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**STRATEGIC CULTURE AND REGIONAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE:  
THE AGENCY OF REGIONAL SECONDARY POWERS IN THE  
CREATION OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN DEFENCE COUNCIL**

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# ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates the roles Argentina, Chile, and Colombia played in the creation of the South American Defence Council (SADC), resorting to the conceptual framework of Strategic Culture to tap into the meanings and motives behind state behaviour. By doing this, it brings forward an aspect often neglected by the existing literature, emphasizing the role of agents in shaping the social structure within which they interact.

The SADC, one of the first sectorial councils created within the Union of South American States (UNASUR, in Spanish), is an innovative governance mechanism in South America devoted to fostering dialogue, policy coordination, and cooperation in the defence sector. The significance of its creation cannot be overstated, bringing together a dozen countries with diverse security and defence concerns, material capabilities, ideational commitments, and diverging political agendas. However, the existing research on its creation has almost exclusively resorted to (sub)systemic approaches that examine structural incentives and constraints present at the moment of its creation.

The argument of this thesis is that, in order to understand regional security dynamics in a more nuanced and comprehensive way, it is necessary to escape the temptation of approaching the topic exclusively from a regional-level perspective. Instead, the present research proposes a way by which the creation of the SADC can be studied in terms of the impact that the agency of individual states has had in shaping the South American security environment. In order to do this, it engages with different elements of the constructivist research agenda, particularly so with the notion that agents and structures are permanently immersed in a process of mutual co-constitution.

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## List of abbreviations

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**ABACC** *Agencia Brasileño-Argentina de Contabilidad y Control de Materiales Nucleares* (Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials)

**ABC** Argentina, Brazil, Chile

**ALBA** *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)

**AMFA** Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**AMoD** Argentine Ministry of Defence

**BNDES** Brazilian National Development Bank

**CAECOPAZ** *Centro Argentino de Entrenamiento Conjunto Para Operaciones de Paz* (Argentine Joint Training Centre for Peace Operations)

**CAN** *Comunidad Andina de Naciones* (Andean Community of Nations)

**CEED** *Centro de Estudios Estrategicos de la Defensa* (Centre for Strategic Defence Studies)

**ChMFA** Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**ChMoD** Chilean Ministry of Defence

**COIN** Counter-Insurgency

**CoMFA** Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**CoMoD** Colombian Ministry of Defence

**COMPERSEG** *Comite Permanente de Seguridad* (Argentina-Chile Permanent Security Committee)

**COSIPLAN** *Consejo Suramericano de Infraestructura y Planeamiento* (South American Infrastructure and Planning Council)

**DCA** Defence Cooperation Agreement

**DDR** Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

**DEA** Drugs Enforcement Agency (US)

**DSP** Democratic Security Policy (Colombia)

**ECLAC** United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

**ELN** *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (National Liberation Army)

**ESUDE** *Escuela Suramericana de Defensa* (South American Defence School)

**ETA** *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Basque Homeland and Liberty)

**FAdeA** *Fabrica Argentina de Aviones “Brigadier San Martin”* (Argentine Aircraft Factory)

**FARC** *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces)

**FTAA** Free-Trade Agreement of the Americas

**IADB** Inter-American Development Bank

**IIRSA** *Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana* (Initiative for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure)

**IMF** International Monetary Fund

**IRA** Irish Revolutionary Army

**LAIA** Latin American Integration Association

**MERCOSUR** *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Common Market)

**MINUSTAH** United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

**NATO** North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**OAS** Organization of American States

**OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**RSCT** Regional Security Complex Theory

**SADC** South American Defence Council

**SASC** South American Security Complex

**SOUTHCOM** Southern Command (US Navy)

**TIAR** *Tratado Inter-Americano de Asistencia Recíproca* (Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty)

**UNASUR** *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (Union of South American Nations)

**UNSAS** United Nations Stand-by Arrangement System

**UNSC** United Nations Security Council

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

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## General considerations and goal of the research project

The purpose of this research is to fill a gap in the currently available knowledge regarding the processes that led to creation of the South American Defence Council (SADC), the first organization in this region specifically devoted to multilateral consultation, policy coordination, and cooperation in the defence sector. More specifically, it seeks to contribute to the field focusing on how the agency of South American secondary powers was informed by their respective cultural background, determining their negotiating agendas for the SADC treaty and affecting the evolution of regional security governance<sup>1</sup> mechanisms. In this way, the present research will not focus on the actual work of the SADC, but rather on domestic drivers behind the divergent approaches shown by these countries in the negotiations, as well as on how they affected the outcome by

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of *governance* is used here primarily as a descriptive label, pointing towards an understanding that acknowledges the roles various actors have in managing international affairs. Governance approaches to international security do not challenge the central role states have, but rather add extra layers of analysis by considering the roles of non-state actors in the equation (Krahmann 2003, 5–6). Also, governance studies focus on “emergent political institutions and practices that are less territorially focused than their statal counterparts” (Jessop 2016, 2). The present research focuses on “state actors”, but it does so trying to avoid their reification and opening up the “black box” to look at how intra-elite understandings and disagreements affect state behaviour.

pushing for their respective preferences on regional security management, institutionalization, and cooperation. In doing so, it seeks to produce an agent-level constructivist approach that will complement the regional-level analyses that currently dominate the debate.

### Brief description of the SADC

Before moving forward with other specifics, it is important to provide some details regarding the nature and relevance of the SADC in order to contextualize the research. This organization, whose constitutive treaty was finalized in December 2008 (Appendix 1), was among the first sectorial councils formed within the framework of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR, in Spanish). The UNASUR represented a breaking point with previous forms of regional cooperation, not only because it set aside the trade liberalization agendas that defined past regionalist projects (see Chapter 2), but also because it adopted an approach of segmented institutionalization by sector. In terms of the model of regional governance advanced, it has been described as

“[...] a space above the state for debate, knowledge-sharing and the promotion of new practices and methods of regional policy formation, and to provide democratically elected governments with some external support mechanism to which they can turn when faced with internal and external critics. In this new register, regional governance is taking shape in a less spectacular way than in the past and it is proceeding in parts, rather than in response to a comprehensive road map set out in advance.” (Riggirozzi and Grugel 2015, 781–82)

The UNASUR, and the SADC by extension, can also be described as a multilateral approach to governance, explicitly rejecting the creation of a supranational entity. Yet, the case remains that this sectorial, seemingly unambitious, effort established the first basic security governance mechanisms at the South American level. Moreover, it represents the

only instance to date in which the Ministries of Defence (rather than the leaders of the Armed Forces) of the region agreed on a set of principles to strengthen mutual trust and the regional Zone of Peace, advancing cooperation and policy coordination agendas inspired primarily by successful cases of rapprochement seen in the region. This makes the SADC a relevant instance of political coordination and cooperation, able to respond speedily to crises as well as to steadily advance regional understandings during more stable times. The organization embodies a joint governance effort to manage the dynamics of the South American security environment focusing on the development of shared understandings and common goals (Silva Barros 2016, 240–42; Weiffen, Wehner, and Nolte 2013) which, according to Jorge Battaglino,

“[...] can contribute to the development and institutionalization of dynamics that facilitate [conflict] prevention and management through the political coordination among South American countries.” (Battaglino 2012, 92)

Bilateral instances of policy cooperation aiming to achieve precisely these goals existed in the region at least since the early 1990s, though they mostly focused on strengthening the relationship between the respective Armed Forces rather than on increasing the contact between civil servants and high-ranking civilians working at the Ministries of Defence. Similarly, a defence dialogue forum was created in the late 1990s inside the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)<sup>2</sup>. However, despite promising initial steps, it failed to develop an proper work agenda, and the defence sector remained a very minor topic among MERCOSUR activities. The creation of the SADC, on the contrary, represents a significant change of pace and scale for the region in terms of promoting defence

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<sup>2</sup> A free trade bloc formed in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Venezuela was accepted as a full member in 2012, but remains suspended as of 2016 due to “democratic concerns”. Bolivia was accepted as a full member in 2015, with its accession process still ongoing. Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Suriname participate as associated countries.

cooperation and policy coordination in the area, even if it does not respond to “a comprehensive roadmap set out in advance”.

As other UNASUR sectorial councils, the SADC is an inter-ministerial cooperation arrangement. Its institutional structure is formed by the Ministers of Defence, Deputy-Ministers of Defence, and national working groups (UNASUR 2008b, Arts. 6-8), who meet twice a year to coordinate activities and take stock of ongoing actions. In a region characterized by “presidential diplomacy”, institutionalizing an organization to actively work at the ministerial level seeking to alter the regional order would have seemed unlikely only few years before.

The core of what this organization is expected to achieve can be found in its three main objectives (UNASUR 2008b, Art. 4): **a)** Consolidate South America as a Zone of Peace, a condition *sine qua non* to protect democratic stability and development; **b)** Move towards the construction of a regional defence identity, acknowledging existing differences; and, **c)** Enable the development of mutual understandings to foster cooperation.

Many relevant conclusions can be drawn from these main objectives, which will resonate with the analysis of the case studies. First, the key argument for the creation of the SADC is that active regional efforts are necessary to maintain the long-lasting South American peace (Kacowicz 1998), which can no longer rely on the good will of individual actors, bilateral agreements, nor lax sub-regional arrangements. More importantly, however relevant peaceful inter-state relations are, this objective is also conceived as essential in contributing towards the more pressing issues of democratic stability and socio-economic development. Linking regional and international efforts to the prospect of furthering domestic development and stability is by no means a game-changing narrative. Neither is establishing a relation between the defence sector and development,

particularly so in countries like Argentina and Brazil, who went through developmentalist phases between the 1950s-1970s, a period marked by dictatorships that often favoured industrialization in the defence sector to reduce external vulnerabilities. However, what is indeed a novelty for the region is the notion that a regional cooperation organization focused on the defence sector could contribute towards strengthening not only inter-state peace, but also socio-economic development and domestic political stability. This reflects the shared concerns of various South American governments, who no longer understood development, stability, and autonomy as matters to be left for the Ministers of Economy to sort, but rather as goals towards which all policy areas could contribute.

Objective b) and c) are good examples of the diametrically different perspectives on regionalism that separate UNASUR/SADC's agenda from previous experiences that focused primarily on economic and trade integration. MERCOSUR's main treaties and protocols<sup>3</sup>, for example, consistently mention the challenges coming from the international context, converging economic interests, and a compatible institutionality as the key ingredients facilitating regional economic integration. As a consequence, the main objectives of that integration project was creating a common market that would allegedly foster economic growth. The UNASUR framework maintains the imperative of fostering economic development in the region, as the previous paragraph explains. Yet, the task is approached with a view about what makes regional cooperation relevant that is diametrically different from that of MERCOSUR and other trade integration projects, incorporating a broader policy agenda that explicitly avoids discussing trade and economic integration, as well as the discourse of shared identities and history.

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<sup>3</sup> Constitutive Treaty of MERCOSUR – Asunción Treaty (1991); Ouro Preto Protocol (1994); Ushuaia Protocol (1998); Constitutive Protocol of the MERCOSUR Parliament (2005)

As Jorge Battaglino points out (2012, 84), the creation of the SADC cannot be fully explained without attributing a central role to shared ideational factors contributing to the development of a community in South America. The starting point for this organization is, then, that enough mutual understandings about the defence sector exist that make South America a distinct security region, something that will be discussed at more length in Chapter 3. More importantly, objectives b) and c) incorporate the notion that fostering the creation and strengthening of inter-subjective agreements about the defence sector is conducive to maintaining inter-state peace and facilitating cooperation. It should be noted that, while these innovations by no means hinder the co-existence of MERCOSUR and UNASUR/SADC, nor the possibility of the odd convergent efforts, a more meaningful mutual complementation seems difficult at the moment due to radically different perspectives on the political economy of development that persist.

These three main objectives are further broken down into eleven “specific objectives” (UNASUR 2008b, Art. 5)<sup>4</sup>. The main tasks listed there can be summarized as: identify and analyse existing common grounds; exchange information; form stronger trust ties; and, explore new avenues of cooperation and policy coordination. Crucially, records of the negotiations show that the formation of a Collective Security arrangement and similar provisions for pooling military forces were vigorously rejected by a majority of countries involved (Grupo de Trabajo del SADC 2009; UNASUR 2009), going directly against a Venezuelan proposal that called for the creation of a “NATO of the South”<sup>5</sup> (Otálvora 2006,

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<sup>4</sup> **a)** Identify and analyse common elements in the respective approaches to the defence sector; **b)** Promote a more fluid exchange of information and the joint analysis of issues; **c)** Contribute to the articulation of joint positions in multilateral fora; **d)** Move forward in the construction of shared perceptions; **e)** Strengthen mutual confidence measures; **f)** Promote cooperation among defence industries; **g)** Foster training, educational, and academic exchanges; **h)** Share experiences obtained in humanitarian missions and facilitate coordinated actions in them; **i)** Share experiences obtained in Peacekeeping Operations; **j)** Share experiences regarding processes of modernization of the respective Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces; and, **k)** Promote gender perspectives in the defence sector.

<sup>5</sup> A proposal of Venezuelan President, Hugo Chávez, whom spoke publicly about this possibility at the XX Anniversary of the Andean Pact, in 1999, and reiterated his stance over the years.

1; de Pádua and Mathias 2010, 58–59). In the end, however novel an institution the SADC was for the region, its design and objectives are comfortably grounded in the Latin American tradition of defending strong sovereign rights and engaging in multilateral fora, seeking to find the “greatest common denominator” so that the principle of unanimity in the decision-making process is preserved (Ruz 2011a, 4–5).

In sum, the objectives given to the SADC set a regional security agenda that emphasizes the relevance of developing shared understandings and perceptions about regional security, common threats, and norms informing the use of the defence apparatus; as well as creating routines to handle issues of mutual interest, developing coordinated defence agendas, and, institutionalizing regional security governance mechanisms (Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015; Sanahuja 2012).

Designed to avoid a bureaucratically-heavy organization, the SADC’s structure and work agenda were designed to make the most with the limited resources available. This meant that the initial stages of institution-building were devoted to incentivizing a nearly costless flow of ideas and information, trust-building processes, and building capacities within the organization. These would form a base on which incrementally ambitious and intrusive initiatives could be designed and implemented in later stages, and hence contribute with the organization’s main and specific goals. Given the mandate to maintain the bureaucratic structure to a minimum, there is no permanent personnel working for the SADC, except for the few people working at the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies (CEED, in Spanish) and the South American Defence School (ESUDE, in Spanish), both devoted to advancing main objectives b) and c). All other responsibilities, including the primary organizational and coordination duties, rotate yearly following the *Pro Tempore* Presidency of UNASUR.

### Expected contribution, working propositions, and research question

As will be discussed in more length in Chapter 2, the literature on the creation of the UNASUR and the SADC has focused primarily on (sub)systemic factors and processes. One of the dominant lines of research has forcefully argued that the decision to create this organization is related to the emergence of a regionalist agenda known as “Post-hegemonic regionalism” (Legler 2013; Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012b) from the early-2000s onwards. The key argument here is that the political success of this agenda requires the reconceptualization of shared regional understandings and goals, as well as of the cooperation arrangements needed to pursue them (Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015). Authors in this line of enquiry see the “post-hegemonic” as hybrid regionalism, combining native innovations conducive to increasing autonomy with elements of “hegemonic regionalism” (heavily influenced by the history, agendas, institutional design, and normative preferences of the liberal North, and primarily based on the European experience). These conditions contributed to the emergence of novel regional organizations focused on cooperation agendas closer to the concerns of the Global South (development and autonomy, to name just two among many others) than to the forms of economic liberalization promoted by northern powers and international organizations. The line of enquiry promoted by post-hegemonic regionalism and other similar perspectives has produced relevant knowledge about the ideational, political, and strategic choices involved in the creation of UNASUR and the SADC. However, it has done far less to explain what the role of individual agents has been in that process, let alone identify sources of divergence and contestation to the emerging regional agenda.

A second line of analysis interprets the creation of the UNASUR and the SADC as direct result of Brazilian global interests, seeking to advance a regional arrangement designed

to cement its “sphere of influence” (Spektor 2011, 59). From this perspective, the creation of the UNASUR/SADC is seen as a strategy designed to manufacture consent around the idea of a distinct South American region organized around Brazilian leadership, thus excluding potential competition from Mexico (in a Latin American setting) and the US (in a hemispheric setting). All indicators traditionally considered relevant to establish a country’s international power share underpin the argument that Brazil is the primary power in the region (Appendix 4). Moreover, it is likely that Brazil indeed had an interest in the UNASUR, among other things, because it stood to gain international prestige and a stronger footing as “global player”. Yet, considering the several instances in which secondary powers have contradicted Brazilian core foreign policy goals without noticeable consequences for them, their decision to join the negotiations cannot be fully explained by exclusively focusing on power distribution in the region.

The effects of these (sub)systemic factors will not to be dismissed here. On the contrary, the presence of shared ideational commitments at the South American level and the role Brazilian leadership are acknowledged as crucial aspects shaping the regional security environment. Yet, the starting point for the present research is that authors have approached the creation of the SADC focusing exclusively on the regional structure<sup>6</sup> and its characteristics, leaving aside the role played by agents shaping regional arrangements despite the constructivist argument that structure and agency are intertwined in a process of mutual co-constitution (Klotz and Lynch 2007, 3; Onuf 1998, 58; Wendt 1987).

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<sup>6</sup> The term “structure” is used in the sense that Constructivist thinking does, i.e. referring to “historically constructed normative structures” (Alderson and Hurrell 2000, 27). These behave as structures in the sense that they create long-term incentives and constraints, influencing the behaviour of actors. But, since they ultimately are the result of social constructions, structures are also susceptible to change over time due to the agency and interactions of the actors they influence.

This Thesis proposes an agent-centred approach to the regional security governance arrangement created with the SADC. Given that this research comes to fill a gap in the knowledge for which no information is readily available, an exploratory research design has been chose. This means that, rather than a hypothesis, the starting point for this research are the following working propositions:

1. Studying the behaviour of secondary powers is crucial to understand the role agency has in the construction of regional social arrangements, such as the SADC; and,
2. The characteristics given to this security governance mechanism are intimately related with the agency shown by secondary regional powers.

This propositions are based, as will become evident in the following sections, on the theoretical and epistemological commitments of constructivist IR theory.

Seeming contradictions and a multiplicity of positions expressed during the negotiations notwithstanding, the SADC agreement was successfully finalized after only four rounds of negotiation hosted by Chile over the second half of 2008. However, the diverging positions represented in the negotiations and how they influenced the creation of the SADC have rarely been analysed. In order to fill this gap I will resort to the conceptual framework of “Strategic Culture” (Chapter 4), looking into how social norms regarding the use of the defence apparatus defined a path-dependent set of perceptions and understandings about the regional security environment. These, in turn, largely explain the negotiating agendas brought by secondary powers and the trade-offs countries were willing to make, and provide insights into how common ground was found in spite of diverging “Strategic Cultures”.

To sum up and crystalize the key concern driving this research, the central question this Thesis is seeking to answer is: How did the agency of secondary regional powers affect the regional security governance mechanisms created with the SADC?

Appropriately answering this question requires that subsidiary questions are also tackled: What are the relevant domestic roots of state agency<sup>7</sup> in the defence sector? How did normative priors influence the perception of the region and of the SADC initiative? How did that relate to the negotiating agendas brought by secondary powers? How did secondary powers deploy their agency during the negotiations? What role can be attributed to their agendas in the regional security governance mechanisms created? What does all this mean in terms of understanding the process of mutual constitution between agents and structure theorized by Constructivist IR?

The expectation is to provide a detailed and theoretically-informed account of the agency deployed by secondary powers when participating in the negotiations, highlighting not only how they impacted the design given to the SADC, but also the role agents have in shaping the regional social structure and governance mechanisms.

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<sup>7</sup> While there are references to “the state”, “state behaviour”, and “state agency” throughout the Thesis, it is not my intention to reify these abstractions. The analytical concept of Strategic Culture (Chapter 4) makes reference to social constructs that emanate from a specific subset of domestic actors and is, more often than not, contested by other groups within the same country. In other words, rather than reifying the state, this research looks at how the cultural constructs shared by a specific group of individuals dominates local perspectives on defence to such extent that it becomes crystalized in norms and affects the international actions of the collective referred to as “the state”. References to “the state”, “state agency”, and “state behaviour” remain useful for purposes of clarity and simplicity.

## Methodological considerations

The first task of the present research is to analyse the effects domestic cultural constructions or normative priors have on a state's international behaviour, and how this can affect the international/regional security environment. More specifically, it has to identify and analyse the roles dominant Strategic Cultures had in shaping perceptions on, agendas for, and approaches to the SADC negotiations, and explain why this is consequential for the social construction of international/regional security dynamics.

Some methodological clarifications are necessary before moving forward. Given the relative lack of systematic analysis on the agency of secondary regional powers, the chosen research design is an exploratory study engaging with separate case studies. The cases are approached with an analytical toolbox formed of a constructivist and interpretivist understanding of international relations, resorting to the concept of Strategic Culture to understand the development of state agency in the defence sector.

### Epistemological commitments, data collection and interpretation

Following Patrick Thaddeus Jackson (2011), *a priori* definitions about “scientific credentials” based on criteria of “objectivity” and “methodological rigour” are considered a poor choice to properly assess social inquiry. In Jackson's view,

“The methodological principle is that we should regard positions on the character and conduct of science as resting on provisional commitments —wagers— about matters of philosophical ontology that can really never be settled definitively. [...] commitments of this sort undergird every instance of scientific research, implicitly shaping what the goals of such research are thought to be and how the research goes about trying to accomplish those goals.” (Jackson 2011, 34)

These commitments “constitute worlds” in that they set a frame that will highlight or downplay theoretical and empirical questions, thus becoming foundations of research (Suganami 2012). Arguably, this means different parameters should be used to evaluate the legitimacy of knowledge-production and academic practices that differ in their basic epistemological and ontological commitments.

This research seeks to identify and analyse the intersubjective meanings (normative priors, norms, and culture broadly speaking) informing the actions of defence and foreign policy elites, equated here with “the agency of the state”, to understand how they were consequential in the creation of the SADC. An interpretivist epistemology is an adequate fit to engage with such topics (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986, 765–69; Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 417), placing “the events [interpretivists] describe in an intelligible context within which the meaning of actions becomes explicable.” (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 36). Moreover, within the realm of interpretivism, Constructivism develops analytical tools that shed light on aspects of international relations that are crucial for the present research, primarily:

- The effects social institutions have on agency and the development of other social arrangements (Hall 2010; Onuf 2013, 7–8);
- The dynamic of mutual constitutions that exists between agents and structure; and,
- Various levels of aggregation (domestic, state, regional, inter-regional, global) in which interactions between arrangements and agents take place (Kubáľková 1998, 52–53).

In other words, the epistemological commitments of interpretivism and constructivism provide a thoroughly discussed approach to engage with matters such as: how South American institutions and security dynamics influenced the perceptions states had of the

region and, more crucially, of the SADC initiative; how these interacted with historically contingent domestic cultural constructions, explaining both a degree of path dependence and the ability for change in the agency of states; and, finally, the effects the agency of secondary powers had in shaping regional intersubjective meanings and arrangements.

Crucially, the present research is expected to shed light not only on the specific forms of agency and influence deployed during the SADC negotiations, but also on the dynamics of agent-structure co-constitution more broadly. Hopefully, the analysis conducted here will help better comprehend the ways in which agents influence the development of regional social arrangements and norms other than merely “constituting” them by repeating legitimized forms of behaviour over time.

In addition to the above, it is also crucial to mention that the research design used is exploratory. Since no existing research has applied a systematic account for state agency in relation to the creation of the SADC, a detailed analysis of each case is necessary to establish a starting point for future studies. There are, therefore, no theory- nor hypothesis-testing motivations behind the case studies.

The chosen design involves engaging with three distinct case studies, rather than with a strict comparative methodology, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the specific domestic features of their agency. Though the cases will be repeatedly contrasted one against the other, this should be seen only as a heuristic device to bring forward the specificity of each case. This type of cross-case comparisons are useful to better assess the distinctive characteristics of each case, drawing preliminary conclusions as to what the relevant variables in the study may be. In Alexander George and Andrew Bennett’s words,

“[...] the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study or research program” (George and Bennett 2005, 67)

The key methodological choices in this research are informed by the concept of “Strategic Culture”, also in line with the constructivist research agenda (see Chapter 4), used to engage with the agency of individual states in the process of negotiation of the SADC. Suffice it to say at this point that cultural factors are considered to be at the root of key systems of meaning, establishing parameters to evaluate processes of path dependence and change with regards to the perception of the regional environment, the actions of other players, and the range of actions considered viable and legitimate.

The impact of Strategic Cultures on the positions presented during the SADC negotiations can be analysed interpreting the practices that define the respective defence sectors, observable resorting to a combination of archival work, legal analysis, and in-depth interviews with members of the relevant elites. A basic assumption of this research is that Strategic Cultures involve understandings about the role and reach of the defence sector, influencing perceptions of the regional environment and the logic of interaction deployed in the SADC negotiations. This follows what Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch argue about the constructivist approach to security and defence studies:

“Constructivists see ‘security’ as a relationship historically conditioned by culture rather than an objective characteristic determined by the distribution of military capabilities. Consequently, *we favor methodologies that acknowledge contingency and context.*” (Klotz and Lynch 2007, 17 italics added)

With the above in mind, it is important to address the two main primary sources of information to be used in this research: archives (primarily local legislation for the defence sector and diplomatic communications), and in-depth elite interviews. One of the

problems in resorting to archive material was its availability and ease of access. This was not an issue with regards to the domestic legislation, but obtaining diplomatic communications and other ministerial documents related to the negotiations proved challenging in various instances. This aspect will be discussed case by case in the following sub-section, but it is important to point out that the differences between the three cases in this respect would have made it impossible to conduct a formal comparison.

A second problem is that these sources tend to contain only an official account of the facts, done with the often standardized and formulaic language of state bureaucracies. Nevertheless, this obstacle can be avoided by contextualizing the sources, resorting to analyses of the actual practices of the actors, using data obtained in interviews to compare and obtain a more nuanced understanding, and contrasting with secondary sources.

With regards to the interviews, the subjects were mostly members of the Foreign Policy and Defence elites, including career officials, political appointees, expert consultants, negotiators, and academics (Appendix 2). Given the in-depth knowledge of the negotiations the interviewees were expected to have, the tool chosen was a semi-structured questionnaire with a set of 6-8 basic questions, upon which the researcher could expand and formulate follow-up questions. The questions included in the questionnaire (Appendix 3) were thought to tackle conceptually-relevant aspects regarding the relation between the dominant Strategic Culture and state behaviour, while also giving room for the interviewees to expand on relevant features and allow the interviewer to explore unexpected lines of questioning. Additionally, this form of interview allowed to include questions based on information provided by previous respondents (making sure to keep their anonymity), thus triangulating among them to try and obtain more in-depth insights.

### Case selection

Ideally, a project of this nature should be able to engage with the historical, social, and cultural specificities of each of the countries involved in the creation of the SADC, as this would allow obtaining a nuanced understanding of the variety of diverging agendas that converged in the creation of this organization. However, limited resources and space for such endeavour mean that selection criteria are necessary to identify the cases expected to provide a more meaningful understanding. A degree of arbitrariness is unavoidable in such selections. However, a consistent logic was applied in defining the selection criteria used in this research, which sought to account for the main arguments that currently dominate the knowledge on the creation of the SADC.

### *Secondary regional powers*

The first selection criterion put forward to narrow down the constellation of available cases is that this research will focus on the agency displayed by secondary regional powers. In this instance, the concept of “secondary regional power” is defined exclusively in terms of the distribution of material power, both military and economic (Huntington 1999). Though the literature is vague regarding how the distinction between primary, secondary, and minor regional powers should be determined, it can be argued that the empirical characteristics of the power distribution in South America make this conceptual vagueness less concerning. As can be seen in Appendix 4, assigning each of the region’s countries to one of these categories should be fairly easy, with Brazil as the only primary regional power; Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela confidently in the “secondary regional power” group; and Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Surinam, and Uruguay among the minor powers.

More nuanced concepts like “regional middle power” involve not only sheer power distribution, but also ideational, behavioural, and societal aspects of a state’s position in the region (Nolte 2010, 891–92). Though this is certainly a richer approach in some respects, the present research does not call for such features since the focus on “secondary regional powers” responds to their material ability to resist pressures coming from the *primus inter pares*, something that minor powers would find more challenging and costly (Jesse et al. 2012). This criterion controls for the argument that the Brazilian material power is the main cause for the creation of UNASUR/SADC, focusing exclusively on the degree of autonomy secondary powers are expected to have in their international behaviour thanks to their position in the regional distribution of power.

The relevance of Brazil in South American regional relations is in no way disputed, nor is this country’s very active role in the creation of the SADC. On the contrary, both the existing literature and the testimonies collected in the interviews coincide in assigning it a central role in the process. For example, different sources identify the 2008 region-wide tour of Brazilian Defence Minister, Nelson Jobim, as a turning point to obtain unanimous support for its creation (Grupo de Trabajo del SADC 2009; Moreira 2008). However, this research aims to transcend one-dimensional explanations, contributing to a more encompassing analysis of the events by taking into consideration not only the regional context but also the agency of secondary powers.

Contrary to the notion that alleged Brazilian hegemonic intentions can explain the creation of this organization on their own (Buyé Grau 2011; García 2008; Mijares 2011; Spektor 2009; Varas 2008), I argue that secondary powers did in fact exercise a high degree of agency, presenting a number of demands/alterations to the project that substantially influenced the characteristics given to the SADC. Such positions responded

to the perceived regional-level incentives and constraints (within which the Brazilian leadership/hegemony and shared ideational commitments fall) as much as to unit-level motivations.

Indeed, the five states listed above as “secondary regional powers” displayed distinct (and often times diverging) voices during the SADC negotiations. However, since studying five cases in depth is still beyond the means of this research, a second criterion is necessary to further narrow down the case selection.

*Expected ideational compatibility with the SADC project*

As already mentioned, the second key line of research about the creation of the SADC argues that it can be explained looking at the rise of a distinct regionalist agenda shared by the leading countries in the region (Battaglino 2012; Benítez Manaut, Celi, and Diamint 2009; Colombo and Roark 2012; Ruggirozzi and Tussie 2012b; Sanahuja 2012). This argument often relates the development of the post-hegemonic regional agenda with the political coincidences during South America’s “left turn” in the 2000s.

Addressing this argument means that some form of ideational and political distinction between the five secondary powers is necessary to identify the more interesting cases available and further narrow down the selection. As Alan Jacobs rightly points out, there is a difficulty in studying the effect of ideational elements that does not exist when the focus is put on material forces. Jacobs attributes the difficulties of conceiving ideas as independent variables to two main reasons: they are hard to measure<sup>8</sup>; and, they “are often highly correlated with other plausible causes of political outcomes.” (Jacobs 2014,

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<sup>8</sup> The question of “measuring” in Social Sciences remains tied to a rather positivist way to understand social inquiry. Nevertheless, producing solid evidence based on ideational mechanisms is more difficult and disputed than doing so with material factors, regardless of the epistemological position of the researcher.

1). I would add to Jacobs's appreciation that ideational causality in IR is also in disadvantage because of an under-development of the methodological tools available to properly identify and study the consequences of ideational factors in this discipline.

With this in mind, and acknowledging the undoubtedly problematic aspects of its application, the second criterion used for case selection can be loosely defined as "expected ideational compatibility" with the idea of creating the SADC. Selecting cases based on their expected position in relation to the characteristics of the broader class of events is a well-documented approach (Gerring 2007). This criterion is crucial in that, if the new regionalist project is indeed related to the "left turn", then the position each of these cases has in the left-right political spectrum should say something about their predisposition to engage in the SADC negotiations and their regional governance agendas (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 115). I propose that engaging with one country in each extreme of the political spectrum and with one middle-ground example should provide enough variety and relevant insights about the relevance of political/ideational factors in the decision-making process each actor followed.

Being the only secondary power indisputably leaned towards the right end of the political spectrum, Colombia is perhaps one of the more interesting cases available. Moreover, this country's decision to join becomes more puzzling knowing that its own actions accelerated the creation of the SADC<sup>9</sup> and that President Alvaro Uribe's administration openly expressed its discontent with the initiative. A regional outlier, Colombia explicitly opposed the "populism" of left-of-centre governments, showing more interest in strengthening its bilateral relations with the US than in engaging in South

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<sup>9</sup> The rolling out of the SADC initiative was accelerated by the Colombian bombing of a FARC campsite in the Angostura region, Ecuador. The violation of Ecuadorian territorial sovereignty led to escalation of tensions between Colombia, on one side, and Ecuador and Venezuela, on the other. Brazilian authorities saw this as proof that the region needed an organization to promote trust and govern tensions.

American cooperation initiatives (Tickner 2007). Based on these characteristics, the Colombian decision to join the SADC may even sound counterintuitive, making the analysis of the intricacies of this case a necessary task that may help qualify the role attributed by the literature to shared understandings and ideational commitments.

Argentina and Venezuela can arguably be found among the secondary powers in the left-of-centre end of the political spectrum, albeit with marked differences. Venezuela represents one of the more extreme positions with regards to its commitment to Latin American regionalism, consistently proposing the creation of integration mechanisms significantly more ambitious than those advanced with the UNSAUR/SADC framework. Such was President Chavez's support for Latin American regionalism that the Venezuelan support to the SADC was not weakened even when its entire agenda and negotiating position was blocked by actors defending far less intrusive approaches (Serbín 2009, 151–52). Argentina was also permeable to regional cooperation processes from the onset, as well as an advocate of defence cooperation for over a decade before the SADC was even an idea. However, unconvinced by the "Brazilian intentions", this country initially showed less enthusiasm about the SADC than would have been expected based on its historical position on the topic. Only after pro-SADC Defence elites won President Cristina Fernández's favour and "defeated" the more conservative position of Foreign Policy elites, did Argentina take a more decisive stance in favour of the organization. Hence, while Venezuela is arguably the better representative of ideational commitments consistently coinciding with the SADC; Argentina constitutes a more complex, nuanced, and interesting case, presenting an inter-ministerial contestation between commitment with the SADC project and caution about Brazilian intentions. This characteristic makes the case more interesting, in that the answers to why the country joined the negotiations and what agenda it brought are far less linear than in the Venezuelan case.

Finally, the middle-ground position could be easily filled by either Chile or Peru. Both countries have consistently showed a strong commitment with neoliberal practices and economics, as well as with the less intrusive “Open Regionalist” approach to cooperation (see Chapter 6). Moreover, at the moment of the negotiations, Chile had been governed by a social-democrat coalition for almost 18 years (Roberts 2011), while Peru was timidly joining the “left turn” with a centre-left government (Cameron 2011). All of the above puts both countries in a comfortable position to represent a middle-ground position.

The decision to favour Chile over Peru is based on two key points. On the one hand, Chile is arguably the stronger and regionally more influential of the two, making it a better choice with regards to the first criterion. On the other hand, and despite its initial doubts about the UNASUR/SADC framework, this country had a central role in the negotiations due to its position of *Pro Tempore* president of the group during 2008. This somehow forced Chilean elites to develop a comprehensive regional agenda that allowed the country to exercise great influence in the goals and shape given to the SADC despite long-term suspicion among Chilean elites about South American regionalist projects.

To summarize, while five cases fall within the category of secondary regional powers by all relevant measures of “power”, a case selection of three is more viable in face of the in-depth analysis sought and the resources available for this research. Using a broadly defined criterion of “expected ideational commitment” the case selection was narrowed down to include Argentina (left), Chile (middle ground), and Colombia (right).

Each of the three cases has consistently shown ability to deploy autonomous foreign and defence policies, as well as influence regional politics (sometimes even explicitly against Brazilian interests) despite the power imbalance in the region (Schenoni 2015, 5,

2017). In other words, none of the cases selected has been so vulnerable to Brazilian pressures that they could not oppose the SADC initiative, had they wanted to. This resonates with Gian Luca Gardini's view that "[...] in Latin America, regionalism, although meant to be an expression of unity and solidarity, has become a stark reflection of Latin American diversity and heterogeneity." (Gardini 2011, 235).

It is also important to highlight that there is no expectation that the cases selected will be representative of other countries, and no generalizable conclusions nor typologies will result from their analysis. However, in showing the spectrum of diverging starting positions, this research seeks to show the wide variety of trajectories that lead to the converging decision to create the SADC, which by no means was as evident an outcome as some structural-level approaches may suggest.

#### Data collection and analysis

Some considerations about the data collected during the field work are necessary in order to address the fact that different sources of information have been used in each of the cases. Following Norman Denzin, I understand that

"The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin 2012, 82)

The first primary source involved interviewing members of the defence elites (civilian and military) who participate of the dominant Strategic Culture, considered key subjects in this research. In some cases, such as with public servants and high-ranking political appointees, the decisions and actions of these defence elites embody what is perceived as "state behaviour" itself. Hence, them sharing the meanings attached to the Strategic

Culture and behaving accordingly during the SADC negotiations means that the agenda of “the state” could believably be considered the result of dominant cultural constructions. This makes the causal link (understood in the broadest sense) between the cultural framework associated with the defence sector and state behaviour during the negotiations more credible.

It is important, though, to highlight that Strategic Cultures are not “national”, in the sense that there is not just one set of understandings and norms that corresponds perfectly with how a given country should relate to its defence apparatus and the use of force. Rather, they reflect the dominant set of meanings and representations regarding the topic, while alternative perspectives constantly contest their definitions. This will be further discussed in Chapter 4, but suffice it to say at this point that, given the low public profile of this policy area, the features of a Strategic Culture are predominantly the result of intra-elite debates, explaining the focus on domestic elites.

Available records of the negotiation rounds (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional de Chile 2009, 139–45) were particularly useful to identify relevant subjects to interview among the members of the respective negotiating teams. The majority of the interviewees in each country were either negotiators themselves, or high-ranking officials at the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence with direct involvement at different stages of the negotiations. Members of the defence epistemic community were also interviewed, including academics, diplomats, civil servants, and military officials with relevant expertise. Finally, a minority of the interviews were arranged thanks to a snowballing process, whereby interviewees helped identify other relevant subjects that for different reasons might have gone unnoticed during the initial sampling.

The subjects identified were initially approached by email in order to arrange a personal interview. In both instances of contact, the subjects were presented with a summary of the research project, research questions and objectives, and brief comments on the purpose of the interview. An in-depth, semi-structured design was used to engage with these elites, including a relatively short questionnaire that provided ample room to inquire about emergent topics/narratives/dynamics identified by the interviewees.

These interviews provided crucial insights into the way in which defence elites in each country perceive and understand the defence sector and the regional security environment. More importantly so, the repetition of terms and representations by different interviews allowed to identify key sets of meanings embedded in the local Strategic Culture. Triangulating this data with other interviews and with the archive material gathered, the emergent narratives identified are understood here as evidence of a dominant Strategic Culture.

Another type of primary sources used were official archives. Given the different institutional restrictions regarding access to these and varying levels of implementation of transparency policies, there is unequal archival support for the case studies. The subsections below discuss the specificities of each case in this regard.

The documents used are part of official state archives, with the only exception of classified diplomatic memos regarding secret negotiations between the Colombian and US governments unveiled by Wikileaks<sup>10</sup>. This has implications in terms of what and how

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<sup>10</sup> Given that neither the Colombian nor the US governments have denied the veracity of the memos released, and that Colombian President Álvaro Uribe discussed the secret negotiations with other South American leaders after they became public, documents made available by Wikileaks will be treated here as archive material regardless of whether or not the parties involved consider the way they became public to be legal.

the documents say, as well as regarding their use as sources. Official archives are to be understood as formalized records of the state bureaucracy, and thus social constructions created with the intention to favour the preservation of specific versions of and perspectives on events over others. In that sense, archives

“[...] have been about power - about maintaining power, about the power of the present to control what is, and will be, known about the past, about the power of remembering over forgetting.” (Schwartz and Cook 2002, 3).

As a result, official archives seldom reflect internal conflicts, dissenting voices, and “disqualified” or “inappropriate” knowledge (Stoler 2009, 20), to mention but a few of the problems associated with this type of source.

Nevertheless, official archives do allow to tap into the way a country perceives, rationalizes, and frames its actions. This, in turn allows identifying whether or not there is a narrative working as a running thread in these official accounts, which opens the possibility to identify and analyse underlying meanings attached to the decisions adopted. In the case of IR and Foreign Policy studies, official diplomatic documents, legal frameworks, and ministerial reports can shed light on the perceptions of the self and the others in the international arena that inform the political agendas and interactions with other states. This opens a window to glimpse at the meanings embedded in the bureaucracy’s language and practices, an entry point to the dominant culture in the area.

Secondary sources are mostly comprised of academic and public debates on the respective defence policies, mainly in the form of published articles and reports. Where available, data from elite surveys is used as a means to extract and re-signify information about understandings, values, norms and behaviours shared by sets of relevant domestic

actors associated with the policy area in one way or another, shaping the dominant ideational commitments in that regard.

Information obtained from primary and secondary sources was triangulated, seeking an in-depth understanding of running narratives and representations that would have otherwise been difficult to identify. Similarly, this method is useful to bring forward disagreements and contested concepts, either because they are not readily evident to the researcher or because they have been omitted from the official archives. As Howard Lune and Bruce Berg point out,

“[...] real-life experiences and memories of people cannot so easily or so thoroughly be omitted, edited, erased, shredded, or swept away. At any rate, collections of individual narratives cannot be filtered by institutions or media.” (Lune and Berg 2017, 168)

The method involves the simultaneous evaluation of a variety of data sources on the same topic, which is used here as a technique to unveil a deeper understanding of the cases rather than as a device to obtain “objective” knowledge about them (Denzin 2012). In fact, given the constructivist-interpretivist frame of understanding used in this research, the very notion that obtaining objective knowledge about the social world is impossible.

Both between-methods and within-methods triangulations are used (Flick 2007, 81). The former refers to instances in which data obtained using different methods is compared looking for verification, contradictions, and nuance. Such is the case of the example described above, where interviews and documents are put one against the other in order to complement and problematize the details provided by each of them. The latter refers to the triangulation of data obtained using the same method. This was used

primarily to engage with the interviews, aiming to distil the core features and cracks in the running meanings, narratives and normative preferences upheld by defence elites. Follow-up questions and the comparison of answers fall in this category of triangulation. In both types of triangulation, the method is used as “a source of extra knowledge about the issue in question and not just as a way to confirm what is already known from the first approach (convergence of findings).” (Flick 2018, 786).

### *Argentina*

Primary sources used in the analysis of the Argentine case include the relevant legislation for the defence sector and elite interviews.

Formal requests to access official documents and reports related to the SADC negotiations were presented at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMFA) and at the Ministry of Defence (AMoD), obtaining unsatisfactory answers in both cases. Upon informal discussions on the matter with a high-ranking official of the Office for International Security, Nuclear and Space Affairs (DIGAN, in Spanish), the AMFA area thematically related to the SADC negotiations, it was confirmed that no archives were available due to the AMoD centralizing all coordination and negotiation duties. Though open to researchers, the AMFA General Archive provided no relevant information due to restrictions in the access to the material for the relevant dates.

The AMoD, on the other hand, issued an official response to the request for information explaining that no official archives existed on the SADC negotiations. This was informally confirmed by the Head of Expert Advisors at the Office of International Affairs, Leonardo Hekimian. Archives compiled by the negotiators existed at his office, but the potential presence of unvetted sensitive information made them unavailable for researchers.

As a result, the main source of information on the perceptions, agenda, strategy, and interests of this case study come from in-depth interviews with members of the local defence and foreign policy elites. Almost the entire negotiating team was interviewed, with the only exception of AMFA's representative in the negotiations, Ambassador Rafael Grossi. Additionally, the information obtained from the people directly involved in the definition of the negotiating strategy was complemented with high-ranking officials from both ministries, allowing to trace the decision-making processes and inter-ministerial dynamics. Finally, academics with proven expertise on relevant areas for this study were also interviewed in order to develop a more contextualized and informed interpretation of the information provided by ministerial employees.

### *Chile*

Primary sources for the Chilean case include this country's legislation for the defence area; archives retrieved from Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ChMFA); and, interviews with local Defence and Foreign Policy elites.

Chile was the only country out of the three that granted full access to diplomatic communications between its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies, including telex, memos, and notes labelled "Reserved" and "Secret". As a result, the available information about Chile's coordination role is substantial, allowing to tap onto the perceptions, motivations, and narratives informing its position; offering insights into the its overall relation with the region; and unveiling concerns discussed with other countries.

The archives show a close relationship with Colombia, as well as the intense work done to address its concerns over regional security; debates and political coordination with Brazil; efforts to appease Ecuador after the Colombian attack; and, attempts to moderate

Venezuela's expectations. Only the communications with embassies located in countries with which Chile shares borders (Argentina, Bolivia and Peru) remain confidential. Lacking the files from the embassy in Buenos Aires is particularly challenging, since this thwarts the ability to assess bilateral coordination. However, this is compensated by the abundant information available on the bilateral relation, as well as by the fact that a large number of negotiators interviewed from both sides provided detailed and consistent accounts of the coordinated efforts made during the negotiations.

The interviews, on the other hand, help relate the above with the country's perception of its own position, role, and primary goals in the region. That there was a significant overlap between the accounts provided by the archives and the views expressed by the interviewees is understood as evidence of consistent narrative underlying the behaviour of the local Defence and Foreign Policy elites.

The country's positions as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) are almost exclusively left to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to define. Yet, considering the high degree of coordination between it and the Ministry of Defence during the SADC negotiations, analysing the perspectives defended at this UN body may provide relevant insights into the elements that make up the country's Strategic Norms.

Evaluating these primary sources helps identify the underlying Strategic Culture informing the decision to join and take a leading role in the SADC negotiations.

### *Colombia*

As already explained, Colombia is perhaps the most interesting and puzzling of the three cases analysed. Yet, it is also important to mention some of the difficulties and challenges found in this country to gather the necessary data for analysis.

The only formal representative the Ministry of Defence (CoMoD) had in the negotiations was Admiral (r) David René Moreno, Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and lead SADC negotiator through 2008. Interviewing Admiral Moreno granted me access to essential information about this Ministry's involvement and position in the negotiations. Due to his role as a military officer and his high rank in the Colombian Armed Forces, together with his direct involvement in the negotiations, Admiral Moreno was able to provide crucial insights into the CoMoD's perspectives and negotiating agenda, as well as his views on the relation between them and the country's Strategic Culture. Attempts made to secure a second interview with Defence elites to obtain additional information and clarify the points made by Admiral Moreno were not successful. The other key actors involved on behalf of the CoMoD (then Deputy Minister of Defence for International Affairs, Sergio Jaramillo Caro, and then Minister of Defence, Juan Manuel Santos –now President of Colombia) were either unable or unwilling to participate. Mr. Jaramillo Caro would have been able to provide particularly relevant insights for this research, considering that the area of the CoMoD under his control had incumbency over the negotiations. However, his prominent role in the peace negotiations between the Colombian state and the FARC (2012-2016) made him unavailable for interviewing.

In any case, the Colombian negotiating team was mostly comprised of civil servants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CoMFA), where I was able to interview people at both ends of the ministerial hierarchy. Paola Lugari, who was in charge of handling everyday matters related to the SADC negotiations, was able to provide detailed information about the proceedings, specifics of the Colombian agenda, and key points of contention with other delegations. On the opposite extreme of the institutional ladder, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaime Bermúdez, and then-Deputy Minister, Camilo Reyes, were able to provide relevant insights about the decision-making processes, interests, perceptions of

regional politics, and views on defence cooperation that informed Colombia's participation. Two mid-ranking diplomats involved in the negotiations, Sergio Restrepo and Nicolás Rivas, were unable to participate in the interviews. Nevertheless, sufficient information was collected from other interviews in the CoMFA and with Colombian academics that a sufficiently accurate understanding is still possible.

The main challenge found in Colombia was the impossibility to obtain access to archives. All documents related to inter-ministerial coordination, the conformation of the Colombian negotiating agenda, or the country's actions during the negotiating rounds remain classified. A high degree of secrecy and lack of transparency seems to surround these and other public records related to the Defence Policy of the country. Formal requests for public information were submitted to the pertinent authorities at the CoMoD and the CoMFA. However, they were either left unanswered or the answers provided were unsatisfactory. As a result, no official archival evidence is available.

The matter was partially remedied using documentation found in alternative sources. Documents obtained at the ChMFA make reference to the views of high-ranking Colombian officials, including Minister Santos, during meetings in Bogota with Ambassador Gabriel Gaspar. The limitations of this archival source are many, since the information is mediated not only by the interpretation of the Chilean diplomacy but also by the intentioned words used by Colombian officials when discussing matters of National Defence with members of a foreign diplomatic corps. This means that ideas put in the mouth of Colombian officials must be scrutinized with a particularly critical eye. However, to the extent that many of the opinions expressed coincide with data gathered in the interviews, that the documents were stamped as reserved or secret, that the SADC negotiations were not closely related to the core interests of Colombia, and that Chile is

seen by Colombia as a close and like-minded ally, there is no ground to suspect that either side intended to be deceitful. If nothing else, these documents provide additional confirmation to the claims made by the interviewees, a general understanding regarding the administration's perception of the region, and insights into the decision-making process by which Colombia decided to join the SADC negotiations.

Similar considerations can be made about documents obtained from Wikileaks referring to meetings between Colombian and US officials in which regional security issues were discussed. These leaked documents provide crucial insights into the Colombian agenda for the secret bilateral negotiations to sign a bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA), in 2009. Though this took place after the SADC was created, the way Colombian officials addressed their interest in the DCA and their concerns about other South American countries shed light on the country's regional Defence agenda and Strategic Culture. These documents also confirm the arguments presented by Tickner (Tickner 2007) and Méndez (Méndez 2012) about the active Colombian agency in securing a bigger US military involvement in its domestic conflict. Moreover, it provides an almost simultaneous counterpoint between Colombia's discourse regarding regional security at the SADC negotiations and the views expressed in secret negotiations with the country's closest extra-regional partner. Finally, these leaked documents are also crucial to understand the existing divide between Colombia's perception of US presence in the region (a result of self-interested and autonomous agency on its side) and the views other regional powers have of this (proof of US hegemonic interest to set foot in South America).

## Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 analyses the merits and shortcomings of existing literature regarding the creation of the SADC. Two lines of argumentation are covered there: one focused on Brazilian leadership and interests; and, another discussing the role regional commonalities had making South America permeable to a proposal like the SADC. With a majority of currently existing studies adopting system-level approaches, this chapter highlights the need to complement the existing knowledge with agent-level analyses.

Chapter 3 discusses the characteristics of the regional security environment. Though the main contribution of this research is the empirical exploration of the three case studies mentioned above, it is nevertheless crucial to have a good understanding of the social conditions under which the SADC was created. This is necessary under the understanding that adopting the constructivist notion of mutual co-constitution of structure and agency requires engaging with both to properly comprehend the recursive dynamics that emerge, even if the argument focuses on one more than the other. This chapter seeks to bring forward and analyse the normative commitments that, “based on a shared system of codes and symbols, of languages, life-worlds, social practices.” (Checkel 1998, 159–60), define the way actors interpret material and social conditions in the region.

Chapter 4 discusses the conceptual framework with which the agency of the three case studies will be analysed. The key concept discussed in this chapter is that of “Strategic Culture”, facilitating a systematic engagement with aspects of state agency (perceptions, understandings, and meaningful behaviour) specific for the defence sectors. This conceptual framework also establishes a dialogue with the constructivist regional-level

analyses discussed in Chapter 3, allowing both to feed off each other. The chapter puts forward that the concept of “Strategic Culture” is an appropriate fit to engage with the specificity of state agency in relation to how the defence apparatus is understood and used by a given society, what is the history behind such constructions, understand how they relates to the agendas brought by each country to the SADC negotiations, and explain how all that is consequential for the regional security governance mechanisms created.

Chapter 5 to 7 provide a detailed, theory-informed, and historically-rooted analysis of each of the three case studies. The first goal of these empirical chapters is to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the historical, social, political, and international elements involved in the development of each country’s Strategic Culture. Given the complexity each case study presents in that respect, this analysis takes up roughly half of each empirical chapter. Once this is covered, the second step is to analyse the roles the respective Strategic Cultures of the case studies had in influencing the agendas and performance of each country during the SADC negotiations, and what was their impact in defining the regional security governance mechanisms embedded in the SADC.

Chapter 8 provides an overall conclusion to the different arguments discussed in the preceding chapters, seeking to draw some general conclusions regarding the relevance of engaging with an agent-level analysis to explain the creation of the SADC. This chapter summarizes and combines the conclusions of previous chapters, seeking both to re-evaluate their respective relevance and implications for the existing knowledge about the creation of the SADC, but also to put consider them in terms of their potential impact on the dominant understandings about regional security dynamics in South America.



## Chapter 2. Literature Review

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### (Sub)systemic approaches to the creation of the SADC

#### Introduction

Due to its novel approach to regional governance, the creation of organizations like the UNASUR and the SADC has attracted the attention of academics working on Latin/South American dynamics, institutions, and governance. The existing research is largely focused on four general areas, often times touching on two or more of them to provide nuanced understandings of the processes involved: **a.** the regional and systemic contextual conditions that allowed the emergence of the UNASUR/SADC; **b.** the Brazilian interests involved in advancing this initiative; **c.** the organizations' objectives and institutional design; and, **d.** the expected reach and impact that these institutions could have on regional dynamics.

Given the focus of the present research on reasons behind the creation of the SADC and their impact on the final form given to the regional organization, rather than on its actual working, this chapter will eminently engage with the first and second of the above

research areas. At least two main lines of enquiry have dominated the research on these topics: those authors who emphasize the role of Brazil as its instigator and main beneficiary, on the one hand; and those who attribute the bulk of the responsibility to the presence of shared ideational factors (norms, political inclinations, identities, etc.) at the regional level, on the other. The present chapter will analyse in detail the two, identifying the key arguments advanced to analyse their merits and shortcomings.

Authors focusing on the role of Brazilian leadership and interests take the creation of the SADC as the direct result of a regional balance of power favourable to that country's quest to become a regional leader and a global player. According to them, Brazil's condition of *primus inter pares* created incentives for its diplomacy to engage in the institution-building process that would eventually become the UNASUR/SADC framework, seen exclusively in utilitarian terms as a "stepping stone" to become a leader and rule-maker in the region. In other words, this strand of researchers engage primarily with the a power distribution analysis at the (sub)systemic-level.

Authors studying the shared ideational elements at play at the regional level and how they facilitated the creation of these organizations have also adopted a structural approach to the question. They emphasize how shared ideational features (political ideologies and agendas; identity markers; understandings of the goals and reach of regional cooperation/integration processes; international norms; etc.) have shaped perceptions and understandings of the regional security environment among South American states, and hence conceives these factors to be unavoidable pre-requisites to explain how the SADC came to being.

In addition to the above, inter- and extra-regional factors have also been identified as contributing towards the creation of the SADC. Olivier Dabène argues that the expansion

of the US-led “War on Terror” to the Andean North of South America is one of the key contextual factors driving the inclusion of the defence sector in the UNASUR institutional framework (Dabène 2013, 3). This resonates with authors highlighting the permanent influence (in actuality or potentiality) the US has had over regional politics in the past century, which stresses the inherently open nature of regional systems, in general, and the penetrated nature of the South American region, in particular (see Chapter 3). However, it is worth mentioning that, while the effect this penetration has in the South American security environment is indeed one of its defining features, it is by no means a novelty of the post-2001 World and hence cannot explain on its own the apparently “sudden” inclusion of the defence sector in the regionalization process.

It has also been argued that an intervening factor was the alleged decrease in the US’s involvement in South American regional dynamics, creating a condition of possibility for a more autonomous regional agenda as a result of the attention and resources demanded from the US by the “War on Terror” (Colombo and Roark 2012). Jorge Battaglino has aptly challenged this explanation, arguing that it clashes with the fact that “rather than abandoning the region, the US has renewed its presence through a military deployment that South America had not experienced since the World War II” (Battaglino 2012, 87). This increasing military deployment in the region can be seen more prominently in the deployment of military cooperation programmes in the context of the “War on Drugs” and, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, the “War on Terror”; and, in the re-institution of the IV Fleet of the US Navy in 2008, which effectively contributed to the expansion in the size and responsibilities of US Southern Command<sup>11</sup> (Battaglino 2009a, 33). It could also be argued that, even in times of the Cold War with the US focused on its global rivalry with

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<sup>11</sup> Branch of the US Ministry of Defence devoted to the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

the USSR, penetration in Latin America was more prominent than ever before, challenging the notion that a global primary focus and regional penetration are mutually exclusive.

Perhaps Barry Buzan and Ole Waever's evaluation of the inter-regional dynamics at play can help clarify this point. According to these authors,

"US preponderance makes the relationship highly asymmetrical and the United States a major factor in security calculations in the region –for good and for bad. But the US engagement is not constant and the United States neither 'rules' the region nor even generally shapes it." (Buzan and Waever 2003, 309)

The above seems to suggest that it is probably wise not to assume the disappearance of US interest and involvement in South American security dynamics during the period immediately before the creation of the SADC. However, neither was this country able to contain the development of an institutional framework that explicitly sought to increase the levels of regional autonomy from extra-regional influences on the governance of international security and defence matters. This suggests that, whatever relevance we can attribute to the US penetration in the period, it does not seem to be a determining factor in the creation of the SADC. This is not to say that US penetration in South America is irrelevant for the evaluation of the regional security environment, as shown by Brazilian Minister of Defence Nelson Jobim visiting Washington in early 2008 to discuss the SADC proposal (Saint-Pierre and Castro 2008, 1). Rather, the above discussion indicates that this factor may only be secondary to understand the conditions allowing the regional governance innovation discussed in this research.

This chapter will engage with the existing literature on the conditions, processes, and events that led to the Brazilian proposal to create the SADC, as well as those that may have

influenced the successful negotiations conducted in Santiago de Chile during 2008. In order to do so, the chapter will be broken down into two sections, the first one analysing the key arguments centred on the Brazilian role and the second one discussing the research focused on the ideational aspects of the process.

By the end of this chapter it should become evident that, however insightful and relevant these approaches are, the agency of individual actors other than Brazil has been left under-researched. This created the illusion that regional players were simply in agreement with the creation of the SADC, either due to them sharing in the understanding that it was a necessary development, or perceiving the Brazilian bid for regional leadership as legitimate. The present research seeks to problematize the two assumptions, focusing on the agency secondary powers and how it affected the regional governance mechanisms embedded in the SADC.

### **The role of Brazilian leadership in the creation of the SADC**

As a result of a prolonged process of economic growth and power accumulation, by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Brazil had undoubtedly become the only real pole in South America (Benítez Manaut, Celi, and Diamint 2009; Schenoni 2015; Sediq 2013). Brazil currently represents half of the region by all relevant measures of power (Appendix 4): its landmass covers half of the region's total surface; it concentrates half of the region's population; its economy represents half the region's GDP; half of the regional military power is in Brazil's hands; and, though there has been a relative decline recently, Brazil still represents half of the annual military expenditures. This is not to say, as Luis Schenoni rightly points out (2014, 143–44), that Brazil can be considered a hegemonic

actor (in the realist, power-political sense of the term), since it has not yet managed to create any considerable technological gap with neighbours and its continental size means that resources are spread across massive extensions of land.

Yet, as Sean Burges notes (2008), Brazil's approach to leadership/hegemony has not been based on brute force (neither political, economic, nor military strong-arming are in its usual repertoire), but rather is more reliant on the construction of a multilateral consensus based on ideas and concerns relatable to its partners. In Burges's words,

"The imperative was not to subsume other regional states to Brazilian will, but instead to cycle the region-forming process through Brazil and position the country's propositions and prerogatives as the central unifying factor of a potential South American region." (Burges 2008, 75).

This "consensual hegemony" strategy responds to a large extent to the inability of the Brazilian state (and the likely opposition of the Brazilian people) to face the substantial economic commitments related to region-building and materially-enforced hegemony. In fact, in a later article reviewing the strategy of consensual hegemony deployed by Brazilian governments since the 1990s, Burges comes to the conclusion that this can only be a "temporary phase", since followers will soon demand returns in the form of "concrete leadership goods provision" for the confidence given to the hegemon (Burges 2015, 204).

Nevertheless, the "Brazilian touch" is undeniable in the inspiration behind the creation of the SADC. As early as 2004, the Strategic Affairs Nucleus released an Annex (NAE 2004b) to the oft-cited *Projeto Brasil 3 Tempos* policy paper (NAE 2004a). The Annex contained a list of 50 "Strategic Issues" identified as key guides for the long-term integral development of the country. Items 19 and 39 listed in the document are relevant to

understand the long-term regional policy that Brazil would try to implement, including the explicit possibility of developing “collective defence”<sup>12</sup> mechanisms by the year 2061:

*Table 1. Strategic issues related to Brazil's regional policy*

19	Political-Economic Block of South America	The implementation of new foreign policies can create an “integrated economic space” in South America. Under Brazilian initiative, the economic, social, cultural, political, and security aspirations and obligations resulting of this process must be taken into consideration.
39	National Defence System	The improvement of the defence policy can result in the strengthening of Brazilian defence capabilities, either in isolation or as part of a collective defence system with neighbouring countries, to face new threats and challenges, guarantee the protection of its territory, and provide backing the country's stance in international negotiations.

*Source: Projeto Brasil 3 Tempos. 50 Temas Estratégicos (NAE 2004b, 5–7). Original in Portuguese. Own translation.*

The wording of these two items is general enough as to allow a variety of measures to be adopted. However, they do show the Brazilian preference for the development of forms of regionalism that have come to be known as post-liberal (Sanahuja 2012) or post-hegemonic (Riggiorozzi and Tussie 2012b). Also, though the publication of this document does not necessarily imply that the Brazilian government would adopt active diplomatic efforts to advance a regional “collective defence” arrangement in the short term, it did explicitly bring the defence and security cooperation agendas to the region. Moreover, it

<sup>12</sup> Neither the *Brazil 3 Tempos* policy paper nor its Annex provide clues as to what is meant by “collective defence”. As mentioned in footnote 5, page 6, the option of a NATO-like collective security organization had been advanced by Venezuela, but was openly and vigorously rejected by most South American states. The inclusion of this term should, therefore, be understood as a long-term, vague goal subject to alterations. It is, nevertheless, relevant to take into consideration, helping explain the active Brazilian advocacy for the creation of the SADC as part of a long-term strategy.

is not a secret that the proposal to create the SADC was put forward to the region by Minister Jobim in a highly publicized tour after tensions started to escalate between Venezuela-Ecuador and Colombia (Saint-Pierre and Castro 2008).

It is not surprising that, given the above conditions, the argument has been advanced that shifting the focus from Latin to South America would facilitate Brazil's quest for regional leadership (Colombo and Roark 2012; Malamud 2010, 74–76; Serbín 2009, 151–52). Indeed, a series of projects were fostered by this country with the aim of cementing the notion that South American countries shared a set of values, needs, interests, and perceptions distinct from those of other Latin American countries. This allegedly sought to expand the reach of the “bloc identity” developed in the MERCOSUR<sup>13</sup> area (Rivarola Puntigliano 2007, 98) to the whole region. Consequently, a substantial portion of the debate regarding the creation of the UNASUR framework, in general, and of the SADC, in particular, has emphasized the Brazilian role and interests in this institutional development.

### Brazil and South America: The region as a global trampoline?

There are no doubts that Brazil became heavily invested in advancing the notion of a distinct South American grouping, at least since it organized the First Summit of South American Presidents, in September 2000 (Burges 2008; Cviic 2000; Espinosa 2014, 40; Gratius 2008, 4). It is in this period, for example, that Brazil “took” the proposal for the

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<sup>13</sup> *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Common Market), a trade integration scheme created in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. By 1995, the four countries had achieved a level of integration close to becoming a trade union, and further institutional and normative innovations were incorporated (including democratic clauses, the creation of a political branch, a structural convergence fund, formalized contacts between lawmakers of each member country, etc.). In 2012, Venezuela's incorporation to the treaty as a full member was unanimously approved. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are part of the organization as Associated States, but do not have full membership as of 2017.

creation of the IIRSA<sup>14</sup> from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Andean Community, turning it into a scheme almost entirely funded by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES). This would not only mean that the transport links and trade routes with neighbouring countries were to become more efficient (for Brazilian purposes), but also that the contractors participating in major infrastructure projects across the region would be Brazilian firms (Burges 2008, 76; Gomes Saraiva 2010, 161). More importantly, this initiative seems to show that the country was becoming willing to provide common goods to regional partners with the aim of obtaining recognition (if tacitly) as a legitimate regional leader (Gomes Saraiva 2010). Moreover, given the projects selected for development and the characteristics of South American geography, the resulting infrastructure network looked like “a spider’s web, with Brazil filling its centre” (Burges 2008, 76). Suzanne Gratius and Miriam Gomes Saraiva eloquently add that

“Brazil perceives regional integration not only as a goal in itself but also as an instrument for autonomy and ‘soft-balancing’ the United States. Thus, its attitude towards integration is not free of self-interest. Apart from common regional goals, the country also seeks to implement a neighbourhood policy that serves Brazil’s power aspirations in South America and the Americas.” (Gratius and Gomes Saraiva 2013, 8)

Federico Merke further argues that the Brazilian aspirations to become a more relevant global player is in no way a novelty, but rather “a fundamental dimension of its international identity” (2014, 181). Instead, what he identifies as a novelty is the “double movement” of the Brazilian diplomacy to spearhead the construction of a South American institutional framework and, then, present itself globally as a “natural leader”, an “interpreter”, or even a “representative” of the region (Merke 2014, 181–82). In this way,

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<sup>14</sup> The “Initiative for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure” (Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana) was created to foster the integration of regional transport and energy infrastructure in South America, aiming to incentivize economic development and connectedness throughout the region.

the Brazilian regional project is as closely related to the development of better regional relations *per se* as it is to advancing this country's global aspirations (Gratius 2008, 3–4; Schenoni 2017; Soares de Lima 2007, 172–74; Soares de Lima and Hirst 2006, 30–31). This would mean that the shift in regional cooperation from Latin American and hemispheric approaches to a South American project could essentially be interpreted as a Brazilian “geopolitical design”, excluding Mexico and the US in order to bolster its own position (Malamud 2011a, 6; Sanahuja 2010b, 47; Schenoni 2014, 144).

According to Jorge Battaglini (2012), this became particularly relevant with the above mentioned re-militarization of the US approach to Latin America, via military cooperation efforts with local partners; the re-activation of the IV Fleet; and, as was found in 2009, the secret agreement negotiated with the Uribe administration to increase the number of troops deployed in the Colombian territory. This shift from the “free-trade and democracy” liberal agenda of the Clinton era to a more militarized approach inaugurated by the George W. Bush administration, together with the tensions created by the ideological divide between the more vocal representatives of the left- and right-wing governments in the region (Venezuela-Ecuador and Colombia, respectively) forced Brazil to step up and respond.

“Brazilian diplomats and academics alike have long regarded regional leadership as a springboard to global recognition and influence. Brazil's elites consider this sub-region to be within its natural sphere of influence. In this way, South America instability is perceived by Brazilian elites as an obstacle to international aspirations. [...] Similarly, Lula sharply criticized the US-Colombia basing deal signed in 2009, [...] concerned that Colombian bases would be used as a platform to increase US military control over the region.” (Battaglini 2012, 90–91)

This line of argumentation maintains that contextual conditions heavily influenced the Brazilian strategy, creating incentives to accelerate the launching of the SADC initiative in

order to protect regional and international interests via institutional innovations (Battaglino 2009b, 79–80). Hence, the SADC was expected to fulfil an instrumental role, allowing Brazil become a regional leader by taking a more prominent role in maintaining the South American Zone of Peace through the organization of joint responses to shared threats, coordination of common positions in international fora, creation of confidence building measures, and management of a (so far hypothetical) joint participation in Peacekeeping Operations (Benítez Manaut, Celi, and Diamint 2009).

### Defence Industries and developmentalism

It has also been argued that the SADC initiative sought to favour Brazil's Defence Industries, creating a scale economy and helping increase their market share in the region. Under this light, the creation of the SADC could be interpreted as a regional leg of the domestic developmentalist/industrialist policies that characterized the 2000s in Brazil (Soares de Lima and Hirst 2006). This type of policies has traditionally been framed within the narrative of autonomy, particularly so when applied in relation to the Defence sector. Since the 1950s, Brazilian elites sought to incentivize the development of a local military complex with the goals of reducing its vulnerability to foreign suppliers, gaining more autonomy, incentivizing local production, and fostering the creation of Research & Development centres (Saint-Pierre and Zague 2017, 298). According to Barry Buzan (1987, 45–48), being a late-comer in the Defence Industry sector, by the 1970s Brazil was able to self-supply some of its military needs and had started to participate in the international defence market. By the mid-1980s, it was well in the way to develop the only “broadly-based” military industry in the region able to compete internationally.

In fact, interviewees agreed with the claim that one of the key driving forces behind the initiative was securing “priority access” for the Brazilian Defence Industries to the South American arms market, something to be achieved by advancing cooperative projects in which development and production of new military equipment would involve suppliers from various member (Benítez Manaut, Celi, and Diamint 2009). Minister Jobim, acknowledged this interest, both before and after the creation of the SADC, and linked it to his country’s developmentalist economic programme as well as to the region’s continuous quest for autonomy (Infobae 2009; Jobim 2008).

Attempts at this had been made before, in particular in partnership with Argentina<sup>15</sup>, but the SADC would provide a platform to bring this notion to the regional level (UNASUR 2008 Art. 5, f.). This arguably made assessing the respective industrial capacities of and potential complementarity among member states’ Defence Industries one of the organization’s early priorities (Grupo de Trabajo del CDS 2009, 23), materialized in the organization’s first Action Plan (SADC 2009 Section 3).

### Shortcomings of Brazil-centred explanations to the creation of the SADC

All the above arguments led experts to perceive the UNASUR framework and its immediate predecessors (particularly MERCOSUR and IIRSA) as attempts to create institutional frameworks shaped to Brazil’s convenience and interests (Gardini 2011; Rivarola Puntigliano 2007; Silva Pedroso 2014, 80–81). The evidence suggests that these

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<sup>15</sup> The two key examples are the *Gaucha*, an “Airborne and General Purpose” 4x4 vehicle jointly developed between Argentina and Brazil; and, the Embraer KC-390, a medium-size military transport aircraft designed by Brazil that included the Argentine FAdE as one of its key suppliers. The UNASUR I, a basic pilot training aircraft aimed to address the needs of South American air forces, is the first project developed within the SADC cooperation framework, but has not yet been able to leave the design table.

intentions and interests were indeed present. However, it is also important to bear in mind something that Gian Luca Gardini points out,

“[...] the fact that it is the product of Brazilian initiative provides the bloc with a designated, or self-designated, leader, with an obvious interest in a return from the success of the organization. At the same time, Brazilian preponderance generates resistance and makes the success of the group over-dependent on Brazil’s own domestic and international preferences.” (Gardini 2011)

This resistance to recognize a Brazilian leadership can be clearly identified in the three case studies. Argentina consistently revelled against acknowledging any superiority to its neighbour, not only in the regional arena but also in international fora (Malamud 2011b; Vieira and Alden 2011; Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007). Chile maintained a distant relation with the region since the early 1970s, and even participated in the creation of an alternative grouping (the Pacific Alliance) immediately after the creation of UNASUR. Finally, Colombia vocally showed its discontent with the notion of a SADC, threatening not to join in the negotiations, and simultaneously negotiated in secret an enhanced military cooperation agreement with the US.

Suzanne Gratius (2008, 3–4) has argued that one of the possible aspects feeding this resistance is related to a duality embedded in the SADC initiative. In her analysis, this resulted from the “ambivalent leadership” shown by Brazil, moving back and forth between its ambition to become a global player and its attempts to lead the region in a collective project. Indeed, as Gratius points out, this ambivalence can be seen more clearly in instances when High-Ranking officials (including President da Silva) placed the creation of the SADC and the Brazilian bid to become a permanent member of the UNSC in close proximity (Orozco Restrepo 2016, 16). Hector Saint-Pierre adds that the lack of transparency about the Brazilian intentions and military planning may have also

generated doubts among its regional partners, something that was only partially remedied with the publication of the document National Defence Strategy, in 2008 (Saint-Pierre 2009, 15–17).

The relative resistance to Brazilian leadership, combined with the economic impossibility to muster the resources necessary to build and distribute regional common goods, has led to a situation labelled by Andrés Malamud (2011a) as one of a “leader without followers”. He argues that the above circumstances hindered Brazil’s ability to build a leadership legitimized by regional partners, despite it being classified as an emergent global power due to resource accumulation and international performance. In his view, the key paradox in this situation is that

“By playing the regional card to achieve global aims, Brazil has ended up in an unexpected situation: while its regional leadership has grown on paper, in practice it has met growing resistance. Yet the country has gained increasing global recognition.” (Malamud 2011a, 19)

This can be put in direct contrast with the regional bid made by Venezuelan President, Hugo Chávez, who was able to start a relatively successful sub-regional grouping with the ALBA, in 2004. This was done despite Venezuela having none of the material conditions discussed in the Brazilian case, having traditionally been peripheral to South American regional dynamics, and facing increasing international backlash against its openly anti-US rhetoric. This was arguably related to its ability to articulate an autonomist collective identity (something that Brazil also did, albeit in a less confrontational way), and distribute material and symbolic common goods to partner countries (which Brazil was unwilling to do). Though this institutional framework has become increasingly irrelevant after the demise of President Chávez, in March 2013, and the sudden drop of crude oil

prices, in June 2014, the fact remains that Venezuela was able to momentarily advance its own regional project against all odds. One of the possible explanations for this success story resides in the fact that President Chávez was willing to back his regional agenda by committing his country to asymmetrically assume the costs of creating and distributing common goods to an extent that Brazilian elites were not willing to.

The above explains why many interviewees maintained that the SADC project presented by Brazil looked like an “empty shell” to be filled through negotiations. In their view, the key Brazilian interest was the creation of this regional organization itself, and not so much being able to determine every specific aspect of the agreement. This strategy allowed UNASUR sectorial councils, in general, and the SADC, in particular, to be perceived as the result of a broad multilateral consensus rather than as a hegemonic imposition. This perception meant, for example, that negotiating the inclusion of clauses that served the interests of Brazilian Defence Industries was far easier than it would have been under different circumstances. More importantly, in the eyes of Brazilian elites this approach meant that the notion of a distinct South American “regionality” could be advanced reducing the need to assume responsibilities for its working asymmetrically.

However, highlighting the disputed condition of the Brazilian regional leadership is also important in the context of this research since it problematizes the notion that the accumulation of resources, relative power, and geopolitical interests can explain the construction of the SADC on their own. In fact, both the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) and the SIPRI Milex data index (Appendix 4) show Brazil has consistently held half of the region’s power resources at least since the 1980s. In other words, though Brazil has grown its power resources in absolute terms over the last decades, so have the other countries in the region (and almost at the same rate in

average). This is not to deny the central role played by Brazil in the creation of the SADC, but to point out that its share of regional power does not seem to have radically changed in the years leading to it. This means that there must be other factors that also need to be taken into consideration to have a more complete understanding of the agendas and processes involved in this institutional innovation and region-building process.

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the other factor usually considered by the literature as central to understand the conditions that allowed the creation of the SADC is the presence of shared ideational commitments among South American States. Hence, the following section will focus on these elements to try and understand what their contribution was.

### **Ideational commonalities in the creation of the SADC**

The second line of research that this Literature Review needs to engage with focuses on the role of shared ideational features among South American states to explain the conditions of possibility for the creation of the SADC. The large majority of academics advancing this line of argumentation rely on a variety of constructivist approaches to understand the role ideas play in processes of regionalization, closely related to what Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum (2000) have called New Regionalism Theory (NRT). According to these two authors, one of the key pursuits of NRT is “[...] to emphasise the reality of regionalisation behind the fetishism of formal regional organisations.” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000, 460), a goal to be achieved by analysing the actual ideational and behavioural characteristics of a geographically contiguous grouping of states (i.e., the “regionnness” of this grouping).

The argument that the UNASUR and the SADC are the result of a pre-existing “regionness” at the ideational level can be found not only in academic pieces analysing the process of their creation, but also in a number of official documents and statements issued in the years leading to the SADC negotiations (as briefly explained in Chapter 1, pp. 4-5). For example, the final communiqué issued after the 2000 Brasilia Presidential Summit (First South American Presidents’ Summit 2000) makes special reference to the presence of common values as one of the central reasons justifying the region-building initiative. Similarly, subsequent Presidential summits (Third South American Presidents’ Summit 2004), agreements (Comunidad Suramericana de Naciones 2006), and the respective UNASUR and SADC statutes (UNASUR 2008a, 2008b) consistently refer to cultural commonalities, shared historical experiences, and the collective quest to construct a South American identity as some of the central reasons validating the idea of building new ways of regional cooperation and policy coordination.

Though there are differences among the authors ascribing to this approach, they all share in identifying immaterial factors as central to understanding the context that explains this institutional innovation. For purposes of clarity alone, in this section I will group authors into two general branches, whose arguments are nevertheless intertwined and overlapping: first, those who emphasize the role the regional “turn to the left” and recent social learning processes in shaping a new form of South American regionalism; and, secondly, those authors that highlight long-term cultural continuities to explain the “ideational context” of these developments.

### The SADC as a result of a common regional agenda

For over two decades, between the mid-1970s and the late-1990s, right-of-centre governments dominated South American politics advancing neoliberal economic reforms in line with the “Washington Consensus”<sup>16</sup>. During this time, regional integration projects focused primarily on setting up free trade areas (Mellado 2013, 140).

This tendency started to change, however, in the early-2000s. Canonically, the 1998 electoral victory of Hugo Chávez for the Presidency of Venezuela is identified as the beginning of what came to be called the “Latin American left turn” (Levitsky and Roberts 2011), which is also closely associated with the rise of new forms of regional cooperation. By 2008, when the statutes of the UNASUR and the SADC were under negotiation, eight out of the twelve countries in the region (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela) had left-of-centre administrations in power. Pía Riggirozzi sums up this argument,

“In Latin America, real regional spaces for alternative policy-making have taken shape since the early 2000s as part of a new political climate of social mobilisation and political motivations embraced across the region by new Left of Centre governments, in a move that is often characterised as post-neoliberalism.” (Riggirozzi 2012, 425)

The specific position each of these governments had in the left-right political spectrum has been a matter of debate (Arditi 2008; Rivarola Puntigliano 2008, 41–42), to the extent that authors have challenged the notion of grouping them under the label of “the left” altogether (Puello-Socarrás 2015, 31–33). Indeed, something similar could be argued

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<sup>16</sup> “After the severe economic, political and social crises of the 1970s and the 1980s, economic liberalization seemed to offer a route to overcoming their problems. [...] These reforms form the core of the neoliberal reformation and were summed up in 1990 in a list of 10 policy items by John Williamson and labelled the Washington Consensus, since they expressed the common sense of the multilateral agencies headquartered in Washington DC and of the US administration.” (Kirby 2003, 55–56)

about the neoliberal regional agenda advanced in previous decades, where authors have identified differences and contradictions among different countries in terms of their preferred strands of neoliberalism and choice of strategies for implementation (Etchemendy 2011, 126–49; Puello-Socarrás 2015).

There is widespread agreement among researchers working on Latin American regionalism that one of the key developments resulting from this pendulum towards the left was the emergence of a new dominant perspective on the role and preferred forms of regional cooperation (Beasley-Murray, Cameron, and Hershberg 2009; Colombo and Roark 2012; Levitsky and Roberts 2011; Moraña 2008; da Motta Veiga and Ríos 2007; Panizza 2009; Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012a; Rivarola Puntigliano et al. 2008; Sanahuja 2007; Tussie 2014). Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts (2011) have argued that, in addition to other ideational features, at least two crucial goals were shared among South American countries: escaping the limits to economic policy imposed by the “Washington Consensus” in order to advance an agenda more focused on development and redistribution; and, seeking to diversify their international insertion strategies. In addition, most of the market reforms undergone in the preceding decade and the democratic credentials obtained since the 1980s had to be maintained while pursuing these goals. The regional dynamics resulting from the implementation of these agendas became a key defining feature of South American politics, revitalizing the autonomic elements of the Latin American regionalist tradition (Colombo and Roark 2012).

Accordingly, authors have taken the “turn to the left” to represent one of the key necessary conditions to understand and explain the emergence of new perspectives on and projects for cooperation at the regional level. Perhaps the two more interesting ways in which this has been theorised is through the notions of “post-liberal” regionalism

(Gardini 2011; da Motta Veiga and Ríos 2007; Sanahuja 2009; Serbín, Martínez, and Ramanzini Jr. 2012) and “post-hegemonic” regionalism (Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015; Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012a). Though the two share in many relevant aspects regarding the conceptualization of this regional process, there are crucial differences between them, particularly with regards to what each perceives as the central political agenda driving the emergence of new regionalist efforts.

*SADC and the concept of Post-liberal regionalism*

Authors using the “post-liberal” label to describe the regionalist processes embodied by the UNASUR and the SADC have focused primarily on the efforts made by these organizations (together with the other sectorial councils, as well as the Venezuela-led ALBA) to advance regional agendas different to trade liberalization. The central argument is that post-liberal regionalist efforts resulted not only from a Brazilian interest in changing the geographical delimitation of the region, nor exclusively from a shared conviction among member states about the benefits of coordinating policies in new areas, but also from a generalized reluctance to continue advancing with the trade-liberalizing projects that dominated the regional environment throughout the 1990s (Sanahuja 2010a, 88). According to Pedro da Motta Veiga and Sandra Ríos (2007), such developments are not limited to South America, and relate to a widespread backlash against the effects of globalization leading to the resurgence of economic nationalism and the development of heterogeneous models of international insertion.

José Antonio Sanahuja, one of the prime proponents of this approach to understand the creation of the UNASUR identifies the following features as common to all post-liberal regionalist efforts in South America (Sanahuja 2012, 7–8):

- A generalized rejection to the neoliberal agenda of the “Washington Consensus”;
- A return of the autonomy agenda to the foreign policies of member countries, particularly regarding the influence of the US over their policies and over regional developments;
- A re-politicization of development policies, challenging the dogmas of trade liberalization and free-market economics, and bringing state planning and intervention in the economy back to the menu;
- The rise of wider regional agendas, explicitly involving matters of regional governance and the resolution of “development bottlenecks” (particularly those related with lack of transport and energy infrastructure);
- Concern with resolving socio-economic asymmetries, addressing structural developmental imbalances across the region by relating the process of regional cooperation with efforts to address poverty and inequality;
- More openness to the involvement of non-state actors in different stages of the process, as well as efforts to socially legitimize the drive towards regionalization.

In short, as has already been mentioned, Sanahuja sees efforts to build a new regionalization project to be primarily concerned with re-politicizing dimensions of regional relations left aside during the heyday of the Washington Consensus. These include the social, development, infrastructure, and international defence/security, among others, explicitly omitting free trade and economic liberalization (Dabène 2012). Even the few projects advanced during this time related to the advancement of economic cooperation (the “Banco del Sur” or “Bank of the South”, and bilateral agreements to trade in local currencies instead of resorting to the dollar or the Euro) were also related to gaining more autonomy from extra-regional financial institutions and actors.

One of the reasons that explains the correlation between left-of-centre governments and this new strand in South American regionalism is their interest in protecting local labour and production, in opposition to the de-industrialization caused by neoliberal policies (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012). On the other hand, but also closely related to the characterization made by Sanahuja, social movements and civil society organizations had a central role in the rise of anti-/post-liberal agendas, as well as in the incorporation of notions of “solidarity” and a sense of “common fate” in the regional projects of the 2000s. For example, Sandra Colombo and Mariano Roark (2012) relate the emergence of this South American regionalist process to the backlash against neoliberalism and free trade agreements seen in the international arena, dating back to events like the demonstrations against the 1999 WTO Summit in Seattle and to the 2001 World Social Forum. They also identify the hostile reactions to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) proposal, presented by the US during the 2005 IV Americas Summit, as a key moment showing that the post-liberal agenda had become a prominent feature of South American regional politics.

Yet, in spite of the undeniable relevance of this line of enquiry, it is also important to highlight some of its limitations. One of the main shortcomings presented by using the “post-liberal” label to engage with the creation of the SADC is that it provides too wide of a lens for the analysis to be actually meaningful. Though this approach can certainly help explain the fall from grace of trade liberalization in South America, it provides too little explanatory power regarding the specific regionalization agendas that emerged afterwards. In other words, it could be said that, while the turn to the left can certainly be associated with the weakening of neoliberal regionalism and the resurgence of

developmentalist policies, the “post-liberal” label does little to explain the specificities of the new regional project embodied by the UNASUR and the SADC.

Moreover, Andrés Malamud (2008) challenges, or at the very least qualifies, the notion that it was post-liberal ideational agreements and volitive actions by left-of-centre governments that explain the weakening of liberal regionalism and the emergence of non-commercial forms of regional cooperation. His analysis agrees with the arguments of other authors in maintaining that MERCOSUR intra-bloc interdependence could no longer expand after having peaked in 1999 given the similarity in the exports of member states (Burges 2005; Gómez Mera 2005, 121–23; Malamud 2008). As a result, maintaining the region as a viable locus of foreign policy interests for South American countries required that the cooperation agenda was widened beyond merely commercial agreements. And, indeed, even before the creation of the UNASUR/SADC was in the agenda, an expansion of MERCOSUR’s areas of interest took place. The 1998 Ushuaia Protocol is a good example of this, establishing a democratic clause and declaring the organization a Zone of Peace, decisively moving towards other-than-commercial facets of regional cooperation (Flemes and Radseck 2012, 222; Herz 2010, 607).

Finally, though trade liberalization and liberal regional organizations clearly lost their primacy as the driving forces of South American integration, it is important to bear in mind that they did not vanish. For example, one of the more fervent proponents of the post-liberal approach to regionalization, President Hugo Chávez, also devoted substantial diplomatic efforts to secure entry to MERCOSUR for his country. Arguably, Venezuela’s strategy was one pursuing a “full integration” with South America (González Urrutia 2007, 4–6), meaning that the liberal aspects of regional cooperation were not entirely dismissed, but neither were they the more salient aspect in its international insertion

strategy. Moreover, the hard negotiations between Argentina and Brazil, on the one hand, and Paraguay and Uruguay, on the other, over the acceptance of the Venezuelan bid (promoted by the former and resisted by the latter) show that by no means did the creation of UNASUR uproot the pre-existing expressions of liberal regionalism, nor did it render them completely irrelevant. It is also interesting to highlight that in the early-2000s Brazil did briefly propose the creation of a South American Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), conceived as an expansion of MERCOSUR to the entire region (Gómez Mera 2005). Together with the above, the creation of the Pacific Alliance (Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) in 2011 proves that liberal regionalism was still a relevant feature of this period, albeit not the more prominent nor publicized one.

In other words, using the “post-liberal” label highlights efforts to create a new layer of regional institutions that broke with the hegemony of “Open Regionalism”, but without supplanting it (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012b, 10). The coexistence of neoliberal and post-liberal organizations added layers of complexity to the regional landscape (Briceño-Ruiz 2013; Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015; da Motta Veiga and Ríos 2007), highlighting the sustained interest of South American countries in advancing regional cooperation and policy coordination. However, as with the Brazil-centric approach, one of the main shortcomings this approach presents is that it tells us little about the new agendas advanced by the UNASUR framework, in general, and in the SADC, in particular.

#### *The SADC as a Post-hegemonic regional project*

Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie introduced the understanding of UNASUR and its sectorial councils as expressions of “post-hegemonic” in their edited volume *The Rise of Post-hegemonic Regionalism. The case of Latin America* (2012a). Unlike Amitav Acharya,

who defines post-hegemonic orders merely as those that come “after hegemony” (Acharya 2008, 8), Ruggirozzi and Tussie define the concept in the following way:

“By post-hegemonic we mean regional structures characterized by hybrid practices as a result of a partial displacement of dominant forms of US-led neoliberal governance in the acknowledgement of other political forms of organization and economic management of regional (common) goods.” (Ruggirozzi and Tussie 2012b, 12)

Arguably, what makes these orders post-hegemonic is the “displacement of dominant forms of US-led neoliberal governance” in favour of alternative approaches to the creation, management, and distribution of common goods. However, its qualification as “partial” is a crucial characteristic that should not be left forgotten, accounting not only for the changes but also for the continuities of neoliberal regionalist projects.

Following the above definition, José Briceño-Ruiz and Andrea Ribeiro Hoffman (2015) understand this approach to be in line with a Coxian understanding of hegemony:

“[...] a structure of values and understandings about the nature of order that permeates a whole system of states and non-state entities. In a hegemonic order these values and understandings are relatively stable and unquestioned. [...] Hegemony derives from the ways of doing and thinking of the dominant social strata of the dominant state or states [...]. These social practices and the ideologies that explain and legitimize them constitute the foundation of hegemonic order.” (Cox 1992, 140)

More importantly still, Cox engages with post-hegemonic orders, claiming they imply a “[...] doubt as to the likelihood that a new hegemony can be constructed to replace a declining hegemony.” (Cox 1992). This is crucial, since it means that understanding the creation of the UNASUR and the SADC as expressions of post-hegemonic regionalism would counter the interpretation that they are the embodiment of a new hegemonic order articulated by the Brazilian dominant social strata.

Also, following this understanding of hegemony and post-hegemony accentuates the discursive relation built between commercial forms of regionalism, on the one hand, and the process of neoliberal globalization, on the other (Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015). Globalization is thus presented as a “structure of constraints” that creates pressures towards the formation of liberal regional processes (Fawcett 2008, 2). Regional organizations are promoted as means to ease the integration to the global market, act as stepping stones between the local and the global, defend local economies against the potentially negative impacts of generalized liberalization, and even help strengthen the negotiating positions of relatively small countries by pooling resources and presenting more attractive regional markets to extra-regional economic actors.

Post-hegemonic regionalism, on the other hand, supplanted this with a new perspective that no longer focused on the economic dimensions of regionalization. Riggiozzi and Tussie are, nonetheless, aware of the hybridity that defines the new South American regional landscape, gestating novel forms of non-economic regional cooperation while also maintaining the organizations that epitomized neoliberal regionalism in the 1990s in a “partial displacement”. They argue that

“the current wave of regionalism represents a hybrid model, expressive of an alternative continental strategy for growth and social justice, representative of a more political and confident ‘Latin’ America, suspicious of US leadership yet still largely in tune with the need for open markets.” (Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012b, 11–12).

This understanding shows more nuance than the post-liberal one in the sense that it accommodates both for the continuities and the innovations seen in the period, challenging the view that the UNASUR and other regional organizations created at the time can be defined exclusively as “[...] a space for contestation and resistance vis-à-vis neo-liberalism” (Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015, 53). As discussed above,

characterizing this new perspective on regionalism as post-hegemonic implies that it did not take the form of a new hegemonic discourse and narrative to supplant the previous one, which may help explain the difficulties faced by authors trying to pinpoint a single overarching logic to it other than a general claim to expand the margins of international autonomy for member countries. As already mentioned, at least one of the reasons why this process did not take the form of a new hegemonic order under Brazilian leadership is because of this country's inability to create such an order given its reluctance to asymmetrically assume the costs of region-building (Burges 2008, 75).

Another important feature of this new trend of regionalism in South America is that it maintained the strong regional commitment with the notion of national sovereignty, as can be seen in the reiteration of clauses of non-intervention, consensual decision-making, and respect for territorial integrity (Rojas Aravena 2012, 22–23). According to Thomas Legler (2013, 334), two motives explain the resilience of traditional sovereignty in these post-hegemonic frameworks: **a.** The goal of “bringing back the state” in order to regain space lost to the market under the neoliberal hegemony, facilitating the enforcement of developmentalist strategies; and, **b.** the goal of redefining the relationship between the US and many Latin American countries after the collapse of the “Washington Consensus” became a priority that required bringing back a strong sense of external security. As will be seen in more detail the case studies, the latter even led some South American countries to securitize the systemic level, and particularly the actors that became identified with neoliberal reforms, like the IMF and the US government (Simonoff 2015, 6–7).

Sean Burges (2008) also argues that the agenda of “strong sovereignty” was of particular interest for the Brazilian diplomacy, which was nevertheless unable to advance

the issue unilaterally. Given its inability or unwillingness to establish a new hegemonic order around its own agendas,

“Itamaraty’s response was to extend its long-standing focus on sovereignty and autonomy to the continental level, wrapping it around core regional concerns. The focus was thus placed on the protection of democracy, the interpretation of liberal economics in a manner that would facilitate rapid economic growth, and regionalized responses to the challenges of globalization. These factors were woven together to present national development and democratic consolidation as being [...] grounded in the regional and global context.” (Burgess 2008, 75)

Finally, an element that should also be considered to analyse the persistence of national sovereignty as a key element in the SADC is the strong ideational commitment shared by the elites in most South American countries towards this principle. Battaglino presents this insight in the following way,

“[...] the establishment of the SADC is a regional response to a new defense context characterized by an increased global asymmetry in the distribution of military power and militarization of the US security agenda towards the region, but at the same time as a consequence of a revival of long political and intellectual regional traditions that has never abandoned the goal of Latin American integration.” (Battaglino 2012, 82)

With all the above considerations in mind, it is possible to see that the post-hegemonic understanding of the creation of the SADC not only brings forward the role played in the process by negative perceptions of the US agenda for the region, but also elements of agency and identity involved in giving shape to new forms of regional cooperation. This reinforces the distinction between the “context dependent” regionalism of the 1990s (i.e. a response to the purely external situation of neoliberal globalization), and the post-hegemonic regionalism of the 2000s, understood as a hybrid between old and new, regional and global (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012b, 11–12).

In order to advance this understanding of the creation of the SADC, Battaglino engages simultaneously with the continuities and changes at the material and ideational dimensions. In his perspective, while material changes (such as the rise of Brazil and the militarization of the US approach to the region) are relevant aspects to factor in, it is the ideational that explains the more specific aspect of the SADC (Battaglino 2012, 84–85). Moreover, while he acknowledges that ideational continuities are essential to understand the way South American countries approached the initiative, his analysis pays special attention to the innovations seen in relation to “development of a regional consensus regarding how to deal with defence challenges.” (Battaglino 2012, 83).

Indeed, the construction of a broader base of shared understandings throughout the region regarding the defence policy area is at the heart of the three general and specific goals given to the SADC (UNASUR 2008b, Art. 4-5), as already discussed in the previous chapter. Following the post-hegemonic rationale, these goals seek to contribute to the development of an autonomous approach to the issue of defence, taking the emphasis away from militarized responses and helping advance new areas of mutual understanding between the member states.

More importantly, Battaglino’s understandings of the rationale behind the creation of the SADC and its role in regional governance are based on the notion that it is

“A hybrid combination of realpolitik responses and redefinition of what defence is for in a region that is re-writing the rules of engagement and practices beyond trade and beyond hegemonic competition.” (Battaglino 2012, 85).

The implications he derives from this for regional governance associate the creation of the SADC with the expansion of the defence policy area to other-than-military responses to the concerns of the sector, focusing particularly on the development agenda; on efforts

devoted to the re-definition of identities, interests, and perceptions; and on opening new possibilities for cooperation and policy coordination in an area in which Latin American states had not be willing to discuss in much depth before.

As the case studies will show, this is not to say that there were no disagreements among SADC members regarding the actual chances of achieving meaningful cooperation in the area, nor about the topics that should be included under the banner of a “Defence Council”. In fact, examples can be found in the records of the negotiations (UNASUR 2009) of countries seeking a collective defence agreement and some degree of operational integration between the Armed Forces of the region (Venezuela), while others saw the whole effort as futile and ideologically-driven (Colombia).

More interestingly, the question of what “Defence” involves was contested, with Southern Cone countries (primarily Argentina and Chile) defending the strict doctrinal separation between Defence (external) and Security (internal), and countries like Colombia advancing the position that domestic conflicts, terrorism, and drugs should also fall within the interests of this sector. Yet, the fact that the SADC was successfully created despite these relevant disagreements shows that a consensus could be found. This was done not by re-shaping what each country understands by defence domestically, but rather by painstakingly identifying the maximum common denominators that would allow taking the first steps towards developing a more cooperative approach to the question of governing South American security.

### Shared regional identity

One final set of arguments advanced to understand the creation of the SADC is that this initiative came to fruition due to a pre-existing Latin/South American regional identity.

The overlap with the arguments discussed in the previous sub-section is vast, and the two have certainly been combined in different accounts. Yet, however arbitrary the distinction between the two may be, there is a strong case to present them as analytically diverse.

The arguments in the previous sub-section engaged with the regionalist agenda that became dominant after the rise of left-of-centre governments, whose quest to develop more autonomous and diversified foreign policies in support of their development goals were in conflict with some aspects of the trade liberalization goals that drove neoliberal regionalism. Those arguments are somehow context-dependent, in that their role in the emergence of new models of regionalism is intimately related with the political, economic, and social conditions seen in South America in the aftermath of the crises that resulted from the neoliberal reforms of the 1970s-1990s. This sub-section engages, instead, with the role long term ideational characteristics of Latin American states may have had in the creation of the SADC, making little (if any) reference to the more recent political context.

To be sure, the arguments discussed in the previous sub-section and the ones that will be discussed here are compatible with each other. In fact, left on their own both points of view have severe shortcomings. Without some consideration for the specific political context of the 2000s the perspective to be discussed in this sub-section faces problems making sense of the particular timing in which the SADC was created. Similarly, the arguments of the previous sub-section would lack depth of understanding if no relation was established with the rich regional ideational context and its influence on formation of the post-hegemonic regional agenda.

Battaglino made an explicit effort to put the two in direct dialogue, maintaining that deeply-rooted understandings of regional cooperation informed the way left-of-centre governments approached the issue of defence cooperation, but also that the SADC became

a new landmark in the evolution of the regional collective identity. According to him, the SADC incorporates two elements to the regional identity: a shared understanding about what issues are to be considered part of the Defence sector; and a de-militarized approach to regional defence governance (Battaglino 2012, 84). Though his analysis is primarily focused on the process of social learning the organization was designed to trigger, rather than on the role of pre-existing shared identities, Battaglino's remains the most complete approximation to explaining the creation of the SADC from a multi-causal systemic view.

The notion that a set of identity markers, cultural features, and ideas about how to relate to each other are shared by Latin/South American states is by no means new. One of the theoretical perspectives that has been more convincingly used to advance this idea is the English School (Hurrell 2004; Jones 2008; Kacowicz 2005b; Merke 2011). Generally speaking, the starting point for this approach is that shared institutions and norms, common values and goals, and the related appropriate practices and preferred outcomes that are socially valued by the group, are all essential to understand the international behaviour of states. Though no attempts have been made to use this specific approach to understand the creation of the SADC, and only Charles Jones's paper (2008) has identified South America as an international society separate from Latin America, a general argument could be fleshed out with relative ease based on the existing characterizations of the Latin American Society of States.

An argument along these lines would maintain that, to better understand and explain the context that allowed the creation of the SADC, one should focus on identifying the role shared institutions and norms had in shaping the regional order. In an attempt to identify which primary institutions of the dominant international order (Bull 2002, 95–222) are better at explaining inter-state interactions in the Latin American Society of States,

Federico Merke (2011) identified diplomacy and international law as most relevant, playing down the importance institutions like war, great power management, and balance of power have in defining regional dynamics. Moreover, Merke agrees with Arie Kacowicz (2005b) in identifying the specificity of this region's society of states in breaking those two institutions into principles like multilateralism; sovereignty and equality of states; *uti possidetis*<sup>17</sup> and territorial integrity; peaceful settlement of disputes; confidence building and arms controls; legalism; and, respect for Human Rights and democracy. In this context, the creation of the SADC could be understood as a historically-contingent development resulting from the influence long-held institutions have had in a re-democratized South America.

Though she uses a constructivist approach rather than an English School one, Marina Vitelli (2011) comes the closest to explaining the creation of the SADC from the perspective of long-term system-level ideational structure. Her conclusion is that a regional ideational structure based on the principles of peaceful and collective resolution of controversies are the key starting points that allowed the creation of the SADC (Vitelli 2011, 57–59). María Inés Ruz's research (2011a) closely resembles these argument, maintaining that the strong commitment in the region with the peaceful resolution of controversies, the social learning process resulting from the recent history of cooperation, and the political will to foster a "culture of regional peace" are all essential to understand how and why the SADC came to being. José Antonio Sanahuja also engages with this constructivist approach, but argues that the influence of shared identities, culture, and traditions on the region's different integration processes have been conflicting. In his

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<sup>17</sup> This institution refers to one of the legal principle used by Latin American states to assert their sovereignty after becoming independent from Spain. It holds that the newly formed political units are natural successors to the Spanish crown in the American continent, hence inheriting sovereign rights over the territories under their administration.

view, the characteristics and contradictions seen in the UNASUR framework can be related to what he calls a “permanent trilemma” between three long-term values of Latin American countries (Sanahuja 2012, 1): defending the nation-state and national sovereignty; a drive towards “unionism” and integration; and, the quest for increasing degrees of autonomy. More importantly, he qualifies the relevance of the alleged ideational commonalities at the South American level in the creation of the UNASUR framework by stating that

“Does this mean that this newfound ‘South American’ or ‘Unasurian’ discourse and/or identity are a constitutive element of UNASUR? Probably not, but rather a redefinition of the Latin American unionist narrative has emerged, linking itself with the developments of UNASUR.” (Sanahuja 2012, 9)

Focusing primarily on the first element listed by Sanahuja, authors like Gabriel Orozco Restrepo (2016) have problematized the role and impact of the so called South American identity. In his view, identifying a finite set of shared goals that define a “South American identity” lacks rigour and explanatory power, suggesting that this identity should instead be sought in the actual patterns of interaction (relations of amity and enmity) that have developed within the region over time. As a result, though he acknowledges shared goals and values have a role and may lead to more stable patterns of interaction, Orozco Restrepo argues that the South American identity is defined as much by tensions and conflicts as they are by cooperation, peaceful resolution of conflicts, common ideas, and shared perceptions. Following from this, he maintains that the SADC will not have the expected implications (i.e. a common regional approach to defence) as long as sovereignty, old territorial disputes, and rivalries remain relevant factors affecting interactions between South American states (Orozco Restrepo 2016).

The tendency to escalate tensions and mobilize military forces based on nationalistic discourses is by no means new. In fact, this form of interaction has been discussed in detail by geopolitical authors like Jack Child (1985), Philip Kelly (1997) and David Mares (2001). These authors agree that “violent peace” and “militarized bargaining” are as defining of the South American identity/society as the principle of peaceful resolution of conflicts, the preference for multilateral mechanisms, or the respect for international law.

Researchers at the German Institute for Global and Area studies (GIGA) Daniel Flemes, Detlef Nolte, and Leslie Wehner argue that the remaining influence of territorial and nationalistic disputes, together with the diverging interests of regional powers, should be blamed for hindering cooperation in the defence sector until the creation of the SADC (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 107–8). Their argument is that the ideational conditions necessary for the emergence of a shared understanding about the coordination of defence and regional security agendas had been present for a long time, referring to Andrew Hurrell’s argument (1998) that South America was a proto-Security Community since the 1990s. Paradoxically, though, they identify the border tensions between Colombia and Venezuela-Ecuador, as well as the attempted coup in Bolivia in 2008, as the critical junctures that triggered this institutional innovation. In their view, these critical instances gave momentum to what Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998a, 30) call an “ascending phase” in the consolidation of a tightly-coupled South American Security Community. Flemes, Nolte and Wehner consider that that stage would be achieved through coordination mechanisms that fostered the creation of institutionalized routines for the governance of common security and defence issues. In addition, the authors identify three mutually complementing aspects that coincided in this period and aided in the creation of the SADC (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 123): the political need to isolate the region from the OAS (i.e. the US) in matters of regional governance; the quest

to create regional instances of political dialogue and coordination with legitimacy to mediate in future crises; and, the identity-driven discourses related to the othering of non-members in terms of security and defence matters.

The article by Flemes, Nolte and Wehner addresses one of the potential problems faced by approaches based on overarching cultural and ideational commonalities: Since these conditions had been present for several years, why was the SADC only created in 2008? Yet, the risk remains that such approach may “essentialize” the regionness of South American, attributing its shared identity and common cultural features explanatory power over the entirety of regional interaction. In addition, as explained before, focusing exclusively on systemic level elements (whether material or ideational) to explain the creation of the SADC runs the risk of obscuring the agency of the various actors involved; their diverging agendas and interests; and the role each of them played in shaping this regional organization.

## **Conclusion**

South America’s polarity has been slowly shifting towards an increasingly evident unipolar distribution of power for decades now (Schenoni 2014. See also Appendix 4). However, as will be discussed in more detail in the regional context chapter, the concentration of military, economic and diplomatic power in Brazil are not yet significant enough to fully dominate the regional security environment, let alone allow this country to behave as a hegemonic power imposing its interests upon secondary regional powers.

In addition, the open nature of regional environments (Buzan and Waever 2003; Katzenstein 2005; Prys 2010) means that the implications of power distribution are

exponentially more difficult to predict than at the systemic level, in part due to the penetration of extra-regional powers and alliance formations between said powers and regional players being a concrete possibility. This further weakens the assumption that the creation of the SADC could be explained exclusively in terms of Brazilian hegemony. South American states have incentivized offshore balancing from extra-regional powers as a way to gather external support (political, economic, or military) in trying to fulfil “their national interests” (Hirst 2005; Kelly 1990; Sheinin 2006; Tickner 2007), reducing the relative weight of regional powers. This implies that regional polarity is perhaps of less relevance to predict state behaviour than systemic theories would predict. This reinforces the conclusions reached by Merke regarding the lack of explanatory power shown by the institution of great power management to understand South American dynamics (Merke 2011, 16–21).

Luis Schenoni (2014, 143–44) provides further arguments to disregard the notion that Brazilian power and interests alone can explain the creation of the UNASUR/SADC by highlighting that this country was given no preferential position nor especial voting rights, and that the creation of these organizations can be understood as a way for its neighbours to bind their larger partner and advance the Argentine-Chilean defence doctrine at the regional level.

Similarly, this chapter discussed approaches to the creation of the SADC based on the role the Latin American “turn to the left” had in the creation of an institutional framework that reflected the rise of new regional agendas (whether defined as post-liberal or post-hegemonic). These approaches certainly help better contextualize and interpret the goals given to this organization, and will be useful in qualifying the individual positions of secondary powers when faced with this Brazilian proposal. However, as with the other

(sub)system-level explanations explored in this chapter, an approach of this nature usually fails to account for the individual positions of regional actors regarding the SADC initiative, as well as for their negotiating agendas once the decision to move forward had been made. As will be explored in more detail in the case studies, the diverging political agendas of “centre-left Argentina”, “middle-ground Chile”, and “conservative Colombia” converged in the decision to create the SADC. More interestingly perhaps, regardless of their respective position in the political spectrum and ultimate perception of regional cooperation, all three were initially concerned with the initiative and rejected the more potentially disruptive expressions of the integrationist agenda, represented by the Venezuela-led ALBA. The above highlights the importance of exploring the individual approaches to the creation of the SADC and negotiating agendas of these three regional secondary powers, since such research can provide necessary nuance to the existing analyses and help understand how countries with diverse (even contradictory) agendas came to a converging outcome.

Something similar can be said about the literature focusing on the role of a common South American identity (or other forms of shared ideational features in the region) in the creation of the UNASUR/SADC framework. Arguments like those advanced by Vitelli (2011) and Ruz (Ruz 2011a) provide a strong backing to the idea that a regional preference for principles like the peaceful resolution of controversies and multilateralism had a prominent role in facilitating the creation of the SADC. Yet, on its own, this line of argumentation fails to explain the reasons why an organization like the SADC was successfully created in 2008 and not before despite similar proposals being advanced since the 1990s (see Chapter 5). The paper co-authored by Flandes, Nolte and Wehner (2011) partially remedies this by identifying the tensions seen in 2008 as a critical

juncture that, given the shared ideational context, allowed for the start of an ascending phase in the consolidation of a tightly-coupled Security Community in South America.

However, this should not obscure that the existence and independence of such thing as a South American identity has been put into question, describing UNASUR-related regionalist discourses as “a redefinition of the Latin American unionist narrative” (Sanahuja 2012, 9). Perhaps more importantly, Gabriel Orozco Restrepo (Orozco Restrepo 2016) has highlighted that evaluating the role of a regional identity in this institution-building process should not be restricted to ideational features. Rather, he proposes including long-term practices, territorial disputes, and tensions in the mix. The result is a more complex and ambivalent regional identity, which further complicates understanding the creation of the SADC exclusively in ideational terms.

To summarize, the above discussed (sub)systemic approaches provide relevant insights to understand the creation of the SADC in a context of Brazilian primacy; a shared regionalist agenda related to goals like obtaining more autonomy from extra-regional forces and the implementation of developmentalist economic policies that partially subverted neoliberal discourses; and, common ideational features and identity markers. As already mentioned, Jorge Battaglino’s (2012) analysis provides one of the more balanced approaches to this institutional and political innovation, combining all of the above factors to provide a nuanced understanding of the contextual conditions that allowed the negotiations to reach a successful outcome. These are by no means minor elements to explain the creation of the SADC, and indeed the following chapter will engage directly with defining in more detail the regional context. As explained in the introduction, assuming a constructivist perspective implies adhering to the notion that structure and agents are permanently engaged in a process of mutual co-constitution. Hence, even if the

main empirical contribution of this research comes from an agential perspective about the creation of the SADC, defining how the regional structure influenced the agents as well remains an unavoidable task.

## **Chapter 3. Regional security environment**

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### **Developments in the regional structure post-1980s**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to identify and analyse the key elements that characterize the current South American security environment, providing a better contextualization to understand regional-level stimuli on the behaviour of the three case studies. As will be discussed at length in the following chapter, (Strategic) culture translates and helps interpret these regional inputs, passing them through the lens of deep-rooted meanings that mediate their relationship with action(s) adopted as response. Hence, the relevance of this chapter is that it provides a necessary understanding of the incentives, constraints, pressures, and opportunities coming from regional security environment into South American states.

Federico Merke (2011) correctly points out that South America has usually been portrayed as either some sort of “anomaly” (Buzan and Waever 2003; Holsti 1996; Martín 2006) or as a “microcosm” in international politics, allegedly presenting characteristics

so unique that it could serve as a “laboratory” for International Relations (Jones 2008; Mares 2001, xi). I would argue that these characterizations, while based on the observation of actual regional dynamics, are essentially based on an othering of non-Western patterns of behaviour. In other words, I do not intend to say that South American relations are not distinctive. Rather, the argument here is the contrary: understood under the light of a Constructivist framework, all regional formation will show both unique features and some shared characteristics. In fact, post-colonial scholarship has convincingly argued that the patterns of interaction and norms developed in the West<sup>18</sup> should not escape this provincialization (Chakrabarty 2000, 2008), thus countering discourses attempting to portray them as the “globalized normality” against which the local dynamics of peripheral regions should be contrasted.

Perceiving regions as part of a larger pattern of international relations (to which South America apparently does not conform) implies contrasting actual regional interactions and the behaviour of regional players against the backdrop of an idealized “normal” behaviour (Prys 2010), i.e. Westphalian-type interactions as described by mainstream IR theory. Though, indeed, there are understandings shared by a majority of states and regions, it is also important to notice region-specific variations and specificities (South America’s low record of inter-state wars in a context of “violent peace”, presidential diplomacy, and domestic violence and instability; Western Europe’s supra-national organizations and institutionalist approach to post-WWII peace-building; the Middle East’s long-standing conflict formation and complex networks of transnational

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<sup>18</sup> Though contested, the notion of “the West” makes reference here to the set of countries/cultures that have dominated the production of knowledge in the Social Sciences, and whose visions of society, politics, institutions, normative approaches, identities, and national interest have been labelled as “global” by various IR scholars.

solidarities; and, ASEAN's stable inter-state peace in a context of either undemocratic or illiberal regimes; just to mention a few).

In order to provide such regional-level contextualization for South America in a theoretically informed way that is compatible with the Constructivist epistemology of this research, this chapter is informed by the insights of the English School (ES) and Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). There are, at least, three key reasons for following these two theories before others. Firstly, both the ES and RSCT frameworks show a high degree of compatibility with the constructivist approach, at the core of the epistemological assumptions informing this research. This will prove useful when drawing conclusions about the influence of regional-level dynamics on the agency of actors, and vice versa.

Secondly, the ES provides a well-developed theoretical perspective with which to analyse the role of historically-contingent shared institutions, goals, and values at the regional level. This is particularly relevant in order to explore the role of shared ideational and normative features present in South America, helping determine whether there is any strength to the claim that this regional cluster is indeed different from the rest of Latin America and the World. In addition, as Linda Quayle points out, one of the ES's most relevant contributions resides in its "big picture" analysis and consistent quest to occupy a "productive middle ground",

"Its holism enables it to bring very different actors into the same conversation, while its ability to recognize, defend and validate conceptual "in between" spaces makes it a natural bridge between realist and constructivist, statist and liberal, and structural and agential interpretations." (Quayle 2011, 2)

RSCT, on the other hand, provides the analytical leverage of a theoretical approach focused specifically on security dynamics at the regional level, accounting both for the in-group logics of interaction and for the intrinsically open nature of regional systems. This

theory also provides a relevant analytical differentiation between the sectorial dynamics of regional security and other forms of regional interaction, challenging the notion that the same geographical region can be equally relevant across all policy areas.

Hence, the ES approach will be used here to engage with the idea that there exists a regional society of states in South America, while the RSCT will provide a specialized toolbox to discuss whether this society also works as an independent security cluster. In doing so, this chapter seeks to contextualize and historicize the emergence of the post-hegemonic regionalist project discussed in the previous chapter, placing the creation of the SADC in its larger social contexts. Hopefully, this will provide sufficient understanding of the (sub)systemic factors constituting South American powers, their identities and perception of the regional security environment, influencing their agency when the SADC initiative was proposed by Brazil in 2008.

In the context of a Thesis devoted to the study of state agency, engaging with such regional contextualization is relevant in order to take seriously of the Constructivist argument that agency and structure (or, social arrangements, in Nicholas Onuf's terms) are embedded in a process of continuous mutual constitution. Doing so requires that at least the central characteristics of the South American security environment are discussed, including the dynamics and ideas that define its identity, and how it relates with the rest of the world.

In order to fulfil the objectives set out for this chapter, the first section will be devoted to putting forward a historicized account of the patterns of interaction that allow perceiving South America as sub-global International Society. In order to do so, a general understanding of how the ES approach helps understand regional societies will be briefly discussed, expanding on the points made in the previous chapter about the influence

shared institutions and ideational features have in regional dynamics. The resulting analysis will provide a necessary overview of the social and historical conditions that gave place to the long-term regional order in which the SADC was created.

The second section of the chapter will discuss the nature of the South American Security Complex (SASC). By identifying and explaining the core security practices and dynamics that have marked the recent evolution of regional interactions, this section offers a nuanced understanding of the conditions that facilitated the creation of the SADC. The obvious starting point for this section is Buzan and Waever's chapter about this regional security complex (Buzan and Waever 2003, 304–40), perhaps the most detailed analysis of the region to date using the RSCT approach. I will then proceed to discuss and update the insights advanced by these authors, devoting some attention to discussing the creation of the South American Defence Council within RSCT's framework.

In short, this chapter should offer convincing arguments regarding the saliency of South America as a regional society and a security region, separate from the rest of the Americas by its recent historical record and the development of shared understandings and practices. In doing so, it will evidence both the need to enrich the Brazil-centred understanding of recent regional initiatives, and set a common starting point for the study of the three case studies to be conducted in the following chapters.

## **South America as an International Society**

The ES approach has at least two key strengths that make it a relevant theoretical approach to conceptualize international relations (Quayle 2011, 13–17): **A.** it provides a big-picture analysis, acknowledging multiple spheres of international activity and

contextualizing them within larger historical and societal processes; and, **B.** ES authors make an active effort to position themselves in a “productive middle ground” (Ayson 2008), weighing the relevant contributions of dominant theoretical approaches and seeking to combine their strengths in a coherent manner.

However, though the theory is fully compatible with the analysis of sub-global societies of states, such approach has remained relatively unexplored (Bellamy 2005, 18; Buzan 2004, 205–217, 2012; Zhang 2002, 6–7). In fact, the volume compiled by Barry Buzan and Ana González-Pelaez (2009) on the Middle Eastern Society, Arie Kacowicz’s (2005b) study of the Latin American international society, and Linda Quayle’s (2013) case study on Southeast Asia, are among the few in-depth studies of regional societies using the ES framework. Given this situation, it is worth reviewing how the ES framework applies to the analysis of regional-level societies before engaging with the study of the South American regional society.

#### A case for using the ES approach to study Regional Societies

Though there are a variety of conceptualizations and normative positions associated with the ES framework, there is some consensus about the basic elements that make up this approach (Buzan 2004; Dunne 1998; Suganami 1983; Wilson 1989). One of its key contributions is understanding international politics through the concept of “Society of States” or “International Society”, seen as the result of stable (though mutable) patterns of behaviour and interaction that result in shared values, institutions, and norms. Once these institutions and norms are perceived as legitimate and socially valued features of the international environment, they reinforce particular types of international orders in what is otherwise an anarchic system.

In addition to this, the ES approach contemplates two other spheres of international activity, the international system (devoid of social norms ruling interstate behaviour, closely resembling the neorealist anarchic system) and world society (where non-state international relations take place). Finally, the ES has consistently shown a dismissive view of “scientificist” (positivist) approaches to IR (Bull 1966), defending a pluralism of methods that allows to produce a historically and socially contextualized analysis.

It is important to point out that the ES has been labelled at times as either “morally backwards” (Keal 2003), “Eurocentric” (Hobson 2012), or plainly “imperialist” (Kayaoğlu 2010; Seth 2011). Critics point out that this tradition has kept the values and interests of the world’s rule-takers hidden, if not straightforwardly oppressed, portraying the Westphalian order as a “standard of civilization” (or, at least, the most positively valued arrangement). Moreover, early ES authors have traditionally understood the adoption of “European” patterns of behaviour by post-colonial states as a passive acceptance of the values and goals that lay behind them. Such has been one of the more prevalent narratives about the formation of the Latin American Society of States, and it is only recently that colonialism, decolonization, and the role peripheral agents in the constitution of the so called “European International Society” have started to show more prominence in the analyses of authors working with this theory (Keal 2003; Keene 2004).

A closer analysis of this issue is beyond the reach of this chapter, but suffice it to say that I consider the above to be a problem more closely related with the normative preferences of particular authors than with the general principles of interpretation provided by the theory itself. In other words, the historical and interpretive approach of the ES is perfectly capable of incorporating non-western perspectives and historical accounts to interpret the emergence, evolution, meanings, and consequences of

international patterns of behaviour. Moreover, the definition of international order as a social construct resulting from stable patterns of interaction is more than able to identify the informal hierarchies that exist in international politics, recognizing the effects these inequalities entail for international politics. In doing so, it can be said that the ES presents a conservative view of international politics, but not necessarily a Eurocentric one.

The possibility of using this theory to study Regional Societies is proof of the above. Understanding regional formations as entities with historically-contingent and path-dependent institutions, different from those that shape behaviour at the global level and in other regional settings, allows analysing the specificities without the need to impose a normative preference for any particular outcome. Looking at the current international order as structured in a core-periphery form (with a set of dominant institutions at the core and a variety of regional institutions simultaneously at play), Buzan discusses how the above would allow telling a “less West-centric story”:

“[...] there is still a thin global international society that is partly based on genuinely shared primary institutions [...] and partly a reflection of ongoing western hegemony. [...] This view of international society is partly global and partly hegemonic, and it leaves more room for regional social structures within it.” (Buzan 2012, 25)

A centre-periphery approach makes a relevant contribution to the ES, enabling the analysis of interactions between global-level institutions and post-colonial regions (mostly at the fringe of the global balance of power). The image it creates is one of a partitioned international environment with institutions of different reach, rather than one of a homogeneous structure for global behaviour. Such situation is one where common global institutions and norms still form a shallow International Society, but also incorporates to the analysis the distinct patterns of interaction of sub-global clusters of states. This approach provides arguments to understand regional differentiations in the

degree of socialization and implementation of “genuinely shared primary institutions”, as well as the presence of entirely regional institutions and norms. Moreover, it is also relevant in that it advances a perspective that not only relies on processes of socialization, but also on dynamics of hegemonic pressure and regional resistance, helping avoid a Euro-centric perspective and incorporating elements of regional agency and contestation.

Hence, paraphrasing the classical ES definition of International Society<sup>19</sup>, a Regional Society is defined here as:

Group of geographically proximate states that, conscious of certain common values and interests, conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules and share in the working of common institutions that are distinct from those at work at the global level.

The geographical limitation included helps differentiate Regional Societies, expected to show more intense patterns of interaction across a wider variety of topics, from other types of sub-global groupings. Discussing Alan James’s position on the emergence of shared rules<sup>20</sup>, Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami highlight that a “*matter of logical necessity*” is involved in the creation of norms and institutions at the regional level (Linklater and Suganami 2006, 27). Since no other sub-global factor forces a regular engagement among agents as strongly as geography does, regions seem to be paramount

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<sup>19</sup> “group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system [...] but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.” (Bull and Watson 1984)

<sup>20</sup> “[...] when independent political units come into regular contact with each other certain requirements present themselves, almost as a matter of logical necessity: some rules are necessary for the regulation of their intercourse and also, therefore, some agreement on how these rules are to be established or identified; [...] and, if the collective of units is deemed to form a society, this carries with it the concept of membership, and hence the necessity for some criterion whereby this political unit is identified as a member and that not.” (James 1986, 466)

cases in which to expect the emergence of sustained patterns of behaviour that would indicate a practical need for common institutions and norms.

The above means that, to accurately understand a regional order and its security environment, it is necessary to identify the goals and values shared by the agents involved in them. The contextual conditions that allowed for the creation of the SADC can be analysed under this light by looking at the common regional institutions and norms of the South American society, seeking to understand how they may have affected the agency of secondary regional powers. This would also open a clear line of contact with RSCT and Social Constructivism, which conceive international/regional orders to be socially constructed and historically contingent, and yet stable enough as to perceive them as structural elements.

#### The South American regional society: Key institutions and regional order

Only few attempts have been made to explain the South American regional order using ES approach (Hurrell 2004; Jones 2008; Kacowicz 2005b; Merke 2011). This sub-section will engage with them, seeking to distil a clear image of the institutions that define this society of states and how they affect the regional security environment.

The first academic piece using the ES framework to discuss the participation of the Americas in the International Society was Adam Watson's "New States in the Americas" (Watson 1984), a chapter in the edited volume *The Expansion of International Society* (Bull and Watson 1984). As the title of the book suggests, the aim was not to explore the specificity and evolution of alternative international societies but to analyse the way non-European territories fitted in the globalization of the European Society of States. The narrative that transpires from the book is one of European superiority in economic,

military, institutional, and normative terms, as well as a passive acceptance of the Westphalian order by peripheral regions. In referring to the Americas, Watson notes

“The broad picture is of a whole hemisphere of new states developing from European colonization and on European lines which by the end of the eighteenth century were ready for independent statehood and capable of asserting it. [...] the states they formed were accepted members of the European society – rather boorish, and provincial members, perhaps, but that was no great matter.” (Watson 1984, 139).

This is a good example of the general attitude towards peripheral regions that can be perceived in early ES works. However, this need not be the case. Arguably, one of the characteristics of the South American order is that some of the primary European institutions did in fact become quickly socialized, either because of the desire of regional powers to be accepted as legitimate interlocutors or because their Europe-educated elites valued these institutions and norms (or, most probably, a combination of both). More importantly, however, over time these institutions and norms became constitutive part of the self-images of South American states, being interpreted and implemented accordingly with the perceptions and interests of regional units. As a result, for example, South American states have historically championed the further development of pluralistic institution like International Law and Sovereignty, using them in their own interest, while denouncing the notion of Great Power management and advancing short-of-war conflict resolution methods (Hurrell 2004; Merke 2011). In other words, acknowledging that the South American regional society “imported” many of the institutions from the European order does not mean it did so a-critically, nor passively. The peripheral, post-colonial condition of this region is central to understand the ways in which this process took place.

Though many points raised by Watson may have some explanatory power, the overall way he reads the international insertion of newly independent states is unequivocally

Euro-centric. The processes by which American states obtained independence are described as “negotiated”, disregarding the bloody wars against colonial powers that ended up draining valuable resources, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives, and delaying the process of state formation in the region. Moreover, Watson’s “negotiation” perspective actually gives the central role to the former European colonial powers in the process of “accepting” American states to the international society, rather than to the agency of these American states in gaining independence and finding a place for themselves in international politics.

#### *Institutions of the South American Regional Society*

Contemporary ES authors studying the region have listed a number of core institutions that regulate state behaviour in the Latin/South American society (Jones 2008; Kacowicz 2005b; Merke 2011). The compiled list looks as follows:

- Sovereignty
- Non-intervention
- Autonomy
- International Law
- *Uti Possidetis* and territorial integrity
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts and diplomacy
- “Concertación”
- Domestic balancing

Some of the principal institutions of the globalized European Society (Bull 2002, 95–222) make it into the list (Sovereignty, International Law, and Diplomacy), while others

(war and Great Power management) do not. It could be argued that war and other forms of interstate violence were part of the accepted forms of behaviour throughout the first century of Latin American independence, and only ceased to be part of the South American institutions at some point in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Oelsner 2005a). Yet, authors challenge the notion that South America is a peaceful region, qualifying the use of “foreign” criteria used to identify conflictive relations by favouring an analysis of inter-state conflicts more common and relevant to the region (Centeno 2002; Domínguez et al. 2003; Kelly 1997; Mares 2001; Mares and Bernstein 1998; Martín 2006).

Of the institutions listed above, the first three are intimately related and have remained at the core of the region’s international identity since the time of independence struggles, in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century. This highlights the highly pluralistic identity of this regional society, despite the wide array of values and interests shared. Latin American states understood early on that their recognition as equal-standing agents depended on the adoption of forms of statehood, governance, and international behaviour deemed “acceptable” by European Great Powers (Kacowicz 2005a, 5). In this sense, upholding the institution of sovereignty, as well as the principles of non-intervention and autonomy, was a question of survival in the international system rather than the attribution of an intrinsic superiority to them over other institutions.

As has been made sufficiently clear throughout the last 200 years of anti- and post-colonial struggle, “sovereignty” is not an unequivocal concept (Krasner 1999). In order to secure their position as sovereign units, Latin American states developed a corpus of practices, legal doctrines, norms, and institutions around the concepts of non-intervention and autonomy specific to the region. As a result, these elements became more prominent in Latin American thinking than they ever were in Europe, where they

remained subordinate to sovereignty. The long-lasting impact of these historical developments on the identity of the South American society cannot be overstated. Until today, regional powers are reluctant to violate either of these three institutions/norms, even in cases of humanitarian interventions (Herz 2010, 609). Even the limits to the defence of democracy, incorporated in the form of democratic clauses in the majority of regional regimes and institutions, remains controversial and works primarily as an “anti coup” clause, protecting the incumbent against non-democratic seizure of power but failing to problematize non-democratic actions by said incumbent.

Securing spaces of autonomous action usually remains one of their sustained policy goals. The first principle listed in the SADC statute reflects this, stating that the organization will “Always respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of states, the non-intervention in their domestic affairs, and the self-determination of the peoples”<sup>21</sup> (UNASUR 2008b, Art. 3 a.)

Thought the increased participation of Latin American states in UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions since the 1990s seems to contradict the above, this may simply be a superficial analysis. The region has consistently rejected contributing troops to international interventions in countries with ongoing internal conflicts and, more importantly, it has only participated in interventions where the legitimate leadership of the country has actively expressed agreement with the mission.

According to Monica Herz, South American elites have been driven to adhere so strongly to the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, territorial integrity, and autonomy primarily due to their quest to “[...] preserve state jurisdiction and attributes,

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<sup>21</sup> Own translation. Original in Spanish reads: “Repeto de manera irrestricta a la soberanía, integridad e inviolabilidad territorial de los Estados, la no intervención en sus asuntos internos y la autodeterminación de los pueblos”.

fearing greater control by the United States and other powers of various aspects of domestic and international politics in the region.” (Herz 2010, 609). In addition, she argues that the historical preference for a legalistic, multilateral, institutionalized approach to their respective foreign policies relates to remaining fears that Great Powers (specifically the US) could resume interventionist practices.

Despite the recent and intense processes of regional cooperation, the influence these three institutions maintain on the South American society can arguably be related to the pivotal role they have had in the formation of its identity as a peripheral, post-colonial region. The slow pace at which these institutions have changed despite (still incipient) behavioural changes in some regional powers comes to highlight their structural condition in the regional environment.

It could be even argued that this is one of the obstacles preventing South American countries from forming a mature Security Community, which would imply the acceptance of some sort of supra-national security governance scheme and collective security mechanisms. As a result, it seems likely that the region will remain within the category of “ascendant”<sup>22</sup> Security Community for the foreseeable future, despite signs of change in the last two decades<sup>23</sup>. The above also provides relevant information regarding some of the reasons behind the opposition to the Venezuelan proposal to create a collective security organization, while cooperation and policy coordination that in no way implied a supra-national institutionality nor weakened state sovereignty were more acceptable

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<sup>22</sup> The names assigned by Adler and Barnett (1998b) to the different types of Security Communities (“nascent”, “ascendant”, and “mature”) convey the misleading idea that movement from one type to the other is necessary and linear, as if it was part of an evolutionary process. However, Security Communities are as capable of following this path as they are of stagnating indefinitely or even spiralling down.

<sup>23</sup> As can be seen in the Argentine participation in the desert storm/deserts shield operations; the MINUSTAH; the regional mobilization against attempted “soft” *coups* in Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela and Ecuador; and, the suspension of Paraguay and Venezuela from different regional organizations over concerns regarding their democratic status.

(Sanahuja 2012, 18). In fact, the SADC statute explicitly excludes the possibility of this organization becoming a NATO-like collective security mechanism, and no recent developments in its working nor in the more general regional security environment hint relevant changes in that sense.

In a similar vein, the Latin American regional society has traditionally shown high regard for institutions like International Law and related principles such as *Uti Possidetis Juri*, territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of conflicts, (presidential) diplomacy, and “Concertación” (Hurrell 1998, 2004; Kacowicz 2005a, 8). Arguably, the relevance of international law as a primary institution of the South American society resides in its ability to mediate asymmetrical engagement with extra-regional powers in a predictable way. Similarly, the adherence to the principle of *Uti Possideti Juri* can be related to the need of former colonies to expedite the formation of a general consensus regarding mutual borders, simplified by adopting the administrative delimitations established by the Spanish crown (Kacowicz 2005a, 5).

Of particular interest are the institutions of peaceful resolution of conflicts and “Concertación”, which refers to the systematic use of a principle of consensus as the key decision-making mechanism in regional-level instances (Kacowicz 2005a, 5–6). Interviewees in the three countries analysed highlight the alleged role their respective negotiating teams had in upholding the institution of “Concertación” against the Venezuelan proposal to incorporate a majority decision-making mechanism. At its core, this institution implies that all states, regardless of their relative size and power share, have veto power over regional-level decisions. Though compromises are certainly made, and more flexibility is often expected from smaller powers than it is from larger ones, the

lack of majority decisions-making processes means that even the weaker states in the region are able to veto initiatives with which their positions cannot be reconciled.

This means that members of the South American society not only challenge the European institution of Great Power management by actively seeking conditions for higher degrees of international autonomy, but also by upholding an institution that actively counters the narrative that stronger states have a “natural” claim to lead. As discussed in the Literature Review chapter, this has meant that even Brazil has been unable to impose its preferred outcomes upon regional partners, and continues to face severe difficulties in its attempts to become a legitimized regional leader.

Finally, two primary institutions of the international system, War and Great Power management, have tended not to be as prominent in the South American regional society (Hurrell 2004, 2). The record of interstate wars in the region has been significantly lower than in the majority of other regions across the world<sup>24</sup>, at least since the end of the War of the Pacific, 1879-1883<sup>25</sup> (Kacowicz 2005b). With only few exceptions (Brazil, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War; Colombia, in the Korean War; Argentina, in the first Gulf War) South American states have also avoided taking part in extra-regional military confrontations. As explained above, the case is even more evident with regards to the institution of Great Power management, which has been challenged, resisted, and contested on numerous occasions, and presented generally in direct opposition to the principle of autonomy and the institution of sovereignty.

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<sup>24</sup> See Table 2. South American wars, page 103

<sup>25</sup> The key exceptions being the War of the Chaco (1932-1935), and the different confrontations and skirmishes between Ecuador and Peru over the delimitation of their mutual Amazonian border.

## South America as a Security Complex

The objective of this section is to discuss which features characterize the South American Security Complex and how they have evolved in recent years, contextualizing the characteristics of the regional security environment in which the Strategic Cultures of the three case studies evolved.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the relevance of using RSCT to understand the South American security environment resides in its ability to appropriately characterise regional groupings based on the criteria of sustained security interactions among its member states. This creates a framing that convincingly analyses regions formed around shared security concerns and behaviours, leaving aside essentialist views of what each region “should” look like based on criteria that often do not reflect the actual characteristics of the security environment. This theory also provides vast analytical leverage due to its ability to account for the intrinsic openness and complexity of regional systems; differentiate between situations of penetration and overlay<sup>26</sup>; provide a believable explanation for changes in membership; account for the effects of internal polarity; and, understand the particular position of insulator states. More importantly, though these strengths seem to point to a theory overly concerned with material capabilities and power relations, it actually incorporates these elements into a perspective that focuses on the analysis of actual behaviour in order to extrapolate socially constructed roles and social arrangements from it. In addition, while Buzan and Waever oppose considering “self identification” as a relevant parameter to evaluate the

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<sup>26</sup> Penetration takes place when extra-regional powers participate in the security dynamics of RSCs by making alignments with one of the sides in a regional dispute. Overlay, on the other hand, takes place when the interests of Great Powers completely dominate the security dynamics of a RSC, to the point that autonomously generated patterns of security relations cease to exist.

membership of a regional security complex, they by no means reject the idea that cultural commonalities have an effect on the development of the security dynamics.

In addition to the above, another key reason to favour this approach over the more commonly used Security Communities literature (Adler and Barnett 1998b; Adler and Greve 2009; Bellamy 2004; Diamint 2010; Flemes 2005; Nathan 2006; Pouliot 2008) is that RSCT engages specifically with security regions (clusters of geographically proximate units formed around common security concerns and dynamics), rather than with generic sub-global “clubs” of states grouped to pursue shared interests. Security Communities emerge in a context of shared ideational commitments and interests, limiting the analysis of this approach to instances where cooperative interactions have already emerged. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to tell apart Security Communities from the international organizations that embody them. RSCT, on the other hand, provides a framework that can not only identify and study such cases, but also security regions in contexts of indifferent or conflictive relations. This establishes a clearer analytical differentiation between a security complex, per se, and the international organizations that may exist around security issues. This results in a broader scope of analysis, more nuanced argumentation, and more analytical rigour for the study of security regions.

RSCT also establishes a stricter analytical framework in that it associates the presence of shared dynamics between member states with their core security dynamics, resulting from a set of material and social conditions that shape their perception of threats and opportunities. The intensity of these shared dynamics and their effect on the international behaviour of states means that membership to multiple security complexes is ruled out, while multiple and overlapping memberships to different “clubs” is allowed in the Security Communities literature. In other words, the clusters analysed by RSCT form

around stronger shared social dynamics than those of Security Communities, which rest primarily on the volition of the member states to band together.

A Regional Security Complex is defined as a functional region, structured around patterns of security interactions that emerge among a group of geographically proximate states. Security practices are, thus, the key element in the analysis of RSCs (Buzan and Waever 2003, 48). The development of security interdependence among geographically proximate players requires the construction of group-specific patterns of security interactions. This further distances Buzan and Waever from approaches like David Lake and Patrick Morgan's (1997), which focuses on dimensions such as the self-perception of the units, regionalist discourses, or the presence of shared cultural or ideational features.

Retaining geography as a relevant variable also means RSCT keeps the theoretical specificity of regions *vis a vis* other forms of sub-global groupings. Geographical proximity generates incentives for more assiduous, intense, and varied interactions in the field of security, across a wider range of sectors (Buzan and Waever 2003, 45–46). Keeping the geographical criterion allows Buzan and Waever to establish a clearer distinction between regional, sub-global, and systemic analyses. This generates an analytical leverage that helps understand regional security interdependence in its own terms, rather than as an undifferentiated sub-group of sub-global groupings. RSCT also allows for the study of interactions between the systemic, inter-regional, and regional levels (Buzan and Waever 2003, 81). Yet, however central geography is in creating the conditions for stronger interactions between contiguous states, it remains only a facilitating factor rather than the sole element at play.

For example, as will be discussed in the coming sub-section, South America can be characterized as a security complex regularly penetrated by the US and European powers. But, unlike Central America and the Caribbean (whose security dynamics have been so consistently overlaid by the US that they have come to form part of the North American Security Complex), South America has not seen such situation and remains a clearly independent security complex.

It is important to highlight that, based on this understanding of regions, belonging to a security complex is a condition that cannot be changed solely out of the volition of particular states. It is, rather, the result of sustained and meaningful interactions with a set of neighbouring states. Changes in the membership of regions is accounted for in RSCT, precisely because focusing on the social aspect of security allows recognizing shifts in the reach of and participation on processes that characterize different regions. However, these patterns of interaction and long-term processes affect the security identity of the units, turning regional setups into relatively stable formations.

Finally, the concept of insulator states is another relevant feature of the theory, and one that has implications for the Colombian case. An insulator is a state located at the edges of two different security complexes. The difference between this concept and the traditional notion of buffer states is that the latter is a unit located at the very centre of strong patterns of mutual securitization, while the former refers to a unit located at the edges of two different regions it does not fully belong to and that do not necessarily see each other in negative terms. An interesting question to answer in the Colombian case study is if this country can be considered an insulator state between the North and South American security complexes, or if it has full membership in either of the two.

This framework also provides analytical tools to classify regions based on their polarity, something that Security Communities literature does not pay much attention to. But, unlike materialist accounts of international politics, RSCT also considers the effects patterns of amity and enmity have on regional interactions. These are classified in a scale that goes from conflict formation, through security regimes, to security communities, incorporating this category as a sub-group among other possible forms of security regions (Buzan and Waever 2003, 53–54). RSCs can also be classed differently depending on a variety of socially constructed features, classifying the interactions between agents as structured or non-structured, centred or standard. Discussing the intricacies of each of these classifications is beyond the interest of this chapter, but it is nevertheless important to highlight the multiple dimensions used by RSCT to engage with security regions.

In the case of the SASC, the region is portrayed as a standard, unipolar region, showing the general characteristics of a security regime. In other words, South America is defined by the presence of a *primus inter pares* (Brazil) that is, nevertheless, unable to determine unilaterally the regional security agenda and practices, which show structured patterns but have not yet developed into a Security Community (and may never do).

#### RSCT. Theory and practice in the South American case

Barry Buzan and Ole Waever's chapter (2003, 304–42) on the South American Security Complex is a useful starting point for discussion. This section seeks to update and provide more detail to the otherwise broad strokes of Buzan and Waever's understanding of the region.

One of the central differences I would establish with Buzan and Waever's chapter is the timeframe of the analysis. With good judgement, they assert that the modern foundations of the SASC should not be traced back to the pre-colonial nor colonial eras, but rather to the post-independence history of the region (Buzan and Waever 2003, 305). Arguably, however, this timeframe is no longer the most relevant to understand currently dominant security dynamics in the region. Instead, a timeframe starting with the radical changes undergone in the region since the 1980s has more explanatory power on the current characteristics of the SASC.

Perhaps with the only exception of the Colombian case, whose particular features will be discussed in Chapter 7, the evolution of the regional security environment shows the 1980s to be a crucial breaking point. This does not mean that all previous patterns of interaction were discarded, nor that a "clean slate" for regional relations was established in that decade. However, it is precisely in this moment in history that regional rivalries and geographical barriers that had largely defined the interactions between regional powers cease to be relevant features of regional security almost simultaneously, leaving room for the emergence of cooperative practices never before seen in the region. My argument is that the 1980s should represent a landmark in the periodization of South American history due to a series of intertwined (though analytically independent) processes:

- Democratization;
- The establishment of regional mechanisms to secure political stability;
- The defusing of military tensions throughout the region;
- The spreading of drug-traffic-related transnational organized crime.

With the only exception of Chile, all South American countries that were subject to dictatorial regimes held elections and proclaimed democratically elected governments between 1979 and 1985 (Huntington 1991, 22). Chile joined this trend in 1990. Thus, in little over a decade, the entire region shifted from military elites imposing their perceptions of international security and commanding state interactions to democratic regimes more open to regional cooperation. Initially, this was seen primarily as a way of cementing democratic stability through regional solidarity. Democratizing the state, its norms, bureaucracies, and practices marked the political agenda of following decades (Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005).

The above has had an impact on regional patterns of interaction, affected by the still ongoing modification of domestic Strategic Cultures, bureaucratic structures, military doctrines, threat perceptions, and objects of securitization. In this context, the region went from a precarious type of negative peace towards a more stable positive peace defined by the presence of mutual confidence and higher trust levels than ever before (Oelsner 2007). Some of the most relevant processes of peaceful dispute settlement and rapprochement between former regional rivals ever developed in the region (Argentina-Brazil, Argentina-Chile, Chile-Peru) emerged since the 1980s, and can be directly related to the process of democratization.

Another relevant feature of the post-1980s SASC is closely related to the above. Seeking to stabilize democracy and prevent the emergence of a new wave of non-democratic regimes, South American states proceeded to the joint securitization of the issue. Arguably, the “extraordinary measures” adopted henceforth work along the lines of raising the costs for domestic factions seeking to seize power undemocratically,

delegitimizing their expectations to rule through a network of mutual support embodied in regional democratic norms. As briefly mentioned before, these democratic clauses work primarily to protect the incumbent, rather than as a broader defence of democracy. This can be seen in the regional interventions seen in the democratic crises in Bolivia<sup>27</sup>, Paraguay<sup>28</sup> and Ecuador<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, the inability of the region to articulate coherent responses to cases of humanitarian crises in the context of democratically elected regimes, like in Colombia during the early 2000s and in Venezuela in the last few years, highlights the remaining pervasiveness of pluralist institutions. Nonetheless, these norms have become such a salient feature of the SASC that it is undeniable that the principle of non-intervention has undergone a process of (partial) revision.

The dynamics by which pre-1980s military tensions were diffused are central as well, and have had an all-encompassing impact throughout the region. Though Buzan and Weaver (2003, 322–23) do identify the structural effect that the rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil had on regional security relations, they fail to highlight the relevance of similar processes taking place among other South American states roughly at the same time. Arguably, the Argentine-Brazilian case represents the more consequential of these cases, but it is worth mentioning that by no means did it stand alone. During the late-1980s and 1990s a slow process of desecuritization of inter-state relations swept the

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<sup>27</sup> In 2008, a series of escalating domestic conflicts between the central government and the oil-rich provinces located in the East of the country put at serious risk the continuity of President Evo Morales. An emergency UNASUR Presidential Summit led to the unanimous regional support for Morales's continuity, shifting the balance in favour of the his administration and helping put an end to the conflict.

<sup>28</sup> The Paraguayan case is largely perceived as a failure of regional organizations to protect democracy, since they could not prevent the Congressional opposition from illegitimately deposing President Fernando Lugo (IACHR 2012). However, this is still a good example of the role these organizations can have in cases of "institutional *coups*", since both the UNASUR and the MERCOSUR suspended the Paraguayan membership until free elections were held.

<sup>29</sup> On September 30, 2010, police and other security forces with support from sectors of the Air Force staged a rebellion against President Rafael Correa (de la Torre 2011). UNASUR member states promptly issued a joint communiqué and agreed to have their Ministers of Foreign Affairs meet in Quito within the week in support of Correa's claim to power and delegitimizing any government resulting from a *coup d'État*.

region, redefining crucial aspects of the dynamics observed in the SASC. Except for the 1995 low-intensity confrontation between Peru and Ecuador, and the recent standoffs between Colombia and Venezuela, in no other occasion during the last three decades have there been even remote chances of military conflicts.

Interestingly, the arguments that South America constitutes an “anomaly” in international relations usually fail to properly weigh the changes introduced by the democratization process. They make reference to the relatively low amount of intra-regional wars in comparison with other regional environments, which extends way beyond the post-1980s context and involves an array of security practices ranging from pacific methods of conflict resolution, to arms races, and militarized bargaining<sup>30</sup>.

A couple of caveats are necessary before explaining how recent changes affected this long/standing characteristic of the SASC. On the one hand, what apparently sets South America apart are not the patterns of behaviour observed, but rather the intensity with which they are used. The above mentioned practices are common to most regional environments, which means that qualifying South America as an “anomaly” only makes sense when compared with an external referent for “normalcy” of their expected rate of occurrence. Such place is often granted to European or “Western” patterns of behaviour.

Additionally, the region can only be considered “under-conflictual” if the perspective adopted is strictly international. In contrast with the peace seen in inter-state relations, domestic conflicts and instability have consistently concern South American states

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<sup>30</sup> “International politics is largely a bargaining situation: two or more actors, with common and competing interests, interact with each other in addressing, directly or tacitly, the terms of their relationship. [...] Under some circumstances, however, state leaders draw upon their military capabilities to influence the terms of their international relationships. [...] These uses of a state’s military capabilities represent *militarized bargaining*.” (Mares 2001, 7–8).

(Buchanan 1996; Buzan and Waever 2003; Jones 2008; Kacowicz 1998, 78–81), showing levels of internal violence unparalleled in the world (Rojas Aravena 2010, 13–14). This contextualizes regional patterns of interaction and breaks with the myth that the absence of inter-state confrontations can be equated with generalized peace.

*Table 2. South American wars*

Name of War	Beginning	Ending	Casualties (military)	Countries involved	Casualties on each side	Result
Argentine-Brazilian	25/08/1825	27/08/1828	4,000	*ARG *BRA	N/A	*Lost *Won
of the Rio de la Plata <sup>31</sup>	19/07/1851	03/02/1852	1,300	*ARG *BRA	*800 *500	*Lost *Won
Ecuadorian-Colombian	22/11/1863	06/12/1863	1,000	*COL *ECU	*300 *700	*Won *Lost
Triple Alliance	12/11/1864	01/03/1870	310,000	*ARG *BRA *PAR	*10,000 *100,000 *200,000	*Won *Won *Lost
of the Pacific	14/02/1879	11/12/1883	14,000	*CHI *PER *BOL	*3,000 *10,000 *1,000	*Won *Lost *Lost
of the Chaco	15/06/1932	12/06/1935	92,661	*BOL *PAR	*56,661 *36,000	*Lost *Won

Source: The Correlates of War (CoW) Project<sup>32</sup>

Three further conclusions can be drawn from the data shown in Table 2: **1.** Even when international conflicts broke in the region, no rival dyads were ever repeated, insinuating that only circumstantial disputes were the causes of the wars and no Hobbesian culture developed; **2.** Except for the two major conflicts in the region's history, the Triple Alliance

<sup>31</sup> Though the CoW Project lists this military confrontation as an inter-state war, and the Brazilian official narrative describes it as such as well, this classification is contentious. Argentina sees this as part of a domestic conflict between the provinces and the central government, in which the Brazilian military intervened by request the former to overthrow the *caudillo* of Buenos Aires (Hurrell 1998, 230).

<sup>32</sup> Available on-line: [http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/WarData/InterState/Inter-State%20War%20Format%20\(V%203-0\).htm](http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/WarData/InterState/Inter-State%20War%20Format%20(V%203-0).htm)

and the Chaco wars, no other intra-regional war is comparable in number of military casualties to those seen during the same period in other regions (particularly so in Europe<sup>33</sup>); and, **3.** There have been no intra-regional wars since 1930s<sup>34</sup>.

Buzan and Waever identify a number of long-standing features responsible for this: domestic concerns (mostly social, economic, and political instability); geographical barriers; rivalries, leading powers like Argentina and Brazil to turn the back on each other; unilateral handling of transnational conflicts; and, US interventionism and penetration, acting as an offshore balancer and arbitrating regional relations.

The democratization and desecuritization processes that started in the 1980s affected particularly the impact of geographical barriers and regional rivalries, which in turn opened the door for transnational issues to be handled cooperatively. The case of Argentine-Brazilian bilateral relation is a good example of how these have become less relevant as constraints to interaction over the last decades. These countries incentivized wide-reaching rapprochement policies, mitigating the insulating effects of geographical barriers<sup>35</sup>, creating incentives for further cooperation, and deactivating the mutual

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<sup>33</sup> The Correlates of War (CoW) Project, lists 16 intra-regional wars took place during the “long European peace” of the 19th century, leaving 1,100,000 military casualties. South America registered “only” 5 intra-regional wars between 1851 and 1932, with 418,961 casualties in total.

<sup>34</sup> There have been a number of conflicts between Peru and Ecuador over their Amazonian border, the last of which took place in 1995. However, these have been low-scale, low-intensity confrontations, keeping them outside CoW’s criteria. Yet, were they to be included in the record, the overall image of South America as a relatively peaceful region would not be affected. The Malvinas/Falklands war of 1982, on the other hand, has been excluded due to the fact that it cannot be considered intra-regional, and thus the security practices and the identity of the South American Security Complex were of little relevance in it.

<sup>35</sup> The border between the two countries is over 1200 km long, and for the vast majority of its extension follows the path of the River Uruguay. On the Argentine side, the area is separated from the rest of the national territory by one of the biggest rivers in South America, the Paraná. In order to impose higher costs to the logistical chain of a hypothetical Brazilian invasion, Argentina historically kept these provinces largely disconnected from the rest of its territory. Transit from the border area towards Buenos Aires remained tortuous until the 1990s. Brazil, on the other hand, stationed its Armed Forces close to the border. However, these policies have been reversed since the 1980s, involving the construction the necessary infrastructure to support tighter trade relations and the development of a strong agenda of bilateral cooperation. Brazilian troops were moved away from the border and focused on the defence of Amazon regions, four international bridges over the Uruguay River were inaugurated in the period 1985-1997 (when only one had existed between 1940s-1980s), and the border provinces of Argentina received the necessary infrastructure to connect them to the rest of the country’s territory.

rivalry. Similarly, between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, Argentina and Chile solved most of their remaining border disputes by peaceful means (chiefly via arbitration), increased the number of international crossing points, started a de-mining program in the southern Andes that continues until today, and instated a series of confidence building measures that radically changed their mutual perceptions.

Regional rivalries that structured a large part of the security practices in the region (Argentina-Brazil, Argentina-Chile, Chile-Peru, Peru-Ecuador) have been in constant decay for well over 30 years. Only the Colombian-Venezuelan and the Chilean-Bolivian borders remain somehow “hot”, if only intermittently and with little to no expectation that a war could actually break between these countries. As a result, not only has sustained cooperation become a concrete possibility, but it has actually become a full-fledged reality incarnated in organizations, regimes, norms and institutions that dominate the regional landscape. Relevant efforts have also been made to build the infrastructure required to solve the relative isolation created by geographical barriers, either through bilateral efforts or in regional-level initiatives such as the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America) and projects funded by the IADB (Inter-American Development Bank).

In other words, at least two of the five long-lasting features listed by Buzan and Waever to explain the “South American anomaly” have either disappeared or weakened to such extent that they no longer affect regional security practices in any meaningful way. Yet, rather than weakening the regional inter-state peace, the disappearance of these conditions has led to the development of a proto-Security Community (Hurrell 1998).

The last regional feature that developed in since the 1980s is the spread of drug-related transnational crime. The spill-over of transnational conflicts resulting from organized

crime activities related to drug traffic followed a southward direction, spreading from the Andean North to the Southern Cone. One of the key problems that this has raised is that most South American states have proved unable to deal with an “enemy” that is transnational, highly mobile, and difficult to detect.

Though this has generated only limited inter-state tensions so far, organized crime has nonetheless altered regional patterns of interaction. The realization that the issue needs to be tackled regionally rather than unilaterally has surfaced among countries who openly reject the agenda and methods of the Washington-backed “war on drugs”, cooperating to create a different model to counter drug production and traffic (Carlsen 2013). However, no agreement is even close to being reached in this respect, primarily due to extremely different perceptions of the problem across the region. A sectorial council was created in 2009 within the UNASUR framework to discuss the issue, seeking to share experiences and bring closer the existing doctrines to fight the problem. However, activities halted almost immediately after they began, either due to the lack of interest by the members or because of the sheer differences in the approaches used.

In one way or another, the post-1980s features described above had been identified by Buzan and Waever. However, in analysing the present and future of the SASC, they gave more relevance to the stability of the MERCOSUR and the developments in the Colombian chapter of the “war on drugs” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 305), assuming that the biggest risk was the splitting up of the region into two along those lines. This was not the case. MERCOSUR has yet to recover from the stagnation period it fell in after the Brazilian and Argentinian crises of the late-90s and early-2000s, from which these countries emerged having revisited their previous commitment to free trade regionalism. The organization has shown resilience and continues to arbitrate some relevant aspects of the bilateral

trade between Argentina and Brazil, even in a situation of seeming paralysis. On the other hand, the “war on drugs” has indeed defined an important portion of regional security dynamics, but not in the way Buzan and Waever thought. Instead, drug-related transnational organized crime spread throughout the region, generating new areas of shared security dynamics and increasingly similar interests. This last example is crucial to show the analytical leverage provided by RSCT. Even in a context of negative security dynamics emerging in the region with no form whatsoever of inter-state cooperation in the horizon, RSCT is able to make sense of the issue and incorporate it into the characteristics that define the SASC. Other academic literatures devoted to the study of sub-global or regional security, particularly those focused on positive interactions between states and institutional building processes, would struggle to do so or would consider it a factor debilitating the region.

In addition, one of the key aspects Buzan and Waever failed to notice is the crucial role the securitization of democratic stability has played, leading Southern Cone players to construct regional-level organizations and mechanisms of peaceful resolution of conflicts in order to neutralise as many sources of international tensions as possible. The aim was to strip the respective Armed Forces of external excuses to justify attempts to topple democratically elected governments, forcing them to redefine their roles as tools of democratic governance.

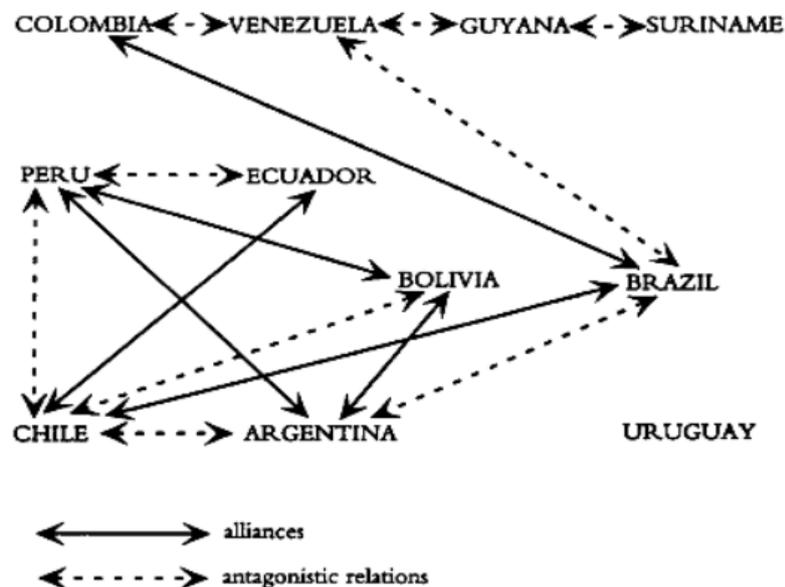
### Regional security dynamics

Buzan and Waever identified four key security dynamics in the SASC (Buzan and Waever 2003, 309–10):

A) A pattern of checker-board alignments<sup>36</sup> defining the region since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though relatively stable, these never became formal military alliances and only responded to defensive geopolitical considerations (Buzan and Waever 2003, 309).

Buzan and Waever seem to have contradicting ideas regarding this dynamic and its role within the regional security environment. On the one hand, they argue that it continues to form part of the regional complex. On the other hand, they follow Andrew Hurrell (1998) in identifying the emergence of an embryonic security community forming in the Southern Cone, and even maintain that “The old geopolitical thinking that created threatening scenarios among the South American states has been largely abandoned” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 338). They propose no solution to this contradiction, but an analysis of the regional security environment points towards the conclusion that checkerboard alignments no longer are a relevant pattern of interaction.

*Graph 1. Checkerboard alignments in South American relations*



Source: (Kacowicz 1998, fig. 3.2, p. 93)

<sup>36</sup> Phillip Kelly (1997) uses this term to refer to the balancing strategies present in the region, where regional powers balanced their immediate neighbours by aligning with their respective enemies. This created patterns of interaction that roughly resembled the image of crossed alliances.

Andrea Oelsner (2005a) points out that the steps taken since the 1980s to defuse bilateral military tensions and negative perceptions between Argentina and Brazil (the key rivalry guiding the logic of checkerboard alignments) have helped desecuritize a large portion of intra-regional interactions. This is in line with Buzan and Waever's argument that "this rapprochement is, in RSCT, a structural change in the Southern Cone subcomplex" (Buzan and Waever 2003, 323), altering larger patterns of amity and enmity in the region. They understand this as the cornerstone in the changes to securitizing discourses that eventually allowed the construction of regional organizations and regimes during the 1990s, such as MERCOSUR and the ABACC<sup>37</sup> (Buzan and Waever 2003, 325–27). This argument has an important explanatory weight and may provide good grounds to understand part of the political rationale behind later processes of regional cooperation. Combined with Oelsner's regional desecuritization argument, the generalized disarticulation of long-standing checkerboard alignments in the region becomes more evident. No longer do Brazil and Chile threaten Argentina on two flanks, and neither does Argentina side with Peru and Bolivia to keep Chile on check. In fact, Argentina and Chile nowadays share one of the most extensive confidence building programmes in the region, which inspired many of the confidence building initiatives advanced by the SADC.

**B)** The second dynamic is the existence of strong transnational flows (legal and illegal) of people, goods, capital, and political ideas. Cultural and historical similarities facilitate the

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<sup>37</sup> The Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, "the only binational safeguards organization in the world and the first binational organization created by Argentina and Brazil. [...] its main goal is guaranteeing Argentina, Brazil and the international community that all the nuclear materials are used exclusively for peaceful purposes." (ABACC n.d.). Its inspections of Argentinian and Brazilian nuclear sites are accredited by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), thus limiting extra-regional oversight to a minimum (Tulliu and Schmalberger 2003, 203–4).

flow of political ideas (“ideational spillover”), intellectual elites, and labour, while the porosity of South American borders continues to make possible the presence of illegal flows of goods, money, and people. Not all these illegal transnational flows have been securitized, but the capabilities of states to enforce local laws and police borders are constantly challenged by private actors nonetheless. As a result, at least some of these transnational flows are bound to constitute security concerns.

During the 1970s and early-1980s, for example, the only transnational flow that was widely (and jointly) securitized by the ruling military dictatorships was the presence of left-wing activists escaping from persecution in their respective countries and forming regional solidarity networks. In an unprecedented example of regional-level cooperation, the “*Operación Cóndor*” was put in place to facilitate the illegal deportation and assassination of activists (Cuya 1993; A. Paredes 2004). However, transnational flows need not belong the realm of security threats. Human Rights advocacy, transitional justice processes, and Truth Commissions that followed the democratization process of the 1980s were also highly influenced by the emergence of strong regional solidarity networks (Ropp and Sikkink 1999, 175–76; Sikkink 1997).

Arguably, the most salient transnational security concern at the moment of the creation of the SADC was organized crime related to drug production and trafficking. Though widely securitized, and in some cases even militarized<sup>38</sup>, South American countries have so far dealt with the issue individually. The largest cocaine producers, located in the Andes, accepted US-sponsored, highly militarized, and individualized Coca leaf eradication programmes at a great domestic cost (Bradley and Millington 2008; Dávalos

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<sup>38</sup> Largely due to the US-led discourse about the eroding effects of drug traffic on democratic rule. Moreover, since the mid-1980s the US considers drug-related transnational flows as a “national security threat” (Carpenter 2003, 29), and has poured vast lobby, economic, and military resources in South America to sway local elites in addressing the issue according to their preference.

et al. 2011; Young 1996), while Southern Cone countries have openly rejected militarizing the conflict and largely avoided paying much attention to the problem, at least until recently. Nevertheless, what in the 1990s was an almost exclusive concern of the northern Andean states, has slowly spread throughout the region (Benítez Manaut, Celi, and Diamint 2009). Argentina and Brazil, who traditionally played minor parts in the flow of drugs from the Andes to Europe, have now become more relevant in terms of production and consumption. Moreover, they have seen either the development of native drug cartels or became bases of operation for gangs expanding from Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.

Buzan and Waeber clearly identified the security effects of drug traffic as the defining feature of the Andean sub-complex, but their concern was that the differences between the Southern Cone and the Andean North could break up the SASC, giving place to two clearly differentiated regional complexes. Empirical observations show that the actual development of these issues turned out to be quite the opposite, with the negative transnational spillovers related to the “war on drugs” now affecting the entire region. Together with the active role that Brazil played in regional politics during the Lula years, the image of the regional Security Complex is now one of a more cohesive region rather than a more fragmented one.

**C)** The third security dynamic identified by Buzan and Waeber is the intervention by extra-regional powers. South America is, as other peripheral areas, a penetrated region. However, the SASC has not suffered a complete overlay of its security dynamics by foreign powers, allowing it to develop autonomous patterns of security interactions that either regional or extra-regional powers could exploit (Russell and Calle 2010; Tickner 2007).

Empirical records show that various factors determine whether the activities of extra-regional powers in South America are perceived as existential threats or not. In the instances in which this was the case, the key reasons for this framing of penetration are chiefly related to it being perceived as having limiting effects on autonomy levels, sovereignty, or stability. The cases of Venezuela and Brazil are good examples of this. Brazil has consistently voiced its concern over the potential interest of the US in the Amazon rainforest and basin in order to control its natural resources (Dabène 2013; Rivarola Puntigliano 2011). As a result, and thanks to the thorough desecuritization of the relationship with Argentina, military personnel and equipment historically deployed to the Southern border has been moved to different areas of the Brazilian Amazon, rising the number of ground troops in the area to an all-time high, and there are even reports of guerrilla warfare training being provided by the Army to native tribes in the Amazon (Phillips 2006). Venezuela, on the other hand, has maintained a strong anti-imperialist/anti-American rhetoric for over a decade, aimed primarily against the presence of the US in the region (Rivas 2006). The Venezuelan government claims to have identified US support to attempted *coups* and destabilization strategies against President Chávez. Moreover, a defensive military exercise that mobilized 80.000 troops and equipment was conducted in response to President Obama labelling Venezuela as a “National Security Threat”.

US activities in the region have also been perceived as threatening by a wider group states. Despite not having necessarily securitized the US, Ecuador, Bolivia and Argentina have used strong anti-American rhetoric in the past. In 2009, Ecuador decided not to renew the lease the US had on the Manta military air base (Donadio and Tibiletti 2010, 76). Bolivia’s President, Evo Morales, accused USAID of supporting dissidents, conducting illegal intelligence activities, and conspiring against the national government, which led

to the agency being expelled from the country (BBC 2013); Argentina reacted to US activities in the region with equally strong declarations, and was one of the main advocates for the 2009 UNASUR/SADC emergency meeting where President Uribe came under fire in relation to the Colombia-US military agreement.

That being said, there are a number of countries that have welcomed the US, understanding its presence in terms of “cooperation” rather than “intervention”. These countries include Chile, Colombia, and Peru (with Paraguay adopting a middle ground). Far from securitizing the presence of extra-regional powers in the region, these countries may very well be identified as a sub-regional grouping sharing a positive perception of the US. Interestingly, there seems to be a strong correlation between this stance regarding the activities of extra-regional powers in the region and an overall weaker commitment towards “post-hegemonic” regionalism.

**D)** The fourth dynamic described by Buzan and Waever is related to cultural factors, particularly a Brazilian “fear of encirclement” by Spanish-speaking countries (McCann 1983). In the same way that checkerboard alignments no longer inform regional interactions, currently there are no signs of polarisation along this line. On the contrary, in the last decades Brazil has managed to position itself as the “essential player” in the region, establishing an active diplomacy and ever-tighter relations with its neighbours.

That being said, it is relevant to highlight possible areas in which cultural frameworks can still inform intra- and inter-regional relations. The divide between the traditions of Latin-Americanism (“Bolivarianism”, for some) and Pan-Americanism may very well be one such area. Indeed, Arie Kacowicz (2005b, 52) and Federico Merke (2011) point out that cultural, ideational, and identity factors uphold these two traditions. They associate

Pan-Americanism with the idea of cooperation and the creation of solidarist norms between liberal republics, while describing Latin-Americanism as structured around the idea of nationalist identities aligned along cultural lines and pluralist norms.

However, there are some elements that render these definitions unconvincing. On the one hand, Latin American states have repeatedly resisted the Pan-American tradition on the grounds that it was perceived as an extension of US hegemonic attempts to control the region, not because they were opposed to the idea of hemispheric cooperation, political liberalism, and solidarity *per se*. Moreover, it could be argued that the power harnessed by Washington turns hemispheric relations eminently asymmetrical, alienating many Latin American states and hindering the ability of Pan-American efforts to produce truly solidarist relations. Also, such characterization hides the fact that Pan-American initiatives have been fostered throughout the independent history of the continent, regardless of how liberal or illiberal the domestic politics of Latin American countries were at any given moment. Incorporating the element of “liberal republicanism” into the alleged corpus of the Pan-American tradition is a modern development, and one that is also shared by current Latin-Americanist positions<sup>39</sup>.

On the other hand, the Latin-American tradition usually bred from the idea that cooperative relations among culturally and economically similar units could underpin their quest for development and autonomy in the international sphere, two of the key goals shared by the membership of the South American regional society. As a result, despite this tradition having historically led to pluralist relations and norms, the shared

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<sup>39</sup> Most South American cooperation organizations currently include a “democratic clause”: e.g. MERCOSUR’s Ushuaia Protocol (1998); CAN’s Cartagena Agreement (2000); and UNASUR’s Additional Protocol (2010).

traits of the actors involved could eventually allow for the development of more solidarist relations among Latin American countries (if slow, incremental, and consensual).

In sum, the main regional security dynamics that can currently be observed in the South American security complex include: **1.** Strong transnational flows of people, goods, and ideas (both legal and illegal), amongst which drug traffic might be the most relevant at the moment the SADC was created; **2.** Partial securitization of the activities in South America of extra-regional actors; and, **3.** A pendulum between Pan-Americanist and Latin-Americanist traditions. As discussed above, neither the checkerboard alliances system, nor the Brazilian fear of encirclement, are currently relevant to understand regional security dynamics in South America.

The implications of these dynamics to the regional security environment and how it influences the agency of individual actors are vast. Firstly, and underpinning the idea that despite advances made in the last decades a consolidated Security Community is still far from being attainable in the region, the transnational flows mentioned have tended to be read negatively by political elites. This is so not only in the case of drug traffic and guerrilla groups (in the Colombian case), which has seen different governments accusing each other of either not policing appropriately the mutual borders or even harbouring these “groups outside the law” (to use SADC’s terminology). “Ideological flows” have also been perceived as detrimental and even securitized to a certain extent, with Colombia and other countries consistently denouncing the “Chavization” of South American politics and the negative domestic influence the propagation of these ideas has had. Yet, the opposite perception regarding the flow of ideas across borders also exists, with governments and

civil society groups highlighting the regional character of many debates due to the cultural and material similarities that exist, and benefiting or even incentivizing such exchanges.

In short, the impact of transnational flows on the behaviour of states is certainly dependent and mediated by domestic cultural constructions that inform how they are perceived and narrows down the possible forms of legitimized reaction. Given this situation, and considering the deeply-rooted concern over maintaining sovereignty and autonomy from foreign influence, cooperation and policy coordination to tackle these issues has remained relatively limited and mostly circumscribed to the bilateral level. In fact, these have been the slowest moving agendas in the UNASUR framework since its inception. More detailed analysis about specific instances in which transnational flows were relevant to the international behaviour of agents will be discussed in the case studies, but it was nonetheless necessary addressing the issue in more general terms at this stage in order to properly understand the structural nature they have over regional politics.

The second dynamic listed can be read in at least two ways, both complementary to each other. On the one hand, it could be understood in terms of the rift that exists in the region between those countries that have welcomed and even incentivized the presence of extra-regional powers (Colombia, Peru, Chile), and those that have securitized it as a potential threat (Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil). There are obviously degrees in both camps, which should actually be read as extremes in a spectrum; but they nevertheless are good describers of a key fault line that separates the position of South American countries with regards to a central aspect of the regional security environment. On the other hand, looking at the more structural level rather than to how the individual states are grouped in the spectrum, the element of “partial securitization” is relevant to

understand why the region is penetrated and not overlaid. Foreign powers (primarily the US) have traditionally exploited this rift, influencing regional security dynamics by getting through the cracks created by the different perceptions that coexist in the region on this issue. This means that, even in periods of extensive cooperation and in the heyday of post-hegemonic cooperation, extra-regional penetration never ceased to be a concern for some and an opportunity for others. As with the previous dynamic, how this was translated into action by the different agents will be discussed at more length in the empirical chapters.

Finally, the pendulum between Pan-Americanism and Latin-Americanism has consistently been exploited politically by regional powers. In general, these two options have been favoured by states not for their intrinsic value, since all could find arguments and deep-rooted ideational features to justify their preference for either of the two, but rather for political reasons related to their international insertion and balancing strategies at different moments. The Argentine case is revealing of this, showing different factions defending one or the other right before the country decided to join the SADC negotiations. Actually, something similar can be said about the previous two dynamics as well, since the local perception of them and their consequent impact on state behaviour depend not on “national cultures”, but on contested cultural constructions that alternate in their dominant influence over state agency.

As mentioned before, the detailed description and analysis of these three dynamics at this stage is important in order to understand their structural power, thus challenging the notion that they exist exclusively as subjective perceptions by individual agents. They have crucial effects over regional politics by creating opportunities, constraints, and incentives for behaviour. However, as already mentioned, it is only by looking at how they

are interpreted by local defence elites that participate in the dominant Strategic Cultures that the actual impact they have on the behaviour of agents can be properly understood.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has engaged with two different theoretical approaches to characterize South America, the ES and RSCT. The goal of doing so is related with providing different theoretically-informed perspectives on the factors at play in the regional security environment. Yet, the two provide approaches to the issue that are arguably compatible with each other, and with the overall constructivist framework of this research. The result of combining both perspectives in the study of the South American security region brings forward both the actual patterns of interaction that currently characterize the region, and the historical process through which such interactions emerged and developed over time. This combination provides a strong analytical leverage to study regional dynamics, accounting for how institutionalized practices become stable elements in the regional environment and affect the conformation of new patterns of interaction.

Despite efforts to create a regional “security identity” through the UNASUR/SADC framework and the presence of a “unifying discourse” around gaining autonomy from the US, diverging material and ideological interests among key players have hindered further cooperation (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 107–8). In this same vein, Gabriel Orozco Restrepo (2016) highlights that a “South American identity” cannot be exclusively understood in terms of a clearly defined set of shared goals or values, but should also take into consideration the existing patterns of amity and rivalry that have shaped regional relations since independence from colonial rule. Yet, as discussed in this chapter, the

relevance of dynamics like the pattern of checkerboard alliances, regional rivalries, and militarized bargaining have been in decline and no longer help understand the SASC.

Due to their sub-global nature, regions are intrinsically porous (Katzenstein 2005) or open systems (Buzan and Waever 2003; Prys 2010). As a result, even in a clearly unipolar region as South America is (Schenoni 2014), the effects of power distribution at the regional level are far more complex than systemic theories would expect. For example, Colombia has been able to incentivize offshore balancing from extra-regional powers as a way to fulfil its interests (Hirst 2005; Kelly 1990; Sheinin 2006; Tickner 2007), thus reducing the relative weight of regional powers.

Still, penetration by extra-regional powers during the 2000s seemed less relevant than in previous decades. The end of “Plan Colombia”, the Brazilian ascent, and the securitization of US activities in region might help explain increasing rhetorical hostility. Similarly, there are global factors that could explain the seeming US “retreat” from the region, such as the enormous amounts of resources devoted to the “war on terror”, the prolongation of the conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the international financial crisis of 2008, and increasing contestation and great-power politics involving the rise of players like Russia and China. However, the decisive influence that the US can still exercise in South America and the recent organizational boost to the SOUTHCOM demonstrate that the region remains to be a penetrated one (Battaglino 2009a). A good example of this is that US pressure to militarize anti-drug policy continues to influence various South American countries, and has done so ever since President Ronald Reagan declared the “war on drugs” in the mid-1980s (Bagley 1988).

South America has been defined as a penetrated, unipolar, standard RSC with some shared security concerns. It was also discussed that sub-regional divisions of the past have weakened, but that an incipient axis between Chile-Colombia-Peru may be gathering strength while Brazil consolidates its place as regional *primus inter pares*. Cultural differences between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries are no longer source of concerns, to a large extent thanks to the confidence building measures that emerged out of the rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil. Divisions along the lines of Pan-Americanist and Latin-Americanist traditions re-surfaced with the FTAA fiasco, with the latter becoming the preferred alternative by key South American states. However, since Central American and Caribbean states, together with Mexico, largely favoured their close ties with the US instead of supporting a Latin American alternative, in practical terms the division turned out to be one between a South-Americanist position and the Pan-Americanist tradition<sup>40</sup>. Also, the geographical isolation that had characterized the region begun to be reduced since the 1980s via new infrastructure projects that underpinned successful integration processes. As a result, at the time when the SADC was created, the South American Security Complex showed a tendency towards increasingly intense interactions, constituting a fully structured complex whose members continued to be marked by domestic instability and social unrest.

Finally, the positive peace that Buzan and Waever identified in the Southern Cone as by-product of interactions within MERCOSUR has slowly become more widely regionalized thanks to initiatives such as the UNASUR and the SADC. That being said, the SASC remains to be an ascendant Security Community, at best, with little chances of

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<sup>40</sup> The fact that Argentina actively joined the South American group instead of supporting Pan-Americanism, as its long-standing foreign policy tradition would have dictated (Sheinin 2006), is telling of the extent to which South American cooperation in the last decades has altered former patterns of behaviour.

becoming a mature (let alone a tightly coupled) one. This apparent paradox might be better understood with the ES insight that nationalism, sovereignty, non-intervention, and autonomy remain to be crucial institutions of the South American regional society.

The above discussion by no means settles the debate about what constitute the basic characteristics of the South American security environment. Yet, the goal of this chapter was not to do so. Instead, it aims to provide a theoretically-informed understandings of different incentives and constraints to behaviour present at the (sub)systemic level. This was done by covering aspects related to the institutions and values that set South America aside from the rest of the International Society, on the one hand, and the practices and dynamics that distinguish the SASC from other regional security formations, on the other. In doing so, this chapter engages with the arguments advanced by authors that have sought to explain the creation of the SADC from the perspective of regional-level processes. More importantly, this understanding allows to engage now with the elements of agency in the three case studies in a more contextualized way, acknowledging the process of mutual co-constitution between structure and agency that is at the core of the constructivist model.



## **Chapter 4. Conceptual framework**

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### **Establishing the relation between state agency and Strategic Culture**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to build a concise and useful framework to analyse the three case studies, establishing conceptual foundations able to engage with the agency of international actors resulting from the interplay between domestic cultures and international social arrangements. It will be put forward here that embedding such concepts in the Constructivist analytical framework is the best option to answer the questions this Thesis set out to answer.

Ever since the constructivist turn in International Relations, scholars have problematized how mainstream theories understand the processes underlying interest formation (Checkel 1998, 324). Neorealism and neoliberalism have traditionally understood interests as intrinsic, often using game-theoretical, rational choice approaches derived from the field of Economy to define them as the result of gain-maximizing “rationality” in an exogenously given environment over which agents have no

influence (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 40–43; Jervis 1988; Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986, 762–63; Nye 1987; Onuf 1989, 237–47; Wendt 1992, 392–93). In opposition to this, Constructivist authors understand interests as historically-contingent, path dependent, and socially constructed, resulting from processes of interaction between agents embedded in socio-cultural environments both at the domestic and international levels (Klotz 1995, 17–19; Weldes 1996, 279–84). Therefore, a constructivist approach to interests, motivations, and agency tackles questions like: How does the relation between agents and structure affect the formation of identities and interests? What is the relation between these constructions and the behaviour of agents? How do interests and identities change over time? And, Is there a differential role for domestic and international forces in the process of interest formation?

This chapter will engage with constructivist approaches to IR, and more specifically with the branch that Ted Hopf has labelled *social constructivism*<sup>41</sup>, “which relies on domestic socio-cognitive roots to state identity” (2002, 278), to understand the behaviour of international agents. In doing so, it sheds light on the processes by which domestic culture and norms influence interest formation, and how that can inform the behaviour of agents and affect international social arrangements. In this way, the conceptual framework discussed in this chapter aims to establish the analytical independence of the agency of international actors<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Hopf distinguishes this strand of constructivism from *normative constructivism* (socialization processes involved in individuals’ adherence to norms) and *systemic constructivism* (construction and effects of collective identities at the interstate level), suggesting that the three are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in more comprehensive constructivist accounts (Hopf 2002).

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Archer (1996) argues that structuration theory central to IR constructivism forces the Cultural System level and the Social Practice level to “lose [independent] status when inserted into the matrix and ‘cross-referenced’ with the totality of elements.”. She calls this a “central conflation” of the two levels of analysis. Archer identifies two other directional types of conflation, “downwards conflation” (top-down approaches) and “upwards conflation” (bottom-up approaches) (Archer 1995). The main consequence of conflation is that two supposedly independent levels of analysis become either fully dependent one on the other or analytically undistinguishable due to theories being unable to properly incorporate temporality. In

To scrutinize the construction of identity, interests, and agendas focusing on the influence of domestic factors rather than systemic social forces, this chapter develops a detailed understanding of a well-established body of literature centred on the concept of “Strategic Culture”. As will be explained, a general consensus among authors about the exact definition of this concept is lacking and the concept remains contested (Longhurst 2004, 22). However, I will argue that authors that understand Strategic Culture as the social context informing the relation states create with the use of force (Gray 1999; Longhurst 2004; Meyer 2006; Poore 2003) provide the best approach to the issue.

I differ from this position in one crucial point, though: I will put forward that the concept needs not be limited exclusively to a society’s relation with “the use of force”. It could, instead, encompass a broader set of aspects related to how defence elites perceive the position of the country in its international security environment and what they understand as legitimate tools and actions to defend the country. Working with a conceptual framework that understands Strategic Culture in this way facilitates studying the cultural factors informing decision-making processes and strategic behaviour with regards to the use of the entire defence apparatus, which I argue are key to understand the characteristics given to the SADC.

A framework focused on the influence of culture on these issues seemingly implies a trade-off: it offers nuance and richness of understanding at the expense of “scientific” rigour, understood in a positivist sense (Longhurst 2000, 17). However, as discussed before (see pages 12-16), the social scientific worth of a constructivist account of

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the case of structuration theory, this precludes the proper identification and analysis of the two-way interplay (co-constitution) despite it being the mantra of IR constructivism.

international politics should be evaluated on the grounds of its own epistemology, rather than on allegedly “objective” principles for scientific inquiry.

The first section of this chapter will briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the main contenders to engage with the domestic roots of a state’s international behaviour, namely Neoclassical Realism, Foreign Policy Analysis, and Constructivism, arguing that the latter provides the best option. The second section engages specifically with the question of agency and how Strategic Culture fits in the constructivist agency-structure debate. The third section discusses in detail the concept of Strategic Culture, its various definitions and interpretations, and ways in which it has been operationalized. The key goal of this section is to produce a substantiated account of how cognitive and institutional social constructions (culture and norms<sup>43</sup>) can shape the foreign and defence policies of states. The last section of this chapter will delve on the way culture relates to norms, how the latter can be identified, and how they relate to behaviour and decision-making processes. The expectation is that these debates will end in a solid conceptual framework to coherently understand the domestic roots of the Argentine, Chilean and Colombian negotiating agendas, as well as enable the analysis of how their agency affected the regional security environment.

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<sup>43</sup> Though not strictly accurate, the terms Strategic Culture and Strategic Norms are used interchangeably in some instances of this research. Culture (webs of meanings) is a wider construct that limits the universe of possible norms (standards of appropriateness) and informs their content. However, appreciating the content and characteristics of a Strategic Culture requires engaging with it indirectly, analysing its more visible expressions to try and infer from them how the culture in which they are embedded looks like. This will always be problematic, but it is also unavoidable, given the impossibility to engage with an abstraction like culture in a direct and unmediated way.

## **Main theoretical approaches to the study of agency**

The definition of how “agency” affects international politics is highly dependent on the theoretical approach chosen. Martin Hollis and Steven Smith posit in their well-known *Explaining and understanding International Relations* (1991, 8–9) that three distinct agent-structure debates can be identified in IR theory, each engaging with different levels of analysis (systemic, unit level, and individuals). Arguably, a complete picture of any event under scrutiny would necessarily combine these debates and levels of analysis. However, more often than not authors focus on just one of them, either for purposes of clarity in the argumentation or due to space constraints (or, most likely, both). It is necessary, then, to start the discussion about the available approaches to study agency by weighing the strengths and weaknesses each level of analysis entails. This will be done by carefully discussing theories that emphasize the systemic and state levels, and later considering the benefits of a theoretical perspective able to mitigate this strong separation by establishing a way to understand inter-level dynamics.

Approaches based on the analysis of how the individual and interpersonal level affect international politics have a long tradition, and have recently made a comeback with the overlap between international studies and disciplines like psychology or neuroscience (Hymans 2006, 2012; R. McDermott 2004; Rathbun 2009, 2011; Wheeler 2018). This perspective has proven its worth, particularly so when analysing the roles leaders and their mutual relations have played in the development of critical junctures. Using such approach would certainly identify crucial individual and interpersonal traits in South American leaders during the 2000s, which surely facilitated the construction of the joint regional project embodied by UNASUR. However, this level of analysis will not be considered at length here, primarily because the focus of the present research is not on

the actions/perceptions of few individuals steering the agency of the state apparatus. Rather, it seeks to shed light on how path dependent cultural (and, hence, collective) constructions at the domestic level influence the perception of international developments, shape the menu of legitimized responses, and inform the behaviour of international actors.

Three relevant approaches could in principle fulfil the above task, albeit emphasizing the relevance of different levels of analysis and thus resulting in quite different arguments: Neoclassical Realism; Foreign Policy Analysis; and, Constructivism.

### Neoclassical realism (NCR)

NCR developed a distinct research agenda and became a recognised branch of the realist tradition during the 1990s. Its proponents sought to combine the strengths of Neorealism and Classical Realism, aiming for a more encompassing and thorough realist explanation of the connection between systemic conditions and the actions of the units.

They are “Neo” in that they follow Kenneth Waltz’s (1979) argument that the systemic level takes primacy to explain international politics, arguing that “the scope and ambition of a country’s foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities.” (Rose 1998, 146). Yet, they are also “classical”, since they seek to enrich this structural perspective with the insights developed by Classical Realists like Hans Morgenthau (1948) regarding the relevance of domestic factors to determine the specifics of a states’ foreign and defence policies. They posit that the main causal relation that explains international politics in the long term remains to be the distribution of power capabilities among the actors in the system, which establishes material limits to the international behaviour of

undifferentiated units (states). However, they challenge the notion of assuming the state as a “black box” with exogenously given interests, complementing the structural approach of Neorealism with the insight that translating power distribution into actual foreign policy entails an intricate and often imperfect process. This means that domestic factors (perceptions of power distribution; societal and political constraints to resource allocation; dominant ideologies; elite cohesion; development level; political, social, economic, and institutional stability; etc.) need to be incorporated into the analysis to more systematically explain this relation when states fail to behave as perfectly rational, coherent actors (Lobell 2009, 43–44; Rose 1998, 146–47; Schweller 2004, 161).

According to Brian Rathburn (2008, 296), “Neoclassical realism in particular can be defended as having a coherent logic that incorporates ideas and domestic politics in the way we would expect structural realism to do so.”. His argument is that NCR is a “natural outgrowth” of Waltz’s theory, filling relevant gaps left by neorealism in two aspects: improving its understanding of how states manage to mobilize resources; and, providing better explanations for those cases in which states do not behave according to the constraints imposed by the international distribution of material capabilities. Power politics remains at the centre of NCR’s analysis, but is now informed by a more nuanced understanding of domestic conditions that may affect the rationality they “impose”. Tom Dyson (2010, 124) explains quite succinctly how this tension has been resolved by some NCR authors, stating that factors like “nationalism, ideology and organisational culture [are relegated] to the second tier of intervening variables”, understood as resources policy-makers can exploit (albeit not without difficulties).

Such parsimonious complementarity is, however, challenged even by other proponents of NCR. Benjamin Fordham (2009, 251–52), for example, argues that one of the main

problems with this model is that it simply adds an extra layer of analysis seeking to explain cases that do not follow Neorealism's expected outcomes, but fails to properly understand and weigh the role of domestic preferences. In its place, he proposes "an interactive model that considers how the interaction between domestic interests and the international political environment determines foreign security policy choices" (Fordham 2009, 251). He argues that the interactions between the international context and domestic actors should be taken into consideration, analysing how foreign and defence policies result from policy-makers bargaining their preferences regarding how to best respond to external forces.

The question remains, however, as to the relevance of Fordham's model of *limited, one-directional* interaction between the international and the domestic. Arguably, its key worth is the attempt to rescue NCR from irrelevance, had it maintained interests as exogenously given. But, it remains the case that Fordham falls victim of the same two errors that characterise the realist tradition across the board: **a.** remaining oblivious to the contributions made by disciplines like (but not limited to) anthropology, sociology and political science regarding the cultural, historical and normative roots of domestic actors' world views; and, **b.** failing to realize that the distinction between international and domestic realms is but an analytical one, not an actual separation between independent fields. Point a. is of particular relevance for this Thesis, since the theory's inability to engage with the normative priors and historical developments influencing state behaviour puts NCR at odds with the concept of Strategic Culture.

The alternative to this additive model, which claims an unproblematic complementarity between neorealism and NCR, would entail openly challenging the former. Adam Quinn clearly explains the issue with such response:

“Under this view, neoclassical realists could argue that these divergences between systemic imperatives and state behaviour are not merely anomalous occurrences, but rather are regular, consistent and lasting patterns of state behaviour that we cannot expect to see socialised or selected out of existence even over the long term. [...] This latter approach...would put NCR starkly at odds with the limits Waltz sought to place on what a theory of international politics can or should contain.” (Quinn 2013, 160)

As Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik have argued (1999, 7–8), this understanding of NCR would take realism away from all its core assumptions, depleting it from any “theoretical distinctiveness” as a result. Shiping Tang (2009, 799–802) further identifies a number of omissions and problems with this NCR approach. Firstly, he points out that NCR maintains realism’s bias against considering cooperation as a rational outcome in international politics, thus creating an unsurmountable blind spot for the theory. Secondly, the incorporation of domestic politics into the realist framework is fragmented and superficial, missing any coherent understanding of the actual processes involved in policy making and implementation. Finally, he maintains that the assumption that states’ interests are only defined in terms of power politics depletes all explanatory power from the theory, rendering it utterly useless to understand actual state behaviour.

### Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)

FPA refers to a set of theoretical approaches to decision-making in the field of foreign policy, which can include areas such as diplomacy, defence, intelligence, trade, and cultural exchanges to name but a few (Alden and Aran 2017, 3). Whether or not these approaches offer a coherent set of concepts, assumptions, and expectations is a matter of debate, but they do share the goal of presenting an alternative to mainstream IR theories excessively focused on the role of systemic forces to discuss international politics.

In order to fulfil this goal, authors within FPA seek to connect political processes at the state level with its international behaviour, thus opening the “black box” and analysing the endogenous sources of interests, decisions, institutions, policy-making, and actions. This clearly challenges the assumption of mainstream IR theories, most notably Neorealism, regarding the primacy of the systemic level in explaining the international behaviour of “most states, most of the time”. In Chris Alden and Amnon Arat’s terms,

“At the heart of the field is an investigation into decision making, the individual decision makers, processes and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions.” (Alden and Aran 2017, 3)

They also add that FPA has sought to systematize the understanding of state behaviour inductively, building “generalizable theories and concepts” to identify the roots of states’ international behaviour through case studies (Alden and Aran 2017, 2). This shows a stark contrast with Neorealism’s deductive approach, which starts with general hypotheses (the international system is anarchic; and, power distribution determines the role a state will have in the international system) from which conclusions are then “logically” derived and applied to analyse international politics.

Contrary to what psychological approaches to decision making do, FPA does not focus on the personal inclinations of individual political leaders or members of the elite. Instead, it focuses on the role state bureaucracies play in shaping what could be called “national interests” and the associated public policies put in place to achieve them. This does not mean that they leave the influence of politically relevant individuals entirely out of the picture, as the above quote shows; but FPA would look primarily at the institutional level to understand how the preferences of said individuals play within a given organizational setting that imposes goals, resource constraints and standardized procedures, among other conditions. In doing this, the FPA approach stresses the role of organizational

outputs and politics (preferences, debate, power) in the expressions of state agency (Hilsman 1992). Following this understanding means “[...] financial constraints, pressure group lobbying, inter-service and departmental rivalries, matters of organisational survival or bureaucratic momentum play an influential, even decisive role in the formulation and execution of policies.” (Longhurst 2000, 25).

Valerie Hudson argues that if just one contribution of FPA to IR theory had to be singled out as the most relevant, it would be identifying “the point of theoretical intersection between [...] material and ideational factors.” (Hudson 2014, 8) determining state behaviour. Moreover, she further clarifies that said point of intersection resides not in the state but in decision-makers, individuals placed in relevant positions in different organizational structures (state and non-state) that wield the power to influence the state’s foreign policy. This insight brings forward not only the politics of policy making, but also opens the door for change in terms of international behaviour, thus enriching the field of IR theory as a whole by bringing humans into the mix. This also highlights that rather than policy outcomes, FPA scholars have focused on the process of policy making by analysing the interactions between the organizational landscape, decisional structures, main actors and their motivations, and the broader social/political context that affect the formulation of foreign policy (Alden and Aran 2017). In the broader context of IR theorizing, this means that FPA authors have primarily discussed state agency and the domestic factors that explain it.

This has crucial consequences for how FPA engages with the study of international politics. Firstly, and most importantly, it fails to dispute the stark division between the domestic and international levels of analysis present in the field of IR. Secondly, as a direct result of the above, FPA scholars have settled for a subsidiary role in IR theory, seeking to

shed light on the gaps left by systemic theories like Neorealism rather than challenging their assumptions and hypothesis by introducing a bottom-up perspective on the international system. Finally, by leaving the international system untouched, FPA authors have largely accepted (though most times tacitly) the materialist and rationalist foundations advanced by Neorealism (Longhurst 2000, 31–32). As mentioned above, Valerie Hudson would likely dispute the last point with her claim about FPA finding the point of intersection between the material and the ideational. However, even if this was true at the domestic level, authors within this tradition have left the systemic level aside, thus failing to contest the mainstream understanding about international politics.

In the same way that NCR provides an insufficient analytical framework for the analysis this Thesis expects to put forward due to the primacy it gives to structural phenomena over domestic conditions, FPA does not seem like a good fit due to its exclusive interest in domestic policy making and disregard for the international. Let's look now at Constructivism's perspective to see how it manages to combine the two levels of analysis in a single theoretical framework.

### Constructivism

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the key contributions Constructivism has made to the field of IR theory is providing an analytical framework able to analyse the effects of both domestic and systemic factors on international politics, breaking with the stark (and artificial) division between the two that mainstream IR theories had imposed before. Focusing on the socialization and social learning processes by which interactions among agents construct social arrangements (norms, institutions, roles, order), which in turn constitute the agents themselves, this theory also breaks with the dominant

materialist understanding of international politics introducing an analysis of socially constructed intersubjective agreements.

The above means that Constructivism's epistemological framework allows studying the systemic and state levels as having constant effects on each other, without giving *a priori* primacy to any of the two. Moreover, these mutual effects are in no way related to the distribution of material capabilities in the international system, but rather the contrary. In other words, the materially-motivated forms of behaviour described by Realism are indeed possible under this understanding of international politics. However, they only dominate the rationale of the international system in instances where the key social arrangements are constructed around concerns over power distribution, expectations of power/security maximizing behaviour, and perceptions of enmity/rivalry as key shared understandings (Wendt 1999, 20, 249). Constructivism argues that, despite the relatively common occurrence of such arrangement, it is by no means natural nor unchangeable. Alternative forms of social order are not only possible, but have already emerged in different settings over the centuries and involving a large variety of agents. This exemplifies one of the key strengths of the Constructivist framework, providing flexibility and nuance to account for the specificities of different "cultures of anarchy" (Wendt 1999, 254–59), allowing it to understand the international system theorized by Realism as one among many possible social arrangements. This incorporates other possibilities into the mix without erroneously labelling them "anomalies", which closes the debate and prevents the theory from properly understanding international politics.

As will be discussed in further detail in the coming section, most Constructivist authors have tended to focus on either agents or on the social structure, often studying one-directional relations instead of the circular co-constitution Constructivism theorizes.

They still acknowledge that the relation is mutual and constant, but either their specific research questions or the need for clarity lead them to focus exclusively on just one of its legs. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that even in those cases, a Constructivist epistemology establishes that any division between the two levels is nothing but an analytical distinction to make sense of the social world that it should not be reified as an actual description of reality.

As stated above, Constructivism looks at the processes by which agents constitute social arrangements (structure), and vice versa. This entails looking into the roles of shared values, understandings, world views, and identities, which mediate between the material context and agents' behaviour, breaking with the materialist and rationalist fixation of the mainstream IR perspectives that dominated the field until the 1990s.

Crucially, the co-constitution of structure and agency not only exists in the study of international politics, but also at the domestic level. This means states can be understood as social arrangements that interact with agents (state agencies, political parties, sectorial elites, epistemic communities, pressure groups, NGOs, etc.) at the domestic level, and as (collective) agents interacting with each other and with the social arrangements that define the context of international politics. Despite being largely a state-centric theory, Constructivism heavily criticizes the notion of the state being a unitary, perfectly rational actors following a resource maximizing logic. It provides the tools to critically understand domestic interest formation as a result of negotiated ideational commitments.

Together with the blurring of boundaries between levels of analysis, the last point makes the Constructivist approach a highly useful framework to combine with the concept of Strategic Culture, understood as a socially constructed set of long-term

premises and normative commitments regarding the use of the defence apparatus. Kerry Longhurst goes beyond this, stating that

“Strategic culture's intellectual home clearly lies within the broad constructivist/reflectivist school. [...] Constructivism's emphasis upon process, critical junctures and the formation and reformation of interests and identities corresponds with the breakdown of the existing strategic culture [...]” (Longhurst 2000, 33)

It is worth mentioning that Constructivism provides few clues, if any, regarding how the concept of Strategic Culture could be operationalized. This is a crucial point, and will be covered in more detail in the coming pages.

### **Structure and agency in constructivism: An asymmetrical relation**

As has already been established, using sociological and interpretivist approaches<sup>44</sup>, constructivist authors have subjected the pillars of rational-choice theory to continued and effective criticism. They did so by showing that intersubjective knowledge mediates between the material “reality” studied by mainstream IR theories and the understanding that actors have of said “reality”, effectively shaping the context on which they interact with each other (Wendt 1992).

Despite a lack of agreement between strands of constructivism about how to define it, the notion of mutual constitution of agents and structure is central to this theory and one of the key insights it has contributed to the field of IR (Adler 1997, 330–37; Guzzini 2000; Klotz 2006). One of the first IR authors to forcefully defend this concept was Alexander Wendt (1987, 1992, 1999). Rooting Constructivism in the philosophy of scientific realism, Wendt attempts a break with the empiricist-rationalist stance of mainstream IR theories,

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<sup>44</sup> See (Guzzini 2000)

establishing strong ontological grounds to incorporate the analysis of intersubjective, immaterial social constructions and their effects on the behaviour of actors to the field of IR theory (Wendt 1999, 47–91). The need to develop such approach had been previously identified by Friedrich Kratochwil and John Ruggie (1986).

More importantly, Wendt resorts to the conceptual apparatus and epistemology of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory to advance one of the central contributions of his approach, the notion that

“Agents are inseparable from social structures in the sense that their action is possible only in virtue of those structures, and social structures cannot have causal significance except insofar as they are instantiated by agents.” (Wendt 1987, 365)

Audie Klotz (1995) would take this definition even further, stating that if we grant any credibility to the argument that interests are shaped by the international social structure, then the premise that states can behave in a fully autonomous way in the exercise of their agency should be discarded altogether. Instead, Klotz looks at agency through the lens of the constraints imposed by the social structures within which actors are socialized. Just like Wendt, she focuses primarily on system-level social constructions. They differ, however, in that the latter is more interested in addressing the constraints that shared understandings and norms<sup>45</sup> impose on the behaviour of states (*normative constructivism*), while the former's work addresses more directly the construction of collective identities and culture themselves (*systemic constructivism*).

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<sup>45</sup> It is not uncommon for authors in the *normative constructivist* research agenda to conflate the effects of domestic and international social constructions, focusing primarily on the influence external norms have on state behaviour while subordinating the role of domestic culture in that process. Though, generally speaking, the basic process by which social structures influence actors' behaviour, and vice versa, is essentially the same at both levels of analysis, the different dynamics and causal relations in each level are relevant s to establish a clearer analytical distinction between the two.

Given the influence that these two strands of constructivism have had on the research agenda of IR theory, it is important to identify their shortcomings. Of particular importance to this thesis, the conceptual apparatus and epistemology of structuration has been accused of leading authors to “conflate levels of analysis” (Archer 1996, 25–100). The main consequence of this conflation was briefly mentioned in the previous section, it being that the relation between structure and agency is turned into one of unidirectional causation despite the mantra of co-constitution. The majority of the constructivist research agenda has gravitated towards downwards conflation (how systemic social structures constitute agents, most common in *normative constructivists*) and central conflation (how social structures are constructed, blurring the lines between agency and structure, common among *systemic constructivists*). In turn, theoretical and empirical constructivist studies about how agents constitute the structure, and about the domestic forces that shape the interests and preferences of those agents in the first place, have remained relatively scarce (Carlsnaes 1992, 248–50; Doty 1997, 372; Hopf 2002; J. K. Jacobsen 2003, 55). Additionally, Jutta Weldes argues that “Wendt’s anthropomorphized understanding of the state continues to treat states, in typical realist fashion, as unitary actors with a single identity and a single set of interests.” (Weldes 1996)

As a consequence, there is a relative lack of theorization in constructivist IR theory about processes of identity and interest formation, and a lack of understanding about how agents affect social arrangements at the systemic level. All of the above has somehow obscured the role of agency in the constructivist understanding of international politics (Checkel 1998). Even the seminal research on the life cycle of norms developed by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) suffers of this problem, forgetting almost entirely about agents in the second (cascading) and third (internalization) stages of the norm

diffusion process (Bucher 2014), and limiting the role of domestic politics to a quest for legitimacy that denies any constitutive power to this level of analysis (Hopf 2002).

The main problem that these approaches present is one of conflation of analytical levels. They obliterate the analytical independency that constructivist theory should grant actors if it is serious about properly evaluating the two-way interplay between social structure and agency that it claims is central to understand international politics. To be sure, Constructivists do acknowledge that a theory about the social constitution of agents and the structure-changing effects of their actions should be an essential aspect in the theory's research agenda (Wendt 1987, 366) to open up the black box and understand the construction of interests, perceptions, practices, and agendas. However, by favouring an approach in which agents are presented as mere "instantiators" that grant "causal significance" to social structures, agents and their influence on the systemic social environment are placed in a subordinate position (Archer 1995, 81–84). Wendt's theory presents a case of central conflation<sup>46</sup>, annulling the independent standing of agents and structure, turning them almost indistinguishable from each other.

Klotz's *normative constructivist* approach, on the other hand, masks agency by focusing almost exclusively on the effects international social arrangements have on agents, combining the language of norms with that of agency much like norm diffusion literature: "[...] norms are often narratively given the place of acting persons or actions, thereby facilitating an illusion of agency, while violating the deeper ontological commitments of constructivist thinking." (Bucher 2014, 752).

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<sup>46</sup> "[Central conflation], which enjoys a certain vogue at the moment as 'structuration theory', interprets neither structure nor agency as epiphenomena of one another. [...] Instead, what happens is that autonomy is withheld from both levels and this has exactly the same result of precluding any examination of their interplay. Here, structural properties and social interaction are conflated because they are presented as being so tightly constitutive of one another." (Archer 1995, 81)

Though Wendt's *systemic constructivist* perspective does acknowledge more widely the recursive aspect of the intersubjective meanings involved in the mutual constitution of agents and structure (Wendt 1992, 396–97), in both cases theorization and empirical studies fail to understand the two levels of analysis autonomously. With few notable exceptions (Hopf 2002; Weldes 1996), this has led to a generalized understanding of agency that, in practice, treats many of the characteristics of actors (including their identities, interests, and preferences) as intrinsic to them or exogenously given (Doty 1997, 373; Hopf 2002; Weldes 1996).

Walter Carlsnaes (1992) attempted a solution to the problem of central conflation in Wendtian constructivism, substituting structuration theory with Margaret Archer's "morphogenesis"<sup>47</sup>. Given its roots in realist social theory, this approach should be ontologically and epistemologically compatible with Constructivism, accounting for the interplay between the structural and the agency levels of analysis that incorporates temporality and avoids the problem of directional conflation. However, this attempt to "solve" the agent-structure "problem" by merely adding the diachronic morphogenetic analysis was not seen as a real solution to the problem of level conflation (Doty 1997, 373–74; Hollis and Smith 1994, 243–47).

Evaluating the feasibility and implications of fully incorporating morphogenesis to the constructivist theoretical framework is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, though

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<sup>47</sup> Its key contribution is the incorporation of temporality in the mutual relation between agents and structure, which Archer analyses sequentially. Culture provides a context for the actions of agents, steering their behaviour and interactions by providing different meanings, constrains, and incentives. In turn, the actions of and interactions between agents reproduce or transform the initial social structure. Structures shape action due to the presence of emergent properties and causal powers that are not entirely reducible to the intentions or purposeful action of the agents involved in their construction (Hodgson 2002, 166). Archer emphasises the need to understand social process as made of an endless loop of such sequences, where structure and agents mutually constitute each other. According to the morphogenic approach, only in this way can researchers grasp the causal relations involved in the two-way interplay that make agents and structures interdependent while also maintaining their autonomy (Archer 1995).

a better formulation of the relationship between agent-structure is certainly necessary to account for the autonomy of each level of analysis and their interdependence, this does not immediately mean that we should get rid of research agendas that give explanatory primacy to one side or the other. As long as the analyst acknowledges the limitations and potential problems of level conflation, and (partially) remedies them by incorporating considerations about structure-agent dynamics, I would argue that the aspects of international politics that these perspectives bring to light are still valuable. Ted Hopf (2002) argues that only if an IR theory was to stipulate the total independence of identity formation and its impact on foreign policy, completely independent from the dynamics the external, could it be considered reductionist.

The following subsection discusses how a *social constructivist* perspective can complement the understandings of international politics advanced by authors like Wendt and Klotz. Though this is in no way a fix to the problem of conflation, a combination of the insights provided by the three research agendas could provide a fairly complete (if compartmentalized) image of the two-way social processes by which the international structure and the agents affect each other.

#### Agency: Domestic roots and effects on structure. A bottom-up approach

The previous subsection had the aim of introducing the limitation that constructivist approaches have had in dealing with the agency of international actors. The goal of this research is to understand how the domestic environment informed the interest formation and the motivations for action of states, and how this was consequential in the construction of regional social arrangements. More specifically, I am looking to analyse the domestic cultural structures that help explain processes of interest formation and

foreign Policy decision-making in Argentina, Chile and Colombia, aiming to understand the roots and social orientation of their respective agendas and actions during the SADC negotiations. Hence, it is now necessary to identify and discuss some of the key aspects about how the notion of agency will be understood.

In order to fulfil the above goals, international agency will be understood as:

*Meaningful and purposeful behaviour of actors.*

The simplicity of this definition might be misleading. Its underpinnings lie with Weberian interpretive sociology. The meaningfulness aspect of agency is related both with the social and cultural structures that influence the decision-making process behind the actors' behaviour, as well as with the expected relational consequences of the action<sup>48</sup>. These actions are not "rational" in the sense rational choice theory would expect, but can instead be understood as being informed by the dominant socio-cultural framework, providing grounds to justify and interpret behaviour, as well as its intended impact (purpose) on other actors and on the social structures shared with them (Weber 1981, 152–53). Adopting this approach to "agency" and "meaningful behaviour" means that the actions are not primarily analysed as individually motivated, but rather as having a social purpose (Tucker 1965, 158–59). It is also important to remember that "Only occasionally do some individuals raise the meanings of their actions to full consciousness. It is therefore often the sociologists, rather than the agents they seek to understand, who

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<sup>48</sup> "Action specifically significant for interpretive sociology is [...], behavior that: (1) in terms of the subjectively intended meaning of the actor, is related to the behavior of others, (2) is codetermined in its course through this relatedness, and thus (3) can be intelligibly explained in terms of this (subjectively) intended meaning." (Weber 1981, 152)

conceptualize behaviors by classifying them in terms of ‘possibly intended meanings.’” (Ringer 2002, 177). Hence, the above definition implies that agency is a culturally-rooted, socially-oriented type of behaviour that can be analysed through in-depth studies of the meanings and purposes associated with the action, even if the agent is not consciously aware of these.

Moreover, an account of agency within the constructivist tradition should not presume to demonstrate causal (mechanistic) relations, as rationalist and materialist theories in the Social Sciences would. A language of “soft” causality related to terms like “influence” and “inform”, which can be associated with Hidemi Suganami’s use of the notion of intelligibility (Suganami 1999), is hard to escape and does permeate the discussion. However, as Hollis and Smith point out, “Interpretative accounts can certainly use words such as ‘cause’ and ‘because’, but one should not assume that these mean the same things as when the words are used to invoke notions of causal forces or pressures.” (Hollis and Smith 1994, 249). The type of causation that interpretivists<sup>49</sup> refer to establishes a plausible logical chain where shared ideational factors (culture) create conditions of possibility (norms) for particular outcomes (behaviour) (Finnemore 2003, 14–15).

It is also important to clarify one point. Though the terms “state” and “actor” will be used almost interchangeably, I do not intend to convey the idea that states are the only relevant actors in international politics. However, given the empirical focus of this research on the behaviour of the defence and foreign policy elites of three states in the context of regional inter-state negotiations, for the most part I will not be engaging with other types of international actors.

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<sup>49</sup> Particularly modernist constructivists like Peter Katzenstein (1996), Jeffrey Checkel (Checkel 1998), Martha Finnemore (Finnemore 2003), and Emanuel Adler (2013)

As has been made clear in the previous subsection, state agency is not only influenced, constrained, or steered by external structures, but also informed by a domestic socio-cultural environment that provides a network of meanings where actions are embedded, both subjectively and socially. This is a notion that a part of constructivist research (that which exhibits either central or downwards conflation) tends to acknowledge, but rarely engages with. Yet, giving more consideration to the role of the prevailing domestic cultural context and to the social processes involved in shaping interests, perceptions, policy preferences, and political agendas at the domestic level should be an unavoidable aspect of any sociologically-inspired theory of international politics. In other words, historically contingent culture and norms at the domestic level affect states' agency as much as (if not more) than international norms. As a result, it is impossible to properly study the motivations behind the behaviour of states in the international arena without a clearer understanding of the relationship between domestic culture and actions.

This is by no means a ground-breaking insight, as evidenced by the existing literature touching on this topic in the fields of Foreign Policy Analysis (Hudson 2014, 117–39; Lacina and Lee 2013; Malici 2006; Sjöstedt 2007), the *social constructivist* research agenda described by Hopf, and the concept of Strategic Culture itself. However, it remains an important point to make in the face of a large proportion of systemic approaches dominating IR constructivism.

Alternative ways to understand agency have been proposed by post-structuralist approaches (Doty 1997, 1999), Lacanian symbolic/discursive analysis (Epstein 2013), Neo-Gramscian theory (Bieler and Morton 2001; Joseph 2008), and narrative analysis (Bucher 2014; Suganami 1999). Bucher's understanding of agency is particularly interesting, relying on Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall's (2005) discussion about

the different types and effects of power<sup>50</sup> in international politics to define agency within the boundaries of norm politics (Bucher 2014). This approach strongly associates the notion of agency with the productive dimension of power, defined as “[...] the constitution of all social subjects with various social powers through systems of knowledge and discursive practices of broad and general social scope.” (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 55). Bucher argues that by focusing on the different types of power to study the politics of norms, instead of their intrinsic characteristics, it is possible to identify more clearly the multi-dimensional power relations and political practices at play between structure and agency throughout the norm cycle.

Bucher’s approach does, indeed, shed light on aspects of the behaviour of and interactions between actors that other approaches fail to recognize, stripping norms from their seeming neutrality and bringing them back to the field of the political. It also emphasizes aspects that could be related to the concepts of “meaningful” and “purposeful” actions through an understanding of power relations rooted in post-structuralism that incorporates insights about the role of “knowledge and discursive practices” of “social scope”. However, there are two limitations to this way of approaching agency that are worth mentioning. On the one hand, as the author himself points out, there is an array of relevant practices that will be left out of any analysis using this conceptualization due to its strict focus on power relations (Bucher 2014, 757). As such, it fails to engage with the concept of agency itself, focusing exclusively on a limited subgroup of behaviours and interactions. On the other hand, and more importantly so, this approach does not delve

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<sup>50</sup> “The first type is power as relations of interaction of direct control by one actor over another—Compulsory Power; the second is the control actors exercise indirectly over others through diffuse relations of interaction—Institutional Power; the third is the constitution of subjects’ capacities in direct structural relation to one another—Structural Power; and the fourth is the socially diffuse production of subjectivity in systems of meaning and signification—Productive Power+ These different conceptualizations provide distinct answers to the fundamental question: in what respects are actors able to determine their fate, and how is that ability limited or enhanced through social relations with others?” (Barnett and Duvall 2005)

into the reasons behind the deployment of productive power by the different actors, avoiding any reference to whether interests and motivations are understood as intrinsic to the actor or if there is any sort of socio-cultural process involved in their formation.

Arguments to incorporate a stronger theory about how social constructions at the state level affects actors' interest and agenda formation, and in turn influence the international environment, are not uncommon. In an attempt to establish a dialogue between Neorealism and Historical Sociology, Stephen Hobden maintains that

“Through considering the state form, the balance of its activities, and the two-way relation between system and units, the possibility of explaining change becomes much more feasible than in Neorealism [...]. The impact of the international system on the form the state takes at any historical period can be considered, whilst the impact of changes in state formations on the international system can also be analysed.” (Hobden 1998, 181)

In fact, explaining the “causal” relations that exist between different forms of state institutions with particular types of external action has been one of the central contributions of Historical Sociology to IR thinking (Hobden 1998, 1–3; Mann 1996). Similarly, Democratic Peace Theory (Doyle 2005; Russett et al. 1995) draws conclusions about the international behaviour of states based on their domestic political organization. As discussed, Neoclassical Realists have also attempted to reconcile the role of domestic political institutions in influencing the actions of states in the international system.

However, what these theories lack is a clearer understanding of the relation between a larger set of social constructs (not just the form of domestic political organization) with state agency. This is, precisely, the gap that the Weberian understanding of agency comes to fill in this Thesis, identifying and theorizing the link between agency and the meaning-creating domestic cultural-normative context. Moreover, building upon this, the concept

of Strategic Culture will help tackle this relation specifically in relation with the cultural aspects informing a society's understanding of the resort to the defence apparatus, and how it informs its agency in the deployment of foreign and defence policy preferences. It is necessary now to engage directly with the discussions of that body of literature.

## Strategic Culture

Having defined agency as meaningful and purposive (i.e. culturally-rooted and socially-oriented) action, I will now engage with the key conceptual tool to be used in the analysis of the three case studies: Strategic Culture.

As already discussed, Strategic Culture literature is by no means the only approach interested in how idiosyncratic domestic factors inform behaviour. The concept was coined roughly at the same time as two seminal books on similar topics were being published: Robert Jervis' *Perception and misperception in international politics* (1976); and, Ken Booth's *Strategy and ethnocentrism* (1979). But, while Jervis' approach understands the influence of the domestic onto foreign policy in broad terms (including an array of cultural, institutional, legal, social and political factors) and Booth's addresses the issue specifically in relation to how cultural<sup>51</sup> ethnocentrism affects the actors' strategic thinking and behaviour, Strategic Culture provides a different focus. It is specifically interested in understanding how cultural constructions specifically built

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<sup>51</sup> Booth provides a vague definition, claiming that culture is a "[...] set of patterns, of and for behaviour, prevalent among a group of human beings at a specified time period [...]. Within the sense of this definition, culture embraces different modes of thought, implicit and explicit behavioural patterns and social habits, identifiable symbols and signals for acquiring and transmitting knowledge, distinctive achievements, well-established ideas and values, particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems, and significant discontinuities in all these respects as between one group and another. Culture is one of the key factors determining who is whom in the social universe." (Booth 1979)

around the understanding and use of the defence apparatus mediate between the stimuli coming from the security environment, the perceptions defence elites have of them, and the strategic actions that are considered viable and legitimate as responses.

This last point is crucial, since it broadly defines how the relation that exists between culture and action is understood within this conceptual framework. Ann Swidler (1986), a cultural sociologist that defined the currently dominant understanding of that relation basing her arguments on Clifford Geertz's definition of culture (see page 160), argues that culture works as a "toolkit" where actors find an array of path dependent meanings that allow them to interpret inputs, but also works as a "repertoire" of legitimized forms of behaviour actors can choose from in order to build particular lines or chains of action. In other words, culture is a set of lenses that filter incoming incentives, translate them into meaningful and rooted bits of information, and distil a relatively limited variety of options actors can choose from. In addition, Swidler states that

"Strategies of action incorporate, and thus depend on, habits, moods, sensibilities and views of the world. People do not build lines of action from scratch, choosing actions one at a time as efficient means to given ends. Instead, they construct chains of action beginning with at least some pre-fabricated links. Culture influences action through the shape and organization of those links." (Swidler 1986, 277)

This caveat is important, since Swidler understands actions to be not only culturally-informed in the sense discussed above, but also path dependent in that they tend not to be chosen independently but as a string/chain/line of more or less coherent actions.

Moving forward, Kerry Longhurst (2000, 18) lists two key assumptions that largely define the starting point for Strategic Culture literature. I would contend that the first assumption is actually made up of two analytically distinct assumptions, namely one regarding the origin of Strategic Cultures and a second one referring to their stability.

With that modification in mind, the central assumptions of Strategic Culture literature can be described as:

1. Collective actors (primarily states) develop strategic cultures as the result of beliefs, values, and attitudes towards the use of force<sup>52</sup>, which emerge or are shaped in historical junctions and result in shifts that redefine the collective.
2. Once instated, a new historical juncture could certainly modify them, and they may even change as the result of long-term social learning processes or accumulative change. However, Strategic Cultures tend to conform elements of “inertia”, showing remarkable stability over time.
3. A Strategic Culture is intimately related to a dominant framework of reference or network of meanings, which establish criteria of legitimacy favouring specific actions while discarding others. These set the path for most of the key policy decisions and actions of the collective, working as normative priors for international behaviour.

### Definition and key debates

The existing literature on Strategic Culture is rich in theorization and debate, but sparse, has not reached an agreement about some central concepts, and has been relatively limited in terms of its empirical application (though this seems to be changing).

Jack Snyder (1977) coined the concept of Strategic Culture in a report for the Rand Corporation that already contained insights into some central topics of contention that would define the theoretical debate for decades. He defined Strategic Culture as

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<sup>52</sup> The concept focuses primarily on how defence elites and society at large define the key social norms regarding the use of force. However, I would argue that engaging with the local Strategic Cultures of the case studies is crucial not only to engage with the instances in which those states would justify going to war, but also to understand their predisposition to deal with international security issues in non-violent ways. In other words, properly understanding the limits set by a society to the use of military force also reveals the instances in which said society shows a cultural preference for the peaceful resolutions of international tensions and, by extension, the areas they are willing to open for cooperative approaches.

“[...] the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy” (Snyder 1977, 8)<sup>53</sup>

Definitions loosely resembling that of Snyder’s<sup>54</sup> have dominated the literature (Ball 1993; Gray 1981; Jones 1990; Longhurst 2004; Lord 1985; 1990). One of the key problems with them is that they risk being tautological. Strategic culture literature conceives culture as a heuristic device that underpins and provides meaning to the behaviour of states, but the above definition also includes “patterns of habitual behaviour” as a constitutive element of this cultural framework. Analytically, conceiving behaviour as both a component part and the result of culture at the same time is problematic<sup>55</sup>. This means that, in order to make the concept of Strategic Culture work for the analysis of interest formation and state agency, a different way to define culture is necessary.

Different generations of authors have conceived the concept differently, each helping identify different types of relations between culture and agency.

For Snyder, for example, the strategic cultural context of a country imposes cognitive biases on its elites, which influence the interpretation of and reaction to external stimuli. Because decision-makers are not “culture-free, preconception-free game theorists”

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<sup>53</sup> The restriction to the realm of nuclear strategy is related to the empirical goal of the report. This, however, should not pose limitations for the concept to be used in the study of a broader scope of military- and defence-related topics. Arguably, all policy areas related to the use of force against an external adversary should be permeated by the Strategic Culture of the country. A confirmation of this stance can be seen in the volume edited by Carl Jacobsen, *Strategic Power: USA/USSR* (1990), in which various authors (including Jack Snyder himself) published research on a broad variety of defence-related topics affected by the Strategic Culture of each Super Power.

<sup>54</sup> Colin Gray defines Strategic Culture as “[...] modes of thought and action with respect to force, derive[d] from perception of the national historical experience, aspiration for self-characterization [...], and from all of the many distinctively [national] experiences [...] that characterize an [national] citizen” (Gray 1981, 22); while Carnes Lord maintains it is “[...] traditional practices and habits of thought by which military force is organized and employed by a society in the service of its political goals.” (Lord 1985, 271).

<sup>55</sup> Anthropologists do understand ritualistic behaviour as a key expression of culture, but studies on political culture still question whether it is possible to extrapolate culture from state behaviour (and how to do it).

(Snyder 1977, v), but politicians and bureaucrats embedded in a particular cultural context, the Strategic Culture they share will be determinant of state behaviour. Strategic culture is understood here as a historically contingent context that both informs the perceptions and actions of decision-makers, and provides a key with which to decode the meanings underlying in the data (documents, military doctrines, speeches, negotiating positions, alliances, deployment, etc.). In this way, exploring the characteristics of a country's Strategic Culture helps reduce ambiguity and the risk of misinterpretation.

It is worth mentioning that the term culture is also used “[...] to suggest that these beliefs tend to be perpetuated by the socialization of individuals into a distinctive mode of thinking.” (Snyder 1977, 38), which raises another problem with Snyder's conceptualization. If culture is both historically contingent and “perpetuated”, without the theory clearly identifying under which circumstances the strategic cultural features of a state will remain stable and when they will change. Though this is by no means an unsolvable problem, Snyder fails to provide more details about his thinking on the topic.

Ken Booth has aptly summarized how authors adhering to this line of conceptualization tend to resolve this issue, stating that

“A Strategic Culture is persistent over time, but neither particular elements nor a particular culture as a whole are immutable. Nevertheless, those elements together or in part deserving to be called ‘cultural’ do tend to outlast all but major changes in military technology, domestic arrangements or the international environment.” (Booth 2005, 25)

This understanding is common to other lines of inquiry in political sciences and in IR that refer on socially constructed, historically contingent elements of any given collective actor or aggregation of actors. This explanation is particularly prominent in theoretical approaches that understand Strategic Culture as a non-falsifiable concept, as a context

that informs perceptions, preferences, interests and behaviour alike, and outside of which there is nothing. However, Darryl Howlett has pointed out that for Strategic Culture literature to move forward, it is necessary to theorize the processes involved in cultural continuity and change in more detail (Howlett 2006, 5–6).

Another problem with this line of theorizing is that, pretty much as with Booth's definition of culture, Snyder and his followers resort to such a large set of inputs to define Strategic Culture that the concept becomes vague and over-determined. Moreover, a lack of deeper consideration into the relation between culture and behaviour insinuates an extremely strong path dependence, even resembling a deterministic relation where states cannot escape behaving in ways similar to how they have behaved before (Johnston 1995, 33–34). In fact, Alastair Johnston identified the combination of the two points above as the main problem with the first generation of Strategic Culture authors, claiming that

“If ‘Strategic Culture’ is said to be the product of nearly all relevant explanatory variables, then there is little conceptual space for a non-Strategic Culture explanation of strategic choice. This makes valid tests of a Strategic Culture-based model of choice extremely difficult.” (Johnston 1995, 37)

Johnston's insinuation that there could be non-cultural explanations for strategic choice has been widely rejected based on the above discussed understanding of Strategic Culture as an un-falsifiable, unescapable context filtering information, shaping preferences, influencing interests formation, and informing agency (Gray 1999; Longhurst 2004; Poore 2003). However, more consideration should be given to the constitutive elements of Strategic Culture and their relation to strategic choice.

Another line of inquiry into the concept of Strategic Culture, identified by Johnston as the “second generation” of theorizing, is related almost exclusively to the work of Bradley Klein. I disagree with the labelling used by Johnston, not because Klein’s work does not show sufficient differences with both previous and later authors, but precisely for the opposite reason. He understands the concept in a Neogramscian fashion, as an element of the hegemonic ideology (Klein 1988, 1989). Strategic culture is seen as a symbolic discourse used instrumentally by ruling elites to maintain their hegemonic position, granting a monopoly over the legitimate use of force to specific state agents and identifying the enemies that need to be fought (Klein 1988). In this version of the concept, Strategic Culture works merely as a *post facto* discursive justification for pre-existing, class-related preferences and interests regarding the use of force. This also means that elites are not constrained in their behaviour by any sort of cultural framework, which challenges the entire research agenda of this line of thought. Hence, despite using the same term, the research agenda Klein follows, the phenomena and actors he identifies, and the causal relations that interest him show such little relation with all other authors in the Strategic Culture tradition that it is hard to see any relevant points of contact between them. It might be best, then, to consider Klein’s work as something else than Strategic Culture as understood here.

Finally, Johnston self-identifies with the “third generation” of Strategic Culture thinking, described as “[...] more rigorous and eclectic in its conceptualization of ideational independent variables, and more narrowly focused on particular strategic decisions as dependent variables.” (Johnston 1995, 41). The eclecticism mentioned means

that it is difficult to provide a unique definition for what these authors understand by Strategic Culture, but Johnston's provides a good starting point for discussion:

"[...] an integrated system of symbols (i.e., causal axioms, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious." (Johnston 1996, 222)

This definition identifies two basic mechanisms by which culture affects the strategic preferences of states. On the one hand, it constitutes a cognitive sieve, filtering the wide array of possible strategic options in any given case so that only those that conform to the cultural framework are seen as "realistic and efficacious". On the other hand, culture is attributed productive abilities with regards to the norms ("concepts", in Johnston's definition) guiding long-term preferences for the use of force. Johnston's goal is to devise an approach that can "explain" behaviour by clearly identifying independent variables (ideational aspects of Strategic Culture) from dependent variables (strategic behaviour itself), separating him from first generation authors that sought to "understand" strategic behaviour by tapping into the meanings embedded in them through the concept of Strategic Culture (Meyer 2005, 527).

Grounding norms and cognitive biases about strategic preferences exclusively on a "system of symbols"<sup>56</sup> has the effect of eliminating the reliance on behavioural observations. This does not mean, however, that patterns of ritualized behaviour do not constitute cultural elements, broadly conceived. But, keeping behaviour out of the

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<sup>56</sup> Clifford Geertz, on whose concept of religion Johnston based his definition of Strategic Culture, understands symbols as "[...] any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception -the conception is the symbol's 'meaning'" (Geertz 1973, 91)

definition and focusing only on its ideational dimension prevents falling in the tautological trap mentioned before. This move also helps authors using this approach identify behaviour more clearly as the dependent variable in the relation (Johnston 1995, 44).

What this definition makes more explicit than Snyder's is that the menu of valid options available in any given Strategic Culture includes a variety of possible paths to follow, rather than establishing a deterministic relation between the two. However, this may make Johnston's goal of "explaining" behaviour based on the independent variable of Strategic Culture more difficult.

However, combining the conceptualization of first generation authors with this insight might help break the tautology and strengthen their ability to "understand" the meanings and reasons motivating strategic behaviour (Meyer 2005). This step requires an operationalization of the concept that establishes a concise methodological approach to understand how Strategic Culture: **a.** Filters the external environment and guides the interpretation of stimuli; and, **b.** Shapes the Strategic Norms guiding behaviour and the menu of preferred strategic options.

Moreover, leaders and decision-makers are not only socialized into a Strategic Culture, but also participate in other cultural environments and bring their own sets of normative and behavioural preferences with them (Weldes 1996). These also affect the world-view of defence elites and can, then, have an effect on strategic behaviour, albeit more indirectly and less prominently. Though this could certainly bring an extra layer of complexity to the empirical study of the effects Strategic Culture has on behaviour, there is no point in denying the potential for crossed pollination between cultural constructions in different areas. This should not mean that the notion of engaging with the cultural features specific to the defence sector and their effects on behaviour should be abandoned, though. A

compromise could be that the operationalization of the concept leaves room for domestic contestation, either originating in the same Strategic Culture but reaching different conclusions due to interfering webs of meaning or emerging from subaltern Strategic Cultures. This aspect of the theory will be further covered in the following subsection.

Finally, a bifurcation has taken place recently in the research agendas followed by different authors. A large proportion still use the concept to tap into the national level of analysis, studying the influence of Strategic Culture on the agency of the state and its impact on the systemic level<sup>57</sup> (sharing the bottom-up perspective and upward conflation problems of *social constructivism*). But, an increasing number of scholars have started to also use it to discuss the construction of a collective Strategic Culture at the sub-global level, particularly in the European context and in Transatlantic relations<sup>58</sup>.

Both groups bring relevant insights to the discussion, but their degree of aggregation of actors, processes, and variables is significantly different. The former, as already discussed, engages exclusively with the impact of the domestic Strategic Culture on the perceptions and behaviour of individual states. The latter, in contrast, requires that we not only take the domestic into consideration, but that we also consider the interaction between a multiplicity of distinct (and, converging?) domestic Strategic Cultures, focusing on the processes of interaction and negotiation required to develop a shared Strategic Culture at the regional level, and exploring as well what the effects of this might be for the global level of analysis.

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<sup>57</sup> See (Biehl, Giegerich, and Jonas 2013; Bitencourt and Costa Vaz 2009; Gray 1981; Johnston 1996; Jones 1990; Longhurst 2000, 2004; Lord 1985; Macmillan 1995; O'Reilly 2013; Snyder 1977; Trinkunas 2009)

<sup>58</sup> See (Cornish and Edwards 2001, 2005; Heiselberg 2003; Margaras 2004, 2009, Martinsen 2004, 2010, Meyer 2005, 2006; Rynning 2003; Sweeney 2013)

I am of the impression that using the concept of Strategic Culture to engage with the latter type of analysis is problematic, since the conceptualization does not accommodate well enough for such kind of complex inter-level dynamics. Moreover, using this approach for sub-global/regional studies does not add much to the theoretical nor to the empirical debates that already exist. Similar insights regarding the construction of shared understandings about the use of force and about in-group/out-group dynamics can be obtained using other, better established theoretical traditions, such as Security Communities (Acharya 2001; Adler and Barnett 1998b; Adler and Greve 2009; Bellamy 2004; Flesmes 2005; Gegout 2002; Nathan 2006; Pouliot 2008) and the analysis of sub-global international societies using the English School approach (Buzan 2012; Kacowicz 2005b; Merke 2011, 2014; Quayle 2013; Schulz 2014).

Having reviewed different definitions for Strategic Culture and analysed some of their key implications, I believe that the most clear and unproblematic way to combine the strengths of each “generation” is to define this concept loosely borrowing from Clifford Geertz’s understanding of culture<sup>59</sup> (rather than from his definition of religion, as Johnston does, which entails a more direct and dogmatic relation between beliefs, values and behaviour). In this way, Strategic Culture can be defined as:

Historically contingent and socially constructed web of meanings that informs the perception of and reaction to inputs from the strategic environment among relevant domestic actors in the defence sector.

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<sup>59</sup> “Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.” (Geertz 1973, 5)

This fits tightly with the culturally-rooted definition of agency as meaningful and purposeful action. The fact that Strategic Culture is historically contingent and socially constructed means that, while stability and relative consistency are to be expected, no part of it is immutable (Booth 2005), leaving room to explain processes of cultural change resulting from either historical junctures or societal pressure, social learning or adaptation to disruptive inputs.

The “relevant domestic actors of the defence sector” mentioned can be equated with what Snyder refers to as the “national strategic community”, though this wording allows for a broader set of actors to be involved<sup>60</sup>. Also important is the fact that the Strategic Culture of a country is not necessarily a “national” culture, in the sense that a large proportion of the population is not socialized into it and it still needs to relate to the constraints of the broader cultural constructions. This is not to say that the Strategic Culture cannot be publicly discussed beyond the members of the defence sector, but to point out that it need not be the case.

It is also important to mention that this definition does not limit the scope of strategic action merely to how a society relates to the use of force. Instead, all behaviour related with the area of defence and international security can be said to be under the influence of Strategic Culture. In this respect, this definition is perhaps the least restrictive of all those reviewed in this chapter.

Finally, this definition implies taking a middle ground of sorts between understanding Strategic Culture as a contextual framework and Johnston’s strict methodological

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<sup>60</sup> The related epistemic community, policy-makers, bureaucrats, politicians, military officials, and everyone involved in discussing and steering the meaningful actions of the state in the area of defence and international security.

separation of cultural and non-cultural variables. On the one hand, I follow Johnston in taking behaviour out of the constituent parts of culture. This is neither because I fail to acknowledge the cultural dimension of (ritualistic) behaviour, nor because I adhere to Johnston's strict division of the ideational (independent variable) and behaviour (dependent variable), but rather to simplify the analysis of the relations that link Strategic Culture and strategic behaviour. On the other side, and related to what I just said, I take Poore's side in thinking that Strategic Culture is not reducible to a set of neatly identified independent variables, but rather a framework that contextualizes the perceptions, preferences, and decisions of the defence elites (Poore 2003). This means that Johnston's identification of non-cultural variables is an oxymoron. All aspects affecting the strategic behaviour of states, material and ideational, are filtered and interpreted using the lens provided by the dominating Strategic Culture.

Having provided a general overview of the debates surrounding Strategic Culture, I will briefly turn now to how this concept can be operationalized to conduct empirical studies.

#### Operationalization: Strategic culture, norms, and the domestic context

Authors working with Strategic Culture have devised different ways to operationalize the concept. Iain Johnston follows the strategy of identifying ranked preferences "[...] about the role of war in human affairs [...], about the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses [...], and about the efficacy of the use of force [...]" (Johnston 1996, 221). He seeks to test for consistency within the same country, identifying potential pockets of contestation, but also allowing for cross case comparisons using similar parameters to identify core characteristics of the respective Strategic Cultures (Johnston 1996).

Kerry Longhurst (2004) provides an alternative strategy, identifying three key elements in Strategic Cultures with distinct functions: foundational elements; security policy standpoints; and, regulatory practices. Foundational elements represent the core characteristics of a Strategic Culture, deeply-rooted beliefs and meanings that shape the development of the other two but that are not immediately evident. Security policy standpoints and regulatory practices, on the other hand, are described as “observable manifestations of the Strategic Culture”, and can be largely equated to what other authors call social norms. In breaking social norms into two distinct fields, Longhurst differentiates the resilient standards of appropriateness used to translate foundational elements into more concrete interests and preferences for policy choices (security policy standpoints), and the far more malleable practices that translate “higher order” norms into behaviour (regulatory practices).

The key problem with this distinction is that it does not seem to contribute much to the existing debate, and might even confound readers already used to the more established language of norms without adding substantial analytical power. For example, including regulatory practices as a constitutive element of Strategic Culture (a direct consequence of her definition of the concept<sup>61</sup>) may only obscure the border between the Strategic Culture, *per se*, and its observable consequences, risking the possibility of falling again for tautological understandings in which behaviour is both a constitutive part of the culture and a result of it at the same time. This is precisely the reason why practices have been excluded from the definition used here. I believe it is more productive and clear to keep

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<sup>61</sup> “A Strategic Culture is a distinctive body of beliefs, attitudes *and practices* regarding the use of force, held by a collective and arising gradually over time through a unique protracted historical process.” (Longhurst 2004. Italics added)

the distinction between Strategic Culture (web of meanings), social norms (standards of appropriateness; reasons for behaviour), and policies and behaviour (outcomes).

Finally, Christoph Meyer (2005, 2006) takes Johnston's approach a step further, structuring it around Peter Katzenstein's understanding of social norms<sup>62</sup>. Understood in this way, Strategic Norms are a pertinent proxy to approach the "web of meanings" that constitutes the Strategic Culture of a state. They translate the ideational factors and meanings that constitute the culture into social rules and conventions that establish what is considered to be appropriate behaviour and what is not, influencing the process of interest formation and providing reasons for the states to behave in particular ways<sup>63</sup>. As a result, though culture should not be confounded with the aggregation of norms, the impossibility to engage with the former in its "pure state" means that it can only be analysed via a proxy. This makes engaging with the more easily identifiable norms a pertinent solution to analyse the effects cultural frameworks have on behaviour. In addition, I would argue that Strategic Norms are in their more crystalized and accessible state when expressed as legal and institutional frameworks for the defence sector.

Norms are social constructs, defined by shared understandings about standards of appropriate behaviour within a particular society and in a particular moment in history

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<sup>62</sup> "[...] social rules and conventions that constitute [the state's] identity and the reasons for the interests that motivate actors." and as "standards of appropriateness" (Katzenstein 1996). The latter definition largely coincides with the perspectives of other relevant constructivist authors (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Kratochwil 1989, 59)

<sup>63</sup> Martha Finnemore provides a clear example of how this causal relation can be established: "[...] new beliefs make possible (and in that sense cause) new intervention behavior by creating new norms of behavior and new reasons for action. Reasons for action are not the same as causes of action as understood by utilitarian theories. [...] But new beliefs about who is human provide reasons to intervene and make intervention possible in ways it was not previously. By creating new social realities -new norms about interventions, new desires of publics and decision makers- new beliefs create new policy choices, even policy imperatives for intervenors. Thus understanding beliefs about the legitimate purposes of intervention is not 'mere description,' since beliefs about legitimate intervention constitute certain behavioral possibilities and, in that sense, cause them." (Finnemore 2003, 15)

(Elster 1989, 99; Klotz 1995). Since norms are an essential part of the cultural environment, understanding the historical processes within which they emerge, spread, and become institutionalized is essential to approach the question of how culture relates with behaviour (Elster 1989). An in-depth study of the existing norms referring to the areas of defence and international security should allow to position them along an axis that scales them in a spectrum going from low or high preference for activism in the use of force (i.e. when it is considered appropriate behaviour to use military force). Meyer identifies a discreet set of such scalable Strategic Norms whose analysis is expected to expose the basic characteristics of a state's Strategic Culture and help understand the interests that motivate behaviour in the realms of defence and international security (Meyer 2005, 529–31): **1.** the conditions that justify the use of force; **2.** the way in which force is to be used; **3.** preferences with regards to cooperation with other actors; and, **4.** the domestic and external thresholds for authorization to use force.

This set of norms seems pertinent to evaluate the characteristics of a country's Strategic Culture, but also to analyse how it mediates the impact that the external environment (both structural features and specific developments) has on the actions of agents. Strategic Culture understood in this way represents the social constructions and normative priors that help agents interpret the international context, thus simplifying the selection of available responses by presenting specific forms of action as legitimate while discarding others. In this way, Strategic Culture becomes the social context that enables legitimate action, reinforcing the constructivist perspective informing the present research by showing that the material and structural characteristics of the region are of little consequence to understand behaviour if devoid of the domestic social constructions that infer meaning in international pressures and give meaning to the actions put forward as a response.

Also, not only does Meyer's operationalization address the classic concern of the literature with the way a society relates to the use of force, but also incorporates the Strategic Norm related to forms of cooperation. By this, Meyer is referring to whether a state prefers to "work" unilaterally, be neutral, or participate in international alliances when undertaking military actions. However, and this is crucial for this Thesis, this could also be understood in the sense of not just cooperating in the use of military force, but also in the construction of security governance arrangements as the SADC.

One of the problems with Meyer's approach, however, is that it lacks clarity regarding how to identify the Strategic Norms he refers to. I suggest that analysing the legal and policy framework that regulates the defence and international security activities of the state is an appropriate way to tap into its Strategic Norms. The argument to do so is that, while social norms certainly have a strong regulatory effect on the behaviour of actors due to their legitimacy, legal norms tend to be perceived as being a more powerful (Finnemore 2000) and hence the preferred way in which states express their preferences and interests, particularly in a policy area like defence.

In order to properly obtain insights into the Strategic Norms of a state through its legal framework, it is necessary for the analysis to look for the underlying meanings and ideational commitments that inspired the laws and policies in the first place. One way to do this is with the assistance of support sources like interviews with defence elites, academic literature on the topic, official archives, and the diachronic analysis of state behaviour, all of which can help interpret the core preferences expressed by the Strategic Norms (their position in Meyer's scale of activism). Through them, the researcher can have a clearer idea of the ideational components constituting the "web of meanings" in the Strategic Culture.

Though the relation between social norms and legal norms is not always linear<sup>64</sup>, the above discussion implies that changes in the legal framework and public policies do not always reflect changes in the Strategic Norms of a country, but a cultural and normative change will most likely elicit modifications to the legal and policy framework. The empirical analysis in the case studies should be able to confirm this.

## Conclusion

To sum up, the aim of this chapter was to engage with the key concepts that will be necessary to undertake the empirical analysis of the Argentine, Chilean, and Colombian cases, discussing definitions for Strategic Culture, norms, and agency; establishing the causal relations that exist between them; and, explaining how they can be studied. As a result, it should now be possible to engage in the analysis of the empirical cases that follow with a strong conceptual apparatus.

Positioned within the research agenda of *social constructivism*, I nevertheless break with Ted Hopf's approach to agency and identity on a crucial aspect. As discussed above, he seeks to inductively find USSR/Russia's identity and study its effects on Foreign Policy, rejecting all forms of normative analysis due to the potential masking effect norms can have on state identity. Instead, he resorts to discourse analysis to better recognise the latter (Hopf 2002). In contrast, following Meyer, I will leave identity largely as a residual category, focusing instead on (strategic) culture and (strategic) norms as social constructions that embody the ideational commitments (normative priors) of a given

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<sup>64</sup> Social norms usually inform legal production and help interpret the legal framework, but they can also be altered by the law (Posner 2000, 4). It is not uncommon that during the critical junctures modifications to the legal framework precede the legitimization of new normative parameters. Still, what causes the social norm to change is not the legal innovation, but the changes caused by the critical juncture.

state at a particular time in history, mediating and interpreting stimuli, and imbuing action with meaning and coherence.

The payoff for following Meyer in this regard is reducing the degree of speculative abstraction, grounding the interpretivist analysis on slightly more tangible aspects of the state's ideational commitments or normative priors. Inasmuch this research on the effect of agency on regional social arrangements seeks to unveil the cultural causes for how states interpret and react to a particular stimulus (the SADC initiative), and not to identify the full scope of these countries' identity, the limitations imposed by this approach are a reasonable compromise when the analytical payoff is considered.

More importantly, it has been argued that what constructivism refers to as state "identity" is, in fact, "a reformulation of the older concept of political culture which, for comparative political scientists, sought to identify the underlying norms of national societies which produced specific orientations of political phenomena." (Lawson 2006, 23). It follows, then, that Hopf's epistemological concern about identifying the key features of a state's identity deductively via the empirical analysis of norms is misplaced, since state identity can be defined as the aggregation of normative priors. In other words, following Lawson's understanding of identity, there is no part of a state's identity that would remain "masked" in the analysis of norms, since norms are the building blocks of (strategic) political culture (a.k.a. identity).

## **Chapter 5. Argentina**

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### From contender for regional leadership to mere bandwagon?

#### **Introduction**

The present chapter discusses the Argentine case, which showed the highest degree of coincidence between local ideational commitments and the declared objectives behind the SADC initiative among the three cases analysed. Yet, given the geopolitical rivalry that defined the bilateral relation between Argentina and Brazil during most of their history (Moniz Bandeira 2014; Oelsner 2005b, 135–38; Russell and Tokatlian 2003; Schenoni 2014, 139–40), that the former joined a regional security governance organization fostered by the latter should not be taken for granted. Additionally, this decision should neither be attributed exclusively to material conditions, i.e. the unipolar condition of the South American region (Schenoni 2017).

Discussing Argentina's open and vocal opposition to the Brazilian bid for a permanent sit at the UNSC (one of its more ambitious and long-term foreign policy goals), Andrés Malamud rightly points out that "Though not a surprise, the fact that the Brazilian main

regional partner was, at the same time, one of its staunchest opponents was a heavy blow to its image as regional leader” (Malamud 2011b). Similarly, it’s been argued that Argentine elites remained sceptical about the possibility the Brazil could perform a hegemonic leadership in the UNASUR and SADC, or that it could use these organizations as a trampoline to be perceived as a global player (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 116). In other words, the South American unipolarity notwithstanding, secondary powers like Argentina have been able to exercise their agency with relative freedom, even in contradiction of core foreign policy objectives of the regional pole.

Despite Argentina’s discursive adhesion to the notion of a distinct South American regionalism (Jenne and Schenoni 2015, 5) and decades of successful bilateral rapprochement with Brazil (Darnton 2012; Resende-Santos 2002), the first response of the Argentine government to the SADC initiative was underwhelming. Distrust about Brazilian intentions and resistance to change informed this initial reaction, particularly in the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMFA hereon)<sup>65</sup>. Yet, this seems to contradict the impact on mutual perceptions attributed to the changes in the international insertion strategies of both sides since the return of democracy (Tavares 2014, 88–92). The arguments and debates discussed in this chapter should help square this circle, providing a better understanding of the reach and effects recent domestic cultural changes have had on the Argentine understanding of its own role in South American regional dynamics, as well as on the forms of behaviour perceived as legitimate.

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<sup>65</sup> Though no official documents nor journalistic articles mention this, the reluctant position of the AMFA regarding the SADC initiative was consistently brought up by different interviewees. This is a rather surprising reaction, considering deep commitment this bureaucratic actor has had to bilateral rapprochement and broader processes of regional cooperation over the last three decades, but further research into the topic is necessary to better understand its causes.

Also, focusing exclusively on the presence of coincidences between the ideational commitments of the Argentine elites and the regional cooperation agenda of the early-2000s does not provide sufficient understanding of the complex domestic processes that led this country's agency during the SADC negotiations. Tracing the reasons that led President Cristina Fernández's administration (2007-2011, 2011-2015) to embrace the creation of this regional organization requires a good understanding of the interaction between the Strategic Norms dominant until 1983, the social learning and cultural change processes that started with the democratic transition, and the perception of the regional security environment described in Chapter 3. The lens provided by the concept of Strategic Culture provides relevant insights to tackle this question, highlighting the tensions between continuity and change, and allowing an analysis of how the cultural dimension informs the motivations and agenda of a country's defence sector.

One of the key arguments this chapter seeks to advance is that some of the most relevant changes in Argentina's Strategic Norms since 1983 are concerned with the preferred modes of cooperation, as well as with the degree of activism normative priors would deem acceptable. The reasons behind this will be discussed in detail throughout the chapter, but recent changes in the perception of and relationship with neighbouring countries could not be understood without engaging with the meanings attached to the re-definition of these norms<sup>66</sup>.

This chapter further argues that such changes at the domestic level can not only help explain alterations in the Argentine Strategic Culture and policy preferences, but can also have a lasting effect in shaping regional arrangements as a result of their influence on the agency of state actors (Bélanger and Mace 1997, 173). Arguably, the current Argentine

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<sup>66</sup> For purposes of economy of language, I use the term "norm" interchangeably with the concept "Strategic Norm", as well as "culture" as a substitute for "Strategic Culture".

Strategic Culture, largely shaped by defence elites that emerged after 1983 (Vitelli 2015a, 8–9), is one of the conditions of possibility to understand the wide-reaching desecuritization process seen in South America over the last decades, setting up a regional context permeable for the SADC initiative as an extension of MERCOSUR's security agenda to the entire region. Similarly, the working propositions informing the present research point to the Strategic Culture of secondary powers like Argentina to have had a significant role in the definition of objectives, norms, and mutual confidence mechanisms included in the SADC statute, influencing via this path the socially constructed elements of the regional security environment.

The above does not mean that either the Argentine interest in the SADC initiative, nor the outcome of the negotiations, were guaranteed from the outset. However, had the mentioned mutually reinforcing processes at the domestic and regional levels not taken place, it would have been almost impossible to even think about Argentina agreeing to join this organization.

In order to advance the above arguments, this chapter is structured in two sections, each divided in two sub-sections. The first section engages with the make-up of the country's Strategic Culture, with its first sub-section providing necessary historical background and discussing some of the central characteristics of the previous Strategic Culture, while the second sub-section focuses on the country's current Strategic Culture *per se*, discussing in detail the normative, legal, and policy framework that informed the Argentine government during the SADC negotiations.

The second section engages directly with the role and agenda assumed by Argentina during the SADC Working Group meetings. This section identifies and highlights the

influence of the country's Strategic Culture in defining its perception of the regional security environment, as well as its negotiating position, and the impact these had on the regional social arrangements related to the defence sector. The first sub-section analyses how Argentina's defence elites perceived the regional context, the SADC initiative, and the country's role in the region. The second sub-section presents a detailed analysis of how these perceptions influenced the country's negotiating agenda and influence in the organization's statute.

As a result, this chapter answers relevant questions that have not been addressed in such detail by the existing literature: Why did the Argentine government join the Brazilian initiative? What goals did Argentina have for the SADC? What was its negotiating strategy? How did it expect this organization could affect the regional security environment? And, how was all of the above informed by the domestic Strategic Culture?

Identical chapter structures will be used in the other two case studies as well, aiming to produce consistent analyses for the three cases and facilitate any necessary comparisons between them.

## **The evolution of Argentina's Strategic Culture**

This section deals with the history, recent evolution, and current characteristics of the Argentine Strategic Culture. As previously discussed, tapping into these aspects provides context to interpret the effect culture and norms have had on the country's behaviour. Also, the historical review included in the first subsection provides relevant background to evaluate the evolution of the meanings embedded in country's defence sector (an essential aspect in the Strategic Culture, as defined in the conceptual framework chapter).

Once the key historical, social, and political events that have shaped the way Argentina perceives and relates with its military apparatus are covered, the analysis of the meanings and norms associated with the current Strategic Culture will become easier to grasp.

Historical context: The Argentine defence sector pre-1983

Argentina's foreign policy has often been described as erratic and lacking coherence (Busso 2014, 11–12; Diamint 2003, 14; Malamud 2011b; Rapoport and Spiguel 2005, 1–2; Schenoni 2015, 13–14), characteristics often attributed to political divisions among sectors of the elites and to domestic instability. Yet, some regular preferences and behaviours across time can also be identified.

Similarly, despite some inconsistencies, the Argentine Strategic Culture has maintained some stable features that, though challenged in different occasions, have successfully shaped the agency of the country for the defence sector. Understanding these regularities, which due to the corporatist nature of the Argentine Armed Forces (Nino 1989, 134–38) become more evident than in other policy sectors, is essential to better grasp what exactly characterizes the webs of meanings (the Strategic Culture) informing the perception of and reaction to inputs from the strategic environment.

*Geopolitical thinking and the negative perception of the regional environment*

Projecting a distinctly “Europeanized” identity that allegedly differentiated Argentina from its “lesser” Latin American neighbours was consistently among the country's foreign policy goals for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Corigliano 2013, 15–16; Deciancio and Tussie 2015, 2). The Social Darwinist and positivist perspectives that underlie this agenda

(García Fanlo 2011, 10–12) also led local elites to construct the myth of Argentina being under constant threat from and vulnerable to the aggressive behaviour of its neighbours (Child 1985; Oelsner 2005b). This myth was reinforced with a narrative presenting Argentina as the victim of numerous instances of expansionist behaviour by neighbouring states, who allegedly robbed the country of parts of its rightful territories during the period of state consolidation (Dodds 2000, 155–58); an idea cemented in the Argentine psyche by the official maps produced by National Geographic Institute, which until this day is part of the Argentine Ministry of Defence (AMoD hereon) (Lois 2006).

Carlos Escudé (1988) relates the development of this myth and its pervasiveness to strong nationalist traits in the Hispanic-American culture. These national constructions, reproduced through the public education system, the military academies, and the Foreign Service institute (Dodds 2000; Escudé 1992), became an essential part of the self-perception of the Argentine peoples. Moreover, with a dominant strategic paradigm based on an *ad hoc* combination of “cepalian”<sup>67</sup> dependency theory, a realist perspective on power politics, and German geopolitical theories, “territory, military balances, state power, and ‘autonomy’ [were identified] as the ultimate goals of a country’s foreign and security policies.” (Escudé and Fontana 1998).

Similarly to other South American countries, this discourse permeated in the Argentine Strategic Culture, imbuing it with strong geopolitical views drawing inspiration mostly from German (until the 1950s) and French (from the 1950 onwards) traditions in the field (Dodds 2000; Rivarola Puntigliano 2011). During the frequent instances of military involvement in domestic politics, this helped further reinforce feelings of mutual distrust

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<sup>67</sup> In reference to the centre-periphery approach developed at the ECLAC (or CEPAL, in Spanish).

and rivalry that marked the relationships with Chile and Brazil (Buzan and Waever 2003, 313–14; Calvert 1994, 146; Oelsner 2005b).

Two journals (*Estrategia* and *Geopolitica*) served as fora for local geopolitical debates. The former, founded and edited by General Juan Guglielmelli, was particularly influential spreading nationalistic views and negative perspectives on any Brazilian actions, Chile, and the United States. The latter, spearheaded by Alfonso Bravo and Colonel Augusto Rattenbach, advanced less confrontational perspectives on regional geopolitics (Child 1985). The former was dominant among defence elites until 1983<sup>68</sup>, while the latter gained momentum after the democratic transition.

The bilateral rivalry with Brazil started brewing since colonial times, and intensified with the bilateral dispute over the Rio de la Plata basin (which led to the creation of Uruguay as a buffer state, in 1828). However, it wasn't until the consolidation of both states around the 1880s that the mutual perception as competitors became crystalized in the respective national identities (Carasales 1992, 72; de la Fuente 1997, 38). Interestingly, other than occasional controversies normal between neighbouring countries, there is no record of sustained confrontations to justify such mutually negative perception. Instead, the rivalry based primarily on cultural constructions of the other as a rival and a threat (Oelsner 2005b), as well as on the competition for influence in the region. This was fuelled by strong geopolitical views that informed defence and foreign policy elites on both sides, setting them on a path of competition for regional leadership (Hurrell 1998; Kacowicz 2000; Kelly 1997).

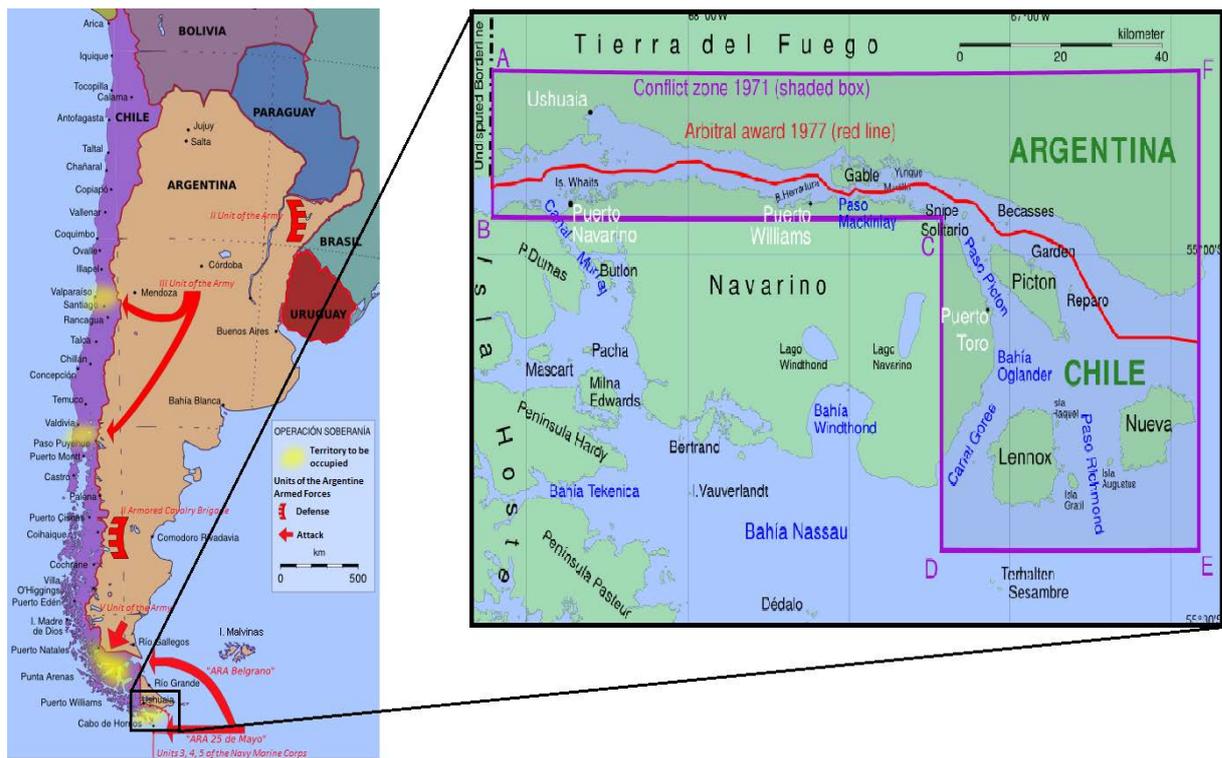
The effect of these geopolitical views is also crucial to understand the bilateral relation with Chile. Despite having signed a bilateral Treaty on Borders in 1881 to put an end to

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<sup>68</sup> See footnote 26, page 94.

border delimitation controversies<sup>69</sup>, as well as several protocols amending its ambiguities later on, “[...] until the 1980s bilateral relations underwent a gradual but steady process that reinforced negative mutual visions and consolidated a culture of antagonism” (Oelsner 2005b).

Graph 2. “Operación Soberanía” and disputed area during the Beagle Channel conflict



Sources: Servicio Hidrográfico y Oceanográfico de la Armada de Chile (SHOA) and Wikicommons

In 1978, the Beagle Channel dispute<sup>70</sup> led to an escalation that was barely contained before the break of a war. The military action planned by Argentina, code name “Operación Soberanía” or Operation Sovereignty, shows relevant aspects of the way the

<sup>69</sup> Since the Spanish empire had never taken control over Patagonia, which represents roughly half of the mutual border, the principle of *uti possidetis juri* used throughout Latin America (Kacowicz 2005a, 2) was of little use. Due to lack of knowledge about the geography and hydrography of the Southern Andes, the 1881 bilateral treaty established two criteria to demarcate the border under the mistaken assumption that they would always coincide: the principle of “highest summits”, and the separation of the hydrographic basins (rivers flowing to the Pacific Ocean, for Chile, and rivers flowing towards the Atlantic Ocean, for Argentina) (Escudé and Cisneros 1998a Ch. 34). The failure to agree on which of the two took precedent led to over a century of unresolved border controversies ended only in the 1990s.

<sup>70</sup> An Arbitral tribunal headed by Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom proposed a solution to the conflict in 1977 ([http://legal.un.org/riaa/cases/vol\\_XXI/53-264.pdf](http://legal.un.org/riaa/cases/vol_XXI/53-264.pdf)). The arbitral laud was immediately accepted by Chile, but Argentina rejected it arguing that it ruled on matters not submitted to arbitration.

country understood the Chilean geopolitical position, but also its awareness and concern over the checkerboard alliance it held with Brazil (Villar Gertner 2016). As the map below shows, the Argentine plan to seize the disputed islands took advantage of the lack of geostrategic depth that the Chilean geography imposed (see Chapter 6, page 226), but was also concerned with the possibility of a Brazilian retaliation in defence of the Chilean interests due to the crossed-alliances system in place.

Core features of the pre-1983 Strategic Culture of the country decoded the regional environment in extremely negative terms, . More importantly, though this views were radically altered from 1983 onwards, elements of the dominant cultural structure have had the ability and the tendency to outlast changes in their environment (Booth 2005), even in the presence of “cultural fault lines” disrupting all other dominant social constructions. This may help explain the relative resistance of the AMFA to the SADC initiative, in contrast with the full and open support received from the defence elites, and specifically by the defence epistemic community<sup>71</sup>. Nevertheless, it is also worth mentioning that, for all the nationalistic rhetoric, geopolitical views, and negative perceptions associated with its neighbouring countries, Argentina has not been involved in a war against Brazil since the end of the Argentine-Brazilian War, in 1828<sup>72</sup>; and never actually fought Chile. This seems to imply that the negative perceptions of the regional environment fostered by defence elites did not necessarily seek to increase the degree of

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<sup>71</sup> In April 2010, for example, academics and practitioners of the defence epistemic community signed a document to be sent to the Minister of Defence of Ecuador (*Pro Tempore* president of the SADC), Javier Ponce Ceballos. In it, they reiterated their full support for the organization, and proposed a series of steps that should be taken for it to achieve its full potential, including the creation of a permanent representative of the SADC; extending the engagement bureaucratic actors of member states had; and fully institutionalizing the CEED. (Comunidad Académica, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Brazilian forces participated in the conflict supporting the provinces against Buenos Aires, which is known to Brazilian historians as the “Platine War” while Argentina sees it as a domestic conflict.

activism in the country's Strategic Norms, which remained fairly low throughout its history, but rather reassert Argentina's own identity by othering its neighbours.

*Regional governance, norms and status*

In spite of the prevalence of negative perceptions of the region, Argentina also consistently invested itself in the construction of different forms of governance and in the development of norms<sup>73</sup> (Deciancio 2008), mostly seeking to build a regional normative framework that reinforced the principle of equality among states (crucial to defend its claim to equal standing with regard to European powers). This also reflects the country's efforts to be seen as a regional leader, acquire the international status associated with being a rule-maker, and stabilize an immediate security environment perceived as threatening (Tavares 2014, 87–88). Juan Pablo Scarfi explains how this effort was not exclusively driven by state institutions, but also by political and academic figures like Vicente Quesada, Roque Saenz Peña and Manuel Ugarte, who fostered the creation of stronger Latin-Americanist ties against the expansionist strategies of the United States (Scarfi 2014, 97). The trajectory of Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas<sup>74</sup> provides another excellent example of the leading role the country and its political elite sought to play in the stabilization of the region in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only balancing against its neighbouring rivals, but also advancing the development of international

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<sup>73</sup> A good example being the Drago doctrine (1907), advanced in 1902 by Argentine jurist Luis María Drago as a response to military actions started by England, Germany and Italy against Venezuela to collect unpaid debts. This doctrine became part of the corpus of Latin American International Law, and was eventually incorporated into the principles of International Law in the Second Hague Convention by US jurist Horace Porter (Vagts 2006, 772).

<sup>74</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs (1932-1938) and President of the Assembly of the League of Nations (1936-1937). Saavedra Lamas successfully advanced the Anti-War Treaty of Non-Aggression and Conciliation, reinforcing the normative and legal framework that sustained the regional institution of peaceful resolution of conflicts. He also mediated the Bolivian-Paraguayan conflict, helping end to the Chaco War (1932-1935).

norms to soft balance against interventionist attempts of the US (Friedman and Long 2015, 135). Even if attenuated by the decline experienced in the last decades, this agenda continues to drive the Argentine behaviour in many aspects, and was part of the rationale behind the active role adopted during the SADC negotiations (Flemes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 116–17).

Argentina's expectation to play an ordering role in the region can also be seen in the attempts to institutionalize the ABC group (Argentina, Brazil and Chile), which momentarily put a halt to the tensions between the three regional powers. The potential influence on South American security dynamics of such regional governance arrangement are undeniable, as seen in the region-wide impact of the successful rapprochement of the 1980s and 1990s. But, though the project did originally gain some traction (Palmer 1997, 109; Small 2009), the three countries ultimately had overlapping and contradictory expectations about it, which created major obstacles to the consolidation of a more stable alliance (Garay Vera 2012, 49). The geopolitical views discussed above also put a limit to any attempts to institutionalize security governance mechanisms, as seen in the suspicions of Brazilian imperialism raised among Argentine elites by the proposal to create a "Zone of Peace" in the South Atlantic (Rogerio Gonsalves 1999, 58–59).

Nevertheless, a consistent commitment to norms of non-intervention, peaceful resolution of controversies, and neutrality can be observed in the Argentine case (Alcañiz 2013, 258), both due to a strong commitment with a legalistic approach to international politics and to a vested interest in reasserting the principle of equality among nations. This would explain the country's consistent preference for Strategic Norms showing a low

degree of (international) activism in the use of force despite the already discussed geopolitical rivalries and regional threat perception.

The firm adherence to neutrality is of particular relevance in the analysis of Argentina's Strategic Culture, since it represents the lowest possible degree of activism in Meyer's model of scalable norms. Indeed, for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Argentina sought to remain outside of all major international conflicts, arguing that it was not in its interest to engage in the struggle for power among extra-regional actors. This was the case during both World Wars<sup>75</sup>; the Cold War, when the country flirted with the Non-Aligned Movement without really committing to it (Serrat 1991); and, in the minimal commitment shown to UN-sanctioned Peacekeeping Operations in the 1945-1991 period, despite the country's efforts to be elected as temporary member of the UNSC (Norden 1995, 331-33).

Having developed a Strategic Culture centred on the principles of neutrality and non-intervention, the domestic threshold of authorization for the use of force was high. The country refrained from using its military apparatus in international conflicts between the end of the Triple Alliance War (1864-1870) and the Malvinas/Falklands War (1982). Even in the context of widespread military rule across the region and after a decade-long arms race between the early-1960s and the mid-1970s (Frederiksen and Looney 1989; Selcher 1985), the sustained Argentine decline *vis a vis* Brazil led to no armed conflict, contrary to the expectations of Power Transition Theory (Organski 1968). This low degree of activism also explains why the military Junta had to organize media campaigns throughout 1978 to justify the escalation of hostilities with Chile (Passarelli 1998), despite the already dominating negative view of the neighbouring country among the general population. Moreover, the take-over by the Argentine Armed Forces of the Malvinas/Falklands

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<sup>75</sup> The war declaration against the Axis powers only came at the eleventh hour, when their defeat was unavoidable.

Islands was done in secret and securing that there were no casualties on the British side, following the unfounded expectation that under those conditions the UK could accept a peaceful resolution to the conflict and avoid a military confrontation.

*The domestic enemy: Counter-insurgency and high internal activism*

Ever since the military seized power from President Hipólito Yrigoyen's government (1916-1922; 1928-1930), the Armed Forces have been involved in six *coups* against democratically elected presidents (1930-1932; 1943-1946; 1955-1958; 1962-1963; 1966-1973; 1976-1983). This marked an evident politicization of the Armed Forces, who had previously resented being used as security-enforcing forces in domestic affairs, but were starting to see themselves as "legal guardians of the political system" (Mani 2015, 3). As a result, "Between 1930 and 1989, no elected government completed its term without some sort of intervention [...]. Civilian control over the military was, for much of this time, problematic [...]" (Diamint and Watson 1996, 1).

Not only did the politicization of the Armed Forces increase in this period, but their willingness to face contestation with the use of military force also grew exponentially. The first open and sizeable example of an increased degree of activism in the use of force for domestic purposes can be seen in the June, 1955, military rebellion against President Juan D. Perón, when elements of the Air Force, the Naval Aviation, and the Naval Infantry attacked various targets across the country (both military and civilian) killing at least 308 people and injuring over 700 (Portugheis 2015).

This trend became particularly dominant since the 1950s onwards, when French counter-insurgency doctrines became a popular topic of debate among military circles, and peaked in the 1960s-1970s thanks to the training in military counter-insurgency

strategies provided by US institutions (the School of the Americas and the Inter-American Defence College) following the 1959 Cuban revolution (Dodds 2000; Pion-Berlin 1989b, 99). However, unlike the intra-elite disputes that triggered the 1955 attacks, the military activism of the following decades used increasing amounts of force against social and political groups vaguely branded as “communists” or “subversives”, presented as threats to the elites’ Western, Christian self-perception (Diamint and Watson 1996; Loveman 1999). In the words of Klaus Dodds, “Armed with the doctrine of national security and the organic metaphor of the state, military figures employed geopolitical discourses to geographically locate these dangers and thereafter to ‘purify’ these contaminated spaces.” (Dodds 2000). Though there are no exact figures of the number of people murdered, tortured, or “disappeared” by the Armed Forces and its para-military *Grupos de Tareas* during the 1976-1983 dictatorship, the numbers are well within the thousands, with Human Rights organizations and family members of the victims estimating it close to the symbolically-adopted number of 30,000.

The above comes to inform the notion that the Argentine Strategic Culture had a low degree of activism in the use of force. Though the Armed Forces consistently avoided inter-state military confrontations for over a century, the use of military force to establish domestic “order” became not only common but also indiscriminate. Meyer’s scalable norms are less effective in appraising this type phenomena, particularly so with regards to the threshold of legitimization and the accepted goals for the use of force, given the dictatorial nature of the regimes and the secrecy surrounding the majority of the actions undertaken. However, it is important to highlight that the Armed Forces were by no means alone in their quest to rid the country of “political extremism”, since due to the bureaucratic-authoritarian nature of the regime they counted with the support of civilian

actors, including sectors of the conservative political, economic and religious elites; bureaucratic actors; and even sectors of the general population (G. O'Donnell 1978, 6–9).

The above discussions sought to highlight key inconsistencies, continuities and contradictions in the Argentine foreign and defence policies pre-1983, used as proxies to tap into some of the central normative features that shaped the country's Strategic Culture for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All planning for the defence sector in this period saw both the international and the domestic (particularly since the incorporation of French doctrines, in the 1950s) as potential threat sources. This meant that, while acquisitions of military hardware were made with an inter-state war in mind, the AMoD devoted a large part of its operational budget to domestic intelligence and security (Sibilla 2010, 26–27).

However, the last military dictatorship constituted such a traumatic event for the Argentine society that it ostensibly affected the Argentine Strategic Culture in the long run. This was not because its policies necessarily broke with previous tendencies, but rather due to the reactions they elicited once democratic rule was restored, opening a window of opportunity for the post-1983 democratic governments to redefine some of the key normative commitments at the core of Argentina's Strategic Culture.

### Evolution of the Argentine Strategic Culture since 1983

This sub-section engages with the Strategic Culture developed in Argentina since the re-democratization process started, in 1983. Its goal is to analyse different elements that allow tapping into the key characteristics of the Strategic Norms informing Argentina's agenda in the SADC negotiations. Specifically, I seek to distil the essential normative

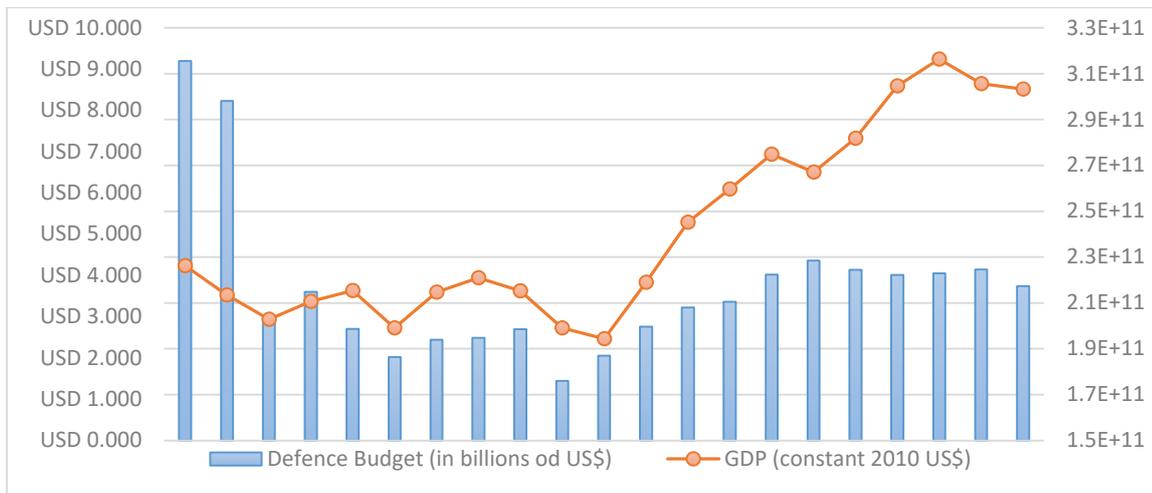
commitments that make up this country's Strategic Culture from the narratives identified in interviews and the domestic legal framework.

### *The Defence sector after the transition*

Coming out of the dictatorship, the Armed Forces only managed to impose a weak self-armistice law that was speedily repealed by the National Congress in the first months of President Raul Alfonsín's administration (1983-1989). Aided by the strong activism of different third-sector organizations that pressured domestically and internationally for the implementation of truth and justice measures (González-Ocantos 2016, 71-74), the Alfonsín administration and other political elites imposed penalty measures to the Armed Forces, including a dramatic cut to the defence budget; a reduction to the number of conscripts; and, a de-centralization of military dependencies and institutes (Tedesco 1996, 25). This was done to make sure that any remaining political leverage in the hands of the "military party" was taken from its power.

There was continuity in this measures. The weight of the defence budget on the annual GDP was reduced by almost two thirds in barely ten years, going from 4.4%, in 1980, to 1.45%, in 1990, and was maintained at 1.56%-1.24% for at least another decade (Scheetz 2002, 63). Though there have been minor increases in the total amounts allocated, they are largely related to peaks in the national GDP and not to a re-definition of the approach to the issue. Moreover, in the wake of one of the country's most devastating political and economic crisis, all post-2002 governments have given primacy to securing funding for welfare policies, thus relegating any budgetary needs of the Armed Forces (Escudé 2010).

*Graph 3. Evolution of the Argentine Defence budget and national GDP (1980-2000). In constant 2010 US\$ billion*



Source: Based on data obtained from (Scheetz 2002) and the World Bank

### *Political context and goals for the defence sector post-1983*

The main concerns Argentina had with regards to its defence sector in the aftermath of the dictatorship were related to: the re-definition of the role and doctrine of the Armed Forces in a democratic context; disarticulating any remainders of the “military party”; and, establishing a strong civilian/political control over the process of defence planning (Battaglini 2013b; Diamint 2013; Martínez 2002; Sibilla 2010).

With this agenda in mind, the renewal of the Argentine Strategic Culture post-1983 responds to a series of political and contextual conditions. On the one hand, the surfacing evidence of blatant Human Rights violations, the defeat in an unnecessary war, and a poor economic performance meant that the loss of social prestige<sup>76</sup> of the Armed Forces gave

<sup>76</sup> A survey conducted by Ruth Fuchs in 2002 shows that, even twenty years after the end of the dictatorship, only 30% of the political elites trusted the Armed Forces (Fuchs 2005). Moreover, a 2005 survey also shows that the approval ratings of the military among the general public remained as low as 21% (Diamint 2008, 95).

the government the mandate to revamp the whole defence sector and the Strategic Norms (Escudé and Fontana 1998; Fuchs 2005; Tavares 2014; Tello 2008). Though remainders of the “military party” eventually managed to leverage President Alfonsín’s administration<sup>77</sup> by staging uprisings, the generalized support for the democratically elected government prevented this from escalating into a *coup d’État*.

In this context, a growing number of lawmakers, academics, jurists and experts in the area came together to form what Marina Vitelli (Vitelli 2015a) identifies as a novel epistemic community around the defence sector. The influence of such communities on threat perceptions and defence policies has been widely discussed (Adler 1992; Haas 1992; Howorth 2004; Sebenius 1992), and the institutional role given to them in Latin America has been proven to be increasingly relevant (Weiffen et al. 2011, 404). Among the more salient names in the first generation of academics and political aids with expertise in the defence sector include Luis Tibiletti, Rut Diamint, José Manuel Ugarte, Marcela Donadio, Ernesto López, Héctor Luis Saint-Pierre (based in Brazil), Gustavo Adolfo Druetta, and Ángel Tello, just to name a few. In institutional terms, *SER en el 2000*, and later RESDAL, helped congregate a wide variety of individuals involved in the debates regarding the re-creation of the Armed Forces and their social role in democracy (Vitelli 2015c, 77–79). The high level of internationalization of this epistemic community and its fluid relations with similar communities in Chile, Brazil, and the US meant that these academics and expert advisors were significantly more open to support the adoption of a cooperative defence agenda than previous generations ever were.

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<sup>77</sup> President Alfonsín advocated for two armistice laws as a way to secure governability in a context of economic crisis and social instability (Tedesco 1996): The “Due Obedience law” (Law 23.521), exonerated mid- and low-rank personnel of Human Rights violations, considering that they were following orders; and, the “Full Stop law” (Law 23.492), limiting the scope of time within which new cases could be brought to justice. Both laws were repealed by the National Congress in 2003, and the Supreme Court declared them unconstitutional in 2005 (Lessa and Levey 2015).

Vitelli has looked at the influence that the Argentine defence epistemic community has had on the development of the country's defence and foreign policies, concluding that it was with them that the idea of creating a South American organization devoted to policy coordination and cooperation in the area of defence first emerged (Vitelli 2015b, 51–53). Moreover, in the interviews conducted in Buenos Aires, both Luis Tibiletti and Jorge Battaglino agreed in that this group of experts had not only influenced the decision of the government to join the SADC negotiations, but also informed the negotiation agenda more broadly by presenting letters of support, organizing workshops on the topic, and thanks to its institutional presence among the expert advisors of the AMoD. This is something that can also be confirmed by looking at the composition of the Argentine negotiating team, which did not include any member of the Armed Forces and was instead integrated by civil expert advisors with relevant academic backgrounds on the field.

On the other hand, the Alfonsín administration not only had the political priority of reducing the ability of the military to influence foreign and defence policy decisions (Norden and Russell 2002, 50; Tavares 2014), but also inherited a situation of incipient rapprochement with Brazil<sup>78</sup> (Escudé and Cisneros 1998b, Chap. 68). The foreign and defence policies of the Alfonsín administration combined elements of both continuity and change to maximize the impact of these processes. Though it sought to reassert the Western condition of the country and its culture, it rejected taking sides in the confrontation between superpowers; returned to the Non-Aligned Movement; gave

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<sup>78</sup> As would be expected, General Guglielmelli reacted negatively to the Corpus-Itaipú agreement that facilitated this rapprochement, publishing an op-ed in the journal *Estrategia* (Issue 61/62, pp. 7-29) entitled "*Corpus-Itaipú. Tres batallas perdidas por la Argentina y, ahora peligrosas perspectivas: el papel de socio menor del Brasil*" (Corpus-Itaipú. Three lost battles for Argentina and, now, dangerous perspectives: The role of being Brazil's smaller partner). However, the Junta under Jorge Rafael Videla's leadership favoured the rapprochement process.

priority to regional cooperation (participating in the creation of regional governance and policy coordination groupings such as the Contadora Support Group, the Cartagena Consensus, the Rio Group); and, signed a number of economic integration agreements with Brazil (Escudé and Cisneros 1998b; Oelsner 2005b). The norm of peaceful resolution of controversies also regained strength, a good example being the decision to submit the arbitration laud on the Beagle Channel controversy with Chile to a referendum, given the lack of political support from the opposition in the National Congress. This not only had the goal of starting a process of desecuritization in the relationship with Chile, but also sought to limit the ability of the military to influence future foreign policy decisions (Norden and Russell 2002, 59–60; Tavares 2014).

Some of these measures continued with subsequent governments. For example, President Carlos Menem (1989-1995; 1995-1999) actively raised the stakes for regional integration, participating in the creation of the MERCOSUR with his Brazilian, Paraguayan, and Uruguayan counterparts. He also continued desecuritizing the bilateral relations with Chile, with whom Argentina currently shares its longest-lasting and more fruitful defence cooperation scheme. As will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs, the Menem administration expressed its interest in institutionalizing (sub)regional defence cooperation in repeated occasions. In addition, to these measures, the Armed Forces were further stripped of role and power after conscript Omar Carrasco was murdered during a rotation at the Zapala military base, in 1994. The political repercussions of this case led to the Congress repealing the conscription system altogether.

If judged in terms of the political and social influence of the more interventionist sectors of Armed Forces and old defence elites, these measures seem to have worked. The

Argentine democracy has become more established and the military has not threatened the continuity of nor the transition between democratically elected governments. However, as Jorge Battaglino argues, the reforms have also led to a substantial reduction of the military's mobilization capabilities, constituting a pyrrhic victory at best, practically decimating the Armed Forces in the long term and hindering their ability to fulfil their most basic tasks (Battaglino 2013b, 267).

Finally, the construction of strong cooperative partnerships got the defence policy in line with the requirements of the foreign policy (Battaglino 2013b; Martínez 2002; Sain 1999). In the context of the immediate post-Cold War order, President Menem's foreign policy priorities were centred on the consolidation of trade regionalism in the form of MERCOSUR, on the one hand, and with the establishment of a preferential relationship with the US, on the other. The country received a "Major Non-NATO ally" status from the Department of State after sending a naval force to collaborate in the Desert Storm/Desert Shield operations. After this, participating in Peacekeeping operations became one of the most salient "power projection" policies adopted during the Menem administration (Huser 1998, 57–60). This was not only in line with the interests of the US (as commentators hurried to point out), but also provided the Armed Forces with a new purpose. Also, the UN covered a number of operative expenses incurred by the countries involved, which meant that the military got the chance to mobilize and provide operational experience to its units at relatively low cost, which was by no means a minor detail in a context of budgetary restriction (Neves 1994).

In addition to all the above, the political and economic crisis that shook Argentina in 2001 led almost immediately to the securitization of the systemic level, in the sense that the society and sectors of the political elites came to perceive the US and the IMF as key threats to the country's interests (Simonoff 2015, 6–7). Given the presence of a number of left-of-centre governments with autonomist agendas in power throughout the region<sup>79</sup>, the Argentine government felt comfortable adopting a Latin-Americanist discourse, expected to produce higher levels of solidarity and shared interests with regional partners. This process created further incentives for regional cooperation, reinforcing the already existing Strategic Norms on the matter. Hence, South America became a refuge during the Kirchner (2003-2007) and Fernández (2007-2011; 2011-2015) administrations, which meant that the balance between “autonomist”<sup>80</sup> and “dependentist”<sup>81</sup> sectors of the local defence elites (Simonoff 2008, 27) accentuated its turn in favour of the former.

*Crafting a new Strategic Culture: Legislation, meanings and normative commitments*

The 1976-1983 dictatorship represented an *impasse* in the common state of affairs, breaking with normative commitments such as the principle of peaceful resolution of conflicts and low degree of international military activism. However, the social discredit of the Armed Forces allowed subsequent democratic governments to seek one of the most

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<sup>79</sup> Alternatively referred to as the “Pink Tide” (Moraña 2008) or “Latin American turn to the left” (Beasley-Murray, Cameron, and Hershberg 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011).

<sup>80</sup> Members of the foreign policy elites and academics who privilege relations with the Latin American region and other peripheral countries with the objectives of maximizing the country's ability to define an autonomous foreign policy agenda and minimizing the constraints resulting from the asymmetrical relations with bigger partners.

<sup>81</sup> Members of the foreign policy elites and academics who seek to establish preferential relationships with bigger powers with the goal of securing higher gains as a result and perhaps even some influence in relevant negotiations tables, even if this requires falling into a bandwagoning strategy.

far-reaching institutional, doctrinal and political transformations of the defence sector in the region (Diamint 2008; Mani 2015). One of the often overseen effects that the military uprisings of the 1980s had over the political system was to facilitate the negotiations at the National Congress to reach a basic consensus about the new National Defence Law, turning it into the epicentre of the conceptual and political discussions about the new Strategic Culture (Follietti 2005; Laleff Ilieff 2012). The resulting body of legislation has been in continuous development and evolution, and currently includes:

- National Defence Law – Law N° 23.554 (1988);
- Domestic Security Law - Law N° 24.059 (1992);
- Armed Forces Restructuration Law – Law N° 24.948 (1998);
- National Intelligence Law - Law N° 25.520 (2001);
- National Defence Law Regulatory Decree – Decree N°727 (2006); and,
- Repeal of the Military Justice Code – Law No°26.394 (2008)

The 1988 National Defence Law established key conceptual, political, normative, and institutional definitions that would become the cornerstone of the defence sector in democracy (Sibilla 2010). It imposes strict limits to the participation of the Armed Forces in domestic affairs, built on a rigid conceptual and legal differentiation between “security” and “defence”<sup>82</sup> (Congreso de la Nación Argentina 1988 Art. 4), thus producing a clear break with the principles of the *National Security Doctrine* incorporated into the previous

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<sup>82</sup> Understanding the latter as the only area of competence for the Armed Forces, defined as the creation of a deterrence to aggressive behaviour by other states (Frenkel and Comini 2017). This distinction at the domestic level may become confusing when engaging with matters of regional or international security, since the mechanisms for cooperation in the Defence sector (understood as protection against external aggression) that the SADC put in place are, when seen from a structural IR perspective, contributing factors to the governance of regional security. Whether the text is referring to domestic or regional/international security should become apparent in the context of the sentence, however I will seek to make this evident when pertinent.

National Defence Law to legitimize the intervention of the Armed Forces in domestic affairs (Congreso de la Nación Argentina 1966).

In order to avoid ambiguities and further reduce the size of the Armed Forces, the *Gendarmería Nacional Argentina* and the *Prefectura Naval Argentina*<sup>83</sup> were taken away from the aegis of the Army and the Navy, respectively, placing them under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Domestic Security (Congreso de la Nación Argentina 1988 Art. 7). Moreover, congressional and social consensus supporting the clear distinction between domestic security and defence was strong enough as to block all attempts to incorporate the “new threats”<sup>84</sup> agenda to the military doctrine despite repeated attempts in that sense by President Menem, high-ranking military officers, and US diplomats (Sain 2001, 14–28).

This would become a crucial aspect in the SADC negotiating agenda, not only because of the domestic legal requirements to separate the two areas, but more importantly due to how this differentiation has been incorporated into the Argentine post-1983 culture, acting as a meaning-making concept that has heavily influenced policy preferences.

The National Defence Law also states that the Armed Forces can address any threats to the country using their means “in dissuasive and in effective” ways (Congreso de la Nación Argentina 1988 Art. 2). Unlike Chile, dissuasion is understood here in its most traditional

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<sup>83</sup> Two “intermediate” forces with capabilities, training and doctrines that allow them to participate both in defence and security activities (Battaglini 2013b, 267). While the *Gendarmería* was inspired in the French *Gendarmerie Nationale* and is tasked with handling law enforcement in areas such as borders and national roads, the *Prefectura* is a body similar to the US Coast Guard but tasked with law enforcement, patrolling, and support only in Argentine territorial waters.

<sup>84</sup> Though this concept had years in the making, it was forcefully advanced by the US to Latin American countries during the First Conference of Ministers of Defence of the Americas, held in Williamsburg, in 1995. Under this umbrella term, challenges of transnational nature such as terrorism, drug traffic, and uncontrolled migration would fall under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces, militarizing the approach to them.

meaning, i.e. the accumulation and implementation of sufficient resources that an aggression would be too costly (Kugler 2002, 1). This is in line with the defensive military doctrine that has characterized Argentina since 1870, rooted in the commitment to the principle of peaceful resolution of conflicts, but is however in conflict with the meagre budgetary allocation that the Armed Forces currently receive.

Strategic norms concerning the goals and ways of using military force recovered a low degree of domestic activism unseen since the 1930s, while the norms that define and shape the preferred forms of cooperation suffered significant alterations. One of the key argument of this section is, precisely, that the changes suffered by the latter are essential to understand the seemingly paradoxical increase in the degree of international activism in Argentina's current Strategic Culture.

A brief clarification is necessary before continuing. As explained in the conceptual chapter, Meyer's definition of activism focuses exclusively on the use of military force, which I find unnecessarily limiting. The high degree of international activism to which I make reference here also includes the willingness to engage in cooperative security initiatives and to deploy the military in Peacekeeping Operations.

There is a widespread consensus among the members of the defence elite interviewed in Buenos Aires regarding the stability and absence of threats to Argentine interests coming from the regional security environment. The redefinition of the Strategic Norms related to preferred forms of cooperation is largely understood and explained under this light, and seen as the result of a slow and incremental social learning process that has shaped the meaning given to increasingly complex and intrusive defence coordination initiatives (interviews with Battaglino; Comini; Rodríguez; Tibiletti). It is interesting to see that the dominating narrative among members of defence elites places Argentina at

the very centre of the initiative, treating the SADC almost as an expansion of Southern Cone security dynamics to the rest of the region. Moreover, since it emphasizes the “leading” role exercised during the 1990s proposing similar initiatives (which will be discussed in detail further down), this narrative seems to imply that Argentina is as responsible for the SADC initiative as Brazil.

One of the forms of international cooperation favoured by the legislative framework is related to the participation of the country in UN-sanctioned Peacekeeping Operations. The AMoD identifies this as one of the cornerstones of Argentina’s defence and foreign policies, and as one of the central elements of the country’s current Strategic Culture (Ministerio de Defensa de la República Argentina 2008, 8). President Menem’s decision to incorporate the participation in UN Peacekeeping missions onto the key functions of the Armed Forces (Congreso de la Nación Argentina 1998) succeeded in boosting the country’s international image, linking the defence sector with international cooperation initiatives, and redefining the country’s Strategic Culture. For the Armed Forces, participating in high-profile, UN-sanctioned, multilateral activities insinuated that their public image could start to recover and that their role in a democratic society was starting to take shape (Hirst 2007, 4). By June 1995, Argentina had created the CAECOPAZ, the first centre in the region specifically conceived to train troops to participate in this type of multilateral operations (Castro n.d., 58), and by 2004 it was coordinating with Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (among others) their participation in the first UN Peacekeeping mission manned almost entirely by South American countries, the MINUSTAH.

However, the incorporation of this cooperative element to the Argentine Strategic Culture challenged the long-held commitment of the country with the principle of non-intervention, creating contention from sectors that saw Peacekeeping Operations as new

ways of legitimized intervention, particularly so in the case of the MINUSTAH (Escudé and Fontana 1998; Follietti 2005; Llenderrozas 2006). Sectors of the Argentine academia argued against participating in the MINUSTAH, based precisely on the understanding that there was a real risk of it turning into an international intervention (Hirst 2007). Given that the legal framework gave the National Congress the responsibility to make decisions about the movement of troops to other countries, the debate that took place in its chambers reaffirmed the essential role of the legislative body in defining the central commitments and norms that made up the country's Strategic Culture (Follietti 2005).

Despite some problems faced by the MINUSTAH, the participation of the country in Peacekeeping Operations has become such a central aspect of the role of the Armed Forces in democracy that very few members of the defence epistemic community would currently question its worth, and no voices were raised against the decision to create the binational Peacekeeping Forces "Cruz del Sur" with Chile, put at disposition of the United Nations since 2011 for deployment in its Peacekeeping Operations under the UNSAS.

The other form of cooperation favoured by the legislative framework is the participation in cooperative security efforts. The post-1983 period saw an expansion of increasingly intrusive cooperation schemes of this type with former rivals, also rising the degree of activism. The already mentioned 1979 Corpus-Itaipú agreement and the well-known 1985 Iguazú Declaration constitute the first steps in the trust-building process between Argentina and Brazil. In 1986, the two countries signed a protocol agreeing to exchange information on each other's nuclear programmes and assist each other should a nuclear accident take place in either country. The bilateral nuclear cooperation, with all its strategic and mutual confidence implications (Mallea, Spektor, and Wheeler 2015),

eventually grew into the creation ABACC, one of the foremost examples of cooperation and policy coordination in the region (Brigagao and Valle Fonrouge 1999; Gardini 2010, 97; Oelsner 2005a, 16; Tokatlian 2013).

In more concrete military terms, Argentine and Brazilian defence elites established the Annual Symposium of Strategic Studies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1987. Other South American countries joined the initiative in subsequent years, turning it into the first regular meeting between high-ranking military officers (and civilian experts) of all Southern Cone countries, which had the effect of increasing mutual confidence, reducing information costs, discussing issues of mutual interest on regional security and defence, and discussing potential collaborative efforts (Vitelli 2015a, 14–15).

The 1997 MoU<sup>85</sup> also remains crucial for the arguments presented in this chapter, since this was the first instance in which the respective MoDs became permanently entangled, establishing a Permanent Mechanism of Consultation and Coordination, with a subsidiary Permanent Mechanism of Strategic Analysis. In direct response to the increasing degrees of mutual trust, Brazil withdrew all its battalions stationed in the vicinity of the border with Argentina in July 1997 (Sain 1999, 136).

With regards to Chile, the 1995 MoU<sup>86</sup> became one of the cornerstones of the bilateral relation, together with the more renowned 1984 “Peace and Friendship Treaty” and the 1991 “Presidential Declaration on the Borders between the Argentine Republic and the Republic of Chile”. These agreements provided the context to deactivate controversies and sources of distrust. The MoU formalized a protocol for the exchange of information related to military manoeuvres, and promoted academic efforts to strengthen

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<sup>85</sup> “Memorandum de Entendimiento de Consulta y Coordinación”, 22nd Apr. 1997.

<sup>86</sup> “Memorandum de Entendimiento para el Fortalecimiento de la Cooperación en Materias de Seguridad de Interés Mutuo”, 8th Nov. 1995

cooperation. More importantly, it created the joint Permanent Security Committee (COMPERSEG), crucial in fostering a stronger cooperation in defence and security (Claudio Fuentes and Alvarez 2011, 528–29; Rojas Aravena 2008, 40–42; Runza 2004).

The COMPERSEG was instrumental in the inception of the first ever joint military exercise between the two countries, in August 1998 (Sain 1999, 135–36), and in the advancement of the most ambitious series of bilateral mutual confidence measures put in place in the region to date (Battaglino 2012, 89; Lt.Col. Arancibia-Clavel 2007), including the development of a control mechanism for military expenditures<sup>87</sup>. In 1997, Argentina invited Chilean officers to join its peacekeeping forces during their tour in Cyprus, providing specialized training for them at CAECOPAZ (Huser 1998, 67). It could be argued that, while unsuspected at the time, this invitation was the embryo for the Binational Peacekeeping Force “Cruz del Sur”, put at disposition of the UN in 2011, and suggested as a possible model for a regional peacekeeping force (Ugarte 2014, 540).

Finally, local defence elites see the different Argentine proposals of the 1990s to create a regional defence organization as one of the main antecedents to the SADC. Reports of calls by Argentina to form a South American / Southern Cone defence coordination organization can be found since the early-1990s (Hirst and Russell 2001; Tavares 2014; Tibiletti 2014, 18), but there is no evidence that any proposal was ever seriously considered by Brazilian authorities. The first record of any high-ranking Argentine official publicly discussing this took place in 1996, when Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrés Cisneros maintained that the creation of an Argentine-Brazilian military force with a joint

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<sup>87</sup> The design of this instrument was commissioned to the ECLAC, and is the base on which the region-wide military expenditures comparison programme conducted by the CEED is built (Interview with Forti).

command was a concrete possibility (Escudé and Fontana 1998). Later, during the 1997 Annual Camaraderie Dinner, President Menem told members of his cabinet, high-ranking officers of the Armed Forces, and lawmakers that the creation of a regional defence organization was among his goals. Despite not explaining in detail what the characteristics of such organization would be, nor if negotiations with Brazil or Chile were already underway, President Menem claimed that advances were being made to create a “regional defence system” within MERCOSUR (Nación 1997). Later reports on the issue maintained that discreet bilateral meetings were to be held between Argentine and Brazilian officials that same month (O’Donnell 1997), but no official declarations nor journalistic articles followed up on this information.

An entire year passed before the topic was brought back to the public sphere, again by Argentina, during the XI Strategic Studies Symposium held in Buenos Aires on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1998. Argentine Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Carlos Zabala, proposed advancing towards the creation of regional defence policy coordination organization. This proposal was based on the perception that each member state had vulnerabilities that endangered the group as a whole and that should be addressed collectively (Castro Olivera 1998). But, yet again, no official response was made public by the other states. This shows that the Argentine interest in institutionalizing this type of relationship was as consistent as the lack of interest in it from its regional partners (Escudé and Fontana 1998).

According to Luis Tibiletti, the initiative was indeed an honest proposal on the Argentine side, but it failed to move forward due to the “lack of enthusiasm” on the Brazilian side (Interview with Tibiletti). Jorge Battaglino goes beyond that, suggesting that despite the successful bilateral rapprochement and cooperation, Brazilian defence

elites had not yet fully gotten rid of suspicions about the intentions behind their former rival's actions (interview with Battaglino).

In terms of the country's Strategic Culture, the initiative shows the full extent of the changes undergone in the years after the democratic transition. In an attempt to exorcize its traumatic past, punish the Armed Forces, and create a defence policy for the newly established democracy, Argentina went ahead with a deep revision of its Strategic Norms related to the preferred modes of cooperation. A low level of activism in terms of the legitimate goals for and ways to use military force internationally regained its traditional position in the Argentine Strategic Culture after 1983, while policy coordination experiences with regional partners and an international identity shaped by the participation in Peacekeeping Operations meant that Argentina altered its preferred forms of cooperation by lowering the domestic authorization threshold for this type of initiatives. Furthermore, the defence policy has been re-designed in such way that international cooperation activities are now at the centre of the country's Strategic Culture, providing a new meaning and purpose to the military and the defence policy.

In addition to these legal and normative framework, Alejandro Frenkel and Nicolás Comini (2017, 10–14) provide a detailed analysis of further restrictions to the Argentine position regarding the SADC emanating from a "polygamous" international insertion strategy and the country's dependence on extra-regional defence suppliers. Having now a better understanding of the cultural, normative, material, and institutional context with which Argentina faced the proposal by Brazil to create the SADC, it is possible to interpret how the decision was finally made, as well as the country's negotiating agenda.

## **The Argentine position in the SADC negotiations**

The developments discussed above should provide relevant insights into the way Argentina re-defined the role of its Armed Forces, the way it has come to think about defence matters, and ultimately about the characteristics of its Strategic Culture. The reasons behind Argentina's adoption of a more active cooperative agenda, deactivating old rivalries, and demilitarizing security dynamics are multiple and cannot be simply reduced to controlling the military. The characteristics of the "New World Order" in the immediate post-Cold War era, a receptive regional security environment, a learning process facilitating coordination and cooperation with regional partners, budgetary restrictions, the need to re-define the role of the Armed Forces in democracy, and the presence of an epistemic community advocating for more intrusive regional cooperation initiatives help understand, the changes introduced to Argentina's Strategic Norms and, hence, the meanings informing its position in the SADC negotiations.

### Inter-Ministerial disagreements in the perception of South America

In the context of increasing political coincidences with other South American countries, and considering the exponential growth in the relevance of cooperative efforts as part of the country's own Strategic Culture, it would be expected that Argentina jumped on the SADC initiative without hesitating. However, the testimony of various interviewees shows that the first reaction to this initiative was not entirely positive. According to Alfredo Forti, this was due to mid- and high-ranking members of the diplomatic service, as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Taiana himself, being suspicious of the Brazilian initiative (Interview Forti). The fact that the main (and, most times, only) representative of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the SADC negotiations, Ambassador Rafael Grossi, was unavailable to be interviewed makes it difficult to have a clear idea as to why the ministry might have held such initial position. Securing an interview with former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Taiana, also proved impossible.

According to Forti, the position assumed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs might be explained due to a number of reasons:

- A persistent distrust about Brazilian intentions (a view shared by Rut Diamint);
- Resentment that Brazil was proposing a regional organization of this nature, when similar ideas presented by Argentina during the 1990s had been snubbed (a view shared by Leonardo Hekimian; Luis Tibiletti; and, Jorge Battaglino); and,
- High-ranking diplomats having undergone training in historical contexts different to the new regional environment, which allegedly would have made them more cautious of hidden agendas.

Though the desecuritization strategy was successful in deactivating the mutual rivalry, that did not necessarily mean that a culture of friendship had fully consolidated between the two states (Russell and Tokatlian 2003, 32). Moreover, one of the foremost representatives of the “old guard” in the foreign policy elites, former Argentine Ambassador to the UN and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Fernando Petrella, has claimed that Argentina’s best interest is in maintaining and strengthening hemispheric institutions like the OAS instead of committing with the South American institutional framework fostered by Brazil (Petrella 2013). His argument is that, contrary to what the “autonomist” sectors would say with regards to the OAS being an instrument of US hegemony in the region, Argentina had had an active and leading role in shaping the objectives and principles that the hemispheric institution defends. As such, his argument

continues, the OAS is better suited to defend Argentine interests and counter the Brazilian seemingly ubiquitous presence in South American politics.

Whatever the reason, the AMFA did see with suspicion the Brazilian attempt to create a South American grouping, and convinced President Fernández that the delegation sent to the first round of negotiations should not include any high-ranking members of the national administration (Interviews with Comini; Forti; Hekimian). Moreover, during this first meeting Argentina proposed inviting Mexico to join the SADC, knowing full well that the proposal would not hold<sup>88</sup>, but trying to nevertheless make evident that it preferred a Latin American arrangement rather than a South American one (Interviews with Comini; Diamint). Though no information in the archives reflects these concerns, interviews to both Argentine and Chilean negotiators show that Argentina's original stance was one of "cautious expectation", rather than ease with the proposal or even an attempt to deploy regional leadership in the negotiations (as insinuated by different interviewees).

In part, the fundamental contradictions between the AMFA and the AMoD may have been associated with the fact that the respective Ministers represented different power coalitions (Diamint 2016, 17), each with different perspectives, interests and agendas. Moreover, the Strategic Norms about the role of cooperative arrangements within the Argentine defence policy certainly had a more direct and decisive effect on the defence epistemic community than on the foreign policy sector. This may also help explain the inter-ministerial disagreement with regard to the SADC. In this sense, the role of President

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<sup>88</sup> The explicitly South American membership of UNASUR prevented the possibility of having Mexico joining the SADC. This was by design. According to José Antonio Sanahuja, the Brazilian decision to circumscribe the new organization to South America was related to two constants in its foreign policy: the quest for autonomy and regional leadership. More autonomy was to be achieved by isolating the region from the US geopolitical area, and regional leadership would be more easily accomplished by eliminating potential rivals. Both objectives were attainable with a redefinition of "the Latin American regionalism in a South American frame and narrative", taking Mexico and the US out of the picture (Sanahuja 2012, 9).

Fernández in deciding which position would guide the Argentine participation in the discussions was essential, as is usually the case in the decision-making processes of delegative democracies (G. O'Donnell 1994, 66).

### The Argentine negotiating agenda

#### *Goals and expectations of the AMoD negotiating team*

The assessment that these expert advisors made of the regional security environment led them to the conclusion that a South American defence cooperation organization was in the best interest of the country, since it aligned with its goals of de-militarizing regional security dynamics and stabilizing the security complex at no significant cost for the country (interviews with Codiani; Hekimian; Rodríguez). Moreover, it was perceived that this initiative could further work in Argentina's interests, should it be able to propagate the country's ideas, discourses, and Strategic Norms across the region. The goal was to use this South American organization to facilitate Argentine leadership in the realm of shared ideas about defence and cooperation, thus compensating for the lack of material and economic resources (interview with Comini).

The expectation of the defence elites was that, if member states of the SADC voluntarily decided to join the cooperative efforts, then the regional security dynamics could be further demilitarized without the need of investing resources to it. Such was the conviction on the positive outcomes this plan could deliver that the Office of International Affairs of the AMoD was assigned the responsibility to lead the negotiations for Argentina. This was the first instance since the return of democratic rule in which the AMoD took over from the AMFA in a multilateral negotiation of this nature, with the latter limiting its participation to providing legal advice.

According to the interviewees, the mandate given by President Fernández to the AMoD to negotiate the creation of the Defence Council was broad. It was up to the Minister to define the strategy, the agenda, and the lines the country would not cross (Interview with Forti). In turn, Minister Nilda Garré passed most of the responsibility to conduct the negotiations to Deputy Minister Forti and the team of advisors working at the Office of International Affairs. The agenda this work group put together can be directly traced back to a Strategic Culture centred on fostering more activist cooperative actions and expanding confidence-building efforts to help further demilitarize regional relations.

From the perspective adopted by the Argentine delegation, the central objectives of the SADC should be to:

- Help further desecuritize regional relations;
- Extend the stable Zone of Peace from the Southern Cone to the rest of the regional security complex;
- Multilateralize efforts to build mutual confidence measures; and,
- Enable a rapprochement process between countries whose relations still remained confrontational.

In Forti's view, institutionalizing and strengthening regional cooperation in the field of defence also allowed to secure more autonomy from extra-regional pressures. This is not to say that the creation of the SADC followed an anti-US logic, as some commentators have suggested was the case. On the contrary, the proposal by the Venezuelan delegation to include in the SADC statute an explicit condemnation to the activities conducted by the US IV Fleet in the region was vocally opposed by most delegations (including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia), which led to its immediate rejection (Grupo de Trabajo del CDS 2009, 79). Moreover, during a trip to Washington in March 2008, Brazilian Minister of Defence Nelson Jobim reassured his US counterpart, Robert Gates, that the aim of the

SADC was in no way to foster anti-US sentiments in the region (Comini 2015, 112–13). Nevertheless, the SADC proposal was certainly informed by Brazilian goal to achieve more autonomy from extra-regional actors (COHA 2008), an objective with which the “autonomist” sectors of the Argentine defence elites could certainly empathize.

The AMoD’s civilian expert advisors, all of whom are either members of or closely related to the local defence epistemic community, were the first to express interest in the project. They recall the negotiations as a relatively expedite process, in which Argentina, Brazil and Chile constituted a cluster that set the agenda and led the discussions. The relevance given in their accounts to the joint agenda advanced with Chile, as well as to the proposals made in the 1990s to create a similar organization, evidences an underlying narrative related to the status Argentina had as regional stabilizer in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. In their view, Argentina approached the negotiations expecting to demonstrate pro-activeness, a propositive agenda, and leadership abilities.

### *The negotiating agenda*

In terms of a more concrete negotiating agenda, all interviewees agreed that Argentina was aiming to reproduce at the regional level the agenda that already existed in the bilateral relationship with Chile. This required, first, that the areas in which policy coordination and cooperation were going to be introduced agreed with the conceptual distinction between defence and security, on top of which Argentina and Chile had built their respective defence policies and mutual cooperation agendas. This was accepted without major opposition, despite the Colombian delegation’s initial request to include the fight against terrorism in the statute. Once this goal was achieved, the Argentine negotiating agenda focused on:

- Mutual Confidence Measures
- Educational and research bodies
- Common doctrine
- Military industries

Firstly, in order to advance the goals of desecuritizing and demilitarizing regional relations, it was proposed that the region could adopt some of the more successful confidence-building measures that already existed between Argentina and Chile. This has been identified by interviewees in Argentina and in Chile as the main interest both countries had in the creation of the SADC, and it is precisely in this agenda that the organization worked most decisively and efficiently during its first years of existence (Consejo de Defensa Suramericano 2009, 2010; Vitelli 2016), creating a joint register of defence expenditures, disclosing military inventories, and organizing joint military exercises, among others. Moreover, though it was only informally discussed after the negotiations, the idea of creating a regional Peacekeeping force put at disposition of the UN also stems from the experience of the Argentine-Chilean Joint Force.

Secondly, the Argentine negotiators were particularly adamant in trying to advance with the creation of shared understandings regarding regional defence, particularly in the form of a regional doctrine that incorporated the Strategic Norms related to international cooperation that already informed Argentine defence policies. In order to achieve this goal, Argentina proposed the creation of two permanent bodies: the Centre of Strategic Defence Studies (CEED), working as a “think tank” from its Buenos Aires headquarters to provide basic research necessary for the development of a joint doctrine and cooperative activities; and, the South American Defence School (ESUDE), which would provide courses and academic exchange opportunities for officials from the different member countries.

Despite Brazilian objections to the creation of permanent bodies within the SADC (interviews with Battaglino; Diamint), the CEED was quickly formed, and almost immediately started producing reports on topics of interest for regional security purposes<sup>89</sup>. The Argentine commitment with the creation of this research centre becomes evident upon realization that it had been part of the AMoD's primary objectives even before the SADC initiative was even announced (Simonoff 2012, 8).

The reason why this was such a central concern for the Argentine position is twofold. On the one hand, knowing that it is in no position to exercise regional leadership on the grounds of its military or economic strength, Argentina's perception was that it had an advantage over other regional powers in terms of the conceptualization and study of the defence sector as a result of the extensive work done by the local epistemic community after the democratization (Vitelli 2015b). It expected that the CEED would lead the way in the creation of the concepts and analytical frameworks on top of which common regional positions could later be built, while the ESUDE would help disseminate them among military personnel (interview with Tibiletti). As already stated, these were not new objectives for the Argentine defence elites, with projects to create a similar research centre within the MERCOSUR being advanced since the mid-1990s (Garreta 1995).

On the other hand, the CEED was to be given the responsibility to monitor the implementation of many of the mutual confidence measures included in the SADC Action Plans, particularly those relating to transparency and sharing of information. Hence,

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<sup>89</sup> Among others, the CEED has produced the following reports and publications: *Procedimientos de aplicación para las medidas de foment de la confianza y seguridad* (2010); An official report on the distinction between security and defence issues (2011); *Informe Acerca del Crimen Organizado Transnacional y Otras Nuevas Amenazas a la Seguridad Regional* (2012); Three editions of the Joint South American Military Expenditures Record (2014, 2016, 2017); *Estudio Prospectivo: Sudamerica 2025* (2015); *Institucionalidad de la Defensa en Sudamérica* (2015); The triannual journal "Observatorio Sudamericano en Defensa", published since 2016. Available online: <http://www.ceedcds.org.ar/Espanol/05-DocInf/05-01-Docs.html>

Argentina considered that the creation of the CEED would give it the ability to secure that these measures were promptly implemented, instead of becoming dead letter. Aside from the positive impact that the CEED and the ESUDE could have by themselves by the very fact of being privileged spaces for the exchange of ideas and information, the Argentine expectation was that they would facilitate the spread of normative commitments in line with its own.

Another of Argentina's objectives, this time in line with the Brazilian position, was to enable the development of a stronger and more integrated regional military industry. Brazil had particular interest in this (interviews with Diamint; Hekimian; Tibiletti), but Argentina also reasons of its own to advance this idea, given the need to revitalize its languishing military industry with projects that could be of interest for the regional market. Also, the initiative was directly in line with the developmentalist policies advanced by the Fernández administration, relating it not only to the country's Strategic Culture, but also to a wider interest in promoting a re-industrialization of the economy (Battaglino 2013a, 35–36). Finally this initiative would have also allowed Argentina to reduce its dependency on imported material, which had become harder to acquire for the Argentine Armed Forces due to the budgetary restrictions and as a result of the embargo that the UK could enforce on sales to Argentina from its NATO partners after the Malvinas/Falklands war.

Though the interviewees somehow minimized the relevance of this point in their negotiating agenda, some very concrete actions taken by the Argentine government in this sense after the creation of the SADC suggest that this indeed was a point of great interest. For example, after the re-nationalization of FAdE, in 2009, the administration showed

immediate interest in taking advantage of a regionalized market. The lack of funding for the Armed Forces meant that FAdEa would have a rough start taking construction projects off the ground, as has been the case with the development of modernized versions of the IA-63 Pampa (an advanced trainer aircraft originally developed in the 1980s) and the re-motorization of the IA-58 Pucará (a COIN aircraft developed in the 1960s). Hence, it joined the Brazilian Embraer in the design and construction of a military cargo plane, the KC-390, and “kickstarted” a project to build a basic trainer for the Air Forces in the region, the UNASUR I. A preliminary design for this light aircraft was already completed by 2010, based on lengthy discussions held by a SADC committee to compile the needs and demands of all South American partners, and to identify the contributions that the industries of each country could make to the construction of the aircrafts. However, subsequent political difficulties, lack of commitment, and complications finding a suitable provider for the engines meant that the project has been frozen ever since (interview with Forti).

It is important to also highlight the “red lines” that the negotiators would not cross. The first was related to containing the more extreme expectations about the SADC, represented in the proposals brought by Venezuela. In this task, the Argentine delegation was in close coordination with Brazil and Chile, but also with Colombia and Peru. As already mentioned, the call made by President Hugo Chávez to make the SADC a “NATO of the South”, providing it with military resources and operational forces that would behave as a collective security arrangement, was quickly and decisively dismissed by Brazil and all of the region’s secondary powers.

The Venezuelan delegation brought up two other contentious points during the negotiation rounds, which also had to be contained. On the one hand, it proposed going against the regional tradition and incorporate a decision-making process based on majoritarian vote, instead of the usual norm of consensus. It is interesting that interviewees in the three countries under study claim that defending the consensus principle was, in fact, one of the main contributions made by their own delegations. On the other hand, Venezuela attempted to incorporate into the SADC statute the claim that the IV Fleet of the US Navy (tasked with the “Western hemisphere”, i.e. the Americas) was a threat to the region. Deputy Minister Forti emphasized that the Argentine view on this matter was that the SADC was “not against anyone”, and that therefore this element would have been out of place in the statute. Here, again, members of the Argentine delegation have claimed that opposing this proposal was mainly their doing, though similar accounts were also found in Chile and Colombia.

Finally, as already explained, the Argentine delegation would not accept mixing domestic and external matters. The strong consensus among policy-makers, politicians, academics, and the society in general on creating a strong conceptual divide between security (domestic) and defence (external) activities made it deeply ingrained in the country’s Strategic Culture, and therefore non-negotiable. In order to be compatible with the local understanding of the distinctive roles that the Armed Forces and the security forces should have, a South American Defence Council could by no means make reference to the internal affairs of the member states. Chile, Uruguay, and to a lesser extent Brazil, all share a similar conceptualization and, hence, the division of labour between their armed and security forces is compatible with Argentina’s. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, due to the involvement of its Armed Forces in the fight against the FARC and drug cartels, Colombia did in fact try to incorporate the domestic security agenda to the

negotiations. The corollary of this disagreement ended up being the exclusion of security concerns from the SADC, and the agreement to create a separate sectorial council within the UNASUR to tackle shared domestic security experiences, concerns and coordination/cooperation actions. Colombia only managed to have a rather ambiguous rejection to the actions of “illicit armed groups” included among the organization’s main principles, instead of a more robust commitment by its neighbours to include the fight against “terrorism” (discourse within which Colombia frames its domestic fight against guerrilla groups) as one of the goals.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter sought to identify the key features of the Argentine Strategic Culture (norms, meanings, normative priors) informing the country’s positioning during the SADC negotiations. In doing so, it shows how historic processes have affected the way in which the country understands the use of its defence apparatus and approaches regional security as a result. This is not to say that the unipolar condition of current South American relations was not taken into consideration at all. In fact, Alfredo Forti clearly stated that “when Brazil calls, we listen” (interview with Forti). Instead, the goal of this chapter is to show how domestic elements also played a crucial role in informing the agency of secondary regional powers when faced with the proposal to create a regional organization like the SADC and, more importantly, their contributions to the regional social arrangements that resulted from its creation.

This chapter has identified a number of continuities (preference for peaceful resolution of controversies; equality among states; low international activism in the use of force; a

quest for regional leadership; etc.) and new developments (incorporation of the Peacekeeping agenda into the defence policy; defence coordination and cooperation; demilitarization of regional relations; etc.) in the post-1983 period.

For example, though not without problems, the preference for peaceful resolution of conflicts has indeed shown a strong continuity. This would indicate that crucial norms that makes up a country's Strategic Culture and inform how it relates to the defence sector broadly speaking (namely, a rather high domestic threshold of legitimization for the use of military force; and, a low degree of activism) have not been significantly affected in the almost 150 years since the consolidation of the current Argentine territory. It is also important to highlight that having incorporated a strong commitment to cooperative security efforts to the Argentine Strategic Culture is the most consequential normative and cultural change experienced by the country in the last three decades.

On the other hand, given that the Argentine political system and the society identified the Armed Forces as the prime culprits of the atrocities and mistakes committed during the 1976-1983 dictatorship, the AMoD (and not the AMFA, nor any other bureaucratic actor) was the only target of institutional, doctrinal, and cultural reform. As a result, though the Strategic Culture of the country was indeed substantially affected and reshaped to conform to new webs of meanings constructed post-1983, aspects of its previous iterations may have remained dormant in other branches of the state. As already mentioned, despite having had an active participation in the foreign policy of the 1976-1983 dictatorship, the AMFA and its body of professionalized diplomats entered the post-dictatorial era largely unscathed. Though the foreign policy of the country was reshaped by subsequent civil administrations, the AMFA maintained a relatively high degree autonomy, allowing some sectors within it to maintain entrenched views about the region.

The transition to democracy opened the door for a new negotiation of the Strategic Norms, and the defence sector was subject to substantial changes by subsequent civil leaderships. This resulted in the Argentine Strategic Culture, normative priors, and legal framework for the sector seeing relevant changes in the period. These experiences reinforced the preference for pacific resolution of conflicts, fostered a higher degree of international activism in terms of cooperation efforts, reduced the degree of domestic activism, and created a more permeable environment for the development of ambitious regional defence cooperation mechanisms. In other words, the critical juncture created by this traumatic experience contributed heavily to creating the conditions of possibility for a thorough re-definition of the relation between the society and its defence apparatus.

As a consequence, between 1983 and 2008 the country successfully desecuritized its relationships with Brazil and Chile (Oelsner 2005a), demilitarized domestic politics (Escudé and Fontana 1998), and developed an agenda of cooperative security, all of which had a direct relation with the cultural developments that led to the substantial alteration of its Strategic Norms. As Escudé and Fontana clearly explain,

“The Argentine government [was] particularly interested in developing a new concept of regional security that privileges transparency, cooperation, and the abandonment of arms races of all sorts. [...] [as well as] in fully implementing the concept of cooperative security and in modifying accordingly the system of collective security, thus overcoming the older conceptions of security based on defensive capabilities of states and power-balancing alliances” (Escudé and Fontana 1998).

This would, perhaps paradoxically, render the Argentine defence elite more permeable to the idea of establishing a regional security governance organization in close cooperation with the country’s most traditional rival. More interestingly, the fact that the AMoD could take responsibility for international negotiations without any part of society resenting it may also evidence that the healing process between the Argentine society and

its defence elites might be coming to completion, largely thanks to the now undisputed civilian control over the Armed Forces. A further testimony to this is that, for the first time in decades, the country has resumed public discussions about the need to increase its defence budget to upgrade obsolete material capabilities without opposing voices.

Given the process of unilateral demilitarization started post-1983 (Escudé 2010), Argentina has shown consistent interest in fostering issue-linkage strategies between regional security and other areas of cooperation/integration (Hirst and Russell 2001, 150). The calculation has been that, if politics and diplomacy could strip the Armed Forces from their most traditional *raison d'être*, then there would be incentives for a new definition of their role in democracy (Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas 2007, 84–85). Precisely for this same reason, Presidents Alfonsín and Menem sought to create rapprochement processes with Brazil and Chile by resolving long-standing controversies via peaceful negotiations, and expanding the areas in which coordination and cooperation were possible. This created further incentives to reiterate the commitment with norms of non-intervention (slightly debilitated after the country gave Peacekeeping Operations a central role in its foreign and defence policies); peaceful resolution of conflicts; and neutrality. All of these were seen as essential normative and legal stances to aid the country defend itself from potential “imperial” or “neo-colonial” attempts by extra-regional powers.

As a consequence of all the above, and due to the meagre funding available for the defence sector, the Argentine delegation approached the question of creating the SADC with a clearly defined agenda of fostering further regional cooperation in the area of defence. This agenda included incentivizing the desecuritization of regional relations; extending the experiences of rapprochement, confidence-building, and cooperation

developed with Brazil and Chile; promoting the development of shared concepts and doctrines to advance a common understanding of the security concerns that affect the region, and how to tackle them; and, taking advantage of a potential regional market for the output of its languishing military industry. Arguably, this negotiating agenda so intimately related to the evolution of domestic norms about the role of the defence apparatus, had a significant impact on the objectives and principles included in the SADC statute.

The above discussions evidence a few important aspects about the current Argentine Strategic Culture. On the one hand, the goal of becoming a political leader in the region and the expectation of being recognized as one remains at the forefront of the identity and international insertion strategy of the country. On the other hand, by 2008, the more activist Strategic Norms regarding cooperation had become so entrenched in the local defence elite's perspectives that the more detached pre-1990s norms about Peacekeeping Operations and the negative geopolitical views about the region were entirely absent from all conversations. In other words, the alteration of these cultural elements in the defence policy preferences of the country has been so thorough and successful that no traces of previously held preferences were found in any of the interviews. Finally, the role of the Armed Forces has been redefined to such extent that the higher degrees of international activism shown and its now increasing relevance in the implementation of the Argentine foreign policy are no longer seen as a threat to the domestic political system, nor to its neighbours.

These insights provide a necessary understanding of the situation, thus complementing and informing the systemic-level explanations to the creation of the SADC

discussed in Chapter 2. It is worth highlighting again that, though the creation of the SADC might not have been in the immediate agenda of the Kirchner/Fernández administrations, Argentina had in fact proposed in numerous occasions the formation of a similar regional arrangement. It is possible that the enthusiasm over the rapprochement experienced in the mid-1990s, the first-hand participation on multilateral cooperative security activities, the demilitarization of the defence policy, and the effective alignment achieved between foreign and defence policy objectives (Sain 1999, 140–44) encouraged President Menem to publicly discuss a regional defence arrangement without having previously made the pertinent consultations with regional partners (Huser 1998, 67–68). This partly explains the negative responses obtained at the time, and perhaps even the fact that Argentina dropped this from its agenda. However, the prompt positive response that the SADC initiative had among defence elites shows that the idea was never truly abandoned.



## Chapter 6. Chile

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### The quest for a triumphant return to the region

#### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse Chile's negotiating agenda in the SADC Working Group meetings through the lens Strategic Culture, which can provide sufficient conceptual leverage to elucidate the purpose underlying this country's behaviour as well as its impact on the social arrangements that define the regional security environment. In doing so, it first needs to shed light on the seeming contradiction between the country's long-held preference for a foreign policy based on bilateral interactions, partnerships with extra-regional powers, and focused on economic and trade agreements, on the one hand, and its decision to actively participate in an ambitious region-wide multilateral cooperation and policy coordination initiative such as the SADC, on the other.

The seeming lack of agreement between Chile's consolidated role as "global trader" and preference for commercial relations with extra-regional partners (Wehner 2016, 64; Wehner and Thies 2014, 422-23), and the regionalist agenda behind the SADC initiative

make this case a particularly interesting one to analyse. It is important to remember that, even in the heyday of trade integration in South America, in the 1990s, Chile was among the regional powers more reluctant to commit to any regional arrangements beyond full trade liberalization and conflict resolution schemes. And, even when it did join regional governance agreements in other areas, its foreign policy preferences leaned more towards bilateral or mini-lateral regimes than to region-wide institutions, establishing a clear distance with the integrationist projects advanced by some of its neighbours. This is not to say that the country was entirely absent from such arrangements, as its participation in groupings like the Rio Group, the Andean Pact and the MERCOSUR (as associated member) shows. However, that Chile decided not only to accept the UNASUR's *pro tempore* presidency ahead of schedule, but also to take such a prominent leading role in the negotiations may constitute a puzzle to observers.

A first step to obtain a better understanding of this case is by tapping into the driving forces behind Chile's agenda and actions. Since Chile's prominent institutional responsibilities during the negotiations (*pro tempore* president of UNASUR; organizer and coordinator of the SADC Working Group meetings) came as a surprise to its diplomacy<sup>90</sup>, aspects of its performance could respond to "automated" reactions, based more on deep-rooted cultural structures than on "rational choice" type decisions. If this is in fact the case, then identifying and analysing these commitments could help unveil the Strategic Norms that guided defence and foreign policy elites in their decision-making process, informing how they perceived the regional environment and Chile's role in it, and influencing its approach to the SADC initiative as a result.

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<sup>90</sup> The country assumed its shift as UNASUR *Pro Tempore* president one year ahead of schedule, in 2008, after Colombia decided in the last minute that it was unfit to assume the responsibility itself given the conflicts in which it was engulfed with Ecuador and Venezuela over the bombing of a FARC campsite on Ecuadorian territory.

As will be shown in this chapter, one of Chile's first concerns during its tenure as president of UNASUR was to remain faithful to its long-cultivated image as a "reliable partner" (Bernal-Meza 2005). All interviewees agreed that, put to the task of presiding over this organization in such a complicated context, the Chilean diplomacy saw this as an opportunity to display its dependability. This was usually presented in direct opposition to the more rhetorical and less consistent attitude seen in other regional powers (mainly Venezuela, but also Argentina and Brazil), of whom Chilean elites think are unable to create truly effective institutional mechanisms to move forward with the regional projects they advocate (Gamboa Valenzuela 2011, 13).

But, it is also true that dependability was not the only contribution made by Chile to the negotiations. The Chilean delegation approached the SADC initiative with a propositive agenda, seeking to foster region-wide coordination and cooperation in a policy area outside of its usual "zone of comfort". The question is, then, how does this approach to the creation of the SADC relate to Chile's broader foreign policy and defence strategy, and how can we make sense of the apparent contradiction between the two using the concept of Strategic Culture as a key analytical tool.

The role adopted during the negotiations seems to indicate that relevant changes have taken place in the country's international insertion strategy in the decade or so leading to the creation of the SADC. My argument is that these changes in its approach to regional politics and security are indicative of relevant alterations to its Strategic Culture, slowly becoming more open to cooperative efforts with regional partners in areas in which it was not comfortable with only a few years before. Such change follows from a consistent, if slow, evolution of the domestic norms regarding the use of the defence apparatus and the limits they impose to defence cooperation. The argument that this chapter seeks to

advance is that the prominent role assumed during the SADC Working Group meetings and the negotiating agenda advanced by the Chilean delegation are in line with the normative commitments that the country has developed since the return of democratic rule, but also that Michelle Bachelet's administration (2006-2010) took advantage of the opportunity to re-insert the country into South American politics with a concrete role after decades turning its back against it. More importantly, by analysing this country's negotiating agenda under the light of Strategic Culture and its effects on action, this chapter advances the argument that any innovations introduced to the SADC statute due to Chilean pressure are intimately related to the meanings and normative priors related to the role given to the defence sector. If this is proven to be right, then a strong argument could be made about the transforming (constitutive) effects agency can have on the social arrangements ruling the regional security environment.

I argue that the outcome of protracted and tense negotiation over civil-military relations, a slow process of dense and complex confidence building in defence cooperation with Argentina (Ruz 2011b), and changes in the perception of the country's place in the region, all contributed to altering the Chilean Strategic Culture. Similarly to what happened in Argentina, the 1973-1990 dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet caused profound changes in Chile's Strategic Norms and culture. However, unlike the case of its neighbour, these changes were less abrupt, resembling more a case of a prolonged social learning process than a situation in which a traumatic event elicited relatively sudden changes. Discussing the characteristics of this process is relevant to obtain a better understanding of the country's Strategic Culture at the moment of the SADC negotiations.

In developing the above arguments, I also tackle a set of related questions: What can we deduce about the evolution of the country's Strategic Culture in the light of this policy shift? How may Chile's new commitments to regional governance affect the regional security environment? And, in return, what was the role of contextual pressures in reshaping Chile's defence preferences and Strategic Culture?

In order to answer these questions, explain the reasons behind Chile's leading role during the SADC negotiations, understand the narratives used by the government to justify (to itself and to others) this apparent policy shift, and provide insights into the role played by norm and culture in defining the country's agency, this chapter will be divided into two main sections, both equivalent to the divisions used to analyse the Argentine case. The first section, itself divided into two sub-sections for purposes of clarity, engages with the recent evolution and current characteristics of the country's Strategic Culture. The first sub-section engages with aspects of the pre-1990 Strategic Culture, deemed relevant both because of the continuity shown in some norms after the democratization process and because of the demand for change they provoked among sectors of the political elite after 1990. The second sub-section analyses the subsequent current characteristics of the country's Strategic Culture, emphasizing their recent evolution and the meanings attached to the different Strategic Norms.

The second section discusses in detail how Chile's Strategic Culture and foreign policy traditions affected perspectives on the goals and expected outcomes of the SADC initiative, and the motives behind its approach to the negotiations. This section contains the main empirical contribution of the chapter, highlighting the role of Chile's agency in its decision to join the SADC and an analysis of its negotiating agenda. Unlike in the Argentine case, this section will not be divided into subsections. This is because matters

relating to the perception of regional affairs among defence and foreign policy elites show such a degree of continuity between the formative years of the country's Strategic Culture and the SADC negotiations, that further clarification on this topic would be redundant. Hence, the entire section is devoted to address in detail the design and implementation of the country's agenda in the negotiations.

## **The evolution of Chile's Strategic Culture**

As explained above, this section deals with both the continuities and the innovations that make up Chile's current Strategic Culture. In order to do so, two broad subsections will discuss the characteristics of Chile's understanding of the defence-related issues during the 17 years that Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship ruled the country (1973-1990) and the evolution of the country's Strategic Norms since the democratization process started, respectively.

### Historical context: The Chilean defence sector pre-1990

During the years leading to the *coup* that brought General Augusto Pinochet to power, President Salvador Allende's government (1970-1973) had started to subvert many of the traditional commitments of the traditional Chilean foreign and defence policy preferences (Fermandois 1991, 437–38). His policies represented clear departures from previous traditions, bringing for the first time to power what Manfred Wilhelmy has labelled the "revolutionary subculture of Chilean Foreign Policy" (1979, 445–46). Though not exclusively associated with Allende, this subculture involved a preference for "third-worldism", anti-imperialism and revisionism that did define his tenure as President and

contrasted with the more conservative diplomatic tradition centred on Chile's "Western" relations (Wilhelmy 1979, 456–57).

Nevertheless, Allende's administration did not entirely uproot pre-existing traditions in these policy areas either, allowing for an array of normative commitments and traditions to have continuity during his administration. Good examples of this were the Chilean long-held preferences for multilateral political fora, internationalism, and regional governance mechanisms (Portales 2011b, 11; Wilhelmy and Durán 2003), a realist strategy seeking to maximize its international influence and stabilize regional affairs through higher degrees of institutionalization of its relations with neighbouring countries. Perhaps one of the more extreme versions of this tradition to ever make it to power can be identified during the administration of President Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970), who actively advocated for the creation of supranational instances to govern Latin American integration (Fermandois 1991; Wilhelmy 1977, 68).

Though relevant cultural changes did take place during the Allende administration, they did not represent a complete break from the past tradition of supporting multilateral governance initiatives at the regional level, nor did they survive the 17-year rule of the Pinochet dictatorship. The long-term eradication of this tradition from the Chilean set of defence and foreign policy preferences was, paradoxically, the work of the conservative "restauration" led by General Pinochet after deposing the socialist government of Allende on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1973 (Durán 1996, 196). A published geopolitical author himself, and hence highly suspicious of the relations with neighbouring countries, Pinochet received support from an emerging domestic coalition of neoliberal technocrats known as the "Chicago Boys"<sup>91</sup>, who gave the dictatorship the economic justification to reduce its

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<sup>91</sup> A group of economists formed at the University of Chicago under the supervision of Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger. They provided the blueprint for the economic policies of the military regime (Letelier

perceived vulnerability by advancing foreign and defence policies that incentivized the Chilean “withdrawal” from regional affairs. Instead of its traditional multilateralism and support for regional institutions, the new approach inaugurated post-1973 was dominated by the liberalization of trade and economic relations (Wilhelmy 1982, 249)(Child 1985), and the quest to secure Chile’s autonomy in the face of a regional environment perceived as intrinsically hostile (Child 1985). As a result, it is in the 1973-1990 period that we must look for any normative commitments and social constructions that would either become permanent characteristics of the Chilean Strategic Culture, or prompt such negative responses that they drove the reforms agenda of democratic governments that followed.

Carlos Portales challenges the notion that Chile has been absent from the region altogether, arguing that the country in fact devoted significant diplomatic efforts to negotiate bilateral trade agreements, solve border disputes, and participate in political cooperation frameworks with other Latin American countries through the 1990s (Portales 2011a, 174–80). The points raised by Portales are relevant, and his arguments certainly provide nuance to the “regional withdrawal” narrative. The development of increasingly intrusive and ambitious mutual confidence measures with Argentina, which have led to the creation of bilateral cooperative security arrangements, is perhaps the clearest example in that regard. More importantly so, as has already been discussed in the previous chapter, a large proportion of the confidence building strategies included in the SADC agreement and in its Action Plans are in fact an attempt to regionalize the Argentine-Chilean experience. Chile has also managed to establish increasingly prosperous bilateral

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1976, 45–46). Embracing the neoliberal agenda put forward by Friedman, the “Chicago boys” occupied key economic policy-making positions throughout the dictatorship, reforming entirely the country’s economic model in the process.

relations with partners like Brazil and Colombia, despite looking with some concern the aspirations to regional leadership (Flisfisch 2011, 20) and willingness to come through with promised regional common goods (Gamboa Valenzuela 2011, 14) of the former. However, it is still true that, having sorted the more conflictive questions with its immediate neighbours, very few high-profile foreign and defence policy strategies in the decades leading to the SADC negotiations had involved multilateral partnerships with South American countries, with the Argentine case being the most salient exception to that rule.

*Geopolitical thinking: Hostile neighbours and the theory of “discontinuous borders”*

Chile’s threat perception has historically been constructed on top of deeply entrenched perceptions of its geo-strategic conditions. Stretching North-South for 6,339 km, and having an average East-West extension of 180 km, Chile shares with Argentina the third largest mutual border in the world (5,300 km), plus 860 km of borders with Bolivia and 171 km of borders with Peru. In addition to this, Chile shows patterns of population and economic concentration around only two regions, the central region around the capital city and the northern region rich in mining resources. In the meantime, the large majority of the country’s territory is composed of vast areas of scarcely populated land. This has been traditionally perceived as increasing the country’s vulnerability, threatening its ability to remain a unity in case of a hypothetical attack/invasion/occupation.

Bolivia and Peru have historically had revisionist positions regarding the current border, drawn after Chile’s victory against them in the 1879-1883 War of the Pacific, a case study on *Lebensraum* geopolitical actions itself (Child 1985).

Graph 4. Chilean borders with northern neighbours before the War of the Pacific (1879-1884) and after the 1929 Treaty of Lima<sup>92</sup>



Source: Modified version from the map available in Wikicommons.

However, considering the increasing economic and military gap between Chile and its northern neighbours, together with the fact that the borders settled in 1929 pushed their threat away from major population and economic centres, local geostrategic thinkers have perceived Chile's geographical situation as providing "vertical strategic depth". In contrast, their main concern has been the severe lack of "horizontal strategic depth", crucial in planning against any potential Argentine aggression (Leyton 2000, 61). As already explained in the previous chapter, despite no direct military confrontation taking

<sup>92</sup> Also known as the Tacna-Arica Compromise, this treaty settled the territorial disputes that remained unsolved between Chile and Peru since the end of the War of the Pacific.

place, the relationship with Argentina was also a historically conflictive one until the 1990s (Fermendois 2010, 18).

The dominant social constructions and meanings around these contextual conditions greatly influenced Chilean strategic planning. Arguably, they drove the emphasis local defence elites put on the alliance with Brazil and Ecuador, expected to work as deterrents against hostile neighbours surrounding Chile with the risk of becoming encircled themselves<sup>93</sup>. These bilateral relations came to be associated with the concept of “discontinuous borders”<sup>94</sup> (Child 1985), central to explain the preferences and behaviour of Chilean defence elites at least until the mid-1990s and a contributing factor to the region-defining checkerboard alliances (Kelly 1997). Yet, the bilateral rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil forced the Chile to re-consider this strategy, which significantly lost all prominence thanks to the improvement in Argentine-Chilean relations after the return of democracy in 1990.

The above evolution is a particularly good example of the mutual constitution that exists between the social arrangements present at the regional level and those that dominate the domestic strategic culture. Firstly, it is interesting to see that, in a context of perceived encirclement, Chilean actions defied what Barry Posen’s hypothesis about doctrinal choices between offence-defence-deterrence (1984, 78–79). Not even at the brink of an Argentine invasion did Chile opt for an offensive strategy, further proving that material conditions alone fail to properly grasp the drivers of strategic behaviour. Secondly, changes in the regional distribution of capabilities were slow and relatively inconsequential throughout the 1980s, weakening the hypothesis that a shifting balance

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<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Argentina’s *Operación Soberanía*, Graph 2, page 175

<sup>94</sup> This concept refers to the strategic proximity with countries like Brazil and Ecuador, considered to be close and dependable allies despite not actually sharing borders with Chile.

of power prompted such strategic and behavioural changes in the two major powers. Rather, it seems likely that the return of democracy and the securitization of domestic authoritarian factions brought Argentina and Brazil closer together, slowly but surely redefining their mutual perceptions and the associated webs of meanings. In this context of changing regional social constructions, Chile lost its major deterrent against Argentina, forcing defence elites to adapt and opening the door for political elites to establish a more positive bilateral agenda with the neighbouring country. This, in turn, served the cause of reducing the domestic allure geopolitical discourses presented about regional affairs and paved the way for growingly ambitious cooperation initiatives.

Still, much like Israel in the Middle East, due to its lack of “strategic depth” Chile evaluated its geopolitical situation as a threatening one, risking territorial, economic and human losses to any of its immediate enemies should it fail to act preventively. Hence, its Strategic Norms and doctrines establish, to this date, that any enemy showing “abnormal” concentration and movement of troops near the border, or any other behaviour rendered “threatening” by Chile, will justify the legitimate use of force by its Armed Forces. Members of geostrategic-leaning sectors still perceive these factors as central determinants of Chile’s defence policy, affecting everything from troop deployment to tactics and strategic planning. In other words, though the terms used to define Chile’s military doctrine are “defence” and “dissuasion” (Leyton 2000, 70) they do not conform with the traditional understanding of the term (see Chapter 5, page 191), but rather are given a meaning close to the doctrine of preventive attacks. The geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the country, together with the entrenched views of its defence elites, mean that this orientation will most likely remain non-negotiable in the foreseeable future, regardless of how good the relations with the neighbouring countries have become in recent years.

*Goodbye to Latin America*

The 1973 *coup* against President Allende inaugurated a radical shift in Chile's commitment to regional governance, changing its insertion strategy and international identity dramatically. The dictatorship broke with the above mentioned consensus shared by "revolutionary" and "conservative" subcultures in at least two crucial aspects: bilateral trade negotiations displaced multilateralism and internationalism as the preferred means for the country to advance its international agenda and interests (Wilhelmy and Durán 2003, 276); and, the narrative of Chile being an "island country"<sup>95</sup>, isolated and distinct from the rest of the region, became prominent in the public discourse and in the mind-set of Chilean defence and foreign policy elites.

Though the origins of the narrative representing Chile as qualitatively different from Latin America can be traced back earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it only became a feature of the "national myth" with the dictatorship (Hamilton and Centellas 2015; Larrain 2006; Loveman 2004). Moreover, while in earlier versions the arguments were centred on Chile's political and institutional stability (something that was ostensibly lost in the 1973-1990 period), the arguments to back this discourse during the dictatorship were almost exclusively economic<sup>96</sup>. In a sense, the only elements that both iterations of the narrative

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<sup>95</sup> The concept of the "island" country also adds a particular understanding of the geographical situation of the country, highlighting that the Atacama desert (north), the Andes mountain range (East), the Pacific Ocean (West), and the Southern seas (South) have are among the "deep forces" that have determined the Chilean self-perception and foreign policy (Cristián Fuentes 2014)

<sup>96</sup> In the 1984-1989 period, Chile's economic output saw an average inter-annual growth of 6,2%. Comparing it with the -4,8% average economic performance that resulted from the Debt crisis in the rest of the region during the same period (Durán 1996), Chilean political and economic elites perceived this as a confirmation of the neoliberal policies adopted since the 1970s, but also as a demonstration that the rest of Latin America was hopelessly backwards and irredeemable.

share are the backdrop of racial and social Darwinism on which they build, widely shared by members of the conservative (white) political elites.

One of the most significant examples of this position is an op-ed written by Joaquín Lavín Infante<sup>97</sup>, entitled “Chile: Goodbye to Latin America”<sup>98</sup> (1988). Published by *El Mercurio* (the country’s most influential conservative newspaper), this article would become one of the most iconic points of reference in the discussions about Chile’s relations with the region. In a nutshell, the author’s argument is that the success of the neoliberal “economic modernization” that the dictatorship started had left neighbouring countries lagging behind, sunk in their endemic political, social, and economic conflicts. Chile, on the contrary, did no longer suffer from these ailments, and was bound to seek for better opportunities and more promising partnerships in the Pacific Ocean basin. Hence, the argument went, it was not in Chile’s best interest to continue to tie its fate to South America, and should advance more decisively in establishing closer ties with developed extra-regional partners. In Lavín’s own words,

“For decades, we were told that Chile had to recover the leadership of Latin America. It already has. Many times fold. [...] Chile has become a ‘giant’ with regards to the Latin American countries, but is still a ‘dwarf’ in comparison to the other countries in our new region: the countries in the Pacific. We no longer look to Argentina and Brazil as examples worthy imitating. Our goal now is to reach the living standards of countries like Australia or New Zealand, or perhaps what the ‘four dragons’ are achieving: Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapur, all of them countries that are applying a market economy model.”<sup>99</sup> (Lavín Infante 1988 translation by the author)

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<sup>97</sup> A Chicago-educated economist, Lavín Infante was Economic editor of *El Mercurio* during the late 1980s. He would later become a salient right-wing political figure in Chile through the 1990s and 2000s, being the presidential candidate for the *Unión Democrática Independiente* (UDI) in the 1999 national elections, in which he lost against the centre-left *Coalición* candidate, Ricardo Lagos, by merely 200.000 votes. He later became Mayor of Santiago (2000-2004), and held ministerial office during President Sebastián Piñera’s administration (2010-2014), including the Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>98</sup> Translation by the author. Original title in Spanish: “*Chile: Adiós a Latinoamérica*”

<sup>99</sup> Original in Spanish: “Durante décadas se nos dijo que Chile debía recuperar el liderazgo en América Latina. Ya lo recuperó. Y con creces. [...] Chile se ha transformado en un ‘gigante’ con respecto a los países de Latinoamérica, pero es todavía un “enano” si nos comparamos con nuestra nueva región: los países del Pacífico. Ya no miramos a Argentina o Brasil como ejemplos dignos de imitar. Nuestra meta ahora es alcanzar los niveles de vida de países como Australia o Nueva Zelanda, o el que están logrando los “cuatro

Together with the economic and trade liberalization policies, this diagnosis would become part of a cross-partisan “common sense” for the best part of the two decades that followed the article (interview with Boris Yopo Herrera), establishing clear limits to the country’s foreign policy options. Many conservative voices have insisted on Lavín Infante’s argument over the years (Barros 2004; Quintana 1995; Rohter 2004), arguing that the country’s “isolation” from the region was not only the result of its development and successful economic policies (España and Rothery 2004, 85–86), but also a necessary and successful policy decision. As such, this narrative has also added to the pre-existent “Chilean exceptionalism” culture in development since the time of independence (Cristián Fuentes 2014, 138),

“Chileans begin to believe that they share in an exceptional character that separates them from Latin America. The entrepreneurial public version of Chilean identity compounds this belief by insisting very much on the idea that Chile is different, a winner country that has become a model for Latin America.” (Larrain 2006, 332)

This exceptionalism was not only fuelled by a positive self-appraisal, but also by a strong negative perception of the regional environment, and particularly of the neighbouring states, in relation to their poor economic performance and to the prevalence among defence elites of the above discussed geopolitical perspectives. As a result, though the Chilean military doctrine has historically been essentially defensive, its Armed Forces have been organized and trained to be operationally dissuasive (Leyton 2000), and even ready to participate in preventive actions. This means that the threshold of domestic authorization for the use of force has been lower in Chile than in most other South

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dragones” del Asia: Taiwán, Corea, Hong Kong y Singapur, países que están aplicando un esquema de economía de mercado.”

American countries, and particularly so during the dictatorial rule of General Pinochet. Having said that, it is important to highlight that no such preventive actions were taken during the 1978 tensions with Argentina, which were defused only hours before Argentine forces invaded Chilean territory *en masse* (Laudy 2000). This can either mean that Chile preferred to play defence in this case (being the *status quo* player, having the arbitral award in its favour, and expecting to receive international support after an unwarranted Argentine aggression), or that the doctrine would be applied differently whether the threat came from Argentina (the largest and best equipped of the three neighbours) or from Bolivia and Peru.

This is a point that will be further explored in the coming subsection, but what is interesting to highlight at this point is that the relationship Chile developed with its regional security environment during the Pinochet years was one of extreme rivalry, if not even enmity. Tensions in the Chile-Bolivia border never really ceased, particularly due to the latter's revisionism (van der Ree 2010, 116), and Argentina was perceived in such negative terms that the Chilean government decided to forego all cooperation agreements in place (the TIAR being the prime example) and provided intelligence and logistical support to the British Task Force during the Malvinas/Falklands war (Alexander 2014). Chile's Strategic Culture in this period was highly reactive to any forms of cooperation, preferring instead a neutral stance with regards to any conflicts that did not affect its interests directly, or a unilateral form of action if such measure was required.

As a result of this threat perception, in 1975 Pinochet modified a crucial piece of legislation known as the Reserved Copper Law (Law N°13.196), originally passed in 1958. Pinochet's modification gave 10% of all income derived from copper exports<sup>100</sup> directly

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<sup>100</sup> Chile has 36% of the known reserves of copper in the world, and has been the biggest exporter of this metal for several years now. Between 1999 and 2008, its share in the global trade of copper fluctuated

to the Armed Forces. The exact wording and detailed contents of the law remain confidential, and even members of the National Congress can only access them under very strict conditions of secrecy. However, some details are publicly known. For example, the law establishes an annual floor of allocated resources indexed to the US Producer Price Index, estimated to be worth between US\$ 90m and US\$ 290m and guaranteed by the National Treasury, with no cap stipulated. Moreover, the law stipulates these funds are considered assets of the Armed Forces, which makes them exempt from congressional scrutiny and taxation (Milet 2008). Also, the funding provided under this law is in excess of the annual defence budget, which is expected to cover all operational costs, salaries, and pensions of the Armed Forces and the Chilean Ministry of Defence (ChMoD hereon), and even contemplates resources for acquisitions. This means that the funds resulting from the Reserved Copper law are used exclusively to purchase new equipment or for the modernization/upgrade of existing capabilities.

It is also relevant to reiterate that the Chilean Strategic Culture suffered few alterations during and immediately after democratization due to the need of political elites to secure governability. This was done by establishing a relatively rigid intra- and inter-elite consensus that allowed for the transition to take place (Cristián Fuentes 2014), while also giving guaranties to the military and conservative elites that supported its regime that they would not be subject to transitional justice processes. One of the key aspects that made this transition more difficult was the constitutional autonomy self-granted by the Armed Forces during the Pinochet regime. This refers to the lack of regulation and institutional control over the activities of the Armed Forces (Rojas Aravena 2001, 156).

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between 37.8%T (2001) and 44.3% (2004). More importantly so, this metal represents 50% of the country's total exports, thus incorporating US\$ 33 billion to the Chilean economy in 2010 alone (Meller and Simpasa 2011, 9-12).

Unlike what has happened with the Reserved Copper Law, relevant advances have been made in this aspect over the years. However, the pockets of power that remained in the hands of the Armed Forces after 1990 made this process more arduous and slow than in the Argentine case.

### *Domestic activism of the Armed Forces*

Though comparatively less prominent than in the Argentine case, the activism shown by the Armed Forces in the use of force against the “domestic enemy” was significant. The violent intervention of the military in domestic affairs was justified, like in many other Latin American countries after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, by a hard-line interpretation of the National Defence Doctrine (Pion-Berlin 1989a, 413–14) inspired in French and US writings, and actively propagated among mid- and high-ranking officers of the region by the School of the Americas and the Inter-American Defence College (Pion-Berlin 1989b). Given the similarities with the Argentine case on this aspect, I will not go into much detail about the reach and implications of this doctrinal approach for the country’s Strategic Culture, but some specific considerations are worth discussing.

A particularly relevant testimony of the view that drove the Chilean Armed Forces to break their traditional respect for the democratically elected officials and political institutions can be found in the words of General Gustavo Leigh when addressing a full auditorium at the School of Law of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile,

“Marxism [...] represents a truly malignant tumour, which has created a painful situation for us all. It is, perhaps, a paradox that the responsibility of extirpating this tumour has fallen on the Armed Forces, whom have not had in generations any political responsibility. But, there is one thing you can be certain of: we are determined to extirpate it at its root” (Leigh 1974, 9 translation by the author)

And so they did. Despite the secretism around the events and the social prestige the Chilean Armed Forces managed to maintain<sup>101</sup>, a 2011 report by the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture commonly known as the Valech Report (the fourth report of its kind produced since 1990) established that the overall number of victims exceeds 40.000, with 3.065 of them having been murdered or “disappeared” by the military or state-sponsored para-military groups (Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2011).

This shows that, while Chile can indeed claim to not have participated in any inter-state military confrontation since the end of the War of the Pacific, and even that it has never put its preventive attack doctrine into use, the Strategic Norms related to the use of force during the 1973-1990 dictatorship did conceive the “domestic enemy” as a legitimate target for the Armed Forces, showed a relatively high degree of activism, and presented a relatively low threshold for domestic authorization.

#### Evolution of Chile’s Strategic Culture since 1990

Chile’s military doctrine is described as strictly defensive, but operationally dissuasive. There are at least two implications of this operational stance. On the one hand, one of the strategic goals of the Chilean defence policy is to accumulate sufficient material capabilities so that any enemy would have to seriously consider the potential risks of attacking, reducing the likeliness of such an attack taking place. On the other hand, given the geographical and socio-economic conditions described above (together with the

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<sup>101</sup> According to the II Human Rights Poll, published in 2013 by the National Institute of Human Rights, 39% of the Chilean population does not condemn the Human Rights violations of the 1973-1990 period (Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos 2013, 41).

dominant geopolitical views among the defence elites), a dissuasive operational attitude has been equated with the possibility of resorting to preventive strikes.

The continuity of these doctrinal definitions reflects the leverage and power that remains with the traditional defence elites, who have consistently blocked attempts to re-define civil-military relations in the country. This has not hindered, however, the evolution of the domestic Strategic Culture in other crucial aspects.

Considering, for example, that threat perception is an intrinsically sociological issue based on shared understandings about and interpretations of sustained patterns of behaviour and interaction, these relationships are subject to alterations over time (even in the absence of legal innovations, for which some degree of consensus among local defence elites would be necessary). The best example of this is the bilateral relation with Argentina, marked by mutual suspicion until the mid-1980s (Battaglino 2008, 29; Varas 1985), but radically altered during the 1990s despite the continuity of the Chilean legal framework for the defence sector. Similarly, available survey data from the project *Las Américas y el Mundo 2008*<sup>102</sup> also helps create a more complete and nuanced image of the socio-political conditions affecting the development of the Chilean Strategic Culture. According to this survey, state actors are not perceived by Chileans as threats. Instead, food shortage (93%), climate change (92%), poverty in the world (92%), drug trafficking and organized crime (89%), and nuclear weapons (87%) conform the top-five choices in this category. Different situations may explain this particular pattern of threat perception, and the answers may very easily change if old tensions with neighbouring countries were to resume. More importantly, there may not be a direct correlation between the survey

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<sup>102</sup> Survey coordinated in Latin America by the International Studies Division of the Centre of Investigation and Teaching in Economy (CIDE), Mexico. The survey in Chile was conducted between November and December 2008, taking a probabilistic sample of 1575 people (93,8% representative of the national population). The survey has a 95% confidence interval (+/-2,9% maximum error). (Garay Vera 2009, 48)

results and Chile's defence policy and military planning. However, what these results do show is that, at the time of the SADC negotiations, the Chilean population no longer perceived any of its neighbours and regional partners as threats.

According to Joaquín Fermandois, the post-1990 Chilean foreign policy has been informed by six intertwined sources: a critique of Pinochet's regime track record on Human Rights (which created tensions with Western allies); a consensus between the Right and the Left about the relevance of democracy; a centrist set of principles about policy and the economy; the emerging pressures (domestic and international) to couple market economics and democratic rule; the re-democratization of the region; and, the influence of an internationalized political and intellectual elite, who shaped their view for a re-democratized Chile around the experiences of centrist European social democracies (Fermandois 2011, 37–38)

#### *Intra-elite disputes in the defence sector*

In light of the legacies from the period discussed in the previous sub-section, and despite the emerging consensus around the Foreign Policy identified by Fermandois, the norms that shape Chile's Strategic Culture had a relatively slow evolution in the years after the democratic transition. According to Carlos Gutierrez Palacios, it is important to consider three intertwined and central features of Chile's transition to democracy in order to fully understand the "slow and feeble" changes undergone in the country's security and defence policies (Gutiérrez Palacios 2005, 1–4):

- a) **It was the result of a pact** that, among other things, demanded that the Political Constitution (approved in 1980, whilst Pinochet was in power) could not be reformed.

- b) Despite losing a continuity referendum, **Pinochet remained a political force to be reckoned with**<sup>103</sup>.
- c) Despite losing all Presidential elections between 1990 and 2009, right-wing parties closely associated with **Pro-Pinochet political and economic elite** groups remained strong. Not made responsible for their role during the dictatorship, conservative elites made it their aim to preserve the “legacy of the Military government”, defending its social, economic and political models, and protecting “constitutional autonomy” of the Armed Forces.

As a result, the Armed Forces and the defence elites that supported them remained veto players in many policy areas long after the transition to democracy, delaying a much needed modernization of the defence sector. The redefinition of civil-military relations took up the best part of the two decades after Pinochet left power<sup>104</sup> (Gutiérrez Palacios 2005; Radseck 2005). This meant that relevant norms that define the country’s Strategic Culture evolved more slowly than in other South American countries.

Probably the best example of the leverage that the Armed Forces still have is related to the definition and control of the defence budget. In 2007, the Chilean defence budget represented 2,63% the country’s GDP, doubling the regional average of 1,32% (Castro n.d., 48) despite not facing any realistic threat. More importantly, the Reserved Copper Law mentioned before is still pretty much in place, despite relevant figures from all sectors of the political spectrum arguing that the lack of transparency surrounding this situation is highly irregular. Further to this, academics tend to agree that this law has

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<sup>103</sup> He remained to be Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army until March 1998, closely controlling all policy-making, planning, and implementation processes related to the Defence sector. Moreover, after retiring from the Armed Forces, he was named “Senator for life”. Not even his indictment and arrest in London for violations of Human Rights, between October 1998 and March 2000, debilitated his public image (Sugarman 2008). He voluntarily resigned to his senatorial position in July 2002.

<sup>104</sup> Crucial norms mandating and organizing the civil governance of Defence matters, such as the first ever Organic Statute for the Ministry of National Defence, only managed to pass through Congress as late as 2010 (Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2010).

made the military budget disproportionate with the country's needs and interests, introducing a distortion to the regional security environment and creating concerns in neighbouring countries (Calle 2007; Flandes and Nolte 2010). Several interviewees shared this view, maintaining that the elimination of the Reserved Copper Law was a crucial step to hold the Armed Forces accountable and to reduce potential sources of tension with regional partners (Interviews with García Pino; Flisfisch; and Durán). However, despite public pronouncements by members of the elites at both sides of the political spectrum (including President Michelle Bachelet and President Sebastián Piñera) supporting the derogation/modification of the Law, it has been so far impossible to reach an agreement regarding the new defence funding system that should take its place. Strong resistance from the conservative defence and political elites have made this reform even more difficult to achieve (Saez 2016).

In addition to the complications generated by the resistance to change on the side of the old defence elites, it is also important to highlight that the political elites that came to power in the 1990s were highly refractory of regional multilateral arrangements. While most South American countries experienced a renewed interest in regional governance schemes from the late-1980s on, Chile preferred to stay at the margins of these processes and called for a more "pragmatic" regional agenda (Fermendois 2011). It developed an agenda known as "open regionalism", understood in Chile as a middle ground between the free trade policies advocated for by economic advisors of the dictatorship, on the one hand, and the regional integration defended by pre-1973 foreign policy elites, on the other (Fermendois 2011; Fermendois and Henríquez 2005, 61). Crafted by moderate governmental elites, open regionalism presented a counter-narrative that was to become one of the cornerstones of Chile's foreign, economic, and development policies from the 1990s onwards, likely constituting one of the strongest elements of cross-party consensus

(Wehner and Thies 2014, 423; Weskamp 2013, 66). At its core, open regionalism consists of regional free trade agreements that, unlike previous sub-global trading blocs, avoid creating a heavily protected intra-bloc market by maintaining low tariffs and trade barriers. The goal is to allow for a broad liberalization of trade between regional partners, while creating incentives for the bloc to remain competitive globally (Burki and Perry 1998, 3–5; Iglesias 1998; Sanahuja 2012, 3).

Joaquín Fermandois and María José Henríquez point out that the seeming contradiction between a discourse consistently prioritizing Latin America and a pattern of behaviour focused mostly on increasing trade arrangements with extra-regional partners only makes sense seen under the light of the consensus around open regionalism (Fermandois and Henríquez 2005). However, in searching for a balance between the *regional integrator* and the *global free-trader* roles, Chile consistently focused more on the “openness” than on the “regionalism” (Wehner 2016). In Alberto van Klaveren’s view (2000, 128), three core aspects inform the way Chile understands open regionalism:

1. Regional integration frameworks that demanded exclusivity from its members pose excessive limitations to their autonomy;
2. Regional integration agreements must be open to the incorporation of new members;
3. Trade blocs and policy coordination projects that require raising tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade impose unacceptable constraints to global trade liberalization.

So strong is the elite consensus around these principles that even the centre-left *Concertación* has incorporated them into its ethos. In fact, Alex Fernández Jilberto attributes the electoral success of the *Concertación* precisely to its ability to abandon the elements of economic nationalism that characterized the left wing parties within the coalition and accommodate for the neoliberal agenda inherited from the dictatorship,

forming what in his words is “their formulation of an alternative strategy of ‘neoliberalism in democracy’” (Fernández Jilberto 1996, 72).

As would be expected, all the above came at the expense of Chile’s relations with the region. Despite all *Concertación* governments declaring that one of their foreign policy priorities was the country’s relation with Latin America (Fermendois and Henríquez 2005), having unilaterally liberalized domestic trade regulations in the mid-1970s lead to its withdrawal from the Andean Pact<sup>105</sup>, in 1976; and to repeatedly turning down offers to join the MERCOSUR (Heine 1999, 113–14). Bilateral relations with neighbouring countries were largely reduced to pragmatic ties (Wilhelmy and Durán 2003, 275), and local elites started to develop a strong resistance to thinking in regional terms (interview with Maldonado). Even today, and despite having shown that the country is able to successfully take on relevant roles articulating regional initiatives, top-ranking officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continue to talk about Chile’s insular condition (interview with Labbé). As a result, by the turn of the century, the chances of having an active Chilean participation in fora like the UNASUR and the SADC was reduced, at best.

In this context, the democratic transition required sustained efforts by subsequent governments to take the remaining pockets of political and economic leverage away from the Armed Forces, slowly gaining civilian/political oversight over planning and implementation of the National Defence policy. The modification of the legal framework determining the objectives, governance, and decision-making processes related to the armed branch of the state has been slow, but ultimately tipped the balance in the internal

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<sup>105</sup> A regional trade bloc of which it was a founding member and that included all Andean countries, from Colombia in the North to Chile in the South.

struggles between the military and the civilian members of the defence elites. In parallel to this process, the Strategic Culture of the country has also been re-shaped.

*The redefinition of the legal framework for the defence sector*

Aside from the above, which remains a debt of the Chilean re-democratization, some relevant changes have been possible in the country's Strategic Norms. The dramatic changes in the bilateral relation with Argentina, for example, lead to a lower threat perception of the neighbouring country, allowing reformers to advance changes in military doctrines and create the conditions to participate in defence cooperation schemes that would become crucial to facilitate the inclusion of a strong cooperation agenda to the missions and objectives of the Chilean Armed Forces (Lt.Col. Arancibia-Clavel 2007, 104-5). As a result, the country has developed a new defence agenda, centred on the normative commitment to cooperation as a pillar of the defence strategy. This normative change took away the relevance of the Armed Forces in the planning and implementation of crucial aspects of the defence policy, disarticulating their ability to resort to believable fear-mongering strategies. In a sense, these measures are related to the fact that some sectors of the political elite and of the Chilean society still perceive the Armed Forces with suspicion (The Economist 2008).

Considering the difficult context for defence reform, the *Concertación*<sup>106</sup> governments attempted the path of least resistance. Instead of seeking to modify all the overall regulatory framework, the first important legal innovations introduced focused on a

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<sup>106</sup> Formally known as *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* (Concert of Parties for Democracy), was originally formed with a number of unlikely partners (including socialists, radicals, humanists, the greens, and the Christian Democrats) coming together with the only goal of ousting Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite (which they did with 54% of the votes). However, fearing that Pro-Pinochet sectors could manage to win the 1989 presidential election, the *Concertación* remained together as a political coalition, eventually becoming the largest political force of the last decades in Chile (Ymayo Tartakoff 2013, 70).

largely unexplored area: the participation of the Armed Forces in Peace Operations<sup>107</sup>. In the context of a decaying relevance of the traditional conflict hypotheses on top of which defence planning was structured, a path to redefine the role of the Armed Forces opened. Chile's participation in UN-sanctioned Peacekeeping Operations grew in complexity and involvement since the 1990s (Gutiérrez 2010, 700–701), a strategy that has been associated with prestige-seeking actions among Western middle powers (Neack 1995). In the Chilean case, pretty much like in Argentina, this was also related to a domestic political strategy seeking to redefine the mission of the Armed Forces, tie them to the democratic rule of law and to international regulations, and reiterate the supremacy of the President over the definition of the national defence policy (Presidencia de la República de Chile, 1999).

In addition, the *Concertación* commissioned the creation of the region's first ever White Book of the National Defence, in 1997 (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional de Chile, 1997). Though still imbued of the dominant conservative discourses, this was the first concrete attempt to foster a collaboration between military and civilian experts in which a discussion on reform proposals was held. In order to achieve such goal, the participants identified the basic interests, understandings, norms and plans for the near future that should guide Chile's defence sector, seeking to construct a shared perception of its security environment and allowing to analyse the defence sector as a public policy area equivalent to any other for the first time in decades (García Pino and Montes 2009, 82). In doing this, the 1997 White Book managed to un-root some of the more sectarian and anti-

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<sup>107</sup> Law 19.067 - Regulating the entry of foreign armed corps to Chilean territory and the norms for deployment of Chilean armed corps abroad (Promulgated on 26 June, 1991). Decree 94 - Establishing a National Policy for the Chilean participation in Peacekeeping Operations (Promulgated on 6 November, 1996). Modified by Decree 68 (Promulgated on 10 October 1999) and by Law 20.297 (Promulgated 13 December 2008). Decree 75 - Creating the inter-ministerial Commission for Peace Operations (Promulgated on 5 May 2009)

democratic practices upheld by the Armed Forces in terms of defence planning. It also represented a landmark in the redefinition of the dominant understanding about the interaction between the defence and foreign policy sectors in the region, incentivizing the publication of similar instruments in other South American countries and increasing the transparency of their respective defence planning processes (Battaglino 2012, 89).

However, it was only with the second White Book, in 2002, that the situation turned noticeably more permeable for an advancement of a renewed defence strategy. In this second attempt, international cooperation was incorporated for the first time as one of the pillars of the national defence strategy, along with dissuasion, contributing to national security by fostering mutual confidence with other states (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional de Chile, 2002, p. 24).

This last step, which arguably was only possible due to Chile's increasing participation in Peacekeeping Operations and to the positive experience in the bilateral relation with Argentina, was one of the key pre-conditions that facilitated the decision to join the SADC negotiations. I will return to this point later on, but suffice it to say at this point that by placing international cooperation as one of the two legs of the country's defence strategy, the domestic structural conditions were ripe for a more decisive participation in international defence cooperation schemes. Moreover, embedding the country in a regional defence cooperation and policy coordination framework would help cement the agenda of defence reformers, who in 2008 still faced resistance to intended structural modifications to the ChMoD and to the funding of the Armed Forces. For example, it wasn't until 2010 and through a protracted negotiation that the role of the Minister of Defence was explicitly upgraded, placing it explicitly above the Armed Forces in the line of command for the first time in Chilean history (Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2010). This

allowed the civil authorities in the Ministry to fulfil the entire public policy cycle<sup>108</sup> for the sector (García Pino and Montes 2009; Montes 2010, 157–59). Before this reform, the Armed Forces largely perceived the Minister as an intermediary with the President, at best, or as a mere “manager”, at worst (Radseck 2005, 184).

In this context, many of the Strategic Norms in place at the moment of the SADC negotiations had not really been affected by the transition to democracy. The legitimate goals for the use of force is probably the norm that suffered the least variations in the 1990-2008 period, even accounting for the conceptual distinction between security and defence that the new legal framework incorporated. The more evident formulation of this norm is included in the 1997 and the 2002 White Books, in the subsection listing the role of the defence sector with relation with the “Permanent National Objectives” (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional de Chile, 1997, pp. 22-24; 2002, pp. 23-24). The list of missions calls for the Armed Forces to defend the independence, sovereignty and territory of the country; contribute to its development and international projection; and, contribute to international peace and stability. But, there are other aspects that are also worth highlighting. The White Book establishes Armed Forces are not to be used in the international promotion of any particular set of beliefs nor values, thus adhering to the principle of non-intervention. As Leslie Wehner points out, Chile’s authoritarian past has led the country to become an active and vocal promoter of democracy and human rights (Wehner 2016), but the use of military force has been explicitly excluded from the legitimate means to fulfil this goal. This places Chile’s Strategic Culture at the lower degree of activism.

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<sup>108</sup> Problem recognition; policy formulation; policy implementation; and evaluation (Howlett and Ramesh 2003)

More surprising, perhaps, is that two elements related to the organic understanding of the state and the domestic activism of the Armed Forces continue to be listed: Contribute to the maintenance of the domestic institutional framework and the rule of law; and, keep, strengthen and renew the historical and cultural identity of the country. This seems to contradict the unambiguous distinction in the doctrine between security (non-state domestic and transnational actors; regular criminality; radicalized political opposition; etc.) and defence (dissuasion of and cooperation with state actors), incorporated precisely to prevent interventions of the Armed Forces in domestic politics. Nevertheless, though this position continues to be contested by a minority group of the local defence elite (Griffiths Spielman 2009), it remains highly consensual and explains relevant aspects of the Chilean position during the SADC negotiations. Moreover, this is one of the main reasons why, despite constant and strong pressure on the contrary by the US (Youngers and Rosin 2005, 3–4), issues such as drug traffic and organized crime have not been militarized in the country.

This strong doctrinal distinction (shared by Argentina, Uruguay and, to a lesser extent, Brazil) was incorporated in the institutional arrangement of the UNASUR, which explicitly excludes drug traffic, terrorism and organized crime from SADC's sphere of influence by placing them under the responsibility of specialized councils. This is one of the most evident examples of how Chile's Strategic Culture affected regional structures during the negotiations.

#### *A return to the old consensus?*

As explained before, the norm that probably changed the most during the decades leading to the SADC negotiations is the one referring to preferred modes of cooperation.

It is possible that political and defence elites chose to develop a consistent policy around Peacekeeping Operations to widen the country's approach to defence, avoiding controversies and stalemates at the National Congress resulting from questions about the democratic transition and civil-military relations. In this way, Chile's basic Strategic Norms incorporated international cooperation as one of its pillars without the need for the government to engage in high-stake negotiations with the Pinochetist opposition.

However, it's worth noting that Chile's approach to multilateralism, cooperation and governance in the sector of defence was not limited to the bilateral rapprochements and the inclusion of the term "cooperation" in its doctrine along with "deterrence". The country also tried to show a higher level of involvement in different international peace and governance mechanisms (Portales 2011b), insinuating a return to the long-lost foreign policy tradition of having an active role in multilateral governance bodies. In the lapse of few years, Chile

- Obtained a non-permanent seat at the UNSC in the 1996-1997 Sessions' Period.<sup>109</sup>
- Became part of a regional coalition coordinating efforts in the UN-sanctioned MINUSTAH.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Put forward by President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994-2000), this initiative represented a relevant shift in the country's international strategy post-1973, "re-inserting" Chile in the international security governance system for the first time in over 30 years (its previous bid for a seat at this body had been the 1961-1962 Sessions). Regularly securing a position at the UNSC has since become a stable diplomatic priority for the country. Chile has been voted to take the seat in two other occasions (2002-2003, under President Ricardo Lagos, and 2014-2015, under President Michele Bachelet). An important caveat is that these recent participations in the UNSC all took place under *Concertación* governments, making it difficult to say whether the right-wing opposition also considers this to be a priority. See: <http://www.minrel.gob.cl/chile-en-el-consejo-de-seguridad-de-la-onu/minrel/2013-11-22/164524.html>

<sup>110</sup> With this, 2004 marks the year in which Chile upped its game in Peacekeeping Operations for the first time, designating and training specialized units put at disposition of the UN to handle complex operational duties in constant cooperation and coordination with other countries (Péndola Brondi 2005, 74-79)

- Got José Miguel Insulza elected as Secretary General of the OAS, the single most important governance and stability mechanism at the hemispheric level.<sup>111</sup>

The activism shown in multilateral forums between 1996-2015 makes this period one of the most active the country has seen in terms of commitment to international governance and cooperation mechanisms. To top all this, the central development analysed in this research (the creation of the SADC) also positions Chile at the epicentre of relevant events in the development of regional cooperation and policy coordination mechanisms.

Finally, it is important to mention Chile's position in terms of the threshold of domestic and international authorization for the use of force, the last of the key norms that give shape to the country's Strategic Culture. One of the key goals that Chilean leaders were chasing was magnifying an increasingly distinctive, respected and democratic voice regarding the handling international security matters.

Given that reforming the domestic legal framework to explicitly elevate the domestic authorization threshold proved difficult, this task was tacitly left to the slow but consistent effects of the increasing democratization and institutionalization of the society (Doyle 2005; Russett et al. 1995). Instead, the reformers among the defence elites sought to elevate the threshold internationally. For example, in the UNSC meeting of 6 May, 2003, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés expressed

“We know that, in a globalized world, the fate of each of our countries is that of all peoples. Therefore, the fight against terrorism is not only a matter for Governments, but must involve our civil societies. It must be developed within a framework of

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<sup>111</sup> With the explicit support of Presidents Lagos and Bachelet, Insulza would hold the position for two full tenures, 2005-2010 and 2010-2015, making this a long-term commitment of the Chilean foreign policy and defence elites.

legitimacy and clear respect for human rights and international law.” (United Nations Security Council, 2003, p. 13)

This quote evidences one of the key aspects of Chile’s foreign policy tradition, namely, its strong attachment to international legality and legitimate procedures, also identified as one of the central features of the South American Society of States (Kacowicz 2005b; Merke 2011). However, what this fails to convey is the degree of assertiveness with which Chile defended its (relatively weak) position during those turbulent sessions at the UNSC, defending the rule of international law against the US attempt to obtain legitimization to invade Iraq (Fermendois 2011).

Being a relatively minor player in a UNSC marked by the division and stalemate between the US and French positions, Chile could have easily chosen to take a back seat and let the negotiations between the permanent members develop (Errázuriz Correa 2003). It could have even decided to side with the US, one of its closest commercial and political allies in the hemisphere, and nobody would have been surprised by it. Instead, it remained fixated in brokering a compromise resolution, despite the barely disguised threats coming from the Bush administration with regard to potentially negative effects that insisting on this could have in terms of passing the bilateral FTA through Congress (Bywaters 2014, 67–69; Ulloa Castillo 2015, 230). This assertiveness in the face of highly contentious international security issues, even putting at risk one of the country’s long-time foreign policy goals, is evidence not only of a political decision by President Lagos, but also of a particular understanding of the high threshold necessary for the international legitimization of the use of force.

The evidence shows that Chile’s position in terms of the international threshold of authorization suffered relevant alterations since the transition to democracy, arguably

informing and qualifying the otherwise unchanged norm regarding the legitimate goals for the use of military force.

### **Chile in the SADC negotiations: agendas and narrative**

Like in the Argentine case, the SADC negotiations were the first relevant instance in which ChMoD deployed an active “defence foreign policy”. Civilian staff from the Ministry led substantive aspects of an international negotiation, relegating the ChMFA to advisory and organizing roles (interview with García Pino). However, given the stakes attached by Chile to these negotiations, President Bachelet instructed Under-Secretary García Pino to personally coordinate the interactions between the different bureaucratic actors that participated in the organization of the SADC Working Group, thus becoming the coordination of inter-ministerial relations. To a certain extent, this gave the last word on the definition of Chile’s negotiating agenda to the ChMoD.

Despite profound changes having taken place in the last decades, the normative and cultural continuities with the dictatorial period are also important. A good example of this is Chile’s perception of the region, and its effects on the country’s self-perception. Though in a lighter version than the one advanced by Lavín Infante, and despite the positive experiences of cooperation seen in the last decades, the view that Chile is qualitatively better than its neighbouring states continues to be relevant to the country’s self-perception and understanding of its place in the world even until today (Colacrai and Lorenzini 2005, 46; Larrain 2006), particularly among some political elites. This cultural context is essential to better understand the domestic impact expected when President Bachelet decided to join and actively lead the SADC negotiations. It could be argued that

this decision was seeking to foster the country to move closer to its abandoned multilateralist tradition, doing so from a position of active contributor to the development of regional norms that sited well with the “exceptionalist” view of Chile that dominated among conservative elites. A number of interviewees, and particularly those working at the ChMFA, showed reluctance to talk about regional leadership in the Chilean case, and instead preferred framing the Chilean contribution to the process of negotiation in terms of it being an effective and efficient “administrator”, a reliable partner, and a propositive actor. The avoidance of the concept of “Chilean leadership” also reflects a long-held preference of Chilean defence and foreign policy elites, aiming to avoid the “isolation” that such projects have historically brought to their respective promoters in South America (Fermendois 1991).

From the point of view of Chilean defence and foreign policy elites, the above definitions not only meant fulfilling the role of *pro tempore* President of UNASUR “correctly”, but also proposing an efficient and transparent mechanism to advance proposals regarding the items to be included in SADC’s statute having a concrete idea of the goals being followed. According to Ángel Flisfisch, one of Chile’s goals in this sense was making sure that the resulting agreement was not merely a rhetoric exercise, but a realistic piece that could lead to actual cooperation among governments with very different political inclinations (interview with Flisfisch). This also relates to the understanding that the main challenge South America presents to Chilean defence and foreign policy-makers attempting to engage in cooperation schemes with the region is, precisely, the absence of a coherent regional project (Flisfisch 2011).

This can be seen in the fact that President Bachelet was who proposed the creation of a SADC Working Group (Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2009) so that the countries could

discuss their different positions through a series of meetings to be held in Santiago, each involving teams of experts and policy-makers from each country and with a clearly defined discussions agenda.

On the other hand, Chile sought to advance a cooperation agenda in whose implementation it already had experience, and whose results had already proven successful (interview with Portales). For this reason, the Bachelet administration decided to advance an agenda largely based in the experience accumulated during the process of rapprochement with Argentina (involving numerous Confidence Building measures and increasingly ambitious cooperation initiatives). In this sense, According to Under-Secretary García Pino, this had enormous implications for the construction of the SADC,

“[...] it is also clear that the type of relationship that had been built between Chile and Argentina around Defence issues helps understand a lot of the dynamics in the construction of the South American Defence Council. I think that, in this sense, the mutual experience we had is really useful. [...] and I have no doubt that the ideological build of the South American Defence Council is Chilean-Argentine, because it's based in 12 years of common work. [...] and, every time there was the need for someone to explain what we were talking about, we raised our hands.” (Interview with García Pino, translation by the author)<sup>112</sup>

Moreover, the SADC Working Group produced a detailed Institutional Report of the negotiations (Grupo de Trabajo del CDS, 2009) to be circulated among member states and made available to the public. The ChMFA, on the other hand, put together a memoir of the main events and debates that took place during Chile's Presidency of UNASUR (UNASUR, 2009). Though less widely circulated, the latter shares with the former in a three-fold

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<sup>112</sup> Original in Spanish: “[...] pero también es claro que el tipo de relación que había construido Chile con Argentina en los temas de Defensa ayuda a entender mucho las dinámicas de la construcción del Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano. Creo que en ese sentido es muy útil la experiencia que nosotros tuvimos en común. [...] y yo no tengo ninguna duda que la construcción ideológica del Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano es Chileno-Argentina, porque está basado en el trabajo común de 12 años que se había desarrollado hasta ese momento. [...] y cada vez que había necesidad de que alguien explicitara de qué estábamos hablando, levantábamos la mano.”

purpose: providing information about the negotiations to member states; crafting an “official narrative” about the negotiations and regional cooperation efforts; and, making evident the crucial role played by Chile as Pro-Tempore President of the UNASUR.

Considering that reports of this nature are by no means common practice in the region, their mere existence points to an intentionality that feeds into the recurring idea of Chile wanting to show its ability to articulate and coordinate regional efforts in an effective way, without abandoning the traditional moderation and efficiency of its diplomacy. Discarding what was understood as “empty rhetoric” and “overly ambitious objectives”, Chile favoured a more pragmatic discourse about regional cooperation, centred on the “lowest common denominators”<sup>113</sup> as a way to move forward with the negotiations. This strategy focused on setting achievable goals (interviews with Flisfisch; García Pino; Labbé; Portales). The success of this strategy was expected to signal that the country had returned to the region in its own terms, providing an alternative to solve the problem of low density of effective integration in a context of proliferation of regional organizations (Rojas Aravena 2010).

Chile’s Strategic Culture, its strong preference for cooperative approaches and authoritative (legitimate) decision-making processes, heavily marked the work done by this group. The way in which these Strategic Norms affect the country’s behaviour can be perceived in a secret memo regarding an issue unrelated to the SADC sent by the ChMFA

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<sup>113</sup> Though interviewees, documents, and academics (UNASUR, 2009, p. 208; Sanahuja, 2012, p. 11) use this formula, it is my understanding that this is a mistake. Using the “lowest common denominator” as a base for an agreement would mean that, existing a number of areas on which all the countries involved shared equal positions (and would, therefore, find no problem incorporating them into the agreement), they actually choose to go for a less ambitious alternative and discard higher shared understandings. If this is true, then the mantra is in fact mistaken, and the principle that actually guided the behaviour of states is that of seeking the “highest common denominator” instead.

to its Embassy in Colombia. In reference to a previous suggestion by the Ambassador in Bogota, Gabriel Gaspar, along the lines of increasing Chilean involvement in the helping resolve the conflicts in Colombia, the Ministry answered the following:

“Though it is true that our country is ready to collaborate in the quest for a solution to the complex Colombian problem, for the time being it is estimated preferable to channel it through existing regional bodies, strongly ‘betting’ on continental integration and solidarity, without hurting our bilateral approach with the different countries in the subcontinent, whom could see with suspicion that Chile would be seeking leadership in the back of regional instances and mandates.”<sup>114</sup> (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2008a - translation by the author)

This respect for the “legality” of the process, the authority of regional bodies over the matter, and the eagerness to avoid being in the spotlight are all important aspects of the Chilean narrative. Different interviewees repeated the notion that Chile had to be realist and prudent about its behaviour, acting in accordance with its size (interviews with Boris Yopo Herrera; Labbé; Flisfich).

Nevertheless, Chilean politicians and defence experts interpreted the task of coordinating and steering the SADC negotiations as an opportunity to show the country’s capacity, efficiency and reliability. In an interesting turn of events, Chile’s position took inspiration from the old narrative of “Chilean Exceptionalism”, but built a narrative around its concepts that led to opposite conclusions. Now, these “exceptional” characteristics could allow Chile to contribute actively and positively to South American politics, instead of simply staying at the margins.

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<sup>114</sup> Original in Spanish: “Si bien es cierto que nuestro país está presto a colaborar en la búsqueda de una solución al complejo problema colombiano, por ahora, se estima preferente encauzarla a través los organismos regionales existentes, que permita ‘apostar’ fuertemente a la integración y solidaridad continental, sin lesionar nuestra aproximación bilateral con los diferentes países del subcontinente, que pudieran observar con suspicacias que Chile busque un protagonismo a espaldas de las instancias y mandatos regionales.”

Does all of the above mean that the Bachelet government prompted a shift in the balance between the *global free trader* and the *regional integrator* roles? The answer to this question is categorically “No”. The *global free trader* role remained the stronger feature of Chile’s international identity. Chile hasn’t engaged in any major regional initiative since the SADC, nor has it entered into any regional trade/integration scheme. Its behaviour indicates that open regionalism remains a strong feature of its international identity. In recent years, it has signed and ratified FTAs with five different countries and established a mini-lateral alliance called the Pacific Alliance with Colombia, Mexico and Peru (Nolte 2016, 1). In the view of the Bachelet administration, participating in the creation of the SADC needn’t mean adopting the integrationist rhetoric and practice. Instead, the leading role adopted during the SADC negotiations would allow the country to display new aspects of the diplomatic capabilities acquired by expanding the open regionalist approach to new areas (interview with García Pino). Moreover, according to Ángel Flisfisch, the country would not have feared facing the costs of being left out of the SADC, had the project not been compatible with its long term interests, such as happened with MERCOSUR and the “Banco del Sur” (interview with Flisfisch)

However, and unlike the ongoing commitment to open regionalism, there are strong arguments that this disdain for the region might in fact be fading. The pro-active performance shown by Chile as Pro-Tempore President of the UNASUR was underpinned by two resounding success stories: the SADC negotiations, and the coordination of the response to the internal crisis in Bolivia, in September 2008. As mentioned before, it is

possible to understand Chile's commitment to these processes as clear attempts to "return to the region".

Roberto Durán argues that Chile's central objective in joining the UNASUR/SADC was precisely to convince neighbouring countries of its "South American vocation" (interview with Durán). Both Durán and Ángel Flisfisch agree that it was central for Chile's strategy that the SADC regionalized the methodology developed by ECLAC to standardize and compare military expenditures between Argentina and Chile (see Footnote 87, page 196), together with other confidence building measures that were already in place between these two countries (interviews with Flisfisch; Durán) and made the Argentine-Chilean case one of the most ambitious and advanced cases of desecuritization, demilitarization, and cooperation in the defence sectors of the entire region (Battaglino 2012, 89).

Chile was particularly interested in advancing ECLAC's transparency mechanism to the regional level. Not necessarily because it wanted to know about other countries' expenditures, but rather out of the concern that others would feel threatened by Chile. Unable to over-turn the Reserved Copper Law nor conservative geopolitical thinking from the defence elites, the Bachelet administration expected this mechanism to help reduce uncertainties around its military build-up. In the mind of Bachelet and her advisors, exchanging information regarding military catalogues, budgets, and activities would help desecuritize the Chilean expenditure in this area, while also showing its intentions to act as an active and committed promoter of peace in the region.

It is of particular interest to pay attention to what Ambassador in Brasilia, Alvaro Díaz, reported regarding the visit of the Foreign Affairs Commission of Senate to Brazil. The Chilean commission and its Brazilian counterparts agreed on the following during a visit to Brazil in July,

“Regarding the SADC, both delegations highlighted the relevance of this initiative as an instance of high-level specific political dialogue, noticing the relevance that this new institutionality could have on issues like Peacekeeping, academic exchanges, the integration of the military industries, and continental defence policies, etc.”<sup>115</sup> (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2008b - translation by the author)

With the “Cruz del Sur” Joint Peacekeeping Force as the most ambitious example in the region for cooperation and policy coordination in the defence sector, Chile apparently had expectations about exporting this model to the rest of the region. This evidences how successful a policy the joint force had become, as well as how entrenched in the country’s Strategic Culture Peacekeeping Operations were.

More broadly, with the deactivation of checkerboard alliances described in the chapter on the South American security complex, the Chilean government perceived that the moment was ripe for the regionalization of an array of mutual confidence measures it had already tried and tested in its bilateral rapprochement with Argentina (interview with Mladen Yopo Herrera). Hence, the initiative to create the SADC was seen as an opportunity and a vehicle to put this region-wide scheme into practice.

Brazil<sup>116</sup> and Venezuela<sup>117</sup> were the only two countries to put forward full-fledged (if still rough) proposals for the SADC statute. The former proposed a Cooperative Security arrangement based on policy coordination and cooperation, while the latter sought a more ambitious agreement, with supranational attributes and a Collective Security

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<sup>115</sup> Original in Spanish: “En torno al Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano, ambas delegaciones resaltaron la importancia de esta iniciativa como una instancia de diálogo político específico de alto nivel, haciendo notar además la relevancia que podría adquirir esta nueva institucionalidad en temas tales como Operaciones de Paz, ayuda humanitaria en situaciones de desastre, intercambios e integración de las industrias bélicas, políticas de defensa continental, etc.”

<sup>116</sup> “Consejo Suramericano de Defensa. Marco Político Estratégico”, or South American Defence Council. Political-Strategic Framework

<sup>117</sup> “Estructura propuesta por la República Bolivariana de Venezuela para la conformación del Grupo de Trabajo sobre el Consejo de Defensa Suramericano en el marco de la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Unasur)”, or Structure proposed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the creation of the Working Group for the SADC within the context of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)

arrangement (Comini 2015). The latter, as already explained in the general introduction, called for the creation of a Collective Security arrangement usually referred to as the “NATO of the South”.

Chile, as well as the majority of other South American states, was adamant that Venezuela’s proposal was not acceptable, given its departure such initiative would represent from the “pragmatic” foreign and defence policy consensus post-1990 and the ideological distance between the *Concertación* government and President Chavez’s Bolivarian agenda (Fermandois 2011; Flandes, Nolte, and Wehner 2011, 117). In order to reassure all other South American countries, Brazilian Minister of Defence, Nelson Jobim, met with President Chávez and discussed the topic in advance of the negotiations. The Chilean Embassy in Brasilia informed in April that an understanding had been reached between the two to eliminate a Collective Security arrangement from the agenda (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2008b). This was also explicitly highlighted during the first meeting of the SADC Working Group (UNASUR, 2009, p. 206).

However, two further issues proposed by Venezuela also represented red lines that Chile was not willing to cross. The first one was the attempt to change the decision-making mechanism within the SADC from the traditionally preferred “consensus norm” (which implies unanimity, whether explicit or by abstention) to a majority rule. This suggestion was quickly rejected by all Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay) and by Colombia. It is interesting to see that in the three cases studied in this research, interviewees highlighted how it was their own country’s determination that put a stop to Venezuela’s ambition on this topic. The refusal to this supra-national decision-making process was strongly associated with a strong attachment to rigid understandings of what sovereignty is and how it must be defended. However, in Chile’s case, the preference for

open regionalism also provides an important insight into this position, since the negotiators would not have accepted any rule with the potential to limit the country's ability to deal with other (extra-regional) powers (interviews with García Pino; Flisfich).

The second Chilean objection to the Venezuelan project was against a request presented during the third SADC Working Group meeting, on 26 August, to include the following formula:

“Condemn the threats and actions in the area of Defence that hover over the peaceful coexistence of our peoples and their democratic systems of government, and reject the presence or action of illegal armed groups and the IV Fleet, which exercise or promote violence, whichever its origin.”<sup>118</sup> (UNASUR, 2009, p.227 underlining in the original, translation by the author)

This last-minute proposal meant that the approval of the draft statute was delayed by around four months, since a fourth (unexpected) meeting of the Working Group had to be organized when a consensus could not be reached during the August meeting. The Venezuelan proposal far beyond from a distant threat to Chile's ability to conduct its foreign policy with an open regionalist mind-set. It actually antagonized one of the country's most important extra-regional allies, and one that had made clear that it “liked the idea” of the SADC, but also expected Chile not to “lose the voice that makes them unique in the US' eyes” (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2008c). Chile was not willing to have such thing happen over the SADC.

Most likely, Venezuela's proposal was only a bluff, destined to be discarded from the outset. President Chávez could not have expected anything different, having countries so

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<sup>118</sup> Original in Spanish: “Condenar las amenazas y acciones que en materia de defensa se ciernen sobre la convivencia pacífica de nuestros pueblos y sus sistemas democráticos de gobierno y rechazar la presencia o acción de grupos armados ilegales y la IV Flota, que ejercen o propicien la violencia, cualquier sea su origen”

strongly connected to the US as Chile and Colombia in front of himself. Nevertheless, it took a big diplomatic effort for the Chilean diplomacy to go back to the original arrangement, which was “not meant against anyone” (interview with Labbé).

To sum up, Chile’s agenda included a number of central elements that were deeply intertwined with its narrative regarding its participation in the SADC negotiations and its role as a regional power. Among the main features of this agenda, perhaps the most relevant are: signalling the country’s “return to the region”; protecting its commitment to open regionalism while engaging in ambitious regional negotiations; showing that it could be a reliable partner for its neighbours, putting its own “exceptional” characteristics at the service of the region; the mutual confidence measures developed with Argentina were to be regionalized, particularly the cooperative and coordinated participation in Peacekeeping Operations; and, though circumstantial, containing Venezuela.

## **Conclusion**

One of the key questions this chapter addressed was whether the long-term policy preference for extra-regional political and trade relations over regional partnerships had permeated the country’s Strategic Culture. The conclusion was that, indeed, Chile’s “withdrawal” acted as a reinforcement to the exceptionalist self-perception and the strong geopolitical views entrenched among defence elites. The resulting negative perception of regional affairs, in general, and of its immediate neighbours, in particular, meant that Chile saw its situation as one of vulnerability and constant threat. Securitizing its relations with potential regional partners in this way has meant that the military doctrine and defence

policy of the country incorporated norms like the possibility of launching preventive strikes, showing a high degree of activism and a low threshold of domestic legitimization for the violent use of its military apparatus.

Understanding the direct and continuing influence of the 1973-1990 dictatorship is as important to properly comprehend the recent evolution of this country's Strategic Culture as is accounting for the persistent intra-elite tensions between Conservative/Pinochetist and reformists sectors. This tension, itself related to unresolved divisions that can be traced back to the dictatorial period, has created a stalemate in terms of modernizing and demilitarizing the country's defence policy and Strategic Culture. As a result, defence elites associated with subsequent *Concertación* administrations have had a hard time advancing any normative, institutional, or doctrinal reforms.

The political elites that came to power since 1990 have tried to revert, or at least mitigate, this situation, but only mildly in the beginning. Chile focused most of its diplomatic efforts between the early-1990s and the late-2000s to negotiate bilateral FTAs, effectively turning trade negotiations into the cornerstone of its foreign policy, and putting significant diplomatic efforts into becoming member of the OECD<sup>119</sup>. This showed a strong continuity with the economic policies put in place by the "Chicago Boys" and other economic elites during the dictatorship. Only after signing FTAs with actors like Canada (1996), the EU (2002), the US (2003), China (2005), Japan (2007) and Australia (2008), among others, did mini-lateral initiatives with like-minded Latin American countries<sup>120</sup> not related to trade liberalization come into its agenda.

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<sup>119</sup> The application was officially presented to the organization in November 2003, while membership was granted in May 2010. Chile remains South America's only OECD-member country to date.

<sup>120</sup> Particularly, the Pacific Alliance, an initiative between Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru created in 2012 to reduce trade barriers, integrate stock markets, and eventually share diplomatic missions in countries in which none of the four members have diplomatic representation.

In the defence sector, on the other hand, the veto power that the Armed Forces and old defence elites retained after the democratic transition meant that new defence elites coming to power had to seek normative innovation in areas that were perceived as secondary and faced less resistance. Engaging in UN-sanctioned Peacekeeping Operations and “returning” to multilateral governance mechanisms like the UNSC became important avenues from which reforms to the dominant Strategic Culture could be conceived. They also had direct effects in terms of crystalizing the country’s position with regards to the international legitimization for the use of force, adopting a position defending a high threshold of legitimization at the UNSC. Similarly, UN-sanctioned interventions in the form of Peacekeeping Operations came to be seen by the country as legitimate goals for the use of its military apparatus outside Chilean national borders.

The Strategic Culture and military doctrine still include atavistic geopolitical views informing negative perceptions of regional affairs. Nevertheless, this element seems to be receding as younger generations start to take leading roles among the defence elites and as the epistemic community becomes more active in policy-making processes.

The most important landmark in that quest to modify the Strategic Culture of the country, however, was the political decision to start a ground-breaking rapprochement process with Argentina, explained in more detail in the previous chapter. The 1984 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and the peaceful agreements over border disputed during the 1990s, helped start an unprecedented process of rapprochement cemented by the creation of wide-reaching Confidence Building schemes (Caro 1995; Lt.Col. Arancibia-Clavel 2007). The positive bilateral relation built in the last two decades means that traditional geopolitical thinkers have been “robbed” of the single biggest threat they perceived in the regional environment, effectively helping demilitarize Chile’s approach

to regional affairs. Equally important, the relationship with Argentina gave birth to an array of Confidence Building measures that have become the blueprint for other rapprochement processes in Latin America, and that both countries have actively tried to regionalize through their influence in shaping the SADC. As has been argued elsewhere, the re-definition of this bilateral relation has not only been fundamental to the recent evolution of the Strategic Cultures and normative priors of these countries, but also to the region as a whole. The agenda brought by Chile to the SADC negotiations, as well as its entire attitude towards the possibility of regional defence cooperation and policy coordination, are directly related to the way its bilateral relation with Argentina evolved in the past three decades, affecting the webs of meanings that inform the country's perception of the regional security environment and the selection of responses to it. This builds up on the argument that a socially constructed Strategic Culture decodes regional incentives and constraints to inform action (agency), which in turn has the ability to transform the social structure. In this case, the effects of the Chilean Strategic Culture on the social arrangements related to the regional security environment come with the decisive role the country had in shaping the SADC statute, setting up a framework whose objectives circled around the idea of expanding of the zone of positive peace present in the Southern Cone to the rest of the region.

Another staple of Chile's foreign policy that helps explain its position in the negotiations is the long-held objective of being perceived as a reliable and trustworthy partner (Bernal-Meza 2005). This meant that failing to assume the *pro tempore* Presidency of the UNASUR was out of the question. But assuming a protagonist role in coordinating and leading the SADC negotiations also responds to the above mentioned idea that multilateral fora like the SADC could help turn South America into a positive zone of peace. This goal breeds directly from the Strategic Norms developed since the

1990s in relation to the role of holding cooperative relations as a means to achieve higher levels of international security, complementing (and usually entirely replacing) the role formerly given to that end to military preparation.

All of the above does not mean that the traditional geopolitical views and negative perceptions of regional affairs that defined how defence elites understood Chile's relation with the region have lost all relevance. They remain influential, and groups still adhering to them hold the keys to block significant pieces of legislation aiming to further reform the defence sector, particularly in relation to the funding of the Armed Forces. However, contestation to the dominant cooperative Strategic Culture has faced relevant blows in the past two decades, and the success story that the rapprochement with Argentina has been further debilitated their chances of fear-mongering, necessary to make a highly confrontational rhetoric such as the one they advanced stick.

Had Chile's "detachment" strategy remained strong with the *Concertación* governments, as it did through the 1990s, the only way to understand the decision to join the SADC would have been as an anomaly related to the political preferences of President Bachelet. Rather, I argue that Chile's shift of behaviour can be explained as the result of a long-term process that re-defined domestic normative priors that structure the country's relation with its defence apparatus. According to Ambassador Labbé, in addition to the meanings attached to the defence sector that informed the country's agency, Chile also attached such relevance to the successful conclusion of these negotiations because it perceived them as an opportunity to project a renewed international image. The objective was to re-define the degree of involvement and role of the country in the region, presenting it as an efficient, effective, and reliable partner (interview with Labbé). Furthermore, this decision shows that the cross-party consensus over the regional

multilateral governance organizations characteristic of Chilean foreign policy before 1973 might be making a return after spending decades vanquished from power.

As a result of all of the arguments discussed above, it is safe to conclude that Chile's agreement to join the SADC negotiations had little, if anything, to do with Brazilian leadership/hegemony over regional affairs. As García Pino pointed out, Chile did not have in its immediate agenda to participate in the creation of an institution of this nature. However, forcing a discussion on the topic by putting the SADC in the agenda seems to be the entire extent of the Brazilian influence on Chilean actions. The domestic Strategic Culture had gone through a series of developments since 1990 that made the country not only permeable to the possibility of the SADC, but also eager to actively instil the new organization with its Strategic Norms, proving that it was the interaction between structure and agents that gave shape to this regional arrangement.



## Chapter 7. Colombia

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### Securitization and containment of “Chavism”

#### Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to analyse the cultural causes behind Colombia’s decision to join the SADC negotiations, how the key points in its negotiating agenda relate to its Strategic Culture, and what that means in terms of the redefinition of social arrangements defining the regional security environment. Arguably, based both on the country’s security practices and foreign policy preferences, Colombia represents the most puzzling of the three cases discussed in this research.

*A priori*, key characteristics of the Colombian case make it seem like the most improvable candidate to join the SADC, or any regional security cooperation initiative circumscribed to this region for that matter. Indeed, a Memorandum sent from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile to its embassy in Bogota maintains that, as early as February 2008, the Colombian government expressed concerns over the gestation of the UNASUR. According to Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Araújo Perdomo (2007-2008), his country was concerned over the influence President Hugo Chávez was allegedly

acquiring in the nascent grouping<sup>121</sup>. As a result, Minister Araújo suggested his Chilean counterpart that the responsibility to coordinate the 2008 Presidential Summit should be swapped from Colombia to Brazil, due to growing tensions between that country and Venezuela (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2008d). Indeed, immediately after the Angostura bombings took place, in March 2008, the government of Colombia decided to excuse itself from assuming UNASUR's Pro Tempore Presidency (which would have entailed not only organizing the UNASUR Presidential Summit, but also coordinating the creation of the SADC), a role swiftly passed to Chile.

Moreover, the first instinct of President Álvaro Uribe's administration was to reject the SADC initiative (AFP 2008b), which he did in two different occasions on the grounds that his country had to deal with its domestic "terrorism" problem before engaging in any form of defence cooperation (The Washington Times 2008). This reaction forced Brazilian President, Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva, to travel to Bogota exclusively to convince Uribe of the opposite (AFP 2008a). Not a week after Colombia agreed to join the negotiations, Minister of Defence Juan Manuel Santos maintained that he was still cautious since the goals the organization pursued were not clear (C-SPAN 2008), showing that the country's participation was by no means a sign of total agreement nor a *carte blanche* to Brazil.

The central argument of this chapter is that Colombia's reserves about the creation of the SADC are deeply embedded into the particular characteristics of its political and social history, which have permeated into the country's Strategic Culture and caused the country to grow apart from the rest of South America in aspects relating to its foreign and

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<sup>121</sup> The blatant "defeat" of the Venezuelan position during the negotiations to create the SADC shows the inability of the Chavist agenda to actually influence institutional outcomes in South America. This seems to point either towards an exaggerated perception of President Chavez's influence over regional affairs, or to a more generalized lack of trust for regional political initiatives (or both) on the Colombian side.

defence policies; preferred ways and goals for international cooperation; legitimate goals for the use of force; and, domestic and international threshold of authorization.

Yet, the puzzle lies in that Colombia not only participated in the discussions, but did so adopting a highly active profile. It presented a set of demands and a negotiating agenda that evidenced the many points of divergence between its defence concerns and those of other countries in the region. The strong departure that the Colombian Strategic Culture shows with other South American countries, and particularly with the basic consensus that seemed to exist among the members of the ABC axis, makes this case particularly interesting in terms of unveiling the role (sub)systemic context and domestic conditions have in informing the agency of regional actors. Moreover, given that Colombia managed to get some of its demands included in the SADC statute, this chapter will show the relation between domestic cultural features and normative priors with international action and, through it, the constitution of the regional social structure. Hence, the starting point for this chapter is to unveil the characteristics of the Colombian Strategic Culture, seeking to understand the reach and implications of the Strategic Norms that sustain it by looking at the political and social conditions that contributed in their development.

As shown at some length in the Argentine and Chilean cases, the pendulum between constitutional and dictatorial regimes has affected the understanding of the roles and legitimacy of the Armed Forces in many South American countries. The ability of the defence elites emerged of the recent democratization processes to re-negotiate the cultural, normative, and legal frameworks that define the meanings attached to the defence sector has been largely dependent on the levels of legitimacy the Armed Forces retained after the transition. In other words, the critical junction that democratic

transition was in the two cases analysed before provided momentum and incentives, but also constraints, for the renegotiation of Strategic Cultures and normative priors.

Colombia went through none of the above in recent decades, having had an uninterrupted constitutional order since 1958 (Taylor 2009, 19). However, holding regular elections does not imply that the meanings attached to the defence sector, the debates about defence and security policies, the decision-making mechanisms related to them, nor their implementation and control have been handled democratically. Although the incorporation of more civilian experts to the process of defence planning and policy-making has been in the agenda since the 1991 Constitutional Reform and with the designation of a civilian Minister of Defence in 1992 (Jaramillo Caro 2010, 66), recent changes to Strategic Culture and norms did not take away the near monopoly military elites have had over the definition of threats, strategic planning, and normative priors broadly speaking. The legal and institutional modifications introduced by the administrations of President Andrés Pastrana Arango (1998-2002) and President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2006; 2006-2010) heavily reinforced the attributions and autonomy of the Armed Forces, advancing an expansion of the legitimized uses of force; helping lower the threshold of authorization; maintaining negative perceptions of the region and defence cooperation with regional partners; and, actively working to attract US security and defence cooperation. Moreover, former Vice-Minister for Political and International Affairs at the Ministry of Defence (and Head of Colombia's SADC negotiating team), put into question the need to establish a clear civilian/political leadership over the military apparatus, stating that

“I personally dislike the concept of a civilian Ministry of Defence. That is erroneous. There needs to be a civilian Minister of Defence, answering politically for what the Ministry does and steering its actions; but, beyond the civilian minister, there are

different types of solutions [*sic*], and what is necessary is the joint work of civilians and military”<sup>122</sup> (Jaramillo Caro 2010)

The above quote highlights a recurrent rejection towards processes of modernization in the defence sector. In countries like Argentina and Chile, in which establishing a civilian control over the Armed Forces became tantamount to stabilizing the democratic rule, processes like planning, policy-making, and implementation have increasingly incorporated civilian public servants and academics. This has not meant, however, that military experts were excluded altogether. Yet, Vice-Minister Jaramillo seems to imply that that is precisely what happened, rejecting such possibility. Something similar happened with the proposed regionalization of the Argentine-Chilean model for military expenditures information exchange, introduced in the Actions Plans of the SADC. Despite it being a confidence building and transparency tool<sup>123</sup>, Colombian defence elites saw this as a means to control and restrict Colombian expenditures (interview with Moreno). This is quite telling of the deeply entrenched constructions that define Colombia’s threat perceptions and definition of its defensive approach towards regional affairs.

Since the main driver of recent normative changes was not renouncing and rectifying previous practices of the defence sector (as in the Southern Cone), but freeing it to tackle the domestic conflict unconstrained, the resulting Strategic Culture of the country is in many aspects diametrically opposite to those discussed in the two previous cases. I argue

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<sup>122</sup> Original in Spanish: “A mí personalmente no me gusta el concepto de que el Ministerio de Defensa sea civil. Ésa es una concepción equivocada. Hay que tener un ministro de Defensa civil que responde políticamente por todo lo que hace el ministerio y le da un direccionamiento, pero más allá de ese ministro civil, hay diferentes tipos de soluciones y lo que se requiere es un trabajo mancomunado entre civiles y militares.”

<sup>123</sup> Detlef Nolte and Leslie Wehner (2013) have suggested that regionalizing this instrument could also be part of an Argentine-Chilean agenda to have a closer knowledge of Brazilian military doctrines and expenditure, but there is little (if any) concrete evidence in that sense other than the claim that defence elites are constantly concerned with Brazilian military expansion plans. Moreover, this is precisely why such a transparency mechanism works as a confidence building tool.

that the history of domestic conflicts and their re-labelling (articulated between the late-1990s and the early-2000s) are key to understand the web of meanings that make up the dominant understanding of the defence sector, which became evident at the time of the SADC negotiations. The negotiating agenda brought by Colombia to the negotiations reflects a highly activist Strategic Culture, with low thresholds of authorization, and limits between the realms of security and defence that are almost non-existent. Hence, the contributions made by this country to the regional security environment through the SADC closely reflect its high threat perception (particularly regarding Venezuela and its closer allies) and an interest to obtain regional legitimization for its militarized approach to dealing with domestic conflicts.

This makes a brief discussion about the conditions of violence and instability that prompted such response essential to properly understand how Colombia's Strategic Culture came to be what it is today. The prolonged domestic conflict that has shaped Colombian society and politics for decades is at the core of how its Strategic Norms have been constructed, and hence play a big role in shaping these country's perception of its regional security environment. Understanding them in some detail is key to provide a nuanced analysis of the intentions and agendas behind its participation in the SADC.

Of the three case studies, Colombia is the only one in which the defence elites interviewed shared a decisively negative image of South American politics and security environment, which they largely perceived as hostile, unstable, lacking leadership, ideologically-motivated, and unreliable. In both other case studies, there was at least some degree of ideational, cultural and/or institutional preparedness to welcome an initiative related to regional defence cooperation. Colombia, on the other hand, lacked this initial permeability. Even having achieved many of its objectives during the negotiations,

the creation of the SADC was seen as a sub-optimal development in itself (interviews with Lugari; Bermúdez). This, again, begs the question as to what led the country to join the organization. My argument is that, feeling isolated from and not comprehended by other regional powers, Colombia joined the negotiations for two main reasons: defence elites thought it was up to them to contain a “left-wing overtake of regional discourses and practices”; and, there was the expectation that the SADC might help obtain some support, understanding, solidarity, or cooperation from regional partners for Colombia’s militarized approach to its domestic conflict.

In order to address the issues briefly described above, identify the defining elements of Colombia’s Strategic Culture, and find a plausible relation between them and Colombia’s stance during the SADC negotiations, the present chapter is organized in two sections, each including two sub-sections. The first of these sections discussed, as in the previous chapters, the historical backdrop and the social processes that shaped Colombia’s Strategic Culture at the time of the SADC Working Group meetings. In order to do so, the first sub-section will engage more explicitly with the historical context and how it drove the country’s understanding about the appropriate roles and uses of its military apparatus. The second subsection, on the other hand, identifies more specifically the building blocks of the country’s Strategic Culture, relating them to the legal and institutional instruments on which these Strategic Norms rest.

The second section discusses more explicitly and directly the Colombian position during the negotiations, as well as how it was influenced by the normative commitments associated to its Strategic Culture. To do this, a first sub-section discusses the view local defence elites had of the regional security environment, in order to later associate that

culturally constructed perception with the specific negotiating agenda brought by the Colombian delegation.

## **The evolution of Colombia's Strategic Culture**

As briefly mentioned above, Colombia has not experienced an event comparable to the democratization processes seen in Argentina and Chile that could explain alterations to its Strategic Culture in recent years. Yet, this country has experienced a protracted domestic conflict between the state and non-state armed groups for over 50 years. Moreover, since the cocaine business exploded in the mid-1980s, the contribution of funds and incentives for domestic violence grew exponentially. It is precisely this process of aggravation of the domestic conflict, with the corresponding state response to it that led the way of normative and cultural innovation with regards to the defence sector. For motives that will become evident in the coming pages, I identify the 2001 re-framing of the domestic conflict in terms of the then global "War on Terror" (newly launched by the US after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington) as the breaking point for Colombia's Strategic Culture.

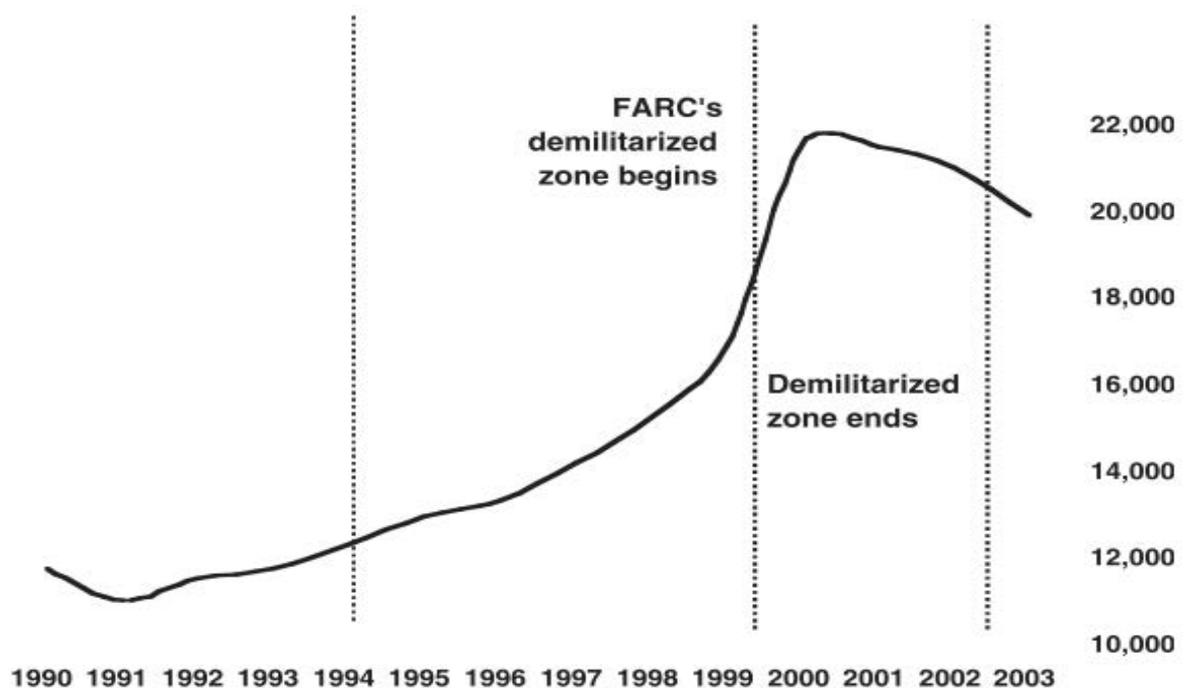
### Historical context: The Colombian defence sector pre-2001

#### *Brief introduction to Colombia's domestic conflict*

Victor Uribe provides an apt summary of the long, complex, and intertwined domestic conflicts that have marked Colombian history (Uribe 2017, 37). Though there was a

period of relative peace and stability during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>124</sup>, domestic violence has been present, almost uninterrupted, since the 1950s onwards<sup>125</sup>. The FARC, the most relevant of all rural guerrilla groups that emerged from *La Violencia*, is a major actor to understand the violence engulfing Colombia's recent history. Having endured almost four decades of low intensity, quasi-military confrontation with the Colombian security and defence forces, this guerrilla group reached its peak membership and territorial control by the early-2000s.

Graph 5. Evolution of FARC's manpower, 1990-2003

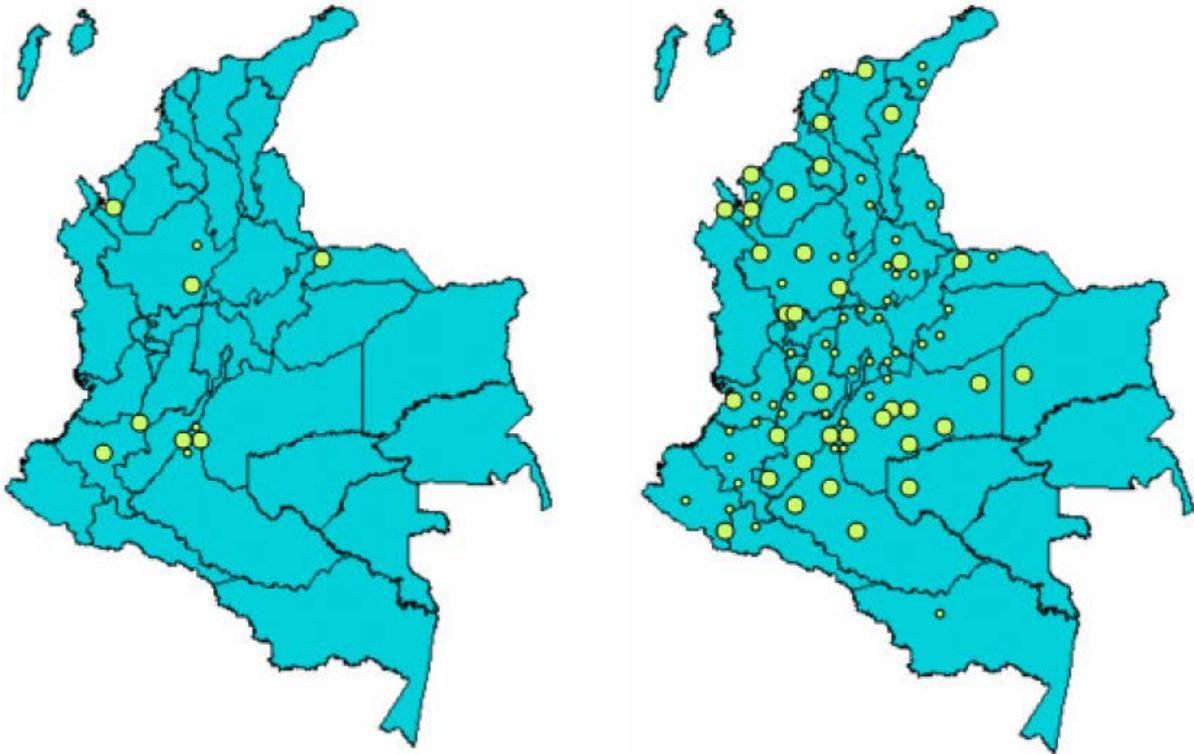


Source: (Arnson 2004, 5)

<sup>124</sup> The 19th century was plagued with domestic conflicts, the most violent of which was the “Thousand Days War” (1899-1902) with the gruesome record of 100.000 casualties (Uribe 2017).

<sup>125</sup> The assassination of the popular liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, during the 1948 presidential campaign, ignited domestic tensions between the leadership and followers of the liberal and conservative parties, leading to a ten-year period of exacerbated confrontations known as *La Violencia* (“the violence”). This period claimed the lives of over 250.000 people, mostly from rural areas, and it is precisely from its ashes that the different rural guerrilla groups that until recently controlled vast areas of Colombian territory would emerge.

Graph 6. FARC military activity, 1980-2000



Source: (Sánchez Torres, Diaz, and Formisano 2003, 12)

In addition to this, around 1997, a paramilitary group known as the AUC (*Auto-defensas Unidas de Colombia*, or United Colombian Self-Defences) became politically and militarily prominent as well. Initially, the self-assigned mission of this group was to defend the interests of land-owners and cattle ranchers affected by the territorial disputes between drug cartels and guerrillas. However, having found a shared interest in the *status quo* with the drug cartels, they openly turned against the guerrillas and adopted a more political position since the mid-1990s (Vauters and Smith 2006, 168–70). Within a few years, the AUC became a relevant para-state player, controlling with an iron fist the territories and drug business in their areas of influence (Arnson 2005, 9). By the turn of the century, the paramilitary had become a political, military and social project (not so) covertly supported by the State (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Washington

Office on Latin America 2002, 3; Velásquez Rivera 2007, 138). At the moment the AUC unilaterally declared a cease fire and started DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) negotiations with the Uribe administration, in 2002, its membership had reached 12.000 people and was identified as the perpetrator of 115 massacres, murdering 680 people, and forcing the displacement of 424.354 more (Valencia Agudelo 2007, 49).

The strengthening of the FARC and the AUC, in parallel with the increasingly militarized counter-narcotics policies of the Colombian government, took the domestic scenario to a whole new level of violence as drug cartels, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and state forces fought and cooperated to increase their respective political and economic power (Cornell 2007, 219–20). This built up on a historically weak federal authority, which had problem in enforcing the law across the Colombian territory due to the geographical fragmentation of the country and to the suspicions of local leaders eager to maintain their power (Bagley 2009, 2–3). Until the mid-1990s the federal government had barely managed to maintain well-functioning Armed Forces (Bagley 2009; Orjuela Escobar 2000; Uribe 2017; Velez de Berliner 2009). In this context of violent territorial disputes between arrays of different actors, state forces decided to follow an “enemy of my enemy is my friend” strategy and establish an informal cooperation with the paramilitaries. The state security and defence forces willingly ignored the illegal activities of the paramilitaries, and the latter got more actively involved in fighting the guerrillas in return. As Vauters and Smith put it, “The Colombian military lacks the mandate or means to launch a full-scale war against the guerrillas, so they often employ the ruthlessness and power of the narco-paramilitaries to extend their reach.” (Vauters and Smith 2006, 170).

According to a thorough econometric analysis conducted by Fabio Sánchez Torres and María del Mar Palau (2006, 14, 24–26), the expansion of armed activity by the FARC and other paramilitary groups strongly correlates with the decentralization process that started in the mid-1980s. The authors attribute this to two factors: the reduced repressive capacity of local governments; and, the increased “pot” these governments started to receive turned them into more desirable targets. Moreover, they conclude that, though decentralization reduced some of the socio-economic conditions that had traditionally brought support to left-wing movements, the availability of resources created incentives for paramilitary groups to establish a more permanent presence and dispute territorial control from civilian authorities. Moreover, Silvia Mantilla Valbuena’s research (2012, 38–58) challenges the few allegedly positive socio-economic effects of decentralization noted by Sánchez Torres and del Mar Palau. She maintains that the abrupt changes in the country’s productive and rural ownership structures caused by neoliberal reforms resulted in large numbers of displaced and impoverished people. As a result, these reforms created an audience vulnerable to the appeal of para-state actors with the capacity to provide some degree of security, governance, and public services. Hence, while blaming neoliberalism as the lone cause for negative developments in Colombia is an excessively reductionist approach, it is also important not to forget that it was indeed a major contributing factor to explain how the FARC and the AUC managed to reach the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a position of economic, territorial and military strength never seen before (Arnson 2004; Mantilla Valbuena 2012).

In addition to the above, an unprecedented amount of funding was obtained by the FARC and the AUC since the mid-1990, when they filled the vacuum left in the narcotics market by the disarticulation of the Medellín and Cali cartels. Led by a sharp increase of in-country cocaine producing facilities and the development of traffic networks into the

US, the consolidation and expansion of drug-related activities in the country since the late-1970s poured seemingly unlimited economic resources into and already conflictive society (Moreano 2010, 242). According to Ricardo Rocha García's extensive report for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the equivalent to 3% of Colombia's annual GDP was repatriated yearly by traffickers between 1982 and 1998 (Rocha García 2000, 28). The availability of these economic resources in the hands of drug cartels would bring the levels of domestic violence to an all-time high, as criminal organizations tried to keep control over territories, traffic routes, and market positions. Perhaps the best known and most brutal example of this is the Medellín cartel (Pablo Escobar's criminal organization), whose resort to brutal violence reached almost mythical proportions (Reuter 2009, 277).

However, it was actually the fall of the Medellín and Cali cartels, the two largest criminal organizations in the country, which brought the domestic situation to a tipping point. The FARC and the AUC became the only organizations with enough organizational structure and territorial control to properly fill the vacuum (Peceny and Durnan 2006, 101–10). But, unlike the profit-driven, pragmatic drug cartels, these two organizations also had strong ideological and political agendas that benefited from the new stream of funding (Bagley 2000, 14–17; Mantilla Valbuena 2012; Thoumi 2010, 39). Though it is impossible to obtain accurate figures about the revenue flow into either group from these illegal activities, rough estimates put the amount well within the hundreds of millions of US dollars per year (Bagley 2000). As a result, and for the first time in decades, the guerrilla had sufficient resources to inflict "major defeats" on Colombian Armed Forces (Uribe 2017). According to data gathered by Thomas Bruneau,

"In 2001, more than 2000 unarmed civilians were assassinated [...]. 200,000 civilians were forced from their land due to threats and terrorism. In the first nine months of

2002, 121 politicians or public officials were assassinated [...]. Many roads, even between major towns, are unsafe due to guerrilla roadblocks. In 2001 the petroleum infrastructure suffered 170 attacks, costing the country \$520 million. [...] The average per year of homicide in Colombia is 25,000. [...] In 2001 more than 2000 Colombians were kidnapped by the guerrillas and the paramilitaries (1923 and 262 respectively). Kidnapping is used not only for finance but also to intimidate the government in that those kidnapped include 145 political leaders and public officials..." (Bruneau 2003, 1-2)

Despite having used the Armed Forces and federal security forces to intervene in specific cases before, the seemingly uncontrollable escalation of violence seen in the mid-1990s justified in the eyes of the Pastrana and Uribe administrations the decision to militarize the conflict. This required meaningful changes to the Strategic Norms of the country, which in time would come to inform the Colombian position with regards to the SADC.

### *Internationalization of the conflict*

Another element to understand the reasons behind the modification introduced to the Colombian Strategic Culture has been extensively studied by Sandra Borda (2012, 62-78), who analyses the process of internationalization of the domestic conflict. According to Borda, this process cannot be understood merely in terms of a hegemonic adventure by the US seeking to stabilize its "backyard". Instead, her research points to a strong element of Colombian agency involved since the 1990s, and more particularly during the Pastrana and Uribe administrations. In nurturing this process, Colombian political elites made a decision that would alter the dynamics of the conflict entirely, not only because of the material and doctrinal input brought into the situation by foreign powers, but also because of the legal and normative changes that this would require.

The involvement of the US in Colombia's domestic problems had started as a counter-narcotics operation headed by the Drugs Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the 1980s, and for most part refrained from (openly) participating in counter-insurgency activities carried out by the Colombian authorities against guerrilla and paramilitary actors (Feickert 2005, 16–17; Tokatlian 1988). This only started to change when President Pastrana invited the US government to take part in the San Vicente del Caguán peace negotiations with the FARC (1998-2002) and in the oversight of the demilitarized zones that would be created through them. However, quickly after the peace talks proved to be unsuccessful, the Colombian government started lobbying for increased military cooperation to deal with the domestic conflict. Given the Post-Vietnam trauma, selling this military intervention to the US public and political elites was not quite the same as inviting them to participate in peace talks (Pfaff 2001; Szulc 2000). Instead, President Clinton accepted to increase counter-narcotics cooperation, which could be sold to US voters as an effort to revert domestic drug-abuse by cutting the supply, while also helping cut one of the main sources of funding paramilitary and guerrilla groups had at their disposal.

*Plan Colombia* was approved in 2000, after over a year of debates in Washington and Bogota. The Clinton administration committed to provide over US\$ 1.3 billion over a three-year period, 70% of which ended up being devoted to “military cooperation” of different sorts (Vaicius and Isacson 2003). After the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration entirely refocused its aid and military cooperation strategies towards the “War on Terror”, lifting many restrictions on military aid in order to fund anti-terrorist efforts by partner states, regardless of their track record (Sullivan, Tessman, and Li 2011, 276). Quick action was necessary by the Colombian government to secure US commitment remained intact or, ideally, increased. A recently elected Álvaro Uribe deployed a re-framing strategy that managed to sell US involvement in Colombia as part of the “Global

War on Terror”, despite how outrageous the alleged link between the two seemed to local and foreign analysts (interview with Borda). The links between the FARC and terrorist organizations abroad were limited to an informal (though fluid) relation with the Irish IRA and Basque ETA, who provided advice and training over the years (Millett 2002). Colombian authorities had referred to the domestic conflict with the guerrilla in terms of “anti-terrorism” with goal of delegitimizing para-state armed actors, but experts agree that the inclusion of Colombia in the US global anti-terrorist crusade was but a discursive fabrication by the Uribe administration to attract the interest of the US. And it worked. The original budgetary and cooperation commitment was expanded to reach a total of over U\$S 7.3 billion for the 2000-2010 period (Isacson 2010) as a result of Colombian ingenuity to exploit the redefinition of US macro-securitization and priorities.

Arlene Tickner’s notion of “intervention by invitation” (Tickner 2007) highlights precisely the Colombian agency in this process. As a result, the US redefined its involvement in the country, aiming its cooperation and efforts against “terrorists”, actively and openly providing support in the counter-insurgency efforts of the Colombian government. Hence, while former US Ambassador to Colombia Anne W. Patterson (2000–2003) had once remarked that “the main goal of the [*Plan Colombia*] is combating illegal drugs” (Vauters and Smith 2006), the successful re-framing strategy led her to claim that

“The *Plan Colombia* continues to be the most effective anti-terrorist strategy we could have ever designed. The *Plan Colombia* will prevent the guerrilla and the AUC from obtaining the vast resources of drug traffic.”<sup>126</sup> (Revista Semana 2001 translation by the author)

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<sup>126</sup> Original in Spanish: “El Plan Colombia sigue siendo la estrategia antiterrorista más efectiva que podíamos haber diseñado jamás. El Plan Colombia privará a la guerrilla y a las autodefensas de los grandes recursos del narcotráfico”.

As a result, Colombia can be identified as one of the few South American countries, and the only one included in this research, that fully incorporated to its policy and normatively embraced the US-sponsored militarization of the response to the “new threats” agenda, first accepting its policy preferences with regards to drug-trafficking under the umbrella of the “War on Drugs” and later eagerly calling for military cooperation under the label of the “War on Terror”. It is important to highlight at this point that this was not just a case of passive accommodation to US interests, but rather the slow development of coinciding cultural and normative positions that became fully amalgamated with the US agenda under President Uribe’s mandate.

#### *Colombia’s regional stance*

A final element that is worth mentioning before discussing Colombia’s Strategic Culture evolution is the country’s position in the South American Security Complex. President Uribe’s strategy was to sell the Colombian conflict as a crucial part in both the US counter-narcotics and counter-terrorist strategies, hinting at the notion that the country shared enough security ties with the US so as to consider it a part of the North American Security complex (Carranza 2009, 292). Such situation would not be problematic in analytical terms for the RSCT framework, since Colombia fulfils the geographical criterion of contiguity and has developed strong security interactions with different actors of the North American region (interview with Lugari).

Even if one was to doubt Colombia’s full membership to the North American Security Complex, it would still be possible to consider it an “insulator state”. Buzan and Waever’s theory argues that if a state does not fully belong with the security dynamics of any complex, but rather sits between two complexes with which it shares borders, then it

should be labelled an “insulator state”. Unlike buffer states, which are at the centre of a region’s security relations and “mediate” the border between two rival regional powers, insulators are at the edges of two different regions and belong to none.

The above are, however, problematic ideas. On the one hand, Colombia’s domestic conflict has not spilled over into the US, other than in the form of creating some concern among defence elites regarding potential contagion in neighbouring countries and the overall instability of the region (Millett 2002). On the other hand, the transnational security concerns created by the interaction between drug production and traffic, politics, impoverished societies, and a lack of sufficient enforcement capabilities by the local government have created dynamics that are shared by an increasing number of South American countries. While Peru and Bolivia have traditionally been the other two big cocaine producers in the region, countries like Argentina and Brazil that had traditionally served as logistical hubs to triangulate illegal drugs to Africa, Asia, and Europe (Belton 2016; Gomis 2014) have now also become providers of chemical precursors, mature markets for these products, and disputed territories for local and regional players that have driven a substantial escalation in violence levels (Derghougassian, Evans, and Kuzniecki 2013; LaSusa 2016; Miraglia 2016, 3–4). Moreover, the FARC has not only created a (weakening) support network among the left-leaning parties of the region, but its trans-border activities have caused the Colombian conflict to spill over the region in the form of tensions with Venezuela and the bombing in the Ecuadorian region of Angostura<sup>127</sup>, which is often cited as a key factor that accelerated the creation of the SADC.

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<sup>127</sup> A military attack by the Colombian Armed Forces took place in the Angostura region (Ecuador) on 1st March, 2008, targeting FARC’s Second in Command, known by the alias of Raúl Reyes. Ecuadorian President, Rafael Correa, denounced the violation of his country’s sovereignty (Grupo de Trabajo del CDS, 2009, p. 117) and broke bilateral diplomatic relations within few days of the event. Colombian authorities defended their right to conduct the attack on the grounds of lack of cooperation to deal with the FARC campsite by Ecuador. Secret documents sent from the Chilean embassy in Bogota to Santiago reports that Brazilian Ambassador in Colombia, Valdemar Carneiro Leao, was certain that the military operation had been directly

Though Colombia has indeed militarized and securitized its domestic conflict to levels that neither of its neighbours see appropriate, there seems to be an increasing openness towards this type of approaches in various other South American countries in recent years (Gagne 2015; Woody 2015). This has given strength to the idea that Colombia could in fact cooperate with regional partners providing its expertise in counter-narcotics/counter-insurgency strategies and thus become a “net security exporter” (Lukacs 2012; Tickner 2014, 4–5). Also, traditional South American security dynamics such as militarized bargaining (Mares 2001) and crossed alliances (Kelly 1997) continue to play a role in Colombia’s repertoire and Strategic Culture.

This points to the conclusion that Colombia still shares stronger security concerns and practices with South America than it does with the North American region, and hence that its membership to the South American Security Complex cannot yet be put completely in doubt. Buzan and Waever make another relevant point about the nature of the Colombia-US relations, stating that they consider themselves to be “inter-regional”:

“Does the link become more global than interregional with a potential redefinition of the US effort in and around Colombia as part of ‘the war on terrorism’ (a global effort) rather than ‘the war on drugs’ (de facto hemispheric)? So far this has not been the case, because the activities are not tightly integrated into a coherent ‘war’ that structures in

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ordered by President Uribe (Ambassador Gaspar, March 2008 No.126; Ambassador Gaspar, October 2008 No. 582).

Colombia claimed that diplomatic notes and intelligence data confirming Reyes’ location in Ecuadorian territory had been sent to President Correa’s administration, with no satisfactory cooperation provided in response. In their eyes, this everything but confirmed the Ecuadorian connivance with and support to the guerrillas (interviews with Bermúdez; Moreno). Data gathered from computers recovered from the bombing site seem to confirm some degree of interaction between the FARC and members of the Ecuadorian government. Ecuador, however, rejected the accusations. Bilateral tensions started to de-escalate only after the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, with the mediation of the Carter Centre and other interested actors, agreed to resume diplomatic relations in September 2009.

Hernán Moreano points out in his ethnographic approach to the trans-border traffic of illegal goods between the two countries that the security forces of Ecuador had, in fact, been relatively successful in identifying FARC campsites in their territory (45 bases/campsites in 2006; 47 in 2007, and 182 in 2008). Moreover, despite an increase in the number of security personnel in the border region during Uribe’s first mandate, the resources assigned by Colombia to police the area remain insufficient due to the complex geographical conditions of the mountainous terrain (Moreano 2010; Ramírez 2006). This led Ecuadorian Minister of Defence, Wellington Sandoval, to claim in 2007 that his country’s northern border was with the FARC, not with Colombia, echoing a similar phrase uttered two years prior by Minister Mauricio Gándara (AFP 2007).

any systematic way. It is mostly a re-labelling and a legitimisation of conducting the war on drugs as a counterinsurgency operation, as several actors had wanted for a while." (Buzan and Waever 2003, 328)

This is not to say that Colombia could not, in the future, "migrate" to the North American Security Complex, but rather to explain why it is not yet there. One of the key implications of understanding Colombia as a full member of the South American Security Complex is that the strong US involvement in its domestic conflict has to be explained as a form of penetration by an extra-regional power, which is yet another characteristic that has defined security dynamics in the South American region since the independence of its member countries.

#### Evolution of the Colombian Strategic Culture at the turn of the century

The described situation illustrates the turmoil created by the domestic conflict, and some of the international implications it has had, which I argue are a central part in re-shaping Colombian norms about and degree of social legitimization for the use of force, as well as its preferences in terms of international cooperation in the area of defence and security.

As can be seen in the above discussion, in contrast to what happened in the Argentine and Chilean cases, the key historical determinants of Colombia's Strategic Culture do not derive from conflictive civil-military relations in need of re-definition, but from a protracted domestic conflict and its ramifications. As a result, the negative perception of the region is not so much defined by dominant geopolitical views, nor by inter-state rivalries nor even territorial disputes, but rather by an evident lack of mutual understanding and ideological tensions between Colombia and its regional neighbours.

Hence, a large part of this perception of a hostile regional security environment on the Colombian side derived mostly from the ideological confrontation that existed between President Uribe and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez (1999-2001; 2001-2007; 2007-2013), as well as Uribe's clear discomfort with the more general "turn to the left" that had taken place in the region since the early-2000s. This generated a mutual distrust, which heavily affected Colombia's position in the region.

The aggravation of the domestic violence in the late-1990s reinforced the sense of urgency attached to the reforms to the country's military doctrines and practices that started with President Pastrana's administration and continued through President Uribe's. The latter inaugurated an increasingly aggressive and militarized approach to facing the domestic conflict (Marks 2006). The slow but steady militarization of the drugs issue through the 1990s was accompanied by a re-framing strategy deployed by President Álvaro Uribe's administration, artificially conflating the domestic conflict with the "war on terror" that the Bush administration had launched after the September 11 attacks (Echevarría 2010, 32-33). This re-framing was a major diplomatic success, with Colombia becoming the largest recipient of US military cooperation in Latin America (over US\$ 6 billion in 2000-2008), and one of the top ten in the world (Tickner 2014, 2). This led to alterations to the Colombian Strategic Culture in at least three distinct ways:

- Modified the country's understandings about the legitimate goals and ways for the use of force;
- Facilitated deeper security and defence cooperation ties with the US; and,
- Lowered the international threshold of authorization for the use of force.

Two central pieces of legislation reflect the development of the country's Strategic Culture towards an increasingly activist and militarized approach to the domestic conflict, supported by the security cooperation provided by extra-regional powers. In 2001,

President Pastrana's "National Security and Defence Law" (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2001), became the first substantial modification to Colombia's Defence and Security policies in decades, coming as a direct response to the advances made by para-state groups. Two years later, President Uribe introduced the "Defence and Democratic Security Policy" (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003), better known as the Democratic Security Policy (DSP). Among other things, this law sought to legitimize a more openly militarized strategy against the FARC, further conflating the means and doctrines of domestic security with those of external defence, and putting forward an international cooperation strategy permeable to the direct military presence from extra-regional powers.

In addition to the militarization of the domestic conflict, the DSP required a substantial expansion of the territorial presence of Colombia's Armed and Security Forces. However, with 92% of the defence budget allocated to wages, pensions and other ongoing operational expenses, barely 8% of the budget was left for capital expenditures and new missions. Starting in 2002, the Colombian government introduced a number of temporary "war taxes" to help fund the escalation of military actions. According to Gustavo Flores-Macías, the funds provided by these taxes

"[...] created 2 divisions, 18 brigades, 15 battalions, 13 urban antiterrorist units, and 598 town guard (*Soldados de mi Pueblo*) platoons, among other units [...] armed forces personnel increased by about 36% and combat forces by 45% during Uribe's first term in office." (Flores-Macías 2014, 479)

By President Uribe's second term, the war taxes had expanded, allowing the Colombian Ministry of Defence (CoMoD) to increase its capital acquisitions. In the 2007-2010 alone, US\$ 3,9 billion were added to the Defence budget through the tax, with which weapons, airplanes, helicopters, submarines, and frigates were purchased (Flores-Macías 2014). In

this sense, the funds provided by the US through *Plan Colombia* were also crucial in allowing the Colombian government implement the DSP.

The characteristics of the above discussed pieces of legislation respond not only to the political and ideological inclinations of the incumbent governments, but also to the large degrees of autonomy in the definition and implementation of military doctrines and norms that the CoMoD has. Among defence elites, almost entirely formed by professional military officers, the region is still perceived as a competitive sub-system, marked by crossed alliances, in which the use of militarized bargaining strategies remain legitimate forms of behaviour, and (particularly during the Uribe administration) are perceived to be shaped by ideological divides between governments.

President Pastrana's Security and Defence Law introduced a number of legal and institutional innovations of relevance to this study. Articles 3 and 6 of the law introduce two crucial concepts to the Colombian legal system: National Power<sup>128</sup> and National Defence<sup>129</sup>. Though neither of the two were technically part of the constitutional order, their joint effect was nonetheless a substantial increment to the extraordinary powers granted to the federal authority in a state of exception<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup> The accumulation of the Colombian state's capabilities to answer to situations in which the rights, independence, integrity, autonomy and sovereignty of the country are at stake (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2001, Art. 3)

<sup>129</sup> The integration and coordination of the National Power to pursue, confront and counter any threat or aggression, domestic or external, which jeopardizes the sovereignty, independence, territory and constitution of the country (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2001, Art. 6)

<sup>130</sup> According to Carl Schmitt, a state of exception is a situation in which extraordinary powers are granted to the competent authority (the sovereign, in Schmitt's work) to implement the necessary measures to remedy severe disturbances to the political, social or economic orders, momentarily suspending the limitations to the use of force imposed by the law. In liberal orders, the law establishes who is to decide when extraordinary measures are necessary and what extraordinary powers are granted, but the fact that the legal order is (momentarily) suspended implies that increasing levels of activism and violence are to be used by the state. Moreover, in Schmitt's view, "The precondition as well as the content of jurisdictional competence in such a case must necessarily be unlimited. From the liberal constitutional point of view, there

The National Constitution states that the Armed Forces are only to be deployed in case of external aggression (Art. 212) or internal commotion (Art. 213). However, constitutionalists Juan Montaña and Marcos Criado de Diego argue that articles 54, 55 and 56 of Pastrana's Defence Law introduce a new (unconstitutional and illegal<sup>131</sup>) state of exception, the "material exception", which renders all constraints to the use of violence almost totally irrelevant (Montaña and Criado de Diego 2001, 85). The law does this by circumventing constitutional conditions and constraints to the ability of the federal government to declare a state of exception. It also blurs the line between Defence and Security, legitimizing a more militarist approach to the domestic conflict and widening the range of possible extraordinary measures that could be adopted. For the above reasons, Montaña and Criado de Diego maintain that the law goes against the liberal legal order in three ways (Montaña and Criado de Diego 2001): it weakens the republican distribution of power, going against the control attributions of the Judiciary; it creates a new state of exception, reforming *de facto* the National Constitution without undergoing the adequate institutional procedures; and, it reduces the fundamental rights of citizens.

Yet, these institutional and normative changes introduced by Pastrana's Defence law were paralleled by an approach to the conflict that favoured dialogue and negotiations with the para-state actors, and particularly with the guerrillas. This shows that Strategic Norms are not merely the result of a particular legal framework, but rely on the will and ability of the ruling elites to enact the provisions of the law. It may very well be that Pastrana was not immediately seeking to escalate military engagement against the

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would be no jurisdictional competence at all. The most guidance the constitution can provide is to indicate who can act in such a case." (Schmitt 1985, 6-7)

<sup>131</sup> In a state with a written constitution, no normal law can go against or modify the articles of the Constitution. Hence, the inclusion of a third state of exception to the list contemplated by the National Constitution is, in practice, a constitutional reform (albeit one that fails to comply with institutional and political the procedures necessary for such task).

guerrillas, but introduced the new legislation as a measure to dissuade them from opening new fronts. It is also possible that the Pastrana administration felt compelled to introduce this legislative innovations (despite not being inclined to actually enforce them) as a result of mounting domestic pressures from political outsiders. The victory of Álvaro Uribe in the 2002 Presidential elections, running outside of the traditional Colombian party system, seems to indicate the latter could constitute a source of concern for Pastrana.

Between 1998 and 2002, the Colombian government and the guerrillas tried different formulas to stabilize the domestic situation, including prisoner exchanges, designated demilitarized areas, and a *de facto* recognition by the state of the guerrilla's (momentary) territorial control, which arguably failed due to the government conceding to the FARC's demands without producing real improvements in return (Borda 2012; Echevarría 2010; Sanin 2001, 417–19). The failure of this attempt to achieve a stable peace through a negotiations process was one of the key points in Uribe's 2002 presidential campaign.

Having had his father kidnapped and murdered by the guerrillas, Uribe's personal approach to the conflict was amongst the most radical in the Colombian political spectrum. He was adamant that a militarized approach was necessary (Buitrago 2006, 8), since in his and his collaborators' understanding of the conflict the main reason the situation had escalated to such extents was the weakness of the state, and not its excessive coercive power as happened in other countries of Latin America (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003, pp. 14-15).

Uribe attempted declaring the state of exception by Presidential decree in two occasions, one only four days into his mandate (decree 1837/2002) and the second one in the first months of 2003 (decree 245/2003), justifying them with the concept of internal commotion (instead of the controversial "material exception"). However, in both

occasions the Constitutional Court rejected the move, denying President Uribe the ability to expand the attributions and lessen the constraints of the Armed Forces regarding the use of military force in the country's territory (El Tiempo 2003). This, again, shows that Strategic Norms can be contested, and that legal innovations are not sufficient to modify the way the state apparatus and the society understands its relation with the use of force. During its first year in power, Uribe's administration run into several instances of domestic contestation by the traditional political establishment, which had its initiatives blocked by the judiciary and legislative powers. Only after the political and judicial elites became convinced of Uribe's plan, and a majority of the population swayed, could Uribe's new Strategic Norms be formally introduced in a new piece of legislation and enforced.

The DSP came to embody Uribe's belligerent approach, expanding the attributions and autonomy given to the military in the conduct of domestic security activities even further than Pastrana's Defence law did. Thomas Marks argues that this law reoriented the official position of the Colombian state from a posture of negotiation to one of open confrontation (Marks 2006). More importantly so, the DSP incorporated a sort of permanent state of exception into the Colombian legislation, in which extraordinary measures by the Colombian society (and not merely its security forces) would be justified in the fight against terrorism. In Josefina Echevarría's words,

“[...] the DSP aims for the normalcy of governmental war practices. It pretends to disrupt the so-called traditional liberal politics of democracy and accountability and to make exceptional measures an integral part of politics.” (Echevarría 2010)

In the context of this call to an all-out war against the illegal groups that threatened Colombian society, the DSP lists six sources of threat for the Colombian society: Terrorism; Illicit drugs; Illicit finance; Arms traffic; Extortive kidnappings; and, Homicide

(Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003, p.24). However, the breakdown of each of these makes it evident that the government was in fact consistently using the vague and *ad hoc* conceptualization of “terrorism” devised to incorporate Colombia into the global “War on Terror” as its point of reference to conceptualize the other threats. This move obscured the boundaries between each of the identified threats, making it difficult to properly identify cases of terrorist threats from cases of any other form of threats, and hence legitimizing the normalization of the use of the extreme measures propitiated by the DSP.

The framing of the domestic conflict in terms of the “War on Terror” meant that military actions against the FARC and other para-state actors became legitimized in the eyes of the coalition of states following the US lead on the issue, effectively lowering the international threshold of authorization. Moreover, the wording and framing of the DSP make a consistent effort to relate the above listed threats with the civilian population, instead of just focusing on the survival of the state and the actions of the security forces. Arguably, the aim of this rhetorical device was to strengthen the representation of a link between the threats to state institutions and the security of the population, which was in turn a means to lower the domestic authorization threshold.

By altering the Strategic Norms relating to these two topics, and with the legalized state of exception provided by the DSP, the goals for and ways of using military force were also altered. The DSP listed “maintaining a dissuasive capacity [...] to secure the respect to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity, within a defensive strategic posture” (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003, p. 20) as one of the central objectives of the Armed Forces, and indeed the Colombian Armed Forces relied on their dissuasive capacity while maintaining a defensive stance when President Chávez ordered 10 battalions to the mutual border in support of his Ecuadorian ally after the Angostura bombings (Forero

2008). However, the main objective of the Armed Forces in this period was conducting COIN operations, in which they engaged directly with domestic sources of threat rather than with external ones. Though the domestic activism of the military cannot be immediately assumed to translate into more international activism, the overall preparedness of the Armed Forces and the incorporation of the “War on Terror” agenda into their doctrines mean that the Colombian defence elite has indeed been more open than any of its regional counterparts to resort to the use of military force in the territory of another country (though not necessarily against the forces of the country itself), as the case of the Angostura bombings show. More interestingly, other South American countries perceived this as the effective arrival to the region of the pre-emptive strikes doctrine advocated for by the George W. Bush administration (Battaglino 2012; Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2015; Emerson 2010).

Finally, a crucial aspect of the Colombian Strategic Culture that is important to tackle in order to better understand this country’s position during the SADC negotiations is its perspectives on cooperation. According to the DSP, cooperation with neighbouring countries is seen as an essential element in order to properly contain terrorist threats and control borders (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003, p. 44). However, anti-terrorist cooperation being the only interest of the Colombian defence elites, and considering the deep political differences between Colombia and its neighbours with regards to this issue, no relevant cooperative actions with regional partners were conducted throughout Uribe’s mandates (Bell et al. 2010, viii). Colombia has also put limits to the very few attempts of cooperation by South American states that did come up. Aside from the participation of several UNASUR members in an operation brokered by Venezuela to rescue FARC hostages, in 2008, Colombia denied all offers to mediate or facilitate a resolution to the domestic conflict. Their main reason for doing so being that no South

American country agreed to classify the FARC as a terrorist group, a condition *sine qua non* for the Colombian government.

It is quite telling that, while the goal of cooperation with neighbouring states was included among other items under the “Consolidation of Control over the National Territory” title, the call for enhanced and multilateral international cooperation to fight terrorism within the frame of the global War on Terror took a much more prominent place, dominating the title on “Multilaterality and Co-responsibility” (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003, p. 20-21). As a result, though not directly mentioned, military cooperation from the US under *Plan Colombia* was given a higher status in the Colombian defence policy than any type of potential regional cooperation. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaime Bermúdez, provides a pertinent synthesis of how Colombian elites understood the available options of international defence cooperation, contrasting the “real cooperation” provided by the US against a highly rhetorical, impractical, ideologically-driven, and never-materialized cooperation that the region was proposing through the SADC (interview with Bermúdez).

Moreover, the eagerness of Colombian defence elites to further the involvement of the US in the conflict with the FARC was not limited to lobbying for increased military aid packages. Colombian agency in this regard was made evident again in 2009, when the news broke that a bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) had been signed between the two countries. Official documents from the US embassy in Bogota leaked by Wikileaks reveal that the DCA had been negotiated in secret between August 2008 and September 2009, in parallel to the SADC talks. More interestingly, the documents show a Colombian government that was eager to welcome and incentivize increasing levels of US

military presence in its territory, aiming to prevent the resurgence of old and new para-state groups, import stability, and deter against Venezuelan rhetorical escalation and persistent threat of troop mobilization to the shared border.

Confidential communications about the DCA negotiations do show that the US Defence Department had interest in counting with access to military bases near Colombia's borders, as many countries in the region warned and feared (BBC News 2009). However, what is important about these leaked communications in the context of this research is not so much that they confirm the suspicions of neighbouring countries about US intentions, but rather that they present Colombia as an enthusiastic and eager party inviting further US involvement. In a briefing sent by the US Embassy in Bogota to the State Department, on 27 July 2009, US Ambassador William Brownfield (Sept 2007 – Aug 2010) wrote that,

“From the inception of negotiations on a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with Colombia, the Government of Colombia (GOC) has asked for several additional security assistance-related issues to be addressed in the same process. [...] we also note that the GOC has said repeatedly they will not sign the DCA until they have satisfaction on Track II issues. [...] GOC concerns on Track II have focused on three areas. First, they are interested in an air defense system tied into the Cooperative Security Location (CSL) structure. Second, they want assurances of access to U.S. arms, systems, or technology in case of a national security emergency in the region, whether by stockpile agreement or some other process. Third, they want access to all aspects of the CSL once operational--including space, intelligence product, and infrastructure.” (US Embassy in Bogota, Canonical ID: 09BOGOTA2376\_a, p.2)

Moreover, in another communication sent on 6 August 2009, the day after the fourth DCA Working Group technical meeting had concluded, Ambassador Brownfield told the Department of State that

“At the end of the meetings, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Clemencia Forero told us that her working group delegation had expressed satisfaction about the significant

progress achieved by the working group. Still, she probed about the depth of U.S. commitment to the talks in light of the charged regional dynamics. She stressed that the Colombian delegation remains committed to reaching final agreement during the next plenary session.” (US Embassy in Bogota, Canonical ID: 09BOGOTA2505\_a, p.2-3)

These quotes, and more specifically the references to “assurances of access to US arms” and “charged regional dynamics” makes evident that the Colombian defence elites at the time saw regional relations under a particularly negative light. This was not so much due to the prevalence of geopolitical thinking (as was the case at some point in Argentina and Chile), but to ideological split perceived as irresolvable. This othering of the region, and of left-of-centre governments in particular, responded to a variety of factors that go from the personalist approach of President Uribe to the need of the local defence elites to accentuate in the eyes of domestic and international audiences (mainly the US) the degree of isolation and lack of understanding that Colombia had to endure, potentially as a way to secure the sympathy of its extra-regional ally, and to reassert its self-perception as an independent and self-sufficient state.

The consistency with which Colombian authorities sought to internationalize the domestic conflict, particularly through active US involvement, reflects a well-established and long-lasting preference for military cooperation with this country. This certainly reflects the Colombian interest in the material and economic resources that such relation could provide them with, but also a coincidence between the two countries about the legitimate means and goals with which military force could be used in order to tackle the Colombian domestic conflict.

The above described processes provide enough backdrop to better understand how the development of a new Strategic Culture since the early-2000s, one that incorporated

norms and practices more permeable to the use of military force by the state against its own citizens, informed Colombia's negotiating agenda during the SADC negotiations.

## **The Colombian position in the SADC negotiations**

### Regional affairs in the view of Colombia's defence elites

The incompatibility between this extra-regional military presence (and the new Strategic Norms it would give birth to) and long-held institutions of the Latin American society of states led to a rather generalized perception of Colombia as an outlier in the region. Critics of the Uribe administration within and outside Colombia labelled the country a regional "pariah" due to what was seen as an unacceptable use of military force against its own population. Uribe's supporters, on the other hand, were happy to be differentiated from what they saw as an unstable and unreliable region, describing Colombia as the "Israel of South America"<sup>132</sup>.

A consensus seems to exist among the Colombian foreign and defence elites interviewed that the key reason behind the negative perception of the country in the region is due to a lack of understanding of and empathy towards its domestic situation (interviews with Borda; Bermúdez; Montenegro). Borda adds that this lack of understanding by neighbours and regional partners has eventually turned into distrust towards South America on the Colombian side, thus reinforcing the division and increasing the perceived distance between each other's positions (interview with Borda).

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<sup>132</sup> Uribe supporters used this analogy in a positive sense, describing Israel as an "oasis" of liberal democracy and a prosperous economy surrounded by political, social and economic instability (Halper 2013). However, this term was originally popularized by President Chávez, as a synonym of betrayal to the region or collaborationism with a hostile extra-regional power, describing Colombia as an "enclave" of Western hegemony in South America and a traitor to its neighbouring countries (J. McDermott 2009).

As Louise Fawcett puts it, “The controversy over Plan Colombia and reluctance to engage with the Colombia conflict [...] is testament to continuing difficulties and divergences over regional ideas and policy.” (Fawcett 2005, 45).

As a result of this mutual othering process, negative geopolitical views about regional politics persistently informed the attitudes and practices of Colombian foreign policy and defence elites with regards to neighbouring countries. Colombian interviewees, both from the Ministry of Defence (CoMoD) and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CoMFA), consistently expressed strong suspicions about Venezuela’s “ideological crusade”, the goals underlying the South American integration advanced by Brazil, and the very notion of the region being able to truly cooperate in the area of Defence. Moreover, a reserved cable signed by former Chilean Ambassador in Bogota, Gabriel Gaspar, confirms the conflictive relationship with Venezuela. In it, Ambassador Gaspar maintains that, during a private meeting held with then-Colombian Minister of Defence Juan Manuel Santos, relevant information was received with regards to Venezuela’s direct involvement in harbouring and funding the FARC (Ambassador Gaspar, Oct. 2008 No.528). While it is possible that Minister Santos was simply pitching the Colombian version of the situation to a relatively sympathetic partner, and considering that no concrete evidence is explicitly mentioned in the cable, Ambassador Gaspar’s account of the meeting conveys an inclination to believe the accusations against the Venezuelan government, and particularly against President Chávez.

Moreover, though the negative perception about Chavez Venezuela is well known, when asked about the country’s view of the region most interviewees also spoke at length about the country’s persistent and long-held distrust for Brazil.

The Colombian negotiating agenda

*Views of the defence elites on the SADC initiative*

Considering that the rolling out of the SADC initiative was rushed precisely due to the instability and conflicts created in the Northern Andean region by the Colombian attack in Ecuadorian territory, it would be tempting to say that the country felt compelled to join the SADC merely because this was the least costly thing to do under the circumstances. There may very well be a part of truth in this appraisal, and Minister Bermúdez indeed pointed towards this explanation (interview with Bermúdez). However, this still does not fully answer why the country would make the diplomatic efforts involved in negotiating and participating in a regional defence cooperation initiative like this one, when it was actively seeking to distance itself from the region and hadn't had problems accepting the costs of turning its back on South American norms, institutions, and organizations before.

As already mentioned, Colombian elites have a predominantly negative perception of South America, a view only worsened with the ideological confrontation with Venezuela. This perception is also reflected in the position of Foreign Policy elites, who during the Uribe administrations understood the region almost entirely in terms of this ideological divide between “Castro-Chavism” (Latin-Americanist, integrationist, anti-hegemonic, anti-US, socialist, and in favour of the State’s active intervention in the economy) and the open regionalism of the “neoliberal arch” that created the Alliance of the Pacific<sup>133</sup> (Briceño-Ruiz 2013, 201). As a result, the first reaction of the Uribe administration was to reject the creation of a regional defence organization, accepting the compromise to create a “working group” only after Brazilian President Lula da Silva travelled to Bogota and discussed the issue personally with him (Saint-Pierre 2012, 26).

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<sup>133</sup> Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico

Deputy Minister Camilo Reyes maintained that, while Colombia had accepted to join the UNASUR initiative under the impression that it would be mostly focused on integrating the region's transport infrastructure<sup>134</sup>, the "ideological tension" introduced by the Chavist government broke this "basic agreement" about the goals of the integration process and made it increasingly difficult for such project to advance (interview with Reyes). Minister Jaime Bermúdez reinforced this idea, arguing that one of the reasons President Uribe was persuaded to send Colombian representatives to the SADC negotiations was because the country had already agreed to join the UNASUR, and withdrawing at such a late stage was not seen as a good option. However, as the development of the organization moved into a more politically charged types of cooperation and policy coordination, and away from its original emphasis on infrastructure, a series of concerns of the Foreign Policy elites became evident:

"When the possibility of creating a [Defence] Council was presented, well... obviously we were similarly suspicious of that as we were from UNASUR, and even more, because the topic was way more sensitive. The hard, cold truth is that Colombia is a country that for decades has been marginalized internationally (so to speak) in terms of real cooperation regarding issues like drug traffic and security [...]. Getting into a discussion about security or defence with the region, in a circle (let's say) clearly co-opted ideologically, in which the discussions were not going to be symmetric, was a cause for strong resistance on our side, strong resistance..."<sup>135</sup> (interview with Bermúdez, translation by the author)

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<sup>134</sup> The idea of absorbing the pre-existent IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America) into the UNASUR framework was, indeed, one of the initial points discussed. This was swiftly done in the form of the sectorial council COSIPLAN (South American Council of Infrastructure and Planning) right after the organization was created (Sanahuja 2012, 15; Silva Barros 2016).

<sup>135</sup> Original in Spanish: "Cuando se planteó la posibilidad de crear el Consejo de [Defensa], pues... obviamente todas las suspicacias eran similares a las que teníamos con UNASUR e incrementadas, porque era un tema que se volvió mucho más sensible. La verdad simple y pura es que Colombia, [es] un país que ha sufrido internacionalmente por décadas de una marginación (digámoslo así) de la cooperación real en el tema del narcotráfico y de la seguridad [...]. Meternos en una discusión de Seguridad o de Defensa en la región, en un círculo (digamos) cooptado claramente o ideológicamente, en donde las discusiones no iban a ser simétricas, nos generaba mucha resistencia, mucha resistencia..."

*The negotiating agenda*

Hence, one of the objectives of Colombia's negotiating agenda that Minister Bermúdez emphasized as central was the demand that all decisions within the SADC were to be made by consensus (i.e. they had to be unanimously supported or, at least, not objected by any member state). Though he acknowledged that this was not a contentious issue at all, the focus of the Colombian demand for the consensus rule was different to that of most other countries in the region. While Argentina and Chile (and Brazil) also were invested in this decision-making mechanism, they supported their positions on the notion that the SADC was to be a coordination and cooperation mechanism that had no supranational decision powers. This argument relates to a long-held Latin American preference for arrangements rooted in the commitment for the principle of sovereign equality and non-intervention. Colombia also adheres to these principles, and would agree with a similar line of argumentation. However, according to Minister Bermúdez, there was a more concrete reason for them to demand that decisions were adopted by consensus and not by majority: securing veto power (interview with Bermúdez). This, again, reflects the lack of trust and negative perspective Colombian elites had of the regional security environment. Though obtaining veto powers is an intrinsic aspect of adopting a consensual decision-making process, the fact that Colombia was almost exclusively interested in obtaining this concession makes evident that this country entered the negotiations with an acute perception of threat coming from some of its regional partners.

Moreover, this view was not limited to countries like Venezuela, with which Colombia had an open and vocal confrontation. Admiral David René Moreno voiced similar suspicions, but put the focus on the regional dynamics Brazil was trying to shape with the

SADC initiative, expanding on the negative views the Colombian Defence elites had of Brazilian plans.

“Brazil, who apparently received the blessing to position itself as an emerging power many years ago, [...] was seeking a position at the global level, pretending to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. And, to do that, it needed to be an emerging power. [...] UNASUR, for example, was created and led by Brazil from the beginning... Having decided upon the creation of the South American Defence Council, at the beginning it looked like supplanting (I would say) the authority of the United Nations or the authority that at some point the TIAR would have enjoyed”<sup>136</sup> (interview with Moreno, translation by the author)

This warped view of what the SADC was, what Brazil (and other countries) wanted out of it, and what it could do was repeated in one form or another by all the interviewees, showing a high degree of suspicion over the initiative and of processes of regional cooperation in general.

All of this is key in understanding one of the key motivations of the country’s participation in the SADC negotiations. According to different interviewees, Colombia saw it as its task to bring to a halt the highly ideological and confrontational rhetoric put forward by Venezuela, and the only way it found to do so was by actively engaging in the negotiations to create a regional organization it did not actually want to belong to. Colombia’s inward-looking Defence planning, strong distrust for the regional security environment, use of military force for domestic security at levels unique to the region, low threshold of legitimization, and preference for extra-regional cooperation, all provide

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<sup>136</sup> Original in Spanish: “Brasil, que desde hace muchísimos años aparentemente ha tenido la bendición para poderse colocar en una potencia emergente, [...] lo que buscaba era posicionarse a nivel mundial, donde quería entrar en el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas. Y, para eso, requería tener una posición como potencia emergente. [...] UNASUR, por ejemplo, desde el comienzo fue creada, también fue liderada particularmente por el Brasil... Y, al haberse definido el establecimiento del Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano, al principio era como para suplantar (diría yo) la autoridad de las Naciones Unidas y la autoridad que podía tener en un momento determinado el TIAR”

important insights to explain how the country's Strategic Culture affected the its negotiating agenda during the SADC negotiations.

Another excellent example of this distrust to regional cooperation initiatives also came out of the interview with Admiral Moreno. When referring to the initiative advanced by Argentina and Chile to regionalize their bilateral military expenditure transparency system, Admiral Moreno expressed his strong disagreement with the idea. The mechanism in question is one of many bilateral Confidence Building Measures put in place by the two Southern Cone countries in the 1990s with the goal to build mutual trust by homogenising their military expenditure accounts, making them comparable, providing more transparency to the cooperation efforts, and clearing doubts about the type of equipment that each side acquired. Admiral Moreno understood this as an attempt to control Colombia's "disproportionate" expenditures, with the goal of blocking its military purchases. Moreover, in his view, the idea of sharing sensible information about equipment available and military deployments with countries that had cooperative ties with the FARC was entirely out of the question (interview with Moreno).

Different interviewees also acknowledged that Colombia sought to "take the teeth out of UNASUR" (interview with Lugari), by making sure that it was not a closed club exclusively designed for South American states. For this reason, it actively advocated for, and obtained, a clause claiming that the SADC is an organization open to all states (which, incidentally, happened to get started in and for South America).

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that Colombia's agenda was not entirely cynical. In fact, one of the central goals of its participation in the negotiations (and one that closely relates to its Strategic Culture) was to obtain legitimization for its counter-

narcotics and “counter-terrorist” strategies from the members of the SADC (interview with Reyes). The inclusion of a clause condemning terrorism was a *sine qua non* condition for Colombia’s participation in the negotiations. This is confirmed by the official report on the negotiations (Grupo de Trabajo del CDS, 2009, p. 69). In the words of Minister Bermúdez, a regional organization working on the areas of defence cooperation and coordination that was to help Colombia advance its “national interests” and policy objectives could not avoid explicitly condemning terrorism (Interview with Bermúdez). The aim of this clause was twofold: introduce elements of a war-on-terror-style securitization into the SADC institutional design; and, legitimize Colombia’s militarized approach to its domestic conflict. Arguably, by accepting an anti-terrorist clause, South American countries would have also implicitly accepted Uribe’s re-framing strategy, which would have meant a major diplomatic success for his administration. Though the proposed clause faced strong opposition, and the final version of the agreement avoids making explicit reference to “terrorism”, Colombia forced a compromise to include a less controversial formula condemning “armed groups outside the law” (UNASUR, 2008, Art. 3, subsection m). Similarly, and as a direct response to the proposal advanced by President Chávez to grant the FARC belligerent community status (Hernández 2008), Colombia managed to include explicit provisions to recognize the exclusive role that “constitutional Armed Forces” have in the defence of the “nation” (UNASUR, 2008, Art. 3, subsection h) in the SADC statute.

The push to include an “anti-terrorist” rhetoric in the SADC relates to two crucial objectives of the Colombian Foreign Policy strategy under President Uribe: to get at least a minimum degree of regional solidarity with and validation for the Colombian approach to its domestic conflicts; and, more importantly so, to find regional legitimization for the re-framing of its domestic conflict as part of the “global war on terror”, accepted by the

US in the early-2000s. This last point is crucial, since the discursive bridge built between the Colombian guerrillas/drug traffic and international terrorism significantly altered the Colombian Strategic Culture and its security practices at the domestic level, attracting increased volumes of US Defence and Security cooperation in the process but failing to generate solidarity from neighbouring states. Moreover, President Uribe's re-framing strategy got to the extreme of avoiding the term "armed conflict" in all official documents, and using the term "terrorism" instead (Coronel López 2007, 404; Ramírez 2006, 70). This move drove some neighbouring countries away, whom refused to include the FARC in their respective lists of terrorist organizations (Ramírez 2006).

Colombia also expected to clear the air about its privileged security relation with the US. In fact, though the majority of the statute had already been negotiated and agreed upon by the third technical meeting of the working group, Venezuela's request that the activities of the US IV Fleet in the region were condemned and banned was unacceptable for Colombia. In a reserved document from the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Gaspar explains that the proposed clause was discussed in private with Deputy Minister Reyes and Paola Lugari, whose opinion was adamant that Colombia would not join a regional organization with South America if in any way it threatened the privileged relationship with the US (Ambassador Gaspar, Aug. 2008 No.478, p.2).

Still, the overall message obtained from all interviewees that participated in the negotiations is that they feared President Chávez and his supporters would somehow co-opt the organization and try to constrain Colombia's ability to determine its own Foreign Policy and Defence cooperation strategies.

Finally, an element that is relevant to highlight is the consensus existing in the two incumbent ministries regarding the negotiating position of the Colombian state. Despite the lack of coordination and inter-ministerial tensions noted by Sandra Borda with regards to the design and implementation of Colombia's foreign and defence policies in both of Uribe's administrations (C. Paredes 2010), the interviewees from each of these dependencies shared an overwhelming degree of agreement regarding their views and evaluation of the SADC initiative. Given that Borda's comments were made in the context of the presentation of an in-depth report on the Colombian Foreign Policy commissioned to a board of experts by President Uribe (Bell et al. 2010), it is particularly interesting to note that two otherwise un-coordinated bureaucracies shared such a cohesive view regarding this particular topic. What this implies is that the Strategic Norms developed through the Pastrana and Uribe administrations managed to permeate homogeneously on the defence and foreign policy elites, shaping their respective understandings about the possibilities and desirability of regional cooperation in the realm of defence and security.

## **Conclusion**

As with the two previous case studies, the main goal pursued in this chapter was to evaluate the cultural and normative elements at play in Colombia's approach to the creation of the SADC, as well as their impact on the regional security arrangements included in it. In order to do so, I first focused in describing and analysing the elements of

the country's recent history that have had a direct effect in shaping how regional and domestic environments are perceived, as well as the webs of meanings defining how the defence sector relates to each of them. I then engaged with the elements that constitute Colombia's Strategic Culture, seeking to explain its recent evolution and better understand the norms defining the use of the defence apparatus. Finally, I put these insights to the service of explaining Colombia's position with regards to the SADC initiative, the meanings underlying its negotiations agenda, and their impact on regional level arrangements.

Unique historical experiences have allowed for the emergence of a set of Strategic Norms legitimizing military and security practices in Colombia that other countries in the region find unacceptable. The bombing of the FARC campsite in Ecuadorian territory and its consequences is but one example of the deep differences between the region's norms and the Strategic Culture forged by Colombia. Though the internal threshold of authorization for the use of military force was already lower than in the rest of the region, President Uribe's "Democratic Security" strategy lowered it even further, moving the perception about the legitimate causes for the use of force to a more active position. This drove Colombia further away from regionally acceptable practices, reinforcing the representation of the country as the "Israel", the "pariah", or the "Cain" of Latin America (Carvajal 2012, 1). Arguably, the intense pressure put by the Colombian delegation to have a principle condemning the actions of "groups outside the law" included in the SADC statute is related to this, seeking to obtain at least some degree of legitimization for its approach to defence at the regional level. Interestingly, the inclusion of this article may also become important for other regional powers, whose understanding of the spheres of

influence reserved for the defence and security sectors are not as rigid as those seen in the Southern Cone. In other words, it is possible to say that Colombia's agency influenced regional arrangements and norms relating to the use of force in such way that the use of militarized approaches to domestic conflicts is somehow legitimized.

To be sure, it is possible that no immediate practical effect may come from this in the short term, nor will countries like Argentina and Chile immediately start using their Armed Forces to fight domestic issues due to the inclusion of this article in the SADC statute. However, social legitimization is relevant in shaping the perceptions agents have of what is considered a valid, acceptable action and what is not. Should powers like Brazil, Peru or Venezuela increase their use of military means to deal with domestic issues, this article could provide them with legitimization, and further social arrangements might be put in place to frame it within the pluralistic institutions that characterize the South American society of states.

The Colombian case is also unique to the region in that the country has not suffered the typical pendulum between democracy and dictatorship that has characterized the history of other Latin American countries throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, a protracted and multidimensional domestic conflict has marked the country's relation with the use of force and violence. In addition, Colombia did not join the rest of the South American countries in their "turn to the left", nor did it perceive positively the advance of a South American regionalism. Moreover, Colombia is possibly the only secondary power in the region that not only accepts, but also has incentivizes the presence of US military forces and equipment in its territory. Finally, the perception of regional affairs and of regional partners was, at least during the Uribe administration, a conclusively negative one. This

is more than likely related with the fact that Colombia's neighbours have shown little interest in addressing the domestic conflict and providing the cooperation that Colombia was after. According to David Pion-Berlin, Colombia saw "[...] a military solution as the only desirable outcome." (Pion-Berlin 2005, 223), which many other countries considered not a viable solution.

Colombian defence elites interviewed agreed in pointing out that the preferred outcome for Colombia's government was for the SADC (and the entire UNASUR institutional framework) not to be created at all. This preference led the negotiating team to actively seek to "take the teeth out of the SADC", always remaining just short of completely boycotting the initiative. This is also made evident by Uribe's two refusals to join the organization, as well as by Minister Santos's remarks in the Washington Q&A mentioned above. The reasons for this position are related to this defence elite's deep distrust of other regional actors, particularly Ecuador and Venezuela, but also Brazil. This finding, together with the Wikileaks documents discussed, challenges the hypothesis advanced by José Antonio Sanahuja that the goal in joining UNASUR was a means to diversify the country's international insertion (making it less vulnerable to its bilateral relation with the US) and redefine its relationship with Venezuela (Sanahuja 2012, 10).

The combination of a protracted domestic conflict with large amounts of funding coming from illegal activities are the factor to explain Colombia's changing Strategic Norms. In combination with the entrenched views of defence elites, these elements can explain a large part of the Strategic Culture developed between the late-1990s and early-2000s, which shows few points of contact with the rest of South American countries during the years prior to the SADC negotiations.

The answers to why did Colombia join the SADC and what are the cultural roots to its agenda are not simply. On the one hand, there is the systemic-level explanation regarding Brazil's leverage to make sure its desired outcomes move forward. However, this explanation leaves a whole array of relevant elements out of the picture, particularly those related to agency and contestation. Similarly, claiming that Colombia joined the SADC merely because it was the "least costly" option is as myopic.

Colombia's activism in the domestic and external realms; its low threshold of domestic and international legitimization to which it submits; the low profile given to cooperative initiatives; and, the negative perception of the regional security context, all indicate that there is no possible compatibility nor point of contact between Colombia and the majority of the other South American countries. Yet, it joined the negotiations, influenced the resulting organization, and regionalized some of the elements of its Strategic Culture.

On the one hand, immersed in a long and potentially unstable confrontational rhetoric with Venezuela (and, to a lesser extent, with Bolivia and Ecuador), Colombian defence and foreign policy elites concluded they needed to be the "first line of defence" to contain this country's "Castro/Chavist" agenda for regional cooperation. On the other hand, Colombia sought in the SADC statute a tool to legitimize his own actions under the "War on Terror" and the "War on Drugs", as well as to obtain a higher degree of understanding and receptiveness from its regional partners. Finally, Colombia was under the impression that it was up to itself to hold firm the regional commitment with decision-making mechanisms following the norm of consensus (in which all countries have veto powers). This went, yet again, against the Venezuelan proposal of using a decision-making approach based on the principle of the majority.

As a result, despite the deep differences between the Colombian case and the rest of the empirical cases, Colombia converged with other South American countries towards the creation of the SADC, whose constitutive statute it shaped and modified.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

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The central objective of this research project has been to make a theoretically-informed empirical contribution to the available knowledge on the creation of the South American Defence Council, focusing specifically on understanding the agency of three regional secondary powers in the negotiations, how their agendas were informed by domestic Strategic Cultures, and how this had an impact on the construction of regional security governance mechanisms.

The review of the relevant literature makes evident that the large majority of analysts used (sub)systemic-level analytical tools to engage with the creation of this organization. As a result, the dominant research agendas on the topic have given a more prominent role to regional-level elements than to the agency of individual actors. Chapter 2 covers in detail the merits and shortcomings of this literature, concluding that neither the current distribution of power nor the presence of shared ideational features in the region can provide a complete explanation regarding the creation of this organization.

The condition of Brazil as *primus inter pares* and its leadership goals surely were central in getting the creation of the SADC into the regional agenda, as well as rallying reluctant actors to sit at the negotiations table. The Colombian case is an interesting

example in that sense. However, it is telling of existing biases in this line of argumentation that it focuses exclusively on “Brazilian leadership” goals and the country’s (soft) power projection capabilities, while denying Colombia any agency in its own decision to attend the negotiations and eventually join the organization.

The focus on Brazilian alleged attempts to build regional leadership/hegemony also forget to acknowledge that this country did not show the will to assume the economic costs involved in building regional common goods asymmetrically, nor the political costs of imposing them forcefully upon the rest of the region. As a result, though Brazil’s power and preferences have undoubtedly been relevant in shaping the perceptions and behaviour of other regional powers, explaining the creation of the SADC exclusively in terms of this country’s selfish interests provides only a limited and ultimately inaccurate understanding of the dynamics at play.

Similarly, arguments involving the impact of the Post-Hegemonic regionalist agenda do provide relevant insights into the socio-political context that allowed for the creation of the SADC. Yet, it shares with the Brazil-centred approach the limitation of attributing barely any relevance to the agency of individual actors in the process of planning, negotiating, and implementing of the UNASUR/SADC institutional framework.

In spite of these shortcomings, these approaches do have some explanatory power and provide key elements that undoubtedly should be taken into consideration when studying the development of individual states’ agency. As a matter of fact, the relevance of these (sub)systemic approaches became more evident in recent years, with the UNASUR being less prominent as a regional governance mechanism since the mid-2010s due to Brazilian politics falling into disarray (which severely limited its power-projection abilities and curtailed the regional leadership projects of previous administrations) and to a

weakening political/ideational consensus across the region. This is yet another good reason to have included an entire chapter to discuss these (sub)systemic explanations to the creation of the SADC, despite this research's core empirical concern is with the agency of individual states.

Similarly, Chapter 3 focuses on a detailed, theory-informed description of key characteristics found in the South American security environment. This chapter provides an understanding of the social structure present in South America. The main argument for having included this analysis is that discussing regional social arrangements helps set the shared context in which the three states studied have been socialized. Understanding the common external inputs that the agents "received" helps shed light on the specificities of domestic cultures, and how they influenced the respective interpretations made and the repertoire of legitimate responses considered. This follows the understanding that there is a constant process of co-constitution between agents and structure. Under the Constructivist-Interpretivist epistemological assumptions informing this research, properly analysing the social structure of the regional security environment is crucial to have a more complete understanding the agency of the actors.

The two distinct theoretical frameworks chosen to structure this analysis, the English School and RSCT, share a constructivist inspiration (at least in the versions discussed here). This allows them to discuss different aspects of the social arrangements influencing the regional security environment in which the SADC was created. The ES approach explains the South American context with strong arguments regarding the existence of a distinct regional society, discussing in detail the specific norms and institutions that set apart this group of states from the more shallow "global" international society and other sub-global groupings. It is put forward here that the defining principles and institutions

of South American regional society (sovereignty; non-intervention; multilateralism; peaceful resolution of controversies) may originally be of European inspiration, but also denote a relevant degree of agency in institutional choice, adaptation, and innovation. As a result, the patterns of behaviour that define this regional society are understood as the product of interactions between the colonial heritage, the post-colonial struggle, and the post-1980s democratization (the most recent critical junction that swept almost the entire region).

RSCT, on the other hand, provides a fitting theoretical framework to analyse the specificities of the regional security environment and its dynamics from a constructivist perspective, engaging with the defining characteristics of regional interactions. As each of the empirical chapters has shown, the ways in which these characteristics have been perceived and interpreted, as well as the responses considered “legitimate”, vary greatly.

Using this approach, the region has been defined as a penetrated, unipolar, standard RSC with a number of common security concerns that justify perceiving South America as a unified security complex separate from the one engulfing North America, Central America and the Caribbean. In fact, characteristics identified by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever as potential threats to the unity of this regional complex (the proto-Security Community forming around MERCOSUR, and the violence characterizing the Andean North) have arguably brought the region closer together rather than breaking it in two. Indeed, the UNASUR/SADC framework can be read as an attempt to actively spread the stable peace of the Southern Cone to the rest of region, while the spillovers of domestic and transnational violence related to the production and distribution of illicit drugs have also become an increasingly regionalized problem to which no common answer has yet been put forward. In other words, while the internal dynamics of the security complex

have strengthened in the last decades, this does not mean that South America has moved towards the consolidation of a Security Community. Moreover, despite the potentially positive implications related to the creation of the SADC, the inability to find a consensus regarding how to approach an issue of violence spillovers is proof of the limitations that still exist to the formation of a truly stable peace in the region.

To reiterate, the key conclusion of Chapter 2 and 3 is that, while (sub)systemic perspectives are indeed relevant to the understanding of the context in which the SADC was created, an in-depth and systematic analysis of the agency displayed by actors other than Brazil remained relatively unexplored. This opens a window of opportunity to make a relevant empirical contribution to the literature on the creation of this organization, tapping into the agency individual actors showed during the negotiations and creation of the SADC. More importantly, this can help bridge the clear disconnect that exists in the literature between agency-focused perspectives on foreign and defence policies of South American countries, on the one hand, and the vast (sub)systemic-level analyses that dominate the study of regional politics and governance in South America, on the other.

The implication of this research's contribution is, then, not limited to obtaining a more nuanced knowledge about the processes that allowed for the creation of a particular regional organization, but rather a wider understanding of the dynamics by which agency and structure co-constitute each other in this region. Such insights should be relevant, first and foremost, for Latin Americanists studying regional security dynamics. However, the approach and conclusions of this research should also contribute to the wider constructivist research agenda, with which I have sought to engage in different ways.

Having identified the gap in the currently existing knowledge regarding the creation of the SADC, and having analysed in detail the features of South America as a distinct security region, the agency of individual countries in the area of defence was defined resorting to the concept of Strategic Culture. This facilitates engaging with the historical, social, and political processes informing the approach of each country to the defence sector, in general, and to regional security in particular.

The resulting image is one of multiple levels of structure-agency relations at play, resembling a game of nesting dolls. Strategic Culture works as a central element defining the domestic social arrangements, informing the perceptions, decisions, and behaviour of local agents (defence elites, diplomats, and political leaders). In turn, the aggregate of these agent-structure relations give shape to the agency each of the countries displayed internationally, informing the dominant perception of regional politics; foreign and defence policies; international agendas; and negotiating positions. Following the constructivist epistemological position, this agency is both influenced by the stimuli coming from regional social arrangements and, at the same time, the key element constituting said social structure.

The operationalization of the concept largely followed Christoph Meyer's grid of scalable norms, understood as the more readily identifiable and analysable embodiments of the Strategic Culture. These norms include: **1.** Conditions that justify the use of force; **2.** Acceptable ways in which force can be used; **3.** Preferences with regards to cooperation; and, **4.** Thresholds for authorization. Crucially, Meyer's conceptualization of these norms was somewhat modified in order to focus more broadly on the meanings, norms and legitimate actions associated with the defence sector, rather than exclusively focusing on "the use of force". Perhaps the most evident example in this sense is the norm

regarding cooperation, which is conceptualized here not only in terms of the predisposition to use force collectively/unilaterally, but rather in relation to the openness to handling international security matters cooperatively or not. The domestic legal and institutional frameworks for the defence sector were considered the more easily accessible expressions of these norms, facilitating a more effective operationalization of the concept for the conduct of empirical analysis. It is argued here that, once contextualized and analysed with the help of other primary and secondary sources, the study of legal frameworks allows tapping into the web of meanings informing the country's Strategic Culture and agency.

### **Key findings: Agents' effect on the structure**

Though comparisons have been used only as heuristic devices to highlight the specificities of each case, the core empirical contribution of this research has been the analysis of three independent case studies. Each of them sought to understand how the respective Strategic Cultures influenced the perceptions of the regional security environment, thus influencing the responses to the SADC initiative and shaping the agendas brought to the negotiations. This provided a theory-informed perspective on agency in the area of defence and its effect on the constitution of regional security governance arrangements.

This implied identifying and dissecting in the Strategic Norms present in each country by analysing the relevant legal frameworks defining the relation between society and the defence sector. This was aided by an analysis of official documents and declarations, interviews, and secondary sources that allowed contextualizing the development of

Strategic Norms and more easily distilling their key characteristics. These chapters also paid particular attention to comprehending in depth the historical processes that informed the emergence of the dominant Strategic Culture, taking into consideration how critical junctures and socio-political pressure conditioned their development. This analysis provided key insights into the development of ideational commitments that heavily influenced the meanings and roles attributed to the defence sector. More importantly, the empirical chapters explore a myriad of instances in which individual agents, or the pooled agency a group of them, managed to have an impact on regional social arrangements by influencing the development of the understandings, principles, or norms underpinning the SADC.

The analysis shows a significant agreement in the agendas Argentina and Chile brought to the negotiations. The support of these countries (with whom Brazil showed strong coincidences) to a similar set of principles, understandings, norms, and expectations about the working of the SADC meant that theirs became the dominant position in the negotiation rounds. Yet, the empirical chapters clearly show how even these countries reached their respective starting positions as the result of quite distinct, and at times diverging, paths and normative priors. This meant that each focused their efforts differently, expecting to affect the regional social structure in diverse ways.

Colombia, on the other hand, constituted a regional outlier, openly revelling against the SADC initiative during its early stages, participating in the multilateral negotiations while having an evidently negative perception of the region, and all but publicly stating that it would have preferred the organization not to be created. However, the Colombian authorities did recognize in the creation of the SADC as a window of opportunity to try and shape the regional normative structure in their favour, obtaining some form of

legitimization for the utilization of the defence apparatus in the conflict against the FARC. Importantly, even this country's position ended up converging with those of its South American counter-parts, regardless of having such a divergent starting position.

For Argentina and Chile, the respective processes of democratic transition constitute the most recent critical juncture in which their Strategic Cultures were altered. With some relevant differences, the post-dictatorial periods were marked by political and social contexts ripe for the relationship between society and the defence sector to be re-visited, replacing the webs of meanings inherited from the times of state formation and military dictatorships with the creation of new consensus about its role in a democratic society; the reach of its authority; its relationship with civilian leadership; the definition of threats and openness to cooperative security arrangements; and, the legitimate means by which the Armed Forces are to fulfil their defensive role.

Argentina could advance with the implementation of these changes more swiftly (and haphazardly) thanks to the poor reputation with which the Armed Forces emerged from the 1976-1983 dictatorial regime. Chilean Armed Forces, on the other hand, retained a much stronger social support after leaving power, managing to arrange an armistice before the democratic transition and remaining politically relevant well into the 2000s. This forced a more pragmatic and paced approach to the redefinition of Strategic Norms that democratic political elites consistently sought to achieve.

Despite the differences in these process, the legislation and doctrines resulting from this cultural change shared in emphasizing the indisputable civilian/political control over the military, and created a strict doctrinal separation between defence (external threats) and security (domestic conflicts). More importantly, both countries promptly

incorporated the participation in international cooperation efforts into the DNA of their defence sectors, primarily by: **a.** Incorporating the participation in UN-sanctioned Peacekeeping Operations as one of the main instances of military deployment; and, **b.** Thoroughly involving the Armed Forces in the bilateral rapprochement efforts.

Working in close collaboration throughout the negotiations, Argentina and Chile managed to incorporate many of the key features of their bilateral relationship into the regional social arrangements. This helped blocking attempts to introduce matters of domestic, “inter-mestic”, and transnational security into the SADC, and resulted in some of the more ambitious projects within the organization being modelled after their shared experience. Interestingly, the strict separation between defence and security incorporated into the UNASUR framework via the separate creation of the SADC and other councils related to “security issues” (organized crime, drug traffic, etc.) was relevant almost exclusively for these Southern Cone countries. The doctrine in the majority of the remaining members presented a blurrier limit between the two sectors, with instances of wide legitimization for the use of military force at the domestic level. The Colombian case is, perhaps, the more salient example of this, showing the almost the diametrically opposite doctrinal position to those of Argentina and Chile. But this country was by no means an outlier in this sense: Brazil has gradually militarized its approach to the control of drug traffic and drug-related violence, particularly in urban settings; the Peruvian military has actively engaged with domestic threats posed by guerrilla group Shining Path; and, the Venezuelan military significantly increased its security roles since the rise to power of President Hugo Chávez (himself a former officer of the Army). Hence, the incorporation of this strict distinction between security and defence is perhaps one of the clearest examples of how the agenda of a small group of agents (none of which was a hegemon, nor a *primus inter pares*) affected the outcome of regional negotiations, and

through it the approach to and agendas of regional security governance mechanisms created.

It remains to be seen whether or not the crystallization of this principle in the UNASUR framework will be fully incorporated into the South American social structure. Arguably, this would be a necessary condition for the process to be able to come full circle and influence the normative priors and Strategic Cultures of other countries. If such was the outcome of the creation of the SADC, it would provide further confirmation to the argument that there is a circular nature to the co-constitutive processes described by Constructivism. Yet, it is also important to keep in mind that, should this not be the case, it would be necessary to look further into the processes of socialization and social learning involved, since the effects of agency on the structure (and vice versa) are by no means automatic nor do they come undisputed. That the Argentine negotiating team put such emphasis on the creation of the CEED and the ESUDE to foster doctrinal debates and advancement of shared understandings regarding the defence sector may point to this country's intention to secure the successful development of such dynamics and regionalize its own position in these regards.

In addition to the separation between defence and security, the desecuritization and demilitarization of mutual relations through mutual confidence measures is another area in which the Southern Cone set the agenda regarding what understandings, norms, and practices should be incorporated to the security governance mechanisms of the region. In fact, looking at the SADC's first few annual action plans, the majority of the measures included are inspired by the experiences of Argentine-Brazilian and Argentine-Chilean rapprochement processes, with some of the more ambitious initiatives being the

construction of a Joint South American Military Expenditures Record inspired by that created by the ECLAC for Argentina and Chile; and the discussions to eventually move forward in the conformation of a Joint South American Task Force for Peacekeeping Operations, modelled after the Southern Cross bi-national force.

The expectation in doing this was to create the conditions to expand the zone of positive peace constructed over the last three decades in the Southern Cone to the entire region. Though this may have changed in recent years, until the mid-2010s it seemed likely that the commitment to the post-hegemonic regional agenda would create conditions of possibility for these understandings, norms, and practices to become socialized at the regional level with some ease. Moreover, given that in most cases incorporating these into the domestic realm would not have necessarily required drastic changes to the Strategic Cultures of states, the full circle of co-constitution might have been more easily attainable than in the previous example. Political will, investment in confidence-building efforts, and the development of shared ideational commitments would have still been necessary. But, none of these seemed out of reach for South American countries in the years following the creation of the SADC.

In the Argentine, Chilean and Brazilian cases, these processes were bottom-up, resulting in converging strategies inspired by diverse domestic pressures. As will be more extensively discussed in the coming section, such bottom-up process is essential for a thorough redefinition of a country's Strategic Culture and, by extension, of its international agency in the realm of defence. However, a favourable regional structure incentivizing the desecuritization and demilitarization of interactions between countries could certainly propagate, reinforce, accelerate or, perhaps, even initiate the necessary processes of socialization and social learning even if bottom-up processes are weaker

than in the cases discussed here. This reinforcing effect was precisely one of the merits of the MERCOSUR, and a role that the SADC was expected to fulfil in the regional arena. The success of these efforts still relies on permeable social and political contexts at the domestic level, but since many of these confidence building mechanisms require neither extensive nor rapid ideational changes on behalf of the states, their accumulative effect both on the regional structure and on the constitution of South American agents did not seem farfetched. Their impact relies on a slow accumulation of experience over time, facilitating the redefinition of domestic Strategic Cultures and normative priors if successful. However, as will be more extensively discussed in the coming section, some instances of co-constitution may involve different dynamics to have their desired effect.

It is worth reiterating that, though the Argentine and Chilean negotiating agendas had so many points in common and that the two countries coordinated their positions extensively, each engaged in the negotiations pursuing distinct goals. In particular, each had different expectations about the reach an organization like the SADC should be given, the impact it would have on the regional social arrangements, the time-frame within which these changes should be advanced, and how it would contribute to their standing as regional powers.

For Argentine defence elites, the possibility of regionalizing the market for the country's languishing military industry was particularly attractive, as shown by their speedy attempt to capitalize on it developing the UNASUR I basic trainer aircraft project. However, it seems accurate to suggest that this goal was secondary to the objectives pursued in relation to the SADC, since most efforts went into securing the creation of the

CEED and the ESUDE. This highlights the crucial role attributed by this country's defence elites to leading the development of shared ideational commitments in the region.

On the Chilean side, participation in the UNASUR/SADC framework was never a given. Though the country did pursue the goal of breaking with the regional "withdrawal" of the Pinochet years, it would only agree to join if the SADC was in line with its pragmatic approach to foreign policy. The Bachelet administration saw its position of *Pro Tempore* President of UNASUR as an opportunity to assume a prominent role and steer the results closer towards her administration's foreign policy goals. This was to become a proof of the commitment Chile had with regional governance, as well as evidence of its dependability as coordinator of collective efforts, and a landmark of Bachelet's strong stances in foreign policy.

Both countries succeeded in these initial goals. Argentina not only secured the creation of the CEED, but has also had a prominent role in its working<sup>137</sup>, seeking to become a regional "thought leader". Chile not only showed its commitment to advancing "responsible" forms of regional cooperation and governance, but also put forward its dependability as an international partner able to carry the weight of coordinating complex multilateral negotiations. They both shared the goals of promoting a stable, positive regional peace beyond the Southern Cone. Crucially, they both engaged with the creation of the SADC understanding it as a clear opportunity to exercise their agency in such way that it would alter the existing social arrangements, rather than coerced by Brazilian power or convinced of that the already existing agreements sufficed to move forward with the project. To reiterate the conclusion reached in Chapter 2, neither the power asymmetry favouring Brazil, nor the rise of the post-hegemonic regionalist agenda

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<sup>137</sup> Its headquarters are located in Buenos Aires and funded primarily by Argentina, and the first Director of the institution (who served two consecutive mandates) was also Argentine.

fully explain the position of these countries with regards to this organization. Rather, seen from the long-term historical development of their Strategic Cultures, these two factors played relatively tangential roles in defining their negotiating positions. Though counter-factual, it does not seem farfetched to maintain that Argentina and Chile's position on the creation of a regional organization designed to manage cooperative efforts in the defence sector would not have differed substantially had Brazil not held a dominant position or had the regional "left turn" not happened.

Among some of the key characteristics that separate Colombia from the other two cases, it is worth mentioning: the critical junction shaping its current Strategic Culture was related to heightened levels of domestic violence rather than dictatorial processes; explicitly opposed to the Post-hegemonic regionalist agenda; showed a consistent pattern of distrust towards neighbouring states (including Brazil); had a negative perception of regional organizations and their performance; openly rejected the doctrinal separation between defence and security; and, had the most right-wing administration in the region at the time. In addition, Colombia had been at the centre of a regional crisis in March 2008, having unlawfully violated Ecuadorian sovereignty to bomb a FARC campsite.

Had the Post-hegemonic regionalist agenda not emerged, almost certainly this country would not have intensified its relations with South America, let alone participated in the creation of a multilateral cooperative defence organization. Similarly, had Brazilian authorities not convinced them otherwise, Colombian leaders and defence elites would probably not have joined the SADC. In the same vein, Colombia would not have engaged in efforts to advance the construction of mutual understandings, doctrinal convergence, and policy coordination mechanisms for the defence sector, nor would it have joined an

organization explicitly separating the realms of defence and security, if these had not been put in the agenda by other countries.

All interviewees maintained that the optimal outcome for Colombia would have been that the SADC was not created in the first place, since the country struggled to find the project relevant for its own agenda. It is difficult to say the extent to which the final decision was due to mere pragmatism, to the pressure exercised by Brazil, or to different reasons altogether. I would argue that this is relatively inconsequential for the purposes of this Thesis. What is important is that, despite its rejection of the SADC and its consistent claims about allegedly being the only remaining barrier against the regional expansion of the “Chavist” agenda, Colombia developed an active role during the negotiation, construction, and implementation of this regional security governance mechanism.

In general terms, the biggest impact the Colombian agenda had in the conformation of the SADC was lowering the regional “maximum common denominator”. To be sure, it was not alone in its goal to minimize the reach of the agreement, with Chile pivoting between its commitment to the process and a cautious attitude towards regionalism, and Peru remaining vigilant at the margins. However, only Colombia openly voiced its negative perception of regional affairs and its discontent with the SADC. Whether the regional commitment would have managed to move further into more ambitious initiatives had Colombia not voiced its concerns, is difficult to know. What is possible to see, though, is the positive impact the Colombian agenda had on the arrangement reached<sup>138</sup>.

Crucially, the understanding local defence elites had of what “cooperation” meant was quite different to what most other countries in the region understood. Interviewees

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<sup>138</sup> By this, I mean its ability to get proposals included in the SADC statute and contribute to shaping the final agreement. It is not an evaluation of the qualities of such contributions.

consistently referred to “effective cooperation” in terms of actual military support coming exclusively from the US. Interestingly, in its attempt to keep any whiff of “Chavism” at bay, Colombia sided with those countries that actively opposed including the provision for actual military mobilization in support of any member state, thus rejecting the very possibility that the SADC could ever provide the “effective cooperation” that Colombian defence elites seemingly demanded from the region.

Perhaps the more salient and evident of the elements Colombia managed to get included in the statute is the principle condemning “armed groups outside the law”. Albeit a watered down version of the article originally sought, this did allow Colombia to save face and maintain its militaristic domestic strategy while also complying with the regional normative priors. Despite the clear contrast between Colombia’s approach to its domestic conflict and the preferences of many other relevant countries in the region, it succeeded in obtaining some degree of legitimization for its militarized anti-terrorist fight against the FARC. Moreover, other states conducting militarized anti-insurgent/anti-terrorist/anti-narcotics actions in the region probably benefited from this legitimization as well. In short, considering how hard Colombia had to negotiate in order for this principle included, it is undeniable that the agency it displayed during the negotiations had the potential to affect the regional normative framework significantly.

It could be argued that, given the strong commitment to non-intervention and pluralism that continues to define the South American society, Colombia’s domestic policies would not have faced relevant backlash in the absence of the SADC. Indeed, other than some sporadic complaints, Colombia’s war against the FARC was not widely questioned by its regional partners before the SADC existed, even at the height of hostilities and human rights violations. It is also interesting to note that the Colombian

government was confronted with a stronger condemnation for its “invite” to US Armed Forces to use its bases than it ever did for the militarized ways used in domestic security since the Uribe administration.

Yet, this is not to say that obtaining legitimization from this new regional security governance mechanism was irrelevant for the country (nor for the region as a whole). The decision to engage in this effort and fight hard to have this principle included in the statute actually implies that some degree of relevance was attributed to finding a framework in which Colombian authorities could maintain their chosen path of action while also facilitating cooperation (or, at least, a dialogue) in the area of defence. Moreover, once the council started to work regularly, Colombia became a remarkably active participant in the meetings, not only “containing Chavism” but more importantly proposing initiatives to move forward the cooperative agenda, particularly in terms of military industrial projects.

As already mentioned, another way in which Colombian agency was transformative for the region was its adamant opposition to the “Chavist agenda” in South America. This not only fuelled the tensions that led to the proposal of the SADC, in the first place, but also prompted its defence elites to take part in the negotiations, making sure that Venezuela was stopped in its perceived intentions to promote its ideational commitments throughout the region. For example, Colombia was a vocal and extreme example of the regional commitment to upholding the norm of consensus-driven decision-making, thus helping block the Venezuelan proposal to instil the SADC with a supranational majority decision-making mechanism. Paradoxically, Colombia’s input in this aspect was not strictly necessary, since most members preferred the same outcome, which rested on a long-held regional practice that was not facing serious challenges. However, this shows that Colombia does share with its regional partners in the working of common

institutions, and that its own agency may have been influenced by regional institutions despite political differences with centre-of-left governments.

It is possible that, as common sense would indicate, the likelihood of becoming more isolated from the region also played a role convincing local defence and political elites about the need to join the SADC. However, this only explains part of the story. Understanding the specific forms in which Colombia tried to participate before and during the negotiations requires a better understanding of the webs of meanings attached to its defence sector and to the use of military force in particular. Hence, while the country was unsuccessful in reaching many of its objectives, the agenda defended during the four rounds of negotiations can be better understood under the light of a Strategic Culture characterized by a high degree of activism in the use of force, low thresholds of domestic and international legitimization, and goals for the use of force that far surpasses the regional standard.

### **Implications of this research and contributions to the field**

The findings of this research have ramifications into various aspects of how agency is studied, avoiding individualistic conceptions of the term and instead approaching it as a constitutive part in regional security dynamics and in the development of the regional security environment. In this sense, the findings discussed above contribute to different fields within the discipline of Interantional Relations, including:

- The structure-agency debate within Constructivist theory, particularly in relation to the use of Strategic Culture literature to engage with the webs of meaning informing agents' behaviour in relation to the defence sector;

- The multi-level analysis of regional security dynamics, establishing a dialogue between different theoretical approaches to regionalism in order to bring forward different aspects of the regional security environment;
- The existing knowledge on the causes behind the creation of the South American Defence Council, complementing existing (sub)systemic approaches with an agent-centred perspective focused on the dynamic of mutual constitution between agents and structure;
- Detailed empirical analysis of three cases, exploring the how their respective Strategic Cultures shape agency by mediating between external and domestic stimuli, on one hand, and action, on the other hand.

Chapter 3 engaged with the ES and RSCT to try and characterize these, identifying long-standing institutions, norms, and practices that defined, at least in principle, the main features of South America as a distinct international society and as an independent security complex. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the conclusion was that the South American international society remains strongly committed to intense but pluralistic interactions, with states heavily relying on multilateral organizations to magnify their voices in the international arena (both independently and collectively) and on *ad hoc* mechanisms to secure the peaceful resolution of controversies. The principles of sovereignty and non-intervention remain at the heart of how South American states behave internationally. The South American Security Complex, on the other hand, is identified as a penetrated, unipolar, standard RSC with shared security concerns, such as the spill over of violence related to organized crime, maintaining or even increasing its autonomy, and the securitization of democratic stability.

The case studies show that these characteristics remain central to understand regional social arrangements and security dynamics in South America, with the agents studied

perceiving the scope of their legitimate behaviour well within the limits mentioned above. The generalized commitment to sovereignty, non-intervention, and pluralism define the regional context to such extent that even the worst cases of human rights violations in the region rarely faced any relevant contestation, and the SADC negotiators explicitly sought to avoid involving the organization in any actions that would contradict them. As mentioned in Chapter 3, even the “democratic clause” incorporated to all regional organizations since the 1990s remains strongly within this tradition, showing wide consensus for the defence of the incumbent but little to no agreement regarding its use in cases of non-democratic or illiberal actions by a democratically elected government. In contrast, regional powers had no issue resorting to the UNASUR/SADC to demand explanations after the Colombian-US military cooperation deal became public, showing that this decision was perceived as potentially allowing an extra-regional power to set foot in the region and threaten the sovereignty and autonomy of regional powers.

The implication of these conclusions is that not only is it possible to see these institutions, principles, and norms still at play at the inter-state level, but they are also very easily identifiable in the perceptions and agendas of individual agents. This means that at least one of the legs in the process of co-constitution (the top-down constitution of agents by structural incentives) can be confirmed to be at work.

A relevant caveat is necessary here. The process of mutual constitution between agents and structure becomes trickier when it comes to the effect the regional environment can have on the domestic Strategic Cultures and related normative priors. Only in cases where profound critical junctures are present does the domestic context become permeable to be influenced in this regard by regional pressures, primarily because the initial impulse

for such modification results from domestic processes. This may help explain why the governments that emerged from the processes of democratization in the 1980s sought to create a regional network of agreements and rapprochement processes, mutually reinforcing their stability and securitizing democratic stability. These were developments gestated domestically on which the regional environment had an effect only after the democratic transition had begun.

Such critical junctures opened the possibility (and even the necessity) for deep debates about the roles of the defence sector in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. Without them creating social, political and/or economic pressure for cultural change domestically, even the stronger incentives coming from the regional level would have lacked strength to alter Strategic Cultures at agent level in the short and medium terms. Historical instances like these give strength and momentum to the re-signification of crucial social arrangements, creating more permeable contexts for change and mediating pressures coming from the regional level into domestic realm.

Slow, accumulative effects on the agents' identities would still be a possibility, working through processes like social learning and socialization. But, the shorter the period analysed, the more necessary critical junctures seem to become as conditions facilitating change. Should this insight be confirmed with further empirical analysis, it would mean that the Constructivist notion that the structure constitutes agents should be qualified, at least in the case of identity markers related with the defence sector.

In terms of the opposite leg of the co-constitution process (bottom-up alteration of the regional environment by the agents), it could be argued that influence on social constructions could be expected to take place even without the presence of regional critical junctures. This is due to these ideational commitments being less entrenched than

national ones. If such is the case, the modification of the social structure due to the agency of specific actors could be expected to materialize as easily through processes of accumulative change (social learning; socialization, etc.) as they would in the context of an international critical junctures (wars; international crises; drastic shifts in the norms and leading actors of the international system; etc.).

A key implication of this is that a relevant difference should be established by Constructivism between the two legs of the mutual constitution, focusing particularly on the pace and processes involved in each of them. This would add nuance to the notion of temporality Archer incorporated with her morphogenic approach. In this way, it is not enough to simply analyse the dynamics of co-constitution sequentially, but it is also necessary to theorize better the distinct conditions of possibility and contextual incentives expected to be present in each instance. In other words, an element of “asymmetry”<sup>139</sup> between the two legs of the agent-structure relation has so far remained undertheorized in the Constructivism, and needs to be looked further into in order for the theory to reflect more closely the actual processes at play in international politics. Together with the temporality proposed by Archer and the addition of notions like Strategic Culture adding an extra layer of analysis, acknowledging and exploring the differences that exist between the top-down and bottom-up relations of constitution would further strengthen the Constructivist research program and perhaps even facilitate its operationalization.

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<sup>139</sup> By this I don't mean that there is any form of hierarchy between top-down and bottom-up processes, but simply that they are not equal nor do they consume the same amount of time to take hold.

The final implication I would like to highlight is related to the working propositions and research question presented in the introduction to this Thesis. The former state that studying the behaviour of secondary powers is crucial to understand the role agency had in the construction of the SADC and its impact on security governance mechanisms. These working propositions were later crystalized in the following research question: How did the agency of secondary regional powers affect the regional security governance mechanisms created with the SADC? A question broad enough to allow for a variety of approaches and a multiplicity of sources to be used. Indeed, after an evaluation of the main conceptual frameworks contending to seek an answer for this question, Strategic Culture literature was deemed the best fitting one.

Indeed, the present research showed that lacking a proper understanding of the agency deployed by agents, explanations regarding the creation of the SADC (or any other multilateral organization for that matter) are incomplete, at best, or plainly wrong, at worst. The secondary powers studied here affected in a variety of ways the outcome of negotiations and, through them, the regional normative structure. With Brazil introducing the SADC as an empty shell, opening the game for other regional players to fill in its content, secondary powers took to the job of setting agendas and limits for the defence cooperation to be fostered through this organization. As discussed in the previous section, among other articles and principles central to the organization they introduced: conceptual distinctions that influenced not only the SADC but the entire UNASUR; mutual confidence measures inspired in their own experience became part of the core of the organization and essential elements for it to fulfil its objectives; the creation of the first fora in the region for the advancement of shared understandings and doctrinal positions, seeking to shape the identity of the South American security complex at large.

None of these elements, and hence the nature of the SADC itself, could be properly understood if the only interpretative approaches used were (sub)systemic. Explanations based exclusively on the dominant position of Brazil or on the emergence of a post-hegemonic regional agenda related to shared ideational commitments provide relevant insights, but they need to be complemented with an agent-centred approach in order to understand the fuller story. This confirms the intuitions that led to the working propositions presented in the introduction, and highlights the relevance of engaging with the full circle in the process of co-constitution of agents and structure.

All the above qualifies Battaglino's claim that "Essentially, the establishment of the SADC can be traced as the result of a process where South American nations shared new understandings of defence based on a genuine regional approach." (Battaglino 2012, 85). Instead, based on the discussions and evidence presented in this Thesis, it seems reasonable to argue that shared understandings regarding the possibilities for defence cooperation and policy coordination are the result of the creation of the SADC, and not a pre-requisite. Finding of "maximum common denominators" for this was the main outcome of the negotiations and the necessary condition for shared understandings to start developing through the convergence of highly divergent strategic cultures, perspectives on regional security, and regional agendas. It is within the limits created by the SADC that Colombia found a window to access regional security discussions on positive terms; that Chile found a way to "return to the region" securing a prominent role without sacrificing any of its commercial and economic liberalism; and, that Argentina found a way to regain some initiative in regional order discussions despite meagre funds and an inward-looking strategic culture.

## **Final considerations and future research**

The goal set for this research at its outset was to contribute to the existing knowledge about the process by which the SADC was created in 2008. The central motivation was to break with largely one-dimensional explanations that dominate the field, engaging with the topic from a perspective not taken into consideration by the majority of previous researchers. The argument here is not that the regional power asymmetry or the presence of shared ideas and understandings are inconsequential to explain the behaviour of these states. Rather, the this research has sought to advance that individual actors, themselves constituted as agents by a combination of domestic and regional factors, effectively influenced the development of the regional security environment through their meaningful and purposeful actions (agency). In order to do this, the conceptual apparatus used to analyse the regional (ES and RSCT) and domestic (Strategic Culture) levels were inspired by a Constructivist understanding of international relations. In doing this, the present research has not only analysed the impact secondary powers had in shaping the SADC, but has also explored more general aspects of how agents can affect the social structures within which they operate.

The Strategic Cultures of these secondary powers were identified as a crucial element informing their respective perceptions of the region, approach to the SADC initiative, and negotiating agenda, providing a theoretically-informed account of the motivations underpinning their behaviour. Similarly, having properly contextualized the meanings embedded in the principles and norms each sought to have included in the SADC statute, it has been possible to evaluate their impact on regional normative structures in a more complete and concise form than ever before.

The future lines of inquiry that could emanate from the present research are many. On the one hand, the discussions about the Strategic Cultures of the secondary powers studied and about how they affected their performance in their interactions with the region should be helpful for all researchers seeking to engage on multi-level analysis of South American relations in general. In fact, a growing interest in the use of this concept can be noticed in the last years. Panels on the role distinct national Strategic Cultures have had in Latin American relations have been organized by different research groups in two of the most prestigious academic conferences devoted to the region (LASA 2017 and ALACIP 2017). Furthermore, the Florida International University has held a number of workshops since the late 2000s on the Strategic Culture of different Latin American countries that eventually derived in the publication of the edited volume “Culture and National Security in the Americas” (Fonseca and Gamarra 2017), some of whose chapters have been relevant for the present research. This Thesis should contribute to the growing interest around the concept of Strategic Culture seen in the region, as well as on the understanding of its impact on policy-making and regional affairs.

It would be interesting to produce a similar evaluation of the Strategic Cultures and participation in the SADC negotiations for the remaining secondary powers. This would, for example, allow to explain why Venezuela chose to join the SADC despite almost all of its preferences for the organization having been defeated. Moreover, considering that one of the case selection criterion worked under the assumption that secondary powers should be more capable of resisting the regional power asymmetries and engage more freely with the negotiations, it would be worth exploring how minor regional powers behaved and their motivations. Should the empirical analysis of those cases show that the

Brazilian power asymmetry did not affect their decision-making processes nor their negotiating agendas, then the whole notion that the regional balance of power is relevant to explain South American relations could be brought into question.

Considering that the SADC has been in operation for the better part of ten years already, it would also be interesting analysing whether or not it has been able to influence regional dynamics and the agents that participate in them. This would require doing an in-depth performance evaluation of the organization, analysing not only the fulfilled projects but also the impact it has had on regional dynamics and the prospects of developing more ambitious cooperation/coordination. In addition, the agents themselves should be re-evaluated, trying to identify whether or not the way in which they understand and relate to their defence sectors has been affected, whether or not their perception of the region has changes, and whether or not the goal of extending the stable peace of the Southern Cone to the rest of the region has been achieved. Moreover, it would be worth looking at whether or not institutional/bureaucratic/professional networks emerged between those how handled SADC issues at the national level in each member state, whether or not this led to their normative priors to change, and (if the two previous conditions prove to be true) whether or not this has had any relevant impact on the respective defence elites.

Finally, though this research sought primarily to make an empirical contribution, hopefully the conceptual work done with the Strategic Culture framework and the connection established with the wider constructivist research agenda can help advance the agent-structure debate within this tradition, looking not only into the general abstraction of “co-constitution” but also engaging more explicitly with questions of operationalization and empirical work.

## Appendix 1: SADC Statute

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### ESTATUTO DEL CONSEJO DE DEFENSA SURAMERICANO<sup>140</sup>

#### I - Naturaleza

Artículo 1.- Créase el Consejo de Defensa Suramericano como una instancia de consulta, cooperación y coordinación en materia de Defensa en armonía con las disposiciones del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR en sus Artículos 3° letra s, 5° y 6°.

#### II - Principios

Artículo 2.- El Consejo se sujetará a los principios y propósitos establecidos en la Carta de Naciones Unidas, y en la Carta de la Organización de Estados Americanos, así como en los Mandatos y Decisiones del Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de UNASUR.

Artículo 3.- El Consejo de Defensa actuará conforme a los siguientes principios:

- a) Respeto de manera irrestricta a la soberanía, integridad e inviolabilidad territorial de los Estados, la no intervención en sus asuntos internos y la autodeterminación de los pueblos.
- b) Ratifica la plena vigencia de las instituciones democráticas, el respeto irrestricto a los derechos humanos y el ejercicio de la no discriminación en el ámbito de la defensa, con el fin de reforzar y garantizar el estado de derecho.
- c) Promueve la paz y la solución pacífica de controversias.

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<sup>140</sup> Despite English being one of the four official languages of the UNASUR, no official version of the present Statute was found in that language in any of the official websites of the UNASUR, the SADC, the CEED, nor the member countries Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. The present version in Spanish was retrieved from: <http://ceed.unasursg.org/Espanol/09-Downloads/Normativa/Estatuto-CDS.pdf>

d) Fortalece el diálogo y el consenso en materia de defensa mediante el fomento de medidas de confianza y transparencia.

e) Salvaguarda la plena vigencia del Derecho Internacional en concurrencia con los principios y normas de la Carta de Naciones Unidas, la Carta de la Organización de Estados Americanos y el Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR.

f) Preserva y fortalece Suramérica como un espacio libre de armas nucleares y de destrucción masiva, promoviendo el desarme y la cultura de paz en el mundo.

g) Reconoce la subordinación constitucional de las instituciones de la defensa a la autoridad civil legalmente constituida.

h) Afirma el pleno reconocimiento de las instituciones encargadas de la defensa nacional consagradas por las Constituciones de los Estados miembros.

i) Promueve la reducción de las asimetrías existentes entre los sistemas de defensa de los Estado miembros de UNASUR en orden a fortalecer la capacidad de la región en el campo de la defensa.

j) Fomenta la defensa soberana de los recursos naturales de nuestras naciones.

k) Promueve, de conformidad al ordenamiento constitucional y legal de los Estados miembros, la responsabilidad y la participación ciudadana en los temas de la defensa, en cuanto bien público que atañe al conjunto de la sociedad.

l) Tiene presente los principios de gradualidad y flexibilidad en el desarrollo institucional de UNASUR y en la promoción de iniciativas de cooperación en el campo de la defensa reconociendo las diferentes realidades nacionales.

m) Reafirma la convivencia pacífica de los pueblos, la vigencia de los sistemas democráticos de gobierno y su protección, en materia de defensa, frente a amenazas

o acciones externas o internas, en el marco de las normativas nacionales. Asimismo, rechaza la presencia o acción de grupos armados al margen de la ley, que ejerzan o propicien la violencia cualquiera sea su origen.

### **III – Objetivos**

Artículo 4.- El Consejo de Defensa Suramericano tiene como objetivos generales los siguientes:

- a) Consolidar Suramérica como una zona de paz, base para la estabilidad democrática y el desarrollo integral de nuestros pueblos, y como contribución a la paz mundial.
- b) Construir una identidad suramericana en materia de defensa, que tome en cuenta las características subregionales y nacionales y que contribuya al fortalecimiento de la unidad de América Latina y el Caribe.
- c) Generar consensos para fortalecer la cooperación regional en materia de defensa.

Artículo 5.- Los objetivos específicos del Consejo de Defensa Suramericano son:

- a) Avanzar gradualmente en el análisis y discusión de los elementos comunes de una visión conjunta en materia de defensa.
- b) Promover el intercambio de información y análisis sobre la situación regional e internacional, con el propósito de identificar los factores de riesgo y amenaza que puedan afectar la paz regional y mundial.
- c) Contribuir a la articulación de posiciones conjuntas de la región en foros multilaterales sobre defensa, dentro del marco del artículo 14º del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR.

- d) Avanzar en la construcción de una visión compartida respecto de las tareas de defensa y promover el diálogo y la cooperación preferente con otros países de América Latina y el Caribe.
- e) Fortalecer la adopción de medidas de fomento de la confianza y difundir las lecciones aprendidas.
- f) Promover el intercambio y la cooperación en el ámbito de la industria de defensa.
- g) Fomentar el intercambio en materia de formación y capacitación militar, facilitar procesos de entrenamiento entre las Fuerzas Armadas y promover la cooperación académica de los centros de estudio de defensa.
- h) Compartir experiencias y apoyar acciones humanitarias tales como desminado, prevención, mitigación y asistencia a las víctimas de los desastres naturales.
- i) Compartir experiencias en operaciones de mantenimiento de la paz de Naciones Unidas.
- j) Intercambiar experiencias sobre los procesos de modernización de los Ministerios de Defensa y de las Fuerzas Armadas.
- k) Promover la incorporación de la perspectiva de género en el ámbito de la defensa.

#### **IV – Estructura**

Artículo 6.- El Consejo de Defensa Suramericano estará integrado por las Ministras y los Ministros de Defensa, o sus equivalentes, de los países miembros de UNASUR.

Artículo 7.- Las delegaciones nacionales se compondrán por altos representantes de Relaciones Exteriores y de Defensa y por los asesores cuya participación sea considerada necesaria por los Estados miembros.

Artículo 8.- El Consejo tendrá una instancia ejecutiva, encabezada por las Viceministras y los Viceministros de Defensa, o sus equivalentes.

Artículo 9.- La Presidencia del Consejo de Defensa Suramericano corresponderá al mismo país que ocupe la Presidencia Pro Tempore de UNASUR. La Presidencia tendrá la responsabilidad de coordinar las actividades del Consejo.

Artículo 10.- El Consejo podrá conformar grupos de trabajo para examinar temas específicos y formularle sugerencias o recomendaciones.

Artículo 11.- Las atribuciones de la Presidencia del Consejo de Defensa Suramericano son las siguientes:

- a) Asumir las tareas de secretaría del Consejo y demás instancias de trabajo, incluyendo la comunicación con los Estados miembros y el envío de información de interés para los trabajos del Consejo.
- b) Elaborar la propuesta de agenda y organización de los trabajos, para las reuniones ordinarias y extraordinarias del Consejo de Defensa Suramericano, a ser sometida a consideración de los demás Estados miembros.
- c) Formular, previa consulta a los Estados miembros, invitaciones a especialistas para que participen en reuniones del Consejo de Defensa Suramericano.

## **V – Funcionamiento**

Artículo 12.- El Consejo realizará anualmente reuniones ordinarias, según el criterio de rotación de la Presidencia Pro Tempore de UNASUR.

Artículo 13.- Los acuerdos del Consejo se adoptarán por consenso, de acuerdo al artículo 12° del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR.

Artículo 14.- La instancia ejecutiva del Consejo sesionará cada seis meses, sin perjuicio de reuniones extraordinarias, y elaborará el plan de acción anual.

Artículo 15.- La Presidencia convocará a reuniones extraordinarias a petición de la mitad de sus Estados miembros.

Artículo 16.- El Consejo y sus Estados miembros darán a los documentos entregados el tratamiento establecido por el país de origen.

Artículo 17.- La incorporación de nuevos Estados al Consejo de Defensa Suramericano se hará de acuerdo a lo estipulado en los artículos 19º y 20º del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR.

Artículo 18.- En las iniciativas de diálogo y cooperación con otras organizaciones regionales o subregionales, el Consejo actuará de conformidad con los artículos 6º, 7º y 15º del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR.

Propuesta de Grupo de trabajo sobre el Consejo de Defensa Suramericano, suscrito en la ciudad de Santiago, República de Chile, a 11 días de diciembre del año dos mil ocho.

**Sr. Daniel Rodríguez**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Argentina

**Sr. Ricardo Bocalandro**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Argentina

**Sr. Alfredo Lobo**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Bolivia

**Sr Miguel Carvajal**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Ecuador

**Sr. Germán Ortega**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Ecuador

**Sr Miguel Hermosilla**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Paraguay

**Sr. Mauricio Dorfler**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Bolivia

**Sr Gilberto Antonio S. Burnier**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Brasil

**Sr Joao Solano Carneiro da Cunha**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Brasil

**Sr Boris Yopo**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Chile

**Sr Juan Eduardo Eguiguren**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Chile

**Sr Sergio Restrepo**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Colombia

**Sra Paola Lugari**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Colombia

**Sr. José Antonio Bellina**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Peru

**Sr José Boza**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Peru

**Sr Jorge Menéndez**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Uruguay

**Sr Duncan Croci**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Uruguay

**Sr José Fuentes**

Ministerio de Defensa  
República de Venezuela

**Sra María Lourdes Urbaneja**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
República de Venezuela

**Sr Gonzalo García Pino**

Presidente Grupo de Trabajo



## Appendix 2: List of interviewees

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### Argentina (in alphabetical order)

**Battaglino, Jorge.** 2015. Interview on 24th June, Buenos Aires

PhD In Latin American Politics (University of Essex). Assistant Professor of International Relations and Latin American Politics (Universidad Nacional de San Martín/CONICET). Former Director of the National School of Defence.

**Codianni, Eduardo.** 2015. Interview on 25th June, Buenos Aires

MA in Economic Development (Universidad Nacional de San Martín). Analyst, Office of International Affairs – Ministry of Defence (2010-2015). Visiting Lecturer: Latin American Geopolitics and Defence (University of Buenos Aires); Public Administration and Defence (National Defence School).

**Comini, Nicolás.** 2015. Interview on 28th July, Buenos Aires

PhD in Social Sciences (Universidad de Buenos Aires). Director of the Master's degree in International Relations (Universidad del Salvador). Junior negotiator in the Argentine delegation to the SADC Working Group.

**Diamint, Rut.** 2015. Interview on 6th August, Buenos Aires

PhD in International Studies (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona). Professor of International Security (Universidad Torcuato di Tella). Expert advisor at the Argentine National Congress. Chief of Staff and expert advisor at the Ministry of Defence (2003-2005). UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (2013-2015).

**Forti, Alfredo.** 2015. Interview on 22nd June, Buenos Aires

Deputy Minister of Defence for International Affairs (2007-2013). Head of SADC negotiators for Argentina. Director of the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies (CEED/SADC) (2011-2015). Special advisor to the Secretary General of the OAS on Defence matters (2015- ).

**Hekimian, Leonardo.** 2015. Interview on 30th July, Buenos Aires

Joint degree in Law and Political Science. Lecturer of International Security (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina). Civil servant at the Ministry of Defence (1992- ). Head of Expert Advisors, Office of International Affairs - Ministry of Defence.

**Mendoza, María Cecilia.** 2015. Interview on 4th August, Buenos Aires

PhD (c) in Latin American Studies (Universidad de Buenos Aires). Civil servant in different branches of the Argentine state. National coordinator on UNASUR-related matters – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009-2010). Coordinator at the National School of Diplomacy– Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011-2012)

**Rodríguez, Daniel.** 2015. Interview on 5th August, Buenos Aires

PgDip in Control and Administration of Public Policies (FLACSO/Argentina). Expert advisor at the Office of International Affairs - Ministry of Defence (2006-2012). Senior negotiator in the Argentine delegation to the SADC Working Group. Argentine delegate to the CEED.

**Tibiletti, Luis.** 2015. Interview on 23rd June, Buenos Aires

Capt. (R) Argentine Army. Advisor to the Argentine Congress on International Relations and Defence matters. Founding member of the Regional Strategic Security group (SER) and director of the “SER en el 2000” journal. Academic Secretary at the Centre of Strategic

Defence Studies (Ministry of Defence). Security Secretary (2005-2007). Professor at the National Defence School and at the Universidad del Salvador (USAL).

### **Chile (in alphabetical order)**

**Durán, Roberto.** 2015. Interview on 10th July. Santiago de Chile

PhD in Political Science (Institut de Hautes Études Internationales et du Développement, Geneva). Professor of International Relations, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Universidad Católica de Chile. Expert on Chilean foreign and defence policies.

**Flisfisch, Ángel.** 2015. Interview on 7th July. Santiago de Chile

MA in Political Science (University of Michigan). Director of FLACSO-Chile. Professor of International Relations. Head of the Special Policies section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under-Secretary for Foreign Policy (2009-2010). Senior negotiator in the Chilean delegation to the SADC Working Group.

**García Pino, Gonzalo.** 2015. Interview on 6th July. Santiago de Chile

Lawyer. Director of the Constitutional Jury. Advisor to the Minister of Defence (1994-1997). Under-Secretary of Defence for the Navy (2005-2006). Under-Secretary of Defence for War (2006-2010). President of the SADC Working Group during the SADC negotiations.

**Labbé, Alfredo.** 2015. Interview on 9th July. Santiago de Chile

Senior career diplomat. Director General of Foreign Policy (2014-2016). Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva (2010-2014). Director for International

and Human Security (2009-2010); Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York (2005-2008). Head negotiator in the Chilean delegation to the SADC Working Group.

**Maldonado, Carlos.** 2015. Interview on 9th July. Santiago de Chile

MA in Defence Policy (Academia de Guerra del Ejército de Chile). Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence. Senior expert advisor on International Affairs to the same Ministry. Negotiator in the Chilean delegation to the SADC Working Group.

**Portales, Carlos.** 2015. Interview on 6th July. Santiago de Chile

MA in Political Science (Stanford University). Professor of International Relations at FLACSO-Chile. Director of the International Organizations, Law and Diplomacy programme at the Washington College of Law, American University (2010-2014). Director General of Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003-2008). Director of Chile's diplomacy academy "Andrés Bello" (2000-2001).

**Yopo Herrera, Boris Igor.** 2015. Interview on 10th July. Santiago de Chile

MA in International Relations (Universidad de Chile). MA in Political Science (FLACSO/Chile). Researcher at the Institute of International Strategic Studies (IISS), London (1986-1987). Researcher at FLACSO/Chile (1985-1989). Director of studies at the Diplomacy Academy "Andrés Bello" (1992-1995). Director of Postgraduate studies at the Instituto de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de Chile (2003-2006). Expert advisor on international affairs to the Presidency of the Republic (2007-2008). Head of expert advisors at the Ministry of Defence (2008-2009). Research Fellow at the Academia Nacional de Estudios Políticos y Estratégicos (ANEPE), Ministry of Defence (2009-2011). Director in Chile for Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's Regional Security programme.

**Yopo Herrera, Mladen.** 2015. Interview on 30th July. Buenos Aires

PhD in Political Science (University of Leiden). Professor of International Relations (Universidad de Santiago de Chile). Expert advisor, Ministry of Defence. Deputy Director of the CEED/SADC (2015-2017). Deputy Director at the ANEPE (2017- ).

## **Colombia (in alphabetical order)**

**Bermúdez, Jaime.** 2015. Interview on 21st July. Bogota.

DPhil St. Anthony's College (University of Oxford). Communications adviser to President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006). Colombian Ambassador to Argentina (2006-2008). Minister of Foreign Affairs (2008-2010).

**Borda, Sandra.** 2015. Interview on 23rd July. Bogota.

PhD in Political Science (University of Minnesota). Postdoc in Foreign Policy (University of Groningen). Head of the School of Social Sciences at Universidad de Bogota "Jorge Tadeo Lozano". Senior Researcher in the Colombian Foreign Policy report requested by the Colombian Presidency (2010). Expert in Colombian foreign and security policies.

**Cardona, Diego.** 2015. Interview via Skype on 15th October.

PhD in International Studies (Institut des Hautes Études Internationales – University of Geneva). Lecturer of International Relations at Universidad Nacional de Colombia (1988-1991). Lecturer of International Relations at Universidad de los Andes (1990-1994/1997-2000). Professor of International Relations at Universidad del Norte. Coordinator of the Centre for Strategic Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Coordinator of political

cooperation and common foreign policy at CAN. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Head of Staff for International Affairs at UNASUR Secretary General's Office.

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PgDip in Negotiation and International Relations (Universidad de los Andes). Adviser at the Americas Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-2007). Coordinator of the Regional Economic Integration and Political Consultation Mechanisms Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007-2011). Coordinator of South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Latin America and the Caribbean, Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (2012). Junior negotiator for Colombia during the SADC talks.

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Admiral (R) Colombian Navy. PhD in Oceanography (University of Bordeaux). Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Colombian Military Forces. Deputy Commander of the Colombian Navy. Headmaster of the Naval Academy. Senior negotiator for Colombia during the SADC talks.

**Reyes, Camilo.** 2015. Interview on 17th July. Bogota.

PgDip in Integration Law (Università Prodeo, Rome). Senior career diplomat. Minister of Foreign Affairs. Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. Ambassador to the United States of America.

## Appendix 3: Interview questions

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1. What is the history of the project to create the SADC? (Warm-up question)
  
2. In your opinion, what conditions made the South American context permeable to the creation of the SADC in 2008?
  
3. Why was the South American option preferable to a Latin American or a hemispheric one?
  
4. How did the X administration react to the proposal?
  
5. Was the local understanding of this project affected in any way by the fact that Brazil had promoted this idea?
  
6. How was the regional context perceived? / What aspects of the regional context were its most defining features at the time?
  
7. Once the SADC initiative is rolled out, how was it decided that the country would join the negotiations?
  
8. How was the negotiations agenda defined? Where there any clearly defined primary and secondary objectives? What there any domestic contestation to participating in the negotiations?
  
9. How about “no-go zones”? Was there any outcome that would have been considered unacceptable or a deal-breaker?
  
10. How would you define the key ideas influencing the role of the defence sector in society? Where does the prospect of increasing international cooperation/coordination fit among them?

**11.** In your opinion, where principles or understandings about the defence sector important in informing this country's negotiating position? How?

**12.** Taking into consideration the negotiating agenda agreed at the outset, which would you say constitute the biggest successes and defeats for the country in the negotiations?

## Appendix 4: Regional power distribution

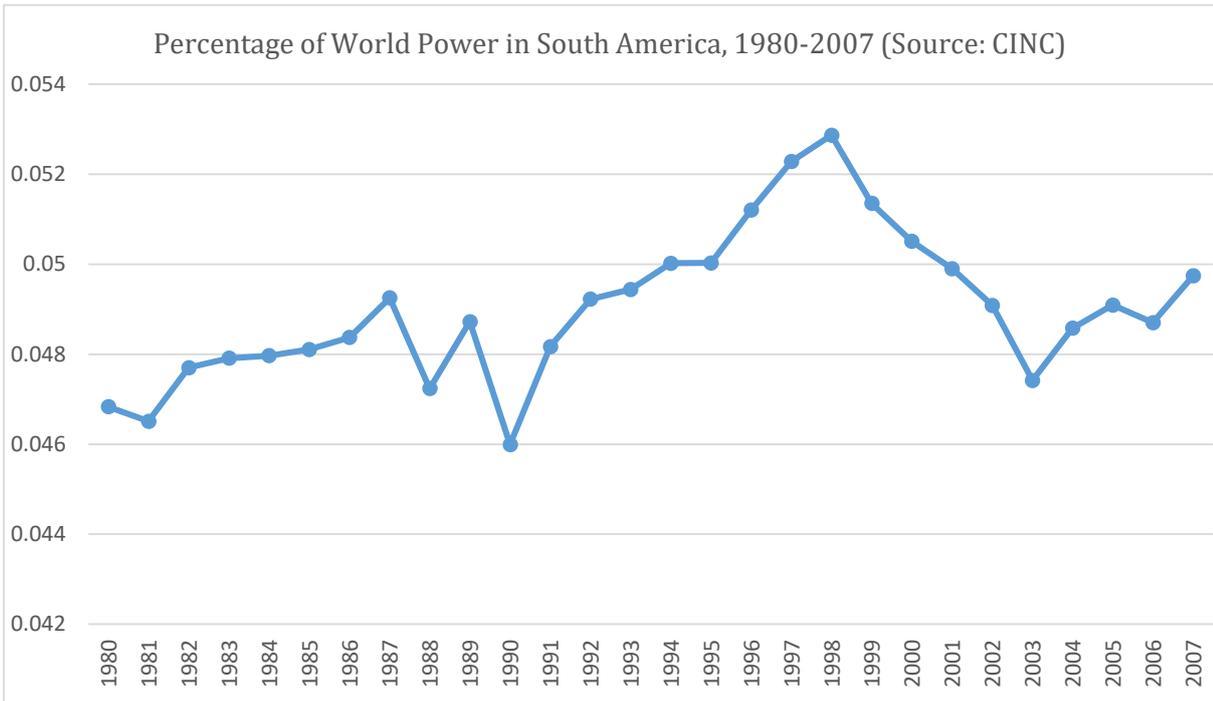
### Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) scores<sup>141</sup>

<http://cow.dss.ucdavis.edu/data-sets/national-material-capabilities>

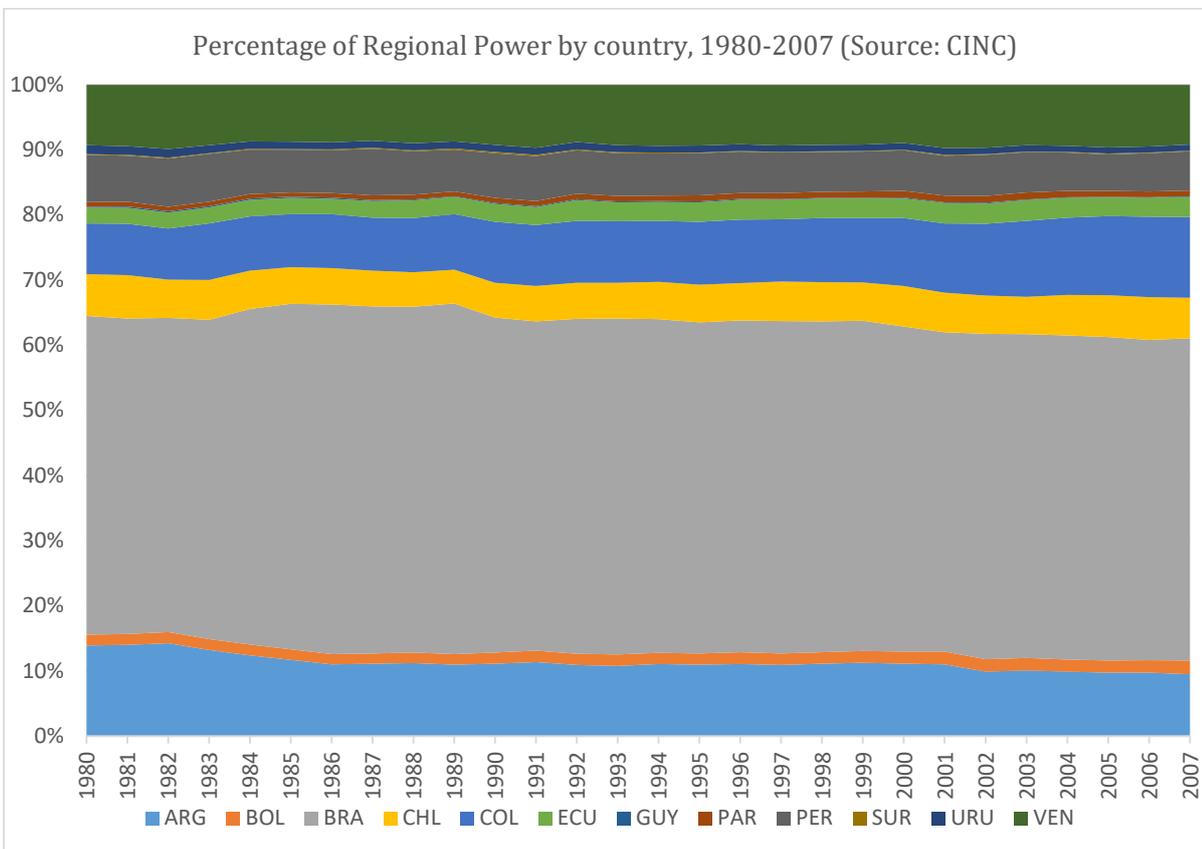
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
ARG	0.006522	0.006503	0.006797	0.006338	0.005953	0.005633	0.005324	0.005472	0.005291	0.005336	0.005107	0.005467	0.005367	0.005316
BOL	0.000764	0.000788	0.000819	0.0008	0.000789	0.000782	0.000765	0.000785	0.000771	0.000796	0.000797	0.000846	0.000862	0.000873
BRA	0.022926	0.022526	0.023004	0.023479	0.024701	0.025514	0.025973	0.026234	0.025067	0.026226	0.023635	0.024342	0.025297	0.025492
CHL	0.002998	0.003087	0.002807	0.002938	0.002843	0.002699	0.002694	0.002693	0.002516	0.002538	0.002477	0.002639	0.002741	0.002721
COL	0.003656	0.003691	0.003746	0.004163	0.003981	0.003913	0.003997	0.004026	0.003938	0.004149	0.004306	0.00451	0.004669	0.004673
ECU	0.001113	0.001137	0.001171	0.001177	0.00122	0.001209	0.001144	0.001252	0.001275	0.00128	0.001249	0.001304	0.001576	0.001447
GUY	0.000081	8.11E-05	8.05E-05	7.89E-05	9.59E-05	0.000097	9.29E-05	7.54E-05	6.83E-05	6.65E-05	6.74E-05	7.04E-05	6.81E-05	5.76E-05
PAR	0.000334	0.000334	0.000342	0.000339	0.00033	0.000314	0.000337	0.000344	0.000347	0.000351	0.000359	0.000392	0.000403	0.000416
PER	0.003405	0.003298	0.003529	0.003507	0.003282	0.003146	0.003182	0.003536	0.00313	0.003138	0.003163	0.003328	0.003294	0.003256
SUR	5.54E-05	5.37E-05	5.96E-05	0.000058	0.000057	5.37E-05	6.06E-05	7.48E-05	7.05E-05	7.64E-05	8.58E-05	8.66E-05	7.25E-05	0.000071
URU	0.000625	0.000633	0.000634	0.000589	0.000555	0.000547	0.00054	0.000522	0.000521	0.000526	0.000499	0.000534	0.000538	0.000522
VEN	0.004355	0.004379	0.004713	0.004443	0.004161	0.0042	0.004264	0.004239	0.004243	0.004243	0.004245	0.004652	0.004339	0.004597
Total	0.046834	0.046509	0.047702	0.04791	0.047967	0.048108	0.048373	0.049254	0.047237	0.048726	0.045991	0.048169	0.049225	0.049441

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
ARG	0.005542	0.005482	0.005675	0.005715	0.005879	0.005776	0.005619	0.005496	0.004844	0.004785	0.004797	0.004791	0.00475	0.004721
BOL	0.000856	0.000864	0.000911	0.000909	0.000939	0.000942	0.000941	0.00098	0.000949	0.000903	0.000918	0.000912	0.000927	0.00105
BRA	0.025611	0.025438	0.026079	0.026679	0.026833	0.02602	0.025197	0.024453	0.024523	0.023563	0.024155	0.024371	0.023933	0.024597
CHL	0.00287	0.002886	0.002955	0.003173	0.003191	0.003023	0.00315	0.003033	0.002893	0.002736	0.003041	0.003155	0.003208	0.003107
COL	0.004699	0.004822	0.004978	0.005005	0.005205	0.005094	0.00526	0.005326	0.0054	0.005528	0.005762	0.005967	0.006006	0.006174
ECU	0.001444	0.001511	0.001574	0.001567	0.001577	0.001516	0.001527	0.001552	0.001529	0.001493	0.001461	0.001404	0.001413	0.001518
GUY	5.78E-05	5.71E-05	5.69E-05	5.65E-05	5.67E-05	5.64E-05	5.58E-05	5.29E-05	5.21E-05	5.06E-05	5.03E-05	5.01E-05	4.95E-05	4.92E-05
PAR	0.00043	0.000475	0.000465	0.000471	0.000492	0.000501	0.000524	0.000517	0.000518	0.000508	0.000479	0.000445	0.000446	0.00045
PER	0.003242	0.003235	0.003255	0.003257	0.00324	0.003153	0.003149	0.003064	0.0031	0.002936	0.002858	0.002759	0.002847	0.002986
SUR	5.94E-05	5.85E-05	5.72E-05	5.72E-05	5.64E-05	5.47E-05	5.88E-05	6.15E-05	5.94E-05	5.69E-05	4.98E-05	4.99E-05	5.77E-05	5.79E-05
URU	0.000525	0.000528	0.000513	0.000513	0.000528	0.000506	0.000514	0.000514	0.000474	0.000446	0.000464	0.000471	0.000455	0.000474
VEN	0.004688	0.004675	0.004686	0.004879	0.004873	0.00471	0.004513	0.004856	0.004744	0.004412	0.004544	0.004722	0.00461	0.004559
Total	0.050023	0.05003	0.051204	0.052282	0.05287	0.051352	0.050508	0.049903	0.049087	0.047418	0.048577	0.049095	0.048704	0.049743

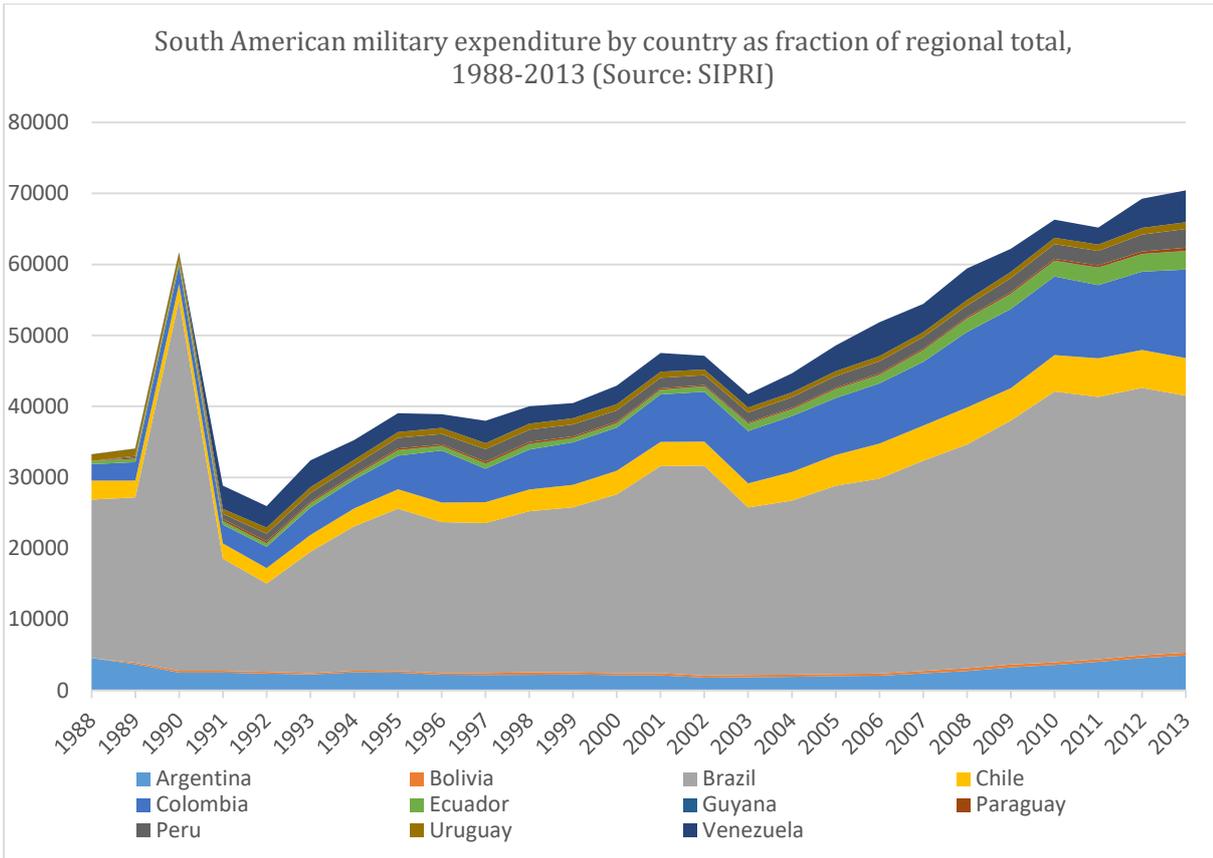
<sup>141</sup> Based on information from the National Material Capabilities data set, which contains annual values by state for total and urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, and military personnel and expenditure. The time frame selected here (1980-2007) covers the latter stages of the military regimes widespread in the region until the 1980s and the democratization period, until the year before the UNASUR and the SADC were created.



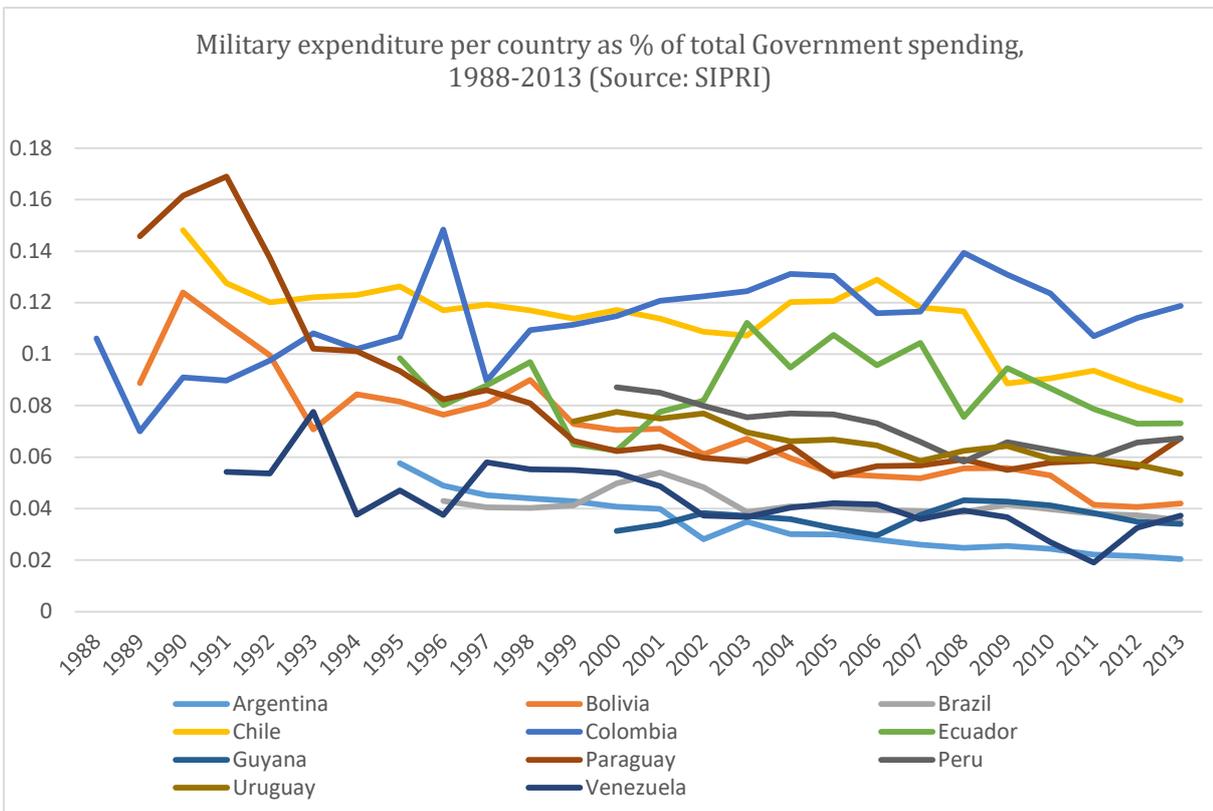
**Note:** “The CINC reflects an average of a state’s share of the system total of each element of capabilities in each year, weighting each component equally. In doing so, the CINC will always range between 0 and 1. “0.0” would indicate that a state had 0% of the total capabilities present in the system in that year, while “1.0” would indicate that the state had 100% of the capabilities in a given year” (Greig and Enterline 2017, 7). This means that at no point in the almost 30 years between 1980 and 2007 did South America account for more than 5,3% of the global power.

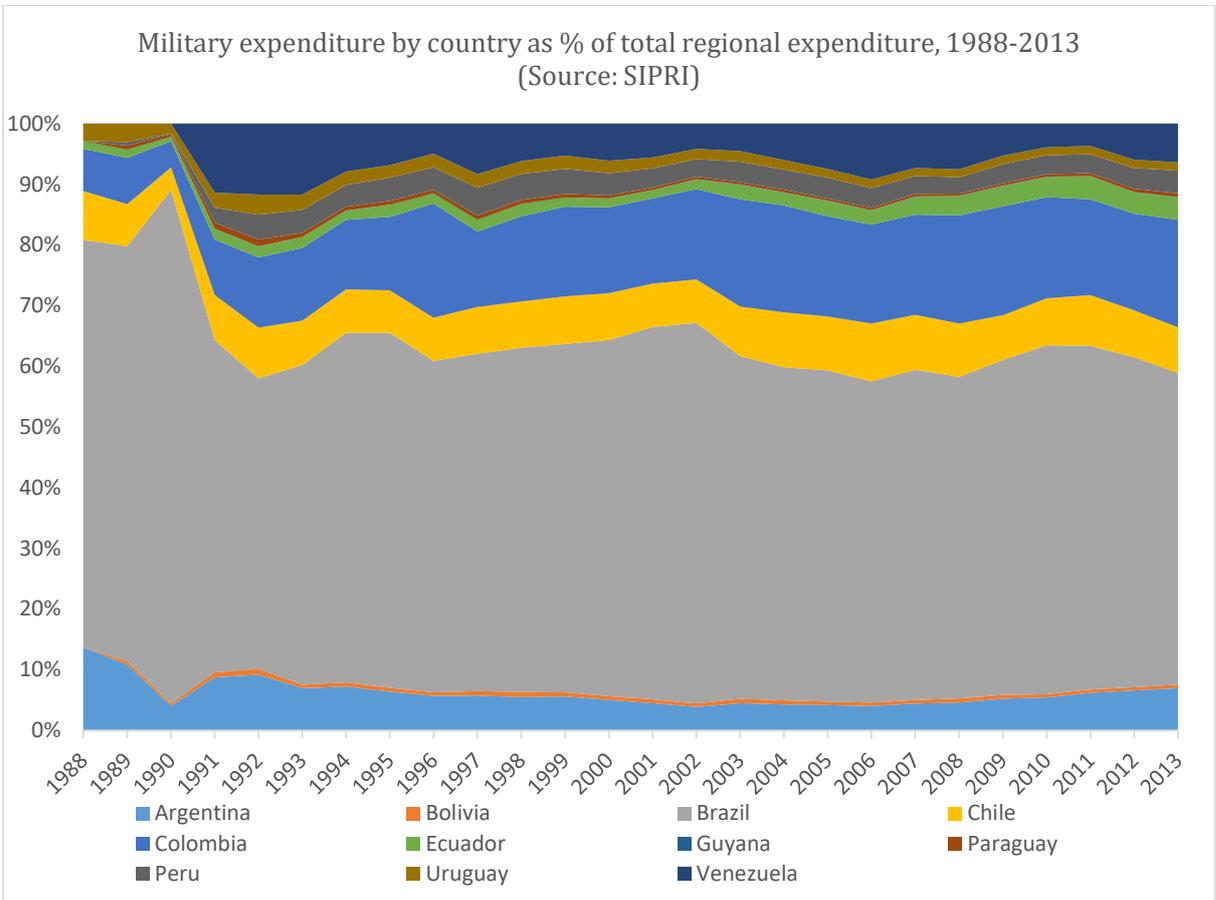
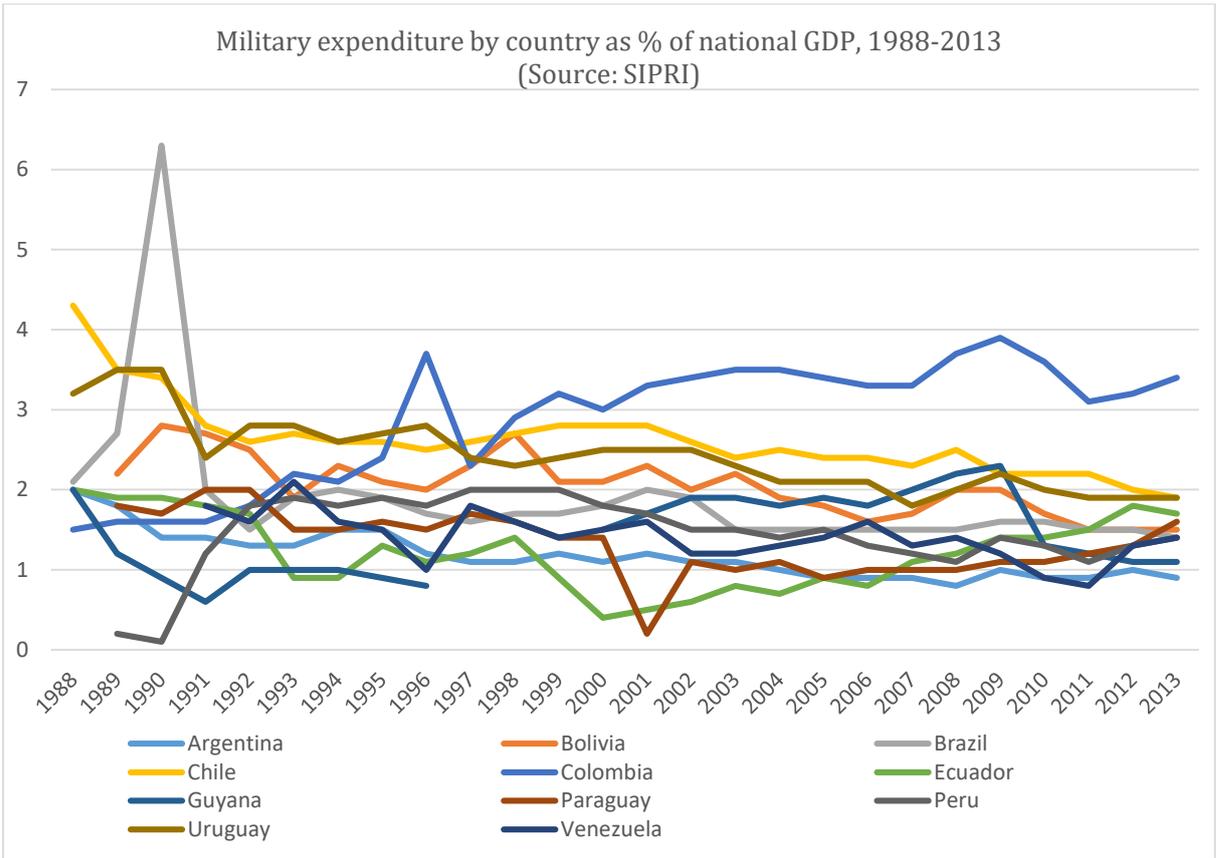






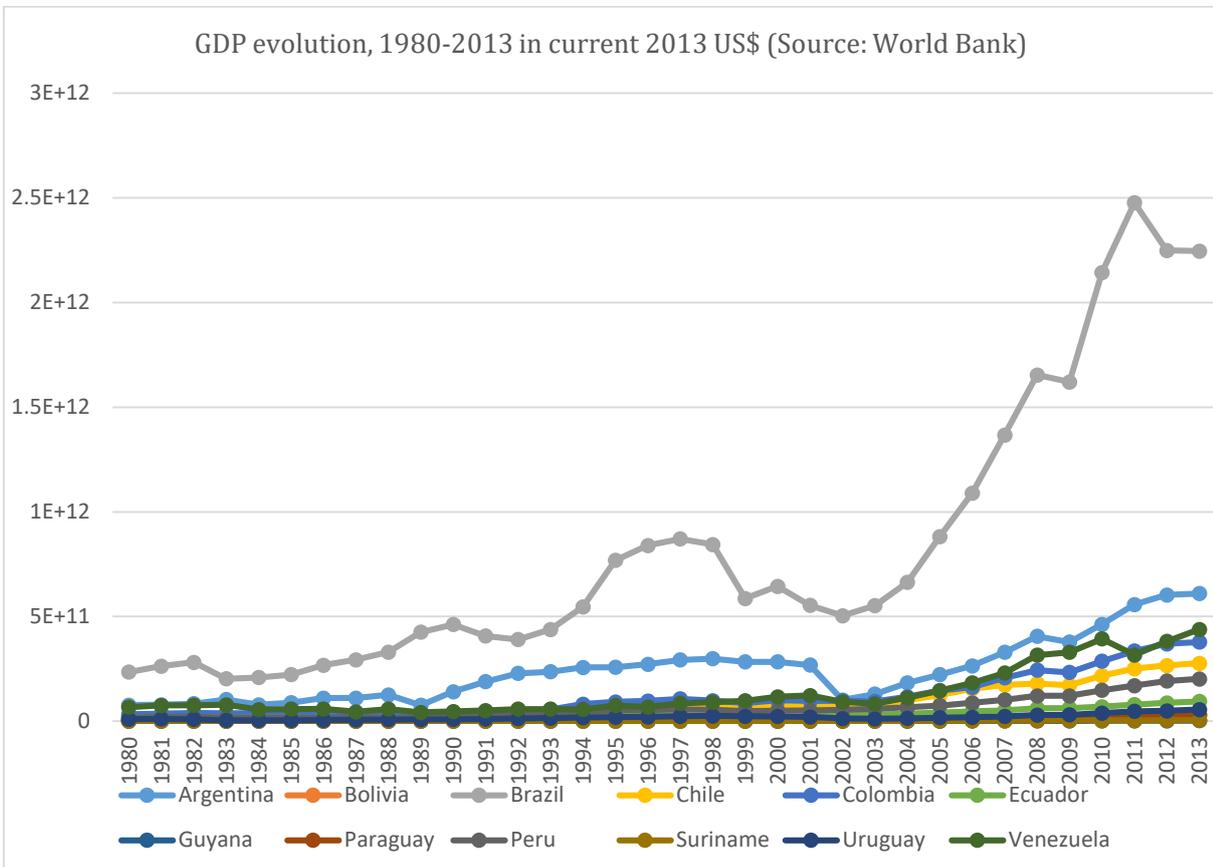
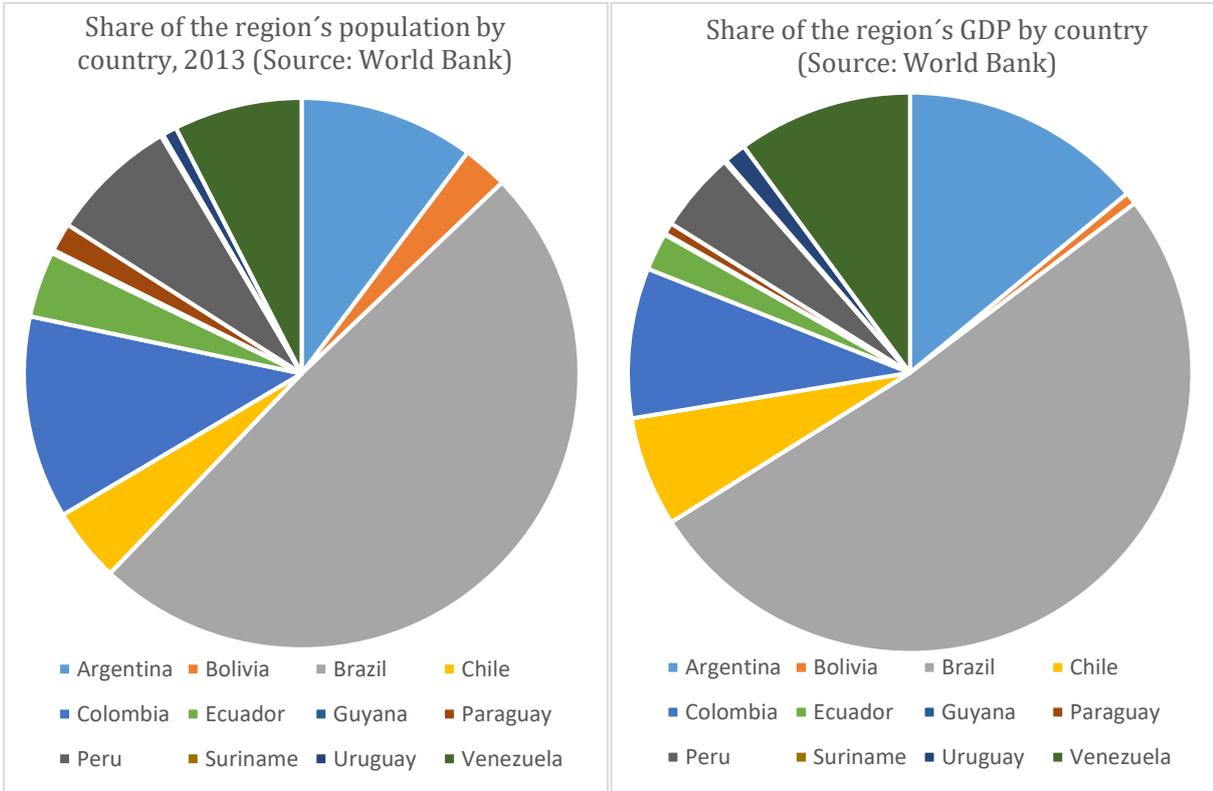
**NOTE:** The abrupt increase (and subsequent fall) seen in Brazil's 1990 military expenditure figures are, in fact, related irregularities in SIPRI's database resulting from a prolonged monetary crisis in the country (Milani et al. 2015, 47)





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<http://data.worldbank.org/>



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