

2 Chávez and American Integration

Tim Anderson

This chapter explains the historical foundations of the large regional organizations built in Latin America in the early twenty-first century, and the critical role played by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Without Chávez, the continent may not have seen ALBA (for Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas), UNASUR (for Union of South American Nations), or CELAC (for Community of Latin American and Caribbean States). Yet all these groupings have important historical antecedents, living memories embedded in the postcolonial and neocolonial history of the region. This regional movement has been counter-hegemonic, historically contingent and often social democratic, paralleling Venezuela's internal transformations. This is not simple populism, because participation and benefits run deep and wide. Cuban professionals formed the backbone of immense regional social programs, opening up human potential for millions in the region, but it has been Venezuela's petrodollars and the tremendous political will of Chávez that has driven the broader union. While the region maintains a great diversity of political-economic systems, the U.S.-centric model has rapidly fallen in prestige. Chávez touched a nerve, and the southern continent responded. This chapter argues that identification with and participation in this new regionalism makes it more likely to endure and bear fruit, even beyond Chávez.

INTRODUCTION

Although the transformation of Venezuela by President Hugo Chávez is a phenomenon, no less important has been his role in reshaping American regional integration. Chávez has nothing if not a sense of history. In 2005, alongside Argentine President Nestor Kirchner, he announced that the Washington-led FTAA (for Free Trade Area of the Americas) was dead and would be buried at a summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina.¹ He was right. In the wake of the failure of the FTAA, we saw the rise of ALBA led by Venezuela and Cuba, UNASUR, and CELAC. The latter includes all American states except the United States and Canada. In 2013, Cuba, for many decades ostracized by the United States, assumed the presidency of CELAC.

Hugo Chávez had firm ideas on regional integration well before his first election as Venezuela's president. At the University of Havana in December 1994, he said, "It is not adventurism to think of a political project, an association of Latin American states. Why don't we think of that? Why continue fragmented?"²

The Cubans understood and eventually so did much of Latin America. Nevertheless, outside Latin America, there are limited understandings of this "Bolivarian dream." This is due to globalist ideology (in which U.S.-led neoliberalism was equated with the global order) and to the distinct current of Pan-Americanism (which subordinated the American continent to Washington). In Latin America, however, there has been a long history of anticolonialism and anti-imperialism; attempts at federation, revolts, and revolutions; calls for a second independence; and various attempts at regional organization (e.g., MERCOSUR, the Andean Community). Only in recent years have those groupings begun to show greater scope and promise.

In North America, both Bolivarianism and the Chávez phenomenon have been dismissed as mere populism, that is, tokenistic and shallow, with little substance or viability.³ This is a mistake. The depth of participation and identification with the process is the key to the difference. It is true that Chávez had a style with populist elements: A strong leader making calls to disenfranchised classes for mobilization against a powerful oligarchy, and making these calls over the heads of the private investors and media channels. However, populism also implies a hidden and deceptive agenda, involving reversion to or maintenance of elite rule.⁴ In fact, this is not too far away from the *third way* agendas, which usually link a neoliberal agenda of corporate privilege to limited social programs. Chávez at first did indeed pursue the idea of a third way.⁵

However, he went well beyond populism. Even at the beginning of his first mandate, two central elements suggested something different. First, a constituent assembly was elected to refound Venezuelan democracy through a new constitution with strong participatory elements. People could more readily elect and even recall political leaders; key social rights were defined.⁶ Second, Venezuela's immense petroleum and gas resources were gradually reclaimed by the state, as productive assets to be used for public policy and mass social programs.⁷ Tensions over the Venezuelan state's reclaiming of natural resources would help incite a U.S.-backed coup attempt in April 2002.⁸ Later, elements of radical social democracy coalesced under the banner of "Socialism of the twenty-first century."⁹ Venezuela today has large-scale, state-funded education, health, housing, agricultural, and small business programs, along with community organizations that have the power to direct development of their own infrastructure and shared services. This is not a "hand out" system, but rather a state fomenting protagonism and investing in people. Chávez adviser Marta Harnecker notes how Chávez moved beyond populism, "A revolutionary leader with charisma communicates with the people like a populist. The difference is that the populist

gives things, like Perón; but doesn't help people to be independent . . . [yet] Chávez suggested that people organize . . . that is not populism; it is revolutionary leadership."¹⁰

This inclusive process produced results at home. After poverty levels that had grown to extremes under the neoliberal period of the 1980s and 1990s, Venezuela boasts achievements better than those of a region which, in itself, has made some significant progress. Between 1999 and 2011, income poverty in Venezuela fell from 42.8 percent to 16.6 percent, and extreme income poverty from 20.1 percent to 8.5 percent.¹¹ This was ahead of the Latin American averages—43.8 percent to 30.4 percent and 18.6 percent to 12.8 percent—for that same period.¹² Venezuela's relative progress in the Human Development Index (combining measures of income, life expectancy, and education) was even better, largely due to strong gains in education. Venezuela's Human Development Index was 0.56 in 2000 and 0.735 in 2011.¹³ Further, in that same period, Venezuelans ranked their own democracy at seven out of ten, one of the highest in the region.¹⁴

However, all this is by way of setting the scene for an important parallel story in social democracy: the launching of a new round of regional integration. This regional process has allowed for wide and diverse participation and has already delivered some substantial benefits. After the shared trauma of the neoliberal 1980s and 1990s,¹⁵ it was Chávez, backed and mentored by Cuba's Fidel Castro, who drove rejection of the Washington-led Pan-Americanism and who has revived Bolívar and Martí's ideas of regional union.

To understand regionalism in the Americas, we have to consider key ideas and moments in the parallel histories of Pan-Americanism and its antithesis Latin Americanism, stretching back two centuries. This chapter, therefore, characterizes key historical themes in American integration, with particular emphasis on the Latin American and Caribbean resurgence. The Bolivarian project could be said to be counter-hegemonic, historically contingent, and social democratic—parallel to and sympathetic with the internal processes within Venezuela—yet in competition with Washington-led Pan-Americanism. After characterizing these competing histories, the chapter discusses the most significant institutions of this new regional order.

PAN-AMERICANISM AND OUR AMERICA

Hugo Chávez referred to Simon Bolívar as the chief architect of the independent Venezuelan state and chief protagonist of a unified American continent. Yet this project never included the United States. Even in the early nineteenth century, Bolívar held great suspicions about the hegemonic ambitions of the northern giant. In 1829, after the failure of a congress designed to create a continental union, Bolívar lamented, "The United States seems destined by

providence to plague the Americas with miseries in the name of freedom.”¹⁶ The competition over American integration was well underway.

A series of famous voices joined in the call for Latin American union. Bolívar, in 1814, had sent a message calling for union of the former Spanish colonies, “[we need] a single powerful American nation . . . a colossus capable of confronting the Spanish colossus.”¹⁷ This power was needed against Spain, but also against the growing power to the north. Sixty years later, José Martí, who died fighting the Spanish in Cuba, saw the economic designs of Washington on what he called “Our America,” and called for a “second independence.” Another seventy years on, right after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro traveled to Caracas and told large crowds that Venezuela must lead the project of Latin American integration.¹⁸ A few decades later, Chávez picked up this same call. Then in December 2004, the first ALBA accords were signed between Cuba and Venezuela, and this began the process that led to the creation of the 33-nation CELAC, affecting the lives of 600 million people.

To understand this new continental project, it is useful to review some of the history of the longer projects, through key moments and ideas across the past two centuries. Table 2.1 provides an overview of these moments and ideas.

Key themes in this long history include Washington’s determination to lead and dominate an American alliance, its resistance to countervailing groupings, and its pursuit of commercial advantage. On the Latin American side, there has been defense of distinct identities and history, resistance to strategic and corporate domination, and attempts to develop some more symmetrical organizations.

Bolivar versus Manifest Destiny

With independence victories against Spanish colonial rule growing across the continent, Bolívar, in 1815, wrote his famous “Letter from Jamaica,” which foreshadowed a union of independent peoples with “one origin, one

Table 2.1 Key Moments in American Integration

	Pan-Americanism	Latin Americanism
1820s–1840s	The Monroe Doctrine, “Manifest Destiny” of the United States	Bolívar’s Congress of Panama, 1826
1890+	Pan-American Congress, 1889–1890; Organization of American States, 1948	Martí: “Our America,” “second independence,” 1890; Anti-intervention
1960s	Alliance for Progress, 1961	Cuban Revolution, 1959
1990s–2000s	NAFTA, FTAA, 1994	ALBA, 2004; UNASUR, 2008; CELAC, 2010

language, various customs but one religion.” There was a need for a federation of states to prevent distant powers from dividing the peoples of the Americas. “How beautiful it would be if the isthmus of Panama were for us what Corinth was for the Greeks!” he said.¹⁹ After a series of successful battles that liberated great parts of South America, in December 1824, Bolívar called the new Latin American administrations to a regional meeting. This was to be a *Congreso Anficcionico* (the latter word taken from the Greek notion of a joint foundation, a type of constituent assembly), to be held in 1826 in Panama. Bolívar had secured confederation treaties between his Greater Colombia (which then comprised present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela), Perú (in 1822), Chile (in 1823), México (in 1823), and, after its separation from México, with the Central American Republic (in 1825).²⁰ The next step was to bring them all together.

The Congress of Panama aimed to create a “supranational government of the formerly Spanish republics which would represent Afro-Indio-Spanish cultures, regulate their commerce, and make alliances with others.”²¹ Bolívar’s deputy, Francisco Santander, invited (against Bolívar’s wishes), the United States, whereas Bolívar sought to include the British, both as a counter-weight to Spain and to attract Argentine and Chilean commercial interests.²² Although U.S. observers were invited, they did not attend; one died on the way and the other arrived late. Both Great Britain and the United States, as it turned out, worked against the idea of union, having their own designs on the continent and preferring to work through a number of weaker and divided new states.²³ Washington was unhappy with and worked against Bolívar’s plan. In the United States, although Henry Clay supported the idea of a confederation, Quincy Adams thought the conference would weaken U.S. influence. Bolívar’s conference dealt with “a magnificent confederation in which the United States does not have a single vote,” Adams observed.²⁴

Bolívar’s agenda for the former Spanish colonies included a denunciation of Spain, support for the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico, treaties on regional trade and navigation, national boundaries with a base year of 1810, a body of international law including the recognition of the new republics, and an agreement on the complete abolition of slavery.²⁵ Problems arose for almost all of these objectives. For one thing, the United States defended its position as a slave state, with a large plantation economy relying on slave labor.²⁶ Second, the idea of trade preferences faced the problem that many Latin American states depended on import duties for revenue.

In the end, this regional Congress agreed to a nonbinding declaration on union and confederation, the mediation of conflicts, and a number of strategic matters.²⁷ It also resolved to adjourn to a new venue in Mexico. However, by then, U.S. diplomats (with their eyes on Mexican territory) had maneuvered Mexican capital against the union, arguing for neutrality toward Spain and only supporting the idea of treaties of friendship and trade.²⁸ Argentine investors had similarly expressed most interest in guarantees on

property and industry.²⁹ The Latin American states themselves remained divided, and the entire project lapsed.

At the same time, in 1823, the United States created its Monroe Doctrine, claiming “America for the Americans” and aiming at excluding Great Britain and Spain from regional affairs. The doctrine was said to be respectful of the sovereignty of Latin American countries, and resentment of the idea is often portrayed as a misunderstanding.³⁰ Nevertheless, the idea clearly was to establish Washington as the controlling center of the Americas.³¹ Secretary of State Henry Clay expressed this idea of a regional union, “a system of which we shall be the center, and in which all South America will act with us.”³²

Two decades later, after the annexation of Texas and just prior to a war with Mexico that led to the absorption of the formerly Mexican territories of California and New Mexico, the idea of a North American *manifest destiny* gained currency. This was a vision of the United States leading the region. The New York *Morning News* wrote of, in December 1845, “the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent.” A week later, Massachusetts congressman Robert C. Winthrop also advocated “the right of our manifest destiny to spread over this whole continent.”³³ The idea was echoed by many other writers.³⁴

It was a message heard in Latin America, and more so after Mexico was relieved of more than half its territory. A Mexican diplomat would later compare the resulting 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as similar to the 1994 NAFTA, pointing out that both represented a “heavy liability [for] the Mexican people.”³⁵ Nevertheless, influenced by and in competition with the European empires, the idea of manifest destiny is said to have “galvanized North American faith in an expansive future.”³⁶

Martí, the Pan-American Conference, and the Organization of American States

Several decades later, in an attempt to impose the northern giant’s stamp on continental relations, James Blaine convened a Pan-American conference, held in Washington between October 2, 1889, and April 19, 1890.³⁷ Blaine, who was secretary of state under Presidents Garfield and Cleveland, was considered the heir to his predecessor Henry Clay’s dream of a hemispheric union, led by Washington. Five of the eight agenda items dealt with trade and economic integration: creation of a customs union, uniform customs regulations and standards, uniform port regulations, a Pan American railway system, and a common currency based on the silver coin.³⁸ Despite these matters being precursors to later free trade proposals, the United States in the late nineteenth century was highly protectionist. The McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 would survive for another forty-four years.³⁹

A Mexican delegate observed that most of the Latin American delegates “looked with distrust on the meeting . . . fearing that its object might be

to secure the political and commercial ascendancy of the United States on this continent.”⁴⁰ But they still attended the conference. The U.S. delegation was dominated by manufacturers and merchants, only one of whom spoke Spanish. Many of the Latin American delegates did not speak English;⁴¹ so distrust was compounded by the problems of translation.

Cuban consul José Martí—a nationalist, writer, and educator, who had been imprisoned by the Spanish as a young man—played a key role at the conference. Cuba was still a Spanish colony, and Martí had lived in exile in the United States for ten years prior to the conference. He understood North American politics and culture.⁴² He was also steeped in Latin American history, writing in a children’s story that “all Americans should love Bolívar like a father; Bolívar, and all those who fought like him so that America was for the American people.” He wrote this by way of developing lessons about character building and the pride one should feel to live in one’s own country, with one’s own people.⁴³

Martí, with his humanism and eloquence, acted to mobilize the natural suspicions of the Latin American delegates. Better for them to be the “natural friends” of the United States, he said, than to become “its choir, subject to a country with different interests, a hybrid composition and terrible problems, determined to face the world in an arrogant and perhaps childish challenge, before putting its own house in order.”⁴⁴ Echoing Bolívar, Martí said that the United States had begun to consider that the “universal aspiration” of freedom was its exclusive privilege, and that it had been acting “to invoke its name in order to deprive other nations of it.”⁴⁵ He insisted on presenting a united front to the U.S. hosts, speaking of a possible better future agreement between the south and the north, and he succeeded in blocking Blaine’s plan.

The Mexican delegate to the Pan-American conference observed that the United States’ move to establish a permanent court of arbitration in Washington “was looked on as a way of giving the United States a decided preponderance in all questions affecting this continent.” It was not accepted by the Latin American delegates.⁴⁶ The Argentine government favored trade reciprocity treaties, but in this area too, there was a lack of trust. In conflicts that foreshadowed the tensions within NAFTA a century later, Mexican sugar and mineral exports to the United States had been blocked, despite a bilateral reciprocity agreement between the two countries.⁴⁷ That did not reflect well on the proposal to extend similar agreements to the South Americans.

However, Martí’s fears over U.S. designs on his own country ran deeper. There is “another plan,” he would write, “dark and malevolent,” to force [Cuba] into war “in order to use that as a pretext to intervene, and to use the role of mediator or warrantor in order to seize control of it.”⁴⁸ Martí foresaw the United States inventing a pretext to intervene against the Spanish, and to then seize Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. All this in fact took place shortly after Martí died, fighting for Cuban independence.

The Pan-American conference failed to create a Washington-led union, with compulsory arbitration, a customs union, and a common currency (the

latter proposal was also opposed within the United States). However a Commercial Bureau of American Republics was created, under the supervision of the U.S. secretary of state. A committee with representatives from the other governments was formed later. This bureau came to be known as the International Bureau of American States, and later as the Pan-American Union.⁴⁹ After World War II (1939–1945), when the United States emerged as the major economic power, this group formed the basis for the Organization of American States (OAS).

Martí's ideas gave greater substance and ethical force to Bolívar's foundational plan. In his famous essay, "Our America," Martí develops a broad nationalism. Warning of looming U.S. imperialism and the need for a second independence, he said those who could not see beyond a narrow, parochial vision would be crushed by a monster. Regional disputes had to give way to an inclusive union: "The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing."⁵⁰ For Martí, Our America comprised the mixed race peoples of Latin America's former colonies. He spoke of the need to accept one's own culture and not seek to imitate imported systems or cultures. Democracies from other countries "could not be grafted onto a country without regard for its history and its own political realities."⁵¹ Local histories had to be taught, pluralism accepted, and a disjointed continent brought together.

Latin American resistance to U.S. dominance was widespread, but as Martí had predicted, it remained weak so long as it was fragmented. Attacks on the Monroe Doctrine and U.S. ambitions for the continent came from various countries and various traditions: for example, from Ruben Dario⁵² of Nicaragua, Carlos Pereyra⁵³ of Mexico, Manuel Ugarte⁵⁴ of Argentina, and Eduardo da Silva Prado⁵⁵ of Brazil. Fears were given substance by regular U.S.-armed interventions across the continent. For example, the first decade of the twentieth century, the United States intervened militarily in Cuba, Colombia, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Nicaragua.⁵⁶

The North American debate, perhaps unsurprisingly, has been rather different. A common view has been that Pan-Americanism simply means that "problems ought to be solved by the concert of American nations." This was not meant to be anti-European or anti-Asian but rather a practical expression of "the common or concerted action of . . . American republics for the welfare of one or more of them without infringement of their sovereignty or integrity."⁵⁷ The idea of U.S. imperialism has been considered in the north, but usually as a distortion of Pan-American ideals. Lockey wrote that the Pan-American ideals were of "the independence and equality of the American nations, community of political ideals, non-intervention, the settlement of inter-American disputes by amicable means, no conquest, and cooperation to achieve the common aim." However, it is logically clear that "if the ideals and the practice are too much at variance, Pan-Americanism may become a mockery" of such idealism.⁵⁸

A range of specialist Pan-American organizations sprang up in the early twentieth century, dealing with health, transport, coffee, geography, and so on.⁵⁹ However, the major in-principle dispute between the United States and the Latin American states in the Pan-American conferences of the early twentieth century was over recognition of the principle of nonintervention. Faced with a virtually united front from Latin America, the United States eventually gave in, with Secretary of State Cordell Hull recognizing nonintervention at the 1933 conference in Montevideo.⁶⁰ Of course, Washington intervened militarily both before and after this, but embedding the principle reduced the legitimacy of such interventions.

Davis says OAS finally came to inter-American relations “after fifty-eight years of amorphous existence.”⁶¹ The OAS charter was created at a 1948 conference in Bogota, after initial agreements in 1947 at Rio de Janeiro. The charter included provisions for voting (the “two thirds rule”), a collective security agreement (whereby disputes could be resolved without recourse to the United Nations), statements on rights and duties, and dispute resolution procedures.⁶²

One might say that the OAS, a clearly Pan-American organization, was reluctantly accepted in Latin America. The United States had tremendous economic weight in the postwar years, and the Latin states were generally weak and divided. However, the idea of Latin American union persisted.⁶³ The greatest morale boost to this dream was the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Fidel Castro’s forces managed to completely evict a U.S.-backed dictatorship, mafia regime, and commercial oligarchy, but it was precisely against Cuba that the OAS was used to its greatest effect.

The Cuban Revolution and Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress

In 1959, the Cuban Revolution moved rapidly into agrarian reform and shortly after to the nationalization of large companies, most of them owned by U.S. capital.⁶⁴ There were major social reforms, including a mass literacy campaign. However, talks over compensation for the nationalizations broke down as U.S. policy hardened against its small island neighbor.⁶⁵ Washington blocked the supply of oil to Cuban refineries, prepared an invasion of the island, and, when that failed, began to enforce a tight economic, commercial, and financial blockade.⁶⁶ The denial of oil and additional economic sanctions pushed Cuba into an energy agreement with the Soviet Union (mainly sugar for oil), and a failed invasion in April 1961, along with intelligence suggesting a second invasion was planned,⁶⁷ led to Cuba also seeking Soviet military assistance. This escalation culminated in the missile crisis of October 1962, which ended in a Soviet back-down but also blocked the second invasion.

U.S. diplomats noted that “Castro’s victory had triggered an outpouring of social revolutionary fervor throughout the Latin American region.”⁶⁸ The United States sought to contain this with a new regional plan. President

Kennedy launched his *Alliance for Progress* precisely to counter the demonstration effect of the Cuban Revolution. He called this “a vast co-operative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose.”⁶⁹ It seemed novel because, as Horowitz pointed out, “Instead of invoking the time-worn anti-communist rhetoric of the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines, which in practice had always meant defense of vested interests and the status quo, Kennedy set the US and its new Alliance firmly behind the demand for revolutionary change.”⁷⁰ Kennedy said he wanted the alliance to “transform the American continents into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts . . . with the rule of courage and freedom and hope for the future of man.”⁷¹ He spoke of land reform, loosening the power of the old oligarchs, and aid for infrastructure projects, economic growth, and employment. At home, he stressed the return of this foreign aid investment to U.S. companies and U.S. strategic interests, saying that the 1960s would be “a decade of development.”⁷² Nevertheless, three weeks later, Kennedy launched the attempted invasion of Cuba which, if it had succeeded, would have reversed the most prominent social revolution and land reform in the region.⁷³

The sanctions and aggression that had pushed Cuba into an energy and military alliance with the Soviet Union, along with the declaration of the Cuban Revolution as socialist in character, gave the United States sufficient pretext to mobilize the OAS against Cuba. The OAS condemned the Marxist-Leninist nature of Cuba’s new system as incompatible with the inter-American system. With the notable exception of Mexico, they agreed to suspend the rights and privileges of Cuba to participate in the group. The OAS also backed the United States to take measures, including armed force if need be, against the delivery of further Soviet Union weapons systems to the embattled island.⁷⁴ The OAS had effectively isolated Cuba.

Nonetheless, skepticism was widespread about Kennedy’s alliance: How would it advance land reform yet protect U.S. investments? The United States had overthrown a social democratic government in Guatemala in 1954 after a land reform program threatened U.S. corporate interests,⁷⁵ and the new alliance included people vehemently opposed to popular reforms, such as the military dictator of Nicaragua, Anastasio Somoza.⁷⁶ The contradictions of this Alliance for Progress were perhaps best played out in Chile, under the reformist Christian Democrat administration of Eduardo Frei (1965–1969). President Frei had some independent and reformist credentials, and U.S. President Lyndon Johnson called Chile “a model for the Alliance for Progress.”⁷⁷ The Frei administration did indeed legislate for agrarian reform as well as introduce education reforms and housing programs. However, while new schools were built and access to higher education was expanded, in practice the agrarian reform stalled and new housing did not reach the poorer sectors. Investment and economic growth also stalled. The result was hardly a success story either for Frei or Washington.⁷⁸ After this, the Popular Unity government of socialist President Salvador Allende actually carried out Frei’s agrarian reform agenda, also delivering on social programs and

nationalizing much of the mining and banking sectors.⁷⁹ The U.S. reaction was to back a bloody military coup against Allende.⁸⁰ This, combined with the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala and the attacks on Revolutionary Cuba, would help confirm the distinct counterrevolutionary and antidemocratic role of Washington in the region.

Pan-Americanism is said to have experienced a crisis in the 1970s,⁸¹ when the United States helped install and maintain a chain of military dictatorships across the continent—in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. The United States had been confronted by the Cuban Revolution and a leftist Chile. It then lost a major war in Vietnam and, in the late 1970s, was ejected from Iran and lost its client dictator Anastasio Somoza to Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution. It took the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989–1991, an apparent victory for the United States in its ideological cold war, for a revival of Washington's project.

Free Trade or a Bolivarian Alliance?

The invasion of Panama in 1989, to arrest a defiant military ruler,⁸² and the U.S. attacks and economic sanctions on Nicaragua, culminating in electoral defeat of the Sandinistas,⁸³ were precursors to a Pan-American revival in the 1990s. However, the first Gulf War of 1991 and the prominence of global economic organizations showed a wider U.S. focus. New alliances formed in multilateral trade discussions culminated in the 1995 creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which embodied a fair degree of U.S. strategic economic ambition.⁸⁴ Further, because the debt crisis of the early 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB; both based in Washington) had been implementing systematic loan programs that helped impose neoliberal reforms (privatizations, less controls on foreign capital, trade liberalization) on a wide range of countries.⁸⁵

Perhaps paradoxically, this new globalism⁸⁶ helped undermine Washington's influence within the Americas. The idea of a special relationship with the countries of the Americas took second place to wider ambitions, fostered by U.S. dominance in the UN Security Council. President George H. Bush spoke of a "new world order,"⁸⁷ and U.S. think tanks promoted the idea of a "New American Century,"⁸⁸ suggesting U.S. dominance would survive the twentieth century. Yet even at the beginning of the 1990s, analysts were observing "reductions in the level of U.S. control over Latin America."⁸⁹ Although NAFTA with Canada and Mexico had been designed to keep pace with European integration, distraction from the region was exacerbated by increasing dependency on fossil fuels and an anxiety to control Middle East supplies. This became particularly prominent after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were used to justify invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as part of a move to establish greater control of the entire oil-rich region.⁹⁰

The revival in Pan-Americanism was weakened by a chronic U.S. trade deficit and the Middle East wars. Nevertheless, elements of the new

Pan-Americanism were said to include: (1) new and harsher measures to isolate socialist Cuba, in attempts to incite economic and social collapse; (2) the 1994 launch of NAFTA; (3) strengthening of the U.S. military's Southern Command (SOUTHCOM); (4) advocacy of NAFTA-like principles at the newly formed WTO; and (5) the parallel initiative of the FTAA.⁹¹ Perhaps buoyed by its global self-image, U.S. strategy in Latin America in the early twenty-first century is said to have been "overwhelmingly unilateral," combining manifest destiny leadership ideas with a security agenda that linked expansion of trade and the capture of natural resources to national security.⁹²

The centerpiece of this new Pan-Americanism would be a trade and investment agreement embodying many of the themes of the Washington conference a century earlier. Through the OAS, Washington organized the First Summit of the Americas in Miami in December 1994. The stated principles were to develop "partnerships in development and prosperity," to "preserve and strengthen the democracies of the Americas," to promote prosperity "through economic integration and trade," to eradicate poverty and discrimination, and to "guarantee sustainable development and conserve our natural environment."⁹³ By 1998, there was a draft treaty called the FTAA, modeled closely on NAFTA. The key elements of this draft agreement were "trade liberalization to promote economic growth and prosperity," strong investment and intellectual property rights, and "clear transparent and stable" rules for investment and trade.⁹⁴ A number of these issues, in particular strong investor rights, were being fought simultaneously at the WTO.⁹⁵ UN-led industrialization strategies had failed the southern continent, yet so too had the neoliberal structural adjustment programs, resisted so strongly throughout the 1980s and 1990s.⁹⁶

Fragmentation, weak economies of scale, and a lack of combined political will all worked against the Latin American nations. The FTAA came at a time when the IMF abolished the phrase "structural adjustment" from its lexicon, replacing it with "Poverty Reduction Strategies,"⁹⁷ as public protests erupted outside WTO summit meetings and as Latin America observed the disruption of Mexico's agricultural sector, following NAFTA.⁹⁸ The proposal did not emerge at a particularly auspicious time.

Of course, virtually all countries look for new opportunities in trade and forms of cooperation, but the key question has always been: "on what terms?" Many countries participated in the WTO not because they liked everything that was on offer, but because they feared being left out.⁹⁹ In the Americas, the question of an alternative to the FTAA would certainly attract some interest. Latin Americans have occasionally put the question, "Why is it that the north has the wealth when the south has greater natural and human resources?" That question would reemerge as alternatives to the FTAA were explored. A Cuban analyst pointed out that integration in Latin America has natural advantages over that of other regions, with a shared culture, history, language, and identity.¹⁰⁰

Yet the creation of a concrete alternative to the FTAA needed craft and political will, most likely through some special personal relationship of Latin American leaders. That would come through the links developed between Hugo Chávez and the man who has been referred to as “the greatest Latin American of the 20th century,”¹⁰¹ the leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro.¹⁰² Chávez had begun to make his mark in the early 1990s. Riots in Caracas in 1989 had followed the implementation of an IMF plan, and the repression that followed left hundreds dead.¹⁰³ That act incited talks among Bolivarian circles within the military, soldiers who noted that the founder of their nation and army, Simon Bolívar, had placed a curse on the soldier who fired on his own people.¹⁰⁴ These officers attempted a coup in 1992, and, when that failed, Chávez and some others were jailed. Two years later, they were pardoned and released from prison. Chávez then began open political activity, attracting the attention of Cuba.

Eusebio Leal, the historian of Havana, was the man who introduced Chávez to Fidel Castro. Leal had been invited to Caracas by the Cultural Association in 1994 to give a speech on José Martí. He says, “I was speaking about Martí when, suddenly, Chávez appeared in the audience.” He had just emerged from prison, and his presence caused a commotion in the audience. “I got down from the stage and greeted him,” Leal said.¹⁰⁵ Later the Cuban government learned that the Venezuelan President, Rafael Caldera, was going to receive the president of the Cuban American National Foundation, Jorge Mas Canosa, a man committed to the overthrow of the Cuban Revolution and fully backed in his efforts by the U.S. government. The Cuban government was outraged, and in response, Leal began to prepare a letter of protest to President Caldera. However, Fidel Castro decided to take matters a step further, inviting Chávez to visit Cuba and speak about the Bolivarian dream of integration.¹⁰⁶

Chávez accepted and arrived in Havana in December 1994 to be greeted like a visiting head of state, although at that time he held no position at all in Venezuela. At a conference at Havana University, Chávez said, “The coming century is one of hope, of the resurrection of the Bolivarian dream, the dream of Martí, the Latin American dream’ . . . Sandino, Mariategui . . . there are the roots of a national project, a single Latin American nation.”¹⁰⁷ The subsequent discussions between Chávez and the Cuban government mostly touched on similar matters of history.¹⁰⁸ Back at home, after four years of public campaigning and facing opposition by all the major political parties, Chávez was elected president of Venezuela.

As president, he embarked on the process of constitutional change (which, along with the participatory provisions, changed the name of the country to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), gradually reclaiming the country’s oil and gas resources and confronting strong opposition, particularly from Washington. His broad popular support enabled him to survive a U.S.-backed military coup in April 2002. After that, he began to radicalize his domestic programs, including an expansion of relations with Cuba.¹⁰⁹

Chávez spoke of continental union many times in the years between his assuming office in 1999 and December 2004, when the first ALBA agreements were signed. Perhaps the most significant occasion was in December 2001, at a Caribbean summit, when he linked the idea of a Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean States (*Confederación de Estados Latino Americanos y Caribeños*) to the name of Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (*Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas*).¹¹⁰ This single idea would result in two distinct organizations with almost the same names: the left-oriented subgroup called ALBA (in 2004) and the fully inclusive CELAC (in 2011). None of this negated Chavez's search for wider south-south cooperation, including with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) group of oil exporters, those other countries under threat from Washington (such as Iran and Syria), the larger counterweight nations such as China and Russia, and the smaller countries of Africa and the Pacific. However, his main focus remained firmly on Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, in December 2004, on the tenth anniversary of his first visit to Havana, Chávez returned to Cuba to sign the first ALBA agreements with Fidel Castro, effectively launching a new regional movement.¹¹¹ A few months later, at the 2005 Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Chávez told a large crowd, "We have come with a spade, because the grave of FTAA is here at Mar del Plata" ("Hemos venido con una pala, porque en Mar del Plata está la tumba del ALCA [*Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas*]").¹¹² He and other Latin American heads of government had come to confront the old projects: "That of Jefferson and Monroe, of America for the Americans, but understanding Americans only as the inhabitants of the United States, and that of our project of the south, launched by Miranda, San Martín, Artigas, Sucre, Bolívar . . . two hundred years ago." His words were received by wild applause, singing and waving of flags, in a large stadium.¹¹³ The FTAA had indeed ground to a halt.

THE ALBA AND THE CELAC

Just before the Havana agreements, Chávez spoke in Caracas, stressing the need for integration to be a participatory process, "Necessary integration, liberating integration, not neocolonial integration . . . in this real integration the social movements of Latin America, the workers, the students, the small farmers, the organised women have a key role." This would help organize millions across the continent, in some type of Latin American Confederation of Workers, struggling against neoliberalism and imperialism.¹¹⁴ The initial agreements would be between states but would facilitate human development and participation.

ALBA was initially called an alternative to the FTAA, but soon after became an alliance. It was not a model in the Western modernist sense, but

rather an evolving alternative project based on principle. CELAC drew on a similar postcolonial identity but softened some ideas to take account of participation by a wider variety of political-economic systems. Both made departures from the perceived failures of the FTAA project. These counter-projects would, therefore, recognize the need to build an integration that did not include the chief imperial power, the United States (nor, said the ALBA, the oligarchs of the region); that the need for integration would go well beyond trade, free trade, or economic issues, into a deep and inclusive social and political integration, based on solidarity, complementarity, and cooperation; and that integration (according to the ALBA group and some of the other governments) had to develop new media channels to break the private oligopolies that controlled information and debate.¹¹⁵

The ALBA

The first ALBA (for Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) agreements of December 14, 2004, were a collection of distinct trade, aid, investment, and integration agreements between Cuba and Venezuela; the Bolivian government led by Evo Morales joined very soon after. The ALBA stressed regional and south-south cooperation, along with social and industrial development, as a counterproject to U.S.-dominated free trade agreements, which had mostly ensured access for giant corporations. It was also a reaction to the earlier neoliberal projects that had contributed to the collapse of health and education services, and to the weakening of state capacity through privatizations.¹¹⁶

The inaugural declaration endorsed the words of Chavez at the 2001 Caribbean summit, a call for “a real Latin American and Caribbean integration based on justice . . . the cardinal principle which must guide the ALBA is the widest solidarity between the people of Latin America and the Caribbean . . . without narrow nationalism or a national politics which negates the objective of constructing a Great Country (*Patria Grande*) in Latin America.”¹¹⁷ Principles of the initial Cuba-Venezuela agreement included “just and sustainable development,” “special and differential treatment,” guaranteed access to benefits for those who participate (as opposed to a competitive system where big players win), “cooperation and solidarity” (particularly as expressed by strong regional social programs), special funds and measures for the environment and for emergencies, energy integration (a theme pushed by Venezuela), less dependence of foreign investment and inter-member preferences for public and joint venture capital, protection of Latin American and Caribbean cultures and the establishment of *Telesur* to present “our realities,” and multilateral positions on democratic struggles.¹¹⁸

Practical complementarity can be seen in the first Cuba-Venezuela exchanges. Cuba made the following offers to Venezuela: removal of all tariffs and other trade barriers on Venezuelan goods; *national treatment plus*, meaning sharing public facilities such as shipping ports and sports facilities;

a minimum of 15,000 Cuban health professionals to work in Venezuelan primary care (*Barrio Adentro*); 2,000 general scholarships annually to young Venezuelans and thousands of medical scholarships (a ten-year offer); multideestination tourist products (sharing the benefits of Cuba's tourism industry); and preferences, including tax exemptions, for all Venezuelan state-owned and joint-venture investments in Cuba. In return, Venezuela made these offers: removal of all tariffs and other trade barriers on Cuban goods; national treatment plus; transfer of energy sector technology and an oil purchase agreement (a minimum price of \$27 per barrel of oil plus an agreed premium); all scholarships in the energy sector to meet Cuba's needs; finances for infrastructure and energy projects (such as rehabilitation of the Cienfuegos refinery); and preferences, including tax exemptions, for all Cuban state-owned and joint-venture investments in Venezuela.¹¹⁹ Much of this involved state sector exchange while the investment agreements, in contrast with U.S.-style free trade agreements, favored state equity.

Other than the large-scale barter type exchanges (e.g., medical and educational services for energy sector assistance and discount oil), the ALBA reestablished the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meaning of "special and differential treatment" (SDT) in place of a WTO reworking of the term. There had been long discussion at the United Nations of the need for distinct tracks of development for developing countries, mostly former colonies. However, at the WTO, the big powers revised this to mean simply a slower pace of liberalization.¹²⁰ The idea of national treatment in the ALBA was also different to that of the WTO. At the WTO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in draft investment agreements, the idea of national treatment aimed at removing discrimination against private foreign investors and treating them like national entities.¹²¹ In the ALBA, national treatment simply meant a noncommercial sharing of national facilities. Table 2.2 shows key contrasts between themes of the FTAA and those of the ALBA.

Table 2.2 Free Trade Themes and Bolivarian Alliance Themes

FTAA	ALBA
Free trade, global competition regimes	Complementarity, south-south cooperation
Economic growth, <i>trickle down</i> benefits	Solidarity and social development, <i>guaranteed</i> benefits for all participants
Strong private investor rights	Regional and public investor preference
Single-track, rules-based system	Special and differential treatment
Metropolitan control of energy, free trade in cultural services	Energy integration, cultural protection

Both Cuba and Venezuela enjoyed substantial economic growth as a result of these new collaborations, with all the construction, employment, and production they entailed. For the five years from 2004 and 2008 (when the U.S. financial crisis hit), Cuba's average per capita economic growth rate was 8 percent whereas Venezuela's was 8.6 percent, compared with a Latin American average of 4 percent.¹²² Within a few years, the ALBA group had grown to eight nation states (Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) with considerable diversity of systems. Honduras was a member but withdrew after a military coup in 2009.¹²³ President Evo Morales from Bolivia got the title of ALBA extended to refer to the "Peoples' Trade Agreement" (TCP; *Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos*), in contrast with a free trade agreement (*tratado de libre comercio*); since then, the ALBA became the ALBA-TCP. With the inclusion of several small Caribbean island states, a resurgent Sandinista-led Nicaragua and a social democratic *Citizens' Revolution* in Ecuador, led by Rafael Correa, the group showed a genuine plurality of systems.

From the Cuban side, there has been discussion of the Martí-an nature of this alliance, as some felt that the ideas of Martí were more highly developed and focused on the necessary second independence of the postcolonial context. So the Martí-an Alternative for the Americas (ALMA; *Alternativa Martiana para las Américas*)¹²⁴ is occasionally mentioned, with reference to new economic thought, humanist development and the plurality of initiatives suggested by Cuban socialism and its renewal, the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, the Citizens' Revolution in Ecuador, indigenous revival in Bolivia, and the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua.¹²⁵ However, as Martí was a great disciple of Bolívar, the Bolivarian idea has not been seriously challenged.

The most powerful expressions of ALBA in its first years were the social programs—literacy, primary health care, education, and health programs—typically financed by and with logistic support from Venezuela and staffed by Cuban professionals. Through these programs, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua all reduced their adult illiteracy to minimal levels in just a few years.¹²⁶ A large group of Cuban social workers also helped install power-saving light bulbs and consumer appliances across several countries in a very short time, in something called *the energy revolution*.¹²⁷ Then there were more than 2 million eye operations, mostly by Cuban doctors, to address curable blindness,¹²⁸ and on the back of this, new programs to address the needs of handicapped persons were launched and extended beyond the ALBA group into some neighboring countries.¹²⁹ The scale and advances of these programs deflects a criticism that is sometimes made of ALBA's over-reliance on state-to-state agreements, suggesting there has been less action in fomenting participation.¹³⁰ Investment in this basic human development is the foundation of further meaningful social participation.

In 2009, Fidel Castro wrote of his satisfaction that the ALBA "as an unprecedented example of revolutionary solidarity has demonstrated what

it can do in just five years of peaceful cooperation.”¹³¹ By 2011, achievements of the new grouping were said to include: lifting 11 million people out of poverty; making 3.5 million more people literate, thus raising overall literacy from 84 percent to 96 percent; increasing school and college enrollments; launching massive joint health programs reducing infant mortality by 32 percent; and assisting 900,000 handicapped people in 2010 alone.¹³² It is hardly surprising that neighboring countries sought assistance with some of these social programs.¹³³

Other regional institutions have been driven by Venezuela. Petrocaribe and Petrosur are organizations started by Chavez with the aim of providing concessional oil and oil facilities to regional partners, whether members of ALBA or not. Telesur, the important regional public broadcaster, is based in Caracas but is jointly owned by several countries and has content from the entire region. It is a specific counter to U.S. television networks.¹³⁴ The ALBA Bank, and indeed the headquarters of ALBA, are also based in Caracas. The secretariat says of the group that “what at first sight seemed a mere critique of the old models has become a broad alternative based on new principles.”¹³⁵ The group is said to have broken with “economistic schemes” and to have given greater weight to “the political and social agreements so necessary for our societies.”¹³⁶

ALBA-type agreements have been formed with nonmember countries. For example, in early 2005, Venezuela signed nine agreements with Argentina, which included: a commitment to Telesur; technical cooperation between state oil agencies; supply of Argentine ship-building facilities to Venezuela in exchange for Petrosur agreements on concessional oil supply; cooperation on health, hospitals, health science, and social sciences;¹³⁷ and agreement to develop the project of a continental gas pipeline.

The ALBA most strongly articulated, and passed on to the CELAC, the call for a “new regional financial architecture.” The two pillars of this system, from the ALBA, would be the Bank of ALBA and a new regional currency, the Unified System of Regional Compensation (SUCRE; *Sistema Único de Compensación Regional*). The Bank of ALBA would finance investments, principally Great Nation Projects and Enterprises (*Empresas y Proyectos Grannacionales*) set up by the ALBA, while the SUCRE would gradually become the new medium of exchange. It was envisaged that, at a global level, a *basket* of currencies would take over from the USD (for U.S. dollar) as the base of international monetary transactions.¹³⁸ The first actual SUCRE transactions took place in 2010, in textile sales from Bolivia to Venezuela.¹³⁹ The following year, in 2011, commercial trade within the ALBA group was reported to have reached 4.5 billion USD,¹⁴⁰ largely through oil, agricultural commodity, and textile exchange.

Executive Secretary of ALBA, Rodolfo Sanz, pointed out that some of the Great Nation projects and enterprises were charting new territory. ALBAMED, for example, had listed 475 essential medicines that would be made available to the member countries under a new regulatory system.

ALBATEL was constructing a new system of communications, including by use of its own satellite.¹⁴¹ The impact of ALBA might, therefore, be seen in reshaping some important international norms.

The CELAC

The creation of CELAC came very soon after the 2008 launch of UNASUR. Whereas UNASUR has developed a permanent secretariat, the CELAC extended the union further to include Central America, Mexico, and all the Caribbean states.¹⁴² CELAC had been a long time coming, but some proximate developments helped. The idea was pushed along by the U.S. move, through the OAS, to back elections under a *de facto* government created in Honduras after the 2009 military coup.¹⁴³ Most Latin American states saw this as illegitimate. In the end, it was the ALBA (and Chávez in particular) that helped resolve the Honduran post-coup standoff, and it was UNASUR that helped defuse coup attempts in Ecuador and Bolivia.¹⁴⁴ The history of coups in Latin America is strongly linked to their powerful northern patron, and a “circuit breaker” has long been needed in the form of a powerful southern bloc.

The CELAC grew from discussions at the Rio Group (created in 1986) and the Summit on Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development (held in December 2008). A unity summit in Mexico in February 2010 made the final plan and the new organization—with a declaration of principles and an action plan—was launched at a Caracas summit on December 3, 2011.¹⁴⁵ At the time of writing, the group is still very new but does carry hopes. The Cuban Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodríguez, said CELAC would have an important role in the “enormous challenge of confronting communicational hegemony,”¹⁴⁶ the propaganda wars that seek to legitimize, or delegitimize, other social systems.

CELAC was virtually ignored by the U.S. media, with a U.S. State Department spokesperson asserting that the OAS remained “the pre-eminent multilateral organization speaking for the hemisphere.”¹⁴⁷ Nonetheless, in early 2013, CELAC held a joint summit with the European Union. It is notable that CELAC has adopted some important elements of the ALBA agenda and that, in turn, some of these are seen in the joint CELAC-European Union declaration. CELAC at present has a rotating presidency and no permanent institutions, but parallel experience of UNASUR shows that this could rapidly change. The new regional bloc helps us identify some key distinctions between the two great competing trends of American integration, as shown in Table 2.3.

The Caracas Declaration of CELAC explicitly linked its rationale to the aims of Bolívar, while absorbing the integration aspirations of both the Caribbean and Latin America. Key themes were: a union “based on a wise equilibrium between the unity and diversity of our peoples,” recognition of different political and economic systems, peaceful dispute settlement,

Table 2.3 Competing Themes in American Integration

Pan-Americanism	Latin Americanism
Washington-led Pan-Americanism: “America for the Americans”	Latin American postcolonial fraternity: “Our America” (Bolívar, Martí)
Free trade and integration of capital	Mutual benefit and integration of peoples
Neoliberal globalism, with full spectrum dominance	Developmental guarantees, south–south cooperation and cultural protection

respect for sovereignty and noninterference, and deepened social and development cooperation.¹⁴⁸ The Santiago Declaration of CELAC with the European Union, a year later, shared some important ideas. It rejected “coercive measures of a unilateral character” (in a clear reference to the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba); adopted the ALBA–CELAC theme of social and economic “cooperation and complementarity”; recognized the right of countries to regulate investors so as to meet national policy objectives (a softening of the strong investor privileges that the United States and the European Union had backed at the OECD and the WTO); shared the prioritizing of social and ecological sustainable development; and initiated a “bi-regional strategic partnership” process.¹⁴⁹ These are significant departures from Pan-Americanism.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: CHÁVEZ AND AMERICAN INTEGRATION

Tributes to the influence of Hugo Chávez on American integration come from all sides, except Washington. At the CELAC summit in Santiago, Chile, when Chávez was absent due to serious illness, Chile’s President Sebastián Piñera said Chávez had “a profound impact on the organisation.”¹⁵⁰ Piñera praised the “vision, tenacity and strength” shown by Chávez in pushing for the creation of CELAC.¹⁵¹ In Venezuela, Chávez created a strong foundation in radical social democracy. He “made political will prevail . . . stopped the neoliberal offensive . . . made the state appropriate strategic sectors of the economy . . . [and] recovered national sovereignty.”¹⁵² From the left, there is the view that Chávez and the Venezuelan Revolution “put an end to a ‘dark period’ after the fall of the Soviet Union and became the lighthouse of a democratic socialistic project before the world.”¹⁵³

In the realm of Latin American integration, the impact of Chávez has been tremendous. There can be little doubt that the great will and political skill of Chávez was the foundation of both the ALBA and CELAC. This chapter has argued that only by observing distinct themes in the competing histories of Pan-Americanism and Latin-Americanism can we can appreciate the recent

and distinct regional developments in the Americas. Pan-Americanism has been a Washington-led project of America for the Americans, emphasizing free trade, the metropolitan integration of capital, and, more recently, neo-liberal globalism. Latin Americanism has been an antiimperial fraternity of former colonies, based on the idea of Our America and stressing mutual benefit, an integration of peoples, south–south cooperation, and cultural protection. The counter-hegemonic, historically contingent, and social democratic process that revived the latter project owes much to Chávez. The emphases on social and human development, opening up the possibility of greater participation and cooperation, go well beyond the region’s recent achievements in economic growth. A chronic fragmentation that held the region back has, to a great degree, been overcome and, although it remains to be seen what will be done with the new union and its organizations, the participatory nature of the new regionalism seems likely to help it endure and bear fruit, even beyond Chávez. When Cuba took over the presidency of CELAC in 2013, Argentina’s President Cristina Fernández aptly observed, “Cuba’s assumption of the presidency of the CELAC marks a change of times.”¹⁵⁴

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