Organising the South American Space
Regionalism in times of transnationalisation

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Abstract
What makes governments decide to engage in cooperation with their neighbours to deliver regional public goods? Under which conditions do they decide to keep this cooperation informal, and when do they instead prefer to formalise it through an international treaty? Why do government seem to be more capable to produce regional public goods in some policy-areas than in others? The present research addresses these questions by analysing the contemporary South American-wide regionalism from 2000 to 2014, the period in which the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) was created and later formalised into the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). First, the analysis of the intergovernmental negotiations shows that an informal institution such as IIRSA better accommodated the preferences of governments that were searching for and experimenting with a collective response to an external challenge, whereas a formal institution such as UNASUR better accommodated the preferences of governments that wanted to avoid the emergence of competitive regional projects and the defection of some states. Second, the thesis examines the interactions between governments and transnational actors and shows that regional public goods are more likely to be produced in policy-areas in which governments were able to broker non-state transnational actors to implement basic intergovernmental consensus. In answering these questions, the thesis offers an empirically informed assessment of contemporary South American regionalism without following either the over-optimistic or over-pessimistic viewpoints that dominate the current academic debate.
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Bio

Stefano Palestini Céspedes is a Sociologist from the University Alberto Hurtado in Santiago de Chile and a PhD Candidate in Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute. When working at the United Nations Development Programme in Santiago de Chile, he co-authored the Human Development Reports in Chile 2009 and 2010. He has also worked as a lecturer of Economic Sociology and Sociology of Globalization at the University of Chile, the University Alberto Hurtado, and the University Diego Portales. Since 2014 he has been research associate at the Global Governance Programme (RSCAS) in the project “Regional Organisations and Democratic Conditionality in Latin America and Europe”. His areas of interest are international political economy, comparative regional organizations and institutions, and Latin American politics.