

Reviewing South America Institutionalism and the Failure of Regional Integration Process

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Abstract— South America Revolution on the beginning of 19th century has massively affect the form of independent country and decolonitation process by Spain and Portugal empire. Unification based on the equality of cultural and linguistic was tried to be implemented in this area continually, but the fact is this regional integration process always failed. This weak industry process, limited consolidation of sovereignty, along with so many internal conflict has also contributed in the failure of this attempt. This problem continue to rise periodically until the era of regionalism form after World War II. While the regional integration in Africa and Europe has succesfully made, South America has not yet enforce an integrated institution with high competition in world market. From that implication, this journal will search for interconnection between geopolitical impact with the failure of South America’s regionalism enforcement, the historical factor since decolonitation untul revolutionary wave on 21st century in South America will be used as this journal’s foundation.

Keywords: *regionalism, domestic institution, unification, South America*

I. INTRODUCTION

The timespan between years 1960-1970 and so forth saw the rise of regional integration globally. However, it does not reach its peak until the 1990s, which saw the boom of RIA (Regional Integration Agreement) in context of post WTO establishment[1] This so-called ‘second wave’ of regional integration throughout the world had a characteristics of neoliberal economy paradigm similar with EU (European Union) neo-functionalism formation which heavily featured by open market, construction of new collective identity, asymmetrical RIA partner forming (in terms of size, development levels or both), and import-substitution based strategies[2].

From the aragraph above, one could identify and classify the problem intrigued to better perceivethe failure of regional building in South America. Firstly, the lack of mutual understanding and failure in creating common vital policies that are beneficial for each member states that met with their initial proclaimed goals. Secondly, the presence of rivalry and overlapping between regional organization that further causing inconsistency as well as lack of loyalties in each member states.

Finally, and the most significant one is the lack of belonging in each member states to particular region based on shared values and interests, which in this case is South America. Now, we wonder how could such various integration effort fail miserably in the whole region, in order to further understand the grassroot of those failure which has been described, one must look deep into each formation and find the correlation between variable that constructing South America current regional phenomenon.

II. FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

By using theory and approach that will be described in the next section, this paper will analyze both domestic institution and geopolitics as the main grassroot of failure in South America regional building, thus their correlation that binding South America establishment until now. Subsequently, the main question of this research that could be formulated as : “How the linkages between domestic institutionalism and regional geopolitics leads to the failure of integration process in South America”.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As the most applicable and corresponding paradigm, constructivism convey a whole new concept. Bob S.Hadiniwinata describe it as a opportunity to give explanation for such regional phenomenon by using non-positivist explanatory variable as its main focus, such as cultural identity, institutionalism building, and social construct.[3] Referring to that, the regional constructivism theory by Jeffrey Checkel which highlighting the use of community and identity as a broader scope for understanding the regional identities and integration would be used to analyze this paper. By that means, it includes a pattern of “theory and domestic context method and process”, theory explicates that one can not measure conception of identity within particular country or region without knowing the baseline or grassroot of it, furthermore, domestic context by definition is a process which historical events; political conflict; public opinion; etc, took part in it. It means that one must look at each elements of domestic context from its institutionalism formation as a baseline for further analyze the construction of identity within the current region. Ultimately, this paper will apply those regional constructivism theories finding into integration process by regional organization in case study, especially UNASUR case.

A. The Construction of Domestic Institutionalism Pre-independence era

As a basis of formation from the state, it can not be doubted that domestic institutionalism stands at the core of those pillar. Interestingly, state institutionalism by nature is an outcome of evolutionary process mechanism, which highlight the utility of historical events, thus it will first be discussed from this perspective.⁸ We will use Checkel “theory and domestic context” approach, especially the historical events element, to analyze further the identity and community building in South America.

B. Post-independence era

The political vacuum left by the European power

to the new republics, turns to be disastrous as the people inside the republic itself, does not consider the republics as the sole authority of sovereignty bearer [4]. Buelvas argued that lack of stateness and institutionalism in the early period of independence were resulting centralization of government interest, means only the capital get all the wealth, and the marginalized province gained nothing from it. Consequently, this also resulting in the rise of many local leaders, usually the religious power (church) and traditional elites in the region. However, the most significant one is the rise of local warlords that known as “caudillos” [5]. Typically, they tend to gather mass support of the peasant and mobilize support through their local community to further challenging the government in power. Unsurprisingly, caudillos became the biggest threat the new republics facing in maintaining power and authority, and as more caudillos tried to overthrow their power, the new republics responded it by bringing more repressive authority.

C. Early modernization era in 20th century

Eventually in mid-nineteenth to early 20th century, these caudillos could consolidate their power entirely, but came with heavy prices as they lack in progress to keep up with times and technology, especially in the industrial revolution and the period thereafter.

D. The Construction of Regional Geopolitics

The construction of extra-regional threat perception Similar with other region development, despite their domestic institutionalism issues, they also tried to builds their own collective identity and regional infrastructure, primarily based on their culture and similar fate. However, this process is deemed to be failed as UNASUR, the most waited regional organization is crumbling in 2018 after 7 countries leaves it membership.

We will review the causes from extra-regional involvement and its correlation with the domestic institutionalism afterwards. Between 1830 and 1890, European powers on numerous occasions directly intervened in the hemisphere with varying degrees of military force. Some of these interventions were directed at maintaining influence by aiding friendly South American countries in their rivalries with hostile neighbours. Other interventions are military action undertaken to reassert their claim on South America territory, for instance is the Spanish

invasion of several islands off the coast of Peru in 1861 to reinstate their naval power in the region, or the French blockade of Buenos Aires in 1836.25 [5].

After WW2 ended, as part of Truman doctrine in fighting communist influence, the US government has now directly involved in preserving their influence directly, mainly support for opposition in toppling authority they deemed leaning for Soviet sphere, and installing right-wing authoritarian government in returns.

Such as the 1964 Brazilian coup d'état against centre-left social democrat government, 1973 Chilean coup d'état against democratic socialist government, etc. The only similarity between them is all the government in charge after coup d'état is an authoritarian, military dictatorship right-wing government [6]. This historical process obtained by the South American countries heavily influenced their objective in regional building process. Basically, if European Union as Europe main foundation of regional integration have an objective of minimized their member state rivalries and prevent another war, the purpose of South America regional integration is for countering external threat that came from extraregional power, mainly United States and European influence, thus making geopolitics threat is the basic core of how South America establish their regional integration. "Region" was always understood as the way of conceiving the space that allowed it to exclude the United States and Europe, who were the main threats to sovereignty.

E. South American Phase of regional integration

Based on ECLAC's (Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean) structural and economic analysis, integration thought in South America has developed in three big phases which began in the 1960s and 1970s.28 Thus, it will be explained and be correlated with elements of domestic institutionalism as well as Checkel "method and process" approach.

The first phase of regionalism came with the objective to resolve the socio-economic disparities between South America countries, mainly by making a free trade agreement. It saw the rise of LAFTA (Latin American Free Trade Agreement) and Andean Group (AG), LAFTA proposed an aggressive 12-year plan to bring down all trade barriers of the sensitive and nonsensitive goods, while at the same time countering US influence on the region. This attempt at integration was ambitious and drew interest of many of the countries of the region which soon joined the LAFTA treaty such as Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, etc.

In conclusion, the first wave of regional integration is clearly lacking in any real progress or formation, resulting in Checkel approach regarding regionalism influence could not be used optimally. But, the failure of these integration soon made those former member states perceive the South America regional integration as a hindrance, resulting in their pursue of bandwagoning other major extra-regional actor.

IV. CONCLUSION

We could conclude that in order to look at each regional phenomenon and political relation, one must look at the very basis core of its regional construction in South America, which is the establishment of domestic institutionalism each member states have. Subsequently, it serves as a cornerstone in explaining the whole construction of internal aspect that affecting the so-called nation until now.

Combined with the construction of regional geopolitics South America has ultimately resulting in the failure of South America integration as a whole. Each

variable is linked together and served as a basis to explain the other phenomenon. Based on the arguments we made here, regional integration in South America would not be possible in the long terms policies. All the attempts that have been made such as focusing economic integration or political integration, still leads to failure as they're insists using neofunctionalism as a basis principle in its organization. The perspective of South American integration will require more empirical engagement with the detailed workings of integration projects. One should consider the importance of using framework that serves adequate with each member internal formation, which has the characteristics of weak stateness and institutionalism. While EU-type regionalism could still be compared, it clearly could not be served as a cornerstone anymore in global south especially South America integration process, as each regionalism have a very distinct institutionalism construction and political dynamics.

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