

Preface

Latin American countries' approach to PTAs is a fascinating topic. There is a rich history of how policymakers have used trade agreements to advocate different economic and political models of integration. What we observe is an important variation across time and space. What really stands out is the diversity of approaches and attitudes towards using PTAs. While some countries have been rule-makers and engaged in innovative attempts to introduce new topics, others have been reluctant to use reciprocal trade agreements. The landscape of trade agreements has been further affected by regional integration attempts in the Southern and Central American regions and the existing interests of outside trading partners, such as the US and Europe, not to mention China's non-traditional approach to trade cooperation. Finally, we have noticed an increasing interest and politicization in the wider public when it comes to different treaty projects and the question of 'with whom to trade'.

This project brings together scholars from within and outside the region to address some past, current and future challenges related to PTAs. The contributions offer, from various disciplinary backgrounds, new insights related to questions of the design, diffusion and effects of PTAs. Some of the contributions focus on single countries, on single issue areas; others take a more comparative approach. We thank everyone involved in this collaborative effort and hope that the partnerships developed throughout the process will generate many follow-up studies on the history and the future of trade relations in Latin America.

Our special thanks go to all participants of the World Trade Forum 2022, where early versions of the chapters were presented and discussed. We also thank Sophia Thompson for editorial support and Cambridge Law for supporting the Forum Series over the years.

We also acknowledge financial support from the University of St. Gallen and the Institute of Management in Latin America (GIMLA), which acts as a Leading House from the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), granting incentives and developing joint research cooperation projects with Latin America.

