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Cuban Economic Reform and Latin American Regionalism: A means of « regionally addressing domestic needs » through post-hegemonic integration?

The case of Cuban involvement in the initial phases of the Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC)

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« *Who will be the builders of the new world? The men and women that inhabit our planet. What will be their basic weapon? Ideas will be, and consciousness. Who will sow them, cultivate them and make them invincible? You will.* »

Fidel Castro (1999) A Revolution Can Only Be Born from Culture and Ideas. UK: Cuban Embassy

« *Beyond populist rhetoric and symbolic politics, we need to address current regional transformations as part of deeply rooted dilemmas of development, growth and inclusion, and how to effectively tackle dependency and external vulnerability* »

Pía Riggirozzi (2012) « Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America: Towards a New Synthesis », New Political Economy 17(4), p.439

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

Cuban economic reform and Latin American Regionalism: a means of « regionally addressing domestic needs » through Post-Hegemonic Integration ?

The case of Cuban involvement in the initial phases of the Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC)

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Comprehensive Summary

My thesis lies at the intersection of, on the one hand, Cuban (regional) foreign policy and Latin American regionalism, and on the other hand, of regionalism and development. I wish to explore the interlinkage between Cuba's regionalised development strategies and the current dynamics of Latin American and Caribbean regionalism symbolised by the creation of the *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC), which has every potential to provide the region with a common developmental governance that fits Cuba's needs and would therefore suggest a significant interest from Havana.

Cuban Economic Reforms

Despite the undeniable international character of my study, I decided to start off my literature review with a thorough overview of Cuba's domestic political and economic context. Scholars have discussed Cuba's hardships during the *Período especial en tiempo de paz* (also referred to as the "special period"). Cuba's economic issues are thus traced back to the start of the 1990s and Havana's frenetic race in order to secure its own survival, ***sobrevivencia*** (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014). Insufficient development and an international financial crisis forced Cuba to re-evaluate its approach. In order to solve short-term productive and supply issues, and to reform the Cuban economic system in the long run (***actualización del modelo económico***), the Cuban government approved of the *Lineamientos de Política Económica y Social* (2011) (Fernandez Estrada, 2014 - figure 2). However, these guidelines must be considered as an attempt to reform the island's economy, not to reform its political system. The ultimate goal remains "the construction of socialism" (Campbell, 2016), while absorbing the US-led embargo, dealing with Cuba's weak land endowment and honouring the Cuban regime's high welfare standards.

Economists tend to think that the Castroist is regime is ill-advised to link its shortcomings to external (macroeconomic) causes, while their true origins are **endogenous root causes**, i.e. the country's weak productive structure (Torres Pérez, 2014). Campbell (2016) shows that the global recession and stagnation have "minimal effects" on Cuba's economy, whose FDI-enterprises were not particularly hit and whose GDP growth quickly recovered its poor average from the 1995-2004 period, that is before a bubble-based growth (between 2004 and 2007) and the financial crisis. Indeed, Cuba's hardships are caused by a *poor productivity, uncontrolled growth of the public sector and the weakness of production infrastructure* (Lamrani, 2012a). **"What Cuba needs"** (Torres Pérez, 2014) is to improve its domestic economy (Campbell, 2016), which relies too heavily on the "investment functions" of massive service exports (Monreal, 2006). The island must deal with its *workforce underutilisation* (Fernandez Estrada, 2014) and its *industrial and infrastructural undercapitalisation* (Lamrani, 2012a), which has worsened given the stagnation of tourism has badly hit the island and reduced "the multiplier effect on the rest of economy" (Torres Pérez, 2014). Therefore, economists often push for further liberalisation (which was only pondered in the reform), a larger embracement of the market and the decentralisation of the economy. However, "Arguments about conditions for economic

development presume an inevitable neoliberal insertion into the world economy" (Riggirozzi, 2012b; 439). By only encouraging Havana to obey "the conditions and rules of the contemporary world" (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014), the literature might give in to an orthodox paradigmatic bias. Scholars tend to overlook the **politics behind "*mantener el socialism*"**. Some argue that the regional lens comes in handy to understand Cuba's development strategy, built on political negotiations in order to foster trade and attract FDI's without having to reform its regime. Despite the dependency, it also conveys predictability and political control, which the regime is constantly seeking (Campbell, 2016; Serbin, 2001).

Cuba and Latin America

Building on the "globalist vision developed in the favourable context of the Cold War", Havana sought to secure its "distinct insertion into the international system" in order to benefit from "the opportunity to reinforce and deepen spaces of participation and tighten relations with various regional and multilateral organisations". Serbin shows how, as of the 1990s, **Cuba's reinsertion** started by progressively closing in on CARICOM, the AEC (which explicitly rejected even the thought to mutate into an FTA), and the SELA, characterised by the absence of Cuba's nemesis, the United States (Serbin, 2001). Of course, a comprehensive study of Latin America's regional integration also features the ECLAC and IDB's efforts for the unification of a regional common market (Dabène, 2012), at odds with Cuba's moderately liberal preferences. This said, Serbin's approach highlights the historicity of Cuba's adaptative strategy (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015). Also, Cuba's eventual adhesion to the ALADI tends to illustrate that Havana had truly owned its spot on the regional stage, through regional proactivity, while US anti-Cuban policies harshened with the Torricelli (1992) and Helms-Burton (1996) laws.

The late 1990s are also characterised by the emergence of Venezuelan Bolivarianism. In 2004, due to ideological convergence and a shared anti-US feeling, the region witnessed the creation of ALBA, a "renewed space for a Cuban presence in the region" (Serbin, 2001). ALBA is but the continuation and expansion (in scope and in member states) of the initial Venezuelan and Cuban bilateral *Convenio Internacional de Cooperación* (2000), which set up a kind of oil for doctors and teachers exchange scheme. ALBA's economic system is conceived as "an economic space for a shared and interdependent development [...] destined to consolidate and expand a new alternative model of economic relations in order to fortify and diversify the productive apparel and the commercial trade [...] with a view to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of [its] peoples" (Briceño Ruiz, 2013). In a way, ALBA's interdependence and "coordinated industrial policies [...] between countries [allow] them to bank on their complementarities while assuring that their domestic needs are met". Focussing of Cuba, ALBA allows to highlight the "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012), the "***Bolivarian Matrix***" of Cuba's development strategy. The island was no longer seeking a "direct insertion into the global economy", but bet on the "substantial, and somewhat abrupt [...] expansion" of the Bolivarian alliance. It meant a spurred growth through the expansion of the "investment function of more valuable exports (primarily healthcare services)" (Monreal, 2006). The literature does not hold back from expressing its legitimate doubts about ALBA's long-term viability (Malamud, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012a; Vargas-Mazas,

2017). Scholars have also quantitatively deconstructed the idea that ALBA's vast regional social and welfare plans are all undisputable successes (Ortega & Rodríguez, 2006). Whether ALBA really is Cuba's salvation remains a doubt too as ALBA-induced economic relations feature economic sectors that were already chronically exhausted before ALBA's birth (Torres Pérez, 2014). Yet, a neutral consideration for the ALBA-framework provides an alternative reading of the developmental path Cuba has chosen for itself, attributing some validity to the possibility for politically negotiated regional accounts of development.

The picture of Cuba's reinsertion would not be complete if we were to overlook the ways in which **Cuba** has *been **reinserted***. John de Bhal (2019) provides us with analysis of the Cuban case as a sign of resistance from Latin American figureheads (Brazil, Colombia). Cuba's exclusion from the US-piloted OAS and repeated absence at the US-dominated Summit of the Americas was increasingly denounced. For one, the United States seem to be losing grasp on the region. More importantly still, scholars have described this common opposition as the emergence of a Latin American consciousness and unity, possibly molten in CELAC. Whether the community should or is really destined to supersede the OAS is an unsettled debate (de Bhal, 2019; Buono & de la Barra, 2012; Segovia, 2013). However, scholars generally underline a new impulse for regional political, economic and military integration, which should be dissected for its own sake.

A Redefined Region: Rethinking Latin American Regionalism In Post-Hegemonic Terms

Latin America's leap into the 21st century has been rather exhilarating. The region has increasingly been considered as a terrain for political (re)investment, in response to regional and global dynamics. Not only does it result in a modification of the institutional configuration of regional politics (notably the exclusion of the US and Canada), but also a modification (and often an expansion) of the set of objectives that ought to be pursued by, and of the true meaning attributed to regional interactions and cooperation (Emerson, 2014; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012a; Riggirozzi, 2012b; Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). To describe the current dynamic of Latin American and Caribbean regionalism is no sinecure, because it is a complex phenomenon (Briceño Ruiz, 2013) featuring "diplomatic hyperactivity" (Segovia, 2013). It is altogether built on **new and renewed regional initiatives** (figure 4). Olivier Dabène has thoroughly discussed what he calls the *cycles of politicisation* which permits the explanation of both the creation of organisations and the reorientation of already existing ones. As such, Latin American and Caribbean regionalism is nothing close to a pure "organisational inflation". The only constant is what the author describes as a general "post-trade repoliticised sequence of regionalism" (Dabène, 2012).

A first example if the repoliticisation of MERCOSUR, created in 1985, which regained interest at the start of the 2000s. The organisation went through a phase of "institutional building", with member states contemplating the creation of regional parliament[1] (PARLASUR), judicial institutions and a technical body tasked with furthering the integration project. More striking evidence are ALBA and UNASUR. Despite being

[1] The project eventually never saw the day of light because member states never could agree on the supranational nature of the instance. Authors have also hypothesised that the project lost thrust once the "FTAA-threat", that is the possibility of a US-led macro-regional Free Trade Agreement, was definitely buried, rendering such an idea somewhat obsolete (Dri, 2016).

two “distinct and heterogenous spaces for development”, they share a set of “founding principles”: solidarity, cooperation, peace, equality, States sovereignty, multilateralism, participative democracy, “with economic and social policies directed towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” (Faivre d’Arcier-Flores, 2015). As it was already indicated, ALBA is quite an ideologically charged project, and is equated to the “offspring of the ideological developments of the post-modernity” by gathering “almost all the leftist social schools of thought” that have flourished South of the Rio Grande (Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). For Pía Riggirozzi, it constitutes “a new political economy” (2012a). It proposes “an alternative model of [solidary] development and accumulation” (Riggirozzi, 2012b), which is set on the “maximisation of cooperative advantages [through] economic complementarity” (Buono & de la Barra, 2012). It also proposes a “a new model of production [...] based on a barter system rather than free trade” (Riggirozzi, 2012b). UNASUR, in turn, is a “versatile and even contradictory project embracing different discourses from different members” (Riggirozzi, 2012b) “with objectives formulated in terms of environmental, social, political and security policy” (Briceño Ruiz, 2012: 17). Its main characteristic rests with its broad range of political and economic coordination, mostly in the fields of infrastructure via the IIRSA (Carciofi, 2012). Markedly, UNASUR also mounted the SADC, “a regional defence strategy outside the tutelage umbrella from the United States” (de Bhal, 2019) and the South American Council for Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation “seeking to reinforce the objective quality, equity and international competitiveness through harmonisation of Higher Education programmes” (Riggirozzi, 2012b).

Both organisations deal with their weaknesses. It is obvious that ALBA should not be idealised. I already pointed out its economic vulnerabilities. Many have also understandably underlined the forms of political violence and importance breaches of human rights that characterise its member states. In the meantime, ALBA should not be demonised, and an adequate unbiased scientific approach is needed to fully comprehend just how innovative the project is (Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). For UNASUR, scholars have highlighted the organisation overreliance on Brazil’s regional leadership, while its status as the lighthouse of South America is far from being unchallenged, which has engendered policy setbacks and delays within the organisation (Malamud, 2012). UNASUR initiatives have also been attacked for incoherence with regards to environmental protection (Saguier, 2012). This said, “UNASUR and ALBA represent new attempts to ‘re-territorialise’ new consensus, that are regional not global. [They] have embraced since the early 2000s different projects at odds with the US-sponsored Washington Consensus” (Riggirozzi, 2012b).

Lastly, South America is host to the Pacific Alliance emanating from a convergence of various economic agreements between Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico. Some see in the AP a prolongation of US-inspired economic and security policy (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011), others argue the AP refers to a Latin American appropriation of neoliberal thinking (Briceño Ruiz, 2013; Vargas-Mazas, 2017). The only certainty is that the AP definitely sits on a kind “developmental orthodoxy” by constructing its constitutive agreement on a rather classical economic lexicon: growth, competitiveness, freedom and promotion of enterprise or attractiveness for foreign investments (Vargas-Mazas, 2017).

Latin American and Caribbean regionalism is thus a contested phenomenon, with colliding perspectives on integration and cooperation. Whether this antagonism can coexist, or even merge, remains to be proven. Anyhow, it holds a "transformative capacity", due to the emergence of new narratives and new ideas about regionalism. Whether this capacity is total and assured to produce long-term effects on the regional landscape raises some doubt. Recent initiatives rely on *collective intergovernmental presidentialism*. While it is a good "substitute to weak institutionalisation", it exposes, in the meantime, Latin American governments to an over-diversity of regional agreements and organisations translating "into inflated agendas that are not accompanied by any [actual] progress", all this in a political culture of "weak norm compliance (Dabène, 2012). Yet, what is certain is that it has led to "the reconfiguration of Latin American regional governance" (Riggirozzi, 2012b), which the New Regionalist Approach (NRA) (Riggirozzi, 2012a/b) fails to explain. It posits that Latin American and Caribbean regionalism has been moved by two waves. The first wave of so-called "old" or "closed" regionalism entails classical notions of developmentalism and is "associated with post-war economic protectionism" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 424). The second, often referred to as "new", "deep" or "open" regionalism is characterised by "the embrace of neoliberalism as a developmental project" (Riggirozzi, 2012a). Germán de la Reza (2013) delivers a thoughtful *systemic* approach of both waves and finds that each obeys to a distinctive frame of reference. "Closed" regionalism responds to the European Union's notion of *Generalised System of Preference* (GSP) and implies integration between "countries with a similar degree of development". "Open" regionalism, on the other hand, focusses on export capacity, and follows the trade-based policy lines set by the *World Trade Orgnisation* (WTO) and the *General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs* (GATT). Scholars have also distinguished between macro-ideological explanations for both waves, summoning Latin American Bolivarianism as the foundation of "closed" regionalism and "a 'US vision' born in the Monroe Doctrine and embodied in the Pan-American ideal that advocates Americas free from the influence of countries outside the Western hemisphere – yet guarded by the USA", propping "open" regionalism (Riggirozzi, 2012b).

Only, these descriptions do not hold given the region seems to have moved beyond neoliberalism (as the FTAA failure illustrates), while old-school protectionism is off the agenda as well. The current blend of Latin American regionalism suggests the existence of a "third wave" (Riggirrozzi, 2012a) of regional integration around alternative notions of development. It coincides with a generalised critique of neoliberalism, both in academic and political arenas (Riggirozzi, 2012b) and the emergence of heterodox concepts regarding development such as the idea of "maldevelopment" (Escobar, 2010). This context has favoured the emergence of "the neodevelopmental approach of [Latin American] regionalism" (Dabène, 2012), defined as an "intellectual effort initially aiming at proposing an answer to the shortcomings of [neoliberal] economic policies" (Flexor, et al., 2017). To equip this third way of thinking regional integration, scholars have come up with the notion of *post-hegemonic regionalism*, or "regional structures characterised by hybrid practices as a result of a partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neoliberal governance in

the acknowledgement of other political forms of organisation and economic management of regional (common) goods" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012). As such, post-hegemonic regionalism goes together with an ***alternative regional governance*** for Latin America and the Caribbean, or "*the articulation of new foundational ideas about what the region is for, about common goals and common space, and sense of belonging*" (Riggirozzi, 2012b). It also introduces to the idea of *commonality* (Emerson, 2014), which suggest the acknowledgement of regional solidarity, complementarity and interdependence. Also, the sense of belonging is relevant because of the conceptual shifts regarding el *sentido de lo latinoamericano* (Jesús Martín Barbero, in Escobar, 2010) which suggest the necessity to seriously consider sociological, ontological and cultural factors.

As a consequence, **competing projects** come with **competing explanatory models**. Briceño Ruiz (2013) makes use of "axes" (1° open regionalism; 2° revisionist regionalism; 3° anti-systemic regionalism) and "economic models" of regionalism (1° strategic regionalism; 2° social regionalism; 3° productive regionalism). He then associates a specific project with a specific axe, which denotes a "pure or combined" model of regionalism. MERCOSUR makes up the revisionist axe as it embodies a perfectly hybrid model of regionalism encompassing elements of strategic, social and productive regionalism. The Pacific Alliance articulates the open axe of regionalism and operates on the strategic model by adopting the precepts of free-trade-base integration. ALBA, at last, incarnates the *anti-systemic* axe by combining the productive and social models. This vantage point arguably lacks clarity. It remains rather vague as to how conceptually tell axes and models apart. The terminology is tendentious, mainly around ALBA, portrayed as an anti-globalisation, which some scholars explicitly refute (Riggirozzi, 2012b; Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). In the meantime, Briceño Ruiz's constitutes a valuable approach that enables an explanation of the "different manifestations and intensities" found in the diversity of regional initiatives.

Emerson (2014) conveys the idea of regionalist poles structuring a range of possibilities in terms of regional architectures, which ALBA has widened. He shows that regionalism must be considered as an inter-subjective process, "the base of community and common meaning". As a result, the region aims at creating a sense of Latin Americaness, which "becomes an open and additive process, here understood in relation to economic development, wherein historical change and contestation over the form and direction of the region are placed at the centre of the analysis". Also, we should not discard open regionalism, but only acknowledge the "the displacement of the 'orthodox' US model as the model for the region"

Vargas-Mazas (2017) speaks of an (already) fourth wave of Latin American regionalism characterised by the creation of the Pacific Alliance. He proposes the notion of neoliberalism's "tactical relaunch", which adopts a defensive posture given the emergence of left-leaning regional projects. It generates "a 'new neoliberalism' which rethinks its economic policies and introduces social measures without transforming the dominant political project", which, in Foucauldian terms, reflects the urge not to protect trade and the exchange of goods and services for themselves, but to promotes and protects "competitiveness mechanisms".

It must be emphasised that these three models all approach regionalism from an economic point of view. There also exist perspectives that do not confer such primacy to the economy. One such is Riggirozzi's (2012a; 2012b) theorising, thanks to her utilisation and actualisation of the concept of *regionness*. She borrows the notion from Hettne and Söderbaum, who "defined regionness in terms of organised social, political and economic trans-border relations (material foundations of regionalism), supported by a manifested sense of belonging, common goals and values (symbolic foundations), and institutions and regulations that enhance the region's ability to interact autonomously in the international arena (external recognition as an actor)". She considers regionness not only as an object for politics (Emerson, 2014), but also as an analytical tool affixed to political practices, which are nothing less than "are expressions of a redefinition of regional consensus over social and economic resource sharing, regulations, planning and financial cooperation". However, Riggirozzi refutes the induced perspective of progressive "degrees of regionness" (figure 5) which entails a teleological conception of regionalism that should inexorably lead to EU-type deep integration. Instead, she favours a definition of regionness as "space or arena for action", opening the door to *types of regionness* (Riggirozzi, 2012b). Although unicity is not fully discarded, regional pluralism is contemplated in all seriousness, notwithstanding Dabène's scepticism around loose integration project in Latin America.

Could **CELAC** be the **paroxysm of post-hegemonic regionalism**? CELAC emerged as the convergence of the Rio Group (launched in 1986) the Latin American Summit on Integration and Development (CALC – launched in 2008 by former Brazilian President Lula), two regional bodies tasked with fostering political coordination and consultation. The fusion was enacted during the "Unity Summit", in Cancun (2010) and molten into CELAC constitutive declaration on year later in Caracas (2011). CELAC, therefore, lies at the confluence of both economic agreements, political partnerships *and* mechanisms of political concertation. It "fills an important gap in uniting existing efforts" (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011), "bringing great opportunities and challenges for the new organisation" (Segovia, 2013). CELAC is, however, not being praised in the literature as Latin America's panacea "to create a more autonomous Latin America" (de Bhal, 2019). CELAC's institutionalisation remains weak, as it cannot, strictly speaking, be considered as an organisation given the community does not have any permanent body. It exposes the initiative to the volatility of presidential engagement in regional affairs (Segovia, 2013), consistent with Dabène's critique of intergovernmentalism (2012), which is definitely a key feature of Latin American regionalism[2]. Segovia points out that CELAC "also faces some limitations, restrictions, and challenges" with respect to the time horizon of its agenda or broad (hence ambiguous) formulation of its final declarations (Segovia, 2013). CELAC's potential is high, but uncertain. It has called for a new synthesis (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012) bringing about new explanatory models to elucidate the current forms of Latin American regionalism, characterised by its

[2] Both ALBA, UNASUR and the AP have similar institutional structures, with no supranational entity and, with varying form, a mechanism that gathers Heads of States or of Government. See Institut des Amériques, 2011 for ALBA; Vargas-Mazas, 2017 for the AP; UNASUR Constitutive Treaty (2008) for UNASUR.

urge to challenge US hegemony (post-hegemonism), and, to a large extent, to evade neoliberal capitalist economic models that do not fit what the region perceives as being its best interest (neodevelopmentalism). The question remains, however, as to how unitary Latin America can be, and what is possible to achieve on such a plural regional stage. "The difficulties in the course of transformations mean that it is very easy to dismiss the possibilities of a coherent post-neoliberal future. However, notwithstanding the obstacles in the way, the fact is that the debate over how to best serve participatory, redistributive and demands for greater autonomy is redefining the regional agenda in Latin America" (Riggirozzi, 2012b).

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

To build a theoretical framework is to identify a paradigm that best fits the scientific literature one draws on, and one's scientific objectives through his or her writing. As I situated my elaboration in the fields on International Relations (IR), I face four general options: (neo)realism, (neo)liberalism, constructivism (Walt, 1998) and the broad branch of critical theories in International Relations. My concern will be to explore Latin America's governance with regards to development. I want to assess to what extent, in situation of interaction, ideas and ideologies may shift states identities and interests. For this reason, favouring the constructivist paradigm seems to be the wisest choice, as it will allow to query "what is amenable to change" (Wendt, 1992) in terms of policy, participation or perspective. This endeavour should either way be carried out bearing in mind that the scientific community nowadays tends to consider paradigms as cumulative rather than mutually exclusive, and raw opposition of "-isms" as fruitless (Battistella, 2015e).

Governance is the binding element between (neo-)liberalism and constructivism, and it constitutes the most recent paradigmatic synthesis in International Relations (Ibid.). Although governance is primarily being defined in multi-layered worldwide, global terms (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009), its focal definitely can be reduced without denaturing the notion. My object of study *is* governance, only in an alternative form, with a regional scope. Multidimensional, it encompasses political, economic and social aspects. It refers to a "sense of belonging" (Riggirozzi, 2012b), and to a meta-history of *Latin Americanism* bound to ideological (Cuba's *latinoamericanismo*) or cultural (Jesús Martín Barbero's *sentido de lo latinoamericano*) backgrounds. "Accordingly, the study of [regional] governance is ultimately concerned with how rules are created, produced, sustained, and refined, how these rules help define the purpose of collective action, and how these rules control the activities of international, transnational, and increasingly domestic action" (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009). Also, while refraining from any normative intentions, I use governance as a macro-theoretical analytical tool, which is itself underlaid by two paradigmatically distinct concepts. One is liberal intergovernmentalism (*à la* Moravcisk) which I will explore mainly via Battistella's writings on integration (2015b) and cooperation (2015c). The second has to do with constructivism's conception of institutions. In this perspective, institutions are lively things, supported by ideas, which are deposed in *rules* they enforce and (ever-shifting) *norms* they embody (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009; Duffield, 2007; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

I make use of **intergovernmentalism to explain the rationality of alternative regional governance in Latin America**. According to Battistella (2015b), liberal intergovernmentalism is the most suited theoretical tool for anyone willing to study *integration*, as it bypasses neofunctionalism's empirical shortcomings, and questions situations of *double-edged diplomacy* (Putman, in Battistella, 2015b), states having to bargain among themselves but to ensure legitimacy at home. However, integration alone is liable for Eurocentrism. Taking a step back while remaining in the collaborative scope of governance, I argue one might find a new insight by considering *cooperation* through Latin America looser integrative scheme. We have seen that the whole spirit of post-hegemonic regionalism and alternative regional governance in Latin America is to better inhabit the region and spark an autonomous development. An efficient intergovernmental cooperation must be considered as a pillar of this political objective. Cooperation, however, brings its own lot of conceptually related questions, regarding *hegemony* and *leadership*. The former is not essential, as "a collective optimum that is unattainable via unilateral conduct" suffices for cooperative structures to emerge (Battistella, 2015c). The latter is a trickier question that entails the notion of *followership* (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012), and *collective leadership* in the context of regionalism[3] that need not necessarily be large states but can take the form of small states groupings (Malamud, 2012).

Secondly, I construct a framework built on **institutional accounts of alternative regional governance**, using **shifting norms and identities** as well as **the role of ideas**. Wendt (1992) has since long explained the interlinkage between cooperation and state identities and interests, which is an intersubjective and evolutive process and involves the creation and alteration of socially constructed norms. I summon Duffield's (2007) definition of institutions, which are constituted and regulated by intersubjective "deontic" norms and codified formal rules. Conversely, institutions can be seen as "shared beliefs about the way things *should* be", meaning that institutions are in fact aggregations of shared norms (Duffield, 2007; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Norms (and thus institutions) can of course change. "Norm entrepreneurs" interact within "organisational platforms", challenge existing norms with the introduction of new ideas (or *political paradigms* (Dri, 2016) and strive to rally "norm followers". Norm emergence therefore consists in a politicised "strategic social construction" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). In this perspective, institutions, identities and interests are *mutually constitutive collective meanings*, or *collective cognitions* that are always in a process of socialisation and alteration, while one must account for path dependency in co-constructing a collective "structure of identity and interest" (Wendt, 1992).

I explain why **regionness**, applied to the Latin American context, can be a valuable theoretical and analytical tool to explain Latin American regionalism as a process of institutionalisation, i.e. "a process of internalising new identities and interests" (Wendt, 1992), through the emergence of new regionally shared

[3] Malamud's (2012) research explains how Brazil struggles to really steer the region as its leader, facing "reluctant followers" (Mexico and Argentina). A theoretical framework that crosses through Malamud and Serbin's (2001) work might suggest looking for collective leadership of small states, which might find it easier to strike aggregate their interest and, together, push for regional integration and cooperation.

norms. Regionness rests on organised relations via institutions and regulations and can thus be made, unmade or transformed through the constitutive, regulative and procedural features of its normative and regulatory architecture (Duffield, 2007). The symbolic foundation contained in the idea of regionness stresses the prominence of identity and interests, which are co-constituted through institutions (Wendt, 1992) and deposed in an aggregation of norms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Regions also pursue common goals and are based on common values. In other words, regions are, or at least have the potential to become *spaces for cooperation*, notwithstanding any loose integration or organisation structure. A cooperative scheme to which states participate wilfully and rationally, while the scheme itself translates a specific ideational articulation. Emerson's "politics of regionness" therefore, refers to the "politics of defining the region". It is a discursive process of *subjectification*, an "attempt to bring into being a particular region" punctuated by state agency (Emerson, 2014).

I argue I must also approach **neodevelopmentalism** as a set of regionally emergent norms precisely shaping new identities and interests. I thus identify the intersubjective basis of the region's development agenda by applying a "norm language" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998) to theoretical considerations around neodevelopmentalism. Neodevelopmentalism is a State-led endeavour usually defined in national terms, designed as an inclusive and coherent development strategy based on export and a better access to the world economy. It encompasses a specific political economy, aiming at specialising (not per se expanding) its industries in order to have them firmly rooted in international markets, hence benefitting from increased productivity and a better profitability derived from national manufacture. However, neodevelopmentalism can theoretically be upscaled and considered at the regional level. What matters is the construction of a common project and "institutional mechanisms that favour cooperative behaviours in the long run", inscribed in a *regional* pact (Flexor, et al., 2017). As such, neodevelopmentalism becomes a regional, intersubjective, disputed, discursive intergovernmental project.

Research Objectives and Methodology

With this theoretical framework, I hypothesise that CELAC features a clear post-hegemonic stand and a neodevelopmental political agenda. I hypothesise that Cuba's 2013-2014 pro tempore Presidency coincides with a foundational moment for the community and that it is possible to identify a Cuban impulse, as "norm entrepreneur", fostering a new regional identity and new regional interests, as well as providing member states with a new meaning for the region. Lastly, I hypothesise that CELAC is a means for Cuba to "regionally addressing domestic needs" (Cole, 2012) by creating the conditions that will enable the emulation of a socialist-prone regional environment, regionally comforting the Cuban regime.

A great deal of my research will concern want I dubbed the *discursive and political material* of CELAC, meaning its "normative corpus" (Vargas-Mazas, 2017): its constitutive agreement, its Presidential and Special Declarations and its policy agenda. The documents translate the ideas and the world views which form the bedrock of the organised community. Furthermore, I have shown that CELAC has been designed as a sort of umbrella platform gathering existing mechanism of political integration concertation (Rio Group,

SELA, ALADI). Therefore, policy papers and memoranda of said structures can be invoked in order to assess the regional influence and rootedness of CELAC, in terms of coordination or political precedence. I will also fall back onto *secondary sources* (Vargas-Mazas, 2017), i.e. official press releases or unofficial yet relevant and verified sources of information regarding international and regional politics (opinions, interviews, etc.). Finally, I intended to schedule a set of four directed interviews with Latin American officials or diplomats working in the framework of CELAC. I reckoned that letting the regional actors do the talking was the only way to adequately assess the extent of Cuba's direct and active involvement in, and Cuba's weight on the setting of CELAC's regional governance. Unfortunately, given the exceptional circumstances the world has faced in light of the covid-19 pandemic, I had to renounce this specific methodological axe as all the contacts I had been weaving eventually froze.

My intention is to probe for a possible interrelation between the emergence of the CELAC and Cuba's proactive regional politics. As a relatively new regional project, CELAC combines many key characteristics of Latin American and Caribbean regionalism: a loose architecture, a heavy reliance on intergovernmentalism via cycles of presidential summits and a large multidimensional political agenda. Besides, Cuba has been described as one of CELAC's most vocal supporter, and as one of CELAC founding members. The community fits the "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012) of Cuba's development strategy, and given that Cuba has been a central actor during CELAC's initial politicisation, it is reasonable to look for a Cuban mark in CELAC's creation process.

I go about considering CELAC as an intersubjective arena (Duffield, 2007), where states encounter and socialise (Wendt, 1992). I also considered the community as reflecting a multilayered regional governance (Barnett and Sikkink, 2009). It means that CELAC has to cope with the divergent views on regionalism that must be assumed from the diversity of political unions, and possibly struggle to advance a legitimate regional agenda. Therefore, I suggested that CELAC's norm-building would be the product of strategic social construction (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), emphasising the contested nature of the community. I called upon Ullán de la Rosa's (2012) analytical distinction, by focusing on the creation and consolidation of CELAC "philosophical vision" on regionalism, rather than on its material implications: is there a CELAC-induced governance, a CELAC-defined developmental path, and is it coherent with the overall Latin American neodevelopmental path (Flexor, et al., 2017)? In other words, is there such a thing as a new regional "political paradigm" (Hall, in Dri, 2016), and to what extent is Cuba able to shape this paradigm in order to "regionally [address] its domestic needs" (Cole, 2012)?

Empirical Research and Conclusion

How to rightly address CELAC's emergence has spilled quite its amount of ink. Some regional observers have posited it might very well turn into a "new hemispheric force" (Jessop, 2013), or a "new integrated continent" (Serrano Mancilla, 2014). CELAC is indeed a vast and bold initiative "that has the courage to try something new" in terms of regional politics, which is why it is somewhat regrettable that its

formation, although it was duly acknowledged by international actors, did not seem to merit the corresponding broad media coverage outside Latin American and the Caribbean (de Zayas, 2014). This might derive from a shared caution with regards to CELAC's longevity, equated to a mere outlet of Latin America's punctual Pink Tide and Brazil's active role in tilling the region towards more left-leaning national and regional policies. In the meantime, CELAC's range in member states and a seemingly smooth coaction of Venezuela, Chile and Cuba during the first steps of the community has been seen as a possible "illustration of a rather new capacity in Latin America to favour the general interest over political disputes" (Dabène, in Livingston, 2014). What this "general interest" might be and who it might represent remains to be empirically researched. What is CELAC's political identity (if any)? What is the logic of it functioning? And how wide do its branches stretch in the articulation of Latin America's regional politics?

I subdivide my approach in three main sections. The first section is be devoted to detailing CELAC-induced kind of regionalism. Starting with the presidential declarations of Santiago de Chile (2013), Havana (2014) and Belén (2015), I try to establish the basic framework of CELAC's dynamic. In addition, each declaration has its own optic when read and analysed in light of the special declarations that were agreed upon during the related summits. I am thus enabled to discuss the community's conception of the region (regionness), the kind of development it wants and formulates for itself, with which partners (post- hegemony) and through which policies (governance). Indeed, when general presidential declarations are adequately supplemented with a critical reading of the set of special declarations they are accompanied by one gains precision and insight as to what the region is bound to become. Some elements are dropped, others are retained, deepened and, I argue, radicalised in such a way that it ends up constituting a regionally tailored political agenda. In this sense, the *Declaración de La Havana* and its related special declarations clarify the regional system underpinning CELAC (comforting a mechanistic representation of the community). In turn, the Costa Rican context clears up CELAC's developmental objectives, internally and externally, by identifying economic and social sectors that should specifically be targeted and invested in, planting the seed for a real autonomous regional governance. The second section explores the complementarity between CELAC and other regional and sub-regional mechanisms of integration. Pursuant the Action Plan of Montego Bay signed during the 2009 Latin American Summit on Integration and Development in Montego Bay (CALC, 2009 – *Plan de Acción de Montego Bay*), CELAC's coordination relies in part on existing regional organisms. With a stronger focus on the SELA, but also considering the ALADI and the ECLAC, I question their role in CELAC's functioning and elucidate whether their respective actions are a support or a hindrance to CELAC's governance. Lastly, the third section sheds light on Cuba's position within CELAC. It probes the adequation between the regional environment thus fostered and Cuba's self-identified domestic needs in light of the *actualización* process. It also highlights whether, and to what extent, Cuba is indeed able to weigh on the framing of CELAC's general interest.

I can conclude that CELAC is indeed a form of post-hegemonic regionalism, entailing an autonomous regional governance. The normative shift towards neodevelopmentalism is obvious once the community's presidential declarations and their related special declarations are scrutinised as a system that is progressively being clarified and agreed upon. This illustrates just how politicised its initial phases have been, with hectic presidential summit, intense activity in terms of working groups and ministerial meetings, and various noteworthy decisions. CELAC prioritises state-led public policies and has come to target innovation, technology, science and infrastructure, as well as the regional capture of investments and funds. CELAC's regionalism is also a social regionalism (according to Briceño Ruiz's (2013) categorisation), as the community seeks to address structural inequalities, public health services, poverty reduction, hunger, education and culture at regional level. Moreover, CELAC has integrated certain core values across its discursive apparatus, such as complementarity and solidarity. This implicates that the region's development will come via the region's member states, but that CELAC itself, consistent with Riggirozzi's contribution, will not be a regional actor centrally steering the process. However, I argue that the community has seen the emergence of a collective Global South "developing world" identity, that is pluralised to reflect the double asymmetry which the region faces today: an external one with the developed North, and an internal one with respect to lesser developed CELAC member states (the Caribbean, Central America and the Northern coast of South America) that need specific attention. Such an identity structure the community's interest. CELAC pushes for a fairer shot at the region's insertion into the world system, through a thorough reform of the latter and a better representation of Global South developing countries in international multilateral institutions, especially international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc.). As a result, the CELAC is increasingly seen as the regional voice, advocating for the community's needs and preferences on the world stage, and stimulating South-South cooperative scheme with representative of the developing world (the PRC, BRICS countries, the Arab League, the African Union). This is partly due to the significant support for CELAC's Grupo de Trabajo de Cooperación Internacional (GTCI), which is tasked with deepening intraregional coordination and cooperation, and aggregating a regional political agenda.

Nevertheless, scholars are right when expressing their scepticism as to CELAC's "transformative capacity" (Dabène, 2012). Although CELAC is autonomous and coherent in formulating common political positions, however broad and general, the community's governance is ultimately coordinated by (sub-) regional integration mechanisms, which are asked to suggest roadmaps in order to effectively carry out CELAC's vision. This gives rise to conflicting senses of regionness. Markedly, it does not occur due to a form of competition between politicised regional projects (UNASUR, ALBA, AP), as I hypothesised at first. Instead, CELAC's enterprise is undermined because of its reliance on (sub-)regional structures (ALADI, ECLAC, SELA) that are not as permeated by the region's normative shift. These regional organisations have their own logic, their own sense of regionness, inherited from an "open regionalism" rationale, triggering neoliberal market-oriented and trade-based reflexes. Although I speak of conflicting senses of regionness, I must emphasise that what I discovered is nowhere close an overt conflict, nor a kind of political resistance

from the side of the SELA (mostly), the ALADI or the ECLAC. What this unveils is an ideational and normative gap between intergovernmental state-led negotiations in the CELAC-arena, and pragmatic, technical structure composing the CELAC's mechanism and filling in for the CELAC's lack of permanent bodies.

As for Cuba's role within CELAC, although, of course, I was hampered by the pandemic as I did not manage to plan the interviews I wished to conduct, I could not find any clear and undeniable evidence of Cuba's predominance on the community's political paradigm, functioning or agenda. Evidently, Cuba has been, is and will remain a relevant agent within the community. Its undisputed inclusion as well as its *pro tempore* Presidency also have an unequivocal symbolic weight, given Cuba's long-term exclusion from macro-regional yet US-dominated organisations (the OAS and the Summits of the Americas). Precisely, the fact that CELAC has never been destined to completely side-line the OAS, which is still one of Havana's objective today, should come as a sign that Cuba does not singlehandedly control what CELAC is to become. Moreover, although the community's perspective on development and its prioritised policy domains do mirror Cuba's needs with respect to its *actualización*, I am unable to certify that this is the result of Cuba's power of conviction. As a matter of fact, CELAC's governance and developmental path also reflect ALBA's take on the region and ALBA's conception regarding regional development, of which, in the end, Cuba is only a member state. The best example showing that Havana does not have the region's key in hand on the ideational ground is given by the SELA. Whereas Cuba's influence on CELAC is dubious, it is clearly inexistent when it come to this sub-regional integration mechanism, pushing for the liberalisation and decentralisation of Cuba's economic structure, which is exactly what Cuba is trying to avoid by investing in strong and reliable political and economic partnerships and alliances. In order to assert a Cuban predominance on the region, I would have to prove that the island is successful in "re-politicising" (Dabène, 2012) the entire CELAC-mechanism, and not only in weighing (however lightly) in the intergovernmental arena.

However, it is undisputable that Cuba is using CELAC as a platform to tighten its regional position and domestic regime. The CELAC serves as a shield to legitimise Cuba's political nature through CELAC's "*Zona the Paz*" rhetoric. In light of the region's pluralism, it insists on the sovereign right of CELAC's member states to freely pick their political, economic, social and cultural system. Therefore, external pressure, unilateral evaluations and conditionalities through development aid or FDIs, with which the Havana-regime has always had to deal, are now strongly rejected by a unfified community. Cuba also employs the regional environment thus created as a means to multiply significant bilateral economic and political relations with member states of the region. As such, Havana finds additional ways to benefit from its economic strengths, i.e. service export (mainly in health and education) in exchange for foreign investments, natural resources and infrastructure.

As a final remark, I must underline that my thesis focused on a pivotal, highly politicised stage of CELAC's emergence. It might convey a healthy picture of the community, whereas, lately, the project seems

to be losing steam. In January 2020, Brazil's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araújo withdrew from the CELAC's framework, arguing that the community had not delivered what it was expected to stimulate (Reuters, 2020). Itamaraty's rhetoric was centred on democratisation, and specifically aimed at Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. However, it is unclear whether democratisation is really the reason why Brazil walked away, or if ideological divergences between Brazil's government under Bolsonaro and ALBA member states pushed the country towards to exit door. An analogy with Clarissa Dri's (2016) work on the aborted PARLASUR-process within MERCOSUR and Olivier Dabène's (2012) consideration for cyclic phases of de-politicisation and repoliticisation in regional integration might constitute a follow-up research on the matter: did CELAC's neodevelopmental enthusiasm hide a conjectural craze, which, once the regional context seemed to indicate that the 1990s brand of neoliberalism had indeed been tamed, started to phase out, allowing trade-based regionalism, although adjourned with new ideas, to reinter the stage of regional integration? Conversely, equating Brazil's departure with the cerebral death of the CELAC initiative might very well be a grave exaggeration. Scholars should probably explore a "CELAC-effect" within sub-regional project (ALBA, UNASUR, MERCOSUR, AP), which would help to identify whether CELAC's governance is indeed broadly shared across the region, and whether it is sustainable notwithstanding party politics variation over the course of subsequent legislatures.

List of abbreviations

AEC/ACS – *Asociación de Estados del Caribe*

ALADI – *Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración*

ALBA – *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América*

ALBA-TCP – *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América – Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos*

AP – *Pacific Alliance*

CAN – *Community of Andean Nations*

CALC – *Latin American Summit on Integration and Development*

CARICOM – *Comunidad del Caribe*

CBI – *Caribbean Basin Initiative*

CELAC – *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños*

CMEA – *Council of Mutual Economic Assistance*

DdS – *Declaración de Santiago*

DdLH – *Declaración de La Habana*

DdB – *Declaración Politica de Belén*

DECI – *Declaración Especial sobre la Cooperación Internacional de la CELAC*

DEFI – *Declaración Especial sobre el Fortalecimiento de la Integración*

ELAM – *Escuela Latinoamericana de Ciencias Médicas*

ECOALBA – *Economic space of the ALBA-TCP*

GATT – *General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs*

FTA – *Free-Trade Agreement*

FTAA – *Free Trade Area of the Americas*

FOA – *Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States*

GTCI – *Grupo de Trabajo de Cooperación Internacional*

IMF – *International Monetary Fund*

ISI – *Import Substitution Industrialisation*

IIRSA - *Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America* (UNASUR)

MERCOSUR – *Mercado Común del Sur*

MDGs – *Millennium Development Goals*

NAFTA – *North American Free-Trade Agreement*

NRA – *New Regionalist Approach*

OAS – *Organization of American States*

ODA - *Official Development Aid*

SADC – *South American Defence Council* (UNASUR)

SELA – *Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America*

SICA – *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*

SIDS – *Small Island Developing States*

UNASUR - *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*

TAS – *Technical Assistance Sector* (MERCOSUR)

WTO – *World Trade Orgnisation*

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Introduction

Research works in mysterious ways. I originally destined myself to explore the role played by the Cuban government (along with the Norwegian government) in the peace process that eventually led to the Havana Peace Agreements. After a 52-year-long conflict, the Colombian government and the Marxist *Fuerzas Armadas revolucionarias Colombianas* (FARC) could at last bury the hatched. Cuba had stepped in as a referent, enabling a political dialogue between antagonistic forces and had strived for Colombia's and the region's best interest, hence the ending of a bloody guerrilla war (Lafuente, 2016). Interestingly, exploratory readings underlined just how extremely regionalised the conflict had been. Roméo Langlois' (2016) documentary on Colombia's military actions against the armed group suggested US financial and military support which, despite the peace talks in Havana, kept a shadow of doubt above the prospects of durable peace in the country. Diplomatic relations between Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador had also petered out, as the Colombian government accused its counterparts of hosting FARC members on their respective side of the border. Theses tensions filtered into the *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (UNASUR), which, to a certain extent, led Venezuela to launch a parallel regional project dubbed the *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América* (ALBA) (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011).

Slowly, my focus was sliding towards Latin American regionalism, whose "dynamics and politics" (Dominguez, 2015) have recently been reactivated, as the creation of the *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC) has demonstrated. As such, it constitutes a whole self-sufficient object of study that is (quite regrettably) but lightly covered on this side of the Atlantic Ocean (de Zayas, 2014). I found it especially relevant given any thorough approach of Cuban affairs must now address Cuba's central presence in ALBA (Jaudeau, 2019). It offers a refreshing perspective that does not focus, at least not exclusively, on the rocky relationship that has been opposing Washington to Havana ever since the 1959 Cuban revolution. The good old Cold War, imperialist rhetoric, and the repeated study of Cuba's economic hardship and political isolation have probably been exhausted by now. It is the academia's responsibility to update its angles of attack and recognise the potential gaps that possibly cripple its understanding of the world. Therefore, I humbly set out to analyse Cuba's regional foreign policy in light of the current developments moving Latin American and Caribbean regionalism.

The first part of my thesis will provide the reader with a global review of the existing scientific literature on the matter. Although it might come to some as surprise, I initiate the review with a survey of Cuban domestic politics. My ways are certainly criticisable, but I felt that situating Cuba's foreign policy in a specific national context was needed to fully grasp the meaning of Havana's relations with the (sub-)continent. Considerable economic reforms (*actualización*), a rusty economic structure and a regime that tries to ensure its survival by somehow mustering sustainable development, all these elements must have an impact on Cuba's regional attitude. As a matter of fact, this approach allows me to discuss the "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012)

of Cuba's strategy for development, which is actually needed to understand the island's recent reforms (Campbell, 2016). A progressive reinsertion into the region (de Bhal, 2019; Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015; Serbin, 2001) as well as the "Bolivarian matrix", i.e. the overall ALBA-framework (Monreal, 2006), are then the logical springboard towards Latin American and Caribbean regionalism. The creation of the CELAC is but the ultimate stage of significant ideational and normative changes that have occurred South of the Río Grande. The continent has faced a phase of regional *politicisation* (Dabène, 2012), re-politicising existing regional organisation (MERCOSUR) or creating new regional bodies (UNASUR, ALBA and the Pacific Alliance) entailing a new perception on regionalism. I thus discuss what the literature refers to as *post-hegemonic regionalism*, defined as "regional structures characterised by hybrid practices as a result of a partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neoliberal governance in the acknowledgement of other political forms of organisation and economic management of regional (common) goods" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 12). It entails a research agenda that sheds light on "regional projects with a new emphasis on social and political aspects of integration" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 423), and a "neodevelopmental approach" of regional cooperation (Dabène, 2012; Flexor, et al., 2017). I will therefore conclude the first part with an overview of the different explanatory models that have been put forth to categorise the different forms that post-hegemonic regionalism has taken, which also highlights the contested nature of the phenomenon (Briceño Ruiz, 2013; de la Reza, 2014; Emerson, 2014; Riggirozzi, 2012a; Riggirozzi, 2012b; Vargas-Mazas, 2017).

The second and third parts concern my theoretical framework and my methodological considerations. I construct a framework based on the concept that bridges the new paradigmatic synthesis in the field on International Relations: *governance* (Battistella, 2015e). As such, I will summon liberal intergovernmentalism (and questions about integration, cooperation, hegemony and leadership) on the one hand, and the constructivist realm of norms and institutions, on the other hand. I will demonstrate how Riggirozzi's (2012b) revised definition of *regionness*, and Emerson's (2014) description of a Latin American and Caribbean *politics of regionness* will allow me test for the intersubjective construction of an alternative regional governance, based on cooperation and neodevelopmentalism, featuring a new collective regional identity and its related set of perceived common interest, which could all be embodied in CELAC's *space for cooperation*. To do so, I explain how dissecting the community's *discursive and political material* (presidential and special declarations following presidential summits), secondary sources (specialised press mostly) and the documentation from the library of (sub-)regional integration mechanisms, such an alternative governance, provided it exists, can be unveiled.

The fourth and last part comprises my research. I wish to determine whether CELAC is indeed an embodiment of post-hegemonic regionalism, if CELAC is indeed pursuing a neodevelopmental agenda, and if CELAC has indeed stimulate the emergence of a new regional identity that leads to an alternative regional governance. Given Olivier Dabène's (2012) work on the cycles of politicisation, I also wish to assess whether CELAC's initial stages have indeed been highly politicised, and to what extent did Cuba weigh on the process. Lastly, I hypothesise that Havana, through CELAC, is finding ways to "regionally [address] domestic needs"

(Cole, 2012), by expanding its scope of regional cooperation and political entente beyond the sole ALBA-framework, as to reach out to all 33 CELAC members states.

Part I: Literature Review

How to adequately review the interlinkage between Cuban foreign policy and Latin American regionalism? An intricate question I must briefly discuss as to explain the reasons that have led me to structure my literature review the way I have, out of clarity, transparency and scientific probity.

My thesis definitely has an international tone to it. Cuba must thus be considered from a more general, regional perspective. For some, Cuba lies at the heart of a new Latin American geopolitics (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015). The latter term would suggest that to analyse Cuba's foreign policy inevitably means to consider Cuba in the light of its political nemesis, the United States of America. Although the "US-Cuba thaw" (de Bhal, 2019) *is* critical to understand Cuba's evolving relation with the region as political space, I will show that going beyond the duality opposing Washington to Havana may unveil new possibilities in order to better grasp Cuban strategy in the Latin America. Hence, the *new* Latin American geopolitics.

As a matter of fact, the need to more extensively situate Cuba in the regional environment is anything but new, in a changing regional context (Serbin, 2001). The relationship held between Cuba and Latin America has undergone a "long itinerary to normalisation" (Kruijt, 2017). As it will be shown, Cuba's involvement in regional politics has developed in many interesting ways. Indeed, Cuba has both actively been (re)integrating and more passively been (re)integrated via the intercession of key regional actors, be it states or organisations.

This dialectical dynamic will lead us to a more detailed discussion of Latin American regionalism itself, and the current theoretical shortcoming in the light of empirical novelties, for which I will extensively (but not exclusively) draw on Pía Riggirozzi considerations and theoretical contributions regarding the said topic, especially with regards to *post-hegemonic regionalism* or the revisiting of the concept of *regionness* (Riggirozzi, 2012a, Riggirozzi, 2012b; Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012).

However, departing from a regional perspective might entail a certain pitfall: that Cuba be analysed only through an "internationalist" lens. Cuba's propensity to project itself on the international scene is well known and well documented, be it in order to export the revolution, to show signs of political solidarity with a non-aligned Third World or to capitalise on the successes of its soft power through "civilian development aid ("internationalism")" (Kruijt, 2017), sometimes labelled "international humanitarianism" (Lamrani, 2012b; *see also* Graber, 2013; Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015) . Nevertheless, it cannot hide the fact that Cuba is an actor for itself. Given the changing regional context hinted above, Cuba has also had to adapt its foreign policy in order to actualise its international relations: "We here take over the official terminology of "actualisation" designating a vast process launched in 2011 set to reform the Cuban socialist model, in order to refer to nowadays Cuban foreign policy[4]" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 57). The said reforms cannot be

[4] Own translation.

overlooked and must be considered in this review, as their very goal is to ensure Cuba's economic survival and to see the island through an internationally condemned yet ongoing economic embargo by Washington.

Cuba's economic reform process is obviously a topic of its own, one that would constitute a second designated thesis. Yet, I chose to include it in my review, as I believe it offers plenty of interesting insights regarding what Cuba has lately been facing, which must have had an impact on its international, regional stands. However, I realise that I must avoid a merely instrumental representation of regional politics as a means to meet domestic needs. It is clear by now that State interests conveyed on the international scene cannot be seen as an isolated, purely national substrate, colliding with the ones of third States (Wendt, 1992). This being said, the national and the regional are always in interaction. My motive lies elsewhere, as I only wish to deliver the most comprehensive picture of Cuban foreign politics as possible. The reforms may contain a set of ideological material and political ideas that can be recuperated and reapplied at the regional level, or, reversely, the reform might itself in part be a decantation to the national level of regional dynamics.

For these reasons, my review will take the following structure. I will start with I feel are the necessary considerations regarding the process of economic reforms initiated by the Cuban government, as of 2011. From there, I will be able to situate Cuba's actualisation of its economic model into a broader perspective, where I will lay out the dynamics and conditions behind Cuban involvement and reinsertion in Latin American politics. Lastly, as I explained above, I will seize the occasion to introduce the reader to the various accounts that exist today about Latin American regionalism, and the theoretical and paradigmatic turmoil it has triggered.

Cuban Economic Reform

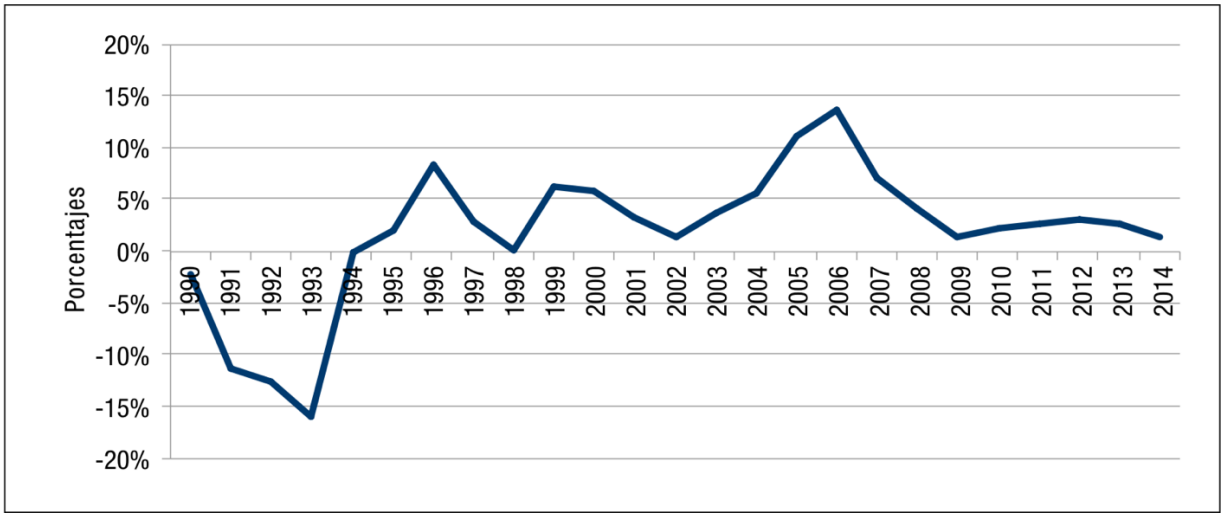
Sobrevivencia

The Cuban economic reform is generally analysed through a lens that links "growth and development", the latter being affixed to the current Cuban economic context (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014). Establishing the boundaries of the said context so that the relevance is optimised becomes the challenge. Overall, the literature tends to identify the fall of the Soviet Union as the pivotal point from which Cuba entered a new economic era. Although the military and economic support Havana was receiving towards the end of the Cold War had been decreasing for quite some time already, the quasi-full stop after 1991 was most severely felt (Kruijt, 2017).

From then on, Cuba entered one of its most critical moments. The government declared the *Período especial en tiempos de paz* (that would be referred to by scholars as the "special period"). "Cuba's economy and society were transfigured into a Spartan system of extreme austerity and ideological tightening" (Kruijt, 2017). The drastic and heterodox measures and the short-term political reasoning swiftly addressing economic urgency aimed at somehow absorbing the blow, and guaranteeing Cuba's *sobrevivencia* (Triana Cordoví &

Torres Pérez, 2014). Evidence shows that the said package has proved somewhat efficient: Cuba promptly recorded steep GDP growth from 1995 on (Campbell, 2016; Serbín, 2001). The enthusiasm is, however, not shared by everyone, as, it is true, growth would on the long run be undermined by deeply implanted distortions stemming from the nineties (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014).

Figure 1: Real Cuban GDP-growth rate (1990-2014)



Source: Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez (2014) p. 19 – authors' calculations based on official data from the ONEI; *see also* Campbell (2016) p. 145 who reaches a similar outcome by computing data from the ONEI (2014) and the ONE (2009, 2003, 1999, 1998).

Some have pushed even further back in time to find the causes of Cuban shortcomings in terms of growth and development. For instance, Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez refuse to overlook the lessons that could (and should) be derived from the Cuban developmental experience *during* the Cold War (that is between 1959 and 1989). Development, they argue, must constitute its own political agenda and must be freed from all ideological battlefields (namely the construction of socialism). Furthermore, one should avoid relying on *external advantageous conditions* and *special insertion conditions* (through the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance – CMEA), nor should one build its social programs, which are part and parcel of its development horizon, around the said external resources: "external dependency converts in a strategic weakness that is harmful for one's developmental goals[5]". Also, true and sustainable development rests on the role of the market, without which one is doomed to suffer the effects of economic and market distortions. Moreover, the market is not only turned outwards and designed for export, but must also be considered internally, nationally (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014).

Then comes 2007, and its diffused aftermath. The world financial crisis hits Cuba harshly (although not quite as harshly as one might have expected; I will get back to that later on). Havana can no longer escape the pressing need to reform. From December 2010 to February 2011, the Economic Commission of the Communist Party is tasked to draft "a program of socio-economic reforms". In April 2011, after a rather

[5] Own translation.

unusual consultatory and participatory public process (which I do not have the time to discuss here) "a total of 311 items in a final version that modified 68 per cent of the initial proposals [was submitted] to the 6th Party Congress […]. Then [the *Lineamientos de Política Económica y Social* were] sent to the Cuban Parliament, whose member gave it the go-ahead in a plenary session held on 1 August 2011" (Lamrani, 2012a: 26). The *lineamientos*, or guidelines (figure 2), are explicitly designed to get beyond the limits of Cuban developmental policies during the Cold War, and to correct its lasting undesired outcomes. As such, Fernández Estrada observes "that economic policy takes place at three very distinct levels: Short term macroeconomic equilibriums; capacity to address persistent problems at the economic structure; and the more general principles of the functioning of the economy as a whole, understood as the economic functioning model" (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 24). Lamrani makes this crystal clear by citing Raúl Castro during the 6th Party Congress: "We are convinced that the only thing that can make the Revolution and Socialism fail in Cuba, risking the future of our nation, is our inability to overcome the mistakes we have made for more than five decades" (Lamrani, 2012a: 26).

"Actualización del Modelo Económico"

The above-mentioned guidelines should, however, not be misconstrued. Indeed, they altogether encompass elements of political economy and broad social policies. But their *intent* was never to turn the latter into a *political* reform. That seems unanimously agreed upon when one skims the existing literature. Campbell, for instance, stresses that despite the successive crises, the ultimate goals is and remains the "construction of socialism" (Campbell, 2016: 142). Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez, for their part, underline the guidelines exclusively serve to "maintain and consolidate" the latter, which would be the true sign of Cuban prosperity (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 17). Finally, Fernández Estrada explains how the motives behind the whole process of the economic reforms, from the drafting to the adoption of the guidelines, was "to isolate 'economic issues' from the remaining fabric of social relations, postponing discussion of 'political issues'". The author subsequently dares a cautionary remark. Given the rather vague boundaries between the political and the economy, Cuba must cost what may keep the whole reform under control. The experience of Eastern Europe teaches us so. The centralised government will have to strike a balance between (political) dogmatism and "a bias of economic pragmatism [which risks unleashing] reactionary forces" (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 23, 38).

Nevertheless, seeing the economic reform through will not necessarily be easier or self-evident. Havana will have to deal with a set of intricate challenges, namely the island's limited resources, the "negative economic-geographic situation[6]" induced by the US-led embargo and last but not least the very high social standards Cuba has set for itself and is thus ready to protect and perpetuate (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 13). Torres Pérez suggests that the Cuban government itself is self-aware of these challenges. He induces

[6] Own translation.

Figure 2: Lineamientos summarised

Table 2.3 Sectoral policies in the Guidelines for Economic and Social Policy

Section	General objective	Intersectoral reference	Specific sectors
Diagnostics	Reducing the external debt	Exports and import substitution	Agriculture
Chapter I	Eliminating subsidies for enterprise losses	Unprofitable companies	–
Chapter II			
Monetary policy	Supporting the development of certain activities (credits)	Exports and import substitution; other activities that may guarantee economic and social development	–
Fiscal policy	Supporting the development of certain activities (implicit in the document)	Key sectors, export funds, import substitution, local development, environmental protection	Agriculture
Chapter III	Diversifying exports, higher value-added and technological content	Exports and import substitution	Parts and spare parts (mechanical industry), industrial sector, special development zones
Chapter IV	Prioritizing investments in selected branches (implicit)	Productive area, services that generate benefits on the short term, infrastructure	–
Chapter V		High value-added exports, import substitution	Biotechnology, medical and pharmaceutical, software, renewable energy, high-tech equipment, high value-added scientific-technical services, nanotechnology
Chapter VII	Improving the contribution to the balance of payments	Food import substitution	Cattle raising, rice, beans, corn and soy beans, coffee, honey, cocoa, cigars, citrus fruits, fruits, sugar, platform fishing, aquaculture
Chapter VIII	Export promotion, cost reduction	Exports (implicit)	Pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, nickel, gold, silver, chrome, copper, and zinc, electronics industry and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Cienfuegos industrial park, fertilizers, tires, packaging, construction materials, steel, recycling, mechanics, oil and natural gas, renewable energies
Chapter IX	Maximizing direct foreign currency earnings		Health tourism, yacht clubs, golf, real estate companies, adventure/nature tourism, conferences, culture
Chapter X	Strengthening the transport chain (implicit)	–	Shipyards

Source: Compiled by the author based on the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution

Source: Torres Pérez (2014), p. 15-16

that from the way with which the guidelines were drawn up. The guidelines locate the hearth of Cuba's predicament "at the macroeconomic level: the *external imbalance*". It follows these must be addressed via its main causes. The document operates a clear distinction, in large parts consistent with what is related above, between *exogenous factors* of the disequilibrium (the world financial crisis, the embargo and markedly heavy

natural disasters) and *endogenous factors* which are said to be mainly, "operational […] such as excessive centralisation of foreign exchange management".

However, the said author, along with other scholars (only with varying degrees of assertions), argues that Cuba might be misled with regards to the priorities it set for herself: "[t]his analysis does not explicitly consider *problems in the country's productive structure* that essentially explain the external imbalance as well as the amplified effects of exogenous events such as the international crisis and the US blockade" (Torres Pérez, 2014: 16). I will dig deeper into this in the next section.

What must at this point be conveyed is what seems to transcend scholarly analysis of the Cuban reform. Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez (2014: 16) posit what one might identify as a "consensus in groups of aspects" based on international experience and on the knowledge of Cuba's economy, which could structure and complement the critical approach of the *actualización*:

1. The sustainability of "Cuban socialism" is conditioned to a proper development;
2. To develop is to find ways of enhancing economic growth, as the both of them go hand in hand;
3. Cuban development will require high levels of investments;
4. By investments is also meant *Foreign Direct Investments* (FDI), which *will* play a crucial role in Cuban development;
5. *Productive policies* must complement Cuba's efforts in order to trigger economic growth. It will therefore have to change the *energy sector* and the *importation* matrix, and it must focus on the fabrication of more complex goods [i.e. the problematic of value added and global value chains];
6. The modernisation of infrastructure is vital, magnified by a special care for technologies if information and communication;
7. And lastly, *research, development and innovation* must be central to the overall Cuban effort to develop[7].

ENDOGENOUS ROOT CAUSES

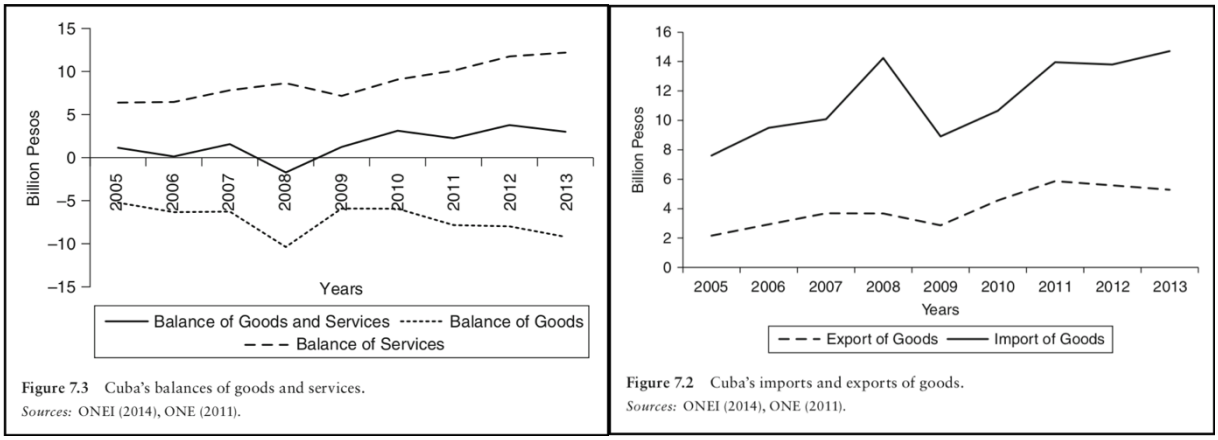
Campbell is the one whose research most directly stresses the endogenous root causes of Cuba's poor developmental performances. By triangulating Cuba's GDP, Balance of Trade and the FDI's reaching the island, he wishes to "understand why its economic growth has significantly slowed at the same time as the world slowdown, without the latter being its cause". The unavoidable conclusion he comes to is quite similar to Torres Pérez's findings, as it highlights that "the key to Cuba's future lies with its improvements of its domestic economy" (Campbell, 2016: 144). This convergence is compelling given the respective paradigms and approaches of both authors. Whereas Torres Pérez assessment is less surprising given his contribution to

[7] Own translation.

a joint publication that follows a more classical *orthodox* line with regards to the science behind the economy, Campbell's work admittedly adopts more *heterodox* perspectives.

Campbell closes his analysis with a somewhat looser review of the room left for FDIs in Cuba. Though he readily admits the limits of his assessment, as official and trustworthy data is almost unavailable, he is still able to deliver some estimates through "three quantities [that] have been typically used to give an indication of the amount of FDI into Cuba: the number of international economic associations (IEA), their total sales, and their contribution to Cuba's exports" [8]. Nevertheless, Campbell put forth a couple of prudent observations. He shows that "sales of FDI enterprises" were not disproportionately hit by the world economic recession, once again proving the irrelevance of too strong a focus on external factors. He also brings our attention to an evolving political attitude regarding FDIs, which has been translated into a much more comprehensive legal framework, notably via the Investments Law 118 which "specifies some new additional goals for FDI involvement, lists two important prohibitions on FDI[9] [health and education], and indicates a number of specific branches of the Cuban economy to be prioritised for FDI participation". FDI are now broadly seen as a cornerstone for development. Priority is given to "agriculture, agro-industry, energy, mines, sugar, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and tourism", and the said legal framework "specifically allows for foreign joint operations with non-state entities" (Campbell, 2016: 152).

Figure 3: Cuba Balance of Trade; Cuba imports and exports of goods



Source: Campbell (2016) p. 146-148

But the more general thread he uses to make his point unfolds as follows. GDP measures are largely deceitful when used individually (although this should sound familiar to anyone who has ever had the most

[8] It does obviously not come as a surprise; working on Cuba, whether it is regarding economic or political matters, is always an ambitious endeavour. I, myself, have had some difficulties obtaining at the very least an answer from Cuban officials, either from the administration or from the diplomatic services. See the 3rd part of my work for a detailed explanation of my methodology.

[9] "La inversión extranjera puede ser autorizada en todos los sectores, *con excepción de los servicios de salud y educación a la población y de las instituciones armadas*, salvo en sus sistemas empresariales", Ley n°118 – Ley de la inversión extranjera de 2014, capítulo IV, Art. 11.1. – Retrieved March 6, 2020, 18:16 - https://www.onbc.cu/uploads/media/page/0001/01/eef3049ed87cb52a254b39719250268c55739dac.pdf

basic course of macroeconomics). Departing from Cuba's GDP growth in the aftermath of the financial crisis, Cuba's average growth of approximately 3 to 4% (*see also* Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 21) "During the post-2009 world-recovery years has to be seen as weak", not so much when compared with the spectacular, "notwithstanding bubble-based" 4-year boom spanning from 2004-2007, but more generally when compared with the average growth spanning from 1995 to 2004. "Given Cuba's very open economy," and its external dependency one could also derive from the steep fluctuation in GDP growth (figure 1), a potential negative effect of "the sluggish performance of the world economy" should not come as a surprise. "A careful consideration of the main channels through which such an effect from the world economy would influence the Cuban economy, however, will suggest that, contrary to such expectations, the current world slowdown is having only a minimal effect on Cuba's economy".

This is where the balance of trade jumps in. Campbell finds that even during the harshest moment of the financial crisis, Cuba still managed to increase its imports (figure 3), which are relevant "not only for consumption but for its overall economic performance. [However] its GDP growth nevertheless continued the slowing that had begun in 2007. […] The slowing at that point, however, could be considered essentially only a return to its average growth rate of around 4% from 1995 to 2003 indicated above". The main reason Cuba was able to do so is through the amount and the nature of what the island exports, which, again, was hardly even affected by the world economic condition. "Since early in the 1990s, Cuba has been primarily covering the deficit in its trade of goods […] with a surplus in its trade of service". Quite surprisingly, this allowed Cuba to stand on a "positive overall net goods and services trade balance" which is likely to be one of Cuba's key economic features in the coming decades (Campbell, 2016: 144-153).

"What Cuba Needs"…

It is now clear that "the anaemic world economy cannot be considered the prime cause of Cuba's recent weak performance" (Campbell, 2016: 154). One must therefore look inwards to seek out more sustainable solutions. Lamrani echoes Torres Pérez earlier remarks, explaining that Cuba's hardships are caused by a *poor productivity, uncontrolled growth of the public sector and the weakness of production infrastructure* (Lamrani, 2012a: 24-25). Torres Pérez, in turn, makes use of a sectoral approach to explain how agriculture and Cuban industry have underperformed. The former's productivity growth is unsatisfactory and has shown that it can no longer be seen as an engine for development. Cuban industry, already nowhere near her optimum, is burdened by two negative factors. First, the stagnation of the tourism sector (mainly after 9/11) has hit the island, which reduced "the multiplier effect on the rest of economy. As a result, the share of manufacturing in GDP and employment has contracted persistently over the past two decades, which indicates a process of systemic loss of engineering capabilities that threatens the nation's prospective of technological development", given industrial outputs have already dropped. Furthermore, an agonising industry is tasked with financially supporting, via income transfers, the growing service sector, for a large part made out of social services, which is absorbing vast amounts of would-be unemployment by harbouring excess labour (Torres Pérez, 2014: 6-9).

The guidelines have established a renewed economic model whose innovative features are obvious. It rests on a new array of *agents of development* (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 16). "State and mixed-capital enterprises, cooperative farms, usufructuaries [*usufructuarios* (Bye, 2014: 7)] and small private businessmen will have more independence". The reform is accompanied by a "structural revolution of labour", with large cuts in the amount of public sector employees, and a second set of measures that "involves the state economy's opening to private entrepreneurship [*cuentapropismo* (Bye, 2014: 11)], among other reasons to legalise the growing black market and to collect taxes in a country where people are hardly ever subject to taxation. Accordingly, the government has decided to decentralise and pass on to private individuals a share of its 90 per cent control over the island's overall economic activity and limit itself to manage and exploit the existing strategic resources[10] in an effort to spur development" (Lamrani, 2012a: 26-29).

The literature recognises the reform has had tangible positive results. Non-state private involvement in agriculture has had a positive impact on total output, although it is hard to measure to what extent the relative privatisation is to thank for it[11] (Mesa-Lago, 2014: 70-71). Also, the "principal merit of the new model's reformulation of ownership is the harmonisation of existing regulations with the real conditions of the reproduction of society", meaning that the informal economy, translating *real market forces*, has somewhat been reclaimed by legal(ised) structures/actors (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 25).

Besides the said acknowledgements, some consequential doubts are still cast whether the *actualización* might be enough on the long run. A general concern is the institutional framework: corruption and extensive bureaucracy remain a massive impediment for economic prosperity (Lamrani, 2012a: 19,20 & 28; Mesa-Lago, 2014: 68-69). What Cuba needs is "new engines for growth that combine the creation of high-quality jobs with high export revenues [i.e. the problematic of global value chains], denser linkages with the rest of the economy and better use of the relatively high skill levels of the labour force. Diversifying the productive effort is important; there are opportunities at the local or regional level that although not large-scale, would allow for the development of highly specialised niches" (Torres Pérez, 2014: 20). The skills of the labour force are of vital importance. *Human capital* is certainly the most valuable resource Cuba has in its possession, which is a real tribute to one of Cuba's pride: its education policy[12]. It is also one of Cuba's curse. The agricultural sector and its share of hard, exhausting, physical work is unattractive for highly skilled workers. Meanwhile,

[10] Strategic resources have to do with energy and mining, especially the nickel industry (Campbell, 2016; Lamrani, 2012a), of course, but also concern specific sectors "pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries" (Lamrani, 2012a: 30) which are furthermore the most efficient sectors of Cuban industry (Torres Pérez, 2014: 8) and help keep the country afloat.

[11] What to make of those allegations is unclear. Total output may have risen, the data is there. However, Bye points out that Cuba is adopting a dual-track system with domestic food commodities increasingly produced by "middle size [independent] farms", while export products (sugar, citrus…) remain in State-led military-managed enterprises (Bye, 2014: 10). Fernández Estrada also explains that *private property* has specifically been contemplated by the government for "simple commodity production" in the agricultural sector (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 26-28). This being said, the data given by Mesa-Lago shows unpredictable fluctuation for both the State-led and private-owned farms, depending on the year slot analysed. One might argue it supports Fernández Pérez's point that agriculture is no longer a motor for development.

[12] Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez (2014: 23) explain how Cuba's education policy target every level, up to higher education and university. In 2010, Cubans had on average been in the education system for 10,57 years, the third highest value of the developing world (right behind Taiwan and South Korea).

"industrial and infrastructural undercapitalisation" (Lamrani, 2012a: 25) has led to a degradation of "the technological profile of Cuban industry [which has been unable] to develop industries that require a high level of knowledge or technology" (Torres Pérez, 2014: 8; *see also* Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez, 2014: 23). As a result, Fernández Estrada speaks of *workforce underutilisation*. *Aggregate labour market* is an immense concern in Havana: "although Cuba is an island, given the international development of communication technologies and the effects of the internationalisation of production, the notion of a closed economy is totally inapplicable to the Cuban case. Domestic demand for labour must compete with foreign demand, especially from economies where wages are higher, and the Cuban supply has proved to be highly competitive" (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 31-32). Lastly, on a more capital-market and financial note, scholars argue that Cuba "falls short of structural changes: a profound reform of the pricing system (and further still, of the economic planning (Fernández Estrada, 2014: 33-35)), the elimination of the currency duality (a remnant of the economy's "dollarization" after the fall of the Soviet Union (Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez, 2014: 16)), the establishment of realist exchange rates, and the restructuration of the banking system" (Mesa-Lago, 2014:72).

THE POLITICS BEHIND "MANTENER Y CONSOLIDAR EL SOCIALISMO"

Nevertheless, scholars, in some cases, apparently succumb to their normativity. Beyond the analytical agreement upon the need to address root causes of Cuba's endangered long-term development, and beyond the reckoning that Cuba's *lineamientos* are *only* economic in nature (as opposed to political), some considerations implicitly (some less than others) challenge the feasibility of such an endeavour. From this tension, divergent paths arise, inscribing Cuban development in different political frameworks.

Some have applauded what seems to be a prudent and progressive slide towards a market economy model, even though the reforms do not explicitly frame it as such (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 30). It relates to a predominant orthodox economic perspective[13], especially regarding the role of the markets (domestic and international) spurring growth and so thus development. There exists a certain ambiguity, with authors in a sense insinuating that the political control over the *actualización* is the mere expression of conflictual relations within the Cuban Communist Party, and that the guidelines actually embody a stand (the last stand?) of the more conservative members of the party to buy Cuba some time and prevent the island to drop its guard before a looming capitalist order. But I will not last and Cuba will most likely follow the path of other former socialist States (Mesa-Lago, 2014: 72-74) and eventually turn into a full-fledged market economy. Cuba's insertion into the "meso-economy" seems to be the only viable outcome. We head back to

[13] It follows Hayekian conceptions of the economy, urging to substantially alleviate State management through privatization and abandon economic planning, which has been rendered paradoxical since "increased enterprise autonomy is essentially contradictory to regulation through predominantly vertical directive" (Fernández Estrada, 2014). Although of course the State should step in when market inefficiencies arise, the island should expose herself more to the self-regulating dynamics of supply and demand (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 21).

the crucial role of the FDIs, which the Cuban government, after acknowledging their vital importance, should seek to attract even more, while taking into account the "conditions and rules of the contemporary world[14]" (Triana Cordoví & Torres Pérez, 2014: 24-26). Also, Cuba's access to international markets would free Havana from its over-reliance on unstable politically framed single-market regional alliances[15] and finally find durable substitutes to former socialist export markets (Mesa-Lago, 2014: 17; Torres Pérez, 2014: 11-13).

Others refuse to take the plunge. Going back to Campbell, it is important to indicate how radical his observations are. The guidelines are exclusively intended to contribute to the construction of socialism, *despite* the capitalist outlooks of the socio-economic reforms they contain. It means that market mechanisms, capital investments and the role of private property are contemplated and allowed in so far as it makes Cuba's development and Cuba's journey towards socialism possible. To that end, capital flows are and remain severely restricted (Campbell, 2016: 142-143), and the economic model remains "governed by planning and up-to-date methodologies, organisational methods and management techniques" (Lamrani, 2012a; 29).

"Arguments about conditions for economic development presume an inevitable neoliberal insertion into the world economy" (Riggirozzi, 2012b; 439), and it could be a miscalculation to assume that Cuba is giving ground on that matter. In fact, arguing that Cuba will inevitably concede political reforms risks overlooking the political motives behind the impediments for its development and Cuba's strategies to overcome or bypass them. First, one of the challenges specified earlier that Cuba still faces today is political by nature: the US blockade. Secondly, Cuba's foreign policy is quite coherent when it comes to preserving its political system from external influences. Cuba's acceptance for FDI as a central resource for development was incremental and controlled, in terms of its use as well as its origin. Cuba has also been extremely cautious on the regional scale pursuing "the multiplication of spaces of insertion with regards to economic but also *political* matters[16]", as a means to resist both the US embargo and "external pressures to introduce domestic political reforms[17]", be it from regional organisations, multilateral partnerships or European conditionalities (Serbin, 2001: 45-46). Lastly, where some see in Cuba's political alliances a weakness, a sign of dependency, others tend to argue it might be a token of foreseeability and political flexibility, that could precisely invalidate concerns about dependency. Indeed, Cuba "has been able to broadly continue, and sometimes even expand, its level of necessary imports and its inward FDI. It is hypothesised that this is so because an important part (though certainly not all) of both its trade and FDI relations are politically negotiated with governments" (Campbell, 2016: 11). If we are to involve political considerations into our analysis, then these are all elements that indicate a new relevance for international, and in this case regional accounts for development. They also

[14] Own translation.

[15] This specific point has to do with regional integration, and South American "counter-" or "post-hegemonic" regionalism. I will lead a more detailed discussion of the matter in the coming pages. What can however be conveyed here is that the authors stated hereabove generally deem Cuba's regional alliance, mainly the ALBA framework with Venezuela (i.e.) to be too volatile and too dependent on Venezuela's internal political context.

[16] Own translation. Emphasis is mine.

[17] Own translation.

prefigure, given Riggirozzi for now punctual appearance, the need for a broad review of the existing literature on the *region*, what it means for Cuba, but also what the region means to herself and the States that constitute her (regionalism).

CUBA AND LATIN AMERICA

Cuba's evolving political relationship with Latin America constitutes a useful parallel timeline, which completes the assessment of Cuba's domestic reform process as being mainly economic. The said evolution is definitely conjunct to the *special period* and the economic hardships that arose in the 1990s leading the *actualización*. That same timeslot was also the stage of noteworthy developments with regards to international and regional closing, involvement and activity.

CUBA'S REINSERTION

In 1962, Cuba's membership to the Organization of American States (OAS) was suspended. Havana suffered a 30 year-long political isolation with Latin American States bending under US pressure and rupturing diplomatic ties with the Castroist Island[18] (Kruijt, 2017). Nevertheless, Cuba never really turned its back to the continent, instilling the "doctrine of *latinoamericanismo*" (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 27) in its constitution, promoting a sense of brotherhood and anti-imperialism among Latin American States[19]. When the situation progressively came to change, especially due to world-historical dynamics, Cuba was eventually given back her access to the region.

Andres Serbin's prompt demonstration of Cuban regional proactivity delivers a clear continuity departing from the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. From the same precepts as Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez, Serbin explains how the disappearance of the CMEA forced Cuba to find alternative supports (economic but also political ones), partially in order to face the imperatives of the *special period*. Building on the "globalist vision developed in the favourable context of the Cold War", Havana sought to secure its "distinct insertion into the international system" in order to benefit from "the opportunity to reinforce and deepen spaces of participation and tighten relations with various regional and multilateral organisations". Again, it must be emphasised that this endeavour was made in such a way that Cuba would not have to give in on political changes (Serbin, 2001: 43-45)[20].

As I pinpointed earlier, Cuba's globalist vision has much to do with Cuban Non-Aligned South-South internationalism, or what Dirk Kruijt (2017) has labelled "Cuba's Soft Power diplomacy" that was based on

[18] There are two exceptions: Mexico never did break the said relations. Neither did Canada, although Canada had only been an observer of the OAS until 1990 (Kruijt, 2017).

[19] Suárez Salazar (2006) cites the Cuban constitution (1972) in order to define the above-mentioned doctrine. *Latinoamericanismo* seeks the "integration of Latin American and Caribbean nations that have been liberated of external domination and internal oppression into a community of brotherly nations committed to national and social progress joined by a common history and struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism".

[20] All translations of the paragraph are of my making.

intervention tools and sets of actions directly drawn from the Cold War era. It conveyed much prestige on which Havana is (still) able to capitalise today. However, Cuba's altruism is insufficient to explain how and why she managed to re-enter the regional stage. Rather, it is because "even during its most extreme period of austerity, it never reduced its system of international relations. But especially it nurtured its relations with Latin America and with the Caribbean states" (Kruijt, 2017). In other words, "The relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, with the crisis of the early nineties, were once again favoured within Cuban foreign politics[21]" (Serbin, 2001: 46).

Cuba's game plan was gradual, aimed at securing Cuba's spot in multilateral fora markedly deprived from any United States involvement and was initially focused on the Caribbean. Cuba made a first attempt to re-enter the region through the *Comunidad del Caribe* (CARICOM), by giving a second breath to the mixed Cuba-CARICOM commission. Serbin depicts two major advantages that the CARICOM conveyed for Cuba. First, it potentially made Cuba eligible for European aid to ACP countries through the CARIFORUM. In fact, Cuba was included as an observer during the 2003 Lomé IV talks (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 53). Second, it allowed for the normalisation of Cuban relations with the English-speaking Caribbean States (Jamaica, the Grenadines, the Barbados), with which affinities had been damaged since the US invasion in the Grenadines.

This reconciliation with the CARICOM offered Cuba some meaningful support (from those same English-speaking States but also the Dominican Republic) that led to an approved participation in the *Asociación de Estados del Caribe* (AEC/ACS), whose development and strengthening have a lot to thank to Cuba. The AEC is an intriguing example of the interlinkage of economic and political imperatives, compellingly illustrating to what extent Cuba was seeking an effective integration "with regards to economic but also political matters" (see above). "The AEC is altogether a political platform and an arena for economic concertation that does not intend, contrary to other frameworks, to become a free-trade agreement (FTA). [The AEC embodies] a regional dynamic [whose purpose is to create] a zone of cooperation", which was markedly consistent with Cuba's strategy of avoidance regarding trade liberalisation inspired by the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) rallying cry. Serbin also underlines a strong external support for the AEC coming from the *group of three* (Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela), which, for economic and geopolitical reasons, backed the said association as it proposed a viable counterpart to the US-led *Caribbean Basin Initiative* (CBI) of neoliberal inspirations. The AEC is also said to having been popular among small regional economies, since it prioritised their interests.

The sake of Cuba's involvement in the AEC was primarily that relations with Central America had bettered. More importantly, it granted Havana access to an even broader structure, the *Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe* (SELA). The island was once more elevated one step higher on the regional setting. Despite "the progressive dissolution of its role as a mechanism for concertation" and the deterioration of its attractiveness during the nineties, the SELA remained attractive at least for Cuba given the absence of

[21] Own translation.

the United States. Moreover, it provided Havana with direct contact with the Group of Rio, and a more legitimate position within the Ibero-American Summits. Serbin points out that Latin American States hushed questions surrounding democratisation and human rights infringement (especially regarding Cuba) whereas the said summits were in fact designed to address such topics. He then closes his empiric analysis with the case of the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración* (ALADI), a multilateral arena initiated by the larger States of the continent, to which Cuba gained entry in 1998 due to her firmer stand in the region, comprising "complementary rather than competitive economies as was the case in the Caribbean basin. [The ALADI generated] a propitious climate for Cuba's political reinsertion onto the Latin American stage[22]" (Serbin, 2001: 46-49).

Serbin's early contribution is both enlightening and puzzling. One could argue his observations are somewhat linear and emphasise Cuba's active role as the unique motor inevitably conducing the isolated island back on the regional map. Also, he described the Caribbean and Central America as subparts of the continent that have steadily and increasingly welcomed Cuba, overlooking regional developments indicating political and economic dynamics at odds with Cuba's preferences. For instance, Dabène explains how Central America, through the *Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean*'s (ECLAC) and the *Inter-American Development Bank* (IDB) pushed for "the unification of the regional market" until the late 1990s (2012: 48). In the meantime, he lays out an undisputable long-term periodicity of Cuba's reappearance in Latin America. His work is all the more interesting when considered in the light of subsequent papers treating the same topic and enriching what had been discussed before. As a matter of fact, a similar progession is found in Faivre d'Arcier-Flores's works, while she puts the emphasis on the toughening of US measures put up against the Havana-regime through the Torricelli (1992) and Helms-Burton (1996) laws. "Havana was then obliged to bet on the development of multilateral relations, in priority with the Latin American and Caribbean community. Her participation in regional organisations [the AEC, the CARICOM and the ALADI – she uses the same examples] was operated in such a way as to adapt Cuba's economy to a globalised world system[23]" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 53; *see also* Suárez Salazar, 2006).

THE "BOLIVARIAN MATRIX"

Cuba's regional reinsertion as an impactful actor is most unequivocal when approaching its relationship with Venezuela. Reaching back to Campbell's hypothesis positing that Cuba might draw a certain strength from politically negotiated partnerships (see above), there is no doubt that the Caracas-Havana axis has been of a particular relevance since the end of the Cold War. The emergence of the late Chavez's Bolivarianism in the nineties has brought about a substantial change in the regional context of Latin America (Serbin, 2001:

[22] All translations of the paragraph are of my making.
[23] Own translation.

50), one of which Cuba managed to benefit the most. The Castroist regime had also found in the person of Chavez a valuable political ally. This entente engendered the *Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas y el Caribeño*, with the signing of a joint declaration on December 14, 2004. By 2012, the said Bolivarian alternative had welcomed additional members (Bolivia in 2006, Nicaragua in 2007, Dominica in 2008 and Saint-Vincent and the Grenadines, Ecuador and Antigua and Barbuda in 2009, Suriname in 2012, Saint Lucia in 2013, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis in 2014 (de Bhal, 2019: 861)) changed its name into the *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América* (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – ALBA) (Cole, 2012: 314). The official name even mentions the *trade agreements* that are now part and parcel of the ALBA project: *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América – Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos* (ALBA-TCP). Even before the formal creation of ALBA, Serbin suggested that the Bolivarian framework might prove to be a "renewed space for a Cuban presence in the region[24]". According to him, it would in any case provide Havana with the "possibility to reactivate and expand its sphere of influence and leadership at the regional level". Given ALBA's growth in memberships, it is a plausible account. More importantly, this possibility was given "through the rallying capacity around banners that had traditionally been driven by the Cuban revolution and are currently devoted to the critique of the process of globalisation[25] and its underpinning neoliberal prerequisites[26]" (Serbin, 2001: 51-52). ALBA emerged from Venezuela's antagonism towards Washington and US influence on political and economic affairs in the region. For instance, by the end of the last millennium, Caracas already intended to make use of its vast oil reserves in order to fund what must be considered political alliances that could stand a chance in confronting US hegemony (Serbin, 2001: 50). ALBA is simply the integration of the said practices, as its launch and enlargement were largely made possible by oil money.

Scholars have casts doubts concerning the viability of the Bolivarian project. Most evidently is ALBA's own expansion, which did not always go neatly. It is for instance worth mentioning Honduras's brief adhesion which joined in 2008 but then withdrew after the US-backed right-wing coup that saw Manuel Zelaya's destitution and Roberto Micheletti's rise to power in June 2009 (Cole, 2012: 314, Dabène, 2012: 48). Others have noted that ALBA is founded on the principle of "unconditional relations" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 61), which suggest an extremely high-degree of ideologization rendering the project vulnerable to political conjunctures. It is in part Vargas-Mazas's point when underlining that ALBA is greatly suffering from the political thaw occurring between Havana and Washington, which would seem to downgrade the project to an "anti-neoliberal" *rally round the flag* effect more than a true regional Cuban style revolutionary cry (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 73). Lastly, ALBA is often said to be over-reliant on Venezuelan oil, which has led scholars to doubt the organisation could survive without it (Riggirozzi, 2012a), or at least not if Venezuela's own economic health was caught vacillating (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 73). In fact, Caracas could even have been

[24] Own translation.

[25] Later developments will however show that the critique regarding the process of globalisation is not evident or agreed upon by everyone. I must, however, underline this now, because it is of particular relevance.

[26] Own translation.

buying off alliances (Malamud, 2012: 172-174). In spite of this nebulous forecasting, scholars explain ALBA, echoing Cuba's *actualización*, as an undeniable regional emanation of Chavez's 21st Century Socialism (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 434). It entails a bundle of peculiar features with regards to the conception of the region and its position on the world map. In fact, ALBA alone justifies alternative approaches to Latin American regionalism in its latest expression (Tussie and Riggirozzi, 2012). I will lead a more detailed discussion about the innovative features of the ALBA framework a bit later in my review when assessing the said regionalism as a whole. For the time being, the purpose of this section is to analyse Cuban development in light of the Bolivarian framework.

Even preceding the creation of the Bolivarian alliance, Cuba had been one of Venezuela's main oil recipients. Under the *Convenio Integral de Cooperación* (2000) signed by Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, Cuba was to be given 53.000 barrels of oil bought at preferential rates, and with the possibility to sell a portion of the said barrels on the world market at the world prices (Serbin, 2001: 51). In exchange, Cuba committed to supporting Caracas's large-scale free healthcare program *Barrio Adentro*, supplying Venezuela with about 20.000 Cuban doctors and the "construction of 600 comprehensive health clinics, 600 rehabilitation and physical therapy centres and 35 centres fully equipped top medical technology" (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 29-30). This is an additional testimony to the importance of the medical field in the eyes of Cuba that had just completed the construction of the *Escuela Latinoamericana de Ciencias Médicas* (Latin American School of Medical Sciences – ELAM) which "opened its doors in September 1999 with students of eighteen Latin American and Caribbean countries" (Kruijt, 2017), reaching out even outside of the ALBA bosom.

The latter sheds light on the "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012) of Cuban economic development. A dimension all the more reinforced once the Bolivarian alliance breathed life into ALBA whose main objective "focuses on regionally addressing *domestic*, communal needs and social opportunities […]" (Cole, 2012: 314). Cole's regional dimension is best illustrated by the constitutive agreement of the economic space of the ALBA-TCP (ECOALBA) signed in 2012. It is conceived as "an economic space for a shared and interdependent development […] destined to consolidate and expand a new alternative model of economic relations in order to fortify and diversify the productive apparel and the commercial trade […] with a view to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of our peoples[27]" (*cited in* Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 34). In Cuba's eyes, the alliance goes well beyond economic ties, let alone cheap oil provision. More radical and somewhat partial views suggest one should see in ALBA a conceptual distinction between *development* (to *have* more), and *progress* (to *become* more), the latter being the motto of the alliance, and the true motive behind Cuba's involvement (Cole, 2012: 315-316). It constitutes an amphora receiving an "outward projection of the Cuban revolution", and a means to get past the "mutually acceptable yet limited cooperation agreements" signed with regional organisation such as the CARICOM (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 28-30). As such, Cuba was keen to engage its valuable *human capital* in the medical, biotechnological and educational fields (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 55-56). Reports

[27] Own translation.

edited by the United Nations have explicitly linked a variety of social progress (in terms of schooling, *human development*, poverty alleviation and access to satisfying health services) with Cuban involvement (Lamrani, 2012b: 351-352). In this context, Cuba pushed for the creation of ELAM-antennas abroad, notably in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela (Kruijt, 2017). Cuban doctors pursued their participation to Venezuela's free healthcare programs, carrying out the ALBA-coordinated *Operación Milagro* (2004), which allegedly procured medical attention in Cuba to 90.000 Venezuelans "of which 20.000 [would have] recovered their sight" (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 29). The said operation then reached out to other ALBA members and even outside of the alliance[28]. Trustworthy estimates suggest that Cuban ophthalmologists have treated more than "a million people suffering from ocular pathologies through similar missions disseminated in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia[29]" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 58). Not only doctors but also Cuban teachers were summoned, i.a. via the *Misión Robinson*, first in Venezuela, later via subsequent versions devoted to other partners, notably Bolivia (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 29). Making use of the Cuban *Yo sí puedo* methodology, teachers set out for remote or undeveloped areas in order to teach how to read and to write. The success of these enterprises has been recognised worldwide, with the UNESCO declaring both countries "illiteracy-free" territories in 2005 (Venezuela) and 2008 (Bolivia) (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 56).

From what precedes, some have seen fit to propose alternative perspectives on Cuba's economic development. The establishment of ALBA coincides with a rather promising moment for Cuba's economy, spanning between 2003 and 2006 (figure 1). Cuba was still struggling with a strong reliance on (the "investment function" of) exports and the tourism sector. What is more, Cuba's policy of import substitution industrialisation (ISI) aiming at diversifying its "productive base, including [its] production of capital goods" had after a 30-yearlong attempt proved unsatisfactory and could not deliver the expected engagement in the world economy. As a result, Cuba was forced to innovate, as stated above. Pedro Monreal therefore looks at the "transformation in Cuba's model of international economic insertion". According to him, Cuba had slightly changed its strategy, and was no longer seeking a "direct insertion into the global economy", but bet on the "substantial, and somewhat abrupt […] expansion" of the Bolivarian alliance. Cuba was thus purposely "favouring export services with the intensive use of the island's wealth of human capital. Among many potential explanations for this last shift, two undoubtedly stand out: a half-century of successful programs geared at the creation of human capital; and the mutually beneficial agreements between Cuba and Venezuela-which [he calls] *the Bolivarian Matrix*". In a way, ALBA's interdependence and "coordinated industrial policies […] between countries [allow] them to bank on their complementarities while assuring that their

[28] It is worth mentioning the quantitative survey focused on Latin America delivered by Salim Lamrani: "For example, 100.000 Ecuadorians, 61.000 Nicaraguans, 61.000 Jamaicans, 50.000 Panamanians, 48.255 Brazilians, 34.245 Argentineans, 22.280 Peruvians and 312 Paraguayans, among others now have restored vision". Cuban practitioners have also welcomed US and Canadian citizens, who, "for lack of funds, prefer to seek healthcare and surgery in Cuba, a country known for the excellence of its healthcare system and prices that are affordable for Westerners" (Lamrani, 2012b: 355).

[29] Own translation.

domestic needs are met". For Cuba, it meant a spurred growth through the expansion of the "investment function of more valuable exports (primarily healthcare services)" (Monreal, 2006: 22-26).

A regional account for Cuban development is, of course, not freed from potential critiques. An over-reliance on health service export, which "accounts for less than 1% of the total workforce in Cuba in 2009", might very well be costly. Furthermore, as Cuban doctors are meant to train local structures and practitioners, it is to be expected that their service well have become redundant at some point in the future (Torres Pérez, 2014: 13). What is more, this kind of *social regionalism* need not "presume that regional integration will solve the social issues from the countries of the region". Therefore, the notion of *national density* is of utmost importance, stressing that the region will only be as strong as its member states "internal situation" (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 26). In other words, Cuba's endogenous root causes for economic shortcomings are not entirely out of the picture. In addition, it must be pinpointed that ALBA's missions, hence the region's collective development as a whole, have not been universally praised, and scholars who scrutinised their implementation have opposed stark criticism aimed at its seemingly positive results. For example, the success of the *Misión Robinson* (and by extension subsequent missions held in other countries) is subject to debate. Scholars have argued that if it was possible to observe a positive effect of the said measures on Venezuelan literacy, it was however dubious to consider it to have completely solved the problem of illiteracy. For instance, Ortega and Rodríguez's qualitative and statistical study ends with the following concluding remarks: "This paper has shown that the implementation of *Misión Robinson* coincided with at most a moderate reduction in Venezuelan illiteracy. Most of our estimates of program impact represent quantitatively small and rarely statistically significant effects of Robinson, while some point estimates are actually negative. […] The possibility that the Robinson program led some newly semi-literate individuals to claim they are literate in surveys means that even these very small gains might be overstated". Overall, the program's returns were significantly lower than other UNESCO-praised programs in Asia or Africa. *Robinson* was thus of an exorbitant price, relatively inefficient and fell prey to political discourse as its range might have been overtly exaggerated by Caracas and Cuba (Ortega & Rodríguez, 2006: 26-28).Although it may seem that Monreal probably falls prey to a certain kind a wishful thinking, or at least a certain inclination towards a heterodox normativity (as I have suggested elsewhere, regarding other scholars), hardly providing any hard-econometric evidence, his observations are nonetheless useful and worthy of consideration. They provide an alternative reading of the developmental path Cuba has chosen for itself, attributing some validity to the possibility for politically negotiated regional accounts of development[30].

[30] More orthodox authors, such as Claes Brundenuis and Ricardo Torres Pérez, have even suggested, although with a totally different perspective from the one taken by Monreal, that ALBA might be "a middle ground […] on which to base Cuba's current market liberalization within a socialist framework" (Brundenius & Torres Pérez, 2014: 4). Later developments in this review will dispute such an assertion. It, however, stresses how relevant the ALBA-framework, both for itself *and* for Cuba.

CUBA REINSERTED

For the sake of completeness, I shall also point out that Cuba (re)introduction into the regional space of Latin America is not entirely to result of the efficiency of Cuba's Foreign policy. John de Bhal has led an interesting discussion of the "Cuban issue" in the context of Latin American regional integration (de Bhal, 2019: 862). I have already hinted an increasing support for Cuba's re-inclusion into international fora when mentioning the Ibero-American Summits. In fact, one should not only speak of support but rather of a regional overt advocacy for Cuba to be incorporated into existing organisation, and a joint call for the same organisation to ease the political pressure put on the island.

It is best exemplified by Latin America's critical stand and outspoken opposition towards two "US-led and US-dominated" regional structures, whose survival was increasingly uncertain: the convening of the Summit of the America and the OAS (de Bhal, 2019: 857). Cuba's continuing absence at the former was increasingly opposed with States boycotting the 2012 (Nicaragua, Ecuador) edition or doubting their presence would be guaranteed in 2015 (Brazil, Colombia). Besides, Cuba's perpetuating exclusion from the latter[31] was increasingly condemned, as was the US embargo targeting the island (de Bhal, 2019: 863).

Such an outcome can in part be explained by Cuba's international prestige but must also be approached by Cuba's growing appreciation by Latin American States, for which the so-called *Pink Tide* that shifted power to the (centre-)left across the continent is but only one factor. The growing empathy devoted to Cuba (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 58) flows from the conjunction between its international humanitarianism, its developing position in the region *and* its role as a "peace provider" for Colombia and Guatemala (Kruijt, 2017), which altogether undermined Washington animosity towards Havana[32]. Cuba is now also considered a full-fledged individual economic partner, as illustrated by the Brazil-Cuba relationship with regards to the construction and enlargement of the Port of Mariel (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 57).

Recalling the critical remarks ensuing Serbin's discussion of Cuba's reinsertion into Latin America's regional space, the latter section shows that Latin American regional dynamics exceeds the sole Cuban case. It is hard to say if Serbin had imagined such an outcome when evoking a "changing regional context". While Cuba clearly is part and parcel to this recent trend, Cuba is probably not the central element. Instead, it is first characterised by the "marginalisation of the US's vision for the region". Second, scholars underline a new impulse for regional political, economic and military integration, for which the *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC), "a regional bloc consisting of every sovereign state of the Americas except for the US and Canada" is most likely the most striking evidence (de Bhal, 2019: 856-859). In fact, scholars have even dared to suggest it might incarnate an additional threat (or at least competitor) to the OAS

[31] Although the US re-opened the OAS's gates to Cuba in 2015 (de Bhal, 2019: 854), Cuba refused the invitation in favour of a broader involvement in new regional initiatives, such as ALBA or CELAC (which I will lay out hereafter) characterised by the absence of the United States of America (Faivre d'Arcier Flores: 2015: 59).

[32] Faivre d'Arcier-Flores (2015) speaks of a Cuban revenge when discussing its crucial role in the Colombian peace-talks. Indeed, Cuba was, at the time, still on the United States' blacklist gathering countries who supported terrorism.

(de Bhal, 2019; Buono & de la Barra, 2012; Segovia, 2013). To better dissect these developments, Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie have put forth the idea of "post-hegemonic regionalism" featuring "new discursive and ideationals patterns" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 8), which I know set out to deeper analyse.

A Redefined Region: Rethinking Latin American Regionalism in "Post-Hegemonic" Terms

Latin America's leap into the 21st century has been rather exhilarating. The region has increasingly been considered as a terrain for political (re)investment, in response to regional and global dynamics. Regional organisations, States and non-State actors have been redefining its boundaries, geographically and ideologically (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 426), markedly by excluding the United States (and Canada) from any active participation (Emerson, 2014). Not only does it result in a modification of the institutional configuration of regional politics, but also a modification (and often an expansion) of the set of objectives that ought to be pursued by, and of the true meaning attributed to regional interactions and cooperation (Emerson, 2014; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012a/b; Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). This caused a renewed scholarly interest about the regional phenomenon in Latin America, stimulating various conceptualisations an array of explanatory models.

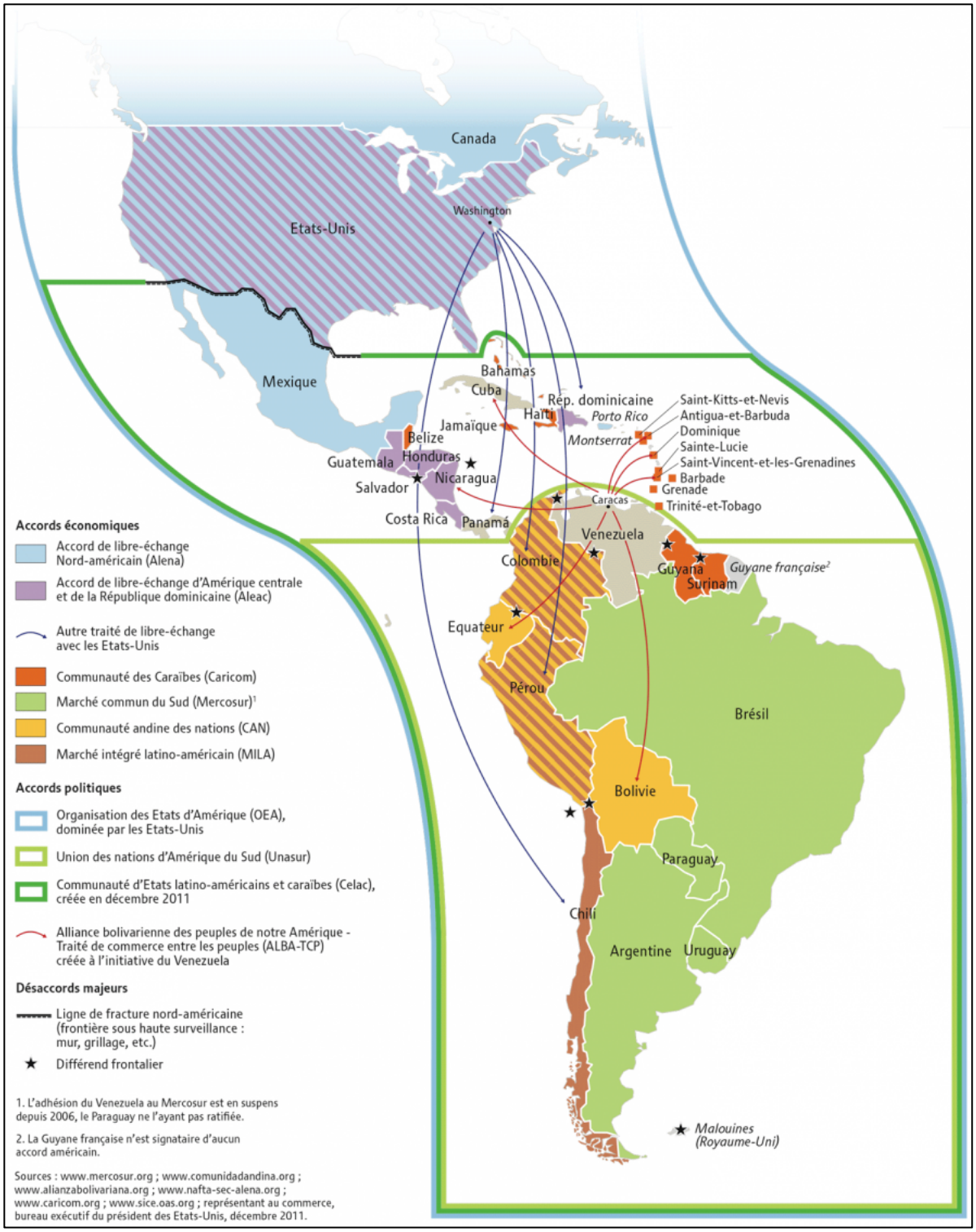
New and Renewed Regional Initiatives

Latin American regionalism has been facing a "complex new momentum" (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 11) induced by States' "diplomatic hyperactivity" (Segovia, 2013: 100) in reshuffling regional politics. A myriad of regional projects has led to "the reconfiguration of Latin American regional governance" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 422). Figure 4 displays a crude yet schematically decent overlook of what Latin American regionalism looks like nowadays. It becomes instantly evident that a complete assessment of the said object of study must depart from a broad consideration of the *Americas*. A thorough investigation must aggregate the Caribbean, Central and South America, which is why scholars have favoured speaking of "LAC" (Latin American and Caribbean) countries (Ruttenberg and Fuchs, 2011). It is also necessary to scrutinise their respective and collective relationships with the Northern hemisphere (Mexico being some kind of a wild card scholars have had to deal with). Finally, notwithstanding the existence of any tie with North American countries, Latin American regionalism is definitely polymorph, altogether encompassing political and economic agreements.

However, the apparent richness in terms of regional organisations must not lead us to believe in any "organisational inflation". Oliver Dabène's (2012) recourse to the idea of *cycles of politicisation* permits the explanation of both the creation of organisations and the reorientation of already existing ones, as well as "the

irregular patterns observed in the evolution of most regional integration processes". It furthermore delivers a deeper understanding of the phenomenon by including the historical context and "external incentives" to form

Figure 4: Overlook of Latin American and Caribbean Regionalism[33]



Source: "L'Atlas des monde émergents", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Retrieved March 3, 2020

[33] Appearing hereafter with the English acronyms, from top to bottom: *NAFTA*, *CAFTA*, *CARICOM*, *MERCOSUR*, *CAN*, and *LAIM* for the economic agreements, *OAS*, *UNASUR*, *CELAC*, and *ALBA-TCP* for the political ones.

or reshape regional structures. Politicisation implies that "actors consider economic integration as an instrument to reach political goals, such as crisis resolution or consolidation of democracy. [Hence, it fosters] a commitment of key political actors sharing a conception of common interest, institutional building to embody common interests, and possible participation of non-state actors" (Dabène, 2012: 42). What Latin America features today would be a "post-trade repoliticized sequence of regionalism" (Dabène, 2012: 61).

I will get to the "post-trade" aspect in a later section of the review. For the time being, I wish to focus on the application of the cycle of politicisation when exploring Latin American regionalism in its current forms. As a starter, the clearest example of a *re*-politicisation is to be found with the evolution of the rather resilient *Mercado Común del Sur* (MERCOSUR). Ever since its launch in 1985, it has faced recurrent political disinterest and oscillating commitment from its members to fostering its two main goals, i.e. economic integration and democratisation. Between 2002 and 2008, it entered a phase of "institutional building" "with the creation of a parliament [PARLASUR] and a judicial body", as well as a "Technical Assistance Sector (SAT)" composed with national experts and charged with deepening regional integration (Dabène, 2012: 52-55). This being said, MERCOSUR's developments are probably the least groundbreaking in comparison to other regional organisations. The most striking evidence being that the PARLASUR, cornerstone of the initiative, was not granted any supranational power as national governments keep on restraining from allocating legislative power to the regional level[34] (Dri, 2016: 149).

Next in line are the *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (UNASUR)[35] and ALBA-TCP. Both illustrate a clear demarcation with MERCOSUR's reorientation and highlight that Latin American and Caribbean regionalism is best characterised by the *creation* of new regional organisations. UNASUR and ALBA-TCP are often analysed hand in hand (Riggirozzi, 2012a; 2012b), as two sides of one polycentric regional impulse. Despite being two "distinct and heterogenous spaces for development", they share a set of "founding principles": solidarity, cooperation, peace, equality, States sovereignty, multilateralism, participative democracy, "with economic and social policies directed towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[36]" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 55). They also share certain member States (Ullán de la Rosa, 2012: 149), markedly Venezuela, whose presence may explain "the fluidity of UNASUR in terms of polities and policies" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 433). Indeed, ALBA's birth was in part prompted due to strategic disagreements on "leadership, motivations and political understandings" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 29).

In many ways, ALBA, as an integrative scheme, stands out from the crowd. First envisioned during the Third Summit of Heads of State of CARICOM (Lamrani, 2012b: 347), "it is, without a doubt, an original

[34] Clarissa Dri (2016) suggests that the thorny question around supranationalism was discarded once more after the evaporation of the neoliberal "threat of the FTAA", the Free-Trade Agreement for the Americas, following the quite hectic 2005 Summit of the Americas at Mar del Plata (Argentina). This seems to prove Dabène's point when highlighting regional organisation's exposure to broader contexts and explaining politicization and institutionalisation through "external incentives".

[35] Launched in 2004, the UNASUR was known as the South American Union of Nations (SACN) until 2007.

[36] Own translation.

project[37]" (Ullán de la Rosa, 2012: 133) that, as explained earlier, is ideologically charged (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 2). This, however, did not prevent the organism to evolve from "a theoretical proposition to a political platform" (Lamrani, 2012b: 349). For Pía Riggirozzi, it constitutes "a new political economy" (2012a: 28), one that conveys "another way of thinking international relations" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 55). Some have argued that the name itself, ALBA, which in Spanish translates as *dawn*, mirrors this innovative spirit (Cole, 2012: 314). ALBA's *leitmotiv* is "to subdue, from the beginning, the economic dimension to the political domain[38]" (Ullán de la Rosa, 2012: 132), departing from the idea of "cooperation and reciprocity" (Lamrani, 2012b: 349). It proposes "an alternative model of [solidary] development and accumulation" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 434), which is set on the "maximisation of cooperative advantages [through] economic complementarity" (Buono & de la Barra, 2012: 34-36; *see also* Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 33). It also proposes a "a new model of production […] based on a barter system rather than free trade" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 434; *see also* Riggirozzi, 2012a: 26), which Briceños Ruiz dubbed the "politics of productive integration" (2013: 34). The latter is best epitomised by the *Grannacional* scheme[39], i.e. the creation of large international public enterprises (Ullán de la Rosa, 2012: 155). They encompass "welfare programs [*Grannacional* projects] and private cooperatives and community-owned enterprises [*Grannacional* enterprises or companies]", which "are the basis of a new model of organising regional production and distribution", "to reduce asymmetries among societies, and fair and just trade" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 28-29), highlighting the crucial role born by the State as the "regulator and coordinator" of integration and development (Suárez Salazar, 2006: 30). "Collectively, these initiatives promote State and local institutions so as to deepen social services, rather than opening them to market logics" (Emerson, 2014: 573).

The literature insists that a correct assessment of the ALBA framework requires one moves beyond the "value judgements" one might have in its regard. Scholars have underlined that its worthiness as a scientific object of study derives from its originality alone. The scientific community must not forgo the ALBA's ideological richness, one which Ullán de la Rosa describes as the "offspring of the ideological developments of the post-modernity" by gathering "almost all the leftist social schools of thought" that have flourished South of the Rio Grande. ALBA covers much more than mere political propaganda directed against the United States, or the Western World more generally put. Its "discursive apparatus" must in part be seen as "a calculated strategy […] designed to nurture and retain high levels of popular commitment", since the "anti-imperialist discourse holds functions of adrenaline and political cement at the same time". It must finally be stressed that interest in the matter does not mean that one intends to justify the (grave) impediments to democratic rule, the

[37] Own translation.

[38] Own translation.

[39] My objective is not to fully excavate here the depth of the ALBA framework, of which the *Grannacional* projects and enterprises are but one dimension. What I wish to point out, however, echoes what has previously been said about Cuba's economic reform. Ullán de la Rosa leads an interesting discussion regarding the ways in which the *Grannacional* scheme "foments cooperation and formulas of collective ownership and corporate management" (2012: 157), which resonates with Fernandez Estrada's call for an enlargement of management models promoted from Havana (2014), such as collective management of the workforce, or hybrid private and public ownership.

rule of law or human rights occurring within the ALBA bosom, especially so concerning Venezuela and Cuba[40] (Ullán de la Rosa, 2012: 132-145; *see also* Riggirozzi, 2012a: 27-29).

UNASUR, in turn, has its own kind of originality. Ideologically speaking, it is a "versatile and even contradictory project embracing different discourses from different members" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 433). Although it emerged from a convergence between two economic integration projects, MERCOSUR and the Community of Andean Nations (CAN), UNASUR's Constitutive Treaty signed in 2008 immediately emphasised an expanded ambition for the newborn organisation, "with objectives formulated in terms of environmental, social, political and security policy" (Briceño Ruiz, 2012: 17). Its main characteristic rests with its broad range of political and economic coordination: in 2010, UNASUR formally integrated the *Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America* (IIRSA) "as the technical body of UNASUR" (Carciofi, 2012: 66) in order to "boost infrastructural integration" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 433); UNASUR launched the *South American Defence Council* (SADC) (Battagliano, 2012), "a regional defence strategy outside the tutelage umbrella from the United States" (de Bhal, 2019: 858, *see also* Segovia, 2013: 99); Pía Riggirozzi mentions the creation of the South American Council for Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation "seeking to reinforce the objective quality, equity and international competitiveness through harmonisation of Higher Education programmes" (2012b: 433).

Here again, UNASUR deals with its weaknesses. A great many of its projects are envisioned and fuelled by Brazilian leadership (especially the SADC), given that Brasilia has increasingly been considered as a viable counterweight to US predominance over the region (Serbin, 2001: 50; *see also* Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 4). However, Brazil's status as the lighthouse of South America is far from being unchallenged, which has engendered policy setbacks and delays within the organisation (Malamud, 2012). UNASUR initiatives, specifically the ones concerning infrastructure, have also been attacked for incoherence with regards to environmental protection (Saguier, 2012). This being said, it remains an impactful organisation in the region whose principal goal is to forge itself "an autonomous position vis-à-vis external influence". Taken together, "UNASUR and ALBA represent new attempts to 're-territorialise' new consensus, that are regional not global. [They] have embraced since the early 2000s different projects at odds with the US-sponsored Washington Consensus" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 432).

Esteban Vargas-Mazas (2017) has for his part focussed his research on yet another rookie organisation on the regional stage, with yet another approach as to what regional relations should mean and aim for. The Pacific Alliance (AP) was launched in 2012, and gathers Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, emanating from a convergence of various economic and FTA between its member States. The true nature of its philosophical and ideological foundation remains an ongoing debate: some see in the AP a prolongation of US-inspired economic and security policy (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 4), others argue the AP refers to a Latin American

[40] All translations of the paragraph are of my making.

appropriation of neoliberal thinking (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 30-31; Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 75-76). In addition, Malamud (2012: 176) observes that three of the AP's members (Chile, Colombia and Peru), although they are reliable partners, each have another centre of attraction: Colombia has for long been looking North towards the US, Peru is keen to striking deals and agreements with Asia and Chile is relatively self-centred. It thus raises questions as to how deeply coordinated the AP might turn out to be. The only certainty is that the AP definitely sits on a kind "developmental orthodoxy" by constructing its constitutive agreement on a rather classical economic lexicon: growth, competitiveness, freedom and promotion of enterprise or attractiveness for foreign investments (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 78). Pursuant the Presidential Declaration of April 8, 2011, the alliance's goal is the creation of a common market between its four member States (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 30). The literature portrays the AP as the somewhat natural opponent of ALBA (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 4), since their respective logic and perspectives are fundamentally opposed. The said opposition suggest the existence of regional competition (Malamud, 2012; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012; Vargas-Mazas, 2017) that seems to favour the former over the latter in terms of policy efficiency, GDP-growth or HDI-evolution (Ullán de la Rosa, 2013: 161-163).

However, the said competition is not merely framed as being antagonistic per se, given the possible coordination between competing projects from within CELAC (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 4). I will consciously keep the discussion around the latter organisation on the side a little while longer. The purpose of this section was exclusively to pinpoint one crucial aspect of Latin American regionalism since the turn of the 21st century: "Latin America [has become] a contested term evoking competing boundaries, actors, actions, histories and, in a more operational sense, policy positions" (Emerson, 2014: 568, *see also* de Bhal, 2019: 855). It features a multiplicity of narratives and sits on an ideological magma supplying regional projects that enclose a "transformative capacity" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 436). Olivier Dabène (2012) has made his reserve known as to exactly how transformative the projects in consideration might turn out to be, adding to the shared doubts about their viability (ALBA's in particular). In his views, they mostly rely on *collective intergovernmental presidentialism*. While it is a good "substitute to weak institutionalisation", it exposes, in the meantime, Latin American governments to an over-diversity of regional agreements and organisations translating "into inflated agendas that are not accompanied by any [actual] progress", all this in a political culture of "weak norm compliance ("*se acata pero no se cumple*")" (Dabène, 2012: 60-61). What current developments prove anyway is "the rediscovery of the region as a common space for pulling together resources in support of post-neoliberal practices and in rejection of the idea of neoliberal-led regionalism" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 24). For this reason, the study around Latin American regionalism "needs to reach a new synthesis" (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012: 10).

ALTERNATIVE (REGIONAL) GOVERNANCE

Latin America is often said to have lived through two successive waves of regional institutionalisation, each with a specific interlinkage between regionalism and development, and have both been studied and theorised by the New Regionalist Approach (NRA) (de la Reza, 2014; Emerson, 2014; Riggirozzi, 2012a/b). The first wave of so-called "old" or "closed" regionalism entails classical notions of developmentalism (ISI, reinforcement of national capital-intensive production, Keynesianism) embodied by the ECLAC policy line in the 1960s/-70s (Flexor, et al., 2017). It is also "associated with post-war economic protectionism" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 424). The 1980s debt crisis that spread across the subcontinent led to the collapse of the first wave while paving the way of the second wave, often referred to as "new", "deep" or "open" regionalism. It is characterised by "the embrace of neoliberalism as a developmental project" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 22). Germán de la Reza (2013) delivers a thoughtful *systemic* approach of both waves (even though his primary focus lies on "open" regionalism) and finds that each wave obeys to a distinctive frame of reference. "Closed" regionalism responds to the European Union's notion of *Generalised System of Preference* (GSP) and implies integration between "countries with a similar degree of development". "Open" regionalism, on the other hand, focusses on export capacity, and follows the trade-based policy lines set by the *World Trade Orgnisation* (WTO) and the *General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs* (GATT) (de la Reza, 2013: 178-184, *see also* Vargas-Mazas, 2017). Scholars have also proposed macro-ideological explanations for both waves, summoning Latin American Bolivarianism derived from "Simón Bolívar's quest for a unified body of former Spanish colonies" underpinning "closed" regionalism, and "a 'US vision' born in the Monroe Doctrine and embodied in the Pan-American ideal that advocates Americas free from the influence of countries outside the Western hemisphere – yet guarded by the USA", propping "open" regionalism (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 427, *see also* Segovia, 2013: 100). The Monroe Doctrine has largely contributed to Latin America's portrayal as "America's backyard". The Southern half of the American continent is indeed "a fundamental part of the US hegemonic strategy, often the site where this strategy is applied most crudely and directly" (Tom Chodor (2015) *cited in* John de Bahl, 2019: 857).

Scholars have pinpointed "open" regionalism's inherent ambiguity that revolves around its normative scope, "closer to decision-making than the explanation of [its] particularities". Its neoliberal attributes have led scholars to describe "open" regionalism as steeping stones towards worldwide trade-based multilateralism (de la Reza, 2013: 180-184). It established a regional governance ordinated by *Washington Consensus* that "set out to transform economic practices via a range of policies from the privatisation of public assets to cut in public expenditure" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 23), which in the literature has been "identified as 'meso-globalisation', or "neoliberal strategies at a regional scale" (Phillips, 2003 *in* Riggirozzi, 2012b: 424). John de Bhal explains how the US-dominated continental organisations have long "been the principle vehicles for pursuing these interests. The [Summit of the Americas] provided a multilateral medium to lock in neoliberal reforms across the entire continent, constituting the economic arm of the pursuit of neoliberalism in Latin America. On the other hand, the OAS had a more political focus, aiming to promote democracy via free and

fair elections" (de Bhal, 2019: 857). Moreover, Oliver Dabène's (2012: 53) discussion of MERCOSUR's cycle of politicisation delivers an interesting example of the broad acceptation of the Washington Consensus when examining the organisation's "institutional modesty" and apathetic focus on trade inscribed in the Asunción Treaty (1991) and the Ouro Preto Protocol (1994).

However, today's regional dynamics in Latin America poses a major challenge to "the explanatory powers of the New Regionalist Approach". It fails to explain the implosion of the "*Enterprise for the Americas*", launched in 1990 by Georges W. Bush Sr. "designed to lead to a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) with a deadline for its signature in 2005" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 429). The latter was never to see the light as, despite Canada and Mexico's support, the FTAA faced MERCOSUR's fierce opposition and Chavez's thundering disapprobation at the 2005 Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 11). Some have argued this refusal symbolises "a growing awareness of the dangers to which Latin American countries may be exposed by conditioning their economies to the interests of transnational companies, most of which originate in the United States[41]" (Faivre d'Arcier-Flores, 2015: 54; *see also* de la Reza, 2013: 187). Pía Riggirozzi considers that the FTAA's drowning is mostly due to the negative impact of the Washington Consensus on Latin American polity: "It led to the introduction of highly executive, undemocratic, and non-consultative procedures within government, reduced access to the state, deepened poverty, heightened social and economic exclusion, and increased social tensions" (2012a: 23). Lastly, the NRA has "often overemphasised globalisation as a structure of constraints and regionalism as a defensive mechanism of adjustment", fully discarding "closed" regionalism as vain or retrograde. "Today the regional picture presents a complexity that challenges both the notion of ["old"] defensive regionalism and US-led regional governance" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 425-430).

The current blend of Latin American regionalism suggests the existence of an alternative, a "third wave" (Riggirrozzi, 2012a: 18), a "third way" (Ullán de la Rosa, 2013: 140) to construct regional integration around alternative notions of development. Scholars have hypothesised that a large-scale trade-based integration has become a very unlikely outcome for Latin America, with the old idea of a Latin American regional common market (*à la Prebisch*) fading in the distance (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 36). It coincides with a generalised critique of neoliberalism, both in academic and political arenas (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 430) and the emergence of heterodox concepts regarding development such as the idea of "maldevelopment" (Escobar, 2010: 23).

Once development is thought of as a set of normative knowledge and grand narratives, development must also be considered as a mode of power obeying the governmental principle of the dominant world order (capitalism and liberal individualism as ordaining principle, neo-colonialism and imperialism as structures of power). Therefore, critical scholars have put forth the notion of "post-development" (Escobar, 1995). It is in

[41] Own translation.

this peculiar line of thought that Arturo Escobar (2010) considers Latin America as being "at a crossroads of critical theories", building an "anti-neoliberal development model" based on a "post-capitalist economies" (i.e. solidarity, cooperative, social, communal). These are the governing principles of the "post-Washington Consensus climate" (Escobar, 2010: 3-12) that has favoured the emergence of "the neodevelopmental approach of [Latin American] regionalism" (Dabène, 2012: 61). Goerges Flexor and his colleagues have defined this approach, more generally speaking neodevelopmentalism, as an "intellectual effort initially aiming at proposing an answer to the shortcomings of [neoliberal] economic policies". Although their work focusses on the Brazilian case study, their point can be generalised to the whole continent (Flexor, et al., 2017: 54). UNASUR and ALBA are the two clearest examples of neodevelopmental regionalism in the current Latin American context. They are the "embodiment of alternative models of development that contest or reframe the neoliberal orthodoxy prevailing in the 1980s and 1990s" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 17; *see also* Riggirozzi, 2012a 34-35). It is for instance in this sense that Ullán de la Rosa (2013) analyses ALBA as a regional project built on the precept of "alter globalisation", or that scholars have drawn back on Bolivarianism (in an updated version) to explain ideational shifts underpinning today's developments (Emerson, 2014; Segovia, 2013; Serbin, 2001). Also, Pía Riggirozzi pointed out that the most recent regional initiatives are more "at odds with neoliberalism" rather than anti-globalisation[42], further complexifying Latin America third regionalist wave (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 436; *see also* Ullán de la Rosa, 2013: 141).

This has led scholars to suggest the concept of *post-hegemonic regionalism* (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012a/b), incarnating this third wave of Latin American regional impetus. Post-hegemonic regionalism refers to "regional structures characterised by hybrid practices as a result of a partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neoliberal governance in the acknowledgement of other political forms of organisation and economic management of regional (common) goods" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 12). It entails a research agenda that sheds light on "regional projects with a new emphasis on social and political aspects of integration" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 423). In truth, what we are facing today is a form of regionalism that aims at something more than going beyond neoliberal trade-based integration, and, at the same time, a form of regionalism that proposes something entirely different from a "counter-hegemonic" model (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 432). Battagliano's (2012) work over the SADC gives a striking evidence of that. He has shown to what extent the SADC exceeds the functions of a "simple" Defence Council. In his views, the SADC's operates on an expanded definition of security and seems "to play two defensive and non-defensive functions". This latter function has been exacerbated even before UNASUR's birth at the 2003 Conference on Hemispheric Security, held that year in Mexico. Battagliano explain that "several South American countries refused to include terrorism as a threat to national defence. [They] maintain that violent conflict in South

[42] Reminding the reader of Serbin's (2001: 51) insight concerning today's recuperation, within ALBA, of the ideals of the Cuban revolution critiquing globalisation, we clearly see to what extent the question surrounding Latin American regional projects' stand with regard to globalisation is far from self-evident or univocal. Please refer to Briceño Ruiz's general model for the current forms of Latin American regionalism in order to find an additional element of the said complexity.

America should be interpreted as a problem rooted in social issues. As a conflict stemming from development gaps and social and political inequality, their resolution cannot be found in the military sphere" (Battagliano, 2012: 83-88). Battagliano's research resonates with David Chandler's discussion of the Development-Security Nexus, the negative impacts on development of Foreign intervention justified by perceptions of "underdevelopment" as a security threat (Chandler, 2007), or the underpinning "securitisation of questions of conflict and poverty" (Chandler, 2015).

In order to fully grasp its complexity, scholars should interrogate post-hegemonic regionalism's true meaning (de la Reza, 2013: 180) and adequately acknowledge Latin American political actors' "will to renew regional politics" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 426). As a matter of fact, post-hegemonic regionalism goes together with an *alternative governance* for Latin America and the Caribbean, or "*the articulation of new foundational ideas about what the region is for, about common goals and common space, and sense of belonging*" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 6; Riggirozzi, 2012b: 437). Commonality (Emerson, 2014), or the notion of common goals, refers i.a. to Riggirozzi's idea of Latin America's "new continentalism" (2012a: 32) based on solidarity, complementarity and regional interdependence. Briceño Ruiz's (2013) work may very well have illustrated the validity of this theoretical bedrock. When the Tabaré Vázquez administration (2005-2010) initiated negotiations with Washington with a view to conclude a bilateral FTA between the United States and Uruguay, MERCOSUR's internal discussions and contacts made crystal-clear that if such an agreement was to be struck, Uruguay would implicitly have left the organisation (Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 24). Innovation regarding the spacial aspect is illustrated by ALBA's conception "advanced by member States which do not share any contiguous borders" (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 28). Lastly, the sense of belonging is relevant because of the conceptual shifts regarding *el sentido de lo latinoamericano* (Jesús Martín Barbero, in Escobar, 2010: 5), which suggest the necessity to seriously consider sociological, ontological and cultural factors. Olivier Dabène (2012: 62) delivers an interesting example, pointing out that Bolivia and Ecuador have pushed the sense of belonging as far as to include and emphasise "regional integration in their new constitution".

COMPETING PROJECTS, COMPETING EXPLANATORY MODELS

As it transpires from the preceding sections, post-hegemonic regionalism is a complex, non-linear and multidimensional mechanism. Hence, scholars have set out to develop alternative theoretical models in order to better fathom its depth and intricacy, with a varying degree of liberty in comparison to the New Regionalist Approach. The objective, of course, is to lay out the general dynamics of post-hegemonic regionalism, as well as the "exceptions" and "irregularities" that flow from this regional competition.

Briceño Ruiz (2013) makes use of "axes" (1° open regionalism; 2° revisionist regionalism; 3° anti-systemic regionalism) and Weberian "ideal types" or "economic models" of regionalism (1° strategic regionalism; 2° social regionalism; 3° productive regionalism). He then associates a specific project with a

specific axe, which denotes a "pure or combined" model of regionalism. MERCOSUR makes up the *revisionist* axe as it embodies a perfectly hybrid model of regionalism. It started out as a strategic model of regionalism focussed on trade and commerce, which progressively, as trade ceded precedence over other political domains, effectively integrated aspects of the social and productive models of regionalism. The social model entails (social) inclusion policies and the regulation by the State of externalities and distributive shortcomings of liberalisation. The productive model implies the idea of "growth from within", in accordance with the idea of developmentalism (Flexor, et al., 2017). As a whole, one could argue that Briceño Ruiz's portrayal of MERCOSUR resonates closely with Olivier Dabène's cycle of politicisation previously discussed.

The Pacific Alliance articulates the *open* axe of regionalism and operates on the strategic model by "adopting the NAFTA blueprint". The alliance gives a concrete example of a "deep integration" dismantling barriers to trade and favouring free circulation of goods, people and capitals. The latter is obvious on reading the Lima Declaration signed in December 2011. In line with de la Reza's (2014) observations, although the said declaration does not explicitly refer to the WTO rules, Briceño Ruiz stresses that Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Peru have them all already internalised through their respective bilateral FTA with the United States. However, the AP must be considered as a post-hegemonic regionalist project as it envisions a kind of South-South FTA, centring the effort in South America.

ALBA, at last, incarnates the *anti-systemic* axe by combining the productive and social models. It is anti-systemic since it refutes the necessity of a capitalist bedrock in order to launch a viable and efficient regional project. In this sense, ALBA is "a form of integration that does not depart from mercantilism". Instead, as already mentioned when describing ECOALBA, it intends to construct "an economic space for a shared and interdependent development, sovereign and solidary, destined to consolidate and expand a new alternative model of economic relations in order to fortify and diversify the productive apparel and the commercial trade […] with a view to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of our peoples[43]".

This vantage point arguably lacks clarity. It remains rather vague as to how conceptually tell axes and models apart. The terminology is tendentious, mainly around ALBA. Portraying this project as "anti-systemic" might lead to think of ALBA as not only an anti-capitalist (system), but what is more, also as an anti-globalisation project. The literature does not fully agree on this. Briceño Ruiz's point is imprecise, Serbin (2001: 51), as mentioned earlier, explains that pursuant the ideals of the Cuban revolution incorporated in ALBA's *zeitgeist*, ALBA-members give way to a general critique of globalisation and the neoliberal principles that underpins it, and lastly, Riggirozzi (2012b) and Ullán de la Rosa (2013) both restrain from depicting ALBA as (radically) *anti*-globalisation. In the meantime, Briceño Ruiz's constitutes a valuable approach that enables an explanation of the "different manifestations and intensities" found in the diversity of regional initiatives.

[43] Own translation.

R. Guy Emerson (2014) conveys the idea of regionalist poles structuring a range of possibilities in terms of regional architectures. Latin American regionalism has therefore a lot to thank to the little revolution that ALBA has brought about. Indeed, ALBA introduced a new "reference point", hence it "reconfigures what had previously been understood as economically feasible in the Americas". Emerson's contribution is double. First, regionalism *must* be considered as an inter-subjective process, defining intersubjectivity via Alexander Wendt (1992) as "the base of community and common meaning". As a result, the regional competition, what Emerson calls "the politics of *regionness*", aims at creating a Latin American Self, a sense of *Latin Americaness*, which "becomes an open and additive process, here understood in relation to economic development, wherein historical change and contestation over the form and direction of the region are placed at the centre of the analysis". Second, we should not drop out open regionalism, but only acknowledge the "the displacement of the 'orthodox' US model as *the* model for the region".

Esteban Vargas-Mazas (2017) speaks of an (already) fourth wave of Latin American regionalism characterised by the creation of the Pacific Alliance. His approach builds further on elements put forth by other scholars appearing in this review, although he never explicitly mentions them. For instance, one can spot Briceño Ruiz's (2013: 28) argument about a diluent effect of neoliberalism in Latin American, through the anti-neoliberal surge preventing the region to unite under a regional FTA. Accompanied by Emerson's idea regarding the mere displacement of the orthodox US model, it suggests that neoliberalism always remained active and well rooted in all Latin America's components (the Caribbean, South and Central America), where many "governments may be rhetorically against neoliberalism, however, in practice they enact only mild redistributive programmes respectful of prevailing property relations and have proved capable of pushing forward a new wave of capitalist globalisation with greater credibility than their orthodox neoliberal predecessors" (Emerson, 2014: 570). For these reasons, Vargas-Mazas proposes the notion of neoliberalism's "tactical relaunch", which adopts a defensive posture given the emergence of left-leaning regional projects. It generates "a 'new neoliberalism' which rethinks its economic policies and introduces social measures without transforming the dominant political project", which, in Foucauldian terms, reflects the urge not to protect trade and the exchange of goods and services for themselves, but to promotes and protects "competitiveness mechanisms[44]" (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 75-76).

These three models all consider current regional initiatives as examples of *economic* integration. This choice might turn out dubious because it downplays the political nature of Latin American regionalism. For instance, if forced Briceño Ruiz to leave UNASUR out of his analysis, which considerably diminishes its scope while possibly falsifying his conclusion. The author considers UNASUR as a branch of the revisionist axe, but, since it did not commence as a strictly economic integration, decides to renounce its inclusion in his study. It sounds particularly strange once we recall that most recent regional initiatives, except maybe for the

[44] Own translation.

Pacific Alliance, precisely wish to transcend economic considerations. Also, authors will not all agree on Briceño Ruiz's point. UNASUR is elsewhere described as a project that advances "trade at its core, deepening linkages with neighbouring countries, yet seeking alternative and autonomous trade and post-trade political projects, even reaching outside the region" (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012: 11). The corollary is that Briceño Ruiz sort of reduces ALBA to a mere economic integration, underestimating its ideological charge and thus its inherent political dimension. Pía Riggirozzi (2012b) probably escapes this theoretical straitjacket thanks to her utilisation and actualisation of the concept of *regionness*, which Riggirozzi borrows from Björn Hettne and Frederik Söderbaum. She considers regionness not only as an object for politics (Emerson, 2014), but also as an analytical tool affixed to political practices, which are nothing less than "are expressions of a redefinition of regional consensus over social and economic resource sharing, regulations, planning and financial cooperation" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 425). Regionness is definitely tributary to the constructivist paradigm in International Relations, as, just as Emerson, Riggirozzi paraphrases Alexander Wendt (1992): "Region is […] what actors make of it" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 2). Such a definition allows the interrogation of the region's "new sense of mission" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 35).

Figure 5: Levels of region's regionness

Pía Riggirozzi

Levels of region's regionness

Levels of regionness	Nature and dynamics
Regional space	A geographically contiguous area with no organised society existing at this stage
Regional complex	Embryonic interdependence driven by trans-local relations to achieve mutual gains in issues like trade or security
Regional society	Intensified regional complex advanced by trans-local relationships in different areas of politics between states and non-state actors supported by infrastructure developments, and incipient institutions
Regional community	A regional society in which cohesion is supported by convergence of values, norms and behaviour. Polity is deeper and a sense of inclusion and belonging underpins identity formation
Institutionalised regional actor	A coherent form of governance that institutionalises norms and practices in support of a regional community

Source: Riggirozzi (2012), p. 426

Her approach, however, breaks away from the one adopted by the concept's genitors. Hettne and Söderbaum "defined regionness in terms of organised social, political and economic trans-border relations (material foundations of regionalism), supported by a manifested sense of belonging, common goals and values (symbolic foundations), and institutions and regulations that enhance the region's ability to interact autonomously in the international arena (external recognition as an actor)". However, Pía Riggirozzi refutes the induced perspective of "degrees of regionness" "from mere regional space to deeper institutionalised polity with a permanent structure of decision-making and stronger acting capability as a global actor: region as actor" (figure 5). Instead of a, in her views, teleological progressivity towards unicity (in essence duplicating the European Union's integration model), she favours a definition of regionness as "space or arena for action", opening the door to *types of regionness* (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 425-426), as well as the possible "deconstruction

of *the* region and a reconstruction of *regions* as spaces, or arenas for debate and action" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 8). Although unicity is not fully discarded, regional pluralism is contemplated in all seriousness, notwithstanding Dabène's scepticism around loose integration project in Latin America.

CELAC: Paroxysm of Post-Hegemonic Regionalism?

CELAC, in many ways, appears to be the "perfect synthesis" of the direction that the most recent forms of Latin American regionalisms have taken. It embodies Latin America's "systematic efforts throughout this decade to transfer duties of the Rio Group and the Latin American Summit on Integration and Development (CALC)" to a broader structure, carved for the region as a whole (Segovia, 2013: 98). The Rio Group was created in 1986 by the *Grupo de los Ocho* (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) as a "Permanent Mechanism of Political Consultation and Concertation", whose main task was to carry out "a regular process of consultation on issues that affect or constitute a particular interest for the member States of the mechanism, with a view to attain a greater Latin American unity" (Diéguez, 1994: 153). For his part, the CALC was launched in 2008 after the Lula administration had convened every Latin American and Caribbean State. With the Salvador de Bahia Declaration (December 2008), the growing consensus "upon the utility of continental political concertation forum" becomes apparent. On February 23, 2010, in Cancún (Mexico), the Rio Group and CALC held a "Unity Summit", and with the Cancún Declaration starts the creation of CELAC "on the basis of a convergence/complementarity between existing agreements". After that, in less than two years' time, the Caracas Declaration (December 2011) officially launched CELAC, Chile's President Sebastián Piñera taking over the organisation's first *pro tempore* presidency[45] (OPALC, 2012).

CELAC, therefore, lies at the confluence of both economic agreements, political partnerships *and* mechanisms of political concertation (Rio Group, SELA, ALADI). It "fills an important gap in uniting existing efforts" (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 1), "bringing great opportunities and challenges for the new organisation" (Segovia, 2013: 98). CELAC is *the* overhauling, comprehensive organisation *par excellence* and gathers all the competing regions under one roof, from ALBA (Buono & de la Barra, 2012) to the Pacific Alliance, which finds "that it cannot isolate [itself] from the process of constructing the current regional order" (de Bhal, 2019: 861). "High on CELAC's agenda are the creation of a new regional financial architecture; a more rational use of energy with improved energy access for those countries that lack adequate means; enhancement of transportation infrastructure that can permit geographical integration; the definitive eradication of hunger and poverty through better food and nutritional security; universal access to education and health care; water and sanitation projects; and more comprehensive guarantees for the human rights of migrants through greater interstate cooperation" (Buono & de la Barra, 2012: 32). CELAC, in a sense, seems to accomplish this everlasting Latin American dream of unity. Not only (maybe not at all) in the romantic (and ideologized) sense of "*Nuestra America* - Our America", in accordance with the Cuban "poet and independence hero" José Martí,

[45] All translations of the paragraph are of my making.

setting a contrast with the "other America to the North" (Emerson, 2014: 567-568). This strong tendency towards political concertation, and the urge towards "a unified social agenda" (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011: 1) stress Latin America's taste for "political unity (not only integration)" (Cole, 2012: 314; *see also* de Bhal, 2019: 858), although dissenting opinions have been voiced with regards to the possibility of political unity, let alone ideological unity, given Latin America's regionalism patchwork looks (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 432).

CELAC also has an undeniable "post-hegemonic" tone when assessed in parallel with the OAS. Daniela Segovia (2013) argues that CELAC emerged at a time when the OAS is going through somewhat of an existential crisis, that is the "concrete expression of the growing contradiction and deterioration of the relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the United States. We are not only witnessing a mere administrative helplessness of the OAS, but also the result of deep differences in the economic, politic, strategic and military fields inside the inter-American system". According to her, the United States are now biting the dust for not always having complied with the *Declaration of Principles of the OAS Charter*, as it repeatedly backed right-wing (authoritarian) governments. In essence, the OAS is now facing an image and legitimacy crisis. However, Latin American countries are unwilling to let the whole OAS-framework go to waste and seem to acknowledge the usefulness of such an organisational skeleton in order "to foster multilateral approaches" (Segovia, 2013: 99-100). CELAC might be construed as some sort of an organisational appropriation of the OAS, with a view to better and ameliorate its functioning.

CELAC is, however, not being praised in the literature as Latin America's panacea "to create a more autonomous Latin America" (de Bhal, 2019: 856). Although it features some likely advantages, such as the "rationalisation of the agenda […] reducing the number of Summits", or the "reduction of the duplication of the efforts in the sub-regional initiatives" (Segovia, 2013: 103), scholars have cast many doubts as to its own *transformative capacity* (Riggirozzi, 2012b; Dabène, 2012). Segovia points out that CELAC "also faces some limitations, restrictions, and challenges", such as an "emphasis on short-term goals", or a slower and/or weaker power of action due to the consensus rule that any decision taken by CELAC has to comply with, exposing it to vaguer wording in its official declarations which might be "leading to different interpretations". More importantly, the institutional framework is a central issue in Segovia's eyes. Strictly speaking, CELAC cannot be considered an international (regional in this case) organisation, as it lacks "permanent bodies in charge of dealing with collective interests and capable of expressing a non-partisan legal will, independent from those of its members" (Segovia, 2013: 101-104). The *Procedimientos para el funcionamiento orgánico de la CELAC*[46] (2011) exactly articulate what Dabène (2012) defined as "collective intergovernmental presidentialism". It establishes six organs:

- The (yearly) **Summit of Heads of State and of Government**: the "supreme authority of the Community", designates the *pro tempore* President but more importantly defines and adopts

[46] All translations of the *Procedimientos* are of my making.

the "political guidelines and directives, and establishes the priorities, strategies and plans in order to attain CELAC's objectives";

- The **Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers**: normally meets twice a year. Its functions are heteroclite. It must implement the decisions made during the Summits, control the implementation thereof, and can occasionally be put to work by the *pro tempore* Presidency as the coordination platform for the sub-regional integration mechanisms. It is also tasked with fuelling the Summit by adopting "resolutions and [emitting] declarations on issues of regional and international nature translating the region's best interest", or by "coordinating common positions" and "proposing CELAC's guidelines". Finally, it must approve the biennial Work Programme presented by the Presidency;
- The ***pro tempore* Presidency**: is "the organ responsible for institutional, technical and administrative support". It is tasked with the preparation of the Summits it presides, of course, but must also plan and coordinate the meetings of, and ensure clear and reciprocal communication between, all CELAC's organs. It is responsible for the draft of the biennial Work Programme of CELAC to be approved by the Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers. It is finally tasked with drafting and keeping the minutes of each reunion it presides;
- The **Meeting of National Coordinators**: is the "authority for national linkage and coordination". National coordinators are named at the discretion of each member States and must hold a meeting prior to each Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers. Their responsibility is to "coordinate unity, dialogue and concertation at the national level", and to "coordinate CELAC's initiatives with other regional or sub-regional integration processes";
- The **specialised Meeting**: "summoned by the *pro tempore* Presidency" if need be, it will be staffed with Senior Officials or Representatives and will be asked to second CELAC's initiatives and/or complement them with their specialised insight;
- The **Troïka**: formed by the previous, current and next *pro tempore* presidents, its function is to support the President-in-Office. The 2013 Summit in Santiago de Chile immediately widened the size of the Troïka, as CARICOM now holds a permanent seat within the organ, attributed to latter's *pro tempore* presidency (CELAC, 2013 – *Ampliación de la Troïka*).

In Segovia's views, such a loose framework negatively "affects coordination with other international organisations and the follow-up and effective monitoring of the commitments assumed by member states", which is why the author explicitly pushes for "further institutionalisation", one such that would ensure the participation of larger States (f.i. Brazil, Mexico or Argentina). The latter reminds us of Riggirozzi's insight on a possible teleology regarding regional integration, a process that should, in the eyes of many, be concluded with the emergence of a region as an actor (Riggirozzi, 2012b). It leads to Segovia's concluding remarks on what one could call CELAC's post-hegemonic transformative capacity. When it comes to its final goal, CELAC "is still an audacious, bold and credible initiative, as long as it does not intend to be a replacement of

the OAS". Supplanting the latter might be uncalled for. It might also be the sign that CELAC does not realise it faces the same coordinative challenges as the OAS, given its internal pluralism and heterogeneity (Segovia, 2013: 104-105).

We have seen how Cuba's economic reform is nationally and internationally context dependent. From the *sobrevivencia* after the end of the Cold War and the fall of Cuba's strongest ally since the revolution (the Soviet Union) to the *actualización* of its economic model following the special period, both dimensions unsurprisingly have to be taken into account. What the true nature of those reforms might be, is (and will probably remain) uncertain. Is it purely economic, or must we consider them as unavoidably political?

What is certain, however, is the ideological bedrock, hence the political reading to be acknowledged once we situate this process in the regional context: Cuba's endogenous root causes for its economic shortcomings are possibly addressed via the region, more specifically via the so-called Bolivarian Matrix (Monreal, 2006) which presents a sense of a strong centralised political control over regional economic affairs.

The said matrix symbolises the changing regional context (Serbin, 2001), most favourable to Cuba. Havana re-entered the region avoiding deep integrative projects, mainly through the Caribbean, which subsequently opened door to broader organisations and platforms also embedded on the continent. In the meantime, Cuba was also being reintroduced on that same stage by its constituent actors. For many, this is nothing less than a sign of a whole new dynamic of regional politics, one that testifies that Latin America, in spite of its political, ideological, economic and cultural heterogeneity, has rediscovered her might, as a region. This dynamic, best exemplified by CELAC, has called for a new synthesis (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012) bringing about new explanatory models to elucidate the current forms of Latin American regionalism, characterised by its urge to challenge US hegemony (post-hegemonism), and, to a large extent, to evade neoliberal capitalist economic models that do not fit what the region perceives as being its best interest (neodevelopmentalism). The question remains, however, as to how unitary Latin America can be, and what is possible to achieve on such a plural regional stage. "The difficulties in the course of transformations mean that it is very easy to dismiss the possibilities of a coherent post-neoliberal future. However, notwithstanding the obstacles in the way, the fact is that the debate over how to best serve participatory, redistributive and demands for greater autonomy is redefining the regional agenda in Latin America" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 422-423).

Part II: Theoretical Framework

To build a theoretical framework is to identify a paradigm that best fits the scientific literature one draws on, and one's scientific objectives through his or her writing. As I situated my elaboration in the fields on International Relations (IR), I face four general options: (neo)realism, (neo)liberalism, constructivism (Walt, 1998) and the broad branch of *critical theories* in International Relations. This endeavour should either way be carried out bearing in mind that the scientific community nowadays tends to consider paradigms as cumulative rather than mutually exclusive, and raw opposition of "-isms" as fruitless (Battistella, 2015e).

Given the topic at hand, and the whiff of Cold War narratives emanating from any question surrounding Cuba and the mere indication of a US hegemony, one might intuitively turn to the realist paradigm. However, the literature reviewed in the prior chapter does not target power politics, nor the centrality of security concerns. Rather, it is the notion of development that is more thoroughly debated. This being said, the latter is far from being a univocal concept, and may be studied from very distinctive angles. It bears an undisputable economic dimension (as I examined at large both for the case of Cuba *and* Latin America in general) and relies on economic integration and cooperation between international actors (state and non-state ones), rendering the liberal paradigm eligible for consideration. Whilst this economic dimension is omnipresent, I have shown how problematic it can be to reduce post-hegemonic regionalism in Latin America to mere economic integration or cooperation. Recent problematisations of the very notion of development could pull us towards critical theories in International Relations. Chandler's (2007) *securitisation* of development or Escobar's (1995) idea of *post-development* raise deep questions about framing and discourse by delving into the power relationships underpinning development: What does development mean? Who defines development? And for whom? I, however, do not destine my thesis to elaborate further on this account, to focus on the dynamics behind *writing development*, to paraphrase Campbell (1992). To the contrary, I take stock of what radical approaches have had to say about development and consider it to be a political factor of measurable significance.

Indeed, the literature upon which I will be basing my research discusses the "new discursive and ideational patterns" (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012: 8) of Latin American regionalism. I depart from what one might call a "classical statist ontology", and I refer to key singular notions, such as *intersubjectivity* and *commonality* (Emerson, 2014). My concern will be to explore Latin America's *governance* with regards to development. I want to assess to what extent, in situation of interaction, ideas and ideologies may shift states identities and interests. For this reason, favouring the constructivist paradigm seems to be the wisest choice, as it will allow to query "what is amenable to change" (Wendt, 1992: 391) in terms of policy, participation or perspective. This should come as no surprise given Wendt is explicitly being mentioned a couple of times in the review.

To handle this theoretical complexity, I will therefore summon Dario Battistella's (2015) seminal book on the *theories of International Relations*. His broad theoretical and epistemological discussions as well as his

consideration for exchanges and discussions across paradigms will confer both a structure and a safety net to the construction of my theoretical framework. More specifically, the seventeenth chapter of his manual depicts the most recent paradigmatic synthesis taking root within the discipline, allying the liberal and constructivist paradigms, and beyond that, the realm of rationality and the realm of ideas in international relations (Battistella, 2015e). Battistella will provide me with a broad and general approach, which I will then refine and deepen by introducing additional authors and concepts.

Governance as a Paradigmatic Middle Ground

The great *entente* between (neo)liberalism and constructivism is to a large extent explained by a larger paradigmatic eclecticism in IR, as well as a paradigmatic "conversation" (and not so much a controversial debate) between constructivism and both rationalisms in IR (neorealism and neoliberalism). However, there exists a much closer connection linking constructivism with neoliberalism rather than neorealism. For Battistella, it derives from a similarity in theoretical perspective of both paradigms, "that is laying the theoretical foundation of a peaceful regulation of the world society, by combining neoliberal theoretical achievement around regimes, the conclusions of the theory of democratic peace, and the constructivist breakthrough regarding the role of networks in global and multilevel governance[47]" (Battistella, 2015e: 634-639). As it appears, the notion of governance is the one that best crystallises the metatheoretical synthesis. "Governance is about how actors work together to maintain order and achieve collective goals" (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009: 78; *see also* Battistella, 2015e: 639).

In this sense, the idea of governance represents an attempt to move beyond realist conceptions of cooperation, which is based on *self-help* in a fundamentally anarchic world, in which "power [must be considered] as means and end" (Waltz, 1979; Waltz, 1990). Governance is also a way to get past and criticise the somewhat Polanyian "discovery of international relations" (Polany, 2001/1944), in other words, the economic bias of the "neos" in IR, which "might more appropriately be called "econorealists" and "econoliberals," since what was new in both cases was an injection of microeconomic insights" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

For these reasons, the concept of governance appears to be quite adequate when dissecting Latin America post-hegemonic regionalism and its characteristic features, that is "the articulation of new foundational ideas about what the region is for, about common goals and common space, and sense of belonging" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 6; Riggirozzi, 2012b: 437). Although governance is primarily being defined in worldwide, global terms, its focal definitely can be reduced without denaturing the notion. My object of study *is* governance, only in an alternative form, with a regional scope. Multidimensional, it encompasses political, economic and social aspects. It refers to a "sense of belonging" (Ibid.), and to a meta-

[47] Own translation.

history of *Latin Americanism* bound to ideological (Cuba's *latinoamericanismo*) or cultural (Jesús Martín Barbero's *sentido de lo latinoamericano*) backgrounds.

Whether it is global or regional does not really impact its explanatory range given the concept's flexibility. As Barnett and Sikkink highlight, "[…] we must become more aware of the different kinds of organisational forms and architectures through which global governance occurs" (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009: 78). The latter fits the multi-layered and pluralist landscape of Latin American regionalism as of today. What is called for, therefore, is to "go where governance is to be found". "Accordingly, the study of [regional] governance is ultimately concerned with how rules are created, produced, sustained, and refined, how these rules help define the purpose of collective action, and how these rules control the activities of international, transnational, and increasingly domestic action" (Ibid.).

Battistella's analysis discloses a normative potential assigned to the theoretical universe revolving around the concept of governance. It was in part birthed by "the traditional *problem-solving* aim of theorists eager to be socially useful", whose inspiration is liberal "in a broad sense, including the new idealism which eventually turned into social constructivism[48]" (2015e: 638-639). I obviously renounce any normative intention. I, however, strongly believe normativity is a threshold I can refrain from, by considering governance as a macro-theoretical analytical tool, which is itself underlaid by two paradigmatically distinct concepts. One is liberal intergovernmentalism (*à la* Moravcisk) which I will explore mainly via Battistella's writings on integration (2015b) and cooperation (2015c). The second has to do with constructivism's conception of institutions. In this perspective, institutions are lively things, supported by ideas, which are deposed in *rules* they enforce and (ever-shifting) *norms* they embody (Barnett & Sikkink, 2009; Duffield, 2007; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). This will consist in a general, highly theoretical reasoning, after which my intention is to reduce the level of abstraction in order to fit the specifies of my terrain of study. I will return to the concept of *regionness*, for which I will combine the definitions present in my review. Lastly, as my research is intimately related to development, I will try to identify its intersubjective basis by applying a "norm language" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 891) to theoretical considerations around (neo)developmentalism.

Intergovernmentalism to Explain the Rationality of Alternative Regional Governance in Latin America

The validity of a recourse to intergovernmentalism is directly linked to Olivier Dabène's (2012) detailed description of what he dubbed Latin America *collective intergovernmental presidentialism* (see above), which denotes the central role of Latin American presidents in domestic politics as well as regional integration. It does enjoy some structural and political advantages. As hinted earlier, collective intergovernmental presidentialism is a good "substitution to weak institutions" (at least for as long calls for further institutionalisation are left unanswered (Segovia, 2013: 103-104)). It is, furthermore, potentially quite

[48] Own translation.

effective in shaping common interests and a sense of belonging, through very symbolic summits, whose "socialisation effect […] is probably important as it enhances the presidents' feeling of belonging to a community". Of course, this regional political setting is not all hunky-dory and contains a bundle of shortcomings. As I mentioned earlier, it may lead to inflated agendas and an over-diversification of regional commitments. Dabène also underlines the shallowness of the said Summits' *Final Declarations*, which "typically refer to Latin American brotherhood and underline the necessity to unite, but the 'Plans of action' that accompany them rarely take the necessary steps in that direction". In other words, integration and regional governance via collective intergovernmental presidentialism can be overly rhetorical and revolve around televised political communication (*telepresidentes*). Finally, regional politics can quickly become the scapegoat of domestic policy failures, by allowing "presidents to shift the responsibility of a *problem-solving* failure to some sort of coordination difficulty, or to the integration's lack of progress" (Dabène, 2012: 55-59, *see also* Dabène, 2016).

Collective intergovernmental presidentialism is a common feature of the regional projects appearing in my literature review. I took the time to discuss CELAC at large (see above). Vargas-Mazas (2017) describes the Pacific Alliance's institutional flexibility and simplicity. "The functioning of its organs is intergovernmental, and not supranational[49]". It features, just like CELAC, Summits of Heads of State adopting and proclaiming general Declarations, ministerial meetings between ministers of Foreign Affairs or Commerce, specialised working groups and a *pro tempore* presidency. According to the author, such a disposition is all but surprising as, for the AP's member states, "institutions are indeed too heavy; they are burdened with formalism which obstructs efficiency of action[50]" (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 79-87). UNASUR Constitutive Treaty (2008) defines in its fourth article (*Artículo 4 – Órganos*) the four bodies that will constitute the organisation. UNASUR rests on three councils, of which the *Council of Heads of State and of Government* is the supreme authority, and a Secretariat General (in Quito, Ecuador). UNASUR also has the possibility to organise sectoral or specialised working groups at the discretion of the Council of Heads of States and of Government. ALBA's organigram features a *Presidential Council*, "the supreme authority in deliberation, decision-making and orientation of the Alliance[51]", supervising four lower councils: The Social Council[52], the Economic Council[53], the Political Council[54] and the Council of Social Movements[55] (Institut des Amériques, 2011).

In a sense, Dabène's contribution is but a geographically situated emanation of the already existing theoretical accounts derived from liberal intergovernmentalism (mainly theorised by Moravcisk as of the

[49] Own translation.
[50] Own translation.
[51] Own translation.
[52] "Ensures the coordination and management of strategies, policies, actions and programs" (Institut des Amériques, 2011)
[53] "Defines the strategies, policies and projects to strengthen complementarities in terms of food production, industry, energy, trade, finance and technology, with a view to structure an economic zone of shared development" (Ibid.)
[54] "Formulates recommendations for the *Presidential Council* on the political strategies" (Ibid.)
[55] "Allows the integration and direct social participation within the Alliance, and contributes to its development" (Ibid.)

1990s). According to Battistella (2015b), liberal intergovernmentalism is the most suited theoretical tool for anyone willing to study *integration*. It is a valuable alternative to neofunctionalist approaches (Moravcisk and Schimmelfening, 2018) who envisioned integration as a mere politically neutral "system of functional arrangements" (Mitrany, in Battistella, 2015b: 398), referring to a sectorial integrative process that expands per *spillovers* (Haas, in Battistella, 2015b: 404). Out of a sheer scepticism as to neofunctonalism's excessive technocracy, Moravcisk set out to revisit the States more active role in integration. In his views, states face a situation a *double-edged diplomacy* (Putman, in Battistella, 2015b: 414), intervening on the regional scale among other States' representative with whom they establish an *intergovernmental bargaining* (Koehane and Hoffmann, in Battistella, 2015b: 412), while States also need to conserve legitimacy and support "at home". Liberal intergovernmentalism pluralises the state's composition by including civil societies and triangulates governmental actions towards to international with domestic needs and interests. The state is central to the analysis, and acts as a rational political unit. Therefore, it comprises the possibility of non-integration if no balance is struck. Battistella sees in this repoliticisation of integration liberal intergovernmentalism's biggest asset (Battistella, 2015b: 398-418).

Its biggest weakness, however, is its blunt Eurocentrism. Liberal intergovernmentalism "has served ever since as a major reference in the theoretical debate on European Integration" (Moravcisk and Schemmelfening, 2018: 64). The European Union is a well-known example of "deep integration" (Carciofi, 2012: 77), a degree to which Latin America is not per se willing to commit. Liberal intergovernmentalism must be repurposed gaining another perspective. Taking a step back while remaining in the collaborative scope of governance, I argue one might find a new insight by considering *cooperation* through Latin America looser integrative scheme. We have seen that the whole spirit of post-hegemonic regionalism and alternative regional governance in Latin America is to better inhabit the region and spark an autonomous development. An efficient intergovernmental cooperation must be considered as a pillar of this political objective. Moreover, as explained above, governance derives from neoliberal considerations around regimes. Defining the latter via Keohane and Nye (1987: 728) as "sets of governing arrangements that affects relationships of interdependence", we see how regimes specifically interrogate the very idea of cooperation. Cooperation, however, brings its own lot of conceptually related questions, regarding *hegemony* and *leadership*. Battistella shows how neoliberal institutionalists have already demonstrated that there must not be a hegemon for cooperation to initiate. All that is needed is "a collective optimum that is unattainable via unilateral conduct[56]" (2015c: 438), since cooperation is best explained as a function of interests and not as a function of power (Ibid., 432). This entails cooperation is best approached via the lens of (political, governmental) leadership.

I have shown that Latin American leadership is kind of a tricky unresolved question. "In South America, as everywhere except Europe, regionalism has never acquired a dynamic of its own. This is the reason why leadership is crucial to understand its ups and down" (Malamud, 2012: 168). As I have already mentioned, Brazil has often been seen as South America's potential counterweight to US dominance (Serbin,

[56] Own translation.

2001: 50). Malamud's discussion about Brazil's leadership delivers a much more moderate perspective. The country is described as the "quintessential soft power". It "scares nobody", "sees itself as a peace-loving, law abiding and benign power". Also, in spite of its "relatively rich endowment", Brazil cannot "buy" its alliances, as Brazil is not the richest country on the continent. Therefore, Brazil must "resort to instrumental (or ideational) [resources of leadership]" and see to it that it could establish a "consensual hegemony" (2012: 167-168). A situation Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie refer to with the notion of *followership*, which "adds a relational dimension to the discussion about regional powers" (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012: 3). The said notion is also to be found in Malamud's concept of *collective leadership* (Malamud, 2012: 169), for whom Brazil's trouble in confirming its leader status (both regionally and globally) is due to "reluctant followers and contending leaders". Mexico and Argentina are similar in size and do not consider Brazil as their superior. Brazil has also (obviously) been engaged in an ideational competition with Caracas, through the ALBA. In the meantime, cooperation vivacity and leadership could be left to smaller regional actors (Battistella, 2015c: 439). As Serbin has shown with regards to Cuba, the isolated island regained the regional stage through regional organisations such as the AEC/ACS "favourable to the interests of small regional economies[57]" (Serbin, 2001: 49). Ullán de la Rosa also suggests that the reason why ALBA has been facing such a stark criticism is because ALBA "is a bloc of poor and small countries in comparison to other Latin American countries[58]" (2012: 144). It does not prevent the organisation of being rather impactful and attractive as Central American states did not hesitate long before joining forces at the start of the 2000s (Dabène, 2012: 48). How (federations of) smaller States may contribute to and influence regional organisations from within is but lightly uncovered both empirically and theoretically.

Shifting Norms and Identities: Institutional Accounts of Alternative Regional Governance, and the Role of Ideas

The latter illustrates the relational nature of cooperation. Alexander Wendt has discussed how cooperation and states identities and interests are intertwined. Indeed, "the process by which egoists [i.e. States] learn to cooperate is at the same time a process of reconstructing their interests in terms of shared commitments to social norms". Refuting the "traditional game-theoretic analysis of cooperation", Wendt thus considers cooperation as a fluid, intersubjective and evolutive process, that is "cognitive rather than behavioural", and involves the creation or alteration of socially constructed norms (Wendt, 1992: 415-417). Generally speaking, constructivism is concerned with the malleability of identities and interest, which are considerably impacted by ideas. It puts forth a sociological perspective on world politics that studies "the role of identities in the construction of interests and actors' actions, as well as the mutual constitution of agents and structures". As a matter of fact, "world politics is determined […] by a cognitive structure composed by

[57] Own translation.
[58] Own translation.

ideas, beliefs, *norms and institutions* intersubjectively shared by actors[59]" (Battistella, 2015a: 316-319). Here again, I hold what is true for world politics as also true for lower levels of international politics, in my case regional governance.

Norms and institutions constitute the conceptual linkage between, on the one hand, liberal institutionalism, whose prime focus lies with regimes, integration and cooperation, and, on the other hand, the constructivist paradigm. This explains in part the paradigmatic junction described above (Ibid.: 318-319), but also why it has been argued that constructivism should be "seizing the middle ground" (Adler, 1997) in International Relations. The binding agent is precisely intersubjectivity, positing a reality that is "constituted and reconstituted, formed and transformed, through the actions and interactions of actors[60]" (Battistella, 2015a: 315), hence explaining change in international relations: changes in States identities and interests, changes in States relationships (bilaterally and multilaterally). Therefore, in Wendt's eyes, constructivism will be able to go beyond neoliberals' "lack [of] a systemic theory of how such changes occur" (Wendt, 1992: 393). Although the following section will lean towards the constructivist realm of norms and institutions, which I will try to thoroughly define, it must be stressed that I will, however, conserve a classical statist ontology and limit my analysis "to the social construction of States at the level of the international system" (Battistella, 2015a: 328). In this sense, my paradigmatic background might be described as "constructivist and statist liberalism", in accordance with Thomas Risse's four liberalisms typology (Risse, in Battistella, 2015e: 634).

John Duffield felt the need to provide the scientific community with a synthetic response to what international institutions are (2007), a synthesis whose quality is indeed praised by Battistella (2015a: 319). To start off, one must identify what institutions are *not*. The theoretical universe surrounding the concept of regimes prevents from considering international institutions *as formal organisations*. Defining institutions *as practices* is equally unsatisfactory in Duffield's eyes. Equating international institutions with social institutions, i.e. "recognised patterns of behaviour or practices around which expectations converge" (Young, in Duffield, 2007: 4), entails a series of theoretical ambiguities I do not need to elucidate here. The main hazard, however, consists in "risking committing the logical fallacy of first identifying institutions on the basis of observed behaviour and then using them to "explain" that same behaviour". To avoid this "danger of tautological reasoning", scholars have also defined institutions *as rules*. Duffield underlines a somewhat "rationalistic" tendency, overemphasising rules as constraints which "diverts attention from the ways may endow actors with certain powers and capacities and, in some case, even create them", and underestimating the intersubjective nature of both rule setting and institutions. Therefore, constructivists have suggested a definition of institutions *as norms*. In this vein, institutions are regarded as "fundamentally ideational phenomena involving ideas that are shared by members of a collectivity" (Wendt, in Duffield, 2007: 6), consistent with the "ideational turn" operated by the constructivist paradigm (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998:

[59] Own translation. Emphasis is mine.
[60] Own translation.

888). In order to resorb this sterile and confusing variety of conceptions and definitions, Duffield set out to construct an "analytically coherent, yet sufficiently encompassing definition" of international institutions, one such that incorporates the "intersubjective and constitutive aspects" born by constructivist approaches, without neglecting the "formal features" and material elements highlighted by rationalist ones. He proposed institutions be defined as "*relatively stable sets of related constitutive, regulative, and procedural norms and rules that pertain to the international system, the actors in the system (including states as well as non-state entities), and their activities*" (Duffield, 2007: 2-8).

Duffield's definition is definitely one of interrelations. A first one concerns norms and rules, which both constitute institutions, the former "to refer to [their] intersubjective elements", the latter "to refer to [their rational] formal elements". It also contains the seeds for the creation (constitutive) and ordering (regulative and procedural) of material entities, such as international organisations, with varying normative strength and rule formalisation (Ibid.: 8-12). A second regards norms and institutions, which helps to give the latter a "deontic […] quality" (Ibid.: 9). Norms bear a "quality of 'oughtness'", a sense of morality (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 890-891), and "are usually defined by constructivists as socially shared expectations, understandings, or standards of appropriate behaviour of actors with a given identity" (Duffield, 2007: 6). Conversely, institutions can be seen as "shared beliefs about the way things *should* be, or how things *should* be done" (Ibid.: 9), meaning that institutions are in fact aggregations of shared norms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 891).

Norms (and by extension, potentially institutions too) are exposed to changes, as explained by Finnemore and Sikkink's norms "life cycle"[61]: norms emerge via *norm entrepreneurs* (state or non-state) who promote the adoption of new norms. Once a *critical mass* of followers is reached (*tipping point*), the "norm "cascades" through the rest of the population". At the end of the process, were it to be successful, norms are internalised by actors related to the institution (Ibid.: 895), inscribing a new norm to the set, or, alternatively, modifying a former one.

This life cycle is a politicised one. For a start, any emergent norm challenges a certain already existing "standard of appropriateness", by framing an alternative one. Finnemore and Sikkink borrow the notion of "meaning architects" from social sciences in order to describe their role, rendering norm entrepreneurs "critical for norm emergence". The rest of the process is one led by force of persuasion and conviction, discursive by nature, and is a function of "distribution of ideas" (Ibid.: 895-902). Deepening this ideational vein, ideas (and thus norms who have an undeniable ideational foundation) can be equated to "political paradigms" (Hall, in Dri, 2016) influencing and determining policy inclinations, and are spread depending on their *availability* (the

[61] I must point out that Finnemore and Sikkink's approach may constitute a breach in my reasoning. Indeed, in accordance with Duffield's work, I set out to avoid defining institutions in terms of practices or behaviours. Their stand on behaviourism is much more consensual than his. Finnemore and Sikkink consider that identifying changing norms equates with looking for "micro practises that may have transformative effects". Although I situate my work in a more ideational line, I still believe their approach can be of use to me, only deprived from this behavioural tone. Please refer to Clarissa Dri (2016) findings on the spread of ideas in MERCOSUR, upon I will elaborate in the very next paragraph.

fact that they have emergence indeed), *portability* (the existence of instruments or platforms favouring their expansion) and *functionality* ("capacity to determine decisions")[62] (Dri, 2016: 142-144). Lastly, Finnemore and Sikkink show how norm cascade and internalisation are the product of a *strategic social construction*, with States playing a "two-level norms game" (analogue to the *double-edged diplomacy* mentioned above) stressing the "highly contingent and contested nature of normative change" as well as its path dependency (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 893, 908 & 914; *see also* Dabène, 2012 when discussing the cycle of politicisation in Latin American regionalism)[63].

In addition, the politicisation of the life cycle of norms is tributary to the identity (identities) of States. Finnemore and Sikkink explain that the path an emergent norm will follow is, at least in part, a function of the identity of the norm entrepreneur and of the states that adopt the emergent norm (*norm leaders*). They also underline the necessity of a minimal "organisational platform", often international organisations[64], for norm entrepreneurs to promote new norms, and for any norm cascade to take place (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 899-906). International organisation can either be considered as institutions (arena) or agents (actor). The adequation of one's choice will depend on one's object of study and one's research objective(s) (Duffield, 2007: 13). I shall therefore consider *international organisations as institutions* given the quite loose institutional architecture featuring Latin American regionalism. Such a conception also coincides with Riggirozzi's elaboration about the concept of *regionness*. She suggests *regionness* be pluralised in types of regionness, and accordingly regionness be defined as "space or arena for action" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 425-426). Therefore, I must pay attention to "the role that institution can play in determining [states] identities, interests, goals, and preferences" (Duffield, 2007: 13).

Wendt's definition of institutions is an insightful complement to the one proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink. Although he too regards them as "often codified in formal rules and norms", an institution "*is a relatively stable set or 'structure' of identities and interests*" (Wendt, 1992: 399). States are said to have multiple identities (Ibid.: 398). Battistella distinguishes four (based on Wendt's contribution): *corporate identity* ("the State as a social entity"), *type identity* ("its political regime, its economic system"), *role identity* ("the properties that characterise the relations of one State with others") and *collective identities*[65] (Battistella, 2015a: 330-331). Nonetheless, identities and interests are *endogenous* to the state system, they cannot be defined without interaction, nor can they remain unaffected by interaction. Identities are "social definitions

[62] Own translation.

[63] This provides an additional example of the synergies that may exist between rationalism and constructivism in IR when studying international institutions and norms. Battistella explains that "for constructivists, norms not only oversee but also make actions possible, whereas neoliberals' institutions are mere elements of actors' means-ends calculations having regard to already existing interests" (Battistella, 2015a: 319 – own translation). In other words, Finnemore and Sikkink's logic of appropriateness put States in situations of rational choices that have to be made taking national, domestic parameters into account, this, however, without depriving States from their active engagement in co-determining emergent norms within an institution.

[64] Of course, international organisations are not the only kind of platform that should be taken into account. The above-mentioned authors bring up the crucial role of NGOs and "the larger transnational advocacy networks of which […] NGOs have become a part" (1998: 899). Given my statist ontology, I chose to limit my analysis to International Organisations whose membership is State based.

[65] Own translation.

[…] actors collectively hold about themselves and one another", which in turn determine the set of interests they bear. In this perspective, institutions, identities and interests are *mutually constitutive collective meanings*, or *collective cognitions* that are *always in process*, a process of socialisation and alteration, while one must account for path dependency in co-constructing a collective "structure of identity and interest" (Wendt, 1992: 396-399).

What then must we take away from the combined analysis of Duffield, Wendt, Finnemore and Sikkink? Normative change is by definition a disputed phenomenon and consists in a strategic social construction articulating rational choices and "intersubjective understandings" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 911) of what an institution is to become. Norms, indeed, are a cardinal element in the definition of institutions. In turn, institutions (hence the aggregation of norms it is made of) also co-determine states identities and interests. The loop must thus be closed. The strategic social construction is closely related to States identities, which change in the process. They do so either by *legitimation* (induced by double-edged diplomacy or two-level norms games; States need domestic legitimacy, which international legitimacy through compliance to new norms help them obtain), *conformity* (entailing a sense of belonging), and *esteem* (which "is related to both conformity and legitimacy, but […] goes deeper, since it suggests that leaders of states sometimes follow norms because they want others to think well of them, and they want to think well of themselves") (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 903). And if identities are altered, pursuant Wendt (1992), so are interests.

Governance With Regards to *Regionness* and Neodevelopmentalism in Latin America

The two precedent sections were highly theoretical. Indeed, I needed to lay the general macro-theoretical foundation and boundaries of more specific theories which will support my ensuing research. I have shown to what extent the idea of governance links the neoliberal regime lexicon, as well as notions such as "institutions" and "norms", referring to the constructivist paradigm. Departing from liberal intergovernmentalism, I argue that the concept does not have to be affixed to European-style deep integration but is also telling when studying schemes of intergovernmental cooperation in a (Latin American) context of looser integration. Cooperation has also been dissected by constructivist authors, highlighting its intersubjective nature, as cooperation rests on the reconstruction of States' interests and the co-construction of social norms (Wendt, 1992). This paradigmatic jump prompted a thorough definition of norms and institutions. The latter pinpoints the deep interrelations between, and "mutually constitutive" (Ibid.) nature of institutions, norms, identities and interests (Duffield, 2007; Wendt, 1992). I have also discussed the politicised nature of normative emergence and normative change which is equated to an intersubjective "strategic social construction" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). As a result, we may now enter the last phase of my theoretical framework. I wish to explain why *regionness*, applied to the Latin American context, can be a valuable theoretical and analytical tool to explain Latin American regionalism as a process of institutionalisation, i.e. "a process of internalising new identities and interests" (Wendt, 1992: 399), through the emergence of new

regionally shared norms. These could comprise Latin America's developmental path when approaching neodevelopmentalism as a set of regionally emergent norms precisely shaping new identities and interests.

REGIONNESS: ORGANISATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND MULTILEVEL NORMATIVE EMERGENCE

I argue Latin American regionalism is best explain by the revised definition of *regionness* given by Pía Riggirozzi (2012b) as it faithfully comprehends what has just been discussed regarding (regional) governance, that is its intergovernmental and institutional nature. As a reminder[66], using Hettne and Söderbaum's wording, she defines regionness as "organised social, political and economic trans-border relations (material foundations of regionalism), supported by a manifested sense of belonging, common goals and values (symbolic foundations), and institutions and regulations that enhance the region's ability to interact autonomously in the international arena (external recognition as an actor)" (2012b: 425). I have already argued that by combining Barnett and Sikkink's (2009) suggestion regarding the consideration for variety of levels and organisations through which governance may occur, and Riggirozzi's reappropriation of regionness viewing the region as space for action and not as a teleological process towards deep integration (2012b: 426) on the other, the concept of regionness is thus eligible for analysis as multilayered and pluralised regional governance.

Regionness rests on organised relations via institutions and regulations. We have now seen that organisations can (and in this case, should) be approached as institutions. Regions, just as institutions, can thus be made, unmade or transformed through the constitutive, regulative and procedural features of its normative and regulatory architecture (Duffield, 2007). The current state of affairs in Latin America would seem to make the making of new organisations of particular relevance. Approached as such, regions should subsequently be thought of as *collective cognitions* (Wendt, 1992), entailing a sense of belonging and *commonality* (Emerson, 2014) that is in the process of creation. The symbolic foundation contained in the idea of regionness stresses the prominence of identity and interests, which are co-constituted through institutions (Wendt, 1992) and deposed in an aggregation of norms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Therefore, regions must be portrayed as social categories defined in normative terms: "one's identity is as a member of a particular social category, and part of the definition of that category is that all members follow certain norms" (Fearon, in Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 902). Regions also pursue common goals and are based on common values. In other words, regions are, or at least have the potential to become *spaces for cooperation*. A cooperative scheme to which states participate wilfully and rationally, while the scheme itself translates a specific ideational articulation.

Emerson's "politics of regionness" is then meaningful once it is freed from his economic bias. It allows "to chart how interests and identities change over time, so as to empower new forms of cooperation and community". The author has put forth a response to "the ontological problem" identified by Hettne: what [do]

[66] Cfr. p. 35 to see first definition of *regionness* given by Hettne and Söderbaum.

study when we study regionalism? Emerson then traces the similarities between regions and regimes, which both possess an "inescapable intersubjective quality". Regions are equated to "social institutions […] constituted by ideas, identities and the accumulation of knowledge", that is "regionally located". The politics of regionness, therefore, refers to the "politics of defining the region", which is a discursive process of *subjectification*, an "attempt to bring into being a particular region" (Emerson, 2014: 559-564). It is in this sense that Riggirozzi and Tussie paraphrased Wendt: Region is what states make of it (2012: 2). *Latin Americanness* (Emerson, 2014), its structure of identity and interest (Wendt, 1992) and its normative skeleton are a politicised process. Although it will always be in process (Wendt, 1992), its initial phases of politicisation are crucial as international regional organisations are path dependent (Dabène, 2012). Central to Latin American governance studied via the politics of regionness is thus the question of leadership, with regards to strategies of cooperation as well as concerning norm emergence underpinning those very same strategies. Indeed, by exploring "how intersubjective structures and regional agents interact […] in the circulation of shared meaning", Emerson has underlined states' agency in shaping the regional governance. Beyond the top-down "diffusionist" approaches positing that "shared meaning is diffused by States being subjected to the same environment" and bottom-up "aggregationist" approaches arguing that the region is in fact the result of the aggregation of "the ideas that individual States hold", Emerson established "how agents play an active role in inscribing the region" (2014: 559-564).

POLITICS OF REGIONNESS AND DEVELOPMENT: A VISION FOR THE REGION

Development has been a key element of my thesis up to this point. I discussed Cuba's development in light of its economic reforms. The "Bolivarian Matrix" (Monreal, 2006) proved that Cuba's development strategy draws to a large extent on regional partnerships. In fact, development through the region (at least in part) is also a feature of Latin American regionalism, which embarked on a neodevelopmental venture (Dabène, 2012: 61) and seeks "alternative models of development" (Riggirozzi, 2102a: 17).

I argue that there exists a theoretical and conceptual linkage between institutions and development. Constructivism has already addressed the synergies between institutions and security, with Wendt hypothesising a worldwide "cooperative security system [depending] on how well developed the *collective self* is", opening the door to cooperative dynamics even in the fields of security (Wendt, 1992: 400-401). In the same vein, and at a lower scale, a regional cooperative system that focuses on development is theoretically possible, paving the way for the development of the collective *Latin American Self* (Emerson, 2014). Escobar has discussed the very notion of development, defining it as a set of knowledge, a system and a discourse (Escobar, 1995). Meanwhile, institutions have been portrayed as collective knowledge, "a function of what actors collectively know" (Wendt, 1992: 399). Therefore, I argue that regions are perfectly able to build their own vision for development, departing from a certain set of beliefs and ideas, melted into specific shared norms translating what development *ought* to look like. How to best depict the said alternative models of development is still to be delineated.

I must recall that I have already excluded any consideration for the development-security nexus (Chandler, 2007; Chandler, 2015) as a basis for my research. Chandler's definition of the nexus as an "*anti-foreign policy*", i.e. a tendency to justify military interventions in the Third World out of security concerns linked to neighbouring underdevelopment, does not match my review. Indeed, hardly any regional project defines its developmental path in military terms. The sole contravening example, UNASUR's SADC, does so only partially, while its main objective is to endow UNASUR with an autonomous body responsible for the region's defence. What is more, Battagliano has shown that the SADC incorporates a shared scepticism regarding military involvement in conflicts "stemming from development gaps and social and political inequality" (2012: 83-88). Nor can I define development as a radical sense of security, *emancipation*, where "security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin" (Booth, in Battistella, 2015d: 515), as such an angle would force me to consider an ontology based on the individual (human being) and adopt critical theories as paradigmatic backbone.

Arturo Escobar's writings provide me with a much better vantage point, especially since Escobar focusses on Latin America's crossroads in terms of developmental paths (2010). In his views, Latin America is torn between *alternative modernisations* (which he pairs with neodevelopmentalism) and an *alternative to modernity* (which he links to his own notion of *post-development* (Escobar, 1995)). The only difference between the two realms is "the extent to which the basic premises of the [current neoliberal] development model are being challenges". Indeed, post-development proposes a developmental path that is *"post-capitalist*, *post-liberal and post-statist*", where the *post* "means a decentring of capitalism in the definition of the economy, of liberalism in the definition of society and the polity, and of state forms of power as the defining matrix of social organisation" (Escobar, 2010: 3-12). I must, however, fare with great caution. Escobar's theses have had to deal with stark criticism. Scholars have argued that post-development and alternative to modernity are themselves based on "flawed premises". The former "attributes to development a single and narrow meaning […] that does not match either policy or theory". For the latter, "no such alternatives are offered" (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000: 188). Furthermore, Latin American alternative governance only features a post-capitalist (anti-neoliberal) outlook whilst the state and the liberal democratic order are not called into question.

Neodevelopmentalism is therefore not only the last but also the best option. It embodies a broad critique of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus, while it aims at taking its distances from "classical developmentalism" as it was enforced in the 1960s/1970s. Neodevelopmentalism is a State-led endeavour, in which the States attempt to forge the necessary conditions for development by regulating, administering and funding developmental projects, as the State is seen as the instrument for collective action. Its key sectors are infrastructure, innovation and research and development. Neodevelopmentalism is usually defined in national terms, designed as an inclusive and coherent development strategy based on export and a better access to the world economy. It encompasses a specific political economy, aiming at specialising (not per se expanding) its

industries in order to have them firmly rooted in international markets, hence benefitting from increased productivity and a better profitability derived from national manufacture (Flexor, et al., 2017). However, neodevelopmentalism can theoretically be upscaled and considered at the regional level. We have seen that post-hegemonic regionalism rests on solidarity, complementarity and regional interdependence (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 32). Hence, regional governance may become an added value when considering Aldo Ferrer's recourse to *national density* (Ferrer, in Briceño Ruiz, 2013: 26). In this sense, what is to be reached at the regional level greatly depends on "the internal situation" within each state, stressing the importance of cooperation in order to attain this "collective optimum that is unattainable via unilateral conduct" (Battistella, 2015c: 32). Therefore, what matters is the construction of a common project and "institutional mechanisms that favour cooperative behaviours in the long run[67]", inscribed in a *regional* pact[68] (Flexor, et al., 2017). As such, neodevelopmentalism becomes a regional, intersubjective, disputed, discursive intergovernmental project.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

To close off my theoretical framework, I may now disclose the direction I wish to give to my research and state the hypotheses that will guide the latter. I aim at uncovering the interlinkage that exists between Cuba's regional policy and strategy, and Latin American alternative regional governance via its forms of post-hegemonic regionalism. However, I must rightly adjust the scope of my research, which is why I will specifically target CELAC. Indeed, I argue that CELAC is the organisation that best fits the post-hegemonic thrust of Latin American regionalism. Despite being a kind of emanation of the region as a whole, and despite its quite broad political agenda for the region, CELAC has only been lightly explored by the existing literature. I wish to remedy what I feel is a regrettable vacuum, and at the same time, a thrilling field of study.

Studying CELAC will necessitate an original approach. Segovia (2013) explained why it cannot be considered as an organisation *stricto sensu*. I do not need CELAC to fulfil this condition in order for my research to stand. As a matter of fact, I will approach CELAC as such, as a *community* working on a strict intergovernmental base. As such, and in spite of the absence of any permanent body, I am still able to consider CELAC as an institution, pursuant the constructivist definition of the term provided above. I argue that it should be seen as a codified "organisational platform" (Finnemore and Sikkink: 1998) bringing Latin American States together and allowing them to craft a specific regional governance. CELAC is thus an example of regionness defined as an "arena for action" (Riggirozzi, 2012a; Riggirozzi, 2012b) where States socialise, which affects their individual and collective identities and interests (Wendt, 1992). I want to study those interactions and I wish to analyse the developmental horizon that is birthed by such a regional set up.

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[67] Own translation.

[68] Of course, neodevelopmentalism has its flaws and limits. It is far from being self-evident, and it may seem as if "its success simply depends on the success of the national [or regional] pact" (Flexor, et al., 2017: 65). Georges Flexor and his colleagues discuss three of them. Microeconomic mismanagement of (national) enterprise can hinder the project. Moreover, neodevelopmentalism relies heavily on mutual confidence between companies and public administration. This being said, too close a relationship between those very actors may induce state-level corruption, impeding the very goals of neodevelopmentalism.

Within CELAC, I wish the pay close attention to Cuba's involvement and political role in shaping the said horizon. I argue that CELAC might be an interesting space for Havana, given the potential "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012) of its development strategy. It can be a means to move beyond ALBA's weaknesses, which are really quite undeniable. What is more, CELAC concurs with Cuba's "doctrine of *latinoamericanismo*" (Suárez Salazar, 2006) stressing the importance of brotherly relations between Latin American and Caribbean countries. My interest in Cuba is also founded on the programmatic convergence between what is deemed to be of vital importance for Cuba's domestic development, on the one hand, and neodevelopmentalism on the other, which, I have argued can be approached at the regional level. Indeed, innovation, research and development, and infrastructure have been identified by Triana Cordoví and Torres Pérez (2014) as key elements of Cuba's best shot at a long-term development, and are in the same time, the central sectors of neodevelopmentalism. Whether CELAC opts for a (set of) neodevelopmental policy(-ies) might therefore constitute a strategic interest not only for Cuba, but for the region through Cuba's eyes, especially given its above-mentioned doctrine. From these premises CELAC appears to be a normative struggle, in which Cuba is but one actor or agent.

Cuba could thus be depicted as a "norm entrepreneur", trying to shape CELAC's governance in the region. Indeed, the Havana regime gathers all the aspects of a "good" norm entrepreneur pursuant Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) definition. It has always stood out on the regional (and frankly on the world) stage, challenging all kinds of normative appropriateness, and opposed US (neoliberal) hegemony. Cuba can capitalise on its renown *type identity* (Battistella, 2015a), as a Castroist-communist regime, as the epitome of *La Revolución*, in order to promote alternative political perspectives. I have shown that Cuba legitimacy has for about 30 years been on the rise in Latin America, partly due to a political and economic balance struck via "politically negotiated agreements" (Campbell, 2016), but also as a reliable and credible partner within the ALBA framework.

Evaluating Cuba's weight on CELAC is in my views of particular relevance. Cuba has occupied the *pro tempore* presidency of the community in 2013. Hence, Cuba was part of the *Troika* between January 2012 and January 2015. Cuba bore such central functions at a crucial time, i.e. the initial phases of politicisation which are known to set any organisation, however loose, on a specific political and ideational path (Dabène, 2012). Notwithstanding the valid doubts regarding the transformative capacity of post-hegemonic forms of regionalism (including CELAC), Cuba's pivotal involvement in one of them, at a time when neoliberal orthodoxy is being challenged must be closely studied. Reusing Lamrani's (2012b) wording when discussing ALBA, CELAC might have shifted "from a theoretical proposition to [real] a political platform" as well, in part by means of Cuban agency. With this in mind, Riggirozzi's considerations are even better founded: "Beyond populist rhetoric and symbolic politics, we need to address current regional transformations as part of deeply rooted dilemmas of development, growth and inclusion, and how to effectively tackle dependency and external vulnerability" (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 439).

I hypothesise that Cuba might be "regionally addressing domestic needs" (Cole, 2012) through CELAC. Only, I do not consider Cuba's recourse as being purely instrumental and materialistic, as this would mean I would settle for a functionalist approach of Latin American regionalism. My objective is more subtle as I wish to observe whether Cuba is able to inscribe its alternative perspective on regional politics within CELAC, whether Cuba is able to convince potential regional followers to adopt its ideas, its alternative "world views [and] principled beliefs " (Dri, 2016). Such an approach might turn out to be conclusive both regarding CELAC's preferences as a community *and* Cuba's effective weight on the community's orientation. Indeed, CELAC, much as most of Latin American regional projects, is a contested phenomenon (Emerson, 2014). It embodies the very arena of multi-level regional governance, which is in itself a competition: CELAC comprises ALBA (whose achievement Cuba might try to transpose to CELAC), as well as the Pacific Alliance. Therefore, regional leadership is not simply there to be plucked. Much to the contrary, it is coveted status within CELAC. Hence, *if* Cuba is able to exert regional influence, this alone will not suffice. Havana must win over followers and potential regional rivals, or, conversely, give in to their ideational reach. This reasoning leads me to formulate the following hypotheses:

- CELAC features a clear post-hegemonic stand and a political agenda consistent with the precepts of neodevelopmentalism (as defined by Escobar (2010) and Flexor and his colleagues (2017)), as such mirroring the dominant trend of Latin American regionalism as a whole;
- Cuba's *pro tempore* Presidency and presence within CELAC's "Troïka" coincide with a foundational dynamic setting the community on the path of alternative regional governance and political multilateralism through pivotal presidential declarations. I believe it is possible to identify a Cuban impulse, as "norm entrepreneur", fostering a new regional identity and new regional interests, as well as providing member states with a new meaning for the region.
- CELAC is a means for Cuba to "regionally addressing domestic needs" (Cole, 2012) by creating the conditions that will enable the emulation of a socialist-prone regional environment. In this sense, Cuba's economic reforms would not risk having to be prolonged into political ones, safeguarding Cuba's regime and identity.

Part III: Methodology

In order to ensure the validity of my research, and for the sake of scientific transparency, it is required that I expose the methodological choices I have retained before carrying out my investigation. I must point out the material I chose to gather, and justify their utilisation, their utility and their explanatory power once injected into my analysis. The methodology I favoured for this work is constructed following three axes, which I will more extensively discuss in a short while: discursive and political material, secondary sources (press-based documents), and directed interview with officials and diplomats related to CELAC organs. Before I begin, I only wish to clearly delimit my ambitions. Although it is true that I will survey CELAC's regional governance with regards to its (neo)developmental path, I do not wish to examine the efficiency or economic adequacy of the policies that might or might not be agreed upon within the community. For one because I am absolutely not equipped for such an econometric assessment, given my academic background in Political Science and International Relations. But more to the point, what is ultimately of interest to me are the ideas that underpin the said policies composing CELAC said governance. Therefore, I will recuperate Ullán de la Rosa's (2012: 159-160) *analytical separation*, suggesting a clear distinction between "its philosophical vision and its program, and the concrete political practices[69]" spearheaded by the community or individual States in the name of CELAC. Although the author's focus lies on ALBA, such an approach is also rather appealing when studying CELAC as it frees the normative and programmatic process from quantitative and practical considerations. The question around policy efficiency must, of course, be asked at some point. I simply underline that this will not be the end I plan to pursue. Rather, I will interrogate the meaning of Latin American regionalism (de la Reza, 2013: 180) embodied in CELAC.

A great deal of my research will concern want I dubbed the **discursive and political material** of CELAC, meaning its "normative corpus" (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 74): its constitutive agreement, its Presidential and Special Declarations and its policy agenda. The documents translate the ideas and the world views which form the bedrock of the organised community. These are also the central feature of Dabène's (2012) collective intergovernmental presidentialism, the channel through which the community's preferences and CELAC's regional governance are structured. It denotes a certain political engagement and a "sense of oughtness" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). I will analyse the said documents by summarising their content and propose a systemic and purposive understanding of their synthesis, possibly identifying specific discursive patterns either confirming or disprove my hypothesis. Furthermore, I have shown that CELAC has been designed as a sort of umbrella platform gathering existing mechanism of political integration concertation (Rio Group, SELA, ALADI). Therefore, policy papers and memoranda of said structures can be invoked in order to assess the regional influence and rootedness of CELAC, in terms of coordination or political precedence. I

[69] Own translation.

will mostly rely on SELA's contributions since, as I will get the opportunity to explain later on, the SELA is most present sub-regional mechanism of integration within CELAC's architecture (*Ayuda de Memoria. III Reunión de Mecanismos de Integración Regional y Sub Regional de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños, CELAC*, 2013 - hereafter *Ayuda de Memoria*).

I will also fall back onto **secondary sources** (Vargas-Mazas, 2017: 74), i.e. official press releases or unofficial yet relevant and verified sources of information regarding international and regional politics (opinions, interviews, etc.). My research concerns norm emergence, yet "we can only have indirect evidence of their existence, just as we can only have indirect evidence of most other political motivations for political action". Hence, norm-making processes "leave an extensive trail of communication among actors that we can study" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 892). Therefore, the press can also convey what states and governments have to say about CELAC, its member states and its governance. It is also a channel through which States and governments can justify their actions[70], stressing the centrality of the so-called double-edge diplomacy as well as the need for domestic legitimacy inherent to intergovernmentalism.

Finally, I intended to schedule a set of four directed **interviews** with Latin American officials or diplomats working in the framework of CELAC. I reckoned that letting the regional actors do the talking was the only way to adequately assess the extent of Cuba's direct and active involvement in, and Cuba's weight on the setting of CELAC's regional governance. My initial idea was to question per phone or via Skype four officials coming from four different Latin American States: Cuba, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica. The case of Cuba is rather obvious. I chose Brazil because I deemed it interesting to obtain the perspective of the struggling regional leader, bridging Brazilian diplomacy between UNASUR and CELAC. The case of Colombia was grounded on Colombian membership to the Pacific Alliance and yet Colombian affinity with Havana given Cuba's role in the peace talks with the FARCs. Lastly, I picked Costa Rica for the country has assumed the *pro tempore* presidency in 2014, inheriting from Cuba's legacy at this post, and having to closely interact with the Cuban delegation within the Troïka. Unfortunately, given the exceptional circumstances the world has faced in light of the *covid-19* pandemic, I had to renounce this specific methodological axe as all the contacts I had been weaving eventually froze.

[70] Given CELAC's unanimity rule, anything that is decided or signed by CELAC has effectively received the blessing of all the members of the community.

How to rightly address CELAC's emergence has spilled quite its amount of ink. Some regional observers have posited it might very well turn into a "new hemispheric force" (Jessop, 2013), or a "new integrated continent[71]" (Serrano Mancilla, 2014). CELAC is indeed a vast and bold initiative "that has the courage to try something new" in terms of regional politics, which is why it is somewhat regrettable that its formation, although it was duly acknowledged by international actors, did not seem to merit the corresponding broad media coverage outside Latin American and the Caribbean (de Zayas, 2014). This might derive from a shared caution with regards to CELAC's longevity, equated to a mere outlet of Latin America's punctual *Pink Tide* and Brazil's active role in tilling the region towards more left-leaning national and regional policies. In the meantime, CELAC's range in member states and a seemingly smooth coaction of Venezuela, Chile and Cuba during the first steps of the community has been seen as a possible "illustration of a rather new capacity in Latin America to favour the general interest over political disputes[72]" (Dabène, in Livingston, 2014). What this "general interest" might be and who it might represent remains to be empirically researched. What is CELAC's political identity (if any)? What is the logic of it functioning? And how wide do its branches stretch in the articulation of Latin America's regional politics?

I will subdivide my approach in three main sections. The first section will be devoted to detailing CELAC-induced kind of regionalism. Starting with the presidential declarations of Santiago de Chile (2013a), Havana (2014a) and Belén (2015a), I will try to establish the basic framework of CELAC's dynamic. In addition, each declaration has its own optic when read and analysed in light of the special declarations that were agreed upon during the related summits. I will thus be enabled to discuss the community's conception of the region (*regionness*), the kind of development it wants and formulates for itself, with which partners (*post-hegemony*) and through which policies (*governance*). The second section will explore the complementarity between CELAC and other regional and sub-regional mechanisms of integration. Pursuant the Action Plan of Montego Bay signed during the 2009 Latin American Summit on Integration and Development in Montego Bay (CALC, 2009 – *Plan de Acción de Montego Bay*), CELAC's coordination relies in part on existing regional organisms. With a stronger focus on the SELA, but also considering the ALADI and the ECLAC, I will question their role in CELAC's functioning and elucidate whether their respective actions are a support or a hindrance to CELAC's governance. Lastly, the third section will shed light on Cuba's position within CELAC. It will probe the adequation between the regional environment thus fostered and Cuba's self-identified domestic needs in light of the *actualización* process. It will also highlight whether, and to what extent, Cuba is indeed able to weigh on the framing of CELAC's general interest.

[71] Own translation.
[72] Own translation.

CELAC's Politics of Regionness

By decanting the combined reading of the *Declaración de Santiago* (2013), *Declaración de La Habana* (2014) and *Declaración Politica de Belén* (2015) (hereafter respectively DdS, DdLH and DdB), I argue that it is possible to identify CELAC's type of regionness in accordance with Riggirozzi's revised definition of the concept (2012b: 425). Beyond showing how the Community is organised, what it means in reality is uncovering the image it conveys about itself and its environment, as well as the set of values and ideas it wishes to uphold.

Although it is rather unsurprising that CELAC be defined as a community (*comunidad*) that comprises the all of Latin America and the Caribbean, it must be stressed that the presidential declarations convey a sense of ownership residing with the member states ("*nuestra Comunidad*", "*nuestra región*"). Accordingly, CELAC is described as a process wilfully joined by sovereign States without which there would not be much substance to its existence. The idea of States' sovereignty has two direct implications. First, CELAC's construction and subsequent consolidation must be a gradual endeavour. Second, closely attached to this idea of progressiveness and thoughtfulness, CELAC must at all times have an eye for the community's internal diversity and political and economic pluralism (DdS, 2013 §9; DdLH, 2014 §1).

"Hemos sido, somos y seremos diversos, y a partir de esta diversidad es que tenemos que identificar los desafíos y objetivos comunes y los pisos de convergencia que nos permitirán avanzar en el proceso de integración de nuestra región" (DdLH, 2013 – preamble)

In this sense, CELAC's regionalism does not stand out from other integrative schemes that heed the principles of member states' sovereignty and of *unity in diversity*[73]. The community's originality first has to do with its own proclamation as a Peace Zone (*"Zona de Paz*": DdS, 2013 §14; DdLH, 2014 §53; DdB, 2015 (D)). Commentators have underlined that CELAC's is the first political region in the world to do so[74] (de Zayas, 2014). This peculiar feature ought not to be underestimated, as it seemed to be sufficiently relevant for the community as to melt this conception of the region in an independent document signed during the Habana Summit in 2014 (*Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz*, 2014). Of course, the document is nothing more than a proclamation, and cannot claim to be having the binding legal effects of an international convention (de Zayas, 2014). However, it does have a clear coherence with the region's history of escalating border conflicts (La Nación, 2014 – cfr. figure 5) and the significant levels of social troubles in various member states of the community. The proclamation is also coherent with the political answers that the region seeks for itself mentioned across its emerging discursive apparatus, especially with regards to its developmental path. As such, the community unambiguously rejects both the recourse to Nuclear Weapons and the presence of

[73] Quite obviously, the European Union easily comes to mind.

[74] Except for the Antarctica, although the latter is not considered as an inhabited part of the world with a sovereign political representation (de Zayas, 2014).

weapons of mass destruction on Latin American and Caribbean soil, recalling the Treaty of Tlatelolco that made the region a nuclear-free zone in 1967 (DdS, 2013 §44; DdLH, 2014 §72; DdB, 2015 (B)). More importantly, by defining Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Zone, the community acknowledges the social and societal problems posed by delinquency and transborder organised crime (DdS, 2013 §51) and drugs and weapons trafficking (DdS, 2013 §28-30 and §48, 49; DdLH, 2014 §37, 73; DdB, 2015 (D)). However, the region relinquishes any ambition for the "militarisation" of the community as a means to addressing the said issues. Instead, CELAC puts the emphasis on political dialogue and peaceful negotiations as the sole way to solve interstate disputes (DdLH, 2014 §53). What this conveys is a certain sense of brotherhood linking Latin American and Caribbean States (*Proclama Zona de Paz*, 2014 §4).

Consequently, CELAC can easily be portrayed as a brotherhood sharing a collective identity of Global-South "developing countries" whose individual and common interests are best served by the community. This is first exemplified by the region's self-awareness of its asymmetric nature, which must be taken into account in the community's construction and faring. The vulnerability of some subsets of the region are extensively stressed in CELAC's corpus of presidential declarations. The Caribbean, Central America and the Northern coast of South America are more heavily exposed from an economic, social and environmental point of view (DdLH, 2014 §23), which calls for regional solidarity and specific support. This explains to a large extent the focus put on CARICOM's inclusion and direct participation in CELAC's affairs (DdS, 2013 §8), notably with the special declarations that widened the community's executive *Troïka* (CELAC, 2013 – *Ampliación de la Troïka*) or that highlighted the shared recognition of the developmental hardships of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)[75] (CELAC, 2013 – *Declaración Especial sobre Pequeños Estados Insulares en Desarrollo*). These decisions were expressly saluted by CARICOM's members states, who saw in this formal incorporation of smaller members a means to efficiently identifying and addressing their specific needs through the community (CubaMinRex – Granma, 2014). I argue it is also in this sense that one must understand the focus on equity, one of the structuring values of the Belén Summit.

More strikingly still is the clear definition of CELAC as a cooperative scheme, or as I would rather frame it, a *space for cooperation*. In light thereof, the community should function as an autonomous entity, based on complementarity and solidarity. It is seen as an organism centred on international intra- and extra-regional South-South cooperation (DdS, 2013 §32; DdLH, 2014 §18; DdB, 2015 §80), although it should go about as "a complement and not a substitution of North-South cooperation[76]" (DdS, 2013 §32). This shows just how complex the cooperative aspects of CELAC can get. First, with regards to the world stage, they convey a contrasting stand towards Northern developed countries, who are still seen as a condition to the Global South's development. In the meantime, however, the formers are also held responsible for an intrusive political and economic world system (DdLH, 2014 §44) that engendered a global financial crisis (DdS, 2013

[75] Paraguay and Bolivia, without explicitly stating so.
[76] Own translation.

§52) that more harshly hit the developing countries (although CELAC concedes that Latin America and the Caribbean managed to absorb the blow without too much long-term damage) (Ibid, §62).

> *"Expresamos profunda preocupación por las amenazas y desafíos existentes, incluida la actual crisis internacional de múltiples interrelaciones que, aunque originada en los países desarrollados, impacta negativamente en los esfuerzos de nuestros países en pos del crecimiento y el desarrollo económico y social sostenible. Llamamos a la comunidad internacional a tomar medidas urgentes para enfrentar las fragilidades y desequilibrios sistémicos y a continuar los esfuerzos por reformar y fortalecer el sistema financiero internacional, incluyendo, entre otras, la regulación de los mercados financieros y el cumplimiento de los compromisos de cooperación y de reformas de las instituciones financieras internacionales" (DdS, 2013 §52).*

Extra-regional partnerships and alliances must therefore feature representatives of the developing world (BRICS countries, the African Union, the Arab League, the Korean Republic, Turkey: (Ibid, 19 & 74-76; DdB, 2015 §74-77)). More generally put, past events and the dire consequences that must now be borne by the international community stresses the right of developing countries the demand a larger representation within the "international system" (*sistema internacional*") (DdS, 2013 §43), with, for instance, a specific mention of the United Nations Security Council (DdLH, 2014 §64). Such a posture provides us with a first plausible account for the post-hegemonic nature of CELAC's regionalism, one that is actively looking for new political, economic and financial anchorages. From this perspective, CELAC describes itself as a possible ambassador for the promotion of the interests of developing countries within international fora's and organisms. It pinpoints CELAC's self-representation as one bloc and its need to fortify its internal coordination (DdS, 2013 §41), through the permanency of the *Grupo de Trabajo de Cooperación Internacional* (GTCI) (Ibid, §33) that was thought of in Santiago de Chile and held its first meeting in Buenos Aires in September of the same year.

The GTCI is crucial to CELAC's functioning as it is supposed to be the means to construct "bridges of cooperation on the inside and outside if the region[77]" (DdB, 2015 §81), exploring ways to "strengthen [the community's] capacity to react in a coordinated fashion to the challenges of a world that is in the process of deep economic and political transformation[78]" (DdS, 2013 §41; *see also* DdLH, 2014 §4). CELAC aspires to become a "strong and influential regional voice" (Ibid, §63), both gathering "concerted [political] positions" from the community promoted on the world stage (DdB, 2015 §31; *Plan de Acción de la CELAC 2015*, 2015: 9-10) and fostering intra-regional synergies and complementarities through bilateral or triangular relations (DdLH, 2014 §22). This rhetoric is effectively being used by Latin American and Caribbean mandatories, as for instance Danilo Medina, President of the Dominican Republic, when discussing what CELAC is for:

[77] Own translation.
[78] Own translation.

"Urge buscar soluciones latinoamericanas y caribeñas a problemas latinoamericanos y caribeños […] Hemos dado un paso adelante en la consolidación de la CELAC como la voz de nuestra región, como el interlocutor por excelencia de América Latina y el Caribe frente a los más importantes actores de la comunidad internacional" (CubaMinRex – Granma, 2017).

Structurally speaking, thus, CELAC's flexible architecture has its advantages. It is probably most accurately construed as an intergovernmental South-South cooperative *mechanism* (DdS, 2013 §41) that could more appropriately consider the specific needs and conditions of Global South developing countries, especially from its own community. However, CELAC's dilemma has to do with the voluntary nature of the political process and the rather classical issue around state sovereignty regarding regional integration. Indeed, there is no intention to convert CELAC into any sort of supranational government (de Zayas, 2014). Much to the contrary, it is repeatedly made clear that CELAC's proceedings shall be carried out "in conformity with the strategies, plans and developmental programs" that the individual member states that constitute the community "freely decide[79]" for themselves (DdS, 2013 §32). Clarissa Dri's work on the PARLASUR has already shown that the very notion of supranationalism is far from being popular in Latin America (Dri, 2016), which still does not render MERCOSUR hollow. Moreover, identifying the lack thereof as a potential flaw in CELAC's governance is at odds with the theoretical framework I have set for myself, by suggesting that supranationalism is somewhat unescapable (teleological bias). If anything, the relevance of studying CELAC through the constructivist lens of the "politics of regionness" is to be found in the *Declaración de Santiago* which underlines the necessity to equip CELAC with a "bundle of principles and norms" that could steer the region as a whole towards "tangible benefits" (Ibid). This will depend on how thoroughly and well defined the actions of CELAC are, as a cooperative mechanism, and whether intra-regional interactions and extra-regional relationships are led accordingly.

CELAC'S DEVELOPMENTAL GOVERNANCE: BETWEEN AMBITIONS AND AMBIGUITY

The question surrounding development is extensively addressed in every political declaration, both with regards to the kind of development the community wishes to pursue as to the means, tools and strategies that must be put in place to attain the latter. It is ultimately a normative process that somehow mirrors Latin America and the Caribbean's regionness I have just discussed. What draws the attention, in accordance with what has been highlighted in the literature, is the vastness of the notion as it is often covered in the declarations. So much so that theses can here and there read conflicting approaches of the region's development, or paradoxically convey a certain emptiness. Take for example the preamble of the *Declaración de La Havana*:

"Fortalezcamos nuestras democracias y todos los derechos humanos para todos; demos mayores oportunidades a nuestra gente; construyamos sociedades más inclusivas; mejoremos nuestra productividad;

[79] Own translation.

estrechemos nuestro comercio; mejoremos nuestra infraestructura y conectividad y las redes necesarias que unan cada vez más a nuestros pueblos; trabajemos por el desarrollo sostenible, por superar las desigualdades y por una más equitativa distribución de la riqueza, para que todas y todos sientan que la democracia les da sentido a sus vidas. Esa es la misión de la CELAC, esa es la tarea a la que hemos sido convocados y esa es la responsabilidad política que tenemos por delante y de la cual deberemos dar cuenta a nuestros pueblos" (DdLH, 2014 – preamble).

It is possible to identify some cardinal points attached to CELAC's developmental governance. It is systematically contemplated as a "mutually beneficial" ("*mutuamente ventajosa*" – DdS, 2013 §32; DdLH, 2014 §47) cooperation, thought of departing from "the fundamental role of public policies[80]" although the role fulfilled by the private sector and the civil society is not side-lined (DdLH, 2014 §18). The transparent and proactive exchange of information in the fields of sciences, technology and innovation is crucial for the region's general interest (DdS, 2013 §40). CELAC's cooperation should also specifically target the prospect of a *Mesoamérica*, improving the region's infrastructure and connectivity (Ibid, §26). Despite an overall outlook based on the presidential declarations that could categorise CELAC's vision on development as neodevelopmentalism, one is able to spot some inner tensions conveying the impression that the region is still uncertain of what it is ultimately going for, between neodevelopmentalism or more orthodox neoliberalism. On the one hand, economic growth is again referenced as a metric on which the region should rely, maybe not as an objective per se but at least as an indicator of how well the community is doing. Not entirely unrelated, the market is still a medium through which the community is expected to thrive, economically and socially. This includes strategic economic sectors such as the "regional space of energy" which should combine "market mechanisms and cooperation[81]" (Ibid, §27). Mexico's President Nieto has even declared that, in the long run, he could very well imagine turning CELAC into a common regional market, stressing and expanding the centrality of trade as a binding element (Crosby, 2014).

On the other hand, the structure of the world economy is often starkly criticised. The functioning of the world financial architecture is explicitly deplored, especially with regards to development aid, FDIs and the burden of national debts exposed to financial markets (DdLH, 2014 §43-46). This point echoes the more general discussion of neodevelopmentalism I have led elsewhere in this work (Flexor, et al., 2017). The qualification of the region's development is also not always framed in terms of trade and market liberalisation. CELAC is encouraged to promote an integral and inclusive development ("*desarrollo integral e inclusivo*") targeting the social development of Latin America and the Caribbean's people, as well as an integrated regional development ("*desarrollo regional integrado*") "taking into account the importance of guaranteeing a favourable management of the small and vulnerable economies[82]" (DdLH, 2014 §5-6).

[80] Own translation.
[81] Own translation.
[82] Own translation.

Political iteration should come as no surprise when considering such a loose regional project. It is perfectly coherent with a constructivist approach of international organisations and institutions (as I have explained at length in the second part of my thesis) that consider institutions and norm-building as a permanent process (Wendt, 1992). Although it is true that CELAC appears to be an undecided endeavour, I argue that there exist a clear ideational and political evolution towards a more pronounced neodevelopmental path and a shift towards a social kind of regionalism (Briceño Ruiz, 2013). Indeed, when general presidential declarations are adequately supplemented with a critical reading of the set of special declarations they are accompanied by one gains precision and insight as to what the region is bound to become. Some elements are dropped, others are retained, deepened and, I argue, radicalised in such a way that it ends up constituting a regionally tailored political agenda. In this sense, the *Declaración de La Havana* and its related special declarations clarify the regional system underpinning CELAC (comforting a mechanistic representation of the community). To that end, the *Declaración Especial sobre la Cooperación Internacional de la CELAC* (2014 – hereafter DECI) is more than central. In turn, the Costa Rican context clears up CELAC's developmental objectives, internally and externally, by identifying economic and social sectors that should specifically be targeted and invested in, planting the seed for a real autonomous regional governance.

"Reiterando la necesidad de que la CELAC se dote de un conjunto de principios, normas y procedimientos que garanticen que la cooperación intra y extra-regional redunde en beneficios tangibles para los países de nuestra Comunidad y se lleve adelante de conformidad con las estrategias, planes y programas de desarrollo libremente decididos por ellos" (DECI, 2014: 2)

From a pure theoretical and paradigmatic point of view, approaching CELAC from the perspective of liberal institutionalism (Battistella, 2015a) as a middle ground between constructivism and liberalism in International Relations seems to be justified. I, of course, do not assume that the community is self-aware of the theoretical implications of the above-mentioned excerpt. However, both the rationalist elements of liberal intergovernmentalism and interstate cooperation in international regimes ("tangible benefits"), and the formal codification and intersubjective normative processes underpinning international institutions (Wendt, 1992) find themselves to be embodied in a discursive corpus.

Development through the region is seen as a "complementary strategy" ("*estrategia complementaria*") to national development policies (*Declaración Especial sobre el Fortalecimiento de la Integración*, 2014: 1 – hereafter DEFI). Once again, CELAC does not covet any supranational nature, but instead leaves the room open for *national autonomy* in deciding the "development model that best suits" CELAC's member states, which remain at all times at their discretion as sovereign entities. Although national preferences must be honoured, one of CELAC's objective must be "the reduction [economic and social] asymmetries between its members". A core value of CELAC's collective development therefore rests on the *horizontality* of its internal relationships, which derive from the *Plan de Acción de Buenos Aires* (1978) and the Nairobi Declaration (2009) on the technical cooperation in South-South cooperative schemes (DECI, 2014: 2-3). In this sense,

CELAC is mutualising its development, stressing elements of commonality as it is explained by Emerson (2014). More generally put, CELAC underlines the "urgent necessity to construct a new conception of development[83]" (*Declaración Especial sobre la Agenda de Desarrollo post-2015*, 2014: 1 – hereafter *Desarrollo post-2015*). A first consequence, which will be discussed in the next section, is the need to rethink Latin America and the Caribbean's relation towards the developed North and the representation from Global-South countries within international organisations, illustrating for a second time the post-hegemonic nature of CELAC's regionalism. The second consequence has to do with CELAC's autonomously framed alternative development agenda, fitting the region's needs and strength, and compatible with the region's desire to address its internal asymmetries. The latter is based on the following values:

" […]solidaridad, horizontalidad, complementariedad, consenso, diversidad, equidad, flexibilidad, reciprocidad, corresponsabilidad, beneficio mutuo, participación voluntaria, alineación con las prioridades nacionales, transparencia, resultados y rendición de cuentas en el uso de los recursos públicos, efecto multiplicador, no condicionalidad, priorización de la reducción de desigualdades entre los países y dentro de los países, y de los grupos vulnerables, y el respeto a la soberanía nacional, la igualdad de derechos y la no injerencia en los asuntos internos de las naciones, y el respeto de las Leyes y Reglamentos Nacionales" (DECI, 2014: 3 §1)

The originality of CELAC's development agenda is also being reflected in the priorities that the regions set for itself, which are quite unequivocally derived from a (left leaning) social perspective about what Latin American regionalism should stand for:

"Otorgamos la más alta prioridad a fortalecer la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, la alfabetización y post-alfabetización, la educación general pública gratuita, la educación técnica, profesional y superior de calidad y pertinencia social, la tenencia de la tierra, el desarrollo de la agricultura, incluyendo la familiar y campesina y del trabajo decente y duradero, del apoyo a los pequeños productores agrícolas, el seguro al desempleo, la salud pública universal, el derecho a la vivienda adecuada para todos y todas, y el desarrollo productivo e industrial como factores decisivos para la erradicación del hambre, la pobreza, y la exclusión social" (DdLH, 2014 §14)

This would tend to highlight a certain programmatic predominance of ALBA countries within CELAC. Health and education are indeed the two most central political domains on which ALBA's political cooperation is built. Even the emphasis put on "productive and industrial development" must be read with a view to address inherently social objectives, i.e. the fight against hunger, poverty and social exclusion. In this sense, CELAC appears to be a welcoming receptacle for ALBA's agenda setting, as ALBA was even assigned the coordination of the First Meeting of Regional and Sub-regional Mechanisms for the eradication of Hunger and

[83] Own translation.

Poverty, held in Caracas in June 2014. Such an observation coincides with Emerson's discussion of Latin American regionalism in light of the ALBA-framework, which widened the window of what had prior been conceivable in terms of regional integration (Emerson, 2014). The simple fact that these objectives were inscribed in a presidential declaration could also ascribe some validity to Briceño Ruiz's (2013) theories about revisionist regionalism ("*regionalismo revisionista*"), as right and centre-right Latin American government have felt the need to "socialise" their regional discourse (Livingston, 2014).

What is absolutely certain is the durability of this ideological inclination. CELAC's political line started its consolidation around the need for a *sustainable development*, with a strong, undeniable social angle. As a result, themes like poverty and structural inequalities (education, culture, ethnicity, gender) have moved all the way to the top of CELAC's priorities. The community is self-aware that Latin America and the Caribbean are referred to as "the most unequal region in the world[84]" (DECI, 2014: 2). The *Declaración de Belén* starts off with the region's "determination to eradicate poverty, hunger and inequality as an indispensable requisite in order to attain a sustainable development through the articulation of the economic, social and environmental policies and the equitable and integral inclusion of the civil society[85]" (DdB, 2015 §1), which has elsewhere been defined as *prosperity for all* (DEFI, 2014 §5). Poverty is in fact approached as a structural issue. Hence, the reduction of cross-regional poverty must be addressed "in integral and multidimensional fashion" (Ibid, §2) as a means to target is root causes. Given that hunger is a direct consequence of poverty (DdS, 2013 §39), it should have its own focus, i.a. via close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States (FOA) (DdB, 2015 §18), the strengthening of small family-owned farming structure (Ibid, §17) or the "shift of productive and consumption patterns[86]" (Ibid, §27). Therefore, education (Ibid, §9-11) defined as a human right and culture (*Declaración Especial sobre la Cultura como Promotora del Desarrollo Humano*, 2014 – hereafter *Declaración Especial sobre la Cultura*) entailing alternative modes of knowledge and "creative economies", will play a pivotal role. Additionally, the private sector is counted on as a factor of long-term sustainable development. Only, quite markedly, it is portrayed as a tissue of SMEs, "companies of social production" and cooperatives (DdB, 2015 §16), leaving large multinationals out of the picture.

This "new conception of development" has also been promoted by the region on the international scale. During Ecuador *pro tempore* Presidency, exchanges in technology, the centrality of qualitative public education and a comprehensive global fight against any kind of socio-economic inequality was promoted during the 2015 United Nations' 4th Session of the post-2015 Development Agenda Intergovernmental Negotiations in New York (*Declaración de la Misión Permanente del Ecuador anta las Naciones Unidad en nombre de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y del Caribe. Agenda de Desarrollo post-2015. Cuarta Sesión de Negociaciones Intergubernamentales*, 2015).

[84] Own translation.
[85] Own translation.
[86] Own translation.

It should now be noted that, from a tension between neoliberalism and neodevelopmentalism, CELAC has fared towards an ambiguous coalescence of neodevelopmentalism and post-development aspects (consistent with the distinction convey by Escobar (2010)). The emergence of a representation of a sustainable social development spoken of in terms of *progress* (DdLH, 2014 §11; DdB, 2015 §14), references to colonialism (DdLH, 2014 §38-39; DdB, 2015 §68-69) or the need to include and "safeguard traditional knowledges" as a developmental tool (*Declaración Especial sobre la Cultura*, 2014 §8) tend to indicate a rejection of the current developmental paradigm, rather than a reformative approach, no matter how acute. What is more, ALBA's involvement in the framing of CELAC social development reinforces this impression, especially in light of ALBA's alter globalisation momentum (Ullán de la Rosa, 2013). This can cause a decent amount of paradoxes regarding CELAC's governance. For instance, the community finds herself attacking "scientifically unjustified phytosanitary trade barriers" harming developing countries' exports (DdS, 2013 §67) whereas sustainable small-scale family-sized traditional agriculture is being promoted elsewhere in the region's declarations. However, CELAC's neodevelopmental programmatic coherence, and the more anecdotical (revolutionary) post-developmental tendency, get all the more apparent when assessing what I have so far left aside: CELAC's relationship with the developed North.

CELAC as Post-Hegemonic Regionalism: Bending a Globalised Neoliberal Developmental Model

CELAC's post-hegemonism is presumably compatible with a neodevelopmental project as the latter puts forth a philosophy of development that corrects neoliberal flaws, whereas the former suggests the emergence of a kind of regionalism that would get passed US-led neoliberal influence on Latin American and Caribbean regional politics. The underlying question is thus also whether CELAC is best explained as a *post*-hegemonic or a *counter*-hegemonic regional structure, opposing US governance in general.

The counter-hegemonic stand is indeed present. For instance, the *Centro Estratégico Latinoamericano de Geopolítica* (CELAG) has argued that, with CELAC as a regional banner, Latin American and the Caribbean would now be more "unamericanised" ("*desestadounizada*") than ever before (Serrano Mancilla, 2014). This would be corroborated by political outings, such as Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ricardo Patiño, visualising CELAC as taking over the once dominant Pan-American OAS (Forteza, 2014). However, accounts for a counter-hegemonic impulse from CELAC's side has but a weak case, which is tributary to partisanship rather than any objective observation of CELAC's dynamics. There is little solid evidence that the community building is effectively embodying a general anti-US feeling in the region, nor that the ultimate intention is to turn the region's back to the Northern Bank of the Rio Grande. In fact, CELAC's political declarations do feature what are in essence grievances held against Uncle Sam (Oxford Analytica, 2014) rather than blatant hostility. It is true, the community does strongly oppose the US-led "economic, commercial and financial embargo" against Cuba (DdS, 2013 §6; DdB, 2015 §78), which is specifically addressed in the *Declaración Especial sobre la Necesidad de Poner Fin al Bloqueo Económico,*

Comercial y Financiero de los Estados Unidos Contra Cuba (2014). CELAC also repeatedly underlines the "Latin American and Caribbean nature of Puerto Rico" (DdS, 2013 §21; DdLH, 2014 §38; DdB, 2015 §68). However, it is impossible to find any outright frontal attacks directly targeting the United States of America. Take for instance paragraph 24 from the Santiago declaration:

> *"Rechazamos firmemente las evaluaciones, listas y certificaciones unilaterales e ilegítimas que hacen algunos países desarrollados y que afectan a países de la región, en particular las referidas a terrorismo, narcotráfico, trata de personas y otras de similar carácter" (DdS, 2013 §24; see also DdLH, 2014 §41)*

Although the spike is probably meant for Washington (with Havana's best wishes), it is muffled and does not name anyone. The United States, moreover, seem to be diffused in the broader ensemble of "developed countries". This is but a sign that shows that the community approaches neoliberalism not only as a US-led governance dominating (and to some extent harming) the region, but as a globalised system hindering the long-term development of developing countries, one that must be tamed and reorganised at the world level. I argue that this is in fact the true post-hegemonic (post-trade) nature of Latin American and Caribbean regionalism, as one might read in the Special Declaration on post-2015 development:

> *"Destacando la importancia de la promoción de un sistema de gobernanza económica global justo y sensible a las necesidades e intereses de los países en desarrollo y de sus poblaciones y reafirmando el papel central del sistema de las Naciones Unidas en estos esfuerzos" (Desarrollo post-2015, 2014: 1)*

CELAC's firm belief, the much-needed revision of the international system stated earlier is deepened. First, CELAC's relations with the developed North must be reshaped. Again, North-South cooperation is still deemed to be of relevance for the Global South's development. However, the impetus for global development should not be left to developed countries alone. Developing countries should seize the initiative and promote:

> *"[…] la construcción de una nueva agenda de cooperación internacional para el desarrollo inclusivo sostenible que tenga en cuenta las necesidades de todos los países en desarrollo sin exclusión, sus desafíos y vulnerabilidades, y que no se fundamente únicamente en el criterio del ingreso per cápita para la orientación de la Asistencia Oficial para el Desarrollo a nuestros países (DECI, 2014 §6)*

CELAC's take derives from the observation that the region development remains unsatisfactory. Therefore, the role of Official Development Aid (ODA), can no longer be considered as *the* means to foster long-term sustainable development. Even less so given developed countries have so far failed to observe the threshold of 0.7% of GDP to be delivered in the form of ODA, as CELAC stresses multiple times (Ibid: 2;

Desarrollo post-2015, 2014 §12). CELAC will thus push for the compliance of the said engagement and will make the effort to capture the necessary ODA and FDIs for its common development[87].

More generally, as a regional representative of the Global South, the community demands a better representation of Global South developing countries at the global level. In this sense, CELAC is far from being a regression to "old" defensive or protectionist kind of regionalism, consistent with Riggirozzi's observation on the matter (Riggirozzi, 2012b). The first reason behind this request is that "traditional donors and financial institutions[88]" will obviously remain at the centre of the stage, but the dialogue should be led on a more equal footing (DdS, 2013 §34). In this sense, CELAC wishes to transpose the dynamic of its regional cooperation scheme onto the world scene, opposing conditionalities and underlining the need to respect national preferences and state sovereignty. Structurally speaking, CELAC promotes the creation of a "true Global Alliance for Development" as to foment a renewed worldwide conception of trade and financing mechanism for development[89] (*Desarrollo post-2015*, 2014 §8). To that end, CELAC will invest in South-South region-to-region relationships (DdLH, 2014 §30) and, as stated above, will strengthen its partnerships with ambassadors of the developing world (BRICS, Arabic League, African Union, etc.).

Obviously, among CELAC's newly privileged partners, there is one in particularly that stands out: The People's Republic of China, with which CELAC has held joint Summits. There are objective fears regarding a considerable closing with Beijing as the risk of a shift from a declining hegemon (the United States) to rising one (the PRC) are not entirely ludicrous (García Rivero, 2014). China has gained preponderance with respect to the region, mainly in terms of trade (Lebret & Rosales, 2012) has China is now Brazil's first and Argentina's and Cuba's second trade partner (Avila & Marull, 2014). However, overemphasising China's possible hegemonic endeavour definitely eclipses CELAC own meaningful and autonomous post-hegemonic strategy. Although it is undeniable that the CELAC-China tandem is "an option that combines a leftist political sympathy [and the search] for an economic prominence that is different from the American and European one[90]" (Rubens Figueirido, in Avila & Marull, 2014), "Latin America and the Caribbean are constructing *its* own dialogue with China […] with an acute consideration for the challenges of developing countries[91]" (Former Chilean Ambassador in China Fernando Reyes Matta, in *People's Daily Online*, 2015).

CELAC's conception of sustainable development, when assessed at the regional *and* the global level alike, is effectively post-hegemonic as it gathers all the key elements of regionalised neodevelopmentalism (Flexor, et al., 2017). Trade and multinationals are valuable assets insofar as the former is rightly coordinated and the latter work in perfect compliance of public policies (whether they be nationally determined or internationally coordinated). The *Declaración de La Havana* makes it clear that (neoliberal) FTAs should

[87] Once again, it is worthy to mention the region's awareness of its asymmetric nature as the community sets to support its lesser developed members in drawing and carrying out policies that could incentivise the reception of foreign investments.
[88] Own translation.
[89] There are explicit mentions of the Doha Declaration on Financing for development (2014).
[90] Own translation.
[91] Own translation.

therefore be avoided as they tend to expose said policies to international tribunals stripping individual member states and regional from their respective sovereignty and autonomy[92]. As a result, CELAC is quite sceptical with regards to unchecked global finance, even arguing for the "reduction of the excessive dependency upon the evaluations of rating agencies[93]". It keeps developing countries from getting sensible and reasonable credits, which comes down to tying the hands of sovereign States. Such a mechanism stimulates debt-creation and public deficits, which, according to neodevelopmentalism, should be avoided to prevent micro- and macro-economic instability. What is more, it burdens member states with their already painful management of sovereign debt, whose restructuring should be a top priority for both debtors and creditors in order to guarantee the "stability and predictability of the international financial architecture" following the financial crisis of 2008[94]. CELAC should thus urgently consider the creation financial integration as part of its broader regional cooperation, as it would strengthen the community's autonomy in framing its own regional development (DdLH, 2014 §43-46).

"Consideramos necesario contar con una herramienta de planificación latinoamericana y caribeña ante los nuevos desafíos que enfrenta la CELAC, razón por la que resultan imperativos los esfuerzos colectivos de integración, solidaridad y cooperación, mutuamente ventajosa en particular con aquellos países vulnerables y de menor desarrollo relativo que servirán para la obtención de objetivos claros, medibles y adaptables a las distintas realidades nacionales, con vistas a la erradicación de la pobreza y a la promoción del desarrollo sostenible" (DdLH, 2014 §47)

Undermining Regionness Competition: CELAC's Reliance on (Sub-)Regional Integration Mechanisms For Coordination

CELAC's ability to speak in the name of the region and to guide the community in one sole direction through political dialogue and cooperation depends on its ability to bridge existing integration projects. It is something that the scientific literature has indeed discussed (Ruttenberg & Fuchs, 2011), although only skimming the surface of it. Defining CELAC as a space for cooperation is all the more justified as the community explicitly recognises the value of past experiences:

"Resaltamos el desarrollo de la instancia CELAC destinada a fortalecer la complementariedady evitar la duplicidad entre los mecanismos de integración de la región, convencidos de que su interacción, fundada en los principios de solidaridad y cooperación, es esencial para la consolidación de la Comunidad.

[92] The said declaration is subtle, but there is hardly any other way to understand the following excerpt: "Subrayamos la importancia de que nuestros países fortalezcan su preparación en materia de atención a controversias internacionales, y consideramos que se debe evaluar la posibilidad de que nuestra región se dote de mecanismos apropiados para la solución de controversias con inversionistas extranjeros" (DdLH, 2014 §43).

[93] Own translation.

[94] Although it is not always mentioned as such, the case of Argentina is subsumed. CELAC actually affirmed its support for Buenos Aires concerning its struggle regarding the restructuring of its sovereign debt in de *Declaración Política de Belén* (DdB, 2015 §37).

Agradecemos la colaboración decidida y permanente de los mecanismos regionales, subregionales de integración y las organizaciones internacionales en el año fundacional" (DdS, 2013 §23)

At CELAC's early beginning, the Latin American Summit on Integration and Development (CALC) drew up the *Plan de Acción de Montego Bay* (2009) designed to immediately clarify the ways in which the "*Cooperation Between the Regional and Sub-regional Integration Mechanism*" would function. The plan distinguishes four areas in which Latin America and the Caribbean integrative complex would have to coordinate themselves: 1°economic-comercial area; 2° productive area; 3° social and institutional area; and 4° cultural area. It structures and steers CELAC's politics of regionness, which is expected to lead to stronger more closely unified region. The Action Plan was effectively put in practice. In fact, in December 2013, CELAC had already held its 3rd Meeting of the Regional and Sub-regional Integration Mechanisms (San José, Costa Rica, 2-3/12/2013), duly conducted by Cuba's *pro tempore* presidency of CELAC. In August 2012, the community took the decision to *institutionalise* the cyclic organisations of these meetings, entrusting the SELA with the coordination of CELAC's common *Matrix of Action* (*Ayuda de Memoria*, 2013), after the SELA's Latin American Council had, in its *Decisión N° 527* and *N° 539*, decided to "provide the technical support and collaboration required by [CELAC] for conducting its activities[95]" via its Permanent Secretariat. This disposition tends to confirm Segovia's (2013) observation with respect to CELAC's need for further institutionalisation, i.e. the creation of permanent bodies within CELAC, if the community ever wanted to gain in credibility. SELA was also tasked with the "systematisation and the actualisation of the information regarding the advancement and the application of CELAC's mandates and agreements" (*Actividades del SELA de Apoyo al Proceso de Consolidación de la CELAC. Informe 2013*, 2013: 3 – hereafter *Informe 2013*). Therefore, SELA's library is a useful resource to monitor CELAC's effective faring[96], and Latin American and Caribbean governments' and regional organisations' interactions held within CELAC's arena for cooperation.

The said matrix provides yet an additional illustration of CELAC inherent coherence with the theorisation of neodevelopmentalism, mirroring what I believe I must extract from the community's presidential declarations. The Action Plan of Montego Bay stresses that the aftermath of the international financial crisis should come as an urgent call to anyone to reshuffle the world financial architecture. This includes revising the vote repartition within international financial institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) and "[reducing or eliminating] the conditionalities in the granting of loans

[95] Initially, the SELA support was planned for the sole year 2013. The practice was then extended indefinitely.

[96] For the sake of exemplification, the SELA mentions a Specialised Meeting gathering CELAC's ministers of Transport, Telecommunications, physical Infrastructure and Border Integration in Santiago de Chile (2012) (*Informe 2013*, 2013), the holding of the VIII meeting of National Coordinators in San José (2014) (*SELA's Report of Activities related to CELAC's Action Plan for 2014*, 2015 – hereafter *SELA's Report of Activities*) or the Meeting of Senior Officials on Productive and Industrial Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organised *by* the SELA in Caracas (2013) (*Informe de actividades del SELA vinculadas a los Planes de Acción de la CELAC*, 2015 – hereafter *Informe de actividades del SELA*).

to developing countries[97]". The Plan also stipulates that the region ought to contemplate the creation of a "regional financial mechanism", which enable an efficient cooperation within the framework of CELAC's four areas of political coordination. For instance, a thoughtful financing strategy should stimulate "intraregional trade" based on "complementarity, solidarity and cooperation", adequately exploiting the community's varied experiences in "regional political economy". The emphasis is also put on technological innovation and the *physical integration* of the region, meaning developing its infrastructure, land, air and maritime transportation. It is highlighted that the region long-term development would rely on "small producers" and SMEs. "Educational integration" and "social security" are seen as a cornerstone of CELAC's social and institutional area, which should "promote common policies […] of particular interest for the citizens" (*Plan de Acción de Montego Bay,* 2009). The region also acknowledges the need to conduct impactful cultural policies, such as the promotion of its diversity or the creation of "the Latin American and Caribbean identity".

CELAC's matrix of action capitalises on the existing regional organisations, which offer their specialised insight on specific political themes, or try to highlight what the community should focus on. ALBA's Executive Secretariat has assigned to coordination of CELAC's Strategic Agenda for Regional Cooperation in the Social Area (*SELA's Report of Activities*, 2015: 2). UNASUR's involvement is multidimensional. UNASUR is first responsible for the upholding of CELAC as a Peace Zone (*Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz*, 2014; de Zayas, 2014). It is also explicitly linked to the development of the community's infrastructure via the IIRSA (*Plan de Acción de Montego Bay*, 2009), and CELAC's management of natural resources (*Ayuda de Memoria*, 2013). MERCOSUR, in turn, has been underlining the necessity to rationalise CELAC's range of action, and to "focus on a few themes", demanding that the productive integration of the region be put into its hands (Ibid).

CELAC's matrix is also actively invested by Latin America's less politicised and more pragmatic, technical (sub-)regional integration mechanism, meaning that structures such as the SELA, the ECLAC or the ALADI are not reduced to mere coordination functions. Notably, the SELA and the ECLAC, as "facilitators of CELAC's productive policy area[98]", have sought to provide the community with their respective expertise during the 2013 Meeting of Senior Officials on Productive and Industrial Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to:

"[…] elaborar un diagnóstico del desarrollo productivo y de las políticas de industrialización aplicadas, así como a identificar los elementos fundamentales y estrategias para promover la integración productiva e industrial de la región, incluyendo la experiencia adquirida en materia de cadenas productivas y de valor, como elementos que pudieran servir de base a los debates en la eventual conferencia ministerial de América Latina y el Caribe sobre desarrollo productivo e industrial" (Informe 2013, 2013: 5)

[97] Own translation.
[98] Own translation.

This resonates with the SELA's activities related with "innovation and port efficiency" (*SELA's Report of Activities*, 2015: 5), and the ECLAC's outspoken efforts to prioritise the strengthening of the region's internal trade through massive public policies targeting energy, infrastructure and logistics (Lebret & Rosales, 2012). Mr Rosales's interview is enlightening and shows a clear penetration of ideas and strategies inherited from alternative perspectives on regionalism and development in an organisation that has been known to enforce a neoliberal agenda as of the 1990s. For instance, he underlines the necessity for public investments, the region's appropriation of its natural resources or intraregional complementarity.

However, my research has shown that CELAC's relationship with (sub-)regional integration mechanisms is not always as consensual as I suggested until now. This is in fact a turning point in my paper. CELAC's neodevelopmental ambitions might indeed ultimately be thwarted, but from an angle that neither I, via my hypotheses, nor the scientific literature in general had really foreseen. My readings had led me to believe that the community could be a political, ideological battleground between competing politics of regionness, that is regional projects gathering states with diverging political, economic and social preferences. It could have inhibited CELAC's range of action by reducing its scope for political agreements. The rather obvious disparity between the Pacific Alliance and ALBA made such an expectation plausible and subject to testing. Nevertheless, CELAC does not seem to suffer from conflicting regional political projects. If anything, the AP (and AP-countries) seem quite silent (or detached – it is hard to tell) whereas ALBA (and ALBA-countries) look more proactive and concerned. It is fair to say that CELAC is actually able to frame common regional *political positions*. Instead, the adverse regionness comes from (sub-)regional mechanism that are undeniably crucial to the coordination *and* the execution of political cooperation conducted within the CELAC-framework. What I pretend to discover is a struggle between state representative moved by an ideational emulation and a (still loose) normative shift induced by more prominent intergovernmentalism on one side, and, on the other, regional organisations that *are* organisations, that are regional *actors* in the sense of Duffield's (2007) definition, with their own structures, their own objectives, their own identity and their own, more rigid, path dependency. There is, of course, no intention to distinguish any right from wrong. I only highlight a conceptual discord within the community's space for action.

CELAC's post-hegemonic post-trade impulse is not shared by the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean regionalist tissue. In spite of CELAC's declared scepticism regarding FTAs and in spite of the community's intention to follow (although with varying intensities) a developmental path that does not rest primarily on trade, the academia is probably wrong is considering the resilient idea of a single common market as outdated, or in viewing the CELAC-arena as somehow immune to trade-based developmental courses. During the III Meeting of (sub-)regional integration mechanism, the ALADI referred to the creation of a "Latin American and Caribbean common market" as a necessity for the region's overall development. This approached was reiterated during the Habana Summit, during which Chacho Álvarez, speaking as the ALADI's SG, praised the idea of trade-based integration as the best way to construct a "community of

interest". Álvarez's rhetoric departed from an element that appears multiple times in CELAC's discursive corpus, i.e. complementarity:

"La CELAC podría contar en su dispositivo organizativo con organismos subregionales que se encarguen de diferentes temáticas y así producir las mejores sinergias, evitando la duplicación de esfuerzos e impidiendo la burocratización y la superposición de agendas o la percepción de que la creación y la proliferación de organismos no va de la mano con la profundización de la integración" (Prensa Latina, 2014)

Hence, CELAC's regionness contains the seed of its own limitation when the community is confronted to organisations that resist the neodevelopmental leap. But the ideational conflict needs not to be as overt. Once again during the III Meeting of (sub-)regional integration mechanism, the ECLAC indicated that the "work methodology" ("*metodología de trabajo*") should be delimited by existing organisms in order to guarantee the expected regional convergence. Methodologies can, of course, change with time. Methodologies also underpins knowledge, which underpins the organisation's conception of development. For now, its approach of the CELAC-framework keeps the focus on orthodox macroeconomic indicators and regional objectives framed in terms of growth and increased trading volumes, translating a classical neoliberal rationale (ECLAC, 2015).

The case of the SELA will provide with yet a better picture of the ideational frictions that inhabits CELAC's dynamic. The Latin American Economic System partially inscribes its action within the WTO-framework, which, pursuant de la Reza's (2014), would link the SELA's momentum with the continuity of neoliberal trade-led open regionalism. Beyond the self-assigned role as an incubator of CELAC's productive policy area, the organisation strives towards the general intra- and extra-regional trade facilitation, i.e. via the fortification and regional appropriation "Foreign Trade Single Window System"[99] ("*Ventanilla Única de Comercio Exterior (VUCE)*"). The objective is evidently neoliberal:

"la productividad y competitividad de las economías nacionales, a partir de los siguientes parámetros: procesos de comercio exterior ágiles, simplificados, transparentes y seguros; en el aumento del intercambio comercial de bienes y servicios; en la reducción de costos de las transacciones comerciales; y el impacto en la transparencia de la Administración Pública" (Informe 2013, 2013: 4-5).

Overall, the SELA articulates its coordinating and political support "in accordance with [its own] objectives", among which figures the creation of a *common Latin American and Caribbean economic space*, based on sub-

[99] There is no need to explain the technicity of the concept. For a detailed explanation of what the idea of Single Windows entails and implicates in terms of trade, to UNECE's Recommendation n°33 - http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/recommendations/rec33/rec33_trd352e.pdf. It defines "the Single Window concept" as "facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardised information and documents with a single-entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. If information is electronic, then individual data elements should only be submitted once" (p.

regional markets (CARICOM, MERCOSUR, SICA, CAN). The SELA thus pursues the "harmonisation and convergence" thereof through the strengthening and diversification of trade flows, and distinct strategies aiming at trade facilitation (*SELA's Report of Activities*, 2015: 3-4; *Informe de actividades del SELA*, 2015: 4-5). A representation *the* region as a composition of various markets is not insignificant and contrasts with CELAC's conception of the very same sub-regional ensemble (CARICOM, MERCOSUR, SICA, CAN but also the AEC and ALBA) as the pillars of the community's cultural richness which should help brewing its alternative developmental paths (*Ayuda de Memoria*, 2013: 9). Lastly, the SELA extensively seeks its inspiration in the private sector, planning large regional conferences gathering the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the region with a view to "incorporate the analysis and the propositions of the region's private sector in terms of productive and industrial development[100]"(*Informe de actividades del SELA*, 2015: 7). Although public-private connivance is not at all conflicting the precepts of neodevelopmentalism (Flexor, et al., 2017), once we acknowledge the ultimate goal of the SELA, i.e. fortifying the region economic competitiveness and extra-regional exports (*Informe de actividades del SELA*, 2015: 8), the compatibility lessens.

By combining the diverging perspectives and objectives for the region's development of the ALADI, the ECLAC and especially the SELA (which is so deeply and extensively introduced within the CELAC-framework), the potential discrepancies that could emerge between CELAC's intergovernmental political agreements and declarations, and (sub-)regional integration mechanisms' path-dependent technical execution are not negligible.

CUBA IN CELAC'S ENVIRONMENT: AN ISLAND TAKING FIRMER ROOTS?

I have yet to discuss the hypothesised impactful Cuban agency within CELAC's space for cooperation. This last point will be most intricate to assess, not only because delving into one state's diplomacy is always somewhat shady, but also due to the unexpected pandemic-related restrictions I stumbled upon (as most of my colleagues did this year) that kept me from conducting any interview. I can still explore the question via indirect ways, taking into account the lack of transparency of the researched field. Diplomacy has always been secretive, and records international intergovernmental meetings (the minutes of ministerial reunions) are not the most readily accessible pieces of information. Not being able to directly ask any questions and scrub the polished and consensual surface of international politics *is* an explanatory weakness I must concede. However, with due diligence and analytic rigour, reading through secondary sources, specialised press and regional organisations' documentation might give me some clues as to how Cuba speaks about and from within CELAC and what is Havana's attitude towards the community. I can also probe for signs of Cuban influence on CELAC's agenda (for instance during the Havana Summit). Lastly, I can look for a systemic description of Cuba's regional politics in CELAC's environment, through CELAC's mechanism.

[100] Own translation.

A first absolute certainty is Cuba's commitment to the community's construction and consolidation. Cuba is keen to emphasise, during CELAC-gatherings, the centrality that member states and integration mechanisms should confer to community in terms of deeper regional integration (*Ayuda de Memoria*, 2013: 3). The Havana regime also repeatedly defends "CELAC as an indispensable mechanism for political concertation and integration", in the words of Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel (CubaMinRex – Granma, 2016), or praises the community as "a new paradigm of regional and international cooperation[101], in the words of former President Raúl Castro. Cuba is quite markedly also using, via the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodirguez, an ALBA-like rhetoric to describe the form that the CELAC-scheme should take, namely a system of "*Gran*-cooperación" (Forteza, 2014), which would convey the idea that Cuba sees in CELAC a valuable channel for development, similar to ALBA *Grannacionales* projects whose overall positive effects have been already been discussed in earlier sections. Regional organisations, such as SELA, have also clearly underlined Cuba's role in steering the region towards the creation of CELAC (*Análisis y recomendaciones para fomentar el comercio entre la República de Cuba y los países de América Latina y el Caribe*, 2013: 3-4 – hereafter *Análisis y recomendaciones*)[102].

However, it is hard to tell whether Cuba can strategically turn CELAC to its advantage and effectively weigh on its political orientation. The fact that Cuba's proactivity within the community really is a milestone (Former Chilean Ambassador in China Fernando Reyes Matta, in *People's Daily Online*, 2015) is to be read just anywhere. It is a tangible proof that Cuba's reinsertion into the region is completed (Grogg, 2013b). Cuba's contribution seems to be most apparent, quite obviously, in the direct aftermath of the II CELAC Summit held in Havana, which observers have dared to describe as a "diplomatic success" (Oxford Analytica, 2014). A first argument is found in the amount of "bold statements" by major states officials that have punctuated the event. I must expressly moderate this observation as "bold statements" fall under the general scientific critique that academics oppose to regional politics built on pure intergovernmentalism, as it underpins a hollow announcement effect (Dabène, 2012). This alone, supposing a punctual "Cuban effect" due the geographical location the gathering, does not suffice to prove a Cuban mark on CELAC. The latter could however be induced from the summit's spirit of *Latinamericanism* ("*Latinoamericanía*"), in reference of Fidel Castro's word during the initial phases of CELAC's creation process (Serrano Mancilla, 2014), which would grant Cuba's doctrine of *Latinoamericanismo* (Suárez Salazar, 2006:27) a fertile ground. Some observers have suggested that Cuba's leverage was also enhanced with the institutionalised presence of CARICOM-countries, with whom Cuba has for long strengthen its political relations, which allowed Cuba to form a common front in the advocacy for small and more vulnerable economies from the Caribbean (Grogg, 2013a). It could moreover confirm Serbin's (2001) observations regarding Cuba's strategical re-entrance of Latin America's general regional space, starting with the Caribbean zone. A last sign of a minimal Cuban

[101] Own translation.

[102] What the SELA highlights is Cuba's long-term commitment to regional politics and regional integration, an observation that should not surprise the reader by now as I have extensively discussed Cuba's regional opening as of the 1990s and the island progressive reinsertion. What I wish to emphasise here is that this contribution is also acknowledged by relevant regional actors.

influence on CELAC's orientation might be found, as I pointed out earlier, by considering the summit's collection of special declarations, whose importance in shaping CELAC can hardly be downplayed. By what precedes are merely signs. I simply cannot assert that Cuba is singlehandedly able to bend the community in one way or another, to emulate a specific Havana-based normative process formatting the community.

"The resulting Havana Declaration strongly echoed the Cuban platform, voiced by President Raul Castro, in its emphasis on prioritising education, health care, socio-economic development and natural resource sovereignty, creating a 'conflict-free' hemisphere, and anti-imperialism" (Oxford Analytica, 2014)

I do not share the enthusiasm being conveyed in the latter excerpt, as the supposed echo is more than debatable. Anti-imperialism can hardly be confirmed. As I discussed above, attributing a counter-hegemonic rationale (directed towards the United States) to CELAC simply misses the point. Of course, the existence of a multilateral condemnation of the unilateral US-enforced embargo and the related special proclamation are both undeniable facts. In fact, even the SELA's Latin American Council published one such declaration (*Declaración "Fin del Bloqueo Económico, Comercial y Financiero de Estados Unidos contra Cuba"*, 2013). However, framing Cuba's inclusion in CELAC as a "revenge" on US regional politics (López de Guereño, 2014) is purely partisan and biased. It overestimates the salience of the opposition between Washington and Havana in the context of the Cuba-US thaw (de Bhal, 2019), at a moment where the very idea of the embargo's durability is losing its popularity even in the United States (Howlett-Martin, 2014). More regrettably still, it fantasises some sort of large anti-US, anti-Pan-American coalition among Latin American and Caribbean States. This is illustrated by the simple fact that the OAS or the Summit of the Americas are *never* mentioned in any of the political declarations signed in the CELAC-context. Therefore, Cuba's ambition to trump the OAS and push for CELAC to actively undermine or render obsolete the OAS (Crosby, 2014; Forteza, 2014) is anything but empirically verified.

As per the priority given to "education, health care, socio-economic development and natural resource sovereignty", the argument suggesting that Cuba might have written CELAC's agenda must be nuanced. It is true that many of its priorities do reflect Cuba's *actualización*, both in terms of sectoral focus and global conception of development. CELAC's agenda also features some of Cuba's biggest strength by emphasising the role of public health or public education. But a mere overlap does not permit any confirmation of any illustration of Cuban predominance in CELAC's agenda-setting. Even less so since, as it was already underlined in a prior section, the adequation in terms of priorities, strategies and conceptions is also valid if we approach CELAC as an expansion of the ALBA-framework. Even though Cuba is a key member state the of Bolivarian Alliance, nothing leads me to believe the reality of a two-level game in which Cuba would (successfully) steer ALBA countries towards a specific developmental strategy, and (yet again, successfully) prolong the effort into the CELAC-space. Although Emerson (2014) is certainly right about the effect that ALBA has had with respect to what is regionally conceivable, and although it is also plausible that Cuba's

visibility within ALBA has favoured the receivability of Cuba and Cuban ideas within CELAC, I am unable to determine the weight of this process.

"Regionally Addressing Domestic Needs"

Yet, the question whether Cuba might be "regionally addressing domestic needs" (Cole, 2012) via CELAC's space for cooperation can be answered, only in a more subtle way. First, CELAC is used as a shield in order to preserve the nature of Cuba's regime. The *Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz* contains one key clause:

"El compromiso de los Estados de América Latina y el Caribe de respetar plenamente el derecho inalienable de todo Estado a elegir su sistema político, económico, social y cultural, como condición esencial para asegurar la convivencia pacífica entre las naciones" (Zona de Paz, 2014 §5 – I emphasise)

The said right to freely choose (not only one's strategy and development plans but) one's political, economic, social and cultural system pops up in various declarations, with little variation in the formulation:

"Consideramos que la unidad y la integración de nuestra región debe ser construida […] con respeto al pluralismo y al derecho soberano de cada uno de nuestros pueblos para escoger su forma de organización política y económica" (DdS, 2013 §9 – I emphasise)

"Reiteramos que la unidad y la integración de nuestra región debe construirse […] con respeto al pluralismo, a la diversidad y al derecho soberano de cada uno de nuestros pueblos para escoger su forma de organización política y económica" (DdLH, 2014 § - I emphasise)

"[…] sobre la base del respeto al pluralismo, la diversidad, los principios de voluntariedad, la solidaridad, la flexibilidad, la complementariedad de las acciones, y el derecho soberano de cada pueblo a construir su propio sistema político y económico […]" (DEFI, 2014 §4 – I emphasise)

Of course, what sounds more like slogan more than a political statement, appears also in the Special Declaration demanding that the embargo against Cuba be ended:

"Expresan su más enérgico rechazo a las medidas económicas coercitivas no sustentadas en el Derecho Internacional, incluidas todas aquellas acciones unilaterales aplicadas por motivos políticos contra países soberanos, que afectan el bienestar de sus pueblos y están concebidas para impedirles que ejerzan su derecho a decidir, por su propia voluntad, sus propios sistemas políticos, económicos y sociales" (Declaración Especial sobre la Necesidad de Poner Fin al Bloqueo Económico, Comercial y Financiero de los Estados Unidos Contra Cuba, 2014 §1 – I emphasise)

We can see how this notion lies at the foundation of CELAC's whole functioning, as an autonomous project, and a space pooling sovereign states together. It is also consistent with CELAC's rejection of conditionalities on the international stage. Cuba has in fact been using the "*Zona de Paz*" card in public outings (CubaMinRex – Granma, 2016), stressing, precisely, its right to freely determine its political, economic, social and cultural system. This has been one of Cuba's concern in the course of the *actualización* process, during which the island tried to put in place an economic reform than, in all its vastness, does not risk alter the political nature of the country. CELAC, therefore, seems to serve as a legitimation cover for Havana. Diaz-Canel's rhetoric can therefore not be considered as anecdotical.

Cuba also seize the opportunity conferred by CELAC to justify and strengthen bilateral relations with other member states, by explicitly inscribing its diplomatic, political or economic ties in the community's framework. In this context, Brazil's former President Dilma Roussef declared that Brasilia wished to turn Cuba into a "major ally", promising continued financial support[103] for the construction of the port of Mariel and the subsequent consolidation of a "special zone of development" ("*zona especial de desarrollo*") around the port. The Mariel-project is but another example of Cuba receiving massive funds of economic or infrastructure projects while sending doctors (an alleged corps of 10.000 units) as a means to enforce large public health programs abroad (ANSA, 2014). Cuba and Peru have also gotten with a view to broaden and deepen their bilateral cooperation. Cuba would be joining efforts to Peru's Beca-18 education plan. More generally, Havana and Lima signed a Joint Economic Agreement to mutually boost trade and investment-capture, and a Technical Cooperation Agreement in the fields of education, health, sports and culture (*BBC Monitoring Latin America*, 2013). Cuba has also found a valuable partner in Costa Rica, with the signing of a Framework Cooperation Agreement ("*Acuerdo Marco de Cooperación*") mainly targeting "education, culture, health, tourism, agriculture, environment, science and technology, library and archive, sports and youth, cooperatives, professional training, academic cooperation, institutional strengthening of the External Service, child and family rights[104]" (*Aprobación del Acuerdo Marco de Cooperación entre los Gobiernos de la República de Costa Rica y la República de Cuba*, 2014, Artículo II). Of course, my list is far from being exhaustive. What I wish to convey here is that Cuba is at least successful in re-entering the region via its individual member states, and, as such, is enjoying all the latitude of a CELAC's welcoming environment.

NEOLIBERAL EXPOSURE: THE SELA'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CUBA

However, Cuba is exposed to the same programmatic and ideational conflict as the CELAC as a whole when we observe Cuba's relation with a key player in the whole mechanism: the SELA. In 2013, the organisation was tasked with drawing up a complete analysis of Cuba's commercial relations and to assess to what extent the latter might complete, and be completed by, the space of cooperation set up under the CELAC

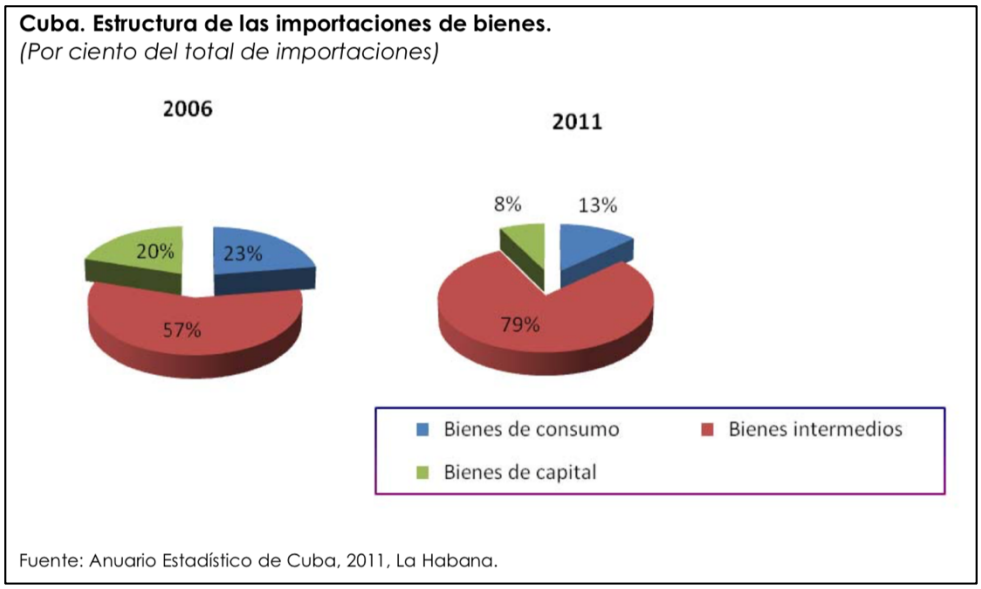
[103] The Brazilian government had already invested $802M into the first phase of the project and was expected to inject an additional $209M (ANSA, 2014).

[104] Own translation.

banner (*Análisis y recomendaciones,* 2013). The study was carried out as part of the SELA supporting role in fostering commentary intraregional trade (*Informe 2013*, 2013: 3). That such a study was commanded, specifically for Cuba, shows just how serious Cuba had become for the community, and that its desire to reinstate the island as a resilient partner was founded on a certain sincerity. But the SELA's recommendations are an obvious illustration of the normative discrepancies that exists between member states and (sub-)regional integration mechanisms.

The study itself highlights well-known features of Cuba's economic structure, as for instance the massive trade surplus in services that helps funding a trade deficit in goods, as I discussed using Campbell's (2016) data and analysis. Overall, the SELA underlines Cuba's weak productive structure and poor establishment within high profitability regional value-added chains. It also acknowledges the centrality of tourism in Cuba's development given its "multiplier effect" (Torres Pérez, 2014). In the meantime, it stresses that a full-bet on the tourism sector is ill-advised as it is a typical example of a sector moved by fierce competition (especially in the Caribbean) in order to keep prices low and remain attractive for tourists, thus limiting the potential for growth via tourism alone. The recent decrease of the sector has thus had an impact of the island's undercapitalisation (which keeps increasing as Cuba fails to attract fixed capital and foreign investments – figure 6), which has thus undeniably harmed its productive structure. This being said, the SELA notes a progressive diversification of the structure of Cuba's exported goods, mostly due to the expansion of Cuba's pharmaceutical sector, despite a concentration in terms regional trade partners (almost half of Cuba's commercial relations concern Latin America and the Caribbean, with about 45% specifically with Venezuela, Mexico and Brasil).

Figure 6: Structure of Cuba's imports of goods



Source: *Análisis y recomendaciones para fomentar el comercio entre la República de Cuba y los países de América Latina y el Caribe*, 2013: 17

The recommendations put forth by the SELA do reflect, at least partially, the "CELAC spirit" in terms of development. Notably, the organisation insists on the possible complementarities that exist between Cuba's

economy and the region as a whole. For instance, Cuba should improve on the "flexibility and reactivity" of its economic apparatus in order to better respond to mutating regional needs. The SELA also underlined the extent to which Cuba might contribute to the development of intraregional trade with ALADI-countries. To do so, of course, funding will be crucial and the SELA suggests that Cuba seek out ways to significantly enhance its attractivity for FDIs.

In the meantime, the document shows the conflict between SELA's methodologies and the CELAC's dynamic. It also shows the political and normative discrepancies between SELA's views on the regional integration landscape, and how Cuba envisions its own integration. For instance, Cuba's ties with ALBA are described in terms of trade, the SELA welcoming a market that is "gaining trust". Only, looking at ALBA as a market is simply wrong (whatever the angle), given the literature's emphasis on ALBA's non-trade DNA. The SELA's discussion of the Bolivarian matrix is but an indicator of its bias. Overall, the organisation pushes for Cuba's trade and market liberalisation. It encourages Cuba to pursue a broader participation in ALADI-led service trade-liberalisation (although it is acknowledged that the Cuban government wishes to contain political control over the economy). Most telling in the organisation's nudge to expand economic ties with CARICOM. The SELA argues in favour of the activation of bilateral negotiations designed to turn the *Acuerdo de Comercio y Cooperación Económica CARICOM-Cuba* in a Free-Trade Agreement, as means to stimulate intra-(sub-)regional trade, which, in 2013 did not exceed 1% on the member states commercial exchange. In doing so, the SELA actually advances its own agenda, i.e. the creation of a common Latin American economic space, based on sub-regional markets, i.a. CARICOM.

A change of political paradigm in terms of regional cooperation can hardly take root in an environment that consists of resilient representatives of the "open-regionalism" era. It was shown for CELAC as a whole. It is now applied at State level. In addition to my doubts regarding Cuba's direct effect on the community's preferences for alternative ways to develop, Cuba is in fact expected to fail unless it is able to till the entire regional integrative architecture towards that end. Given that Cuba is a full member of the SELA, nothing is less sure.

Conclusion

My thesis was designed to explore the *interlinkage between Cuba's regional foreign policy and Latin American regionalism*. In order to ensure that my approach would grasp the whole picture, I started off by discussing Cuba's domestic politics, which has recently been characterised by a wind of thorough economic reforms (or *actualización*) of the Cuban economic model. However, Cuba's reform process cannot be captured in its entirety if its inherent political nature is not adequately assessed. Cuba simply *had* to renew its economic model in order to enable sufficient economic development and preserve its political regime. Although the academic field of International Relations is now well beyond the belief that domestic politics fully determine a state's foreign policy, such a discussion was needed to highlight that Cuba's *actualización* is both a significant factor and an aggregate result of Cuba's foreign policy with regard to Latin America and the Caribbean since the 1990s. Indeed, Cuba's development and regime preservation has been central to the island's evolution with the *Bolivarian matrix* (Monreal, 2006), referring to Havana's crucial activism within the *Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América* (ALBA).

ALBA's kind of regionalism, i.e. a regional scheme of politically negotiated mutually beneficial non-trade-based development projects is but the most blatant example of Latin America's shifting regionalism, a phenomenon that challenged most of the existing explanatory models at the time ("closed" protectionist regionalism and "open" neoliberal regionalism). At the turn of the millennium, the region featured major normative shifts, and was the incubator of new ideas, new narratives and new representations about the meaning Latin American and Caribbean regionalism had to be given. The literature thus explores the notion of *post-hegemonic regionalism* (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012), with a view to expound the region's alternative forms of governance in terms of cooperation and development, based on new sets of perceived common interests and related common policies. As such, post-hegemonic regionalism is a politicised, highly contested process (Dabène, 2012; Emerson, 2014), attempting to move past US-led neoliberal influence over the region as the 2005 failing of the FTAA initiative symbolises.

Governance implied a logical theoretical framework, combining liberal intergovernmentalism and the constructivist realm of norms and institutions. The former included rationalist considerations for (loose) integration and political cooperation, and strategic participation in international regional regimes. The latter brought my attention to state identities and interest, and norms that are permanently in an evolutive process in any cooperative context (Duffield, 2007; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Wendt, 1992). The revised theoretical lens of *regionness* (Riggirozzi, 2012a; Riggirozzi, 2012b) portraying regional integration as *arena for action* rather than a teleological path to EU-like deep integration allowed me to comprehend the region's diversity of political unions (MERCOSUR, UNASUR, ALBA, Pacific Alliance). Lastly, Emerson's (2014) contribution regarding the *politics of regionness* made room for state agency in these normative shifts, what scholars have theorised as the role of *norm-entrepreneurs* within international institutions (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

My intention was therefore to probe for a possible interrelation between the emergence of the *Comunidad de los Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC) and Cuba's proactive regional politics. As a relatively new regional project, CELAC combines many key characteristics of Latin American and Caribbean regionalism: a loose architecture, a heavy reliance on intergovernmentalism via cycles of presidential summits and a large multidimensional political agenda. It was designed to encompass the complexity behind the myriad of existing regional projects and organisations, through the fusion of the Latin American and Caribbean Summit for Cooperation and Development (CALC) and the Rio Group. Besides, Cuba has been described as one of CELAC's most vocal supporter, and as one of CELAC founding members. The community fits the "regional dimension" (Cole, 2012) of Cuba's development strategy, and given that Cuba has been a central actor during CELAC's initial politicisation, it is reasonable to look for a Cuban mark in CELAC's creation process.

I went about considering CELAC as an intersubjective arena (Duffield, 2007), where states encounter and socialise (Wendt, 1992). I also considered the community as reflecting a multilayered regional governance (Barnett and Sikkink, 2009). It means that CELAC has to cope with the divergent views on regionalism that must be assumed from the diversity of political unions, and possibly struggle to advance a legitimate regional agenda. Therefore, I suggested that CELAC's norm-building would be the product of *strategic social construction* (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), emphasising the contested nature of the community. I called upon Ullán de la Rosa's (2012) *analytical distinction*, by focusing on the creation and consolidation of CELAC "philosophical vision" on regionalism, rather than on its material implications: is there a CELAC-induced governance, a CELAC-defined developmental path, and is it coherent with the overall Latin American neodevelopmental path (Flexor, et al., 2017)? In other words, is there such a thing as a new regional "political paradigm" (Hall, in Dri, 2016), and to what extent is Cuba able to shape this paradigm in order to "regionally [address] its domestic needs" (Cole, 2012)?

I can conclude that CELAC is indeed a form of post-hegemonic regionalism, entailing an autonomous regional governance. The normative shift towards neodevelopmentalism is obvious once the community's presidential declarations and their related special declarations are scrutinised as a system that is progressively being clarified and agreed upon. This illustrates just how politicised its initial phases have been, with hectic presidential summit, intense activity in terms of working groups and ministerial meetings, and various noteworthy decisions. CELAC prioritises state-led public policies and has come to target innovation, technology, science and infrastructure, as well as the regional capture of investments and funds. CELAC's regionalism is also a social regionalism (according to Briceño Ruiz's (2013) categorisation), as the community seeks to address structural inequalities, public health services, poverty reduction, hunger, education and culture at regional level. Moreover, CELAC has integrated certain core values across its discursive apparatus, such as complementarity and solidarity. This implicates that the region's development will come via the region's member states, but that CELAC itself, consistent with Riggirozzi's contribution, will not be a regional actor

centrally steering the process. However, I argue that the community has seen the emergence of a collective Global South "developing world" identity, that is pluralised to reflect the double asymmetry which the region faces today: an external one with the developed North, and an internal one with respect to lesser developed CELAC member states (the Caribbean, Central America and the Northern coast of South America) that need specific attention. Such an identity structure the community's interest. CELAC pushes for a fairer shot at the region's insertion into the world system, through a thorough reform of the latter and a better representation of Global South developing countries in international multilateral institutions, especially international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc.). As a result, the CELAC is increasingly seen as *the* regional voice, advocating for the community's needs and preferences on the world stage, and stimulating South-South cooperative scheme with representative of the developing world (the PRC, BRICS countries, the Arab League, the African Union). This is partly due to the significant support for CELAC's *Grupo de Trabajo de Cooperación Internacional* (GTCI), which is tasked with deepening intraregional coordination and cooperation, and aggregating a regional political agenda.

Nevertheless, scholars are right when expressing their scepticism as to CELAC's "transformative capacity" (Dabène, 2012). Although CELAC is autonomous and coherent in formulating common political positions, however broad and general, the community's governance is ultimately coordinated by (sub-) regional integration mechanisms, which are asked to suggest roadmaps in order to effectively carry out CELAC's vision. This gives rise to *conflicting senses of regionness*. Markedly, it does not occur due to a form of competition between politicised regional projects (UNASUR, ALBA, AP), as I hypothesised at first. Instead, CELAC's enterprise is undermined because of its reliance on (sub-)regional structures (ALADI, ECLAC, SELA) that are not as permeated by the region's normative shift. These regional organisations have their own logic, their own sense of regionness, inherited from an "open regionalism" rationale, triggering neoliberal market-oriented and trade-based reflexes. Although I speak of conflicting senses of regionness, I must emphasise that what I discovered is nowhere close an overt conflict, nor a kind of political resistance from the side of the SELA (mostly), the ALADI or the ECLAC. What this unveils is an ideational and normative gap between intergovernmental state-led negotiations in the CELAC-arena, and pragmatic, technical structure composing the CELAC's mechanism and filling in for the CELAC's lack of permanent bodies.

As for Cuba's role within CELAC, although, of course, I was hampered by the pandemic as I did not manage to plan the interviews I wished to conduct, I could not find any clear and undeniable evidence of Cuba's predominance on the community's political paradigm, functioning or agenda. Evidently, Cuba has been, is and will remain a relevant agent within the community. Its undisputed inclusion as well as its *pro tempore* Presidency also have an unequivocal symbolic weight, given Cuba's long-term exclusion from macro-regional yet US-dominated organisations (the OAS and the Summits of the Americas). Precisely, the fact that CELAC has never been destined to completely side-line the OAS, which is still one of Havana's objective today, should come as a sign that Cuba does not singlehandedly control what CELAC is to become.

Moreover, although the community's perspective on development and its prioritised policy domains do mirror Cuba's needs with respect to its *actualización*, I am unable to certify that this is the result of Cuba's power of conviction. As a matter of fact, CELAC's governance and developmental path also reflect ALBA's take on the region and ALBA's conception regarding regional development, of which, in the end, Cuba is only a member state. The best example showing that Havana does not have the region's key in hand on the ideational ground is given by the SELA. Whereas Cuba's influence on CELAC is dubious, it is clearly inexistent when it come to this sub-regional integration mechanism, pushing for the liberalisation and decentralisation of Cuba's economic structure, which is exactly what Cuba is trying to avoid by investing in strong and reliable political and economic partnerships and alliances. In order to assert a Cuban predominance on the region, I would have to prove that the island is successful in "re-politicising" (Dabène, 2012) the entire CELAC-mechanism, and not only in weighing (however lightly) in the intergovernmental arena.

However, it is undisputable that Cuba is using CELAC as a platform to tighten its regional position and domestic regime. The CELAC serves as a shield to legitimise Cuba's political nature through the "*Zona the Paz*" rhetoric. In light of the region's pluralism, it insists on the sovereign right of CELAC's member states to freely pick their political, economic, social and cultural system. Therefore, external pressure, unilateral evaluations and conditionalities through development aid or FDIs, with which the Havana-regime has always had to deal, are now strongly rejected by a federated and united community. Cuba also employs the regional environment thus created as a means to multiply significant bilateral economic and political relations with member states of the region. As such, Havana finds additional ways to benefit from its economic strengths, i.e. service export (mainly in health and education) in exchange for foreign investments, natural resources and infrastructure.

As a final remark, I must underline that my thesis focused on a pivotal, highly politicised stage of CELAC's emergence. It might convey a healthy picture of the community, whereas, lately, the project seems to be losing steam. In January 2020, Brazil's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araújo withdrew from the CELAC's framework, arguing that the community had not delivered what it was expected to stimulate (Reuters, 2020). Itamaraty's rhetoric was centred on democratisation, and specifically aimed at Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. However, it is unclear whether democratisation is really the reason why Brazil stepped down, or if ideological divergences between Brazil's government under Bolsonaro and ALBA member states pushed the country towards to exit door. An analogy with Clarissa Dri's (2016) work on the aborted PARLASUR-process within MERCOSUR and Olivier Dabène's (2012) consideration for cyclic phases of de-politicisation and repoliticisation in regional integration might constitute a follow-up research on the matter: did CELAC's neodevelopmental enthusiasm hide a conjectural craze, which, once the regional context seemed to indicate that the 1990s brand of neoliberalism had indeed been tamed, started to phase out, allowing trade-based regionalism, although adjourned with new ideas, to reinter the stage of regional integration? Conversely, equating Brazil's departure with the cerebral death of the CELAC initiative might

very well be a grave exaggeration. Scholars should probably explore a “CELAC-effect” within sub-regional project (ALBA, UNASUR, MERCOSUR, AP), which would help to identify whether CELAC’s governance is indeed broadly shared across the region, and whether it is sustainable notwithstanding party politics variation over the course of subsequent legislatures.

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