

# **The defence culture's metamorphosis in the South America: between puerility and maturity**

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## **Introduction**

This paper intends to analyse the existence (or not) of a security community through the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).

After the Cold War, the South American RSC started to present: (1) fewer regional instabilities, especially in the domestic level, (2) more interstate dynamics and (3) less globally-oriented and a more regionally-oriented relationship with the USA. There was more stability in the region – after the military governments –, with special attention to the regional integration processes. Cooperative security proved to be important in this period, focusing on external threats.

In the arguments defended by Buzan and Wæver – important to the reflection here developed –, there is one apparent contradiction as to if the region is close or not to being a security community. In a specific moment, the authors affirm that the RSC of South America is close to creating a security community based on securitising primarily an external economic threat, and from this, deriving the necessity of regional pacification. Nevertheless, further on, the same claim that South America has not been a security community or anything close to it, as they describe that the region shows a low rate of conflicts between states, even if there is a great deal of controversies in their relationships. It can be understood that the authors consider the Southern Cone a strong candidate to become a security community, but not the whole of South America.

Particularly, we see a scenario of Brazil's unipolarity in South America. On the way opened by the RSCs, we care to understand how the constitution of a multi-purpose block such as UNASUR can help us comprehend the security dynamics in the South American subcontinent.

The creation of the South American Defence Council (SADC), designed to be *conditio sine qua non* to the construction of a powerful security community or even to

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the transformation of the RSC towards a centred model, will especially guide our current reflection. First and foremost, it is worth mentioning that, between the presentation of proposals and the public exposition and approval of the SADC in December 2008, several were the attempts to overcome the 12 members' differences of shape and content, as well as to do away with the idea that such instrument aimed at consolidating Brazil as a hegemon in the region. In addition, since the beginning, the SADC was designed to be a locus of reconciliation and conversation among members, capable of promoting interchange in the field of security and defence, where decisions are only valid if agreed upon by consensus, with at least one yearly ordinary meeting with the presence of Ministers of Defence.

In fact, more than ever, to promote Brazil's fast development and make the country a global player, stability is a central point not only to the full development of the country's potentials, but also to show the world its performance as a patron of important stability in the region.

### **The Regional Security Complex Theory**

The Regional Security Complexes Theory was developed within the so-called Copenhagen School that aims at understanding international security issues from a regional standpoint, based on the assumption that the threats in general travel short distances rather than long ones. This theory, more deeply developed by Buzan and Wæver,<sup>1</sup> states that security problems are more intrinsically associated with their region but continue to suffer the interference of polarity of the international system. This creates the shallow understanding of it as an approximation between offensive realism and constructivism in the international relations theories.<sup>2</sup> According to the first authors, RSCs have been more under the spotlight after the end of the Cold War, reflecting the change in international security issues of that period. Thus, the new international security standard is not rigid – differently from that observed between 1945-1989/91 –, and its dynamics, even if still influenced by great powers, give RSC a higher autonomy degree than those standards predefined by them.

According to Buzan and Wæver, what makes RSC – which is based on constructivism – interact with Neorealism and liberal theories is the fact that they are expected to take place in an anarchic environment and they serve as a mediator of how

power is exercised by great powers in the international system. Thus, RSCT aims at emphasising an existing midpoint between the global system and the state. It is important to note that the authors do not intend to create an arbitrary definition of region, or even something that is socially constructed by the agents themselves – which could be expected by constructivism. For both theoreticians, then, the region “refers to the level where states or other units link together sufficiently closely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other”.<sup>3</sup> It is essential to understand, then, that in the RSC context, the concept of region is understood as being related to the aspect of the congruity of the security of the units – which may or may not coincide with other elements such as economic or political arrangements, or even geographical proximity.<sup>4</sup> Still, it is possible that RSCs have the so-called *Regional Security Subcomplexes*.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the concept of region, the definition of a Regional Security Complex is “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another”.<sup>6</sup>

Several are the elements that approximate offensive realism to the RSC theory. Such approximation has brought important theoretical concession to the Copenhagen School theory, raising both the latter's reach and interest. Among the main elements of proximity, we highlight: (1) the assumption that the RSC takes place in one anarchic environment. This is an important element, for even if we use a relative standpoint on the position of Wendt,<sup>7</sup> who affirms that anarchy is socially constructed by states, RSC theoreticians believe that anarchy is the absence of a central power, which matches Mearsheimer's initial assumption about offensive realism;<sup>8</sup> (2) The state is still perceived as the main unit in international relations. According to Buzan and Wæver, even if there are other important units, it does not mean that states do not stand as the main ones. Even if their consideration is broader, one that does not necessarily claim that states are not the dominant units in international relations, in their words, “it is perfectly possible that the world *is* still largely state-centric, even if our framework is not”.<sup>9</sup> This relative viewpoint of the constructivist approach is one important aspect for RSCs to be theoretical models for empirical analyses; (3) The perception of the importance of the regional balance of power for the analysis of security scenarios and threat perception. This may be the main element to approximate the RSC theory to offensive realism. It is one of the aspects that distinguish the theory developed by Mearsheimer from that defended by Waltz<sup>10</sup> – which considers only the global balance

of power for the definition of the system's polarities. As they present the possibility of perceiving the system not only through its global level aspect but also its regional aspect, both offensive realism and RSC theory open way for the understanding of how regional polarities are going to influence the behaviour of the units.

One difference, however, associated with regional balance of powers, is important to be noted in the RSC theory and offensive realism. For Buzan and Wæver, there are four possible types of polarity: unipolar, bipolar, tripolar or multipolar. To Mearsheimer, as far as the progression of the amount of fear generated, regional balance of powers may be: unbalanced multipolarities (when there is a potential regional hegemon), balanced multipolarities, bipolarities or regional hegemonies.

Buzan and Wæver distinguish two forms of relationship of the RSC structure and character: power relations and standards of amity and enmity. This considered, it is essential to see the socialisation patterns of the states (argument of constructivism), besides the distribution of global and regional power (argument of offensive realism).

According to the authors, there are four levels of analysis that, when interrelated, form the so-called *Security Constellation*: (1) the domestic level, in special the vulnerabilities generated there; (2) the state-state relationships, which generate the region in itself; (3) the interaction between that region and its neighbouring regions; and (4) the role that global powers play in the region. Just like the others, the regional level will always be operative and, at times, will be dominant – but not necessarily always; however, it cannot be disregarded from the analysis, and this is all the idea behind the RSC theory.

Four variables form the essential structure of the RSC: (1) borders, which distinguish one complex from the other; (2) the existence of one anarchic structure; (3) polarity; and (4) the social construction of the units. This way, the evolution of the RSCs may either take place in order to maintain the *status quo*, or undergo internal transformation, or even an expansion of the external character.

RSCs can be of two kinds: *Standard* or *Centred*. The first type is “Westphalian in form with two or more powers and a predominantly military-political agenda”.<sup>11</sup> In this type, there is no presence of a global level power, and power is thus defined in terms of regional polarity, and the social relationship between the regional powers will define the element of the RSC.<sup>12</sup> It is possible to clearly separate the regional dynamics from those influenced by great powers, in an external manner. In terms of amity-enmity standards, they can be: conflict formations, security regimes or security communities.<sup>13</sup>

Centred RSCs are, according to the authors, of three kinds: (1) unipolar, where a great power is the pole; (2) unipolar, where a superpower is the pole; (3) centred, but integrated by institutions, and not by a regional power. The authors suggest, however, an extra option, (4) a different category, for the authors do not identify a centred RSC of this type: when there is a unipolar centred RSC, but the regional power is not a great global level power.<sup>14</sup>

One observation made by the authors, in special, will be of great importance to our argument.

What links these three types<sup>15</sup> of centred RSC together is the idea that the security dynamics of a region are dominated from a centre located within it. This is partly a question of how dominant a centre is (i.e., the degree of power asymmetry) but equally of the form of hegemony established. A centred RSC is more likely to be stable if the centre establishes a kind of open or penetrated hegemony, where dominated states are given access to the policy process of the 'imperial centre'.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, the way social structures are internalised becomes important. It will be superficial if coercion is the mechanism and deep if they are accepted as legitimate.

According to the authors, it is still possible to form the so-called *Great Power Regional Security Complexes*. These are hybrids of global and regional balance of powers. They are different from the other RSCs for two reasons: (1) the internal dynamics of these RSCs affect the global calculations of balance in such a way that standard RSCs do not. If all the great powers are in a RSC of this type, regional level can be expected to have little influence, giving way to the global balance of power; (2) Due to the involvement of great powers, it is expected that dynamics of this region spread into other regions. On this issue, the authors have written that

The presence of global level powers in an area is thus likely to violate the rule that interregional security dynamics will usually be weak, by allowing an adjacent great power to play strongly into one or more neighbouring regions in a sustained way.<sup>17</sup>

The adjacent presence of superpowers, thus, suggests the existence of what Buzan and Wæver call *Security Supercomplex*. In these cases, the security constellation becomes more elaborate and, apart from the domestic, regional and global levels, a new level would need to be added: the superregional level.

It is still possible that a RSC is not formed, when the region's actors cannot for some reason generate their own security interdependence. This happens: (a) when there is an *overlay*,<sup>18</sup> which happens when a superpower goes beyond *penetration*, and dominates the region in such a way that it prevents the formation of regional security dynamics. After overlay, what happens is either the formation of a new RSC or no RSC at all; and (b) when security regions are categorised as *unstructured*, due to geographical insulation or to low concentration of resources of the region's states, which leads to a low capacity of power projection.

Finally, the authors introduce the three steps to trace RSCs empirically:

- (1) is the issue securitised successfully by any actors?;
- (2) if yes, track the links and interactions from this instance – how does the security action in this case impinge on the security of who/what else, and where does this then echo significantly?, etc;
- (3) this chains can then be collected as a cluster of interconnected security concerns?<sup>19</sup>

### **The Regional Security Complex in South America<sup>20</sup>**

According to the authors, the South American RSC is classified as *Standard*, and presents two relevant subcomplexes: the Southern Cone and the North Andean region, for they face threats of different sources, while they mingle as they develop. During the Cold War, the RSC was not centred nor was it a complex of a great power; it presented a conflicting formation and, despite the great US penetration, it was not overlaid. It faced four major security factors:

- (1) domestic instability, (2) contested borders and bi- or trilateral geopolitical speculation, (3) considerations about regional balance/hegemony mostly involving Brazil and Argentina, and (4) US involvement.<sup>21</sup>

However, after the Cold War, the South American RSC started to present: (1) fewer regional instabilities, especially in the domestic level, (2) more interstate dynamics and (3) less globally-oriented and a more regionally-oriented relationship with the USA. There was more stability in the region – which tended to stand away from the radicalism of military political control –, with special attention to the regional

integration processes. Cooperative security proved to be important in this period, focusing on external threats – which confronted the agenda imposed by the USA especially in the War on Drugs in Colombia, since fight is set against a domestic enemy. Two other securitisation elements are introduced as important for the region: the native people's movements and the securitisation of social movements.

In the arguments defended by the authors, there is one apparent contradiction as to if the region is close or not to being a security community. In a specific moment, the authors affirm that the RSC of “South America is close to creating a security community based on securitising primarily an external economic threat, and from this deriving the necessity of regional pacification”.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, further on, the same claim that “South America has not been a security community or anything close to it”,<sup>23</sup> as they describe that the region shows a low rate of conflicts between states, even if there is a great deal of controversies in their relationships. It can be understood that the authors consider the Southern Cone a strong candidate to become a security community, but not the whole of South America.

Besides the relationship with the USA and a possible division of the RSC in two subcomplexes – one in the north and the other in the south of South America –, Buzan and Wæver claim that two issues are important for understanding the local RSC: the future of MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) and the war on drugs in Colombia. In this prescriptive scenario, the growing separation of the two subcomplexes, in the view of the authors, could lead to the division of the South American RSC in two.

The authors see the presence of the United States in the region as an adjacent presence, since there is not much of an option of a balance of power free from the presence of the USA in the South American RSC, which could be described as a *Security Supercomplex*. In this sense, the proximity of the USA makes interregional and global levels of US intervention in the region merge. It is, thus, a relationship of penetration,<sup>24</sup> and not overlay. However, the authors claim that especially after the Cold War, South America has clearly not been in the US priority action region. Yet, what the states of the region have always done is a *constrained balancing*, where they have tried to keep a distance from the USA, fearing that country's interventions in the region, even if this distance is impossible at all. Brazil's and Argentina's response, in special, is the creation of subregionalism within a context of US influence.

According to the authors, the change in the relationship with the USA is more due to the change of US priorities itself. As the USA have prioritised other regions, the *Divide-and-rule* policy turns out to die down, and the USA ends up serving as a pretext for the cooperation of South American countries.

In the North Andean subcomplex, in special, the impact of 11 September, 2001 could have led to a change in the role of the USA; the country could have left a strictly regional position, concerning the fight on drugs, and penetrated the region on a global justification, the fight against terrorism. This did not happen, even if the authors say that on the American perspective the fight on drugs was mostly military, which worried the region. The crisis in Colombia, as described by the authors, is multidimensional and affects the entire North Andean subcomplex. Another element of possible instability for the region, according to Buzan and Wæver, was the Chávez government, which would oscillate between the support to insurgents in Colombia and Venezuela's candidacy to join MERCOSUR.

One important explanation for the more stable character of South America when compared to other regions in the world would be, according to the theoreticians, closer to Brazil's stabilising hegemonic role than to the penetration of the USA in the region. After the period of territorial annexation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brazil “became essentially a *status quo* power preferring a ‘diplomatic way’ and with a strong vested interest in regional stability”.<sup>25</sup>

In order to see the cohesion of the South American RSC, the authors claim that it is necessary to analyse the joint action in the regional level. While the countries of the region preach, in general terms, the principle of non-intervention, they traditionally leave the intervention for the USA, when it demands necessary. Nonetheless, as far as external involvement is concerned, differences of conditions of the states and their interests have eventually created an important barrier to transnationalism. On joining elements of economic integration with the security agenda, the authors say that, both from Argentina's and Brazil's perspective, the MERCOSUR is given a securitising character, since it is a key element not only of economic integration, but also of the mutual perception of security of the two biggest and most important countries in the region.

On the other hand, the North Andean subcomplex shows a more conflicting formation, even if with elements of change. There have been state conflicts, border issues and democratic instabilities in all the countries and there has even been a raise of

penetration of the USA, due to drug-related problems, especially in Colombia in recent years, seen as the biggest problem in this subcomplex. In case the conflict goes overboard, Panama could become one *insulator* of the South and North Americas' RSC.

Despite the differences and the risk of a separation of the South American RSC in two, Brazil's role still serves to keep the unity between the two subcomplexes.<sup>26</sup> The question asked by the authors is if Brazil would either get involved in the war on drugs, thus creating an alternative that would prevent the massive presence of the USA in the region and try to make it multilateral, or if the country would try elective political engagement with some countries in the region.

Despite the repeated emphasis the authors place on the importance of the future of MERCOSUR for the RSC, they are sceptical that the first would become a securitising source to the second. In their words, "South America will remain, for a long time, an RSC with two distinct centres, each with its characteristic dynamic".<sup>27</sup> The drugs issue may eventually become a cohesion factor for the region, especially as a result of the US pressure for a common policy. However, up to this moment, drugs are one of the separating elements of the two subcomplexes.

In one unusual way, Buzan and Wæver state that the South American RSC balances well the four levels characteristic of the regional security complexes,<sup>28</sup> but they say that the regional dynamics were never strong enough to mould the internal developments of security among South American states, especially due to the fact that the region was never strongly polarised. Despite the problems, the RSC tends to not divide itself, due to both the aforementioned position of Brazil as one central point for the two subcomplexes and the existing institutional relationship among the different processes of regional integration.

### **The South American RSC beyond Buzan and Wæver**

Even though the description of the RSC presented by Buzan and Wæver may seem highly appropriate in several ways, we have identified some important limitations which are directly related to the region's polarisation. We see a scenario of Brazil's unipolarity in South America in the terms of Wohlforth.<sup>29</sup> This evidence has direct implications for almost all descriptions of the South American RSC and its possible consequences.

The first implication has to do with the description of the RSC. Since Brazil is unipolar in South America, two types of RSC are possible: a standard model with one unipolar actor or a centred model. The difference between these two is that in the standard model, the unipolar state, apart from not being a power in the global level, does not control the regional security dynamics.

To understand the satisfactory categorisation of the South American RSC, then, it is necessary to find out if Brazil, as a unipolar power, can manage to control the region's security dynamics. Our hypothesis to be explored in the next section is that it can, for two reasons: (1) by having reduced importance in the USA priority agenda, South America enjoys more freedom to explore the regional safety dynamics. Then, due to the USA's lesser penetration, the way is free for new actors to play the role of protagonists in South America. However, this protagonism is agreed upon once the global level continues to influence the RSC.<sup>30</sup> (2) Upon this autonomy granted by the USA to the region, Brazil's protagonism starts to rise in the RSC and compromise more and more the security agendas of the subcomplexes. This amalgamation is institutionalised and two phenomena are remarkable: the creation of UNASUR and especially of its South American Defence Council, and the stepping of Venezuela into MERCOSUR. Unlike indicated by Buzan and Wæver,<sup>31</sup> institutional cohesion and the future of a possible security community matters more to the future of UNASUR than of MERCOSUR. Brazil's protagonism in the creation of UNASUR and its Defence Council qualifies the country as a central actor for the RSC, by using its regional-level hegemony through institutionalisation and aggregation to reach regional integration.

As a whole, these two factors contribute to allow tracing a change in the South American RSC, not towards a division of the region in two distinct subcomplexes, though, as Buzan and Wæver claimed, but towards a centred RSC with Brazil in the unipolar role. This would place the South American RSC in the only category that Buzan and Wæver introduced of which they could not identify a single case: a centred RSC where the pole is not a great global power.

The following section will analyse this hypothesis based on UNASUR's role as an element to connect the two South American subcomplexes and Brazil as a protagonist under the consent of the USA.

### **UNASUR and the South American RSC**

On the way opened by the RSCs, we care to understand how the constitution of a multi-purpose block such as UNASUR can help us comprehend the security dynamics in the South American subcontinent. More than reflect upon this setting and analyse the details of this place of connection in the cultural, social, economic and political level integrated by UNASUR's 12 countries,<sup>32</sup> it is the formation of the South American Defence Council and its impacts on the areas of security and defence in the region that inspire us.<sup>33</sup>

The end of the Cold War, the intense globalisation process and what has become known as *new threats* (normally via non-state actors) let show the crisis of a hemispheric (or Pan-American) security model that for long had problems. The growing erosion of the legitimacy of the collective security model of the previous period, confirmed by examples such as the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (or Rio Treaty), the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB) and even the Organisation of American States (OAS), together with a growing disengagement of the USA in the region, as well as new priorities on the part of the US Department of State after September 11, 2001, eventually consolidated the image of South America as a place that can and is likely to develop more independent policies due to more autonomy.

In this century marked by the emergence of left-wing and/or progressive national governments – yet of different colours and of heterogeneous nature –,<sup>34</sup> important changes in the post-11 September, 2001 international agenda, growing setbacks in several fields and a relative decline of the USA in the international system, as well as the awakening of the Russian bear after a period of hibernation throughout the 1990s and the spectacular Chinese growth and their flocking to this part of the globe, eventually set a completely different picture from what the region had for decades. It is this new reality that allows the reconfiguration of the South American RSC.

In the mid-2000s, in the 1<sup>st</sup> South American Summit of August/September in Brasília, called by the then president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the need for a closer relationship among the countries in the region starts to become clear. If geography determines destiny, as is said in geopolitics, Brazil and its neighbours seemed to be awakening from a long period of lethargy and inaction, in need of compromising the opportunity and challenge agendas.<sup>35</sup> Then, throughout the whole first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>

century, the meetings became more and more frequent, just as new institutional arrangements were designed and implemented.

At the same time, the election of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in January 2003 would cause important changes both inside and outside the country, given Brazil's status of biggest regional player, or unipole, and its physical, political, economic and military dimensions.<sup>36</sup>

The creation of the South American Defence Council (SADC), designed to be *conditio sine qua non* to the construction of a powerful security community or even to the transformation of the RSC towards a centred model, will especially guide our current reflection. First and foremost, it is worth mentioning that, between the presentation of proposals which started in bilateral behind-the-curtains conversations throughout 2006-2007<sup>37</sup> and the public exposition and approval of the SADC in the UNASUR Extraordinary Meeting of Heads of State in December 2008, several were the attempts to overcome the 12 members' differences of shape and content, as well as to do away with the idea that such instrument aimed at consolidating Brazil as a hegemon in the region.<sup>38</sup> In addition, since the beginning, the SADC was designed to be a *locus* of reconciliation and conversation among members, capable of promoting interchange in the field of security and defence, where decisions are only valid if agreed upon by consensus, with at least one yearly ordinary meeting with the presence of Ministers of Defence.

However, as we analyse the chronology of the themes that comprise the priority (and also the non-priority) agenda to be faced in this effort to integrate South America, no special attention was given to security and defence, except in a marginal way. What change has made this issue become central?

To some of the actors in this process, the following can be said to have accelerated this arrangement: (1) the so-called *new threats*<sup>39</sup> that could cross the borders into other countries, such as drug trafficking from Colombia to Brazil and the dispute involving Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela on the death of Raúl Reyes;<sup>40</sup> (2) the subregional conflicts, such as the disputes involving Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile, among others; (3) the native people's movements spreading the wish to separate, as in the cases of Bolivia and Paraguay; (4) stop Bolivarian momentum in the region, above all via the isolation of Venezuela and/or countries that integrate the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA, in Spanish); (5) avoid arms race in the region, through the growing adoption of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs); (6) consolidate the South

Atlantic as a peace area free from nuclear weapons and vital area for Brazil's power projection, not allowing the presence of extra-regional powers (as in the case of the United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands); (7) stop the consolidation of a strategic policy for hemispheric security defined by the United States for the subcontinent; and (8) boost the strategic goals of Brazil's Foreign Policy to consolidate the South American integration process.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, more than ever, to promote Brazil's fast development and make the country a global player, stability is a central point not only to the full development of the country's potentials, but also to show the world its performance as a patron of important stability in the region.<sup>42</sup> The leadership in the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since 2004 has no other reason despite the usual justifications of humanitarian assistance, etc.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, as pointed out by Alsina Jr., “territorial satisfaction and the non-securitisation of threats deriving from neighbouring countries allow Brazil to prioritise the development dimension rather than the strategic-military dimension”.<sup>44</sup> It has been like this in history, however, a country that has more than 15,000 km of borderlines and around 8,000 km of shore and a huge airspace, that claims a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and intends to guarantee harmony around itself cannot do without a credible military structure and neglect its defence.

Here, it is important to note that, despite the triumphant outburst that at times have taken Brazil's Foreign Policy in recent years, it was only possible to build such a structure as the SADC chose not to openly confront Washington. Aware of its many limitations in the field of capabilities, Brazil's government chose to take up a low profile attitude in the construction of its leadership concerning the theme herein discussed. Indirectly, and we do not wish to suggest any mechanical relation centre-periphery/Washington-Bogota, the USA knew how to use its close political-ideological links with the Andean countries and the cooperation in the Castro issue via Plan Colombia to secure what they did not want for that region.

Counting on Colombia's fear of being insulated and surrounded by left-wing regimes, president George W. Bush knew how to use his influence and other ties on president Álvaro Uribe for the creation of a *softened* (non-operational) structure, as is the SADC.<sup>45</sup> As a matter of fact, the non-participation of Colombia – as was for some time believed – would drain away the substance and meaning of the South American Defence Council, making it a beautiful bird that cannot fly. This scenario would be a

problem for Brazil's attempt to lead the convergence of perceptions on securitisation of the states of South America's two subcomplexes.

Having covered Colombia's case, it was reached a final text, which defended the creation of the SADC as an “instance of consultation, cooperation and coordination in defence-related issues”<sup>46</sup> in UNASUR's frameworks of institutionalism and principles. According to the constitutional document, its general goals are to: (a) consolidate the subcontinent as a peace zone, the bedrock for democratic stability and total development of the South American people, as well as contribute for world peace; (b) build a defence-related South American identity, considering the subregional and national characteristics and contributing to the strengthening of the unity of Latin America and the Caribbean; (c) generate consensus to strengthen defence-related regional cooperation. Besides these general goals, eleven specific goals were also set.<sup>47</sup>

Additionally, in short, in recent years we have had important mechanisms such as the South American Peace Zone/Brasília Communiqué (2000), Meetings of South American Defence Ministries (the first having occurred in Rio de Janeiro in 2003), as well as growing bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina since the 1980s, which culminated in the Bilateral Agreement Regarding Defence Cooperation, signed in 2007.<sup>48</sup> After all, there is a not insignificant tradition of trying to diminish the tension of the security and defence regional environment,<sup>49</sup> besides serving the purpose of compromising the North Andean and the Southern Cone security subcomplexes, with special attention to the central role of Brazil in this process.

As a matter of fact, the way was paved for moving from a decadent model of collective security to a new, more dynamic form of cooperative security. But is the South American Defence Council a useful stable multilateral effective mechanism in conflict situations?

In its initial years, the SADC has been an important space of reconciliation where, despite the regional-ideological differences among the Andean Community of Nations (CAN, in Spanish), MERCOSUR, and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA, in Spanish), important developments have been recorded, such as the definition of common Action Plans concerning security and defence, Confidence Building Measures, the creation of the Strategic Defence Study Centre (*Centro de Estudos Estratégicos de Defesa* – CEED, in Portuguese) in the city of Buenos Aires, the agreement on a common methodology to measure spending on defence, one important

interchange concerning military formation and qualification, among other praiseworthy points. Notwithstanding, some challenges remain.

After the embryonic phase of structuring and agreement on the basal contents, the next big issue is to keep moving on based on a methodology that imposes the need to reach unanimity among members – or at least explicit non-objection by any of them. The regionalisation of the architecture of security and defence in the subcontinent continues, but followed by new questions: what is it that we have been seen, arms race or re-equipment? Have historical borderline disputes been overcome? Are the areas and national identities growingly and reciprocally respected? How can we avoid unbalance when the economy/GDP<sup>50</sup> –as well as spending on defence –<sup>51</sup> of only one of the members represents more than half of all the others altogether? Can we really speak of overcoming the Pacific (arc of instability/North Andean Subcomplex) vs. Atlantic (arc of stability/Southern Cone Subcomplex) dichotomy? Is the risk of Balkanisation in countries of the region part of the past? Has the US strategic tutelage been stopped?

In reality, the SADC has not yet been put through a big test capable of checking the efficacy and efficiency of this institutional structure. In addition, the so-called negative agenda that marked the USA-South America relationship in the post-Cold War period, centred in the fight of drug trafficking, terrorism and other offences, was partly overcome. In spite of that, we insist that the Southern Cone and North Andean Regional Security Subcomplexes still experience very different dynamics from each other, which need more interconnection and organicity.

Being the main sponsor of the creation of the South American Defence Council, Brazil's behaviour needs coherence and numerous times shows to be diachronic. On the one hand, in the highest political level, Brazil's government works for the strengthening of this institutional arrangement (which is already 2/3 of our exports of weapons),<sup>52</sup> including the already mentioned leadership yielded by the USA because Brazil does not threaten the US in the global level. On the other hand, Brazil does not care to use its Ministry of Defence and more specifically its armed forces to have a more decisive and bold attitude to strengthen this important initiative and its operative mechanisms. In practice, the high officials and the generals see this enterprise with some reserve, more than rarely calling it an extravagance, fruit of a left-wing reverie that is no match for reality. Here is a problem that lies despite the stubborn democratic civil control over the military - not yet fully in practice in Brazil.

## **Final Considerations**

South American integration has advanced in a noticeable way, standing many times on frail bases, such as strong nationalist rhetoric, defence of sovereignty and non-intervention. Despite being important, these principles are insufficient as an element of interconnection of the two South American subcomplexes, albeit Brazilian capability to do so. Also, the integration policies advance at different speeds, at times faster in the political field – as in the South American Defence Council –, however, unmatched in the economic field, among others. They also need a more solid institutional architecture capable of supporting a deeper and fruitful integration.

In this century, besides the intended physical and economic integration, Brazil has attempted to promote a common security agenda and counter-arrest the US influence in South America (originally centred on the expansion of military bases in the subcontinent – there are hundreds of them around the world nowadays –, to reactivation of the IV Naval Fleet as well as fighting terrorism and drugs).<sup>53</sup> The compromising of this common agenda would permit, in theory, the creation of a respectable security community or even a transformation of the South American RSC towards a centred model, given the importance of territory in the dynamic of studies on security and the intended reconciliation. However, be it in the regional level or the subregional level, obstacles have come up.<sup>54</sup>

On the one hand, regional integration has worked as a strategy to warrant more attention (and power) to the demands of the region in a world of growing asymmetries of power. On the other hand, this cannot eclipse the absolute frailty represented by the instrumentalisation of this important process for a more systemic cooperation of the North Andean and the Southern Cone Regional Security Subcomplexes, despite some advancements. Finally, the seed has been sowed but it will take a lot of attention, care and dedication to make it thrive. The feeling cultivated by most of the Brazilian elite about our country being the dearest one in the region does not survive a reality check. The concept of a giant sub-imperialist hegemon exists in the hearts and minds of many of our South American neighbours. If Brazil really wants to lead, and consolidate the RSC as a centred one, it needs to wish for it and make it happen. The country also needs to be aware of the price there is to pay (which is not low!).

Never have the chances of cooperation been so high and positive as in this historical moment, including the themes of security and defence. However, by now, to our eye, the lack of maturity in a broad dialogue between civil and political societies about what Brazil wants for the 21<sup>st</sup> century remains. In a country that has been improving but is still marked by the social inequalities of all kinds, with its leadership frowned upon by its neighbours, it seems like an extravagance to mobilise resources and consensus for a longed-for leadership and more prominence in the region. The USA have acceded to share the costs of governance with regional powers such as Brazil. The relative autonomy experienced by South America allows the prominent role of Brazil as a compromising element of perceptions of security of the two regional subcomplexes. The institutionalisation of UNASUR and the SADC contribute to reaffirm Brazil's position in the process; in analytical terms, this would indicate a change of the Regional Security Complex towards a centred model, having Brazil as the pole. This would be the first empirical example of this type of RSC. Nonetheless, based on the presented analysis, one question remains to be answered: is Brazil ready to take up such new responsibilities?

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<sup>1</sup> Since this is the broadest theoretical reference for Regional Security Complexes, the description that follows is majorly a discussion of theory according to what was exposed by Buzan and Wæver (ibid). Although majorly based in one reference, it is important for the formulation of our hypothesis.

<sup>2</sup> Marco Cepik, "Segurança na América do Sul. Traços Estruturais e Dinâmica Conjuntural", *Análise de Conjuntura do Observatório Político Sul-Americano* (OPSA) 1, no. 9 (August 2005): 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 43.

<sup>4</sup> On this issue, it is important to note that geographical proximity is a defining element for the existence of an RSC. However, alone it does not necessarily guarantee the existence of a CRS. Natural barriers (such as a mountain chain or deserts), low concentration of resources in the units or the strong presence of superpowers are factors that may inhibit the existence of an RSC between neighbors.

<sup>5</sup> What distinguishes a *regional security subcomplex* from a *regional security complex* is basically size: *subcomplexes* are within bigger RSCs. The *subcomplexes* are not a necessary characteristic of RSCs. They are not unusual, however, especially when the number of countries in the region is large.

<sup>6</sup> Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 44.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics", *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425.

<sup>8</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago. 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Italicised by the authors Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 45.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.

<sup>11</sup> Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 55.

<sup>12</sup> If there is a single regional power, the standard RSC may be unipolar.

<sup>13</sup> In order to conceptualise security communities, the authors borrow the definition from Deutsch, who defines it as a community where the units cannot even imagine a war among them. There is, then, in this case, a total desecuritisation among the actors. Its development, even if unusual, is a type of RSC and it is not, thus, a level superior to the regional security complexes. NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) is the most successful example in this sense (Buzan and Wæver [ibid]: 57).

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<sup>14</sup> Here it is important to operate a separation that will be very important from now on, between the Standard Unipolar RSC and the Centered RSC where the pole is not a great power. The difference is that in the first case the security dynamics of the region are not dominated by the pole, in its center.

<sup>15</sup> Even if the authors mention here only three types of centered RSCs, we must remember that they had previously added a fourth type, the centered RSC where the pole is not a global power. The reason why it has been suppressed here by Buzan and Wæver is probably that they do not see any RSC in this format.

<sup>16</sup> Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 58.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid: 60.

<sup>18</sup> *Overlay* may at times be difficult to be identified. It can be confused with high intensity *penetration*. *Overlay* takes place when military forces of great powers are significantly present, in a forceful or partly voluntary manner, such as Western Europe/NATO and Eastern Europe/Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. For details, cf. Buzan and Wæver (ibid): 61 and the following.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid: 73.

<sup>20</sup> Due to space constraints, we shall limit ourselves to describing the South American RSC in the post-Cold War period. For more information on the initial formation of these RSCs, see Buzan and Wæver (ibid: 304-43).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid: 320.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid: 57.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid: 304.

<sup>24</sup> The authors point out that the penetration is more observable in the Northern part of the region and less in the Southern Cone, where the border problems were bound to become stabilised since the final period of the Cold War (Ibid: 313).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid: 314.

<sup>26</sup> Brazil's goals in securitising the Amazon would be both a border concern – for the drug issue in neighbouring countries –, and a “paranoia” that the Northern hemisphere states and NGOs want to make the Amazon one area of global interest (Ibid: 331-3).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid: 335-6.

<sup>28</sup> These are: domestic, state-state, between regions and the role of external powers.

<sup>29</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World”, *International Security* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 5-41.

<sup>30</sup> In the latest US *National Security Strategy*, Latin America's marginalisation (and, as a consequence, South America's) remains. That one is mentioned a single time and the subcontinent none. On Brazil, we read “We welcome Brazil's leadership and seek to move beyond dated North-South divisions to pursue progress on bilateral, hemispheric, and global issues. Brazil's macroeconomic success, coupled with its steps to narrow socio-economic gaps, provide important lessons for countries throughout the Americas and Africa. We will encourage Brazilian efforts against illicit transnational networks. As guardian of a unique national environmental patrimony and a leader in renewable fuels, Brazil is an important partner in confronting global climate change and promoting energy security. And in the context of the G-20 and the Doha round, we will work with Brazil to ensure that economic development and prosperity is broadly shared”. White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC: White House, 2010, 1-52, 44-5.

<sup>31</sup> Buzan and Wæver's book was published in 2003 and the UNASUR was created in 2008. Thus, it is natural that it is not present in their analysis.

<sup>32</sup> Having started in the first half of 2008, very bold in its purposes in its first years, UNASUR counts on nine ministerial councils: a) Energy; b) Healthcare; c) Defence; d) Infra-structure and Planning; e) Social Development; f) Drug Worldwide Problem; g) Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation; h) Economy and Finances; i) Electoral. For details, refer to <http://www.unasursg.org/> (accessed 17 December 2013).

<sup>33</sup> An stimulating discussion around security and defence themes and its developments on the region can be seen in Héctor Luis Saint-Pierre, “‘Defesa’ ou ‘segurança’?: reflexões em torno de conceitos e ideologias”, *Contexto Internacional* 33, no. 2 (July-December 2011): 407-433.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Carlos Oliva Campos, “América Latina en la postguerra fría: la nueva reconfiguración socio-política regional”, *Perspectivas* 33, (January-June 2008): 15-61; and Julia Sant'Anna, “Governos de esquerda e o gasto social na América do Sul”. *Observatório Político Sul-Americano* (OPSA) 2, no. 2 (February 2007): 1-21.

<sup>35</sup> Even though this attempt is not exactly new when we look at the history of the subcontinent, it does gain new colours starting with the efforts of president Cardoso (on Brazil's side), which were deepened by president Lula da Silva and again reiterated by current president Rousseff. As a way to escape the traps many times armed by the frail institutionalisation of democracy and institutions in the regions, populist deliriums and/or disputes for leadership in the South American process of integration, Brazil has chosen a

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type of amalgam, started by Cardoso, standing on physical integration (via the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America – IIRSA), having the purpose of promoting the development of infra-structure on transportation, energy and communications. More than 500 projects at an estimate cost of US\$ 135 billions. For IIRSA's areas of action, projects, planning and documents, check <http://www.iirsa.org/Page/Detail?menuItem=70> (accessed 11 February 2014).

<sup>36</sup> The Foreign Relations of Brazil (PEB, in Portuguese) throughout president Lula's terms (2003-2010) is object of controversy among analysts. As far as our interests are concerned, we will not enter this debate in this moment. However, concerning the issues of security and the special treatment that they got throughout president Lula's two terms, we recommend Rafael Antonio Duarte Villa and Manuela Trindade Viana, "Security issues during Lula's administration: from the reactive to the assertive approach", *Rev. bras. polít. int.* 53, n.spe (2010): 91-114.

<sup>37</sup> For a chronology of the creation of the SADC and the disputes involving it, refer to Oscar Medeiros Filho, "Conselho de Defesa Sul-Americano: Demandas e Agendas", *Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA), X International Congress, 22-24 July 2010* ([www.brasa.org/sitemason/files/FLdvB6/Oscar%20Medeiros%20Filho.pdf](http://www.brasa.org/sitemason/files/FLdvB6/Oscar%20Medeiros%20Filho.pdf); accessed 27 June 2013); Leonardo Arquimimo de Carvalho, "Conselho de Defesa Sul-Americano", in Leonardo Arquimimo de Carvalho, Cristián Garay Vera and Juan Cayón Peña (Orgs.), *Segurança e defesa na América Latina*, Curitiba: Juruá, 2009; and Augusto Teixeira, "O Conselho de Defesa Sul-Americano da Unasul", in Marcos Aurelio Guedes de Oliveira (Org.), *Comparando a Defesa Sul-Americana*, Recife: Editora Universitária da UFPE, 2011. To a deeper locus, cf. Graciela de Conti Pagliari, *O Brasil e a segurança na América do Sul*, Curitiba: Juruá, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> On this last point, among others, refer to Cristián Garay Vera, "El Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano: perspectivas de una propuesta brasileña en el contexto subregional", in *Conferencia Sub Regional (SRC)*, Colombia: 28-31 July 2009 ([www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Garay%20CHI.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Garay%20CHI.pdf); accessed 14 July 2013); Carol Monserrat Herrera, "El Consejo Suramericano de Defensa: retos en el contexto político regional", in *Conferencia Sub Regional (SRC)*, Colombia: 28-31 July 2009 ([www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Herrera%20VEN.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Herrera%20VEN.pdf); accessed 14 July 2013); José Luis Martínez, "¿Sudamérica está en condiciones de operar un Consejo de Defensa?", in *Conferencia Sub Regional (SRC)*, Colombia, 28-31 July 2009 ([www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Martinez%20URU.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/chds/SRC-Colombia09/Papers/Martinez%20URU.pdf); accessed 14 July 2013); and Andrés Serbin, "Regionalismo y soberanía nacional en América Latina: los nuevos desafíos", in Francisco Rojas Aravena (Ed.), *América Latina y el Caribe: Multilateralismo vs. Soberanía: La Construcción de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños*, Buenos Aires: Teseo; FLACSO, 2011. One interesting counterpoint of how Brazil's insertion has been designed since the 1950s up to today can be seen in Tullo Vigevani and Haroldo Ramanzini Jr., "Pensamento Brasileiro e Integração Regional", *Contexto Internacional* 32, no. 2 (July-December 2010): 437-487. On the discussion around the idea of Brazilian leadership, consider reading Sérgio Danese, *A escola da liderança – ensaios sobre a política externa e a inserção internacional do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> On the discussion of the *new threats*, also called *fourth generation warfare* or *complex irregular warfare*, see International Institute for Strategic Studies/IISS, "Complex irregular warfare – the psychological component", *The Military Balance*, 2007: 415-20; and Anthony H. Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, "The Asian Conventional Military Balance in 2006: Overview of Major Asian Powers. Working Draft for Review and Comment", in *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2006: 11-23.

<sup>40</sup> Number two in the hierarchy of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP).

<sup>41</sup> Personal notes after off-the-record conversations with members of Brazil's Ministry of External Relations and Ministry of Defence.

<sup>42</sup> It is a fact that, right by the traditional soft power, there are numerous challenges for Brazil to increase its hard power. For example, one important limitation comes from the fact that the country is the only denuclearised BRIC member. Cf. João Fábio Bertoha, "Brazil: an emerging military power? The problem of the use of force in Brazilian international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", *Rev. bras. polít. int.* 53, no. 2 (2010): 107-124; and Mario Cesar Flores, "Segurança Internacional na América do Sul (e o Brasil nela)", *Política Externa* 18, no. 3 (2009-2010): 61-72.

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion on Brazil's leadership in MINUSTAH, how this represents an inflection in Brazil's *modus operandi* in UN peace operations, and still, how this experience serves as a model for the consolidation or Brazil's leadership role in South America, refer to Lucas Pereira Rezende, *O Engajamento do Brasil nas Operações de Paz da ONU – Análise dos Efetivos Enviados e Recomendações para o Fortalecimento da Inserção Internacional Brasileira*, Curitiba: Editora Appris, 2012.

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<sup>44</sup> João Paulo Soares Alsina Jr, “O poder militar como instrumento da política externa brasileira contemporânea”, *Rev. bras. polít. int.* 52, no. 2 (2009): 173-191, 181. Our translation.

<sup>45</sup> On the other end was a histrionic Venezuela defending the creation of a common operational military instrument called South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO, much like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – NATO).

<sup>46</sup> Refer to [www.unasursg.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&catid=82:consejo-suramericano-de-defensa&id=329:estatutos-de-creacion-consejo-de-defensa-suramericano](http://www.unasursg.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=82:consejo-suramericano-de-defensa&id=329:estatutos-de-creacion-consejo-de-defensa-suramericano) (accessed 26 August 2013). Our translation.

<sup>47</sup> According to Article 5 of the SADC, they are: (a) Gradually advance the analysis and discussion of the common elements of a joint view concerning defence; (b) Promote the interchange of information and analysis of the regional and international situation, in order to identify the risk factors and threats that may affect regional and worldwide piece; (c) contribute to the reach joint positions in multilateral forums on defence, as provided for in article 14 of UNASUR Constitutive Treaty; (d) Advance the construction of a shared view concerning defence tasks and promote the dialogue and cooperation with other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean; (e) Strengthen the adoption of measures to promote confidence and share learned lessons; (f) promote the interchange and cooperation in the field of defence industry; (g) Promote the interchange in the field of military formation and qualification, encourage joint Armed Forces training and promote academic cooperation among defence study centres; (h) Share experiences and support humanitarian actions such as demining, prevention, mitigation and assistance to victims of natural disasters; (I) Share experiences in of UN peacekeeping operations (j) Exchange experience on modernisation process of Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces; (k) Promote the incorporation of gender perspective in the field of defence. For further information on the principles, structure and how the SADC works, cf. [www.unasursg.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&catid=82:consejo-suramericano-de-defensa&id=329:estatutos-de-creacion-consejo-de-defensa-suramericano](http://www.unasursg.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=82:consejo-suramericano-de-defensa&id=329:estatutos-de-creacion-consejo-de-defensa-suramericano) (accessed 26 August 2013).

<sup>48</sup> We could add Brazil's initiatives (all in this century) of Bilateral Framework Agreements with Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, besides Framework Agreements on regional security signed by MERCOSUR with Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Cf. Elói Martins Senhoras, *Uma agenda de estudos sobre a regionalização transnacional na América do Sul*, Campinas: mimeo, Ph.D. Thesis, 2010, 266 and the following.

<sup>49</sup> Some see these initiatives, which help the avoidance of wars in the last century, the appearance of a pluralistic security community in the region. For this issue, refer to Andrew Hurrell, “An emerging security community in South America?”, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Ed.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; and Arie M. Kacowica, *The Impact of Norms in International Society: The Latin American Experience, 1881-2001*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. Contrary to this optimistic reading, Mares defends the existence of “violent peace” of which there were 127 militarised interstate disputes (MIDs) between 1884 and 1993 in South America alone, some of which in the democracy/democracy pair. David R. Mares, *Violent Peace: Militarized Interstate Bargaining in Latin America*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 39-43.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. <http://www.imf.org/external/data.htm> (accessed 19 March 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Refer to <http://www.sipri.org/databases/milex> (accessed 26 February 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers> (accessed 27 February 2014).

<sup>53</sup> An interesting analysis of how these bases are present in the post-2001 superpower broader strategic policy can be found in Alexander Cooley, “A política de instalação de bases militares”, *Política Externa* 14, no. 4, 2006: 107-117. On the IV Fleet and its impacts on the region, refer to Jorge Battaglini, “A reativação da IV Frota e o novo paradigma de controle global dos Estados Unidos”, *Política Externa* 17, no. 4, 2009: 31-47.

<sup>54</sup> Only to illustrate the complexity of what we are saying, Venezuela's recent coming into MERCOSUR opens huge opportunities but it also causes discomfort to Brazil and the other members of the block. One important player in the field of energy, Chávez, the Bolivarian former head of this Caribbean country who, in his own words, led a “peaceful revolution, which is armed, though”, kept close ties with countries of little international acceptance, such as Iran, and does not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, the only country with which MERCOSUR has signed a free trade treaty in its more than twenty years of existence.