

**Consistency despite instability, resilience despite crises.
Explaining Latin American regional integration's oxymoron.***

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Abstract:

Latin American regional integration processes call attention for their consistency despite chronic instability, and for their resilience despite frequent crises. This article argues that such contradictory features have not been properly explained and suggests a new approach centered on the notion of politicization. The article starts by defining politicization in terms of political instrumentalization of economic integration. It is then divided in two parts. Part I applies the definition of politicization to historical sequences of Central American, Andean and Mercosurian integration. It shows that politicization is a good predictor of integration's dynamism. Part II examines two variables affecting the level of politicization: collective presidentialism and differentiated integration. Collective presidentialism provides for a minimum politicization, yet it entails a growing gap between the scope and the level of integration. Variable geometry protects the integration processes from terminal crises, yet it incites the member states to choose their level of commitment and aggravates the collective action dilemmas. The article concludes that politicization, used as a conceptual bridge, sheds new light on the different paths of Latin American integration.

Sixty years of Latin American experiences with regional integration are usually judged with severity, from an economic or a political perspective. The most often mentioned weaknesses include: low rate of intraregional trade, incomplete customs unions at best, frequent trade disputes, key political actors' lack of credible commitment, low degree of norms compliance, inflated agendas, inconsistent policy coordination let alone sovereignty pooling, poor institutional performance, modest — if any — effect on economic growth, development and political stability. These features, some critics would add, come in sharp contrast to grandiloquent declarations about Latin American brotherhood and the imperative historical necessity to rebuild the *Patria Grande*.

A close examination of the Latin American, Central American, Andean, Caribbean and South American integration processes makes it difficult to take issue with these assessments.¹ Admittedly, some historical periods and some regions have been less ineffective than others, but even the strongest supporters of Latin American integration would acknowledge that by any account it has not been a success story.

Still, against the backdrop of such a negative balance, almost all Latin American governments (Chile standing as an exception) stubbornly consider regional integration as a destiny rather than an option, and agree to keep their endeavor afloat. From time to time, like during the 1960s or 1990s, they decide to reactivate or deepen the processes. In recent years, they even launched new initiatives, the most recent one being the South American Union of Nations (UNASUR) in 2008. Assuming that Latin American Presidents are not unaware of the past, the question must be raised of why they keep on considering that regional integration is worth a sustained collective effort. To put it differently, Latin American regional integration processes call attention for their consistency despite chronic instability, and for their resilience despite frequent crises.

Being overwhelmingly Europe-centered, with very few exceptions, classical political science literature on regional integration does not address the contradictory features of Latin American integration. Yet, on a broader perspective, some theoretical tools can help accounting for irregular patterns of evolution. Neo-functionalism envisions the evolution of a regional integration process as cyclical, with sequences of deepening followed by crises and subsequent reactivations triggered by actors assessing their gains and losses and learning their lessons.² Intergovernmentalism puts the emphasis on interstate bargaining.³ Other approaches such as historical neo-institutionalism insist on unexpected outcomes and the gaps in memberstate control.⁴ Finally, constructivism pinpoints the importance of representations and explains the evolution of an integration process as the product of social construction, deconstruction and eventual reconstruction.⁵

These theoretical frameworks are usually considered at odds with each other. Some are centered on the State as an interest-driven actor, while others

¹ DABENE, 2009. The main organizations are (without mentioning the regional groupings' successive transformations): Organization of Central American States (ODECA, 1951), Central American Common Market (CACM, 1960), Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA, 1960), Andean Group (GRAN, 1969), Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA, 1969) and Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR, 1991).

² SCHMITTER, 1970b; CORBEY, 1995.

³ MORAVCSIK, 1998.

⁴ PIERSON, 1996.

⁵ BULL and BOAS, 2003.

are centered on value-influenced non-state actors. This paper intends to tentatively and partially bridge them, considering that they are more complementary than mutually excluding. Building upon comparative studies of Central American and South American regional integration processes, I suggest a new direction in explaining the “consistency despite instability, resilience despite crises” oxymoron, based on an evaluation of the processes’ politicization. I use the notion of politicization as a conceptual bridge linking a series of integration features (independent variables) and the oxymoron (dependent variable).

Contrary to some classical authors, I do not consider politicization of integration issues as responsible for its failure.⁶ Looking at history, I will describe sequences of politicization and depoliticization and will argue that the degree of politicization is a pretty good predictor of the processes’ dynamism or lack of it. Then turning to the Latin America’s current situation, I will explore two independent variables susceptible of impacting the level of politicization: collective presidentialism and differentiated integration.

Empirical evidences presented in this paper show that most Latin American integration processes were politicized during their foundational sequence, which created institutions that proved to be very sticky in the long run. In other words, a strongly politicized initial phase puts an integration process on a path that is not easy to deviate from. Conversely, a depoliticized onset of a process is no predictor of what can happen next. Empirical evidences also suggest that at any given time, Latin American integration processes’ level of politicization depends upon a series of their institutions’ features, key actors’ collective commitments and agreed-upon agendas. In the last fifteen years, most integration scheme have had institutions driven by collective presidentialism, have assumed different levels of commitments and have built agendas mostly centered on free trade. Although the last years have witnessed some evolutions on this latter point, the former features insulate the processes from terminal crisis, but do not entail a politicization upgrading; hence they feed the dilemma of resilience without progress, regarding the weaknesses mentioned above.

The paper starts by defining politicization. It is then structured into two parts. Part I will examine different sequences of integration in Central America, the Andean region and MERCOSUR, showing how they were characterized by different levels of politicization. Part II will examine the influence of two independent variables on the degree of politicization: collective presidentialism and differentiated integration. I will close this paper with an assessment of the current trend of integration, gauging the capacity to deliver regional goods. I will also stress the work that remains to be done to further elaborate a politicization centered framework of analysis for Latin American regional integration.

⁶ NYE, 1969; VARGAS-HIDALGO, 1979.

Politicization of an integration process

According to Haas and Schmitter, “politicization implies that the actors seek to resolve their problems so as to upgrade common interests and, in the process, delegate more authority to the centre.”⁷ This definition can still be considered valid, although I would not think about transfers of authority to a centre as primordial, and I would suggest paying more attention, content-wise, to the state and non-state actors’ intentions.

Hence, I offer a slightly different definition, posing that politicization implies that the actors consider economic integration as an instrument to reach political goals. As corollaries, politicization also implies a commitment of key political actors sharing a conception of common interests. Finally, it implies institutional arrangements and a regional public space where the agendas and outcomes are discussed.

This definition allows to better account for the irregular pattern of evolution that characterizes most regional integration processes. Although often mentioned in the neo-functional literature, this pattern is never satisfactorily explained. When Schmitter describes “crisis-induced decision cycles”⁸, or Corbey a “stop and go pattern”⁹ of European integration’s evolution, they offer rational-actor centered explanations that underestimate the importance of the state and non state actors’ representations. They also fail to consider the historical context the actors are embedded in. And they finally ignore the importance of external incentives.

In order to operationalize the above mentioned definition, I will suggest evaluating each of its five components through time, in order to unveil sequences and pinpoint critical junctures, taking into account different types of foreign or domestic incentives. In Table 1, I tentatively represent possible sequences of politicization, depoliticization and repoliticization.

There is no linearity in the succession of sequences, nor is there a dominant independent variable explaining the passage from one sequence to the next one. As mentioned earlier, the onset of a politicized regional integration process is triggered by a common will to achieve a collective political goal through economic integration. This can not occur without a strong commitment from key political actors, but it does not require an active participation from civil society actors nor does it necessarily imply a complex institutional arrangement. The latter elements just add degrees of politicization.

There can be many reasons why such a politicized initial sequence begins in the first place, and eventually comes to an end.

Among the factors susceptible of jump starting a politicized process, some sort of historical foundational trauma can be mentioned. The case of World War II for Europe evidently comes to mind, but it can be any event, including economic crises, that will raise the consciousness of the key political actors over the necessity for collective action. The more severe the trauma, the deeper the cooperation envisioned, including possible pooling or relinquishing of sovereignty. In addition to this output oriented motivation, there can also be more ideological or external incentives. In the final analysis, much depends on

⁷ HAAS and SCHMITTER, 1964: 707.

⁸ SCHMITTER, 1970a.

⁹ CORBEY, 1995.

the different countries key political actors' perception of a historical juncture and them imagining ways to meet common challenges.

The end of the sequence will occur when the important actors loose interest in the integration process, either because they consider the initial political goal has been met or they estimate it is no longer achievable. This loss of political interest will be all the more damaging that the integration process does not yield economic gains. If the initial sequence entailed complex institutional building, its stickiness provides for a minimal degree of politicization in times of depoliticization. If the integration process does yield economic gains, it can consolidate the conception of common interests in the region, also providing for a minimal degree of politicization.

Note that the key political actors may also want to put the integration process on a new path, considering that the initial one has delivered unintended negative externalities, such as uneven distribution of benefits. In that case, the degree of politicization remains equal, with a constant commitment. In another scenario, there can be a positive appraisal of outcomes, in terms for instance of reciprocal trade boosting, entailing an increase of ambition. In that case, the degree of politicization increases, with a stronger commitment to raise the level of integration.

Pressure from civil society actors, i.e. unpleased with the social impact of trade liberalization, may provide an additional motive to change or reverse the integration course, enhancing its level of politicization.

If the integration process does get into a sequence of depoliticization, there are reasons to believe it can last for some time. Once the foundational trauma looses momentum, the actors' core motivation to keep on working together fades away. Some isolated integration entrepreneurs, working for instance in regional agencies, may be pushing for some deeper integration, but they will most probably no be heard.

Again, there is a wide range of reasons why this "zone of indifference"¹⁰ might be shaken by new events acting as a disjunction. International political or economic crises can act as critical junctures¹¹, triggering a change of course. Free trade may no longer be considered a panacea, product of a new political preference-convergence amongst the governments. New actors may bring about changes of paradigm, and enforce an institutional reform. Whatever the reasons, a new sequence of politicization implies the construction of a new project and a new conception of common interests in a given region.

It is important to point out that sequences are not cycles. Member states do not go back to their initial intentions during a phase of repoliticization, but agree on new challenges to be met. Despite stickiness, institutional arrangements do change during each phase. Institutional change will tend to be incremental in the depoliticization phase, with a progressive paralysis, and more brutal in its scope and level during the politicization one, with possible complete cross the board rebuilding.

Part I of the paper will examine empirical evidences from Latin America, and analyze historical sequences of politicization, depoliticization and repoliticization. If we leave aside the motion picture and take a snapshot of the different integration processes at a given time, several factors may affect their

¹⁰ SCHMITTER, 1970b.

¹¹ COLLIER and COLLIER, 1991.

level of politicization. Among them, we will examine in Part II two independent variables: collective presidentialism and differentiated integration.

Part I. Sequences of politicization and depoliticization

My overall objective is to trace the process of politicization and offer a description of historical sequences, rather than discussing in full details the six components of politicization mentioned in Table 1. Some of them are indeed explicitly mentioned, others not due to a lack of reliable indicators.

Central America

Central America has been characterized by some commentators as a Nation divided.¹² United during the colonial times, its five components¹³ built a Federation right after the independence (1824-1838). The experience was short-lived, but it was followed by many attempts to rebuild it. None succeeded. After World War II, Central America ambioned to have its own regional organization, inspired by the 1948 Bogota Treaty giving birth to the Organization of American States (OAS). In 1951, the five Central American countries signed the San Salvador Charter, creating the Organization of Central American States (ODECA). ODECA's ambitions were to encompass economic, political as well as cultural dimensions of regional integration. However, it rapidly proved, to become instrumental for the U.S. sponsored anticommunist crusade in the region, targeting Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz. By criticizing communist intromission in Central America, ODECA gave some legitimacy to the 1954 military coup that put an end to ten years of democratic experience in Guatemala.

The initial politicization of Central American integration is two-fold. On the one hand, there is a construction of a political project and some institutional building, accompanied by the revitalization of functional cooperation.¹⁴ This process is domestically conceived. On the other, there is a collective pressure to rid the region of one its member state's government, suspected of communist affiliation. This second vector of politicization is externally driven.

In parallel to this political construction and the way it got instrumentalized during these times of cold war, the Central Americans also embarked upon an economic project. The same year

ODECA entered into force (1952), the Central Americans held their first meeting with the assistance of some experts (or *técnicos*) from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECALC). Economic integration was on the agenda, and eventually in 1960 the discussions led to the signing of a General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration, creating the Central American Common Market (CACM) and a Secretariat for economic integration (SIECA).

During the 1960s, Central American integration was rather successful as regards the dynamics of its intra-regional trade. However, the region was

¹² WOODWARD Jr., 1976

¹³ Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua.

¹⁴ With the creation of the following regional agencies: Central American University Council (CSUCA, 1948), Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama (INCAP, 1949), Regional Organization of Agriculture Sanitation (OIRSA, 1953), Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP, 1954), Central American Institute of Research and Industrial Technology (ICAITI, 1955).

submitted to contradictory external pressures as regards the instrumentalization of economic integration. On the one side, ECLAC was advocating for regional planning of import substitutive industrialization, inserting trade liberalization into a development project. On the other side, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Regional Office for Central America and Panama (USAID ROCAP) was criticizing possible monopolies and pushing for trade opening as an end. What ECLAC and ROCAP did agree on was to depoliticize regional integration, yet for different reasons. ECLAC had a technocratic conception of integration considering it an exercise of planning without public debate or civil society participation. ROCAP put the emphasis on free trade, without envisioning common policies.

The 1969 so-called soccer war between El Salvador and Honduras epitomized the depoliticization of integration. Article 1 of ODECA's charter mentioned that one of the Organization's aims was to secure a pacific resolution of any conflicts that might emerge in the region. It never got enforced.

During the 1970s, no political project was able to relaunch the process. Some Central American countries were facing serious internal turmoil and guerrilla wars (Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador), and even the economic dimension of integration was stalemated.¹⁵ It was not until the mid 1980s, in the midst of the Central American crisis, that a common project started to emerge. The 1986 summit of Esquipulas (Guatemala), with the participation of the five Central American presidents, marked the first step of the integration reactivation.

During the second Esquipulas summit in 1987, Costa Rican president Oscar Arias presented his peace plan, and the countries of the region started to work together on a common agenda including peace and democracy.

The peace process meant a repoliticization of integration for two reasons. First, the region was able to put together a new collective project, agreeing on a series of objectives, like peace, democracy and reconciliation. Second, the implementation of the peace plan acted as an incentive to upgrade the countries' regional commitments. In order to comply with the plan's objectives, the five Central American governments reactivated old regional agencies or created new institutional arrangements. In other words, this collective work of crisis resolution unintentionally reactivated the regional integration process.

During the 1990s, this repoliticization of the integration process had many effects. The agenda got inflated with new treaties¹⁶, and an attempt was made to grant the process with a global steering (Central America System of Integration, SICA), actually a reformed and actualized version of ODECA. Soon the mismatch between the wide scope and the limited level of integration had the Presidents looking for some coherence building. In 1995, they commissioned CEPAL and BID to make some recommendations in order to modernize the organs and institutions of Central American integration.

In their final report¹⁷, CEPAL and BID insisted on the necessity to make distinctions between three spheres of articulation between scope and level of integration. The first one corresponded to the highest level of integration and an

¹⁵ Although during the years 1972-1976, a High Committee for the restructuring and improvement of the common market prepared a project for a Central American Economic and Social Community (CESCA) that was eventually ignored.

¹⁶ Alliance for a sustainable development (1994), Treaty of social integration (1995), Treaty of democratic security (1995).

¹⁷ CEPAL-BID, 1997.

agenda limited to the improvement of the regional unified market, with a common trade policy and complementarities between other public policies, like the macro-economic one. The second one had a lesser level of integration but an amplified scope, with a “functional cooperation” in the fields of environment, health, education, culture, transportation, infrastructure and tourism. And the third one was even more modest as regards the level of integration and only one issue was on the agenda: Central America was invited to keep on reinforcing its political collaboration to consolidate democracy. As far as politicization is concerned, these recommendations entailed a downgrading. They limited the scope of integration to trade and hence narrowed the common interests of the region.

In 1997, the Central American Presidents decided to follow CEPAL-BID’s recommendations and launched the political reform of their integration process. However, they immediately ran into obstacles, as Honduras was devastated by Hurricane Mitch (1998), Costa Rica faced political scandals, and the external agenda of negotiation kept the diplomats busy.¹⁸ For a decade, Central American integration was pretty much kept out of the governments’ radar, yet it was not either an issue of interest for civil society. A strong opposition to free trade gathered momentum, with powerful networks of transnational mobilizations acting in the region.

In 2007, the region opened a round of talk with the European Union forcing them to get back to work together. Contrary to CAFTA, where the U.S. negotiated on a bilateral basis, the European Union was willing to support the process of political, economic and social integration of the region. In February 2008, the institutional reform was eventually relaunched. It is of course too soon to say if the years 2007-2008 have opened a new trend of politicization. The fact that Nicaragua and Honduras adhered to Venezuela sponsored ALBA¹⁹ represented a political schism in the region that did not allow heralding any easy way to build a consensus on common interests.

I would like to conclude from this brief description that Central America has experienced several sequences of politicization and depoliticization along its contemporary history. The incentives or the factors originating the changes of course are domestic or externally driven (Table 2).

The Andean region

The Andean Pact was first idealized in 1966 by a group of Presidents dissatisfied with the unequal distribution of benefits yielded by the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) launched in 1960. On August 16, 1966, the Presidents of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela met in Bogota, Colombia, and issued a Declaration stressing the need for sub-regional economic integration. Their motives were also geopolitical, as Argentina and Brazil inspired preoccupation for Chile and the Andean countries.²⁰ Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela went on signing a first

¹⁸ With the Puebla Panama Plan (PPP) suggested by Mexico in 2001 and the opening in 2003 of the negotiations for a U.S. Central America and Panama Free Trade Agreement, including the Dominican Republic (CAFTA RD).

¹⁹ ALBA: Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America, associating in mid-2009 Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras and the Caribbean islands of Dominica, Saint Vincent & Grenadines, and Antigua & Barbuda.

²⁰ BAWA, 1980: 143.

agreement on February 7, 1968, giving birth to the Andean Development Bank (*Corporación Andina de Fomento*, CAF). One year later, the same countries, without Venezuela, created the Andean Group, signing the Cartagena Agreement (also known as the Andean Pact) on May 26, 1969.

The regional group was granted a complex set of institutions, quite similar to the European one. The expectations were high, as the regional integration process was supposed to “promote the balanced and harmonious development of the Member countries.”²¹ Bolivia and Ecuador were given special consideration, in order to close the development gap within the region, and policies were adopted to promote industrialization at the regional level.

Much of the Andean Pact evolution ever since has been punctuated by crises, mostly provoked by disputes between member countries, over the distribution of benefits and their level of commitment. In addition, the agenda of integration has evolved, pushed by the institutions or external incentives, requiring adjustments the member countries were not necessarily keen to make. The complexity of the Andean sequences of integration derives from the cross-cutting between these two variables (crises and agendas). Contrary to Central America, no impressive acceleration of intra-regional trade has ever captured the attention of key political actors in the region. As a result, many policies were simply never implemented.²²

The first crisis occurred even before the treaty was signed, with Venezuela deciding to opt out. But the country would eventually join the group on February 13, 1973. Then Chile withdrew on October 30, 1976. In both instances, the issues at stake were the obligation to create bi-national enterprises and the treatment of foreign investments.

During the 1970s, the Andeans embarked upon a CEPAL inspired strategy of import substitution, while expanding the scope of integration, with the signing of several *Convenios* on education (Andrés Bello agreement, 1970), health (Hipólito Unanue agreement, 1971) and labor (Simón Rodríguez agreement, 1973). As the decade came to an end, the Andean countries were too busy managing their transitions to democracy to bother about their process of integration. Then the 1980s’ economic crisis further paralyzed the integration process and led to a shift at the end of the decade.

On May 12, 1987, the Andean countries adopted the Quito Protocol, introducing flexibility in the realm of policy harmonization and development plan coordination. Then, two years later, during the Galapagos meeting, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the integration scheme, the Andeans embraced the neoliberal era and shifted toward open regionalism.²³

Their new agenda was resolutely centered on free trade, entailing a depoliticization of the integration process. The 1990s witnessed a period of growth in the region, and intra-regional trade made substantial progress. The intra-regional to total trade ratio went up from 12% to 17% between 1990 and 1995.

During the 1990s, the authoritarian drift of the Peruvian regime (1992 shutdown of Congress) did not even lead to a repoliticization, although Venezuela decided to break its diplomatic relations with Peru. Peru decided to

²¹ Article 1 of the 1969 Cartagena Agreement.

²² ADKISSON, 2003.

²³ CEPAL, 1994.

temporarily withdraw from the Free trade area and the customs union in 1992, essentially for technical reasons. It would reintegrate both in 1997.

More importantly, in 1995, a border dispute led to a short war between Peru and Ecuador, with close to no reaction from the Andean Pact.

The repoliticization sequence eventually began on March 10, 1996 with the signing of the Trujillo protocol. By converting the Andean Pact into the Andean Community (CAN) and setting renewed ambitions, despite Peru's temporary withdrawal, the protocol relaunched the process of integration putting it on a new track. The protocol refreshed the institutional arrangement, placing the Meeting of Presidents at the top of the decision making process. In parallel, the supranational prerogatives of the Council were undermined. The agenda of integration made some progress, with the inclusion of the social issues in 2003.

On the political front, the left turn of many Latin American governments in the years 2000 impacted the CAN. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, first elected in 1998, started to criticize the neoliberal orientation of the integration process. He was later joined by his Ecuadorian and Bolivian counterparts, Rafael Correa and Evo Morales. Colombia and Peru's opening of free trade negotiations with the United States further polarized the political climate. In 2006, Venezuela decided to leave the Andean Community and joined the MERCOSUR.

As far as politicization is concerned, it can be said that the Andean integration process has always been minimally politicized, because of its high degree of institutionalization and, quite oddly, of its frequent crises. The Andean integration process has been hit by a crisis almost every ten years since 1966, each being followed by a reactivation, most notably in 1987 and 1996. The crisis resolution efforts kept the integration process on the agendas of the Presidents, preventing it from falling into a zone of indifference. (Table 3)

MERCOSUR

The Common market of the South (MERCOSUR) has a much shorter history than Central America or the Andean region. However, since the mid 1980s, the region has experienced several crises, setbacks and reactivations (Table 4).

The initial sequence preceding MERCOSUR's inauguration is clearly a politicized one.

MERCOSUR's origin goes back to the years 1983-1985, when Argentina inaugurated a democratic regime after seven years of brutal dictatorship and Brazil was in the midst of its transition. Argentina at that time was surrounded by military regimes and faced both a severe economic crisis and the discontent of the armed forces, humiliated by the Falkland war and threatened by judicial charges for human rights violations. At the end of 1984, Argentine President Alfonsín took the initiative of opening talks with Brazilian politicians about possible ways to build a device for the collective defense of democracy. In December 1985, both countries held a summit on the triple border, in Foz de Iguazu, that can be considered as MERCOSUR's birth act. Presidents Alfonsín and Sarney had three main issues on their agenda. One was infrastructure, with the symbolically very relevant inauguration of a bridge between the two countries; the second one was defense, with the parties agreeing on a transparent nuclear policy, a major step toward establishing a security

community; and the last one was democracy. The Presidents considered regional integration as an instrument of economic development, and development as an instrument of democratic consolidation.

Democracy, on its turn, was supposed to strengthen regional integration. This circular argument would influence a dozen protocols, signed between Argentina, Brazil and later Uruguay, between 1986 and 1990.

This first sequence of a politicized launching of regional integration came to an end quite abruptly with the opening of the 1990s, for three sets of reasons. One had to do with the proliferation of democratic regimes in the region. The initial mid 1980s preoccupation for the future of democracy was just no longer perceptible. The second owed much to the neoliberal turn. New presidents like Argentine Carlos Menem, Uruguayan Luis Alberto Lacalle and Brazilian Fernando Collor, who all took office between December 1989 and March 1990, had a trade centered conception of regional integration. Third, U.S. President George Bush launched a so-called Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) in June 1990, putting the emphasis on free trade and investment.

It then came as no surprise that MERCOSUR's founding treaties did not mention any political objective. The word "democracy" does not appear in the Asunción Treaty, signed on March 26, 1991, or in the Ouro Preto Protocol, signed on December 17, 1994. However, this depoliticized conception of integration that prevailed in 1991-1994 did not translate into a loss of interest for integration matters. The first half of the 1990s witnessed an impressive increase in regional trade. Intraregional to total trade ratio reached 20.2% in 1995 and 25.3% in 1998, compared to only 8.9% in 1990. As a result, there is a great deal of enthusiasm for

MERCOSUR in the region, and free trade remains high on the political agenda as a common interest builder.

Despite this early 1990s' depoliticization, interestingly enough, MERCOSUR's concern with democracy soon resurfaced. On April 22, 1996, a coup attempt in Paraguay seriously challenged the regional integration process and allowed MERCOSUR to upgrade its level of politicization. Two months after the crisis, MERCOSUR Presidents issued a Presidential

Declaration on Democratic Commitment on June 25, 1996 in San Luis (Argentina), and went on signing the Ushuaia Protocol on Democratic Commitment on July 24, 1998.

The Paraguayan April crisis was a short parenthesis, although its importance in Latin

American regional integration history should not be neglected as it generated the introduction of the first democratic clause in the region. Once the crisis was solved, MERCOSUR returned to its business as usual, until the next crisis burst out.

In 1999, the Brazilian devaluation was a severe and brutal signal for other MERCOSUR member States that this country was acting as a hegemonic power, with a conception of common regional interests that had to be compatible with his own national interests. Two years later, the 2001 Argentine major depression made the main political actors realize that the integration process required some adjustments. The turn to the left, embodied by the election of Lula to the Brazilian presidency in 2002, brought to power new leaders deeply committed to the deepening of integration. In the years 2002-2004, MERCOSUR embarked upon an institutional reform, with the creation of

a Parliament and a judicial body, among others. MERCOSUR also enforced its first redistributive policy, a structural convergence fund aimed at lowering the development differential between member countries and regions.

However, the sequence of repoliticization remained modest both in scope and level, although some sectors were actively pressing for deeper changes. The 2003 reform of MERCOSUR's Secretariat illustrates this outcome. The creation, within the Secretariat, of a Technical assistance sector (SAT), with the recruitment of four high level experts on a merit basis, served the purpose of forming "a space of common reflection on the development and consolidation of the integration process".²⁴ The SAT soon proved to be an active entrepreneur of integration. The four experts were academics defending the general interest of MERCOSUR, and pressing for the process deepening. During its first year of existence, the SAT clashed several times with some diplomats, and in particular the Director of the Secretariat, keen to secure its control over the integration process and preserve its strictly intergovernmental dimension. In 2004, the SAT played an important role in preparing the December summit of Ouro Preto (Brazil). Ten years after the 1994 first Ouro Preto summit that gave MERCOSUR its institutions, and with four Presidents committed to the relaunching of the process, there was a window of opportunity the SAT was eager to seize. Among other proposals, the SAT designed an ambitious project of Parliament, inspired by the European. The final decisions fell short of what the SAT expected, with a Parliament deprived of significant role in the decision making process. The diplomats had won the battle.

Two other factors contribute to explaining the modesty of MERCOSUR's repoliticization in the years 2000. I will just quickly mention them, although they would deserve longer developments.

One has to do with Brazil's diplomacy under Lula which definitively turned global. Despite many declarations of intention, the fact is that Lula prioritized multilateral diplomacy over his regional commitments. The other has to do with the civil society actors' deception. MERCOSUR's institutions provide for several instances of participation in working groups.

However, the experience proved to be disappointing, with agendas of discussion being excessively technical and no possibility for civil society actors to have a say about the general orientations of the integration process. As a result, there are no bottom-up pressures to deepen the process.

To the bitter disappointment of many activists, MERCOSUR under leftist governments has not proven to be as keen to defend common interests as expected. Perhaps MERCOSUR's main problem is not so much the lack of governments' commitment, but rather its excessive imbalance and asymmetry. It seems simply impossible for Brazil to envision a "common" interest with its partners.

²⁴ MERCOSUR's decision 30/02.

Part II. Politicization and credible commitment to deliver regional goods

Central to the definition of politicization given in this paper is a commitment by key political actors to share a conception of common interests to deliver regional goods. In this second part, I argue that the level of Latin American integration's politicization is affected by some core institutional and political features. I examine two independent variables: collective presidentialism and differentiated integration and show that they undermine the capacity of the integration processes to deliver regional goods. By the same token, they also tend to aggravate the Latin American integration's oxymoron.

Collective intergovernmental presidentialism

Latin American integration governance is very much driven by collective intergovernmental presidentialism. This should not come as a surprise, since the features of national formal and informal institutions, or at least the ones of an integration scheme's dominant country, constrain the choices the actors make when designing regional institutional arrangements.²⁵

Latin American countries having presidential regimes tend to reinforce their presidential features, even if sometimes they seem to imitate European integration's institutional arrangement when crafting their own. Europe, conversely, has a dominant tradition of parliamentary regimes that has influenced the evolution of the European Union, in particular the strengthening of the Parliament.

Latin American regional integration processes have also been run by collective presidentialism because the Presidents were keen to defend national interests. This great difficulty in putting the common interest before national ones is manifest in several institutional features, most notably: decisions by consensus, limited resources for the Secretariats, modest role for the Parliaments, or non binding decisions. Presidentialism has been considered either an obstacle or a "hidden cause" for success.

Malamud (2003) has a point when he argues that during the first years of MERCOSUR, collective presidentialism was a substitute for weak institutions. Many trade disputes were resolved at the highest level, and the Presidents kept their endeavour rolling even through hard times. However, it did not take long before the Presidents themselves realized that excessive concentration of power in their hands was slowing down the process. Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay reckoned that without solid institutions, there was no safeguard, no legal binding and Brazil could not be dissuaded from making unilateral decisions, such as the January 1999 devaluation of its currency. Two years later, with the Argentine debacle, even Brazil agreed that weak institutions meant inefficiency. As some observers concluded, MERCOSUR's low level of legalism "led to issue-congestion and over-burdened agenda at the top."²⁶ MERCOSUR's experience is peculiar in the Latin American context. Older integration schemes were granted solid institutions by their founding treaties. The 1969 Andean Pact, for instance, went as far as creating a legislative branch (*Comisión*) and an executive organ (*Junta de Cartagena*) with quasi

²⁵ DABENE, 2009: 90.

²⁶ BOUZAS and SOLTZ, 2001: 104.

supranational prerogatives. The Commission made decisions and the Junta was responsible both for preparing and implementing the decisions. Two features were of crucial importance: the Commission made majority decisions and the Junta was composed of three persons who were supposed, according to Article 13 of the 1969 Treaty, to act “only according to the interests of the Sub-region as a whole.” Article 14 adds that they were prohibited from “asking for or accepting instructions from governments, national or international bodies.”

Yet, despite complex institutional arrangements, these older integration schemes were also governed by collective presidentialism. In the Andean case, the Presidents kept firm control of the integration scheme. Nationalism was a common characteristic of authoritarian governments during the 1970s. In addition, the Junta’s members had a hard time protecting their autonomy, due to frequent turnover provoked by political instability in their home countries. When democracy was reinstated in the 1980s, it was the debt crisis that generated protectionism and nationalism. The 1990 reform allowed the Presidents to institutionalize their political preeminence with the creation of the Andean Presidential Council. Later in 1996, the so called Trujillo Protocol substituted the Junta by a less “supranational” Secretariat. Collective presidentialism is a core feature of Latin American integration. It provides for a minimum of politicization, as no President wants to be held responsible for an integration setback. Yet the Presidents’ commitment is essentially rhetoric. They often refer to Latin American brotherhood and underline the necessity to unite, without actually taking the necessary steps in that direction.

This tendency to insist on the symbolic importance of integration contrasting with the defense of national interests often entails inflated agendas of integration. Or to put it differently, it tends to aggravate the mismatch between scope and level of integration. Presidents are typically keen to enlarge the scope without paying too much attention to adjusting the level of integration.²⁷

The reasons why they tend to do so are to be found in the political benefits the Presidents expect to derive out of their commitment to regional integration. Three of them are of particular importance. One is the prestige associated with an important declaration adopted, or a treaty or protocol signed in a given President’s capital city. Each president is keen to rip domestic political gains from a historical meeting held in his country, and he will push for an enlarged agenda. Another one is an exoneration of a problem-solving failure at the domestic level. The inclusion of a new issue in the regional agenda sends a message to the voters regarding the inadequacy of the national level of decision-making to address it. Finally, related to this last strategy, in a given situation where a regional integration process is suffering increasing opposition by major social sectors, and where the domestic economic situation is not too favorable, a president may use a credit-claiming / blame-shifting type of strategy. The inclusion of new issues on the agenda will eventually allow the Presidents to shift the responsibility of a problem-solving failure to some sort of coordination difficulties, or to the integration’s lack of progress. Conversely, a President will claim the credit for a successful regional policy, while hiding the origins of the decisions made.

²⁷ Philippe Schmitter (1970a) refers to this as a « spill around ».

If, for the Presidents, there are incentives to widen the scope of integration, there is none to adjust its level. Delegating authority and/or appropriating means for regional institutions have never been politically rewarding anywhere.

Central America is probably the integration scheme where these dynamics are more easily observable. During the 1990s, many new issue areas were included in the regional agenda, such as social, environmental or security issues²⁸, whereas the level of integration remained constant²⁹. Although other factors were instrumental in expanding the scope of integration, such as external incentives for instance, collective presidentialism played a decisive role.

Besides collective presidentialism, there are other institutional features limiting Latin American integration schemes' capacity to deliver regional goods. They include excessive bureaucratization, especially in the oldest integration schemes such as the Andean group,³⁰ and a very modest level of common norms compliance.

Just to mention one example, the first biannual report of MERCOSUR's Secretariat shed some light on the very low level of norms incorporation into national laws. From 2000 to 2004 only 43 of the 107 Council of the Common Market's decisions that required incorporations had been actually incorporated, representing a poor 40%. As for the Common Market Group, the balance was even worse, with 25.9% of its resolutions actually incorporated.³¹ The same report mentioned the fact that due to the absence of a regional Tribunal or Court of justice, no single interpretation of the norms was available, leading to different interpretations in the Courts from one country to another and even within the same country from one region to another. In short, MERCOSUR had trouble implementing its common norms, and was incapable of imposing the same norms everywhere. In 2004, a Permanent Review Court was created, that would supposedly secure a unified jurisprudence.

In addition to formal institutions, informal institutions should also be mentioned, although very little is known about them. Clientelism, for instance, would require an inquiry. The clientelistic redistributive game typical of large federal systems such as Brazil, Argentina or Mexico never developed within the integration schemes because they were deprived of any distributive capacities. However, many regional agencies have been converted into foreign assistance channeling devices, in the realm for instance of environment or health. Many of the new treaties signed in Central America during the first half of the 1990s were probably motivated by a will to seize opportunities to attract multilateral cooperation. The Alliance for sustainable development (ALIDES), signed two years after the 1992 Rio Treaty, is an emblematic case.

All in all, regional institutions are minimally politicized because they rest on collective presidentialism. The way the Presidents interact, however, aggravates the mismatch between scope and level of integration and probably reinforces informal institutions.

²⁸ See note 16.

²⁹ The overall budget was not adjusted. The new programs were financed by international cooperation.

³⁰ BARRERA, DAVILA and MEINARDUS, 1991.

³¹ MERCOSUR, 2004: 33.

Differentiated integration

A new pattern of integration emerged during the 1990s. Historically, the regional groupings of Latin America used to include countries that were all assuming the same level of commitment, agreed upon a unique pace of integration and built a consensus around a single agenda of issue areas. This logic was progressively abandoned. What emerged during the 1990s is a flexible type of integration allowing differentiations amongst the groups, in terms of commitment, pace, and agendas. Or to put in “European” terms, Latin America introduced variable geometry, multiple speed and integration “à la carte.”³²

As previously mentioned, the Andean countries were the precursors, introducing flexibility in 1987 (Quito Protocol) in the realm of policy harmonization and development plan coordination. Also in 1987, Costa Rica decided not to sign the Treaty of the Central American Parliament, adopting an opting-out strategy that would inspire other countries. It has to be noticed that Central America has a long tradition of vanguard countries signing new treaties with the hope of convincing the others to join them. Guatemala and El Salvador, for instance, signed the San Ana Pact in 1946, supposedly paving the way for the political union of the region. The project was ill born, as it became clear that Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras did not have any intention to build a political union.

The current brand of Latin American differentiated integration was inaugurated in Central America with the 1993 Guatemala Protocol. Its Article 1 stipulates that “the Member States commit themselves to reach the goal of economic union in a voluntary, gradual, complementary and progressive way.” Then, the same voluntary, gradual, complementary and progressive methodology was referred to by the three new treaties signed in 1994-1995.³³ As a result, in 1996, a CEPAL-BID report noted that there was an amazing variety of memberships in Central American functional co-operation agencies and organs.³⁴ Just to illustrate this point, the Central American Custom Unions had at that time only two members (Guatemala and Salvador) whereas the Regional International Organization of Agriculture Sanitation (OIRSA) had nine (seven Central Americans plus Mexico and the Dominican Republic). Differentiated integration took a spectacular form when in 2003 the Central American countries negotiated separately with the United States a free trade agreement (CAFTA).

More recently, in 2008, the South American Union of Nations (UNASUR) was born under the auspices of pragmatism. The Treaty poses that the Union will be “flexible and gradual in its implementation, ensuring that each State honors its commitments according to its realities.”³⁵

After years of unsuccessful negotiations for the convergence between MERCOSUR and CAN, flexibility is a protection against paralysis and disappointments.

Even the Bolivarian Alliance of our America’s Peoples (ALBA), although inspired by an ideal of solidarity, allows integration “à la carte.” Since ALBA is

³² STUBB, 1996.

³³ See note 16.

³⁴ See Table 5.

³⁵ UNASUR Treaty signed in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 23 May, 2008.

deprived of an institutional arrangement, the different countries are free to choose the different programs they want to get involved with. Many countries for instance are members of the Caribbean oil initiative (Petrocaribe), anxious to get advantage of Venezuelan oil at favorable financial conditions, without being associated to ALBA.

The same logic of differentiated integration has been introduced in the inter-regional negotiations. In the case of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the introduction of variable geometry was a last resort device to save a moribund negotiation. The 2003 Miami trade minister meeting “recognized that countries may assume different levels of commitments”. That did not prove sufficient.

Likewise, the European Union broke away in 2008 with its traditional block to block approach to negotiation with the Andean Community, “taking into account the development needs of member countries of the Andean Community, [and] taking into account the asymmetries between and within the regions and the need for flexibility.”³⁶ This turn to pragmatism represented a major shift for the European Commission in its relations with Latin America, until then marked by a strategy of exportation of its solidarity-based integration. It not only appeared as the only way to keep the negotiation alive, but also reflected the simple fact that variable-geometry integration had become the rule within the European Union, in the context of its enlargement.³⁷

During the 1960s for the Andean countries or during the 1990s for MERCOSUR, multiple speed integration used to serve a redistributive purpose. Less developed countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia in the Andes³⁸ or Uruguay and Paraguay in MERCOSUR³⁹ were granted by the treaties stretched schedules for the removal of their trade barriers. In addition, some treaties included escape clauses allowing member states to temporarily suspend their commitments, allegedly to address some serious problems involving national vital interests.

By contrast, the current sequence of integration has introduced a new brand of flexibility that is not conceived as temporary or exceptional, but permanent and preference-centered.

Moreover, the 1990s also witnessed a drift from a CEPAL-inspired toward a trade-centered conception of regional integration. Those two evolutions ran parallel, as they are both signs of depoliticization and are both framed by neoliberalism.

These changes have had and will have implications that remain to be fully assessed. In the absence of such empirical assessments, a few observations and predictions can tentatively be made. First, this type of turn to flexibility and pragmatism works as an incentive to develop a utilitarian conception of integration. Each country is set free to make a cost-benefit evaluation of the externalities engendered by the integration process. Accordingly, each member state may legitimately choose its degree of commitment, entailing collective action dilemmas for the group. In other words,

³⁶ Andean Community – EU Troika Summit Joint communiqué, Lima, 17 May 2008.

³⁷ Although it can be argued that it was the case since the beginning. See CATTANEO and VELO, 1995.

³⁸ Article 91, Chapter XIII (Special regime for Bolivia and Ecuador) of the 1969 Cartagena agreement stipulates: “In order to gradually close the existing development gap in the region, Bolivia and Ecuador will be granted a specific regime that will allow them to reach a faster pace of economic development...”

³⁹ MERCOSUR/CMC/Decision 5/94, gives one extra year to Uruguay and Paraguay to phase out their protection and join the Customs Union.

flexibility is an invitation to free ride. The “British style” opting out strategy clearly favors the defense of national private interests and potentially represents a regression in terms of level of integration. Second, much for the same reasons, it casts doubts on the member states’ future capacity and will to share a common representation of regional interests. And third, the variable geometry also introduces confusion with regard to the identity of the region. Central America epitomizes this type of confusion, as some institutions or agencies include Mexico or the Dominican Republic among their members.

Europe “à la carte” with its “closer cooperation,” institutionalized by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, has had many positive effects, as it has allowed some countries to launch new joint initiatives in a wide variety of issue areas. Regarding the common interest of the European Union, variable geometry has not undermined it, because it is a “last resort” that must not affect the *acquis communautaire* and is aimed at “furthering the objectives of the Union and at protecting and serving its interests.”⁴⁰ More broadly, the effects are limited because the European Union is a legal construction, granted with organs such as the Commission, the Courts and the Parliament, defending the common interest. Latin American regional integration processes are deprived of such legal safeguards. Therefore, variable geometry has a far more serious damaging potential, although it ought not to be exaggerated.

Latin American integration problem has always been a very low degree of compliance, meaning that the member states have had the tendency of picking the piece of communitarian legislation that favored their interests.

Going back to our initial preoccupation with the oxymoron of Latin American integration, it can be said that differentiated integration will not make much of a difference. The new Treaties have institutionalized a political practice.

Conclusions

During the years 2000, many Latin American countries turned to the left, entailing a rehabilitation of the State as a provider of opportunities for progress through redistributive policies. At the regional level, it translated into a new interest for redistribution of trade-generated growth. MERCOSUR, for instance, made an incursion into positive integration, with the creation of a (modest) fund destined to compensate the huge asymmetries of development between countries and regions that characterize this regional grouping.⁴¹

Other than this timid evolution, the left has not proved very active. No evolution towards supranationalism has taken place, despite frequent rhetorical support for deeper integration.

The radical left in Bolivia and Ecuador has put a strong emphasis on integration in their new constitutions. The governments have nonetheless done very little to upgrade their level of commitment.

Concerning the agendas and outcomes, the recent evolution of integration offers a contradictory picture. On the one side, depoliticized trade-centered integration has tended to widen the scope of its agenda and for some issue areas a destruction of common goods has already taken place. Yet on the other side, there are grounds for anticipating the provision of positive cross-

⁴⁰ PHILIPPART and EDWARDS, 1999:90

⁴¹ Fondo de convergencia estructural del Mercosur (FOCEM). Based on the model of the European Structural Funds, it represents a modest 0.03% of the regional GDP (US\$ 100 million per year).

border externalities, as new experiences try to address issues in a promising way.

I will briefly illustrate that point. U.S. sponsored free trade agreements (FTAs), modeled on the North American experience, include issues that outreached by far simple trade of goods. NAFTA went so far in that direction that Stephen Clarkson (2002), reflecting on the Canadian experience, analysed it in terms of a “foreign constitution.” NAFTA’s famous chapter 11, for instance, provides a degree of protection for investors that can potentially undermine a country’s sovereignty.

Although investors should not be demonized, their intentions are not to deliver regional goods.

Another example has been carefully studied, especially in the Andean countries. The FTAs’ dispositions on intellectual property threaten the Andean countries’ capacity to protect the traditional knowledge of their Indigenous populations and contradict many of CAN’s legislations.⁴² In that case, FTAs are clearly destructive for regional goods, favoring private interests and even biopiraterary.

However, new issues are addressed in Latin America with the potential of delivering regional goods. ALBA, regardless of its political inclination, has introduced a new conception of integration based on solidarity. Its 2007 Energy Treaty, signed by Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua, considers that “guaranteeing a universal supply of energy as a right of the peoples must be one of the ALBA objectives” or that “one of the main objectives of ALBA is to achieve a form of energetic integration that guarantees the stable supply of energetic products, and benefits Latin America and Caribbean societies.” In a way, this treaty makes Venezuelan oil a common good.

Likewise, the new Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) is not trade centered. Its ambition is to build “integration and union among its people in the cultural, social, economic and political fields, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among others, with a view to eliminating socioeconomic inequalities, in order to achieve social inclusion and the participation of civil society, to strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of strengthening the sovereignty and independence of the States.”⁴³

UNASUR has sponsored two initiatives that have already proved successful. One has to do with infrastructure, the other with security. Launched in 2000, the Initiative for Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) addresses a regional chronic deficiency in infrastructure that has consistently undermined any chance of deepening regional integration and has aggravated the typical pattern of south-south integration leading to an agglomeration of economic activities and an uneven distribution of benefits.⁴⁴ A consensus emerged, financing was secured through the Inter American Development Bank (IADB) and the Andean Development Bank (CAF), and hundreds of projects were launched, proving that planning is still a promising strategy.

The other initiative that has also proved quite successful is the deliberation on security matters. The South American Defense Council (SADC)

⁴² GOMEZ, 2004.

⁴³ Article 2 of the 2008 Treaty.

⁴⁴ MESQUITA, 2006.

is far from being a NATO-style alliance. Yet in the aftermath of the signing of the U.S. - Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (October 30, 2009), and in the middle of fierce diplomatic tensions in the region, the SADC adopted an important resolution, on November 27, including a long list of measures aimed at fostering confidence among UNASUR members. They include: exchange of information on the defense systems, on the agreements signed and the military maneuvers planned; cooperation in the realm of fight against drug trafficking and terrorism; guarantee that any military agreement signed by a member includes a clause of no intervention in domestic affairs of other members. The enforcement of these measures will probably prove difficult. However, they put the region on a promising path of collective diplomacy with a security centered agenda that reminds Central America during the 1980s and could lead to the building of a security community.

In a nutshell, it would be wrong to conclude from the preceding developments that U.S. sponsored free-trade centered integration, apart from boosting mutual trade, generates crossborder negative externalities, whereas leftist inspired integration provides regional goods. It is true, however, that trade centered integration is merely negative integration and that leftist governments are more inclined, although sometimes only rhetorically, toward positive integration.⁴⁵ The distinction between negative and positive integration does not always overlap with the depoliticized/politicized one, as free trade has historically often been used as an instrument of peace building. If negative integration is not necessarily depoliticized (it becomes so when free trade is conceived as an end and no longer as a means to reach some superior political goal), positive integration entails a collective construction of a common project. Often in the past, such projects have not properly been implemented, hence the oxymoron. It remains to be seen if the current sequence of integration will be any different.

This paper attempts at shedding some light on a blind spot of the literature on Latin American experiences with regional integration, the “consistency despite instability and resilience despite crises” oxymoron. It argues that the notion of politicization can be helpful, by linking some historical and structural features of regional integration to its success or failure.

Politicization is basically defined as a way of considering economic integration an instrument to reach political goals.

As shown in the first part of the paper, Central America, the Andean region and MERCOSUR have experienced a historical evolution marked by successive sequences of politicization, depoliticization and repoliticization. Any upgrading of politicization has translated into a reactivation or deepening of integration.

In the second part of the paper, I explored the way two independent variables impact the degree of politicization: collective intergovernmental presidentialism and differentiated integration. Collective presidentialism provides for a minimum politicization, yet it entails a growing gap between the scope and the level of integration. Except for periods of loss of interests, or when the governments are tempted by protectionist and nationalist policies, when the Presidents do prove to be concerned with regional issues, they will include in their agendas new issue areas without deepening the process of

⁴⁵ SCHARPF, 1999.

integration. Variable geometry protects the integration processes from terminal crises, yet it incites the member states to choose their level of commitment and aggravates the collective action dilemmas.

These developments had no other ambition than to suggest new directions for investigating regional integration in Latin America. Indeed, much work remains to be done to supplement with indicators the subjective evaluations of key actors' commitment and civil society's participation included in this paper.

Tables

Table 1. Hypothetical sequences of politicization of an integration process

Sequences Components	Politicized onset	Depoliticization	Repoliticization
Incentives	Internal or external	Internal or external	Internal or external
Instrumentalization	Economic integration as a device to reach a political goal (peace, democracy)	Permutation: economic integration as an end	New political goals following a crisis
Representation	Political goal (peace, democracy) as a common interest	Political goals considered achieved or non longer reachable	Common will to regain control over free markets
Institutionalization	Institutional arrangements	Stickiness	Institutional reform
Commitment	Key political actors committed	Lost of interest	Commitment of new actors
Participation	Civil society possibly involved	Lost of interest	New actors involved

Table 2. Central American integration's sequences of politicization

Sequences Components	Politicization 1948-1954	Depoliticization 1960-1986	Repoliticization 1987-1998	Depoliticization 1998-2007
Incentives	Internal/External	Internal	Internal	Internal/External
Instrumentalization	YES	NO	YES	NO
Representation	Peace, solidarity, Anti-communism	Trade	Peace, freedom, democracy and development	Trade
Institutionalization	ODECA	SIECA	SICA	SICA
Commitment	High	High	High	Low
Participation	Low	Low	High	High

Table 3. Andean integration's sequences of politicization

Sequences Components	Politicization 1969-1989	Modest depoliticization 1989-1996	Repoliticization 1996-2006
Incentives	Internal	Internal	Internal/external
Instrumentalization	YES	NO	YES
Representation	Solidarity	Trade	Lack of consensus Polarization
Institutionalization	GRAN	GRAN	CAN
Commitment	High	Low	Medium
Participation	Low	Low	Medium

Table 4. MERCOSUR's sequences of politicization

Sequences Components	Politicization 1985-1990	Depoliticization 1991-1996	Repoliticization 1996-1998	Depoliticization 1998-2001	Repoliticization 2001-2008
Incentives	Internal	Internal/External	Internal	Internal	Internal
Instrumentalization	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Representation	Democracy	Trade	Democracy	Trade	Stability
Institutionalization	Protocols	Institutional modesty	Democratic clause	None	Institution building
Commitment	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium
Participation	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 5. Central American Integration. Variable geometry in 1996.

Treaty, organ or agency	Member States involved
Customs Union	2 Guatemala (G), Salvador (S)
Northern Triangle	3 G, S and Honduras (H)
CA-4	4 G, S, H and Nicaragua (N)
Central American Common Market (CACM)	5 G, S, H, N and Costa Rica (CR)
Central American System of Integration (SICA)	6 G, S, H, N, CR and Panama (P)
Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALIDES)	7 G, S, H, N, CR, P and Belize (B)
Regional council for agriculture cooperation (CORECA)	8 G, S, H, N, CR, P, Dominican Republic and Mexico
Regional international organization of agriculture sanitation (OIRSA)	9 G, S, H, N, CR, P, B, Dominican Republic and Mexico

Source: CEPAL-BID, 1997.

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