

Paper

Latin American Integration: Regionalism a la carte in a multipolar world?

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the 2000s regionalism in Latin America has experienced extreme transformations. The new multipolar scenario has left space for new roles of regional powers that intend to project their power following alternative strategies. In this case Brazil has been a key player in the South American region particularly opposing the U.S. diffusion of neoliberal policies. Brazil has exercise that role through alternative organizations, MERCOSUR first, but more important UNASUR that has allowed the creation of a South American space in which Brazil exercises an uneven leadership. At the same other emerging countries such as Mexico are reclaiming their historical role in the Latin American region and are becoming involved in contrasting regional organizations such as Pacific Alliance and CELAC.

The paper argues that these new initiatives constitute three types of regionalism: neoliberal regionalism reloaded, post-liberal regionalism and multilateral regionalism. The three of them have overlapping membership and agendas but they also show new dynamics that are emerging in the region in a multipolar world in which regional powers attempt to project their interests in economic and political terms. This new momentum allows new dynamics of counterbalancing by competing countries inside the Latin American region and also with other emerging powers.

Given that the importance of regions and regionalism increases in global and Latin American politics, and integration ambitions and initiatives extend beyond trade and investment, the panel aims to explore the paradoxes and complementarities of the current contrasting models of regionalism in the region.