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LATİN AMERİKA JEOPOLİTİĞİ (LATIN AMERICAN GEOPOLITICS)

Editörler

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Doç. Dr. Burak Şakir Şeker
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ARGENTINA FACES THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: NAVIGATING BETWEEN CRITICAL AND LIMITED INSTABILITY (1983-2023)

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THE FATE OF REGIONALIZATION IN SOUTH AMERICA: EPHEMERAL REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Mesut Özel

INTRODUCTION

South America bears the potential or resources, such as population and fertile land, to have more influence in global affairs. However, historically, it has yet to implement regionalization to pave the way for successful performance. New attempts for regionalization are underway that could trigger the potential through a post-hegemonic approach in regionalism, i.e., UNASUR¹ and PROSUR². This book section discusses the societal, political, military, economic, and environmental dynamics and the historical background of South American regionalization. The regionness and the coherence of the South American Regional Security Complex are analyzed theoretically, elaborating the ambitions and fears of the actors. Moreover, the potential of a revitalized UNASUR or its ephemeral successor PROSUR to improve the status of the continent from a conflict formation to a security cooperation is discussed in the regional framework. At this juncture, the presidential change in Argentina might determine the fate of regionalization.

A GENERAL LOOK AT SOUTH AMERICA

South America constitutes the southern bloc of the American landmass, most of which lies south of the equator. It is the fourth largest continent, covering nearly 17.83 million square kilometers, and is home to 425 million inhabitants, making it the fifth most

1 UNASUR, founded in 2008, is a South American group that aims to end social exclusion and inequality while promoting regional integration on problems of democracy, education, energy, the environment, infrastructure, and security. It was fashioned after and took inspiration from the European Union. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela are the members of UNASUR. Mexico and Panama are observers. “**UNASUR | Regional Integration, Member States & Cooperation | Britannica**”, December 06, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/UNASUR>.

2 “**About PROSUR | PROSUR**”, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://foroproсур.org/sobre-proсур/>. PROSUR’s members are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, and Suriname.

populous continent.³ South America is racially and demographically diverse, with a substantial indigenous population that still strives to preserve its culture and around 85 percent of the continent's inhabitant's practice.⁴ Roman Catholicism blended with indigenous traditions and practices, whereas Protestantism is the next common faith throughout the continent, along with some Jewish communities. Four cultural groups constitute the continent's demography: American Indians, Iberians, Africans, and European immigrants. The descendants of Spanish and Portuguese settlers, the Iberians, were the first to reach the continent and start interacting with the American Indians. Indeed, there are many hybrid races based on the different cultures and peoples on the continent.

In nine of the countries in South America, Spanish is the primary language: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Brazil, the biggest and most densely inhabited country on the continent, is Portuguese-speaking, whereas Dutch is the official language in Surinam, and English is in Guyana.⁵ The northern border of South America is traditionally determined by the Columbia-Panama border, along with the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.⁶ This section provides localized insights for better navigation.

SOCIETAL ASPECTS OF SOUTH AMERICA REGIONALIZATION

Improving the social domain is crucial for South America's progress and quality of life. One of the most prominent problems is public security. South America, listed on the second row of the global top ten homicide rate list along with Middle Africa and the Caribbean, unfortunately, has between 16-23 homicides per 100,000 populations, five times higher than the global average rate of 6.2 victims.⁷ Moreover, the homicide rate among males aged 15 to 29 in South America is more than four times the global average in that category.⁸ This high homicide rate, along with other crimes, has detrimental consequences not only for individuals but also for the region's economies and development. A regional mechanism is needed to exchange knowledge and ideas on handling the issue. The current practices of governments and international organizations need to be better coordinated. Inequality and informal employment require particular importance in struggling poverty, considering that South America is one of the regions in the world with the most significant income disparities, and informal employment accelerates this phenomenon.

Currently, programs are in effect to fight against poverty in the region, such as the Bolsa Familia Program and its updated version in Brazil.⁹ Women's participation in economic and

3 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, (2017), **Statistical Yearbook 60th Issue 2017 Edition**, New York, accessed on November 28, 2017, https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publications/statistical-yearbook/files/syb60/T02_Pop.pdf

4 "**South America | Facts, Land, People, & Economy | Britannica**", accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-America>.

5 United Nations Statistical Division, **Standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49)** accessed on November 28, 2017, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

6 Accessed on November 28, 2017 <http://www.worldpopulationstatistics.com/population-of-south-america/>

7 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), **Global Study on Homicide, 2013**, Vienna, Austria. pp.12

8 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), **Global Study on Homicide 2019**, Vienna, Austria. pp. 35.

9 "**New Bolsa Familia: Challenges and Opportunities for 2023**", accessed on December 08, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/brazil/brief/brazil-new-bolsa-familia-challenges-and-opportunities-for-2023>.

social life by abandoning their traditional role has also been crucial to reducing poverty, access to political decision-making, and diminishing violence against women. Unfortunately, in South America, prejudice and stereotypes from the past have still been persistent in society, causing cases of harassment and or street violence to continue. Additionally, despite the enactment of several laws and measures in this venue, the rights of sexual minorities are often not respected.

Although there is widespread access to education, the primary challenge is the quality of education. In that respect, the inefficient use of time could be handled by raising the effectiveness of the teachers and their life standards and by innovatively using intelligent technologies to increase the quality of teaching and fight against poverty.¹⁰ Significant improvements have been made in the region to ensure better accessibility to health services. However, diabetes, malnutrition, obesity, cancer, and elderly care also need to be taken care of through the healthcare system.¹¹

Social policy is a neglected domain in most contemporary neoliberal forms of regionalization, caused mainly by the potential reach of the global hegemon, the US. The ill achievement of the former regional initiatives in this venue to raise the quality of life of the South American populations and problems from neoliberal reforms were decisive factors for the rise of leftist parties, leaders, and movements on the continent in the late 1990s. The voters have well received their narrative to handle the severe social and economic problems.¹²

In the early phase of free trade agreements (FTAs)¹³, the “social clauses” had been on the regulatory agreements, mainly in the labor rights and harmonization of the labor policies. Later, the constitutive treaties of MERCOSUR and CAN.¹⁴ It also included labor, education, and health issues.¹⁵ A distinctive body to coordinate at the intergovernmental level of regional health affairs is established in MERCOSUR; the Social Institute and Institute of Public Policy on Human Rights were founded for the involvement of civil society and ordinary citizens in the legislation. However, the funds for implementing the social chapter were the first ones truncated in times of austerity.¹⁶ The societal dimension has become more visible in new trans-societal cooperation in welfare projects and workers’ cooperatives supporting belonging

10 Bruns, Barbara and Luque, Javier. *Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*, **Latin American Development Forum Series**, The World Bank Group, Washington DC, 2015, pp. 6.

11 Mora, Cynthia Flores, **Five Key social development issues in Latin America in 2014**, January 2015, The World Bank, accessed on November 28, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/01/09/temas-desarrollo-america-latina-2014>

12 Pimenta, Gabriel F. and Arantes, Pedro Casas V. M., **Rethinking Integration in Latin America: The “Pink Tide” and the Post-Neoliberal Regionalism**, presented at FLACSO-ISA Joint International Conference, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 23-25, 2014, pp. 4.

13 A free trade agreement (FTA) is an agreement between two or more countries where the countries agree on certain obligations that affect trade in goods and services and protections for investors and intellectual property rights, among other topics—**International Trade Administration, “Free Trade Agreement Overview”**, accessed December 08, 2023, <https://www.trade.gov/free-trade-agreement-overview>.

14 The Andean Community, made up of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, is a leading international organization in integration on the continent, which works to improve the quality of life of 115 million Andean citizens. **“About Us? - Andean Community”**, accessed December 08, 2023, <https://www.comunidadandina.org/quienes-somos/>.

15 The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials) is a regional integration process, initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia -the latter still complying with the accession procedure. **“MERCOSUR in Brief”**, MERCOSUR (blog), accessed 08 December 2023, <https://www.mercosur.int/en/about-mercosur/mercosur-in-brief/>.

16 Riggiozzi, Pia., **“Regional Health Governance in South America: Redefining Regionalism and Regional Responsibilities”**, Doctoral School Lecture, Quito, August 29-12, pp. 4.

identity and regional mission. ALBA and UNASUR have been the most compelling emerging initiatives for this purpose.¹⁷

In the case of UNASUR, a new social schema has amalgamated the sharing and institutional development in fields of social policy, particularly in the health domain. Besides regional policy and procedure development, the implementation on the field was conducted in the case of the 2010 Haiti and Chile earthquakes, coupled with medical support in disaster relief and reconstruction efforts.¹⁸

The focus of new regionalization efforts on societal and humanitarian domains was the pronouncement of the strong convergence of countries' policies and the agenda of such organizations, which could be perceived by the growing emphasis on social and development issues, critical points in the agenda of the leftwing parties and considered fundamental for the reduction of inequalities, social development, search for autonomy and social inclusion policies.

MILITARY ASPECTS OF SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONALIZATION

Military spending in Latin America has decreased 7.8 percent from 2015 to 2016. The fall is mainly explained by spending reductions in oil-exporting countries such as Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.¹⁹ Brazil's defense expenditures have continued to descend due to worsening economic crises. Columbia and Argentina, on the other hand, increased military spending. Columbia has used a portion of its GDP, i.e., 3.4 percent, even surpassing the US on the military modernization programs. It is expected to increase in 2017 to consolidate the deal with FARC.²⁰

While there has been a declining trend in continental defense expenditures, Brazil still has the strongest and the most potent armed forces, in size of 334,500 personnel, with limited power projection capability, followed by Argentina, Peru, Columbia, and Venezuela. Although South American states tend to avoid war, they maintain a decent military to struggle against insurgent groups such as Columbia and to position themselves as regional leaders, such as Brazil and Argentina.²¹

17 Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) is a regional bloc organized in 2004 that aims for social, political, and economic integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. "**Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)**" *Britannica*, accessed December 08, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bolivarian-Alliance-for-the-Peoples-of-Our-America>.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 8.

19 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2016, April 2017 **World military spending: Increases in the USA and Europe, decreases in oil-exporting countries**, accessed on November 28, 2017 <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2017/world-military-spending-increases-usa-and-europe>

20 Gonzalez, Elizabeth, **Weekly Chart: Military Spending in Latin America and the Caribbean**, May 10, 2017, Americas Society Council of the Americas, accessed on November 28, 2017, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/weekly-chart-military-spending-latin-america-and-caribbean>

21 2017 Brazil Military Strength, **Current military capabilities and available firepower for the nation of Brazil**, accessed on November 28, 2017, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=brazil

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONALISM

During the last three decades, South America has experienced a period of macroeconomic volatility that has influenced the highly indebted states of the region. From 1994 to 2008, the continent's economies expanded at an average rate of 7.6 percent. The region's larger economies, Brazil, Venezuela, Chile, and Colombia had made gains from the economies of scale. At the same time, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ecuador had either regressed or stagnated, and exceptionally, Argentine had declined.²²

The Great Recession of 2014 has significantly affected the globe, particularly South America. Countries that have managed the commodity downturn with some success, such as Chile, Columbia, and Bolivia, picked up in 2017. Other oil exporters, such as Venezuela and Ecuador, are expected to continue with low growth. Brazil, the largest economy accounting for half (1772 billion US dollars as of 2016) of the GDP in the continent (about 3558 billion US dollars as of 2016), had stabilized after two years of economic contraction.²³

Currently, the Brazilian economy is less dependent on economies of the rest of the continent, except for some sectors such as automotive, agricultural machinery, engineering services, and energy. However, forces that are exogenous to the continent drive the Brazilian economy. The best future vision for South American economic integration would be to work outside the borders of existing structures under the leadership of Brazil towards an effective free trade arrangement among a core of committed nations. Today, the only driving factor for regional economic integration is the political will of the countries motivated by regional power struggle concerns.²⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONALISM

The prominent environmental issues in South America are deforestation, air and water pollution, overuse of pesticides, eutrophication, epidemic diseases, ocean dumping, fishery protection, biofuel production, and fuel wood usage. Deforestation is one of the vital problems, especially in Brazil, where the rainforests have been cut down for lumber and animal habitats have been destroyed due to agricultural needs.

When it comes to the actual quantity of natural resources, South America dominates: It contains one-third of the world's freshwater reserves, almost half of the world's rain forests, a quarter of the world's potential arable landmass, a variety of essential mineral reserves, including hydrocarbons. In addition, the continent is responsible for one-third of the global carbon emissions due to the conversion of land for exploitation. Alongside the overall meaning of these endless drifts, regular assets are crucial to the landmass' improvement approaches and the personal satisfaction of its populace. Flooding, landslides, hurricanes, drought, pest

22 Jovanovic, Miroslav N., **International Handbook on the Economics of Integration**, Volume I General Issues and Regional Groups, January 2011, Edward Elgar Publishing Group, Integration efforts and Economic Dynamics in South America, Frischtak, Claudio R. pp. 433

23 International Monetary Fund, **Regional Economic Outlook Update Fall 2017**, Latin America and the Caribbean: Stuck in Low Gear, Washington DC, US, pp. 12.

24 Frischtak, pp. 437.

outbreaks, and glacier retreats are exacerbated by poverty in the continent's rural and urban areas.²⁵

In the Southern American context, the regional organizations have clauses for environmental protection and to act jointly in constructing interregional cooperation strategies to strengthen the relations between environment and development, that is, sustainable development. However, these declarations stand on paper rather than action. Environmental issues have the potential to ignite regional conflicts, as in the case of the construction of a pulp mill on the Uruguayan River, causing tensions between Uruguay and Argentina and the fair use of the vast Guarani Aquifer lying under Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil. A hurricane caused substantial damage to Amazon's tropical forests in January 2005, and the frequent earthquakes resulted in a substantial death toll and significant damage to infrastructure.²⁶ The environmental issues have the potential to trigger region-wide conflicts.

Nations included in UNASUR started to insert environmental factors into their related legislation. According to UNASUR's constitutive treaty, preserving the environment is one of the main issues for achieving regional integration. Although environmental affairs have been discussed and considered in the Union's current councils, it would be better to establish a unique body solely dedicated to the environment with equal and permanent participation of all members in decision-making for environmental laws and policies. This institution should be delegated with authority and responsibility to interact with relevant councils and bodies of the Union and other national, non-governmental, international, and transnational bodies in the global field. In sum, the UNASUR has the potential to cover the regional environmental aspect if the framework could be defined clearly.²⁷ UNASUR is a complex sum of the previous regional integration efforts in South America while being a relatively new integration process.²⁸

After the failure of UNASUR, the pro-market leaders of South America inaugurated a new regional body, "PROSUR", boosted by right-wing leaders; right at its birth, this institution risked being defunct and inefficient due to being tied to a particular ideology. PROSUR inherited the environmental chapters of its predecessors to fight against enduring challenges.²⁹

POLITICAL ASPECTS OF SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONALIZATION

In this book section, the prominent states that have the potency to influence regional affairs have been analyzed for clarity.

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- 25 Baud, Michiel, Castro, Fabio de and Hogenboom, Barbara, **European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies** Environmental Governance in Latin America: Towards an Integrative Research Agenda 90, April 2011 | 79-88, pp. 80.
- 26 Tavares, Rodrigo, **Security in South America: The Role of States and Regional Organizations**, 2014, FirstForumPress, London, pp. 80-81
- 27 Espindola, Isabela Battistello, **The UNASUR, and the Environment**, presented in XI. European Council on Social and Behavioral Sciences, Rome, Italy, September 1-4, 2014.
- 28 Isabela Battistello Espindola ve Celso Maran De Oliveira, "**The Environmental Protection in South American Integration Process: A Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) Perspective**", in *INCREaSE*, ed. António Mortal vd. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), pp. 10, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70272-8_1.
- 29 Benedict Mander, "Prosur Risks Joining the List of Failed Pan-South American Institutions", Financial Times, March 29, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/32765d6e-5226-11e9-9c76-bf4a0ce37d49>.

Analysis of State Actors: Ambitions and Fears

Argentina, a country with a prosperous past and expected to be a middle-range power, suffered one of the most severe crises in the 1980s. After the military rule, Argentina took an active stance in world affairs, ending the long-standing isolation. It had pacified its relations with Chile and Brazil. The current state of bilateral relations is considerably cordial and stable, despite Argentina's opposition to Brazil's global power ambitions, such as securing a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. However, in order to generate domestic gains and increase their electoral vote, recent governments have brought some contingent issues to the surface, such as the Falkland/Malvinas question, the dispute over the construction of a pulp mill at the Uruguay River, and the Beagle Channel dispute with Chile.³⁰ In addition, President Javier Milei intends to reorient Argentina's foreign policy away from China and leftist regional partners toward the United States and Israel. He even dared to threaten to freeze relations with China, Brazil's second-largest trading partner, and accused the left-leaning president of being communist and corrupt. The security dynamics and regional organizations will undoubtedly be affected by President Milei's narratives.³¹

Given its population, territory, and Gross Domestic Product, Brazil is anticipated to be a world power. It leads other continental states in land and population size, as well as in the majority of industry, technology, transportation, natural resources, and military power projection. By utilizing its soft power, Brazil, the theater's most potent military and economic power, is a game-changer and a guarantee on the continent. Brazil suffers from severe socioeconomic inequalities inherited from the colonial social structure despite the absence of any apparent foreign threat to national security. Brazil has focused on the continent rather than Latin America to keep Mexico out of the regional power dynamics. Brazil has reaffirmed its power and autonomy in South America. It was the creator of UNASUR and the co-creator of CELAC with Mexico. This ownership proves Brazil's attachment to promoting multilateral regionalism to exercise its global and regional leadership ambitions.³² Economic integration, political alliance, and shared values (social justice, democracy, and human rights) are the foundations for peaceful relations in Brazil's regional vision of cooperation. Brazil believes that institutions emphasizing national sovereignty are the best means of resolving conflicts by fostering confidence and reducing tensions. However, the prospects for this role still need to be improved because of the weaknesses in public security, drug consumption, and environmental protection.³³ On the other hand, Brazil's National Defense Policy of 2020 depicts that South America is no longer a region free of regional conflicts and hints at the 'solution' of regional controversies. Brazil's new stand, coupled with its rearmament and rejuvenation of military equipment, could easily lead to misperceptions.³⁴ According to a balance of power logic, some

30 Tavares, pp. 87-105.

31 Lautaro Grinspan, "Changing Course: How Javier Milei Will Transform Argentina's Foreign Policy", Al Jazeera, accessed December 10, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/8/changing-course-how-javier-milei-will-transform-argentinas-foreign-policy>.

32 "Under Lula, Brazil Can Take on Regional Leadership. Will It?" accessed December 14, 2023, <https://americasquarterly.org/article/under-lula-brazil-can-take-on-regional-leadership-will-it/>.

33 Mares, David R., *Interstate Security Issues in Latin America* from Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World Routledge. November 10, 2014, Accessed on: November 25, 2017, pp. 429.

34 Milton Carlos Bragatti ve Brigitte Weiffen, "The Deterioration of South America's Security Architecture: From Cooperation to Coexistence?", *International Relations*, August 12, 2023, 17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178231195246>.

nations considered Brazil a potential regional hegemon that required institutional binding, buffering, and economic diversification.³⁵

Chile, the last country democratized in the Southern Cone, has traditionally resorted to multilateralism to counter the pressures from powerful neighbors politically. Chile has resolved most of the border demarcation disputes with Argentina. However, the maritime border delimitation issues with Peru and maritime access to Bolivia have persisted. It also faces domestic insecurity arising from the uprisings of indigenous groups.³⁶ Chile is the region's largest spender on arms in its quest to modernize its armed forces.³⁷

Columbia's civil conflict has been the longest and the most intricate on the continent. Despite its resolution by a peace deal, the ongoing implementation period strains its relations with its neighbors. Its bilateral affairs with Venezuela have been strained due to territorial disputes in the Gulf of Venezuela. Drug trafficking mainly drives its foreign policy. Columbia attaches great importance to cooperation with Andean and Amazon countries regarding anti-drug trafficking initiatives. Columbia has substantial military power that is influential in external and political affairs.³⁸ Moreover, it has recently embraced a more aggressive soft-balancing strategy based on economic statecraft and buffering.³⁹

Venezuela, once respectable for its merged majority rules system and oil abundance up to the last part of the 1990s, has moved to a robust and unified system constrained by Chavez and his replacements to advance communism enlivened by another feeling of freedom, Latin American solidarity, and hostile to domineering direction. His foreign policy has also been dictating multipolarity by encouraging the integration of Latin America and pushing for closer ties between UNASUR and CAN. Along with Brazil, Venezuela was involved in forming UNASUR, supported CELAC, and, last but not least, founded ALBA. Even though the social achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution cannot be denied, Chavez's contribution to regional and domestic security needed to be stronger, which made the situation more complicated. However, he efficiently used its great asset, oil, as leverage in global, regional, and domestic politics. The new leadership of Venezuela is currently sitting on the vastest amount of proven oil reserves on the globe.⁴⁰, has suffered from the global economic slowdown, low oil prices, an inefficient economy, and domestic poverty.⁴¹ Venezuela has disputes with Colombia and Guyana on delineating its maritime borders.

Historical Background of Regionalization in South America

Except for the Portuguese-Spanish division of South America by the papal agreement of Tordesillas, the colonial era has yet to affect the evolvement of current relations and borders profoundly. The recent political division of South America could be understood better by the

35 Daniel Flemes ve Leslie Wehner, "Drivers of Strategic Contestation: The Case of South America", *International Politics* pp. 52, p. 2 (February 2015): 163-77, <https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2014.45>.

36 Ibid., pp. 131-145.

37 Bragatti ve Weiffen, "The Deterioration of South America's Security Architecture", 12.

38 Ibid., pp. 145-159

39 Flemes ve Wehner, "Drivers of Strategic Contestation", 172.

40 British Petroleum Company, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 66th Edition*, June 2017, London, UK, pp. 12.

41 Tavares, pp. 159-175.

power balance struggles throughout post-independence history and its reflections.⁴² Most of the time, regionalism in South America or the Americas can be traced back to the Congress of Panama that Simon Bolivar called in 1926 and a series of Pan-Hispanic Conferences in the middle and end of the 19th century. The Pan-American Union's 1910 product was designed to encourage international cooperation. This wave was mainly focused on infusing a very Hispanic interpretation of American identity to resist colonization by Western powers through close cooperation, which had no effect.⁴³

After the independence of South America, most state wars were fought over boundaries and territories, resulting in new states about contested areas of colonial rule, including the fragmentation of Central America. Four viceroyalties of the Spanish colony gave birth to eighteen states, whereas the Portuguese colony emerged as one Brazil in unity.

This failure led to the United States-driven Pan-Americanism. The statement, called later the Monroe Doctrine, by the US president in 1823 had declared unilaterally that the American continents should not be treated as subjects for prospective colonization by any European powers. However, the US did not have the power projection capability to protect the continent then. Along with the emergence of the US as an industrial power and its engagement with South America, Pan-Americanism had reached its peak with the establishment of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948, which has still been the prominent institution of the inter-American system which has been commonly regarded as frameworks of to legitimize US interventions in the region.⁴⁴ Although the US could be deemed a significant factor, an external actor (both interregional and global), South America's security arithmetic fundamentally has its dynamics in which the US intervenes irregularly.⁴⁵

During the Cold War, the start of European integration encouraged other regions to gather around economic, political, and cultural incentives.⁴⁶ The Latin America Free Trade Association (LAFTA) emerged in 1960, and due to significant asymmetries between members resulted in fragmentation into regional sub-blocks; the Andean Community (CAN) established in 1969 getting together Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru, and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) was founded in 1991, Argentine, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Both subregional groupings still need to improve, such as CAN members discussing their political models and bargaining bilateral FTAs with external blocks, including the US and the EU. On the other hand, the main actors of MERCOSUR, Argentina, and Brazil, complain to each other in the World Trade Organization (WTO) on different issues. However, these two subregional organizations were the founding base for the South American Union of Nations (UNASUR) in 2008, with the participation of all twelve South American countries. The integration level of this Union on political and economic grounds is anticipated to alter the prospective conduct of regional affairs in South America.⁴⁷

42 Buzan, Barry and Wæver. Ole. (2003), **Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 305.

43 Tavares, Rodrigo., (2014), **Security in South America: The Role of States and Regional Organizations**, FirstForumPress, London, pp. 175.

44 Ibid., pp. 176.

45 Buzan, pp. 308.

46 Li, Jaime Martín León. (2014), **Regional Integration Process in South America Analysis of Institutions and Policies of Regional Integration Under the EU Framework**, Diplomática Verlag, 2012 Hamburg, Germany, pp. 12.

47 Ibid., p. 24.

In fact, since the early 1990s, subregional integration attempts have intensified in Latin America through revised and newly formed groupings, often ending at overlaying initiatives and memberships. Nineteen interregional organizations and arrangements, of which South American states are currently members, have legal authority to assume security-related responsibilities. It is abundantly clear that security matters occupy a more significant portion of these organizations' agenda, regardless of whether they are moved by symbols or context.⁴⁸ The functional role of some of these organizations in a regional context could be depicted as follows.

The Andean Community (CAN) was established to promote trade, industry, agriculture, and social cohesion. It has developed from the Andean Pact, a regional organization mainly focused on economic cooperation, to a multifaceted organization that addresses security issues.⁴⁹ The fragility of the political situation and the differences in political and ideological grounds hampers the integration process and the focus on regional priorities and interests. CAN's internal crisis stemming from the leadership struggle has been taken to UNASUR, which is increasingly deemed feasible for regional integration.⁵⁰

With the idea of alleviating the rivalry between two regional powers of the Southern Cone, Argentina, and Brazil, MERCOSUR was established by four countries.⁵¹ to facilitate a free trade agreement and a political structure between member states with the ambitious goal of a common market and even a common currency. The initial good performance of the bloc, such as a tenfold increase in trade, was slowed down due to the economic crisis in 2001. Brazil and Argentina have been trying to revive the MERCOSUR through negotiations with the EU for an FTA.⁵² Meanwhile, Argentina has become an observer of the Pacific alliance as a counteract to Brazil's unilateral imposition of antidumping restrictions on steel imports from China.⁵³ The future of MERCOSUR is intrinsically tied to the convergence of Brazil's and Argentina's conduct on trading, which is getting harder considering the presidential change in Argentina.

With its intergovernmental character, MERCOSUR aims to make the integration scheme more flexible and gradual without a supranational and autonomous bureaucracy. It allows governments to overcome disparities characterized by the quest for consulted responses rather than normative rule-based injections.⁵⁴ Though it is regarded as the most successful integration endeavor in Latin America, the absence of supranational organs and the inadequacy of transnational organs mean that the integration process's spread depends entirely on the political will of the governments—that is, the leaders.⁵⁵

48 Tavares, pp. 178.

49 Li, pp. 12.

50 Tavares, pp. 178.

51 Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay are the founding member of MERCOSUR.

52 Li, pp. 15.

53 Felter, Claire and Renwick, Danielle. Council of Foreign Relations, "Mercosur: South America's Fractious Trade Bloc", September 13, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/background/mercocur-south-americas-fractious-trade-bloc>

54 Doctor, Mahrukh (2013) **Review of International Political Economy Prospects for deepening Mercosur Integration: Economic asymmetry and institutional deficits**, 20:3, pp.515–540.

55 Li, pp. 16.

The New Wave of Regionalization Initiatives

UNASUR is the revitalization of aspirations towards South American integration. In recognition of infrastructural development for deeper integration and increasing interdependence, a technical institution was created as the Initiative for the Integration of the South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA), with the support of regional financial organs and transnational actors. UNASUR emerged as an entity aiming at integration and Union among UNASUR nations' peoples in the cultural, social, economic, and environmental fields. Establishing supranational institutions like the UNASUR parliament and the UNASUR Court of Justice is under development.⁵⁶ It also has a military coordinating component, the South American Defense Council (CDS), to form and identify a South American Defense Policy. In the beginning, Columbia rejected CDS due to its concerns about assuming CDS as a continental military force to counter US influence.⁵⁷ The proposal was imitated by Brazil, which requires the consent of both the US and Venezuela. The exemption of the US and Mexico from the organizational equation pleased Venezuela, but the US was also pleased to have Brazil leading instead of Venezuela. Currently, the CDS is working on four topics: defense policy, military cooperation and humanitarian action, defense industry, formation, and capacity building, prevailing towards a regional strategy among South American countries.⁵⁸ Although the security domain appears absent, the UNASUR treaty grants it the right to operate in traditional and nontraditional security issues. It also has a democratic clause to impose sanctions on any member in case of a breach of constitutional rule and the democratic system. The accomplishment of UNASUR's ambitious agenda hinges on several challenges, including the historical hostility between the region's people, the difficulty of achieving regional harmony, the complexity of multilateral defense cooperation, the need to adopt a common strategy for combating drug use, the lack of coordination with other regional organizations, the absence of permanent supranational entities, and, last but not least, the sole reliance on the political will of the governments forming it.

In 2017, the revival of great power competition affected South America. It surfaced in the disintegration of UNASUR, which was based on the claims of denouncing the blockade's excessive ideological "left-wing" nature. The inability to agree on a new Secretary General in 2018 and some members' announced suspension of membership was a crisis that revealed the UNASUR's institutional weakness.⁵⁹

Following the disintegration of UNASUR, the Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR) took its place as "a right-wing response to the left-wing character" of its predecessor. It was designed as a "coordination mechanism" rather than a bureaucratic organization.⁶⁰ Its presidential summits took place under the shadow of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

56 Arenas-García, Nahuel. 21st Century Regionalism in South America: UNASUR and the Search for Development Alternatives' eSharp Challenges of Development (2012), pp. 64-85.

57 Tavares, pp. 218-220.

58 Der Ghougassian, Khatchick., "The Post Washington Consensus on the Regional Integration of South America" in a book edited by Begley, Bruce M. And Defort, Magdalena, **Decline of US Hegemony: A Challenge of ALBA and A New Latin American Integration of 21st Century**, Lexington Books 2015, Lanham Maryland, USA, pp. 171

59 Bragatti ve Weiffen, "The Deterioration of South America's Security Architecture", 11.

60 "Why Prosur Is Not the Way to Unite South America", accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2019/03/21/why-prosur-is-not-the-way-to-unite-south-america>.

This loss of a practical means of integrating the various South American international locations and bringing close family members is exemplified by the current and dramatic dissolution of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and its subsequent alternative through the intermittent Forum for the Progress and Development of South America (PROSUR).⁶¹

Early in 2023, the presidents of Argentina and Brazil announced their intention and will to return to the UNASUR in response to an invitation by the President of Mexico. The core subject of the following summit was to discuss the high inflation storming the nations of South America.⁶² The revitalization efforts have been curtailed by the discourses of the new president of Argentina, who wants to pull his country out of South America's common market (MERCOSUR) and the BRICS and UNASUR.⁶³

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States was officially inaugurated in 2011 by thirty-three states to promote and project a unified voice for Latin America and Caribbean countries. Some of the leaders attending the ceremony have stated that it was founded as a bloc against the OAS without the participation of the US and Canada. CELAC met Mexico's ambitions of reuniting with Latin America and looking for the creation of trade opportunities beyond North America. CELAC is prone to be a competing ground for two regional powers, Mexico and Brazil. The hardship of having relationships between some of CELAC member countries and the ideological and political differentiation has led to distrust and the pursuit of counter-geopolitical strategies.⁶⁴ With no strong identity and robust institutional competency, CELAC is expected to face some critical challenges soon.

Theoretical Background and Spirit of South America Regionalization (Regionness)⁶⁵

Within anarchy, "power relations and patterns of amity and enmity" define the regional security complexes' basic structure and traits. RSCs could also be analyzed in terms of polarity considering the resemblance of regional-level power balance to global level one.⁶⁶ In this regard, the constructivist formulation of social anarchy structures based on the types of roles that dominate the system—enemy, rival, and friend—and the extent to which these roles are influenced by coercion (external force), interest (calculations of loss and gain), and faith in legitimacy could very well shed light on the patterns. Even though the distribution of power tells us about conflict patterns, historical animosities, friendships, and unusual happenings that cause conflict or cooperation, it plays a crucial role in creating the RSC's overall constellation of fears, threats, and friendships. A wide range of factors, including religion, culture, and history,

61 Fernando Vieira, "The Relationship between the MERCOSUR Agreement with the European Union and South American Regionalism", *Global Americans*, January 21, 2021.

62 "Latin America: Unasur Is Back, the Centre-Left Is Trying to Regain Leadership of the Region", accessed December 13, 2023, <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/latin-america-lunasur-is-back-the-centre-left-is-trying-to-regain-leadership-of-the-region/>.

63 "Argentina's Brexit: Why New President Milei is Threatening to Pull out of South America's Common Market", Diego Acosta, Leiza Brumat, December 2023.

64 Tavares, pp. 251.

65 "Why Prosur Is Not the Way to Unite South America".

66 Buzan, pp. 49.

impact the patterns of friendship and hostility.⁶⁷ Four levels of analysis should be examined in the RSC study: the state's domestic character and vulnerability at the domestic level, the state-to-state relations at the interstate level, the region's interaction with its neighbors at the interregional level, and the role of global powers in the region at the global level.⁶⁸

The composite picture of the Cold War South America had been driven by interacting factors, such as domestic stability, contested borders, geopolitical speculation by two or more states, considerations about regional balance and hegemony mostly involving Brazil and Argentina, and the US involvement. In this respect, the scene of the regional security complex could be classified as a conflict formation. In the postwar period, democratization, the diminishing influence of the military on politics, and neoliberal reform in economics, as well as in the structure of the states, gradually took place. The increased predictability had provided better chances for regional cooperation, peculiarly in the Southern Cone. The other persisting two elements of securitization were the insurgency of indigenous people and social underdevelopment. A rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil paved the way for economic cooperation and institutionalization of MERCOSUR. The peaceful resolution of border and territorial conflicts resulted in eliminating significant internal and external conflicts, except Bolivia's endeavor for access to the sea. Security arguments partly drive MERCOSUR, one being the fear of marginalization in the globalizing and regionalizing economy and the other being the defense of democracy against internal dynamics.⁶⁹

In the Andean north, a more traditional conflict formation picture emerged, including the Peru-Ecuador war in 1995, Venezuelan territorial claims from Guyana, illicit drug trafficking, urban violence, and terrorist activities.

Although the differences between the Southern Cone and the Andean North could be sufficient to treat them as distinct subcomplexes, Brazil remains the connector that keeps the Southern Regional Security Complex together.⁷⁰

In this context, the South American integration process has faced two significant challenges: existing asymmetries and regional leadership. Without the clear leadership of the most developed countries and the potent supranational authorities equipped with executive, legislative, and judicial capacities and absolute power, the integration process by the will of the political elite, which exerts their bargaining power on intergovernmental platforms.⁷¹

Even the projects of the neoliberal era, such as MERCOSUR and the Andean community, have yet to achieve sustainable levels of intraregional trade and political commitment. Therefore, a revived focus has brought forward the natural regional spaces for alternative policymaking in South America. The UNASUR and ALBA have emerged as different regionalization projects competing with US-led initiatives through a new dynamism in this venue. UNASUR is fundamentally a regional construction towards the amalgamation between MERCOSUR and the Andean Community as well as Chile via trade agreements, new commitments in infrastructure development, and political cooperation without any external influence (i.e., the EU and the US). The new constitutive treaty was founded on democracy, inclusion, social

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 50.

68 *Ibid.*, pp. 51.

69 Tavares, pp. 221.

70 *Ibid.*, pp. 222.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 252.

development, physical integration, defense, identity, and keeping trade as its primary focus.⁷²

Venezuela led the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA), a new continentalist intergovernmental initiative supporting welfarist projects based on health, education, and housing cooperation through state-led programs. Although it has an ideological discourse, ALBA shows resilience beyond President Chavez of Venezuela has shown leadership by instituting new procedures and policies that allow for political ingenuity beyond purely antiliberal narratives. Developing a new consciousness that supports the globally organized society and the program's march toward a new political economy demonstrate the program's relevance.⁷³

How these regional alternatives are realized as imaginaries and settings for novel acts and practices defines the regions. The concept of regionness makes it easier to comprehend a region as an entity that unites "around collective practices, consensus, and identity". When comprehending UNASUR and ALBA, the area is shaped by the concepts, initiatives, conflicting forces, and practices that reimagine and reconstruct spaces for novel political decisions and practices that differ in each alternative project.

RESILIENCE AND COHERENCE OF SOUTH AMERICA REGIONALIZATION

South American regionalism is symbolic, ceremonial, or summit-based. The integration process still needs a supranational administrative body with enough political power and financial resources to impact each member's national policies and laws. It has yet to be demonstrated historically that the common Iberian heritage, language, and religion contribute to the South American region's cohesiveness. The spirit of Latin American brotherhood and the displays of family unity at the presidential summit pictures have yet to provide opportunities for more in-depth and long-lasting integration processes. However, compared to the extensive list of topics discussed at summits or the significant number of norms adopted by various regional institutions, the lowest integration model has been achieved over the years.⁷⁴

Concerns about the nation's domestic stability, contested borders, geopolitical speculations by two or more states, and considerations about regional balance and hegemony have persisted in the South American continent, amalgamated with social underdevelopment, human security, and insurgency issues. Unfortunately, these existing problems hamper the coherence and resilience of the South American Regional Security Complex.

In this context, UNASUR is prevailing towards a coherent institutionalized entity, with a supranational trait amalgamating the existing organs of MERCOSUR and CAN, reproducing a more classical understanding of open regionalism. On the other hand, ALBA is aiming at a regional community where social cohesion and cooperation through transnationalised welfarism support resilience beyond ideology rather than institutionalization.⁷⁵ Although

72 Riggiozzi, Pia "Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America: Towards a New Synthesis" *New Political Economy*, 17:4, 2012 421-443, pp. 435.

73 Ibid., pp. 437.

74 Dabeane, Oliver, *The Politics of Regional Integration in Latin America: Theoretical and Comparative Explanations*, New York, Palgrave and Macmillan, 2009.

75 Ibid., pp. 438.

UNASUR was involved in resolving the 2008 dispute between Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, it did not attempt to handle the issues of FARC havens or reach for resources in Venezuela or Ecuador.⁷⁶ Consequently, the coherence and peace-enhancing capacity of the regional security architecture is significantly hampered in South America as it falls short of Security Community status.

The resilience of these two institutions as alternative regional constructions and governance models is still being evaluated. New integration models are being driven by diverse motives, ideologies, and leadership aspirations at the start of the post-hegemonic regionalist era. Neoliberal integration and cooperation projects have existed for a long time alongside these models. On the other hand, how UNASUR and ALBA re-establish socioeconomic conduct and regional consensus alter how integration, globalization, and interactions between nation-states change. The distinctions here are significant.⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

South America has traditionally been a Regional Security Complex, a conflict formation. The post-Cold War changes in the South American security constellation contain less fragilities and vulnerabilities, more interstate dynamics in both more conflicts and more regionalization, which in turn imply competing regional architectures as new objects of regional rivalry, the interaction with the US shifting from global level to interregional level, that is the US interaction is mainly shaped by distance concreting on the northern part of the continent, particularly in Columbia, leaving the continent to Brazilian leadership.⁷⁸

Although the four levels of analysis are usually unbalanced and intertwined in the domination of the South America Regional Complex, it could be said that a security regime has been strengthening; at least the current pattern of securitization seems to enhance cooperation, which could be described as a form of security cooperation since there is no need to use the threat of force to handle regional conflicts. Depending on the improvement of the sharing of identities, values, norms, collective practices, and meaning through the ripening and aging of the UNASUR on the right track, the South American RSCs may emerge as a “security community”.⁷⁹ In the foreseeable future, it will depend on Brazil’s leadership performance and its relations with the new presidency of Argentina.

76 Mares, pp. 430.

77 Riggiozzi, pp. 439.

78 Buzan, pp. 337

79 Tavares, pp. 260.

