadership project by contextualizing the significance of the region in Brazilian policy as well as situating the breakthroughs of President Lula in context. The second section disentangles the Venezuelan leadership project and the place of regional integration in the national psyche of the country. It contextualizes the region building project of Chávez in its national context. The third section offers an elaboration of the construction of the post-liberal region in the discourses of the two leaders and offers a comparative analysis of the metaphors employed by both and the individual priorities that motivated these constructions.

BRAZILIAN LEADERSHIP: NEGOTIATING HISTORICAL AMBITION AND PRAGMATIC GOVERNANCE

Brazil's foreign policy has been marked by its own awareness of the position it 'ought' to occupy in the international system as well as a sense of its own 'grandeza.' Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazil's ambition in terms of its foreign policy has been to gain the international recognition "in accordance with the belief that it should assume its 'natural' role as a 'big country' in world affairs" (Hirst and Lima 2006:21).

Brazil can successfully claim a long pacific history. It shares borders with ten other countries in Latin America and all have been resolved and settled through arbitration, peacefully. It is firmly situated in the oldest nuclear free zone in the world and its military budget is paltry when compared to its size. This pacifist bent of policy is probably why Brazil's soft power potential and the exercise of the same has come to define its international ambitions. As Hirst and Lima (2006:21) put it:

> It consistently eschewed the development of hard power, and especially of military power. Rather, its claim to greater influence has been associated with other classical power attributes, such as territory, population and economic profile. Its location in a relatively peaceful regional environment, the early settlement of its territorial demands and border disputes, and its consequent position as a status quo power within the region also help to account for its aspiration to what one might call a middle ground international role.

Combined with this reputation for soft power, has been Brazil's active and vocal participation in international, multilateral, and regional fora. An active participant in matters of international import, its contribution to the environment protection regime especially has been spectacular. It has shown its unwavering willingness to assume a larger role and responsibilities in regional politics and with the coming to power of President Lula in 2003, the focus was definitely turned back to the region, if the number of diplomats posted in South America are any intention. Even pre-Lula, the creation of MERCOSUR was partly a result of extremely persuasive diplomatic prodding by Brazil. With the formation of BRICS, IBSA, BASIC, Brazil has also attempted to define its regional influence in terms of south-south cooperation and extend beyond its geographical neighbourhood. Further, it actively pursued membership and candidacy of its own representatives at the WTO, its bid for permanent membership at the United Nations Security Council. As mentioned earlier, though Brazil has pushed for a pro-

market agenda, the state led development agenda that it has followed has been successful in improving socio-economic indicators. In the words of Hirst and Lima:

> Moreover, as democracy deepens its roots within the country, Brazil has attempted to link an increasingly activist stance in world affairs with political support at home for a more active partisan involvement in foreign policy. In this context, the government's fight against poverty and unequal income distribution at home and its assertive and activist foreign policy can be viewed as two sides of the same. (Hirst and Lima 2006:22).

Burges (2007:1349) calls Brazil's regional strategy 'neo-structuralist'. Unable to afford rent payments in the manner of Venezuela "focusing on creating conditions beneficial for domestic actors that might also be attractive to key constituencies in partner countries." Brazil as a neo-structuralist state, has focused on capacity building and addressing information gaps.

Although the attempts to reform the Security Council so each could have a coveted permanent seat were frustrated, the more prosaic ambition of deepening trilateral linkages continued. While the results of the IBSA programme have not had the same rhetorical bite as those of ALBA, they have generated a steady increase in commercial, governmental, and civil society interchange. Thus, Brazilian strategy has centred on making investment and cooperation in the South more attractive via capacity-building, keeping in line with its neo-structuralist identity. It bears weight to analyse the specifics of the development of this project especially in their articulation in South America. The next section attempts to discuss the trajectory of Brazil's participation and shaping of the South American region.

Brazilian Regional Leadership: Foreign Policy Precepts, Scope and Trajectories

With the end of the Cold War as well as the successful democratic transition effected by Brazil, the traditional mainstay of Brazilian foreign policy, namely its relationship with the USA, were set aside in favour of realizing the inherent, latent potential in Brazil, especially through "active and potent regional engagement" (Burges 2009:5). This rehauling of principles guiding the making and implementation of Brazilian foreign policy (Hirst and Soares de Lima 2002) was most prominent in its promotion

of South America as a distinct geographical, political and economic region as well as its attempts to eke out a leadership role for itself in this contextualized and delimited space.

The idea of a politically and economically integrated South American region was not a novelty in Brazilian foreign policy. Rather, geography has been an important factor in the organisation of its relations with its neighbours for Brazil. Not only were its colonial, linguistic and state formation trajectories anomalous with the rest of Hispanic America, this diffidence also extended to visions of integration, given its contextually imposed alienation from calls for *solidaridad continental*. This 'whole but apart' binary has marked Brazil's relations with its neighbours as well as its articulating of its continental and regional identity which has been marked by historical patterns of disunity, fragmentation as well as inter-state rivalries. The concept of Latin America itself, was not particularly enthusiastically embraced by Brazilians, not only because of its French and therefore, alien roots but also because the enunciations by the intellectuals in the region who identified a unified region and *solidaridad continental* as an expression of autonomy and freedom, especially emphasizing shared histories of subjugation, cultural linkages and independence struggles. Both these meanings of Latin America excluded Brazil especially as Latin America could easily be equated to Spanish America (Bethell 2010). Yet, Brazil remained an important player in the region and Nery (2015) has argued that the process of state formation in South America even during Brazil's Empire years, clearly underlined the importance of Brazilian foreign policy for the region in geopolitical as well as geo-economic terms. As the Brazilian state transformed from Empire to Republic, its balancing act with the USA ensured that it increasingly recognised South America as its sphere of influence, preserving autonomy by refusing to intercede in matters of Central America and the Caribbean where it recognised the hegemony of the US (Santos 2005).

However, there was a shift in the Brazilian attitude towards integration "as a Latin American school of thought based on the theory of dependency" and "a new understanding of centre-periphery relations" grew in importance in the region (Kreitlin 2015:82). This was emblematic in the formation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC or CEPAL) in 1948 which functioned both as an affirmation of Latin American identity as well as an institutional

articulation of the North-South agenda, with far reaching consequences for the 'Latin Americanization' of Brazilian foreign policy (Nery 2015). The link between economic growth, development and the region were enmeshed in the proposal to form the Latin American Free Trade Area (LAFTA) which also represented the increasing importance of the region for Brazil. Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano (2017:111) have explained this by drawing attention to the formation of LAFTA, where they argue that "LAFTA was to a large extent a project furthered by Brazil and the countries of the South American Southern Cone as a response to what was regarded as CEPAL's too ambitious proposals on regional industrialization."

However, the contradictions between the different degrees of development among member countries, as well as the proliferation of military regimes in the region doomed LAFTA to stalemate. As South American countries became increasingly introverted under authoritarian military regimes, the ideological dissonance with neighbours in the North like Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica that denounced the excesses of the military governments and committed to democracy further entrenched the binary between Latin America and South America, especially for Brazil. The economic importance of the region continued to increase for Brazil even as it pursued extra regional alliances. The Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation was one such endeavour prompted and promoted by Brazil where the aim was to create a regional organisation in the Amazon basic that would "further the improvement of physical integration, programs of development and economic complementarity among member countries" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2017:112). Though Mexico as a Central American country was not made a part of these regional schemes, South American neighbours like Colombia and Venezuela as members of the Andean Pact were brought into the fold even though the project could not be realized. The geographical limitation of South America has therefore, been a tenet of Brazilian foreign policy towards the region as has been the effort to affect a political, physical and economic integration.

It makes sense that when LAFTA was refurbished and converted into the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA/ALADI), Brazil played a decisive role in said organisation (Nery 2015). The new organisation was more attuned to the differing development levels and trajectories of member states and envisaged a more open structure with flexible and differentiated initiatives. The region continued to grow in

importance as an export destination for Brazilian goods and initiatives as ALADI allowed greater diversification of Brazilian trade structure and in turn increased Brazilian autonomy and negotiating power vis-à-vis the United States of America. Thus, though these regional initiatives often proved less than effective in achieving their stated goals, they proffered a strong anti-hegemonic ethos as well as the Brazilian aspiration to constitute an integrated political-economic space in Latin America, especially without envisaging a role for the United States (Lima 2013).

Given the importance of the United States as an extra regional player in Latin America, it is important to analyse the motivations and policy priorities of the USA towards the region. Nery (2015) has argued that the USA has historically been wary of countries of South America, especially Brazil, that could theoretically, pose a threat to its hegemony in Latin America. It has actively hindered the integration process and fomented internal disputes among states so as undermine initiatives that do not align with US strategic interests. A major component of this strategy has been to maintain the traditional rivalry between Brazil and Argentina, the two giants of the Southern Cone and prevent the formation of an autonomous union of both countries (Botelho 2013). Therefore, active rapprochement with the region by Brazilian policy makers began with a concerted policy of fostering closer diplomatic ties with Argentina specifically and with other Latin American countries expansively. The idea was that the improvement of relations begun with Argentina would grow to subsequently include the Southern Cone countries, eventually culminating in closer ties with the rest of South America and Latin America.

The bilateral cooperation begun at the lag end of military government rule in both countries was necessitated by the understanding that this cooperation was a political and economic necessity to defend the interests of the two nations in an increasingly aggressive and competitive international system (Costa 2010). This "progressive approximation of Argentina and Brazil" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2017:113) predated the democratisation process, the debt crisis, the end of the Cold War. This cooperation in fact, was "fostered by the last Brazilian military government" where the diplomatic efforts of said government set the tone for the beginning of bilateral cooperation between the two countries in 1985 with both states having effected successful democratic transitions. The Brazilian motivation for pursuing this "stable

and strong connection" with Argentina was prompted by the understanding that such a relationship would "improve conditions of stability in the region" as well as "increase the margins of predictability" of Argentina's international action (Hirst 1994:319). The interplay between regional policies and international outcomes was already a part of Brazilian foreign policy thinking. With Argentina as the first level, Brazil hoped to increase its presence and weight in its region. As Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano (2017:119) explain:

> For the new Brazilian democracy, the changing regional and global situation required to adapt its foreign policy by trying to overcome the suspicions that the autarkic policies of military governments had generated in the region. In this context, Latin America began to gain more importance in the Brazil's foreign policy. Without abandoning the universalist paradigm that characterized the previous foreign policy strategy, the new democratic government began to perceive its neighbors as a privileged space for its political-diplomatic and economic action.

However, the trajectory of the integration process shifted in the 1990s due to historical changes in both the international system, like the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as national contexts, like the debt crisis and subsequent enactment of liberalization reforms in the regime. New political leaders came to power in the region, like Fernando Collor in Brazil, who adopted open market economic policies geared towards trade liberalization.

It was in this context that the 1991 Treaty of Asunción came to be, incorporating Paraguay and Uruguay into the cooperation axis previously formed between Brazil and Argentina, though without the earlier thrust on autonomy. MERCOSUR firmly adopted the principles of open regionalism with a view to establish traditional patterns of economic integration in the Southern Cone. There was no mention of differentiation and asymmetries among member states (Lima 2013) which had been a part of ALADI and MERCOSUR became a tool to sell the newly enacted liberal reforms to domestic populations as well as to entrench the process of democratization among member states.

At the international level, the United States announced several initiatives to reaffirm its status as regional hegemon (Nery 2015) where in a post-Cold War reality, integration processes in Latin America began to be organised and led by the USA. This was evident in the signing of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), soon followed by the

proposal for hemispheric integration in the enunciation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which defined integration not only in limited economic terms but organised it according to the US neoliberal mode of development. The existence of MERCOSUR was suited to US purposes only if it acted as a partner organisation to NAFTA furthering the promotion and eventual creation of the FTAA. Given that MERCOSUR was ultimately a Brazilian initiative, the only plausible candidate for the position of a regional hegemon, in the Southern Cone and possibly in South America, its diffidence to the proposals for the creation of FTAA acquired strategic importance. This delicate dance of compliance with the regional hegemon and search for autonomy underscored the paramountcy of South America for Brazilian policy makers. If Brazil and other South American nations were to effectively seek their long-term interests in a rapidly transforming world, it became essential that they worked consistently in favour of the emergence of a multipolar world where South America acquired a distinct political voice and character (Guimarães 2006).

The logic that guided Brazil's promotion of South America was simple. The FTAA negotiation process and Mexico's accession to NAFTA added urgency to the employment of the South American concept by Brazil were it to eke out an effective zone of influence in the region. This promotion of geography over *Latin Americanness* was implicit as was the acceptance that Brazil could not effectively exercise credible influence over Latin America as a whole (Nery 2015). Brazil exercised the regional option to promote its national interests of safeguarding its political and economic interests in the region as well as provide itself with a platform to project its influence internationally. By confining its integration processes in the defined space of South America, Brazil added significance to the project as well as underlined its commitment to exercise leadership in the region. Brazil rescued the geostrategic and geopolitical concept of South America and by this process of defining it as a regional space, distinguished it from the banality of another sub-region in Latin America (Ramanzini Junior 2014). As Guimarães (2000) explains, South America is the inevitable culmination of the geographical and historical circumstances of Brazil.

This culmination is easier to acquiesce to when the two guiding principles of Brazilian foreign policy, namely universalism and autonomy are considered. Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano (2017:123) explain that while universalism underscored the Brazilian

search for a "comprehensive projection" of itself, that invariably led the country to "deploy its diplomatic actions as different stages of world politics" at the subregional in MERCOSUR, regional in South America, hemispheric, interregional as well as multilateral levels, autonomy implied that Brazil must "continue to keep the fundamental control of its own decisions."

This priority to South America in Brazilian foreign policy was therefore, not dependent on a political leader but rather a historically available option strategically activated when the international system made it imperative. Thus, under President Itamar Franco, the first initiative was the proposal to form a South American Free Trade Area (SAFTA) which would provide a counterweight to NAFTA. Under the Cardoso government, the Brazilian priority to South America began to acquire nuance and as has been previously sketched out in Chapter III, various processes that culminated in the formation of UNASUR were actually undertaken under the Cardoso government. Nery (2015) has explained that the difficult FTAA negotiations and the lock jam in WTO between developed and developing countries made South America a key concept towards the end of the Cardoso government as evidenced by the Presidential Meetings held in Brasilia and Guayaquil where Brazil clearly enunciated its interest and support of building an integrated South America. Scholars like Burges (2009:2) have attributed regional leadership ambitions firmly to the Cardoso years rather than Lula, where Brazil pursued regional groupings in a "decidedly self-interested manner, one that was relatively benign and that explicitly left space for the advancement of the interests of other South American states" as long as these interests aligned with Brazilian interests.

The regional leadership project of Brazil in terms of a "state's ability to conceptualize a potentially hegemonic project- that is, a vision of world or regional order" and more importantly, a state's ability to "persuade other countries to embrace the project" (Burges 2009:45) was clearly one of coalition building and consensus generation (Ikenberry 1996) and the playground for these diplomatic interactions in the Brazilian case was South America. The question that needs to be asked however is that given the importance of presidentialism to the development of intraregionalism in Latin America, wherein lies the difference in Lula's leadership? The next subsection elaborates Lula's policies and strategies as effected in the long-standing project of Brazilian leadership in South America.

The Lula Years: Categorizing the Difference

Neither the desire to assume systemic importance nor the policy option to use the region as a springboard to achieve it, were new ideas in Brazilian foreign policy. As has already been mentioned, the regional leadership project of Brazil had a specific historical context and the promotion of South America as its zone of influence over Latin America also followed a teleological path. The question that need must be asked however, is how did the personal charisma of Lula Da Silva collude with these historical aspirations of the Brazilian state? Though the international, regional and domestic context Brazil found itself in at the turn of the century necessitated an intertwining of its strategic objectives with cooperation in South America, especially adding weight to promote a consolidated South American voice (Nery 2015), different Brazilian administrations pursued this goal with different intensities (Saraiva 2010). It was only with the advent of Lula on the Brazilian political scene that the Brazilian regional leadership project in South America assumed priority status and was actively pursued on several fronts (Saraiva 2010).

Given the importance of presidentialism in the success of intraregional integration efforts, the coming to power of the "most successful politician of his time" (Anderson 2019:43) bears analytical significance. Malamud (2003:56) has argued that the very structure of intraregional integration efforts in Latin America, the characteristically thin institutional build-up are able to function because of "a specific type of executive format, namely presidentialism" that serves as a "functional equivalent to regional institutions." Lula's significance therefore increases even beyond assertions of singular political acumen, charismatic personality and an incredible ascent to power story, as his personal gifts and trajectories are further reinforced by the position he came to occupy.

Lula's electoral victory was emblematic of the waning neoliberal hegemony in the region and the most important electoral consequence, that heralded the arrival of the "pink tide" in the region was the coming to power of Hugo Chávez in 1998. These left to centre-left governments heralded the entry of progressive governments on the political scene who introduced social distributive policies, strengthened the acceptability and incidence of state intervention in relevant matters of social justice and espoused their commitment to an autonomous foreign policy. Lula's charismatic

personality, his party's nationwide mass organization as well as his political acumen were formidable assets. Despite widespread fears of his socialist roots, Lula inherited large fiscal debt from the Cardoso government and an increasingly hostile international financial environment to Brazilian interests. His progressivism was tempered with pragmatism which ensured that even though the language of socialism continued to be employed actively by the Worker's Party (PT), the interests of capital were not excluded from the national project (Nery 2015). Singer (2012) has called this the intermediate path to neoliberalism that opted to form a political pact with the Brazilian elites the PT was traditionally opposed to and in return demanded the reduction of social inequalities. The Lula government attempted to do away with the conflict between the Left and Right. Thus, the economic-political-social nexus which would characterize UNASUR once it was formed was evident in the domestic policies of the Lula government. The building of consensus was as important as home as it was in the region.

In order to effect change at home, the Lula government prioritized various social welfare schemes, especially those geared towards poverty reduction. The protagonism of the state in these endeavours was underlined as was its indispensable role as a provider of social justice. The Lula government adopted policies to reduce poverty, incentivize domestic market without active confrontation with the capital class of the country. The austerity of his earlier economic policies bore fruit when fiscal deficit decreased, aided by a favourable international situation of rising commodity prices, Chinese trade and investment as well as the attractiveness of Brazil to lenders and investors for avoiding the Argentine fate, democratic institutions and steady economic growth. Economic growth was conceptualised in a wider sense to include poverty reduction, access to healthcare and promotion of state intervention in reduction of inequalities as well as aiding social security for all.

Nery (2015) expounds that three pillars defined the basis of policy making in the Lula government, firstly, the re-evaluation of the coordinating and interventionist role of the state; secondly, the social inclusion agenda along with the strengthening of the domestic market; and thirdly, the usage of foreign policy as one of the key instruments of the country's development strategy. Foreign policy enabled access to newer markets to domestic Brazilian capital, gave voice to the demands for reformation of important

international issues central to the Brazilian development strategy and allowed for the achievement of the historical Brazilian foreign policy goal of occupying its just and rightful position in the international realm.

Under Lula, Brazilian foreign policy was grounded in nationalist, activist and autonomist thought where new actors of this "autonomist school of thought" espoused reformation of international institutions, greater projection of Brazil on the international scene, forging links with other emerging countries with the main goals to "build up regional leadership and be seen as a global power" (Saraiva 2010:154). Integration became an important tool for these autonomists which would in turn assist in "gaining access to foreign markets, strengthening the country's bargaining positions in international economic negotiations and projecting Brazilian industry in the region" (Saraiva 2010:154).

Lula's active and ebullient diplomatic exercise included affording Itamaraty greater power and importance in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, increased diplomatic exercises in Asia and Africa, as well as South America and a concerted effort to provide impetus to academic and civil society players in foreign policy making exercises. Several domestic social welfare schemes were actively exported to other parts of the world and an attempt was made to provide a social dimension to foreign policy. This ebullience became more prominent in the second term of Lula's presidency when he distinguished himself from his predecessor, enabled by the rising economic fortunes and global position of Brazil. Actively, new partnerships were sought out in pursuit of universalism which was guided by a desire to introduce reformation in the international system so as to eke out room for maneuver for Brazil. Autonomy guided the formation of the variety of southern coalitions Brazil became a part of with a view to counterbalance the Northern agenda. South-South cooperation, therefore, became an emblematic tenet of Brazilian foreign policy under Lula and was actively pursued beyond the historical economic association of Brazil with the concept. Political cooperation was paramount in this new pursuit of South-South relations by Brazil, especially given its privileged position as an intermediary state in the North-South and rest divide (Vieira and Alden, 2012). New groupings like IBSA, BRICS, BASIC, G-20, G-4 emerged in lieu of this reorientation.

At the regional level, South America emerged as a clear priority especially in line with Brazilian goals of achieving successful international insertion. The reduced priority to the region in the wake of 9/11 attacks by the United States created a vacuum in the leadership role within the region. Moreover, PT was a member of the region wide agitation by progressive parties in the previous decade against neoliberal economic policies that birthed the new order of integration within the region. The logic was simple. A cohesively organised and united South America was important to mount an effective challenge to US neoliberal hegemony, for the creation of a just multilateral order and for the promotion of Brazilian economic interests as home and diplomatic interests abroad. Unlike the Cardoso government, the model of open regionalism was rejected by these progressive governments and integration was defined in a wider conceptualisation beyond trade and economic logic (Nery 2015).

The Brazilian regional leadership project gained momentum under the Lula government most importantly, in its diffidence to the ongoing FTAA negotiations which would clearly circumvent its ambitions to autonomous decision-making as well bolstering its international status via the conduit of regional powerhood. The Lula government opposed FTAA for its inability to account for asymmetries in development trajectories of the different states of the region and rejected its trade based, homogenous conception of integration. The opposition to FTAA was based on specific issues and not on terms of ideology, especially on matters of agricultural subsidies, investments, services and intellectual property right, arguing that Brazilian interest lay in negotiating these issues at the multilateral level rather than hemispheric one where the US would exert its considerable clout in all decisions. Due to the active opposition mounted by the Lula government, along with other ideological dissenters in the region, the FTAA failed to come to fruition (Hirst 2009). Though the Brazilian opposition to the FTAA had been persistent, its tonality underwent a change from suave to direct under the Lula government.

The other important regional initiative that received marked attention by the Lula government was the strengthening of MERCOSUR. Nery (2015) argues that MERCOSUR represented the nucleus around which South American integration consolidated. The Lula government promoted a relaunch of MERCOSUR, in what has been called "New MERCOSUR" with a wider commercial dimension, deeper

institutionalisation as evidenced by the creation of the MERCOSUR Parliament and an emphasized political orientation. In opposition to the earlier disavowal of regional asymmetries, initiatives like the MERCOSUR Structural Convergence Fund were undertaken to rectify the earlier lapses of the Asuncion Treaty formed in another political context. Investment in physical infrastructure like roads, electric transmission lines as well as social initiatives was underlined in the scope of the newly created fund.

However, the regional leadership project of Brazil culminated in the formation of UNASUR. A forum for building consensus, the membership included states across the ideological spectrum as well as overlapping members of contradictory even contravening integration projects. Brazilian diplomacy played a decisive role in the formation of UNASUR to reconcile divergent ideologies of member states. It is the articulation of UNASUR that explains the earlier assertion that only in his second term of presidency did Lula's social-developmentalist agenda acquire a clearer outline, especially in its negotiations and attempts towards consensus building in the formation of UNASUR as well as reconciliation with ALBA, Pacific Alliance and other free trading nations in the eventual formation of CELAC. This process of negotiation aligns with Burges's (2009:46) definition of regional leadership based on consensus and coalition building where a leader must work towards the "elaboration and dissemination of a vision of how a particular set of relations should be ordered." As Saraiva (2010:155) puts it:

> diplomacy efforts under Lula have sought out more direct strategies for boosting the autonomy of Brazilian actions, while strengthening universalism through south-south cooperation initiatives and in multilateral forums, and strengthening Brazil's proactive role in international politics. With respect to South America, the Lula da Silva administration has demonstrated a political will to increase the level of coordination between the region's countries, with Brazil at the hub

However, the regional projects that emerged in South America were contingent on several players and a variety of factors. In order to analyse the trajectory of Lula led Brazil in the formation of post-liberal regionalism, an analysis of the other regional leadership project and other regional integration vision active in South America during the period is imperative. The next section attempts to unravel the specifics of Chávez - led Venezuela during the period.

VENEZUELAN LEADERSHIP: BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND PRAXIS

Though not a traditional claimant of the leadership role in Latin America, under the leadership of Hugo Chávez, Venezuela enunciated a clear ideological opposition to neoliberalism that was distinctly anti-imperialist and more importantly, anti-US in nature. There is little doubt in the scholarship that Chávez was an important catalyst for the shift in the political, economic and social orientation of the region in the twenty first century, especially the crucial role he played in "pushing the boundaries of debate on regional integration and encouraging the rest of the region to move further along the path to a more original and endogenously inspired post-liberal regional order" (Chodora and McCarthy-Jones 2013:211).

The Bolivarian Revolution revived an earlier integrationist impulse, especially geared towards attaining greater autonomy for the region enumerated in a politically articulated integration. Venezuelan national interests however, were part and parcel of these calls for greater South-South cooperation and oil-based aid was often a means of creating and maintaining alliances.

This section attempts to contextualise the emergence of the Bolivarian revolution especially as it came to be in light of historical Venezuelan foreign policy orientation, its status as an oil producer and the continuities and interruptions that motivated the Venezuelan foreign policy orientation under Chávez. It attempts to analyse the specific role that Venezuela has attributed to the regional space as well as the domestic contours of the Bolivarian ideological project. Finally, it attempts to elaborate on the regional leadership style employed by Chávez in the region in order to clearly distinguish his project from that of Lula.

The Venezuelan Regional Leadership Project: Continuities and Path Dependencies

Given that the very term to define intraregional integration in Latin America is termed *Bolivarianism*, Venezuela as the homeland of the *Libertador*, Simon Bolivar, acquires historical significance in regional projects. The coming to power of Hugo Chávez initiated a novel and dynamic process that brought the idea of radical change back to

the fore in Latin America (Santos 2017). This break in 'politics as normal' that the coming to power of Chávez represented necessarily implies that the analytical treatment met out in the previous section to Brazil, where continuities and foreign policy path dependencies could be isolated and delineated, is not replicable in the Venezuelan context. The Venezuelan leadership project as it emerged post the 2000s, is firmly entrenched in the personality, ideology and foreign policy practice of Chávez. However, several domestic realities and foreign policy preoccupations shaped the Bolivarian revolution. These factors were emblematic of the format Chávez's invocation of *Bolivarianism* took and it bears weight to systematically discuss and delineate these historical congruities.

Though much smaller in size and population than some Latin American giants, namely Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, Venezuelan foreign policy has had great success in influencing policy options and decisions of much larger players. Corrales and Romero (2015:153) have argued that this "larger-than-expected influence abroad" is a product of Venezuelan oil wealth as well as the various investments and innovations made by the Venezuelan state in its practice of diplomacy. While the first factor has been written about ad nauseam, the second has great significance in offering a nuanced analysis of the Venezuela as a regional and international actor. These innovations in diplomacy are a direct result of the various identities that Venezuela has simultaneously occupied. These identities have ranged from its identity as a "western" democratic state; a close identification with the Caribbean states, an Andean identity where it has presented itself as a leader and donor state and shaped itself as a regional leader for its lesser fortunate neighbours; an integrationist identity organised hemispherically and aligned with the United States; a third-world identity with a post-colonial orientation. Along with these multiple roles, the Venezuelan state also has a petro-state identity, which has often funded and shaped the contours of its donor state identity. This has given rise to a sense of exceptionalism about its nature and character, especially as pertains to its Latin American neighbours.

Serbin and Serbin Pont (2016) have elaborated on this Venezuelan exceptionalism and drawn links between the multiple roles Venezuela has historically alternated between as well as the break that the Hugo Chávez represented. They argue that it is this historical exceptionalism that has persisted and became magnified in the anti-US

rhetoric effectively employed by Chávez that came to define his political ideology and governance style. Even though girded by the vision of *solidaridad continental* in its pre-modern state formation, especially as the homeland of Simon Bolivar, Venezuela has traditionally maintained an aloofness in relation to its Latin American neighbours, underlining its difference from the shared trajectories of the region. While the Southern Cone countries were constrained by military dictatorships, Venezuela along with Colombia and Mexico boasted stable democracies and was highly critical of human rights violations and authoritarian excesses perpetuated by the military dictatorships. This democracy was complicated internally by large inequalities, poor performance on various indices of poverty, education, and development. The discovery of oil, even as it exponentially increased the availability of liquid currency with the state, exacerbated the existing inequalities. The link between Venezuelan exceptionalism and its oil wealth is clearly defined in the literature on the country, where the state used petro-diplomacy to fund domestic growth, often with a close alignment to the policy preferences of its partners in the North. It also sought to use this wealth to extend its influence in the region, especially in the Caribbean as well as internationally, as evidenced by the role it played in the formation of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In short, Venezuelan exceptionalism is directly tied with its regional leadership ambitions and concerted efforts towards the realization of these ambitions where policy makers used the country's abundant oil wealth to promote Venezuelan national interests. This exceptionalism has always had an ideological tint to it where pre-Chávez years were marked by the country's efforts to ensure political stability in the region, promotion and consolidation of democracy as well as prevention of communism in order to safeguard the pro-US oil economy that the Venezuelan state was dependent on.

This ideological tint acquires significance when the other resounding characteristic of Venezuelan foreign policy making and practice is taken into consideration, namely, the often-small pool of influencers and decision-making, consolidated in the highest executive of the state, the president. Venezuelan foreign policy making is defined by the persistence of presidentialism (Legler 2011), the reliance on an "overpowered executive" (Corrales and Romero, 2015:154) who "often needed to impose himself on a great number of foreign policy issues." When combined with the historical caudillo culture in Venezuelan politics, where charismatic, powerful, and propensity towards

valorising and possessing military prowess has been a traditional mainstay of leadership style, the significance of personality and ideology of the president become further emblematic. Serbin and Serbin Pont (2016:274) go as far as to suggest that even as other actors acquired importance in foreign policy formation, the "decisive role" in the formulation of foreign policy objectives and priorities. The ideological bent of the president, therefore, often came to define priorities of the state with little room for adjustment or compromise.

The question that bears asking is where and how has the region featured in Venezuelan foreign policy, marked by its exceptionalism and presidentialism? Corrales and Romero (2015:154) have argued that post adopting democracy in 1958, Venezuelan foreign policy has adapted across its various roles consistently to promote three major goals. These are policies to advance the interests of oil-exporting countries, using foreign policy to consolidate the domestic regime within the state and promoting integration in the hemisphere, especially hemispheric integration which clearly envisaged a role for the United States. The pursuit of these three goals has often been marred by exogenous and endogenous factors as well as the realisation of one goal often precluding the pursuit of another. This in turn has supported the primacy of presidentialism in Venezuelan foreign policy, especially as this balancing act of priority has entailed direct and clear leadership.

These three goals have similarly translated in the pursuit of the institutional and integration schemes that Venezuela has adopted. The goal to promote the interests of oil-exporting countries has led to the co-founding and active participation by the state in OPEC, significant as Venezuela is the sole petro state in Latin America. Coupled with the nationalization of its oil companies, the dependence of several Latin American states as well as US interests in Venezuelan oil resources, a conflict was imminent, especially if the goal were to promote hemispheric integration. However, as has been its behaviour during booms in oil prices, Venezuela instituted several oil subsidies programmes, in line with its identity as donor state. As Corrales and Romero (2015:155) put it, "Venezuela learned to make its identity as a petro-state compatible with its other goal of maintaining hemispheric harmony."

On the other hand, this close relationship with the US, its status as a democracy during the period of military dictatorships in the region isolated it within the region. Its pursuit

of economic integration along with other countries of the region was an attempt to ease this isolation as well as promote stability at home. Venezuela participated in LAFTA. When the Cartagena Agreement was negotiated among its Andean neighbours, given their dissatisfaction with LAFTA "which was perceived as benefitting mainly the large countries in the region, namely Argentina, Brazil and Mexico" (Gómez-Mera 2017:151), Venezuela signed the agreement as well, though later than the other Andean countries. The asymmetry of development of states and the disproportionate benefits they could possibly accrue from integration schemes was thus already a part of the Cartagena Agreement. This was simultaneously accompanied by closer ties with the United States with renegotiations of trade agreements. The balancing act between the necessity of preserving its trade relationship with the US as well as assuaging regional players of its commitment to them, especially given their dependence for oil on it, Venezuela actively participated in both economic integration attempts within the region which were necessarily inward oriented as well as actively participating in the OAS. Further, it built strong relations with the OPEC states, sought to forge ties with a wide variety of disparate partners ranging from the Soviet Union to the third world.

As Corrales and Romero (2015:155) put it:

> To compensate for its close relations with the United States (which made Venezuela suspect among more nationalist regimes), Venezuela developed policies for the construction of regional institutions. It tried to increase its degree of autonomy by promoting political integration through the OAS, as well as economic integration and regional cooperation through its active participation in aforementioned LAFTA (now LAIA), the Cartagena Agreement (now the Andean Community or CAN), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Contadora Group, and the Río Group. Outside the region, Venezuela was active in OPEC, and globally, Venezuela participated in the GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which later transformed into the World Trade Organization, or WTO).

Thus, it may be surmised that Venezuelan foreign policy is a constant tale of negotiation between its many identities and its primary goals of ensuring the stability of oil supply and demand, using its oil wealth as a foreign policy tool to assuage and contain threats to its domestic stability as well as a commitment to integration. This orientation is marked by a sense of Venezuelan exceptionalism where the country has always viewed itself as different from its neighbours and this exceptionalism in foreign policy is guided by a strong president whose ideological leanings greatly colour this process of

balancing the multiple identities and goals of Venezuelan foreign policy. However, there is consensus that it was with the coming to power of Hugo Chávez that Venezuela emerged as a regional leader, especially in its commitment to bear costs for the regional leadership project. It was under Chávez that "Venezuela developed regional, and even global, power aspirations" (Fürtig and Gratius, 2010:171). The next section attempts to unpack the regional integration project as it came to be under Chávez and connect his radical project of integration with the path dependencies of Venezuelan foreign policy mapped here.

The Chávez Years: Autonomy, Counter-Hegemony and Novelty

The election of Hugo Chávez as president was momentous not only for the Venezuelan state but also for the entire Latin American region, becoming the point of inflection for a series of changes that would travel throughout the region both politically and economically. The ensuing dynamism of the left-turn, the increasingly vocal rejection of neoliberalism and the culmination of this rejection in the widely defined integration projects under the rubric of *Bolivarianism* articulated both the need and the means to effect change in the region. New definitions of development, inter-state cooperation and integration were proffered even as newer actors found voice in decision-making processes domestically. Given the visibility Venezuela acquired as a regional and international actor under the aegis of his rule, his personal brand of charismatic leadership, the successful building of alliances as well as dispersion of his ideological tenets especially through newly developed integration mechanism, any discussion on Chávez is ensconced in a sense of novelty that appears radically disruptive. This has further been complicated by widely disparate scholarship across the spectrum that often presents the Chávez rule as an outlier either to valorize him or dismiss him. Nevertheless, as the previous section mapped out, Chávez came to power in a structured system with a particular set of rules firmly encoded.

Fabio (2017) explains that the consolidation of Venezuelan identity as a petro-state had important consequences not only in how the population related to the state but also in its conceptualisation of nationalism as well. Oil wealth was equivalent to national wealth, belonging to the people and rightly under the management of the state. It was

with the Punto Fijo pact of 1958, when the earlier sketched three motivations of Venezuelan foreign policy, namely promotion of interests of oil producing countries, ensuring domestic stability and promotion of integration coalesced into their particularly significant formulation of democracy and distribution of oil income. Though alternating between multiple identity, this identification of the nation with oil has superceded and permeated its other identities, especially domestically. The state, as the distributor of and provider of stability for the conduct of oil business acquires a supremacy in all matters where it is embued with the "alchemical power to transmute liquid wealth into civilised life" (Coronil 2013:294). Given the exceptional degree of presidentialism in Venezuela, the permeation of personal ideological beliefs of the supreme executive into the Venezuelan polity make sense. In other words, it helps explain the larger-than-life proportions that Chavismo came to assume though when the regional transmission and acceptance of his ideology is taken into consideration, this becomes only a part of the explanation.

Walking the tightrope between acknowledging the novelty and revolutionary ideas ensconced in the Bolivarian alternative as well as situating this enunciation of an alternative in its historical political context, Buxton (2009:148) argues that "Venezuela's Bolivarian post-crisis alternative emerged by default and not design, and it was premised on anti-Puntofijismo not anti-neoliberalism." Chávez came to power in unprecedented times of political and economic instability in the country in 1998. The background was deteriorating oil prices, two military coups, increasing inequality and underdevelopment despite oil wealth and high foreign debt. Various neoliberal policy measures during the 1993 oil price boom had failed. There was widespread dissatisfaction with Puntofijismo, disavowal of the two political parties associated with it and urgent demands for the need for a political rehauling in the country. The Puntofijo pact had worked well for the Venezuelan state during the period of high oil prices and subsequent high economic growth of Venezuela during the 1960s and 1970s. Oil wealth was distributed widely among the population, investments were made in education and health and land reforms were instituted. However, with the slump in oil prices, these distributive measures began to be financed through international borrowing. The debt crisis marked Venezuela as well and structural adjustment programmes were instituted in the country, initially with great success. In the early 1990s, neoliberal measures of economic orthodoxy were instituted which for a while tided over with a resumption in

oil prices. However, the devastating consequences of neoliberalism were attributed more to the political system that had consolidated power under Puntofijismo, where the political corruption was premised as the perpetrator of the economic ruin of the country's poor. This "predominance of the political over the economic" (Buxton 2009:149) is in tune with the nature of the duties of the Venezuelan state as distributer of oil wealth, promoter of trade and stability as well as the primary institution of power and capacity.

Much has been written about Chávez's invocation of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair to underline how his political commitments were geared towards answering the political situation of his country rather than motivated by a deep personal hatred or ideological project against the United States. Chávez came to power as he was disassociated with the political affiliations of Puntofijismo, had mounted resistance to the same in his participation in one of the coups against the same, his status as a military man who was a political outsider and who promised fiscal prudence, repayment of foreign debt and envisaged the role of the state as a compensating buffer against the failures of the state. His proposed Third Way Socialism (Gott 2005) therefore, was a far cry from the trajectory his ideological project would later come to take. Therefore, it was in this scenario that Chávez's "proposal for a complete rupture from the Puntofijo system and his pledge to construct an alternative social, political and economic model" (Buxton 2009:150) gained popularity. Puntofijismo therefore, was a determinant of Bolivarianism.

The period of the debt crisis also functioned to reduce the sense of Venezuelan exceptionalism as it found itself in a similar situation as the rest of the region. This began the Latin Americanization of Venezuela, especially as the economic content of the integration schemes evolved to include a larger political role. The Contadora and Contadora Support Group and their eventual transformation into the Rio Group clearly articulated the dissonance between Venezuela and the United States. However, there was little momentum to sustain or evolve the political character of intraregionalism as the region hoped for US assistance in climbing out of the debt crisis. However, the fomenting of public opinion against the exacerbating inequality due to neoliberal reforms provided the missing impetus.

This nexus between countering Puntofijismo and neoliberalism enabled the radically anti-US ideological stance eventually adopted by Chávez. The polarization in the country, US attempts to oppose his political legitimacy and ultimately, the failed coup ensured that autonomy and counter-hegemony became the key words of Chavismo. The changes introduced in foreign policy therefore, corroborated with two strategic factors, namely the urgency of consolidating power at the domestic level to counteract the pollical turbulence within the country as well as political mandate on which Chávez came to power that of overthrowing the old system and reestablishing Venezuela along the vision of Bolivar as a relevant actor both regionally and internationally (Serbin and Serbin Pont 2016). Especially after the attempted coup, Venezuela has embarked on a process of "enhanced regional leadership" (Serbin and Serbin Pont, 2016:272) girded by the ideological framework of the Bolivarian Revolution. Julia Buxton (2009:147) explains

> Bolivarianism is a repudiation of the free trade, free market principles, and policies that shaped South America in the 1980s and 1990s; of the philosophical underpinnings of the neoliberal model; and of the "agents" of its adoption and institutionalization across the region—the United States government, the World Bank and the IMF. In the political and governance realm, Bolivarianism eschews liberal democracy and formal institutions, in favor of routinized popular participation (termed protagonistic democracy) and informal, partisan and personalized modes of state management.

In continuation with the earlier impulse to forge multiple alliances as well as bolster economic cooperation in manners that benefit national interests, Venezuelan foreign policy interests under Chávez as well have evolved along two major principles – anti-imperialism and the creation of an alternative economic model that functions to support its ideological project of anti-imperialism (Fürtig and Gratius 2010:172). Both have coalesced in its foreign policy endeavours that attempt to create a multipolar world in order to search for "new power poles that represent the collapse of North American imperialist hegemony" (Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007–2013). The first step towards the creation of this multipolar order is regional cooperation where "mechanisms such as ALBA" are based on "an anti-systematic approach to world politics" (Briceño-Ruiz 2016:165). The organisation also represents an alternative economic model in opposition to neoliberalism and free trade agreements.

It is this willingness to assume the costs of its ideological project that bolster the regional leadership claims of Chávez -led Venezuela especially in systemic terms. As Briceño-Ruiz (2016:172) explains that "Venezuela has been ready to pay- and has paid- the costs of its increasing presence in South American political and economic affairs." The prosperous economic fortunes of the country allowed Chávez to further a strategy based on two principles, "the use of material incentives provided by petro-diplomacy" and "the creation of an alternative sub regional bloc to foster the narrative defended by Venezuelan government."

Chávez 's oil-based diplomacy in ALBA is therefore a form of strategic foreign aid. Burges (2007) even sees the hues of US Cold War containment strategies in the same where he argues that via petro-diplomacy, Venezuela has managed to carve a protective ring around itself in order to help him continue with his stated Bolivarian objectives. Attached with this geostrategic motivation for aid, is the sense of righteousness, a sense that aid is given because it is the right thing to do (Burges 2006). He explains that this question of morality and associated notions of guilt as a powerful discursive tool utilised heavily in Venezuelan foreign policy rhetoric. Further, this moral high tone attached to Venezuelan aid functions to both add international legitimacy to the Venezuelan ideological project that demands reformation of the financial and economic system as well as provide a regional example of the functionality of the Bolivarian alternative, thereby adding to its legitimacy. As Burges (2007:1345) explains:

> One vertex often deployed by Chávez before high-profile gatherings such as the World Social Forum or United Nations General Assembly decries the inequities of globalisation and persistently calls for substantive measures by the developed world to level the playing field. The other, and the one of prime interest to this paper, positions Venezuela as one of the 'have' countries that can and will assist the development process through the provision of subsidised oil.

Though Venezuela has made ample use of the tool of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), it is not immediately obvious. Its oil wealth allows it to straddle both worlds of the underdeveloped as well as the saviour of other like it, another continuation of its attempts to balance its international, hemispheric and regional confrontations. This use of the regional level to address international as well as national

problems and achieve geostrategic goals is not a new concept in the history of Latin America. However, in the case of Venezuela, the novelty lies in the combination of the name of Bolivar and all that it is associated with it in Latin America and oil wealth.

This self-conception as saviour and regional leader of Latin America functions with the ALBA at the centre of its policy and decision-making process. ALBA was envisaged and launched as an alternative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which would exclude the USA and Canada. Burges explains "the imperative is pursuit of a micro-level actor friendly model of economic and social integration, one that will self-consciously privilege the human development Chávez charges is ignored in FTAA-type models" (Burgess 2007:1346).

As mentioned above, Venezuela has often declared its protest by withdrawing membership from other regional organisations like the Andean Community over the series of trade agreements its other members signed with the USA. The contradiction lay in the continued significance of the US as a trade partner for Venezuela something which several scholars have employed to dismiss the ideological opposition and regional vision enunciated by Chávez. The fact remains that oil wealth, remained the primary tool to enforce and embolden claims for systemic change which necessitated the maintenance of ties with the global system of production. However, this was a means to an end which envisaged reduction in the dependence of the South on the North via alternate means of cooperation, diffuse channels of aid and ideological and political solidarity. This ambition couched in ideological and humanist terms, is supported by the oil wealth of Venezuela, most notably through a series of regional oil companies: Petrocaribe, Petroandina and Petrosur.

Like ALBA, where its governance structure is "best understood as a brand that presents pre-existing, improvised, and more thoroughly planned projects as coherent entity" whereas in reality, "Venezuela has ultimate control over the brand and a defining influence in its governance" (Cusack 2018:3), Venezuelan attempts to exert control, leadership and influence through oil-based is clear in Petrocaribe, Petroandina and Petrosur as well.

Burges (2007) proposed that Venezuela wields absolute power over the functioning of Petrocaribe which, although i a regional oil entity governed by a council of member

ministers, a closer reading of the founding treaty and its supporting documents reveals a sliding position on the interest/humanist ODA continuum: the organisation is effectively a terms of sale agreement between Petroleos de Venezuela, SA (PDVSA, the Venezuela State Oil Company) and member national oil companies or national designates.

In fact, despite the appearance of consultation in decision making, control over the physical distribution of the oil remains with PDVSA and Venezuela retains the right to unilaterally alter the sale terms and quantities as it sees fit. Petrosur and Petroandina notably lack the ODA elements found in Petrocaribe. Within an Andean context Petroandina was launched in July 2005 with a view to creating a strategic alliance between the state oil companies of the five Andean Community nations, each of which is a hydrocarbons producer. Although the PDVSA website points to ambitions of co-ordinating energy policy, the most substantive evolution has been a statement of intent by Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa to use Venezuelan refining capacity instead of expanding gasoline imports (Burges 2007).

Similarly, Petrosur has proven thin on the ODA end. In this case PDVSA is perforce required to seek partnership with Brazilian state oil company Petrobras, a firm with a market capitalisation of over US$100 billion and an exceptionally serious business outlook. Although much has been made of PDVSA- Petrobras partnerships and the proposed gas pipeline linking all the countries in South America, the proposal met with dubious interest from the first and ultimately petered out. Indeed, throughout South America the partnerships that PDVSA has made with other regional oil actors have been on a decidedly commercial basis distinctly free of clear suggestions of ODA. Where Venezuela does appear to be providing a burgeoning ODA function in South America is in the spending of its surplus oil income. The conclusion that may be drawn is that the interests behind Chávez 's humanist ODA activities, they also highlight his focus on supporting leftist leaders in countries he hopes will support the Bolivarian project. This tool of provision of aid intervention has clearly delineated Venezuelan regional ambitions from Brazilian ones.

This diversification in the sub-regional space, the multiple identities that Venezuela simultaneously occupies, differentiates its enunciation of South America from that of

Brazil. This becomes even more apparent when the Chávez 's invocation of *Nuestra América* is taken into consideration which is transnational, based on solidarity and has overarching political implications for regional dynamics (Wajner and Roniger 2019:1).

As Trikunas (2011:18) explains, "maintaining and expanding this coalition of like-minded governments, parties, social movements, and activists through the use of Venezuela's oil power is both a regime defense strategy and an effort to reorder the international community."

Given the vastly different methodologies employed by both regional leaders in their articulation of the region, their conceptualisation of their leadership role, their ideological congruities and dissonances acquire an interesting dimension of collaboration and cooperation. How did the presidential visions expound these domestic priorities and international goals into a regional vision? The next section attempts to unpack the regional building efforts of both leaders through an analysis of their purported regional integration discourses.

LULISM AND CHAVISMO: IDENTIFYING THE PLACE FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSE IN POST-LIBERAL INTEGRATION

Such has been the importance of these two presidents in the history of politics in their country and the region at large, that entire movements of political practice and thought were said to have been birthed as a result of their policies, their political choices and most importantly, their ideology. Both are distinct, uniquely contentious and significant, especially as far as the evolution of post-liberal regional integration is concerned.

Chapter III explained the importance of consensus building for the deliberation of the nature and character of the most recent integration regime and it underlined the role that the rise of the Left played in the facilitation of these consensus building exercises. Earlier sections in this chapter attempted to unpack the peculiarities of the two Left regimes under evaluation, with a special emphasis on the role that these leaders, their

socio-political circumstances and most importantly, their ideology played in the deliberation of regional integration.

Orjuela and Chenou (2018) have argued that "focus on ideology allows for an articulation of both political and economic domestic factors of integration." Drawing a connection between presidential diplomacy, summitry and ideology as essence of integration, they explain that ideology in regional integration "is the balance between the pursuit of political autonomy and the pursuit of development and economic insertion" (Orjuela and Chenou 2018:44) and that in the Latin American scenario "integration relies more on the success of summits and joint declarations than on longer-term institutional diplomacy" (Orjuela and Chenou 2018:41).

This section attempts to unpack why "discourse matters" in the creation of regions. The first subsection offers an elaboration of Van Langenhove's conceptualisation of 'regionhood' contextualising it in the Latin American post-liberal scenario. The second subsection comparatively situates Alegría's discourse analysis of the presidential speeches of the two leaders to identify their individual discourses for region construction, points of inflection in their interaction and surmises on the nature of regional leadership forwarded by the two leaders in the region.

Region Building: Grounding 'Actorness' of the Post-liberal Region and Calibrating 'Actorness' of Lula and Chávez

Regions are not readily surmisable entities or concepts. However, there are characteristics that may be identified that underscore the 'regionality,' 'regionness' and 'regionhood' of a region[14]. Van Langenhove (2003:4) has emphasized that even though 'region' is a "polysemous concept," which can refer to "geographical space, economic interaction, institutional or governmental jurisdiction as well as to social or cultural characteristics," any concept of region is always bounded by some notion of territory

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[14] Among other scholars of the social constructionist school, Luk Van Langenhove's (2003, 2011, 2016) theoretical contribution to defining 'regions' has found meaning in extending the psychological and sociological metaphors of 'person,' 'personality' and 'personhood' to 'region', 'regionality' and 'regionhood,' where 'region' as a category denotes the property of existing as a region, potentially, for any territory/group; 'regionality' refers to the individual characteristics of a particular region; and, regionhood, are the characteristic features that distinguish between a region and a non-region.

and "there always seems to be a reference to some aspect of territory." Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano have argued that in the Latin American case, geography and history are especially linked, in that this connection "conditions the formation of states" and the "history of states is also the tale of the construction of legal, cultural and mythical sources of legitimacy to connect 'nation', 'territory' and 'state'" (Briceño-Ruiz and Puntigliano 2021:4). Thus, ideas carry and shape meaning about regions not merely in an abstract or opaque sense, but are bounded by materiality in their territoriality. This interplay between geography and history underscores the assertion in the Latin American scenario that "regions are both a part of physical reality and the result of a process of social construction" (Van Langenhove 2003:9), where this ideational construction through discourse, reaffirms that "there is a meaningful essence to 'region' and 'regional integration'" (Van Langenhove 2003:1). Forwarding the concept of 'regionhood,' Van Langenhove (2003:14) lays down four characteristics of this interaction which are imperative for the existence of regionhood:

> These four characteristics are:
> (i) the region as a system of intentional acts in the international and national arena;
> (ii) the region as a 'rational' system with statehood properties;
> (iii) the region as a reciprocal achievement;
> (iv) the region as a generator and communicator of meaning and identity.

The question to be asked however, is, who are the constructors and forwarders of meaning in the regional scenario? If actorness is imbued to regions, then the "identifiable social actors" (Van Langenhove 2003:18), that is, those whose actions are taken to be emblematic of the actorness of the region, that function in the Latin American enunciations of regions are presidents, specifically Lula and Chávez in the post-liberal integration regime. This may be ascertained following the criteria Van Langehove has laid down in his theoretical expansion of actorness to the region.

While formulating his assertion that regions are actors, Van Langenhove (2003:16) elaborated Bretherton and Voglerxxi's (1999) thesis on the properties of actorness. In order for presidents to emerge as the "identifiable social actors," they must firstly, have a "shared commitment to a set of overarching values and principles." This is easy enough to identify, as was explained in the very beginning of this chapter, where both leaders have not only participated in the same fora of Left solidarity, they have reaffirmed this solidarity in their vision for an integration South America, especially in

the construction of UNASUR. Secondly, these actors must have "the ability to identify policy priorities and to formulate coherent policies." In the regional space, all three organisations have forwarded mandates that have not only presented new items on the agenda, as this chapter has explained, these new items on the agenda have also been relevant to domestic concerns and negotiations in the regional space are demonstrative of cooperation and coordination among both regional leaders, as will be developed in more detail in the Chapter V. Thirdly, actors must have "the ability to negotiate effectively with other actors in the international system." The mutations in the regional agenda of all three organisations, the very fact that amidst these overlapping mandates, a uniform agenda could be formulated first as South America in UNASUR and then, as a larger Latin American space in CELAC are emblematic of this. Fourthly, actors must have "the availability of, and capacity to utilize policy instruments." As was explained in Chapter II, the primacy of the president as decision-maker in foreign policy in general and post-liberal regional integration in particular is rampant because of the inherent tools at the disposal of the president to shape the agenda and forward it through their set of special systemic as well as personal skills. This chapter has further contextualised Latin American presidentialism to Brazilian and Venezuelan contexts. Finally, actors must have "a domestic legitimacy of decision processes and priorities, relating to external policy." The earlier sections in this chapter have underscored this fine balance between domestic and regional by both leaders.

Therefore, "discourse matters" in the creation of regions. In the Latin American post-liberal regional space, presidential discourse was of primary importance. The earlier sections have attempted to explain the different meanings that were created and ascribed to the regional context by the two leaders as well as the contextual background in which those meanings were devised. The next subsection attempts to enumerate these meanings so they may offer a clearer comparative view of the discourse that birthed the three regional organisations under survey.

Region Building via Discourse: 'Regionification' Practices by Lula and Chávez
Following from the idea that regions are social construction, Alegría (2018:24) conducted an analysis of the speeches of Lula and Chávez in order to expound their methodology in the discursive construction of regions, for "regions are, before all else,

ideas" where "their existence is specifically derived from talking about them." Regions are the products of 'regionification' (Van Langenhove 2003, 2011) where "capacity for intentional acts is attributed to some entity" (Van Langenhove 2003:22) and "the concept of 'region' has to be regarded a linguistic tool used by actors to talk about a geographical area that is not a state but has some statehood properties" (Van Langenhove 2011:65). Social actors, or region builders and their intentionality to form a region, precedes the region itself (Neumann 1999), where through "discourses of regionification," these actors "bring about the institutionalization of a certain region" (Van Langenhove 2011:66-67). Simply put, region builders, in this case, presidents Lula and Chávez actively constructed the regional spaces of UNASUR, ALBA and CELAC by forwarding their discourses of the region.

What were the arenas for this discursive action by the region builders? The various summits which proliferated in the region, as has been detailed in Chapter III were the "dialogical social context" (Alegría 2018:24) where this process of regionification occurred, through the reciprocal acceptance of these discourses by other important actors as "it is not enough for an actor to talk about regional integration, but rather that it is necessary for others also to talk in those terms about that region and about that regional integration" (Alegría 2018:26). These summits were spaces where through discursive acts of the region builders along with the participation of other actors, "a well-defined stance" (Van Langenhove 2003:21) was taken towards a regional entity, where the "intentionality to act" ascribed to this entity was recognised by other actors.

In the words of Wendt (1992:397), collective meanings compose the structures that guide actions. Alegría's analysis of region building by Lula and Chávez, through a study of their speeches is an important resource for this study. It is possible to organise his thesis along four factors for a clear and concise comparative evaluation of the discursive strategies of both leaders, namely, overarching metaphor denoting character, indicative terminology and contextual setting employed, nature of oppositional orientation towards extra regional actors and conceptualisation of financial cooperation. A brief survey of these four categories is elaborated as follows:

Metaphor Denoting Character

Alegría's analysis of Lula's speeches, particularly in the South American Summits yielded insights as to the regional vision perpetuated and forwarded by Lula as far as region building in first Community of South American Nations (CSN/CASA) and later the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was concerned. Lula's speeches elaborated the metaphor of a "family house" (Alegría 2018:23) in association with South American integration. Even the Spanish acronym CASA, refers to the Spanish word for house. This house is best able to arrive at solutions for its problems and most importantly, respects diversity of opinions of its members, both ideologically as well as in terms of how integration or the 'house' should function. Lula's speeches lay down that the priority for Brazil, is this South American house, where Brazil is willing to exercise the role of an "older brother" or "mediator" in dispute redressal, with utmost respect for individual members' sovereignty, with non-intervention in state affairs as the cornerstone of this methodology. This delimitation of the region to South America and the Brazilian goals behind this delimitation have been sketched in detail earlier in this chapter. The goal was to respect differences while creating a space for dialogue and communication, especially to shore up defences against the external world. In Lula's harkening to the past, it is the role of the present group of elites and politicians that is highlighted in facilitating the building of this consensus, who unlike those in the past, were not indifferent to the suffering or struggles of their peers in the region.

On the other hand, Alegría's analysis of Chávez's speeches highlights certain features of his discourse that are also in alignment with his political ambitions and girded by his particular historical and political context. Chávez offered "his own version of Venezuela's history" which is "centred on the period of independence being a story of battles in which armed men are exalted" (Márquez 2014:529-530). Interestingly, this blend between the Left and military was a unique characteristic of Chavismo, "the Chávez movement is, if nothing else, a marriage of radicals and officers" (Corrales 2007:1). This historical construction is not arbitrary. As Alegría (2018:36) explains, in his speeches on region building, Chávez "builds a temporal bridge between Bolívar's failed attempt to reach a union between the States of the Americas at the Panama Congress of 1826 and the creation and consolidation of ALBA." The glory of this unity is circumscribed in the history traditions of victories and brilliant myths of revered

national and regional heroes. The stark novelty of the innovativeness of ALBA is legitimated and made more palatable by its enmeshing with Bolivar's revolution by establishing a historical teleology between the two processes. This guides the larger metaphor for ALBA as a "fist" or "bloc" where confrontation, fighting back and action in opposition to an existing system are paramount. Locating the current format of region building in the larger unionist tradition of the region (Sanahuja 2012), Chávez effectively posits the region as a singular nation, or a manifestation of 'Our America.' The movement in ALBA from 'alternative' to 'alliance' is significant where the birth of ALBA carries with it the simultaneous burial of FTAA and the region being build draws sentience from the sentiment of *solidaridad continental* and a continuous reference to *La Patria Grande*. As Alegría (2018:40) explains:

> it becomes clear if we derive membership from exclusion, i.e. taking into account that those never included in the regional union in his addresses are the United States and Canada. This shows that Chávez builds South America in opposition to North America when talking about regional union. For him, South America is not limited to the twelve UNASUR countries, but also includes Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico.

Indicative Terminology and Contextual Setting

For Lula, the stressed terminology used for region-building is "integration." Emphasizing the ability of the "house" to not only have a more nuanced understanding of what the problems are that its members face, as well as their innately superior ability to resolve the same, Lula's speeches posit dialogue and cooperation as the mechanism for further entrenching ties among the members of the house, with a special role for Brazil, in mediating these conflicts and providing solutions for all. The motivation for Brazil to offer these solutions is driven by its association with the "house" as a fellow family member and the legitimacy of its ability to resolve girded in both its long diplomatic history, shared futures with fellow members and commitment to mediate only when asked. These solidarities of conciliation would enable the region to acquire a larger and more influential role at the international stage, ensuring that the international system reflected the potency of their contribution to international affairs. As Alegría (2018:27) puts it:

> Hand-in-hand with the idea of resolving regional problems in an autonomous manner, Lula's speeches also build an equivalence between the deepening of

South American regional integration and establishing the region as a political actor with its own voice, that is, a political actor at the global level.

As such, South America is supposed to be able to arrive with its *head up* to negotiations and international stages. Referring to this point, the expressions tend to be synonyms for *global actor*. He also talks about the region as being *a spokeperson* and the importance of *political coordination* to set joint positions around topics such as security and regional defense, drug trafficking, and the Amazon region.

Interestingly, Chávez utilizes the terminology of 'union', 'alternative' and 'alliance' instead of 'integration,' again locating this preference both in Bolivar's example and his denunciation of neoliberalism which has tainted the terminology of integration. As Alegría (2018:37) explains, Chávez firstly, "disjoins an equivalence between region building and the signifier 'integration'" and secondly, "creates an equivalence between the terms of union and region building." The conversion of CASA to UNASUR has been attributed to Venezuela. For Chávez, the oppositional character of the bloc, especially towards neoliberalism is what further affirms this terminology of union. Drawing from Bolivar's history, the region therefore, is the arena for building solidarity against the excesses of neoliberalism, and its primary actor, the USA. This opposition guides and girds the solidarity of ideological consensus which represents a common if variegated will of member states. Like Lula, for Chávez too, the political function of the region as ALBA was very important. The difference here lay in the intensity of opposition to the current international order, which ALBA could, potentially supplant. The necessity to form consensus therefore, remained important, as long as the larger goal of opposition to US-led neoliberalism was intact. As Alegría (2018:42) puts it:

> This BLOC must be opposed to the United States' hegemony and, principally, to what Chávez views as the U.S.'s imperialist aspirations, not only for the region but with respect to countries worldwide. In the same way, he states that ALBA must allow the elaboration of joint positions with respect to the topics of the hemispheric and global agenda. Thus, the former president considers that it is of paramount importance to create a political actor that acts unified on multilateral stages.

Nature of Oppositional Orientation towards Extra-Regional Actors

As has been emphasized earlier in Chapter III and Chapter IV, the opposition to neoliberalism was a characteristic feature of the post-liberal integration regime. While,

the rise of the Left, was emblematic to the opposition to the existing neoliberal governance and financial regime, this opposition varied in intensity and degree across countries. For Brazil, the goal was to eke out a larger role for itself in the existing system. For Venezuela on the other hand, the goal was to supplant the existing system with a new one.

Alegría's analysis of Lula's speeches emphasizes the opposition to extra-regional actors, in the traditional sense of autonomy in Latin American integration. An extra-regional actor is conceptualised as a neighbour, who despite having the best intentions might be unable to resolve problems within the house, both due to an inadequate understanding of the context as well as having a reduced stake in the matters that beset the household. Thus, local solutions for local problems are not only an expression of autonomy and sovereignty of the region, given that they are based on consensus and acknowledge the agency of those who may require resolution by intervention, not impositional in their character. The integration proffered emphasizes dialogue and building of consensus so that internal divisions that necessitate the involvement of a "foreign neighbour" may be resolved. When this articulation is weighed against the definitions of regional leadership elaborated in Chapter II, it is clear that while Brazil under Lula advocated for a leadership role, this leadership was always consensual and assumed a benign intentionality.

For Chávez, on the other hand, "one of the fundamental objectives of uniting the South is the ability to negotiate conditions of equality and dignity with the North and the rest of the world" (Alegría 2018:40). For Chávez, the birth of ALBA was intrinsically linked with the burial of FTAA, "with ALBA, and with it the womb of the Americas, birth is given to the socialism of the 21st century" (Alegría 2018:39). The union of the 'peoples' of Latin America was necessitated by the excesses of the US-led neoliberal model of governance and international finance which perpetuated systems of inequality, poverty and exclusion in Latin America by undermining the autonomy of Latin American states and enforcing dependent conditions of development on them. This persecution was institutionalised in the proposal of the FTAA and in its defeat, the region gave its anti-neoliberal mandate. Venezuelan leadership, is predicated on its enunciation of its vision of 21st century socialism, the harkening back to policies of inclusion as demonstrated by the credence given to Cuba both in membership and ideological leaning as well as

the rearticulation of what integration could look like, with the forwarding of the concept of cooperative advantage. Chávez's vision argued that though an oppositional binary existed between the US-led neoliberal, capitalist world order and the equitable vision of development forwarded by 21st century socialism, it also acknowledged that different leaders had different visions and articulations of how this fight against neoliberalism was to be fought.

Conceptualisation of Financial Cooperation in Building Integration

It is interesting to compare how the traditional meaning of economic integration, especially the role of the regional leader in facilitating this cooperation by bearing costs was interpreted by both countries. In the case of Lula, Alegría explains how continuing with the metaphor of the house, Lula's speeches referred to this house being under construction which required "innovative financing solutions" (Da Silva 2005). With the Bank of South being an emblematic endeavour for such innovative financing solutions, the Brazilian reluctance to act as paymaster was evident, a factor that mainstream theories of regional leadership have always pointed to in order to contest Brazilian leadership claims. In the words of Alegría (2018:30)

> Thus, it can be interpreted that inside the FAMILY HOUSE the countries of the region are building, Brazil does not wish to assume the role of a parent, but casts itself as an *older brother*. One who is willing to assume greater financial responsibilities than the *younger brothers* (the other South American countries), but who is not interested in assigning itself the entire task of regional integration.

Interestingly, the integration proposed in the speeches, referred to infrastructure building, especially in the arena of energy integration. Capacity building was an important facet of the proffered integration, where Brazil was willing to bear some costs of furthering the project of integration with an involvement of the business community and with a view to bolster trade.

For Chávez, the "socialist economic model" (Alegría 2018:39) that each country must attempt to build, in its own way is directed towards forwarding a social policy that corrects the inequities caused by the neoliberal insertion of the region and is avowedly opposed to it, in varying degrees. As Alegría (2018:42) explains, Chávez acknowledged this path difference in a speech in 2008, when the UNASUR Charter was signed, where

he acquiesced that all governments could not think alike, and even those on the Left wing had "different focuses and speeds," but their "unitary will" which may be surmised as a variegated disavowal of neoliberalism, was key. Expounding the concept of comparative advantage, new forms of economic and financial cooperation were enacted under ALBA and have been detailed in Chapter III. The Venezuelan state, circumscribed the role of its petroleum wealth in aiding the construction of these "socialist economic" models in member states by funding projects through oil wealth. As Alegría (2018:41) explains:

> Chávez also constructs an equivalence of a financial union. Here, not only the economic-financial strengthening of the countries of the union is considered being at play, but rather he interprets it as a political element within the questioning of U.S. hegemony. That is why he highlights the accumulation of reserves in currencies other than the U.S. dollar and the exchange via SUCRE between the ALBA members as fundamental.

The legitimating factors of Chávez's region were to be found in the historical narrative that is the foundation of his discourse, the emphasis on the social well-being of the people and the equitable model of development, financed by a Venezuelan state rallying the region into a union against neoliberal excess, though allowing for the existence and personal acceptance of 'alternative' paths.

It is clear that not only were Brazilian and Venezuelan ambitions embroiled in the construction of the post-liberal integration regime, under the leadership of Lula and Chávez, both forwarded two visions for regionalism. These purported regions were constructed alongside each other where cooperation, competition, contestation between the two leaders as well as other regional actors played out. The next chapter attempts to evaluate these intersecting pathways for region building with a view to identify the claims for both rivalry and cooperation between Brazil and Venezuela.

CHAPTER V

DIVERGENCES, CONVERGENCES AND INTERSECTIONS: THE PATHWAYS TO INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Given the proliferation of regional and subregional integration initiatives in the region, what would a holistic study entail, especially when weighed against assertions of the distinctiveness of the organizations under evaluation in this study? On the one hand, the analytical task lies in tracing the interconnected trajectories of current enunciations with co-existing past iterations, on the other, any analysis should attempt to study processes of integration with a view to detangle the webbed interactions amongst co-existing organizations to gauge the influence their coexistence has had on defining the characteristics of regionalism processes in its temporal location. Chapter I of this study situated the post-liberal, post-hegemonic wave of regionalism in its historical context while Chapter III attempted to delineate the interconnections in processes of formation, institutionalisation as well as the conceptual and policy agendas of the respective organizations. Despite this dual historical extrapolation, it remains difficult to form a nuanced understanding of the intersections between the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), especially with a view to understand the influence of two major regional actors, namely Brazil and Venezuela, and how their respective distinct regional visions, influenced each other.

This chapter is divided into three sections with the first section elaborating the intersections between the integration processes of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC, especially with a view to disentangle the claims of rivalry, cooperation and competition between the two regional leaders, Brazil and Venezuela. The second section offers a theoretical elaboration on the primary characteristics of the post-liberal integration regime, with a view to present the conceptual frameworks for explaining and understanding the contradictions in the processes of integration and explaining the same through region specific metrics. The last section offers an elaboration on the relationship between the practices and concepts of post-liberal integration, with a focus

on regional leadership in order to situate the performance and relevance of the post-liberal integration regime.

DELINEATING OVERLAPS AND INTERSECTIONS IN THE POST-LIBERAL INTEGRATION REGIME

Regional organizations in South America are known for their overlapping memberships and mandates. Nolte and Comini (2016:549) explain, "because of competition and overlapping of regional organizations, it makes no sense to look at them in isolation" which would necessarily entail neglecting "the specific properties of an institutional architecture" (Hofmann and Mérand 2012:133–134). Ignoring how "different regional organizations are assembled together" (Nolte and Comini 2016:549) excludes any analysis of how these processes of assembly impact the regional order. Therefore, "the whole architecture-that is, the combination and interaction of different regional organizations in Latin America-is more important than its parts-that is, individual regional organizations" (Nolte and Comini 2016: 549).

The proliferation of regional organizations in Latin America, has been theorised as overlapping or intersecting regionalism, where new organizations are created to promote strategic interests, manage ambitions of regional powers, manoeuvre autonomy in decision-making for other actors. This overlap of mandate and membership of regional organizations (Nolte 2014) has been variously explained, leading to the espousal of concepts like "modular regionalism," (Gardini 2013) "variable geometry of regionalism" (Hofmann and Mérand 2012) or "*regionalism* à *la carte*" (Quiliconi 2017) in available literature. This "overlap" of UNASUR and ALBA especially, needs another angle of analysis to offer an explanation of the post-liberal regime of integration before any attempt is made to unearth its significance, efficacy or relevance especially as both organizations functioned as arenas for the much-touted rivalry between Brazil and Venezuela to play out. It is imperative to know how far these two organizations shaped processes within each other, especially when analysed with a focus on the leadership variable. This section attempts to answer this question without easy binaries of competition-rivalry or co-operation-co-option of the regional space by Brazil and Venezuela. The first subsection looks at the literature on convergences,

especially among ALBA and UNASUR with special emphasis on delineating the motivations of both Brazil and Venezuela. The second subsection offers an analysis of the divergences, with a view to identify instances of rivalry or competition among the organizations and the two regional leaders. The third subsection attempts to identify the lasting consequences of these convergences and divergences, particularly in terms of the feasibility of this wave of regionalism and how these interactions affected the fate of the organizations under discussion.

Trends of Convergence in ALBA and UNASUR: Pathways to a Common Future?
One of the primary characteristics of post-hegemonic or post-liberal integration has been the insistence of its political and ideological character. For instance, Muhr (2013:1) explains Chávez's rehauling of the idea of integration where "regional union above all would have to be political rather than purely economic." Given the political nature of this iteration of regionalism, there has been much talk of conflict, competition, cooperation, convergences and divergences among the organizations that emerged during this wave, ignoring the important assertion that "like all forms of governance, regionalism is a form of coordination across and between policy areas"; that it is "organised in different forms of institutional architecture that open different kinds of opportunities for political engagement and thus different types of activism"; and most importantly, that it is "the place where politics happen," functioning to create and maintain "a space for policy deliberation and action" (Riggirozzi 2014:2).

The analytical question here is primarily how and to what extent these organizations align either in principles, functions or processes to give evidence of convergence. Riggirozzi's analysis of the role social policies play within integration processes in enabling different regions to act as one in the international realm (Söderbaum & Stålgren 2010) addresses the gap in similar studies on Latin American integration processes. She argues that a major convergence that may be pointed to in the post-liberal regime is the "social turn" that the region experienced where increasingly, the idea that "social policy made sense, not only to compensate market policies but also because some social harms were inherently cross-border" (Riggirozzi 2014:4) gained policy traction. Though different actors may interpret what regional social policy entails differently, the consensus lay in the understanding that regional formations were "sites

for collective action and pivotal actors providing normative frameworks structuring practices in support of governance norms" (Riggirozzi 2014:2). The post-trade social welfarist agenda itself, was the biggest point of convergence among the different regional organizations that emerged during the period. As DerGhougassian (2015:178) explains, "a common post-Washington consensus character of regional integration foreseen beyond free trade, and a renewed role for the state" were the biggest converging trends specifically in ALBA and UNASUR, where both organizations could be seen as "competing reactions to the conceptual bankruptcy of the Washington Consensus model."

What might be the concept that attempted to fill this conceptual void? While various explanations have been formulated to explain the emergence of this post-trade, social welfarist agenda, Wajner and Roniger (2019) explain how *Nuestra América* and the associated ideological and political rhetoric that shaped *Chavismo* were effectively employed to create a sense of an "all-encompassing identity meta-narrative" (Whitehead 2009), which was then mobilized across regional organizations in a variety of ways. As already sketched out in earlier chapters, the notion of *Nuestra América*, understood necessarily as a call to resist imperialism and strengthen an autonomous understanding of what it meant to be Latin American, especially by following a cultural and political path (Mignolo 2009), was not new. "With the goal of legitimizing regionalist political projects" the idea was "summoned on multiple occasions" to "vindicate various transnational projects" (Wajner and Roniger 2019: 3). However, these summons as it were, did not converge across the region, as the presence of various organising ideas like Pan Americanism, Iberoamericanism and Afroamericanism suggest. The uniqueness of the mobilization of the concept by *Chavismo* in particular, as Wajner and Roniger (2019:4) explain, was this aspect of convergence in regionalist projects, where the strategy of promoting transnational solidarity became "foundational," "deliberate" and "officialized" and was the first framework of regionalism "to propose both rhetorically and practically a transnational identity" that disconnected "the regional ambitions of Latin American integration and the links with extraregional powers" (Wajner and Roniger 2019:6).

This is not to suggest that an uncontested or easy acceptance of the Venezuelan leadership or the discursive contents of *Chavismo,* prevailed in the region. Even though the acceptance of a Latin American identity gained increasing credence in the region (Latinobarómetro 2008), the Bolivarian regional project and its acceptance, especially in South America was cautious at best (Burges 2007). Varying explanations of motivation aside, Venezuelan agency in circumventing this cautious acceptance of its regional strategy is what necessitated the "overlapping regionalism" that proliferated across the region, ranging from the creation of new regional and subregional frameworks (Tussie and Riggirozzi 2012) as well as its more active participation within already-existing integration efforts within South America. This is not to overstate the role of the discursive ideological component of post-hegemonic regionalism, as the interplay of "contrasting motivations" (Tussie 2009) of various actors affected the decisions of individual actors. As DerGhougassian (2015:166) explains, in both ALBA and UNASUR, "politics has been stronger than ideological discourse or aspiration," which explains how "two competing integration processes, ALBA and UNASUR, ended up developing a peaceful co-existence with previous integrations--MERCOSUR and Andean Community." Nevertheless, the strategy of *Nuestra América* was accepted across the region, with the culmination of its institution in the region with the formation of CELAC.

This competition among actors within the region itself, was an important aspect of convergence or better put, cooperation among their regional agendas. Muhr (2013) explains how "a discursive shift" was noted even in the bilateral agenda, especially between Brazil and Venezuela, which was governed by "the ALBA-TCP principles of solidarity, complementarity, cooperation, reciprocity and sustainability" leading to the pursuit of "strategic alliances of mutual benefit" as a policy preference. Moreover, the trajectories of the development of both UNASUR and ALBA were not only linked, the development of their institutions too "evolved from intertwined, converging and co-constitutive processes, often the cumulative product of bilateral agreements" (Muhr 2008:234-47).

Muhr's analysis of the increased cooperation among the so-called regional actors is imperative in delineating not only the convergences within the post-hegemonic, post-liberal integration regime, but also sheds light on the co-constitutive role played by

cooperation amongst these actors in the development, especially of UNASUR, as well as the "joint construction of a cross-border (sub) regionalism" that integrated Southern Venezuela and North-Western Brazil, though discussion of the same is beyond the scope of this section. Muhr (2016:2) argues these processes have birthed a "socially produced South-South cooperation space."

Nevertheless, there is ample literature on the divergences in these projects, supported by the fact that these organizations existed independently, where the existence of one did not render the other superfluous. As Serbin (2007) explains, there was a clear distinction between the conceptual framework and ideological leaning of both ALBA and UNASUR, with an emphasis on the competition that ensued between the two regional actors, namely Brazil and Venezuela. The next section attempts to understand how this competition played out in the regional sphere.

Trends of Divergence in ALBA and UNASUR: Alternative Pathways for Latin America?

DerGhougassian (2015) has identified four factors, namely, position on past integration initiatives, strategy towards institution building, the character and definition of activist state and civil society mobilization to explain the difference between ALBA and UNASUR given their co-existence in the larger post-Washington consensus integration paradigm. It is analytically relevant to continue with these four identified categories, though this section will attempt to point out the convergences in these supposed divergences.

The conflict and competition that ensued among these organizations as well as with the pre-existing regional initiatives in the region have analytically been made much of to reinforce both the rivalry between Brazil and Venezuela as well as the claim that the existence of one complicated the existence of the other. For instance, DerGhougassian (2015:165) argues that the most significant divergence between the two organizations "concerns the position of each initiative vis-à-vis past integrations: ALBA is explicitly critical and, therefore, proposes a new start from a novel background, whereas UNASUR aspires to the convergence of the already existing processes to the new and broader one."

The novelty often ascribed to ALBA lies in Chávez's calls for rehauling systems of integration as well as his criticism of the pre-existing forms of integration. The Joint Venezuelan-Cuban Declaration of 2004 that birthed ALBA emphasizes that not only was the FTAA the "most accomplished expression of the appetite of domination over the region" and that it would "constitute a deepening of neo-liberalism," it also underscored that integration of the LAC has historically "served as a mechanism to deepen dependence and external domination." Further, the Declaration puts forth a specific concept of integration where "it is an indispensable condition" for any aspirations of development, where such attempts must necessarily "preserve their independence, sovereignty and identity."

UNASUR on the other hand, proposes a different form of communal identity, necessarily a South American one, which some scholars argue is more rooted in geography than ideological congruity. As DerGhougassian (2015:166) puts it, "for Unasur it is not political ideology that makes a common identity but South American citizenship and respect for democracy and Human Rights." The Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR (2008) lays down a very different vision of integration as promoting the "construction of a South American identity and citizenship" as well as the creation of "a regional space for political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, energetic and infrastructure integration."

Some scholars underline the all-encompassing character of UNASUR and pit it against ALBA, in turn emphasizing the exclusionary nature of the so-called radical and alienating ideological premises of the latter. This is a gross simplification, as the history of the formation of UNASUR denotes the mutation in the development of both, its regionalist vision and method. It is the interplay of a variety of actors with contrasting motivations (Tussie 2012) in the regional space that explains the evolution of the South American Community of Nations (CSN) to UNASUR as the next section on intersection will develop in greater detail. Moreover, ALBA and its anti-US stance were a product of the exhaustion of the Washington Consensus, the concept of 21st Century Bolivarian Socialism as well as the domestic circumstances delineated before in Chapter IV, that made imperative the development of an autonomous regional strategy.

This explains why, despite the much-touted ideological dissonance and regional rivalry between Venezuela and Brazil, Venezuela along with other ALBA states participated in a variety of integration efforts in the region, including MERCOSUR. This ties in with the associated divergence of purpose of the two organizations that emphasizes the extent to which attempts were made by Brazil and Venezuela to forge ALBA and UNASUR as global actors – where multilateralism and interaction with external actors were important strategies of both.

The other divergence is the structure of institutionalization in both organizations. As already discussed, institutionalization of ALBA remained more developed on paper than in actuality, and summit diplomacy was an important aspect of its particular brand of declaratory regionalism (Jenne, Schenoni and Urdinez 2017). ALBA's summit diplomacy had a clear focus on a counter-hegemonic world order based on the principles of South-South cooperation where ideological consonance and shared meanings of autonomy dictated cooperation more than economic complementarities, supported and propelled by Venezuelan oil wealth (Sanahuja 2008), where "the (re)distribution of Venezuelan petroleum and gas resources (and surpluses therefrom) at a regional scale 'alleviate[s] inherited uneven spatial development' by replacing the orthodox competitive 'comparative advantage' by the "cooperative advantage" (Muhr 2016:10). UNASUR on the other hand, defined most by its geographical identity of South America followed an intergovernmental state-centric approach and though a variety of organs populated its erstwhile internal governance structure, decision-making was by consensus and institutionalisation too, remained shallow, clearly representative of the contestation within the regional space as well as what several scholars have called Brazilian reticence to pay the costs of regional leadership (Burges 2007).

The different format that both ALBA and UNASUR adopted in putting forth their understanding of 'loose institutionalisation' itself might be the biggest divergence between the two organizations, clearly denoting the primary contestation within the wave, that of different understandings of what constituted post-hegemony and what a post-liberal world would look like. As Briceño-Ruiz, Vigevani, and Mariano (2017:174) explain, despite the convergence in their criticism of neoliberalism and open regionalism, South American actors, Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina in particular, viewed "the content of a post-liberal or post-hegemonic economy and on a regional

integration policy" quite differently. Though DerGhougassian's (2015) analysis posits a divergence between the economic alternative of ALBA and the more political, strategic one of UNASUR, this divergence in purpose blurs when the interplay in the institutionalisation processes and projects is taken into consideration. Even if the assertion by Burges (2007) that the region is an "artificial construct" that only serves to promote economic interests is considered too limited to encompass the social, economic and political processes at play in both organizations, the priority of the pursuit of domestic concerns which prompts states to employ the regional level to meet domestic goals, explains both the hyperbolic nature of divergences mapped on ideology as well as identity. For instance, as Belem Lopes and Faria (2016:41) explain "certain states have found their social policies serving as important escape valves, as strategic instruments for managing political and economic crises." Thus, the primacy of the State and its domestic interests in regional efforts serves as a better explanation for low and informal institutionalisation in both organizations, rather than a deliberate divergence in regional strategy, where low institutionalisation and intergovernmentalism promotes quicker and more autonomous decision-making. As pointed out, "the argument for low institutionalisation and intergovernmentalism is that progress can be achieved more rapidly, bypassing heavy bureaucracies" (Ganem 2015:205).

The post-Washington Consensus format of integration is marked by a 'return of the State' in matters of integration. Girded by the social protests and civil society movements that marked the increasing dissatisfaction with the neoliberal model, post-hegemonic and post-liberal integration is organised by the state which drives cooperation. DerGhougassian's (2015) conceptualisation of the South American activist state therefore, is very important in terms of identifying and delineating how the state-society relationship was reconstrued during this period especially in the regional integration arena. He (2015:176) distinguishes between the "producer" Venezuelan activist state and the "strategically driven" Brazilian activist state. As he explains:

> Overall, the activist state is a common feature in post-Washington Consensus South America. Yet, when it comes to regional integration, state activism seems to take different meanings responding basically to the nature and goals of the process. For ALBA, the ideological and "revolutionary" orientation blurs the line between the domestic and international agendas, whereas the more

traditionally understood strategic orientation of UNASUR circumscribes state activism in foreign and security policy fields.

How far is this categorization appropriate? The state in ALBA led cooperation efforts from the front. The Cuba-Venezuela Joint Declaration of 2004 lays down the role of the state as the regulator and coordinator of the economy. The idea was, that this return of the state in integration processes signified a "rebirth or re-foundation of the state," where "the state pretends both to represent the masses and lead the change" (2015:174). As already discussed in Chapter III, ALBA represented the international projection of the Bolivarian Revolution where the revolution that began domestically was projected internationally, employing the regional level, coordinated via integration of like-minded nations. The very name emphasizes the importance of the proposed alternative in ALBA's enunciation. The ideological dissonance to the neoliberal model enunciated at the regional level in the form of ALBA therefore, cannot be separated from its purposes and projects.

UNASUR and the emphasis on "strategy" in literature often excludes the role other South American nations, like Argentina and Mexico particularly, and the pursuit of their national interests in the regional space, played in the formation of the organization. Though the pursuit of a common South American identity is enshrined in the South American treaty, this vision was contested in South America, especially by Argentina: "South Americanisation was generally interpreted by the Argentinian authorities as a shoe made for Brazilian feet" (Nolte and Comini 2016:555). Therefore, not only did it come to be "because twelve South American countries wanted it to happen," (Nolte and Comini 2016: 546) rather than being in competition with other regional initiatives in the South American space, UNASUR was an "additional element in the South American regional architecture" (Nolte and Comini 2016:546) where decision-making was state-led and consensus based. Therefore, though divergent in terms of its insistence on positing a rhetoric, UNASUR enunciated mechanisms for dispute resolution and mediation to both contain external influences within the region as well as emphasize the ability of South American nations to further their own distinct definitions of autonomy.

Another important variable that may help in delineating divergences between ALBA and UNASUR is the extent of participation by civil society actors in both organizations, especially their role in the decision-making process. When understood with the linkages emphasized in literature between the development of social welfarist regional agenda in these organizations and the 'Left turn' in Latin America, civil society movements and their actorness in regional processes gains analytical significance (Walsh 2010). The Left in Latin America has a regional facet as well, and the formation of processes that birthed these organizations as already developed in Chapter III, owed a debt to meetings, movements and social moments that occurred across LAC for a near decade.

DerGhougassian (2015:176) explains:

> This *movimientista* character of the South American Left is reflected in their emergence to power but also, the way they learned the tough dialectical management of political/ ideological militancy and state logic within their countries.

It may be argued that while civil society participation had a larger role to play in ALBA, given the insistence on collective decision-making and summit culture of said decision-making processes. While several important initiatives that were institutionalized within ALBA were actually born in these Summits before being brought into the regional space (Blanco 2019), the same cannot be argued within UNASUR due to the intergovernmental character of the organisation. Though epistemic communities of health, security and defence as well as other civil society actors played an important role in the developed of the regional agenda within UNASUR, their methods of influencing said agenda are not as easily discernible as that of the summit culture of ALBA. However, several scholars have argued that many of these inclusions within ALBA were top-down and state-led where the dissolution of the agency of the civil society was often instituted in the implementation of agreed upon process, as Cusack (2019) suggests, "the milk was stale." UNASUR on the other hand, because of the more bottom-up participation of these epistemic communities in the development and implementation of this regional agenda, has left behind path dependencies that may be re-activated if the opportunity were to present itself in conjunction with the right political will, even in the present scenario where it stands dismantled.

These convergences within divergences or vice versa, are also dependent on the lens used for analysis. If the formation of CELAC is considered, some accounts have argued that the cooperation between a determinedly, anti-US Venezuela and conservative Mexico with its robust partnership with the US, aligned to forward the proposal of CELAC in order to constrain Brazilian leadership ambitions and dilute the South American regional space. On the other hand, the very fact that two ideologically opposed states, along with the rest of the LAC region came together to form CELAC is representative of the fact that "collective diplomacy, political cooperation, and a regional vision are very much the order of the day, transcending ideological differences" (Heine 2012:215).

From the development of these two sections, it is clear that while convergences and divergences have been talked about in the literature on post-hegemonic regionalism in a variety of ways, these categories are difficult to separate and there is a blurring of these analytical categories. It makes sense therefore, for any comparative study to talk about post-hegemonic and post-liberal integration in terms of the intersections within these processes. The next subsection attempts to sketch these intersections, especially within ALBA and UNASUR with a view to dismantle the hyperbolic claims that serve to prioritize either ideological or political rivalry between the two primary regional leaders of both organizations, namely Brazil and Venezuela.

Intersections among ALBA and UNASUR: Pathways to a Shared Future?
Palestini and Closa (2015:1) have analysed democratic protection mechanisms in regional organizations. They explain how in the post-Cold War world, "an increasing number of regional organizations have adopted democratic protection mechanisms, such as democratic clauses and electoral monitoring capabilities" and though on the face of it, it may be interpreted as a deeper commitment to democracy globally, it is important to note that "governments are both the rule-makers and the enforcers of these provisions," where they "design democratic protection mechanisms in such a way as to minimize the chances of democratic clauses and electoral missions escaping their discretionary control." Therefore, the higher the intergovernmental nature of these

regional organizations, the higher the probability that "the provisions end up enforcing regime stability rather than democracy per se."

In light of this important analytical insight on the inherent and in built tensions in regional organizations, it makes sense to dismantle hyperbolic denunciations of all regional efforts in Latin American integration efforts as manifestations of imagined or real regional rivalries; instead, it is important to understand these tensions as an expected function of regional organizations for member states, to preserve and promote regime stability, especially in the statist and intergovernmental character of regional integration in Latin America. This also explains why UNASUR, despite its attempts to model itself as an "umbrella" organization collapsed in face of changes in domestic regimes in Latin America. ALBA continues to exist, though having lost a lot of its legitimacy, precisely because there is some continuity in the domestic regimes that founded it.

Therefore, despite the proliferation of claims of Brazil-Venezuela rivalry, which "at the regional scale manifests itself in competition between the ALBA-TCP and UNASUR" (Muhr 2013:1), no matter how "intuitively appealing" and its prodigious "reproduction over time and space," (Muhr 2013), this simplification of the interactions between the two organizations seems circumspect.

These claims of rivalry have very often preceded from readings prioritizing regional power ambitions and ideological dissonances between both Chávez and Lula as well as ALBA and UNASUR. For instance, assertions such as "ALBA reflects the allegedly socialist vision of Venezuela's leader Hugo Chávez" whereas "UNASUR is a Brazilian creation designed to promote Brazil's role regionally and globally" (Malamud and Gardini 2012:123). The regional space is the arena where "a struggle for leadership between Brazil and Venezuela" has been unfolding as "two groups have emerged since 2004 in the fight for leadership of the South American regionalist project" (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 218, 223). This rivalry perforce results in a "contested leadership" (Flemes and Wojczewski 2011) within the region, manifesting in the "Venezuela-centered ALBA" and the "Brazil-centered UNASUR" (Kellogg 2007: 189). The assertion is clear: ALBA and UNASUR "if not in opposition" are "at least in competition" to each other (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 218, 223). While seemingly sensible, such an understanding is also reductive.

The other argument that props up claims of rivalry between Brazil and Venezuela is the misinformed retelling of the story of the formation of UNASUR, where either it is simplified as a conglomeration of existing regional organizations, "in 2008, the MERCOSUR and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) decided to merge gradually, thus initiating the foundation of UNASUR" (Schelhase 2011:185) or subsumed in grandiose pronouncements of its transformative and unique character, "the UNASUR represents the assertion of newly confident governments in the region, for the first time in a generation able to envisage economic and social development outside of US hegemony, and looking for an alternative path that will allow them greater room for maneuver" (Kellogg 2007:9). Even though both ALBA and UNASUR envisaged alternative development models, it was hypothesized that a competition for influence, especially economic, was underway in the region where the Venezuelan Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programs and nationalizing of key industries as part of its Bolivarian revolution would ultimately harm Brazilian business interests in Venezuela and in the region (Muhr 2013; Schelhase 2011:188). According to some scholars, the reconstitution of the CSN to UNASUR was itself a defensive and diplomatic process of containment of Venezuelan ambitions in the region by Brazil: "UNASUR was particularly attractive to Brasilia because it offered a forum for managing Chávez's intermittent outbursts" (Flemes and Wojczewski 2011:35). This limiting of the formation and foundation processes of ALBA and UNASUR to a mere "competition to expand regional influence" (DerGhougassian 2015:173) is misdirected, especially as it is these processes of formation themselves that "cannot be defined as a Venezuela-Brazil competition to expand their influence in the region." Moreover, "not even the processes have taken a competitive turn reflecting the silent emergence of a future rivalry" (DerGhougassian 2015: 173) between the two states.

Muhr (2013) underlines the importance of untangling the processes that transformed the Community of South American Nations (CSN) to the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). It is in the "intricate processes and relationships through which the neoliberal Community of South American Nations became reconstituted as the counter-hegemonic UNASUR between 2005 and 2008" (Muhr 2013:13) that the first and most important intersection between the regional leadership projects of Brazil and

Venezuela may be identified. His work using a detailed survey of documents and field work that lays down the trajectory of this transformation.

The CSN came to be as the result of three biannual presidential meetings and the declarations these meetings birthed: the Brasilia Statement (CSN, 2000), the Guayaquil Consensus (CSN, 2002) and the Cusco Declaration (CSN, 2004) and all three texts "affirm the hegemonic neoliberal agenda" by conceptualising CSN as "an open regionalism expected to build on the existing institutionality," "fusing and perfecting MERCOSUR, the Andean Community, Group of Three (G3) and Chile" and thereby reproducing "the neocolonial development and governance discourse that has emptied notions of human rights, sustainable development and citizen participation from their original meaningful empowering contents" (Muhr 2013:9). Moreover, the representative democracy meaning ascribed to the concept of democracy in all documents was a nod to upholding and keeping with the standards of the OAS rather than articulating new and more inclusive criteria for participation.

The "counter-hegemonic offensive" for the "redefinition" of CSN (Muhr 2013; Muhr 2019) was a joint initiative by the Venezuelan president Chávez and Uruguayan president Tabaré Ramón Vázquez Rosas a week before the Ist Summit of the Heads of State of the Community of South American Nations in Brasilia on 30 September 2005 where in an open letter to other presidents of CSN Nations, keeping in tune with the earlier redefinitions of integration that Chávez had been articulating, together beseeched South American leaders to examine the "contents of integration and the institutional forms" (CSN, 2005) it should take. This prompted the formation of the Strategic Commission for Reflection about the South American Integration Process in December of 2005. The Commission presented its Final Document of the Strategic Commission for Reflection titled A New Model of Integration of South America: Towards the Union of South American Nations (CSN, 2006) at the Cochabamba Summit in 2006.

During 2005-2006, important changes happened to the political landscape of Latin America and the Caribbean. This included Evo Morales coming to power in Bolivia as well as the increasing participation of other likeminded leaders in the ensuing summits, like Rafael Correa and José Daniel Ortega Saavedra, who supported the Afro-

indigenous solidarity vision of *Nuestra América* As (Ganem 2015:204) explains, "the name change can be considered a way of leaving behind the previous identity that the integration process had acquired with neoliberal governments and creating a new identity that favoured the political environment in the region."

Though the influence of Venezuela on the broadening of the agenda in UNASUR was very important, this reconstitution also included the motivations and interests of other actors. As Nolte and Comini (2016) have explained, the motivations and perceptions of other regional actors, especially Argentina had an important role to play in the construction of UNASUR. For Argentina, as has already been pointed out earlier, South Americanisation was interpreted as "a shoe made for Brazilian feet" (Nolte and Comini 2016:557-558). One of the primary goals for Brazilian Itamaraty for their proposed South American project was the effective exclusion of the other important regional player of the region, namely Mexico from the regional space (Burges 2007). Thus, the Argentinian-Mexico strategic partnership agreement was approved almost coincidingly with the negotiations of the Strategic Reflection Committee whereby, "the subsequent inclusion of the category of 'associated states' in the Constitutive Treaty," which in turn "unlocked the gate for future incorporation of other Latin American countries" reflected "the Argentinian government's strategic objective of balancing" (Nolte and Comini 2016:588). As DerGhougassian (2015:175) explains, "the change of the name is not casual; the reference to 'nations' meant that South American countries did not yet reach the stage of a Single South American nation."

This balancing act was not Argentina's alone. The workings of UNASUR and the manner in which instruments like Bank of South were created, prove that Brazil too worked to manage this Venezuelan "reorientation towards looking South" (Serbin and Serbin Pont 2016: 272) where it "most cleverly managed to avoid this process of albanization of the new South American regional movement" and "through a cautious and subtle strategy of cooptation, cooperation and assimilation" (Burges 2010 in Serbin and Serbin Pont 2016: 271) of Chávez's proposals, worked the regional momentum in favour of UNASUR.

Thus, varying motivations, processes, ambitions and goals have played out in the regional space, with UNASUR the best candidate to analyse the interplay of interactions

among these. Therein, in fact, lies the intersection where despite "the increasing trade interdependence, growing Brazilian investments in Venezuela, ideological proximity between Lula and Chávez and personal empathy between them," (Briceño-Ruiz 2016:167) even converging objectives have at times been difficult to achieve because of the dissonance in their strategies to achieve even common goals where, their "different visions have set limits to cooperation and integration between the two countries" (Briceño-Ruiz 2016:167).

These strategies, primarily have been Venezuelan willingness to bear the costs of the leadership project, funneling the gains from the oil price boom to support its regional projects and Brazilian reticence to do the same. Despite favouring an anti-hegemonic stance in regionalism as well as the promotion of multipolarism, the goals even in their critique of the international system have been different. As Briceño-Ruiz (2016: 165) puts it "while the multipolar order of Venezuela purports to be developed by mechanisms such as ALBA and is based on an anti-systemic approach to world politics, Brazilian multipolarism is expressed more in initiatives such as IBSA." Such analyses co-exist with affirmations of how Brazil was the dominant player in UNASUR. What these studies ignore, is the interaction amongst these regional players, where cooperation within UNASUR emerged in a context rife with "conflicts and tension among the countries of South America" (Muhr 2008) and where, despite these tensions, the cooperation that was birthed, led to the development of a political dialogue among members through "UNASUR as a regional political forum" (Ganem 2015:208) which was "one of the most significant outcomes of this new integration regime" (Ganem 2015:208).

This political dialogue and its success are exactly what give credence to claims of Brazil's "consensual hegemony" where "ideas, a sense of common project with benefits for all" forms the basis of the hegemonic project, where the consensual hegemon introduces "an approach to organizing transnational economic, political and social relations," followed by "a consultation process designed explicitly to include, at least on a prima facie basis, the aims and aspirations of the other countries" and this in turn "will help establish and operate the hegemony through their compliance" (Burges 2009:10). As discussed, these claims of compliance, management, consultation have been heavily overstated in the literature. The next section attempts to detangle the

vagaries of this intersection, especially in the theoretical categories that have been framed to explain the same.

UNDERSTANDING THEORETICAL CONVOLUTIONS OF THE POST-LIBERAL INTEGRATION REGIME

Despite the academic and research furore that the post-liberal integration regime unleashed, the fact of the matter is, that not only did the regime fail to meet the expansive regional agenda it had elaborated, situating it in the history of regionalism efforts in Latin America that fail to do so, it added heft to Malamud's assertion that Latin American attempts at regionalism have never converged into a single project. Even the terminology for these stymied, if not outrightly failed attempts is contested-should these organisations and their processes be placed in the spectrum of regional cooperation due to the lack of deepening of the regional agenda or should the declaratory intent of using the terminology of integration by regional entrepreneurs be respected? How far can the post-liberal mechanisms of cooperation be redeemed and how would the theoretical conversation appear?

Mace and Migneault (2011:159) suggest "there may be continuing dialogue inside the various theoretical communities, but almost none between them." This section attempts to catalogue certain elements of this theoretical conversation explaining the three major theoretical concepts emblematic of the post-liberal integration regime. The first subsection delineates the terminologies of integration, cooperation and regional governance through a close reading of the concept of overlapping regionalism. The second subsection emphasizes the importance of state agency in regional integration in Latin America. The third subsection attempts to theorize regional agency in the post-liberal integration regime by explaining how and where presidential agency functioned to build consensus.

Overlapping Regionalism: Merging Pathways of Integration, Cooperation and Governance

The "will to integrate" (Campos 2016:875) in Latin America, the resilience of regionalism (*Briceño-Ruiz* 2020) and the persistence of efforts towards the same have garnered much academic curiosity. So dense has been the proliferation of regionalism in the region, that UNASUR, ALBA and CELAC are merely the newest additions to the "veritable alphabet soup of acronyms" (Heine 2012:209). This propensity towards proliferation it seems, simultaneously stymies the potential of these regionalisms where the "will to integrate" is nevertheless not "real" or "true," precluding efforts to "integrate without fear" (Piñera 2011). It is surmisable then, that regional integration and the understanding of what it signifies as a concept is convoluted and at the best of times, murky in Latin America.

In such a scenario of reactivations, stagnations, new formulations and reinventions, the tall claims made about post-liberal integration regime, especially, its uniqueness and its transformative character, were bound to be contentious. As delineated in the previous section, while the agenda of the post-liberal integration regime was novel in the way it manifested, there are plenty of path dependencies between these new formulations and older versions of regionalisms. Moreover, as Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffmann (2015:5) explain, in the most recent period of regionalism, "neo-liberal and post-liberal initiatives coexist, creating a complex network of overlapping memberships and regional approaches." Newer conceptualizations like "anarchical regionalism" (Hirst 2009) and "post-commercial regionalism" (Tussie and Trucco 2010) have been proffered to explain this proliferation of both organizations and mandates. As Nolte (2018:130) puts it:

> In Latin America, overlapping is mostly the result of the creation of new organizations, which overlap with established ones. Thus, the question of why regional organizations overlap is related to the question of why new regional organizations are created.

Importantly, this co-existence of differing integration logics, in the case of multiplication and overlapping of regional organizations in the post-liberal integration regime has also been explained by referring to its post-hegemonic character (Tussie and Riggirozzi 2012). On the one hand, post-hegemonic regionalism acknowledged that

the regional agenda was beyond trade, where the mandate of integration was widened, leading to the formation of "regional structures characterized by hybrid practices as a result of partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neo-liberal governance, and in the acknowledgment of other political forms of organization and management of regional (common) goods" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:12). On the other hand, the emergence of post-hegemonic regionalism did not mean that "capitalism, liberalism and trade-related forms of integration cease to exist," rather, that their "centrality" was "being displaced" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:35). These were the "alternative pathways to region building" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffmann 2015:6) that Latin America offered, where post-hegemonic regionalism described a "new period" of "regional and economic integration and political cooperation" but, importantly "not a new model." Instead, this characterization attempted to capture "the plurality of models" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffman 2015:6) which coexisted in different regional groupings. Thus, while acknowledging that regional formations were promoting counter hegemonic regional formations, that accommodated different ideological leanings along a spectrum from being anti-neoliberalism to anti-US hegemony, post-hegemonic regionalism also emphasized that regional integration in Latin America was post hegemony, in that "the rationale of the new process in Latin America is not restricted to the promotion of trade or opposition to US hegemony" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffmann 2015:6).

While the category of post-hegemonic regionalism may appear to dilute the "transformative" claims made by post-liberal integration, it attempted to explain the overlapping, competing and even contentious regional mandates that simultaneously existed in the region. It accommodated the difference of these organizations by emphasizing that the mere existence of plurality of integration rationales, was both novel and reconstitutive, in the constructivist sense of region building where "new values and ideas about the nature of regional economic integration and political cooperation" were being "diffused in the region" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffman 2015:7). As a "region is what actors make of it" (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012:3), these new ideas, despite competing with contradictory and contentious prevailing ideas, via the route of the post-liberal regional organizations, "permeated the Latin American system of states and non-state actors" and gave "new traits to the regionalist process" (Briceño-Ruiz and Hoffman 2015:7).

What were the consequences for the promises made by the post-liberal integration regime, given this dissonance in the mandate of integration? The concept of post-hegemonic regionalism, especially in the reality of the eventual stagnation of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC seems to be less convincing. The mere occurrence of plurality in the regional agenda did not guarantee its permanence. With the changes in the economic and political fortunes of the region, increasingly, ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC found themselves in stalemate from 2017 onwards. Eventually, UNASUR, the emblematic umbrella organisation of the post-liberal regime found members leaving its fold ending in eventual disbandment and the emergence of yet another regional organisation, Forum for the Progress and Development of South America (PROSUR).

Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte (2013) have explained the causes of overlapping regionalism which shed greater light on the fate of the post-liberal integration regime, especially in terms of predicting the diffusion of the same. This overlap might occur either in "mandate" of the regional organizations or in "membership" mandate "refers to the functional dimension of an institution; that is, the issue areas it covers" and membership "addresses the geographical or spatial reach of each institution" (Nolte 2018:129). They have used the concept of regime complexity to widen the discussion on overlapping in institutions beyond economic integration. Emphasizing the "power dimension" in the creation of institutions, they argue that these institutions may be "instruments of domination when hegemonic states employ them to promote their interests through their agenda-setting capacity" (Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013:372). In order to "limit the influence" of these hegemons, overlap "results from initiatives by subgroups of states within an institution that create a new institution to limit the influence of an actor within the larger institution," (Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013:372-373) as already discussed in the previous section on intersections. These 'intersecting regional forms of cooperation' are 'an expression of increasingly intense regional relations' (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012; Tussie 2009; Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013).

This overlap creates a situation of "forum shopping" (Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013) which could lead to an instance of "variable geometry" (Hofmann and Mérand 2012: 137) or "modular regionalism" where ""states pick and choose membership of regional integration projects reflecting their national interests and foreign policy priorities in

specific areas" (Gardini 2013). This plurality of regional governance architecture, "enhances the ability of countries to coordinate policies, and provides forums more flexible to the changing political reality in the region and to the different issues that require international coordination and norms" (Herz 2011:77). It could also introduce "unhelpful competition between actors, inefficiencies and transaction costs that end up compromising the objectives of international cooperation" (Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013:373) which could lead to hemispheric disintegration instead of unity (Malamud and Gardini 2012). Thus, "the appraisal of the possible costs and benefits of overlapping regional organizations in Latin America is mixed" (Nolte 2018:129).

This fractious situation, when combined with the power dimension of overlapping regionalism, whether by the act of resistance by minor powers to the regional powers ambitions, which may take the route of creating "nested" or "subsidiary organizations" or, the evocation of a "vision of the future" which come attached with strategic discourses supporting an alternate future, in turn ascribe meaning to regional organizations and serve to "shape a distinct (sub-)regional identity" (Weiffen, Wehner and Nolte 2013:375). This is especially true in the case of Latin America where most regional organizations "have been created to promote new regional projects or objectives that have not yet been realized by existing regional organizations" and these new organizations are "reactions to new challenges" (Nolte 2018:130). Thus, conflicting identities, changed political and economic futures and the potential for competition within overlapping regionalism may explain the demise of the post-liberal integration promise, once the emergence of a new challenge and a new paradigm undid the logic of the previous iteration. In Latin America, states join different organisations to increase their available options and overlapping therefore, "is the result of the activities of member states" and "whether overlapping leads to problems depends on the strategies of the states that are members of different organisations" (Nolte2018:130).

It is clear then, that regional agency may be located in the State in the context of Latin American regionalism. However, given the focus on autonomy and sovereignty, what did the increased role of the State mean for the development of the post-liberal agenda? The next subsection attempts to unpack the importance of the State as a regionalising actor, especially analysing its much heralded 'return' in the post-liberal integration era.

Return of the State: Fraught Pathways of State Excesses, Inadequacies and Resistant Social Structures

The post-liberal integration regime was marked by the "return of the State to politics, particularly in foreign relations and economic and social development" (Sanahuja 2012:7). In dissonance with earlier dictats of the New Regionalism Approach, the state in this integration regime was interventionist, activist and reformist, attempting to undo the "conditionalities imposed by the Washington Consensus in the 1990s" where the "turmoil linked to the relative decline of the hegemonic power of the system" reintroduced the need for "Keynesian politics and state reform" (Corival Alves do Carmo and Pecequilo 2012:1) so that the failures of the neoliberal system, both socio-political as well as the fluctuations in the global market, could be addressed.

There is general agreement in the available literature that once integration was redeemed from the constraints of the Cold War, newer interpretations of what it meant, how it could be instituted as well as understood, were brought to the forefront. In this moment, Latin America "rethought itself" and "in its history" was "able to recognize values and shared culture" (Fernández 2014:3). In the post-neoliberal turn, the State was positioned "as the centre of public, environmental, technological, political and educational policies" (Fernández 2014:4) leading to the birth of organisations like ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC. As Riggirozzi and Ryan (2021:8) explain:

> new modes of mobilization and coordination pushed the states of South America to redefine the nation state with inter-state coordination functioning to create a sub- regional political identity in terms of peace, security, social justice and development. New spaces and actions created a distance from the US in key issue areas (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012) and brought a primarily social agenda back into the ambit of democratic government where social regional policy had been almost completely dependent on market needs.

These "new narratives and practices on regionalism" (Briceño-Ruiz, Vigevani, and Mariano 2017:174) were manifestations of a region-wide "bottom-up critique of the neoliberal model" (Arenas-Garcia 2012:70). A caveat must be introduced in this neat conception of a unified and largely undifferentiated "bottom-up critique." As Yates and Bakker (2013:3) explain, "the post-neoliberal project does not – and cannot – entail a wholesale break from neoliberalism or produce its binary other" as "the concrete possibilities for such are filtered out by historically constituted institutional conditions." Coupled with this dissonance is the fact that this project itself is not uniform. Dabène

(2012:5) has explained, that in the emergence of the post-liberal wave of integration, "convergence stems from the initial economic and political environment" and how, the emergence of the "same policy paradigm" can prompt convergence in a wave of integration as a "by-product of diffusion of ideas or norms." However, despite following similar norms or responding to similar crises, the differences and distinctness of the intensity of response, domestic concerns, role of external actors can introduce an element of friction in these convergences. This may happen even though member states are "keen to develop the same projects, under the influence of the same ideology and proactive actors" and "different groups of countries set similar agendas and try to deliver the same outcomes," (Dabène 2012:5). This friction or "gap" (Pierson 1996) can reinforce overlapping of mandate and profusion of regional agenda despite parity in interests of member states. Therefore, the most recent wave of integration in the region has been "less consensual" (Dabène 2012:16) than the previous waves primarily because of the heterogeneity of regional agenda, leading to an "integration of a third kind, a contentious blend of structuralism and neoliberalism" (Dabène 2012:7). These intricacies, especially in the processes of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC have been sketched out in the previous section of this chapter.

This lack of consensus is especially problematic to reconcile with the overarching explanation of this wave being located in the rise of the pink tide, where these ideologically aligned governments supposedly "used existing and new institutions to expand the provision of public goods on a regional scale" as well as "channeled the demands of social movements, establishing a regional social space that empowered these groups" (Petersen and Schulz 2018:106). However, when the statist agency is underlined, especially in the context of a more nuanced understanding of the presidential character of state agency, this dissonance in the paradigm of the post-liberal agenda becomes clearer. The hope was, that not only were the norms that resulted in the espousal of the post-liberal regime diffused via the São Paulo Forums widely across the region, the victories won by major leaders of the Left in the 2000s actually bolstered their ability to implement these norms into actionable results. Conversely, these victories brought with them their own set of problems which ensured contention, even while working towards similar goals and responding to the same paradigm shift.

The State and its role in driving integration in Latin America is not new, "regionalism in Latin America has long been intertwined with the issue of state capacity, defined as the ability of states to intervene in societies" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:103). However, one of the reasons proffered to explain the "exhaustion of the potential" (Malamud and Gardini 2012:117) of the post-liberal integration regime has been this overlapping of regional agenda, where different motivations of various states and the proliferation of these motivations has manifested in fragmented regional agendas, precisely because of the primacy of the state as the driver of integration. Thus, it becomes important to ask, how did state agency erode the intensification of the post-liberal agency?

Firstly, the paradigmatic shift introduced by the pink tide was not complete. Not only did these governments adhere to different methodologies in their pursuit of dismantling neoliberalism, the stated opposition to neoliberalism also varied. Yates and Bakker (2013:3) explain that post-neoliberalism may be understood as:

> a combination of an ideological project and a set of policies and practices that revolves around the dual aim of: (1) redirecting a market economy towards social concerns; and (2) reviving citizenship via a new politics of participation and alliances across sociocultural sectors and groups.

Moreover, many of these leaders, despite winning big in home elections, had come to power after negotiating contracts with ideologically different interest groups, where "the interaction with the private sector, most notably, constrains the leftist governments' action." (Dabène 2012:24). The Left State, had to encounter the demands of an increasingly expansive civil society, as part and parcel of its opposition to neoliberalism as well as manage the demands of the alliances formed at home which would entail the implementation of this post-neoliberal project. Therefore, "flexibility" or "differentiated integration" (Stubb 1996), where plurality of agenda, voluntariness of participation, flexibility of timelines in following through on agenda items became emblematic of the integration process. Giving the example of the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty of 2008, which emphasizes the principles of "solidarity, flexibility, plurality, diversity, complementarity and voluntary participation," Dabène (2012:24) has argued the post-liberal integration regime "consolidated and institutionalized flexibility as a method of integration." He explains how, UNASUR "clearly calls for a homogenous member states' collective commitment but at the same time, it sets them

free to opt out" (Dabène 2012:24). Thus, the building of consensus was paramount for the implementation of the regional agenda in all concerned organisations, despite the voluntary and flexible nature of adherence; however, the achievement of this consensus could only ever be contentious as a result of the domestic priorities of state actors and the proliferation of demands of non-state preferences.

Secondly, given this distinction in the motivations and perspectives of actor states within the integration regime, most found themselves battling the dilemma of the "sovereignty trap" (Dabène 2012). The new paradigm elaborated at the São Paulo Forums proliferated norms of integration in the region which clearly enunciated the need for supranational integration. These norms were especially motivated by their opposition to the neoliberal regime, the "defensive" (Tussie 2009) character of the integration envisaged, where protection from external threats, especially imperialism, underlined the need for supranational integration. The corollary was, that the paradigm simultaneously also bolstered nation states' sovereignty claims. As Dabène (2012:19) explains, "this leftist conception of regional integration entails a collective defense of sovereignty, while at the same time it compels individual countries to cede sovereignty." This sovereignty trap itself is well documented in the literature on Latin American regionalism (Malamud 2003; Rivarola Puntigliano and Briceño-Ruiz 2013) and is particularly complicated given that state agency in Latin American regionalism is limited to presidential agency, veering between "collective presidentialism" (Dabène 2009) and "interpresidentialism" (Malamud 2003). Such is the predominance of the role of the state-as-president in regional integration in Latin America that this overarching presidential agency leads to the "capture" of civil society demands (Serbin 2012), further unravelling the participatory character of regional cooperation as well as the stated aims of post-neoliberalism. This inherent contradiction has lead Malamud and Gardini (2012:125) to argue that "regionalism in Latin America has reached a peak beyond which it will be unable to progress."

Others have argued that this negotiation of sovereignty vis-a-via supranationality is carefully negotiated by Latin American states. The goal of regionalism itself, is different in Latin America where, "these governments have used regionalism to bolster their agendas for domestic reform rather than to create institutions to provide public goods at regional level" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:105) as the "reluctance of states to

pool sovereignty does not render regional cooperation ineffective" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:104), for states in Latin America use regionalism to "boost their domestic agendas" by setting "the regional agenda" and not via "creating institutions capable of providing public goods at the regional level" or their implementation. Thus, as Peterson and Schulz (2018:110) put it:

> Cooperation is not necessarily about creating effective mechanisms for the provision of public goods at the regional level, but can be used by governments to gather information and legitimize their agendas both internationally and domestically. Since states generally have recognized authority in conducting international relations, this arena can be useful for extending authority into other administrative domains. By building regional support for their agendas, governments can bolster the legitimacy of domestic political projects.

However, even if it were to accepted that regional cooperation serves other purposes in Latin America, the question remains that why did the combined weight of flexible agendas, presidential diplomacy and voluntary participation not result in lasting institutions? The next section attempts to unearth the significance of summit diplomacy and declaratory regionalism to answer this question.

Summit Diplomacy: Contentious Pathways towards Building Consensus via Presidentialism

Peterson and Schulz (2018:103) have argued that states use regionalism to build legitimacy. This project of building legitimacy via regional integration is twofold: firstly, "by acknowledging and being acknowledged by their peers," states are able to entrench their legitimacy domestically by curbing excessive "foreign interference" as well as by "gaining access to external support and markets." Secondly, regionalism can also "function as a tool for legitimizing state activities in specific domains" and "bolstering the domestic agendas" of Latin American governments. The methodology to affect this legitimacy however, is dependent on the development of consensus.

The contours of where consensus must be arrived at are different from the methodology of how consensus must be constructed. The literature suggests that for a new paradigm of regionalism to be instituted into practice, especially for the emergence of a new wave of regional integration, a consensus on the role of the state in the political, economic and integration process must be arrived at by member states (Dabène 2012; Dabène

2009). This would refer to the logic of integration which has been characterized as closed/old, open/new, post-liberal/post-hegemonic, demonstrating the shifts in the role the state need must play to advance the project of integration. However, once the wave is instituted, whether in treaties or in formal recognized institutions, thereby signaling "successful agenda setting" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:108), the contours of building consensus may be implemented in the form the regional arrangement takes as well as the structure and character of the regional agenda. It is in the process of building consensus, where the unique characteristics of Latin American regionalism, namely presidentialism and summit diplomacy become relevant.

The previous section has emphasized how the new paradigm of regionalism, enunciated and developed at the World Social Forums laid down specific rules on the role the State must play in reaction and in response to neoliberalism. While the degree of opposition to neoliberalism differed, there was by and large, a consensus achieved on the importance of the State in directing the political, economic and social responses to neoliberalism. Integration was also a perpetrated goal in this response. This consensus is not ironclad across actors, may waver in intensity over time and vary in degree across issues and actors. Dabène (2009:42) explains this variegation in consensus on the role of the State among members, over time, using the concept of politicization.

> Politicization implies that actors consider economic integration as an instrument to reach political goals, such as crisis resolution or consolidation of democracy. As corollaries, politicization also implies a commitment of key political actors sharing a conception of common interests, institutional building to embody common interests, and possible participation of non-state actors.

One of the strategies for managing this wavering intensity of commitment resulted in the sovereignty gap as explored in the previous section. As Malamud (2013) has argued, the aim of regional integration efforts in Latin America has to with strengthening national sovereignty, in opposition to its pooling or delegation. This refurbished the legitimacy building intentionality identified by Peterson and Schulz before. However, what is the methodology of this process and how is this legitimacy production and consensus construction carried out in the realm of regional integration?

Placing the onus on the "intentions" of states, Dabène has equated the process of politicization with "collective presidentialism" which has "assumed different levels of

commitments" (2009:41) and is a "core feature of Latin American integration" (2009:58). Malamud (2005) has explained this presidential agency by articulating the concept of "interpresidentialism" which is the "outcome of combining an international strategy, namely presidential diplomacy, with a domestic institution, namely presidentialism" (Malamud 2013:7). This distinction between presidential diplomacy and presidentialism is an important one, especially in the discussion on agency as employed towards building consensus. Presidential diplomacy is "the customary use of direct negotiations between national presidents rather than professional diplomats every time a crucial decision has to be made or a critical conflict needs to be solved" (Malamud, 2013:7), as presidents have "greater room for maneuver from both institutional and political constraints in the foreign policy area" (Malamud 2015:112).

Moreover, concentrationist presidentialism, "grants chief executives the power to strike deals without seeking approval by either parliaments or cabinets" (Malamud 2013:7), "increasing the capacity for presidential initiative, rapid response, and executive-driven decision making" (Malamud 2015:112). Given the legitimacy of the president as an actor, due to having won popular elections, their ability to veto domestic institutions as well as the free reign of action they enjoy in the foreign policy realm, has resulted in a concentration of decision-making power in the president. This has "proved well suited to deal with integration, at least in its initial stages, because it managed to overcome obstacles by legislatures, cabinets, and regional institutions" (Malamud 2014:114). If consensus building were the aim, interpresidentialism was a potent methodology. As Malamud (2015:121) puts it

> interpresidentialism is supported domestically by political institutions rather than by societal demands, and it is propelled by political preferences rather than social preferences. Besides, it is proactive and thus autonomous from previous levels of international interdependence. And, unlike bureaucratic politics, it does not involve bargaining among several players because one of them overrules all others, be they cabinet ministers, parliamentary majorities, the diplomatic corps or even supranational authorities.

This "power-oriented rather than rule-oriented" (Malamud 2013:7) character of regional integration further exacerbates the segmentation of the regional agenda as "the agenda is dominated by chief executives unwilling to pool sovereignty, regional initiatives remain volatile and shallow" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:102-103). The logic

of presidentialism however, sustains as national presidents have been deemed "more able, more accessible, more responsive, more effective, and faster than any other actors" (Malamud 2015:118). Apart from their ability to make faster decisions, presidentialism also allows different states, to arrive at consensus, especially regarding the aims and methods of integration, especially in times of democratic stability, where longer terms of presidency allow "incumbent presidents to become more knowledgeable and assertive" and "create personal bonds and political solidarity with fellow presidents in the region," leading to the formation of a sort of "presidents' club" (Malamud 2015:116). The venue for the meeting of this "presidents' club" are the summits, where practicing summit diplomacy, decision-makers, "want to talk integration into existence" (Malamud 2013:9).

Jenne, Urdinez and Schenoni (2017:1) have coalesced this presidential practice of "referring to the region and its institutions in political speeches" as "declaratory regionalism." Despite the implementation gap in integration efforts in Latin America where a "very modest level of integration" has been achieved despite "the inflated agenda of topics discussed by the presidents during their summits" (Dabène 2009:107), "regionalist discourse" seems to have "continued unaffected by the repeated setbacks" (Jenne, Urdinez and Schenoni 2017:2). Dabène's categorization of "symbolic incentives" of integration, hoped to be achieved by presidents offers an explanation why "regionalism has evolved through segmented proliferation rather than enlargement, and through goal transformation rather than goal attainment" in the region (2012:9). These are, prestige accrued from important declarations adopted or protocols signed or summits held in a given president's capital city; presidents also hope for "exoneration of problem-solving failures at the domestic level" by bargaining for extra decision-making clout by invoking the regional level; and, changing the regional agenda to appease opposing social sectors where "a president may use a credit claiming/blame shifting" strategy to shift responsibility for failures.

Coupled with incentives for a diffuse and enlarged agenda, presidents may pragmatically practice and praise integration, garnering support at home without incurring material costs so much so that where "laxity" in implementing formal procedures and rules has become a characteristic feature of the Latin American regional identity (Dominguez 2007). This laxity when coupled with the definitional feature of

presidentialism, namely "a fixed term for office" (Malamud 2015:113) explains why diffuse, segmented integration agendas continue to remain politically relevant for Latin America, where "the key is not implementation or strong institutions, but setting the regional agenda" (Peterson and Schulz 2018:104).

How must these varied interactions between concept, practice and agency be surmised, especially to understand the fate of the post-liberal integration regime, especially its much-touted failure? What are the conclusions that may be drawn from the discussions proffered in both sections on the practice of regional policy making and the theoretical models used to explain this practice? The next section attempts to offer summarising remarks, with a focus on explaining the failures and significance of post-liberal integration.

SURMISING RELEVANCE: EVALUATING THE VEERS, DEAD ENDS AND WIDENING OF PATHWAYS OF POST-LIBERAL INTEGRATION REGIME

The first section of this chapter attempted to underscore the intersecting pathways of decision-making, vision and methodology by the primary regionalizing actors, namely Brazil and Venezuela, especially with a view to explain how binaries of competition or cooperation have not been mutually exclusive in the post-liberal integration regime. The second section explained the primary features of the post-liberal integration regime, namely, overlapping regionalism, the return of the 'state' in regional policy making and the role of consensus building via summit diplomacy and presidential diplomacy to situate the goals of different leaders onto the regional agenda and explain the contradictions in their practice of regionalism. The question that needs to be asked however, is how can these various processes of practice and concept be brough together to evaluate the performance of these integration processes?

Despite the lofty aims of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic integration regime, these organisations have said to have stagnated, fizzled out and abandoned. As Nolte and Weiffen (2021:1) put it, "in Latin America, regional cooperation has been stagnating due to the end of the commodity boom, ideological confrontations, and a lack of regional leadership." However, in the words of Riggirozzi and Ryan (2021:2), "failures

in regional politics are not a zero-sum game." This section attempts to surmise relevance from the post-liberal integration regime.

This section attempts to bring together these contradictions in practice and conceptual elaborations and offer an explanation for the place of the main variables of this research project, namely the regional leadership of Lula-led Brazil and Chávez-led Venezuela, especially with a view on explaining the performance of the post-liberal integration regime. The first sub-section attempts to explain the relevance of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic project, especially in the character of integration it formulated. The second sub-section locates the relationship between ideology and leadership and offers an explanation for the contradictions and purported failures that have marked the practice of regionalism in Latin America.

Unpacking the Terminology of 'Integration': Myths and Truths
The very first argument mounted as an explaining variable in the saga of the failure of post-liberal regional integration is the usage of the terminology itself. Emphasizing the lack of sovereignty transfer and the loose institutionalisation of the regime as explaining factors for its purported failures, Malamud explains (2013:2) that one was to redeem the assigned meanings to this regime would lie in the usage of the correct terminology, replacing regional 'integration' with regional 'cooperation' as "while cooperation entails voluntary compliance, integration requires some degree of sovereignty transfer, which discourages unilateral withdrawal and raised the costs of process reversion." This valorization of sovereignty transfer simultaneously redeems the post-liberal regime as well as offers an explanation for its inadequate performance.

The idea is simple, integration is a terminology best reserved for economic integration, and this blurring of terminology is emblematic of a semantic confusion in the region where "regionalism understood as 'comprehensive economic integration' in a macro-region is losing ground to regionalism understood as 'a set of diverse cooperation projects' in several subregions" (Malamud and Gardini 2012:117). Moreover, despite the insistence on the development of a new paradigm of integration, the segemented and overlapping character of the regionalism that unfolded in the region is emblematic of the exhaustion of its potential. As Malamud and Gardini (2012:117) explain, "Latin American regionalism is not evolving towards yet another paradigm but is instead

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rolling onto itself either spilling around without deepening or going back to standard cooperation agreements." Here, the dissonance with claims of transformative novelty ascribed to post-hegemonic and post-liberal regime are questioned and found wanting.

How does one explain the enduring resilience of regional integration in the region? Reactivation, resilience and the enduring presence of regional integration as a foreign policy choice is emblematic of the Latin American region. As Axline (1981:176) puts it, "one of the most remarkable features of Latin American regional integration has been its capacity to survive and remain active and dynamic in the face of numerous obstacles, shortcomings and failures." Failure therefore, is accounted for in any extrapolation of regional integration in Latin America as is the recognition of the fact that the European model of integration has to be adapted to, remoulded for the Latin American context, depending on crisis, vision and domestic and international context.

Dabène (2009) has evaluated the classical definitions of integration and argued that instead of the ceding or pooling of sovereignty, definitions of regional integration in Latin America, need to answer the question why states form regional organisations in the face of their unwillingness to pool sovereignty. Arguing for a looser definition of integration, Dabène (2009:10) defines regional integration as "a historical process of increased levels of interaction between political units (sub national, national or transnational), provided by actors sharing common ideas, setting objectives, and defining methods to achieve them, and by so doing contributing to building a region."

What does this rearticulation mean for the post-liberal integration regime? Malamud and Gardini's denial of this regime reflecting a paradigm shift precisely because of the overlapping and segmented nature of regionalism seems valid when the existence multiple integration logics is taken into account. However, as Dabène (2012) has explained, no rebirth is totally brand new or complete and the question that needs to be asked is why did regional integration take the form it did across the region and remained a valid foreign policy choice? Muhr (2016) prioritizes a "socio-spatial approach" to understanding regionalism in Latin America, inherently opposed to the "methodological nationalism" which centres analysis on nation states, "spatially conceptualised in absolute (territorially bounded), essentialist terms as an inert, static and timeless backdrop of 'container' of societies and social action" (2016:5). The goal is to deter assumptions of homogeneity in national spaces, especially in terms of

attributing ideology, vision and motivation. Muhr's(2016) socio-spatial approach to understanding the logic of post-liberal regime explains how if nation states were to account for their heterogenous character in line with the uneven nature of development, these inconsistences in adoption of mandates and overlaps would make a lot more sense. This is also in line with the fact that "the segment nature of Latin American regionalism is not always competitive but frequently overlapping" (Malamud 2013:5), where there may be changes in the strategy prompting states to follow regional integration in their foreign policy practice. Dastradi (2010:924) explains that the "dynamic and interactive character of strategy" is emblematic of this learning process, where "states may learn and in process incorporate causal ideas and principled beliefs in revised state strategies."

Undoing this preoccupation with the format integration is supposed to take, where weak institutions demonstrate shallow, flimsy commitments that are unable to promote deepening of integration, Peterson and Schulz (2018:107) have argued that "the focus on implementation overlooks the way that regional schemes can serve other purposes." Outlining these other purposes, Riggirozzi and Ryan (2021:12-13) argue that "even if integrationist ambitions and dynamics face challenges it is possible that new regional opportunities find ways to advance debates and practices in specific areas."

Explaining why "regional policymaking should be assessed through a plurality of political logics, not easily reducible to a single rule or expression of economic integration," becomes easier when Van Langenhove's (2003:28) assertion of the "multi-dimensional" character of regional integration is taken into account, where implicitly, cooperation occurs "along a number of different dimensions such as culture, politics, security, economics and diplomacy." Moreover, "integration is not an end in itself; its success and institutional arrangements depend on the interests of the participating states and of those states' citizens" (Nolte and Comini 2016:551).

Thus, the post-liberal regime is an integration regime not only for the processes of region building and policy formation it furthered, it is also legitimately an integration regime because the drivers of this regime, namely the presidents of the member states, said so. Jenne, Schenoni and Urdinez (2017:16) carried out an analysis of the speeches of the presidents in important international fora and found that in their practice of declaratory regionalism, the leaders of the post-liberal regime, particularly those who

identified with the Left predominantly used the terminology of "integration," where this terminology was employed "in favourable economic and political contexts" and "more so when their mandate fell during the post-liberal period," in reference to "all sub-regional framings except hemisphere." These declarations are extensions of the terminology of integration developed and employed during the São Paulo Forums as developed in Chapter III. Ultimately, "the institutional design of a particular organisation reflects the interests and strategies of its founding members" (Nolte and Comini 2016:550) and "what might be a problem from an organisational perspective can actually create room for strategic action by the individual member states" (Nolte and Comini 2016:550).

Therefore, overlapping mandates, thin institutionalisation or petered out ideological consensus cannot undo the variation that has been acknowledged in integration processes. Even if the relevance of the terminology could only be defended by the declarations of those who spoke it into action, these discourses are significant in that they reveal important insights about the political character of the regionalism processes and an acknowledgement of the victories won in these spaces has the capacity to improve credibility and legitimate regional policy making (Riggirozzi and Ryan 2021).

Leadership and Ideology: Consonances, Compromises and Confrontations
The first section in this Chapter has attempted to explain how the space for leadership in the post-liberal integration regime was both heavily contested and simultaneously, also marked by unwillingness or inability on the part of the most visibly present regional leaders, Lula-led Brazil and Chávez-led Venezuela, to actually lead. Conversely, the second section also emphasized how building consensus was an important instrument to ensure functionality, whether to manage the competitive goals of the member states with the aims of the proclaimed leaders, or to prod agenda items into action in a leadership vacuum. Thus, for the forwarding of the post-liberal agenda, ideological convergence and strong leadership had to be in consonance. Quiliconi and Rivera (2019:220) have analysed this relationship between ideological congruity and leadership in the case of the South American Defence Council (SADC) and the South American World Drug Problem Council (SWDPC) of UNASUR and argue that not only did contestations in leadership, such as the "alternation in leading" by Argentina

and Venezuela made cooperation possible in the SADC, in the SWDPC, despite ideological convergence among members, the agenda did not flourish due to the reticence of regional leaders, namely Brazil in the promotion of this topic. Therefore "preference convergence is hardly possible without the action of a regional leader" (Quiliconi and Rivera 2019:227).

One of the main explanations for the demise of the post-liberal integration regime, in that both its stated goals have become less appealing across the region as well as its rhetoric having been tainted with associations with public political scandals, is the political and ideologic shift currently underway in the region. An important contributing factor in the development of said integration regime had been the congruity of pink tide regimes and their ideological parity. Leaders of the Left came to power on mandates shaped in realm of civil society and social movements against the excesses of the neoliberal regime and forwarded social welfarist agendas in accordance with the goals of these movements. Tapping into their political networks, both in terms of already formalised networks as well as furthering construction of solidarities by emphasizing political like-mindedness, "endogenous development" was a "national state policy" that was "upscaled as (regional and global) South-South cooperation" (Muhr 2016:7). Ideological consonance among member states, and consequently, presidential leaders was paramount for the process of building consensus which in turn determined the construction and enforcement of the post-liberal, post-hegemonic regional agenda. The ebbing of this left-leaning ideological consciousness therefore, has been an important explanation for the petering out of the post-liberal integration regime. It bears to be asked, how has this ebbing been affected across the region and in what way has this ideological variance proved too much for the 'beyond hegemony' logic of the post-hegemonic integration regime? What explains the collapse of UNASUR, when overlapping mandates are a characteristic feature of Latin American regionalism? This question of ideology can be analysed in three respects, with a view towards explaining the 'failure' of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic project.

Firstly, there has been a shift in governance ideology in the region. Levy and Larrabure (2021:2) have pointed out that not only are there several signifiers of this shift, such as the ousting of Dilma Rousseff from power in Brazil in 2016, the coming to power of Mauricio Macri in Argentina and Jair Messias Bolsonaro in Brazil, the coup in Bolivia

as well as the election of more right-wing governments in the region, there is an exhaustion of the progressivist logic of the Left that had been the engine for the social and political agenda of regional policymaking. This exhaustion is visible in the election of the Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, who even though elected on a progressive platform, adopted a conservative and authoritarian stance in his policies post-election. These two features combined, are emblematic of the assertion that "beyond the political polarization," there is a "strengthening of the civil society Right and a fragmentation of the Left" (Levy and Larrabure 2021:2). The relationship that the progressive governments of the Left forged with the social movements that shaped their political trajectories in many ways, had a dual role to play in this subsequent radicalization of politics. On the one hand, concerns for legitimacy by individual presidents and attempts to maintain public support, given that presidential tenures are liable to answering to the public, as sketched out in Chapter II, prompted excesses both in terms of employing presidential powers to appease different domestic factions and exacerbated the tendency for excesses in policy making, increasing possibilities of corruption; on the other hand, the policies adopted by the progressivist governments, especially in the Brazilian and Venezuelan case, involved a co-option of the social movement space where the arena for civil society protest was diminished by policies followed by these governments. This prompts the second aspect of understanding the linkages between ideology and leadership, namely the strategies employed by the Left leaders to enable their leadership projects and further their ideological vision.

Following from the previous paragraph, an important explaining factor for the inability of ideology to sustain the agenda of the post-liberal integration regime has been the fact that many of the proponents of the guiding ideology carried within their practice the elements of its disassembly. Levy and Larrabure (2021:8) argue that "a 'left' that wanted to change power has been caught by the verticality of the state machine, by state capitalism too, which has sucked in part of the living forces that came out of social movements. For instance, in the case of Lulism, or the ideological brand of leadership that emerged under Lula Nogueira (2017:235) explains:

> Lulism represented a social class pact that attempts to strike a balance between the need for reform and the maintenance of social order where dominant elites temporarily and implicitly agreed to cede part of their power by bringing radical movements into a political project from which they had always been excluded.

> This produced an appearance of class revolution but does not change the structure of domination in a fundamental way, and this enables the government to sustain its hegemonic project.

In the Brazilian scenario therefore, in order to ensure governability, the Lula government in particular followed a set of policies that combined neoliberal economic policies with redistributive social policies (Singer 2013). While civil society actors were granted access to decision-making, their co-option by the state, and thereby, the business elite, resulted in a dwindling of purpose and motivation. Moreover, unlike the Vargas era, the Lula era did not lead to the political mobilization of its support base. Thus, existing structures instead of being supplanted were able to concentrate.

In the Venezuelan scenario, given that an 'alternative integration' was posited, with principles that directed the means towards reformulating methods of global insertion, the purported endogenous development, as Muhr (2016:8) explains, "maintains economic growth and competitive insertion in global capitalism" as well as "a spatial approach to alleviating uneven development" where the decisive role is played by the state. The strategy to export this national model regionally, depended on both the 'immaterial capacity,' or "the ideological mission and the networks" of Chávez as well as the 'material capacity', namely "the financial lever provided by Venezuela's oil" Kneuer (2021:2). While there is plenty of literature on Venezuelan petro-diplomacy, the major difference in the Chavista model was a refusal to 'sow the oil' or investing in capacity and infrastructure development in Venezuelan economy. The high dependence on oil for the Venezuelan economy, made the economic situation particularly volatile (Clem and Maingot 2011). Therefore, despite the logic of negotiating new forms of creation, the material capabilities to fund said revolution remained trapped in global capitalism.

It is evident therefore, that not only was the relationship between social movements and the Left "never stable," "expressing partial alliances between the two sides and the political left's need for broader coalition building" (Levy and Larrabure 2021:6), the progressive governments despite their rhetorical anti-neoliberal stance, in practice, depended on an extractivist logic to fund social policies at home. This reliance on primary commodities that formed the basis of the economic growth of the region was

further accompanied by a reduction in industrial development. As Levy and Larrabure (2021:3) explain:

> we can think of the 'progressive cycle' in Latin American politics as a partial shift from finance-driven accumulation, the 'Washington consensus', to accumulation driven by the exploitation of land, what (Svampa 2013) calls the 'commodities consensus'. On the economic front, the high levels of growth and trade achieved have been the result of an overwhelming reliance on the export of primary goods, and have come alongside a decline in industrial production.

Finally, as stated in the very begging of this subsection, ideology and leadership both are important drivers of placing and promoting issues to the regional agenda as well as building consensus to promote these issues into actionable policy. Presidential ideology has a big role to play here, and "the success and failure of regional integration are partly explained by the convergence of presidential ideologies among member states in a given organization" (Orjuela and Chenou 2018:41). Moreover, as Riggirozzi and Ryan (2021:2) explain, "as domestic politics becomes more tightly coupled with regional policy outcomes," "normative arguments about regional institutions are starting to represent more distinct political ideologies and cleavages." New leaders have attempted to break away from the legacy of the presidential leadership that drove these initiatives. In a press conference before the construction of the   Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR), as a replacement to UNASUR, the Colombian president, Ivan Duque expressly talked about the "shut down" of UNASUR, and termed it a "supporter of the dictatorship of Venezuela" (2019). Integration has not been ousted off the roster of state foreign policy choices, but the format has clearly altered. For example, Jenne, Schenoni and Urdinez (2017) found that leaders on the right, were more partial to the use of the terminology of "regional cooperation," representative of looser commitments. As Levy and Larrabure (2021:8) put it:

> The Latin American right turn appears as a response to a demand from the Left for more social equity, economic development and distribution and political representation and inclusion. When this demand is perceived as a threat by the elites, this combination leads to a concentration of power, the entrenchment and even suspension of rule of law. Other issues at play include the concentration of executive power, the fragmentation of the party system, and the fragmentation of civil society.

Latin American regionalism therefore, appears to be in a moment of crisis at present. However, as has been elaborated in this project, crises and reactivations are part and parcel of the regionalism process in Latin America. The various processes that shaped the post-liberal and post-hegemonic regionalism carry in them the potential to continue to shape the choices and motivations in the current political and regional scenario. The next Chapter concludes the findings of this study.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Most scholars are in agreement that Latin America is a 'continent of contradiction.' The proliferation of explanatory frameworks, often at odds with each other and in conflict with experiences of region building exercises are mired in superfluity, so much so that any attempt towards an all-encompassing explanatory doctrine is overwhelmed with a range of variables without any particular way to prioritise one over the other. Referring to 'conceptual cages', that have been the premises for the construction of this academic convolution in Latin American regional exercises, Lubbock and Vivares (2021) have argued in a recent work that Latin American regionalism and its analyses have been beset by confusion due to a combination of three factors. These are, a near universalization of the experiences of the West with regionalism, which has entailed the erasure of the wider history of regionalism in the world, the focus on institutions which due to its apolitical nature, often does not account for the complex processes of reconfiguration inherent in these newly articulated socio-spatial projects and the presence of the United States of America as an extra regional actor, which is the most important variable in the history of Latin American regional arrangements, where the region's relations with the US allow analytical acumen that could potentially override perspectives that either focus on trade, institutions or other top-down explanations without taking into account hemispheric dynamics, transnational class formations and how geopolitical forces at work affect the development trajectories in the region.

Chapter V attempted to delineate some of these contradictions specifically found in the co-existence of integration logics, the incapability of explanatory frameworks and the resilience of metaphors of autonomy, development and sovereignty that seem to encapsulate these contradictions, even if the base definition of these concepts is always contested. It is clear therefore, that there is acknowledgement in the literature that Latin America need must be considered from a holistic perspective.

What might such a holistic perspective entail? Social constructivists are of the opinion that as regions are socially constructed through processes of regionification, the study of regions and region building processes, especially in published academic research is

also part of the construction of regions and thus, important to be considered and evaluated. This project has structured its evaluation in this vein, by articulating the dialogue (and at times, arguments) between a variety of explanations, with a view to explain the construction, functioning and logic of the three regional organisations under study, viz. the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This doctoral monograph has attempted to catalogue approaches towards post-liberal and post-hegemonic regionalism, incorporating the importance of situating the US in these regional efforts, prioritising the political character of the integration regime as well as situating the exercise of regional integration in the historical social and political landscape of Latin American politics.

The present chapter concludes the findings of this study, especially with a view to answer the proposed questions in the beginning of the work. The first section briefly summarizes the main research problem and engages with the identified research questions and research hypotheses. The second section denotes the main findings of this study. The final section identifies the possible implications of this study as well as the relevance of this project in enabling the identification of future possibilities for Latin American regionalism.

DELINEATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Chapter I, a case was made for undertaking a thorough evaluation of the 'transformative' character of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic regional integration regime, especially with a view to understand the qualification of this difference in the form of regionalism that emerged. This study elaborated its stated goal to identify recurring patterns in the touted difference of the format of regionalism that was advanced in this regime, employing the variable of leadership, especially with a view to understand the crisis of the advanced logic and test the relevance of meaning in these projects, given the dissonance between the practice and poetics of the project. Following a social constructivist approach, acknowledging the paramountcy of social actors in the construction of regions as expressed in this analytical framework, especially that regions are 'human constructs' (Van Langenhove 2003), the study

identified leadership as its primary analytical variable. It elaborated a two-level theoretical framework for the same in Chapter II, conceptualising leadership at the state level as regional powerhood and regional leadership and, at the decision-maker level, identified and accorded importance to the primary decision-maker of the post-liberal integration process, namely the president, by employing the concept of *presidencialismo*.

The three organisations under study were the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). These three organisations were both post-liberal, in that their integration logic was post-trade, as well as post-hegemonic, and they did not posit one model of economic development as the primary model of development, prioritising instead a conjugated view of economic development and political cooperation. All three organisations, in varying degrees were also counter-hegemonic, where they envisaged the regional space *sans* the influence of the United States, prioritising autonomous development. These counter-hegemonic and autonomous spaces were marked by 'lite' institutionalisation, a return of the 'state' in matters of development and equitable decision-making honed by ideological and political consensus formed along similar ideas on the vision of integration, if not always the goals. Supranationality was therefore, never the goal or the route, as integration was a means to promote autonomy both for the State as a political actor in setting the regional and development agenda, as well as a nationalist, sovereign entity in the eroded space of the neoliberal world order. States derived legitimacy for this capture of agency by forwarding social welfare projects, honed in social movements and civil society dissent against the neoliberal regime. In the regional space, priority was given to the development of new principles of cooperation, with a view to address inequality, poverty and social exclusion.

To propel these stated goals into action, the principles of equality among member states and decision-making by consensus were prioritised. Presidents were therefore, the ideal candidates for constructing consensus as their unique political agency situated in the Latin American traditions of *presidencialismo* accorded them greater agency and powers to effect action, while their need to sustain domestic legitimacy ensured that the social mandates on which they won power would be adequately represented on the

regional fora in order for them to continue deriving political power from their domestic constituents. The construction of a region, is very much a political act and the politics of this construction is inherent in the competing visions by different regionalising actors. Two distinct regional leadership projects were thus advocated by Brazil and Venezuela, led by two charismatic leaders, President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva of Brazil and President Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías of Venezuela.

Focusing on the social constructivist logic that regions are socially constructed, Chapter I offered an analysis of the concept of 'Latin Americanness' in Latin American integration, grounding the historical discourses of shared identity that both leaders differently articulated in order to forward their personal discourses of regionalism. Chapter IV elaborated the motivation behind the regional strategies employed by the two leaders, contextualising their regional vision in their specific national scenarios and their particular discourses in the forwarding of the regional idea. The regional space during the post-liberal regime therefore, was not homogenous.

However, given the current stalled nature of the forwarded integration processes, various scholarly explanations have been advanced that explained the structural factors inherent in the processes of integration as well as the politics of the region that ensured the 'failure' of these projects. These explanations are often contradictory and difficult to prioritize over other co-existing explanations. This study critically employed the constructivist concepts of identity and construction of meaning through discourse by grounding them in the primary variable of leadership, especially with a view to explain these contradictions. The study identified three questions to resolve these contradictions: first, how can the separate history of Brazil be reconciled with historical regional identity in Latin America? Second, given the importance of the two regional leadership projects, were these projects complementing or competing with each other? Finally, what are the reasons that the 'state' has remained the predominant actor in regional integration efforts in Latin America? All three questions have a unique bearing in both the contradictions expounded in the literature on post-liberal integration regime as well as a central place in their proffered explanations.

Creating consonance and ensuring reciprocity of meaning are important aspects of building a region. Creating a sense of shared identity was an important strategy of both regional leadership projects where the Brazilian construction of a geographically limited South America was an attempt to negotiate its uneasy reality of having an adjacent but not similar historical path to the rest of the Latin American region. Grounded in the larger narrative of 'Latin Americanness,' the Brazilian construction of South America, as detailed in Chapter IV, was a political project that was in development much before Lula. Prompted by its search for status at the international stage as well as the carefully considered opposition to the FTAA, Brazil followed a strategy of 'autonomy through participation' where, under the leadership of Lula, regional integration found priority, especially to bolster Brazilian ambitions towards leadership at the regional and more importantly, at the international stage. Most analyses of the period, like the one conducted by Onuki, Mouron and Urdinez (2016), explain that despite most Brazilians not identifying with the Latin American identity, during the period where UNASUR came into being, public opinion polls were largely in favour of Brazilian leadership in the region. The delimitation of the regional space to South America therefore, allowed the Brazilian state to forge a geographical regional identity, bolstered by the efforts of an organised and directed elite, where the Brazilian state was necessarily the one providing direction, when asked to do so. Brazil was therefore, best suited to provide local solutions to local problems, supplanting the necessity of the involvement of extra regional actors, not only because its own geographical and historical proximity to its regional neighbours made it party to their shared futures, but also because of the consensual nature of its leadership, forged in its rich diplomatic and pacifist past. Given the consensus-based nature of this leadership, the traditional responsibility of bearing financial costs for the leadership project were conveniently sidestepped by the Brazilian state. The leadership project therefore, was bolstered by political cooperation and involved great room for variance in development paths, both as a demonstration of the accommodating nature of leadership as well as a safeguard against the responsibility of bearing leadership costs. Brazilian ambitions for the regional order were to reform the international order to offer greater room for Brazil in the management of affairs and was thus, more accepting of variegated degrees of opposition to neoliberalism, not having articulated a strong ideological stance, especially against the US.

The Venezuelan project, was clearly different from the Brazilian one, where historical unionist impulses could be readily summoned by leaders to underline the shared civilizational past. However, even in the Venezuelan case, a sense of exceptionalism marked its national identity. Moreover, the Venezuelan regional leadership project, as advanced by Chávez, forwarded a distinct ideological, social and political project under the rubric of '21st Century Socialism' where, anti-neoliberalism predominated and political affiliations were fostered in a culture of anti-US rhetoric. In order to further this opposition to neoliberalism, Venezuela funded new forms of economic cooperation and integration under the rubric of 'cooperative advantage' where unlike Brazil, it was willing to bear the financial costs, funding cooperation through its petroleum wealth. However, the intensity of its ideological programme made its leadership claims less tenable to co-existence with those who preferred a negotiated co-existence with neoliberalism.

The existence of two regional leadership projects, and the charismatic personal appeal of both presidents have often prompted claims of competition and rivalry in the literature, arguing that the overlapping of regional mandates as well as the proliferation of different regional organisations were symbols of this contestation where each leadership project effectively fragmented the regionalism project. Chapter V delineated a detailed description of the competition and cooperation between these two regional leadership projects and explained how, the relationship between the two leadership projects could at best be described as intersecting. These intersections occurred not only with their individual national goals and personal leadership visions, but also with the goals of pre-existing and other emerging regional arrangements, the ambitions of other regional actors and the ebbs and flows in their own stated leadership goals. The cooperation-rivalry binary therefore, has been overstated in the literature and these easy binaries are unable to capture the complexities of the processes of post-liberal integration.

Finally, the primacy of the 'state' as a regionalising actor in the integration process in Latin America has a historical rationale. The primacy of the state in the regionalism process is a direct result of the process of state construction in Latin America. A binary identity exists in Latin America, where the regional and the national often overlaps, that

is, when as issue escapes the national capacity of resolution, it is automatically promoted to the regional level. This binary can be traced back to the independence struggle and consequently, the constructed binary of *patria chica/patria Americana* utilized to create the Spanish Crown as the 'Other' while forming an organic basis for unity which post completion of the independence project caused fragmentation of the devised unity. A similar explanation has been forwarded by some scholars for the stagnation of the post-liberal regime, where the search for autonomy proved so successful that the refurbished national level has in the current scenario, overridden the regional level. Regionalism, after all, is both policy and project (Tussie 2009). The availability of this historical option further bolstered the demand for the reconstruction of the domain of the state, especially as purveyor of equitable development in the wake of the neoliberal erosion of the welfare state. A developmental state, brought to power by the protests and demands of social movements that birthed the leaders of the pink tide, the state was necessarily envisaged as a provider of rights and guarantor of social securities. In order to negotiate these at the regional level, the state was the ideal actor for these processes of rearticulation as it had the ability to bear the material costs of furthering cooperation projects, the agency for decision-making was also bolstered by the presidential character of state actorness in the regional processes. Thus, in order to articulate a counter-hegemonic economic rationale and moreover, to promote political cooperation so it could be articulated regionwide, the state was brought back into the region building process with its enshrined responsibilities of negotiating space for social protection in the globalised world of neoliberal market forces.

What were the specifics of the post-liberal and post-integration regime? What was the character of this difference and how may this difference be conceptualised in the assorted categories of integration, leadership and ideology? The next section summarises the findings of this study.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study had articulated two research hypotheses to evaluate the successes, performance and relevance of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic regional integration initiatives of ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC. The first hypothesis posited that

integration in Latin America is a socially constructed project rather than an economically driven project, in acknowledgement of the much-touted social welfarist agenda of the integration regime under evaluation as well as the rise of progressivist leaders of the 'pink tide.' However, regional integration and evidences of the teleological format it is supposed to undertake, are missing from the Latin American regional space. How may the concept of regional integration as articulated in post-liberal regionalism be resolved with the mainstream accounts of the form and format it is supposed to take? The first subsection of this section attempts to summarise this resolution.

The second hypothesis of this project argued that individual leadership visions and efforts have driven and sustained contemporary cases of intraregional integration in Latin America. The primary analytical variable of this study was leadership, with a focus on the Lula-led, Brazilian leadership project and the Chávez-led, Venezuelan leadership project. However, the contestations in the regional space as well as the available literature on the fate of these regional leadership projects have underlined the complexity in the trajectories of these leadership projects. The second subsection summarises the findings of this study in order to evaluate the claims of this hypothesis.

Significance of Regional Integration

The title of this project makes a reference to the term 'integration.' This seems contentious as out of the three organisations, only ALBA has an expressly articulated economic integration component and most literature refers to CELAC as a dialogue forum. UNASUR is said to be a site for political and functional cooperation. Moreover, supranationality or embedded institutionalisation is neither the expressed goal nor an unexpected outcome, where teleological development of deepening interdependence could be evaluated. Though various terms have been used to define this regime, it remains mired in the nomenclature of not just method, or vision but also purpose. What is the relevance of using the term integration and what are the theoretical pathways developed by this study? At several instances in this study, most notably Chapter V, an explanation has been offered why, despite the difference in the character of 'regional

integration' advanced in the post-liberal and post-hegemonic regime, there is a case to be made for terming these processes as 'regional integration.'

Firstly, the use of the term integration in the case of ALBA, denotes that economic integration can be differently conceptualised, and 'cooperative advantage' was the trade logic that girded the economic interactions between countries. ALBA was the most radical in its articulated opposition to neoliberalism, where it forwarded cooperation based on principles of anti-imperialism, mutual development and cooperative advantage. A new vision of insertion in the global economy was forwarded, where the unevenness of development in member states and the inherent inequality was acknowledged. However, this conception co-existed with other forms of economic integration, with Briceño-Ruiz (2018) identifying three different axes of economic integration namely, the 'new MERCOSUR,' the ALBA and the Pacific Alliance. Thus, in true post-hegemonic fashion, a co-existence of different forms of economic integration proliferated in the regional space, without one superseding the other. Economic integration therefore, became fragmented in the post-liberal and post-hegemonic era.

Secondly, these multiple economic integration logics proliferated in an era of increasing political and functional cooperation. On the one hand, the beyond-trade agenda of UNASUR, which focused on physical infrastructure building and the development of capabilities, attempted to negotiate a physical integration of the region, on the other, by including the development of capacity-building in the regional integration space, a wider conceptualisation of economic integration was proffered. Moreover, it was the political and functional cooperation that provided the cooperative space and stabilising influence that enabled these organisations to co-exist, despite the increasingly fragmented character of economic integration in the region.

A third point to mention is, how these organisations also envisage integration of peoples, especially in a social-spatial and political sense. CELAC, despite being termed a mere dialogue forum, offered a pathway for integration too, as it offered a deliberative space for discussion, for consensus building and a forum for solidifying political concertation and summit diplomacy, the major instruments of decision-making that were imperative for the functioning of all three regional projects. Its enunciation itself,

was a discursive creation of an integrated Latin American political space, evident most visibly in the relationship of the bloc with extra-regional actors, like China and the European Union.

Finally, this study demonstrated that the teleological model of economic integration, with an emphasis on deepening of institutions and entrenchment of supranationality, does not really work in the Latin America scenario. States are unwilling to cede or pool sovereignty, precisely as the regional space is an option to safeguard national sovereignty. Further, the methodology of how integration is conceived and how it works, is characteristically different in the region. Economic rationales have always had a strong political, nationalist, and developmental component, where the goal of searching for autonomy as safeguard for sovereignty co-exists with using regional integration as a foreign policy space to elevate ideas and issues, especially to build legitimacy at home. This dual conception further explains why presidential decision-making, especially as it plays out in the summit diplomacy culture, along with 'lite' institutionalisation have continued to pervade in the articulated regional integration projects. The political projects of the political leaders necessitate their nurturing of nationalism, explaining their unwillingness to cede authority to supranational entities. Moreover, the perceptions of these regional leaders keep changing, where political changes have the potential to alter ideas of how national goals are envisaged in the regional sphere and the discourses articulated that support these goals. Therefore, from the teleological terminology of integration, there has been a movement towards understanding that, regions are always in the making, constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through social practice and discourse (Bull and Bøås 2003).

Thus, it is surmisable that integration in Latin America remains a socially constructed project rather than an economically-driven process, where in the post-liberal and post-hegemonic regional integration regime, the concept of regional integration has been widened both in meaning and in scope.

Role of Leadership

The primary analytical variable of this study was leadership. Theoretically, the framework conceptualised leadership at two levels – that of the 'state' and that of the individual decision-maker. At the state level, the concept of regional powerhood and regional leadership were identified as relevant for the purposes of the study and at the decision-making level, the concept of *presidencialismo* was forwarded. The two states under evaluation were Brazil and Venezuela, with a focus on the leadership of presidents Lula and Chávez. While there is plenty of literature on the success, failure and performance of these regional leaderships, the primary focus of this study was the relationship between the two leadership projects and evaluating their success and relevance in articulating the nature and character of the three regional organisations under study, namely, ALBA, UNASUR and CELAC. What was the relationship between these two countries, were their leadership projects acknowledged by the region and to what extent, were these regional projects leadership dependent?

Firstly, the evolution of the post-trade logic and the articulation of the post-liberal regime owed an enormous debt to the various social and civil society movements that articulated a vehement criticism of the neoliberal development model. At the regional level, especially in terms of the summit culture that would come to predominate the workings of all three organisations, there was a proliferation in regional level summits. Complementing the US-led Summit of the Americas process, articulation of opposition against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) at the South American Summits, and at the São Paulo Forums which preceded these Summits, were the sites were left-leaning solidarities as well as primary ideas about the vision for regional integration, economic development and social welfare were formulated. Thus, common ideological positions supported both the brewing of dissent and its later instrumentalisation in the form of the various regional integration strategies. They were also important for the escalation and promotion of issues on the regional agenda as well as the building of consensus.

Secondly, both the Venezuelan state and the Brazilian state were motivated by national goals in the articulation of their regional leadership projects. Both states have a shared history of exceptionalism in their self-conception as well as a notion of their inherent

capability to lead and the role they must occupy at the international level. These historical conceptions of regional leadership roles and the inherent path dependencies were instrumental in the formulation of the regional leadership strategies as enacted under Lula and Chávez. In the case of Brazil, the development of 'South America' as a Brazilian sphere of influence and as a path towards achieving international status were well reflected in both the foreign policy choices made by the previous regimes in power as well as in public opinion. In the Venezuelan case, in order to ensure his own political stability and legitimacy at home, Chávez tapped into the historical path dependencies of autonomy and development. Both leaders, along with other leaders of the Left also found themselves bound to prioritise their support of anti-neoliberalism in order to fulfil the political mandates that brought them to power.

Thirdly, both these leadership projects found it difficult to institute followership and their claims were often contested. While the Venezuelan leadership project willingly funded itself through the various social and political projects it willingly financed via petroleum wealth, its ideological opposition to neoliberalism and vehement anti-imperialism were found to be less palatable by those with closer ties and existing trade arrangements with the USA. Further, with the change in the economic fortunes of Venezuela, the renewed interest of the US in Latin America as well as the death of Chávez, the ideological project found it difficult to remain convincing in the region. In the Brazilian scenario, despite the 'consensual hegemony' that it attempted to negotiate, underlining its intent to be a participatory leader that was nevertheless, hesitant to bear the costs of this leadership project, its leadership project suffered from an inability to generate followership. As the economic climate changed, this unwillingness to lead was more pronounced, reflecting the changes in the national and foreign policy goals of the Brazilian leadership. Moreover, other regional players, like Argentina, Mexico and Colombia often intervened with their own goals to contest the claims of these regional leaders in the regional agenda, especially made possible by the consensus-based nature of decision-making in all three regional organisations. Contestations, compromises and undermining have been the name of the game most clearly manifested in the development models followed by states in the region, leading to the aforementioned fragmentation in the economic integration agenda. Both states were forced to make accommodations, be it the Venezuelan acknowledgement of the variegated opposition

to neoliberalism, eroding the coherency of the '21st Century Socialism' project or the dilution of prized regional projects and changes in character of integration envisaged, as was the case of Brazil. These contestations and competitions regionwide ensured that the both states were forced to compromise on their stated goals driving their leadership efforts, ensuring diminishing pay offs from the regional sphere, making leadership less likely.

Finally, as has been developed in Chapter V, there is a strong relationship between presidential ideology and the format of integration that develops in Latin America. Leaders on the Left more willingly employ integration terminology, have greater success in building consensus due to accessibility of transnational political networks and are able to underscore political legitimacy at home by raising issues from their domestic welfare mandates to the regional level. Thus, who is in power, their access to transnational political networks as well as their personal charisma in terms of building legitimate and convincing discourses that are palatable at home and abroad. However, presidentialism and the personal linkages that ensure its efficacy also expose individual leaders to erosion of their legitimacy at home. For instance, in the Brazilian scenario, the efforts to maintain consensus generated contradiction in long standing domestic foreign policy goals of non-intervention, where its neutrality could not protect it from the excesses of its partner's action, given the associative character of the regional projects. Lula's refusal to participate in Chávez's campaigning for particular political candidates did not serve to safeguard him from the implicit assumptions.

Thus, it may be surmised that even though individual leadership visions and efforts have driven and sustained contemporary cases on intraregional integration in Latin America, these individual leaderships operated in a socially contingent environment with participation from other actors that often altered the leadership visions. Moreover, an ideologically coterminous environment birthed these leadership projects which aided the development of a regional consciousness, most visibly in the construction of a consensus.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Latin American regionalism has registered several shifts in logic and swung between these logics in an unpredictable manner in the last few decades. The post-liberal and post-hegemonic integration regime was the latest wave, with ever increasing acceptance that an all-pervading logic directing integration was not only difficult to arrive at, it may be less than necessary in the 'post-hegemonic' era, especially if the objectives closest to Latin American states, namely autonomy, development and self-determination were kept in mind. While, much has been written about swings to 'open regionalism,' failures of the Left, resurgence of the Right, return of protectionism, resurgence of the market, the resilience of Latin American regionalism remains its enduring characteristic, marked by resilience, despite crises. Though there is agreement that globally, regionalism is under stress, crises are part and parcel of the regional integration infrastructure, especially in the case of Latin America.

In the post-liberal regime however, as loud as the pronouncement of its transformative character had been, the dismantling of UNASUR has marked yet another shift in this historical narrative of crises and reactivations of Latin American regionalism, where its breakdown represents a challenge to the claim that Latin American regional organisations are resilient to crises (Agostinis and Nolte 2021). What then is the relevance of this integration regime and how does this study contribute in the identification of the same? This section offers a summative analysis of the implications of this study, especially in unearthing the relevance of the post-liberal and post-hegemonic integration regime, in light of its supposed failure as well as the larger crises of regionalism itself.

Arguing that important insights may be drawn from the processes of the post-hegemonic organisations, they explain that dynamics of regional diplomacy as well as centering analyses on the outcomes of social policy, Riggirozzi and Ryan (2021) have explained the importance of the post-hegemonic regime in the creation of normative frameworks in the region. By analysing the impact on regional policy making, especially prioritising the post-trade, social welfarist agendas of these organisations and how they were organised and made actionable given the weak institutionalisation of these organisations, it is possible to both broaden the agenda for regional cooperation as well as increase legitimacy of regional policy making exercises, thereby refurbishing

faith and support of regional integration in domestic populations and in turn, in the primary actors of Latin American regionalism, state governments. An analysis of the impact of the social agenda forwarded in the post-liberal regime, particularly in terms of how debates at the regional level allowed for the proliferation of norms, especially by facilitating avenues for information sharing, training and mutual learning, as well as generating support, creating awareness about an issue at the regional level, would make easy pronouncements of 'failure' difficult. Moreover, if regional policymaking is assessed from a plural perspective, without emphasizing only the mainstream economic integration perspective, new sites for reactivation at the regional level in important issue areas may become easily identifiable.

In conjunction with this, secondly, there has been a marked acceptance that Latin American regionalism requires an 'integrative pluralism' approach to unpack the multiplicity of regionalisation projects, from both above and below" (Lubbock and Vivares 2021) with a view to broaden the explanatory power of analytical frameworks, especially in resolving the contradictions of the processes of regionalism. For instance, neoliberalism did not merely affect the way states conducted business but affected the lives of the people that made up these states, permeating their social interactions, their community formations and traditional modes of governance. An acknowledgement of the embedded character of global capitalism and the ways in which neoliberalism altered production and governance structures allows for a more nuanced understanding of the built-in limitations in the project of the Left. Simply put, the Left formed a series of uneasy alliances domestically to hold power, in order to enact policy changes in the social sphere. However, these compromises and alliances carried within them the potential to unravel the logic of the support that brought these governments to power. These methods of sustaining power and the inherent chinks in the armour of the political leadership were further country specific and context dependent.

Thirdly, the empirical evidences from the post-liberal experience have led to new theorizations and deeper complexity in explaining important state behaviours such as regional leadership. A recent work by Nolte and Schenoni (2021) has developed the concept of regional leadership to explain the existence of 'detached or reluctant powers' by arguing that regional leadership is only one available option in the arsenal of a regional power and not an automatic choice for the achievement of its objectives.

Arguing that concepts such as followership assume that in order for a state to acquire the status of a regional power, it must achieve the recognition of its peers do not give adequate agency to the regional power. Nolte and Schenoni explain the case of Brazil's 'contested leadership' by positing that the detachment on the part of Brazil was not a result of the contestation to its leadership, which itself was an acknowledgement of its status but rather, that for the Brazilian state, the actual practice of 'leading' became a less attractive goal. This recalcitrance in assuming the leadership role however, does not dilute the status of the Brazilian state as the exercise of leadership, is contingent on internal matters as well as the action of important extra-regional actors.

Finally, a question must be asked if the 'failure' of the post-liberal integration regime is as complete and total as some academic analyses have concluded. This study has developed the explanations for the factors which made the post-liberal integration agenda untenable, including but not limited to, the change in the economic and political fortunes of the region; the protectionist turn necessitated by these changes in turn; the difficulty of divorcing the ideological and political motivations of these projects from often oppositional political figures; and, the difficulty of building consensus, especially in the leadership vacuum. However, as recently as December 2021, Osborne (2021) argued that Latin American states have employed the China-CELAC forum as a site for practicing their active non-alignment. Moreover, during the Coronavirus pandemic, various regional exercises in sharing of date, organising of resources and pandemic aid were facilitated by ALBA and CELAC, as well as regional organisations from previous waves, adding weight to the idea that Latin America could benefit from a robust regional policy, especially in health. The resurgence of the Right is now being countered, most pointedly by the champion of neoliberalism in the region, Chile. The logic for a welfare state has only gained ground during the onslaught of the pandemic. There is substance yet, in the processes of post-liberal integration.

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