

CHAPTER 5

DEFENCE IN A POST-HEGEMONIC REGIONAL AGENDA:
THE CASE OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN DEFENCE COUNCIL

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War has favoured the spread of a large number of regional institutions working to build and manage frameworks that foster cooperation in both defence and security.¹ Across the Atlantic, the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE) underwent a process of mission expansion after the Paris Summit in November 1990. In Asia, the establishment of the *Collective Security Treaty Organization* (CSTO) between the states of the former Soviet Union, and the *ASEAN Regional Forum* (ARF) in 1994 incorporated 25 states, including the regional powers of China, Russia and Japan. The main goal of ARF is to promote a constructive dialogue concerning political and security issues of common interest. Africa's two main regional institutions, the *African Union* (AU) and the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC), have both assumed a leading regional role in defense and security, including, among others, the management of peacekeeping operations within the region. In Latin America, the *Southern Common Market* (MERCOSUR) has expanded its range of functions by, in 1988, including a regional commitment to the maintenance of democracy and peace. In the Caribbean, the *Caribbean Community* (CARICOM) established the *Regional Task Force on Security and Organized Crime* in 2001 to deal with drug trafficking, weapons and money laundering. This list of regional institutions was recently expanded with the establishment of the *Union of South American Nations* in 2004 (UNASUR) and the creation of one of their premier Councils, the *South American Defense Council* (SADC).²

On a March 2008 visit to Washington, Brazilian Defence Minister Nelson Jobim announced the intention to create the South American Defence Council (SADC), a body 'based on the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty and territoriality'. Jobim then travelled the region to obtain support for the SADC initiative. The Brazilian proposal was prompted by the conflict between Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela when Colombia attacked an FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of

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¹ Söderbaum and Shaw (2003).

² Composed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guayana, Paraguay, Perú, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Colombia) camp in Ecuadorian territory (Saint-Pierre and Castro 2008).³ Brazil, Argentina and Chile headed the project and made it clear that they did not intend to form a NATO-like alliance, but a cooperative defence arrangement to enhance multilateral military cooperation, promote confidence and security building measures and foster defence industry exchange. The decision to launch the SADC was formally adopted in Brazil during a Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) Special Summit in December 2008.⁴ The SADC, the first regional institution in the South American history specialized in defence matters, is composed of the Minister of Defence (or its equivalent) of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela. The Declaration of Santiago de Chile, in March 2009, states that the Council is a forum for consultation, cooperation and coordination on defence. The SADC has established three main objectives that reflect the consensus of its members regarding the challenges that face the region: (a) Consolidating South America as a zone of peace; (b) Creating a South American defence identity; and (c) Generating consensus in order to strengthen regional defence cooperation.⁵

The establishment of the SADC reveals the interest of South American governments in developing a regional defence agenda. In this sense, the creation of SADC reflects the limitations of the Inter-American defence system, which includes two institutions: the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB), which depends on the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (IATRA).⁶ These institutions have been perceived as functional to the US national interest, rather than to the needs of a South American defence vision.

This chapter argues that the establishment of the SADC is a regional response to a new defence context characterized by an increased global asymmetry in the distribution of military power and militarization of the US security agenda towards

³ On 1 March 2008, Super Tucano aircraft of the Colombian air force launched attacks on Ecuadorian territory, which killed 27 people, including Raul Reyes, the second-in-command of the FARC.

⁴ As of November 2010, several councils and working groups have been created in the UNASUR framework: (1) South American Council on the World Drug Problem; (2) South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning; (3) South American Council of Social Development; (4) South American Energy Council; (5) South American Council of Health; (6) Board of Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation; (7) Working Group on Financial Integration; (8) Working Group on Disputes Settlement.

⁵ See South American Defence Council, *Goals*, available at <http://www.cdsunasur.org/es/consejo-de-defensa-suramericano/objetivos>.

⁶ The Inter-American Defense Board provides technical advice and services to the OAS. It is composed of nationally appointed defence officials who develop collaborative approaches on common defence and security issues facing countries in North, Central and South America. The IADB was created in 1942. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly known in Spanish as TIAR from *Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca*) was an agreement signed in 1947 in Rio de Janeiro among many countries of the Americas. The central principle contained in its articles is that an attack against one state in the region would be considered an attack against them all; this was known as the 'hemispheric defence' doctrine.

the region, but at the same time as a consequence of a revival of long political and intellectual regional traditions that has never abandoned the goal of Latin American integration. The new defence scenario, it is argued, has been shaped by material and identity changes. Material changes are related to the militarization of the security policy of the United States towards the region, the revival of territorial and ideological disputes and the emergence of Brazil as a regional power. Ideational changes are linked to the development of a regional consensus regarding how to deal with defence challenges. The recent convergence of those two dimensions is essential to explain the emergence of regionalism in defence in South America. This chapter thus combines both material and ideational dimensions to explain the creation of the SADC.

The structure of the chapter follows from this argument. The next section provides an overview of the factors governing the creation of SADC. It does so by analysing material and ideational factors that frame the definition of defence (and what defence is for in a new regional context), as well as the tensions between the militarization of the US security agenda towards South America and the emergence of new regional practices enforcing regional autonomy and power in the Southern Cone. The second section examines motivations and mechanisms that support the construction of a new defence community. Here the role of Brazil advancing defence as a sense of zones of peace is particularly relevant. The third section concentrates on the defensive and non-defensive functions advanced by the SADC in the governing of South American defence. This section places most of its attention on the strategies of identity formation which are held in SADC's framework. Finally, the conclusions related to what the SADC represents in terms of the transit towards a new form of regionalism and the limits to such endeavour are presented.

5.2. FACTORS GOVERNING THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOUTH AMERICAN DEFENCE COMMUNITY

5.2.1 *Material and Ideational Roots*

The establishment of regional organizations has been explained in material and ideational terms. Neorealist accounts hold that such institutions are built as a response to regional or global changes in the balance of power or as a reaction against military threats. According to this view, regional formation processes are led by the strongest state in the region with a goal of achieving a more favourable balance of power. Regional institutions are, thus, not autonomous from the interest of the state (Baldwin 1993). Neoliberal scholars suggest that regional organizations are established to reduce the growing transaction costs in interstate relations through mutually profitable exchanges. In short, while in neorealist accounts institutions maximize the state interest, liberals argue that institutions respond to the need to allow for the achievement of joint interests (Keohane 1984).

By contrast, ideational accounts stress the logic of identity formation that underlies processes of region building. In this connection, regions arise from the redefinition of

norms and identities by governments and civil society groups which are shaped by the collective perception of identities and meanings. Actor's identities are the result of a shared inter-subjectivity that emerges from reciprocal interaction, which presupposes that identities are dynamic. In this context, the history and process of interaction is a key factor not only for explaining identity formation but also for distinguishing the nature of the system, for instance, if it is more or less cooperative (Kolodjied 2005). Implied here, ideational approaches bring to light the instrumental uses of regionalism to promote specific political and economic ends. In the case of the governing of regional security in South America, this has been the result of a combination of material and ideational factors. The creation of the SADC reveals that although material factors are important in explaining regional responses to security dilemmas, these alone do not bring about regional institutions of defence. To account for the process leading to such institutions it is also necessary to consider the construction of collective identity, particularly since the early 2000s the understanding of new political community in South America that in many ways emerged at odds with traditional paradigms and US regional leadership.

Changes in the defence scenario in South America in the last two decades have been driven by material changes related to the militarization of the security policy of the United States towards the region, the revival of territorial and ideological disputes and the emergence of Brazil as a regional power. These material factors are yet one part of the picture. Ideational changes are also important and have been linked to the redefinition of new regional consensus regarding how to deal with autonomous management of two highly politically sensitive areas of policy: development and defence. The recent convergence of those two dimensions is essential to explain the emergence of regionalism in defence in South America.

Although material and ideational factors are necessary conditions for the formation of regionalism, the ideational dimension in particular has been especially relevant and novel since it is the first time in South American that countries conceive defence issues in regional terms, to protect and advance new solidarities and collective management of regional problems, at odds with US intervention and doctrines. This dimension is an innovative trend in South American history whereas material incentives have been common since the past century. In fact, the US militaristic approach, the proliferation of interstate conflicts and the ascent of regional powers, for instance Argentina at the beginning of the twentieth century, were not unusual events in the South American past (Kacowicz 1998, 2005). However, it is the first time that a regional defence institution is created under the auspicious of South American countries that are reclaiming the regional space. This highlights the importance of the ideational dimension in explaining SADC's creation, since the presence of similar material factors in the past did not favour regional institutional building. In many ways, current transformations in the political economy of the region, together with a redefinition of national priorities on the part of the United States, lent a new margin of manoeuvre for South American nations to rethink what defence is for.

Essentially, the establishment of the SADC can be traced as the result of a process where South American nations shared new understandings of defence based on a genuine regional approach. This interpretation reflects the presence of a new political context in which actors are seeing themselves as carriers of new ideas, perceptions and positions within the Inter-American framework. At the same time, these actors are conceiving the region in terms of autonomy and new identity formation.⁷ In brief, South America has begun to think of defence issues in a regional perspective.

South America has been experiencing since the past two decades the gradual formation of a new identity in defence matters. Regional leaders have come to share the view that challenges in this area have to be handled collectively. This emergent identity includes, for instance, a shared understanding of what a defence issue constitutes, which is a crucial factor when establishing SADC's sphere of action. In this way, SADC's agenda has been restricted to certain tasks: use of the military in external missions, especially those concerning defence cooperation among countries, participation in peacekeeping operations or strengthening of defence industry. This consensus excluded from SADC's framework internal security missions, such as the struggle against organized crime or drug trafficking. In other words, the creation of the SADC itself reflects a shared understanding between South American countries about what constitutes a defence issue, an understanding even shared by those countries, such as Colombia or Brazil, where the military is domestically used.

In this way, the SADC is also a driver of identity formation since it contemplates the implementation of several policies which aim to strengthen the existent regional practices in defence matters. The SADC embodies a new model of regional governance underpinned in alternative understandings about the goals of and tools for regional defence as well as the political economic challenges faced by South America since the early 2000s.

SADC's objectives are not only designed to manage the regional instability that emerge from latent and potential interstate conflicts, but also to promote the consolidation and further development of a shared regional understanding about defence in terms of new cooperation and community practices to reduce uncertainties and enhance a peaceful environment to develop further integration, particularly in areas of political economic significance such as energy and infrastructure. In this way, SADC's goals seem to play two defensive and non-defensive functions.

Defensive functions are designed mainly to control or limit external intervention. Traditionally, the region has been subject to security dilemmas resolved by US indirect influence or direct power via installation of military bases or troops, diffusion of foreign military doctrines or direct military intervention. New practices, now institutionalized in the SADC, seem to respond to the legacy of these interventions setting new normatives, organizations and political coordination that not only reject the

⁷ See [Chapter 2](#).

intervention of external agents but potentially create a new governance of security, what Acharya (2007) called regional order, for South America.

Likewise, non-defensive functions are designed to prevent future interstate crisis caused by external intervention or regional disputes. These functions are preventive in an additional sense: they foster the socialization of members in new ideas and practices that allow for certainty and promote transparency in regional interstate relations. Socialization and uncertainty reduction are non-defensive functions contemplated in the SADC framework.

From this perspective, the SADC can be defined as a hybrid combination of *realpolitik* responses and redefinition of what defence is for in a region that is rewriting the rules of engagement and practices beyond trade and beyond hegemonic competition. In this context, we can define defence governance in South America as an alternative system of rules conceived by state and non-state actors aiming at coordinating, managing and regulating their collective interests in response to threats that are not simply militarily defined. Securing the region brings new understandings of physical and ontological security (Adler and Greve 2009: 64).

5.2.2 *A New Defence Context and the Autonomy of SADC*

The emergence of SADC, as the result of a new defence scenario in South America, may be a useful point of departure to discuss the importance of a regional level of analysis and the extent to which it can remain autonomous from systemic forces—particularly, an intervention of the United States. As argued, defence regionalism in South America has been promoted by a new defence context which material and ideational manifestations can be traced back to the growing military presence of the United States in the region, the new wave of territorial disputes, the rise of Brazil as a regional power and the emergence of a new and shared understanding of defence issues. While the first two conditions have fostered instability and recurrent interstate tensions, the last two have favoured a regional response through the formation of UNASUR and the SADC. Given its disproportionate power vis-à-vis South American countries, the growing military presence of the United States in the area since September 11 deserves attention. This point is especially relevant to account for the level of autonomy of the SADC.

Studies on US security policy towards Latin America agree in that this region does not stand as a strategic priority to US interests (Vilas 2005). However, this assertion neglects one central recent development: September 11 changed international security priorities of the United States as the process of macrosecuritization transformed the world into a single battlefield for the so-called long war against terrorism.⁸

⁸ Barry Buzan defines macrosecuritization as ‘a securitization aimed at, and up to a point succeeding, in framing security issues, agendas and relationships on a system-wide basis. Macro-securitizations are based on universalistic constructions of threats and/or referent objects. A macro-securitization can be about a shared fate, where the referent object is staged in universalistic terms (e.g. the planetary

Certainly, South America has not avoided macrosecuritization as the United States drastically increased its military presence and intervention in the region. Since September 11 the US military relation with South America has evolved rapidly, the 'war on terror' and the 'war on drugs' has replaced the Cold War as the guiding mission for Washington's assistance programmes in the region. The Southern Command of the United States (Southcom) has acquired a growing presence in the region. Southcom has more people working on Latin America than most key civilian federal agencies combined, including the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce and Treasury (Isacson et al. 2006). Moreover, Southcom personnel have claimed that 'radical populism' and gangs are problems that should be targeted militarily, and thus should not be treated as social problems. Moreover, the policy promoted by the Pentagon sustains that US national security was increasingly threatened by those governments in the region that failed to exercise control over vast 'ungoverned spaces' within their borders (Guy Emerson 2010).

The military orientation of Plan Colombia after 2002 and its effects on Brazilian and Venezuelan borders began to worry both countries.⁹ In this way, Colombia was perceived by Brazil as a platform for US surveillance over the Amazon and Venezuela (Marques 2004). This situation worsened after the Colombian military incursion into Ecuadorian territory in March 2008, which almost caused a war between Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. The attack was perceived by most South American countries as the arrival of the preventive strike doctrine to the region (Guy Emerson 2010).

The subsequent policies implemented by the United States did not help to diminish the regional concern. The reactivation of the Fourth Fleet (May 2008),¹⁰ which had been deactivated after the Second World War and remained under that status even during the Cold War, and the attempt to deploy US troops and sophisticated surveillance systems in Colombian bases (March 2009) increased regional tensions

environment, human civilization), or about a widespread sharing of the same threat even though the specific referent objects are mainly at state and societal level (e.g. terrorism, disease)' (Buzan 2006).

⁹ In 2000 the Government of Colombia launched 'Plan Colombia' which was developed by former president Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) as a six-year plan to end Colombia's long armed conflict, eliminate drug trafficking and promote economic and social development. The original plan called for a budget of US\$7.5 billion, with 51% dedicated to institutional and social development, 32% for fighting the drug trade and 16% for economic and social revitalization. However, over 80% of that amount has gone to the Colombian military and security forces since 2000. See Isacson (2010).

¹⁰ The United States Fourth Fleet is a major command of the United States Navy in the South Atlantic, operating as a component of the joint US Southern Command and US Fleet Forces Command. Fourth Fleet is based at Mayport Naval Station in Jacksonville, Florida and is responsible for U.S. Navy ships, aircraft and submarines operating in the Caribbean, and Atlantic and Pacific Oceans around Central and South America. The US Navy also has operational fleets in the Pacific, the Gulf and off the coast of Asia. The US Department of Defense says the measure is aimed at building confidence and trust in the region by focusing on common threats.

and distrust over a US militarized intervention to levels that the region had not experienced since the Second World War (Battaglini 2009). This increasing US military presence and the arrival of one of the most dangerous features of the 'War on Terror' to the region (preventive strikes) prompted the emergence of the SADC. Its establishment, however, would not have been possible without the existence of an emergent identity in defence matters, which recognizes that the maintenance of the national defence in this new scenario demands more interstate cooperation, that is, a regional approach.

It has been for long argued that great powers can easily intervene or use regions as platforms to project their power because regions are in many ways permeable to power politics (Katzenstein 2005). One of the main sources of regional porosity is the presence of weak states that favour the intrusion of the hegemon. In this sense, hegemonic powers have the capacity to overwhelm regional organizations. For instance, Katzenstein (2005) maintains that if Latin America or Africa are enjoying freedom from intervention, this must be the result of *hegemonic disinterest*, not real autonomy. If so, the creation of the SADC would only be possible as the result of the retrenchment of the United States from South America: the involvement of United States in Afghanistan and Iraq enables the region to challenge its subordination to hemispheric organizations such as the OAS. However, this argument could be contested by the fact that rather than abandoning the region, the United States has renewed its presence through a military deployment that South America had not experienced since the Second World War. This militarization of the region is, according to some, an expansion of the 'War on Terror' in South America (Guy Emerson 2010).

Understood like this, the rapid transformations experienced in South American political economy would only allow for ad hoc policy responses rather than the institutionalization of cooperation that is not simply reactive or defensive but also non-defensive involving peace and trust building amongst South American nations. The formation of a regional institution of defence in fact, has deliberately excluded the participation of the United States, revealing the existence of an important level of regional autonomy vis-à-vis the world hegemonic power. This argument in many ways exceeds the work of Buzan and Weaver (2003) and feeds into new arguments about regional autonomy since the end of the Cold War. Likewise, it contributes to rethink regional orders in relation to US primacy, neoliberal globalization (Hettne et al. 1999) and post-hegemonic orders (Acharya 2009).

5.3. MOTIVATIONS AND MECHANISMS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DEFENCE COMMUNITY

South America is experiencing a redefinition of its identity as a region and as an actor. Since the early 2000s political motivations, identity politics and leadership are transiting a change that is linked to the displacement of established rules and consensus for new ones that are regionally conceived as opposed to globally advanced ones (see

Chapters 1 and 10). Defence has been a pillar of this transformation. New practices are redefining what trans-border cooperation, including state and non-state actors, is and is for. During the last two decades military and civilians have engaged in practices based on new ideas about how to deal with defence challenges. New ideas and shared understandings support a multilateral perspective in the search for new ways to think about defence. Although national thinking has not disappeared, it began to coexist with a more regional approach to defence issues. This approach is the substance of the new SADC.

It would be wrong to assume that the institutionalization of new defence mechanisms under the SADC emerged from new political and economic transformations in the regions since the early years of the new decade. There is a legacy in civil and military practices that traces back to the redemocratization period since the mid-1980s. For instance, South America has experienced a growing process of interaction between civilian and military elites in the realm of defence since the beginning of the 1990s. This process started with the 'Santiago Commitment' signed in 1991 in the framework of the OAS. This commitment reflected a regional will to advance in the elimination of conflict hypotheses, improve military cooperation, support democratic stability, foster civilian control over the military and promote transparency of defence policies. Since 1991, the numbers of multilateral and bilateral initiatives have persistently increased. There have been nine Conferences of Ministers of Defence of the Americas since 1995. Confidence building measures (CBMs), such as the joint manoeuvres or the officers' exchanges, have increased considerably since 1994, especially amongst Southern Cone countries. Argentina and Brazil have established a mechanism for bilateral cooperation regarding defence policies called the Argentine-Brazilian Mechanism for Coordination of Security and Defence (MCSD). The MCSD is a forum for policy coordination on defence matters. These mechanisms gained new momentum; new debates emerged around the role of the United States and international security, and the role of solidarity and cooperation in the search for autonomous development in South America (Flemes 2005). Brazil has been an active actor in the promotion of these debates and in the establishment of MCSDs with every South American country.

The Argentinean-Chilean relation has also experienced significant progress in terms of defence. Between 2002 and 2008, 45 joint military exercises were carried out. In 2001, both states developed a common methodology to measure defence expenditures with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). This initiative has no precedence worldwide and managed to achieve great impact at the regional level.¹¹ With regard to the bilateral level, a mechanism of annual conferences between the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of Chile

¹¹ The South American Defence Council used this methodology as a model for developing a common methodology for measuring UNASUR defence spending.

and Argentina has been established. It is also relevant to take into account the experience of the Standing Committee on Security. This committee was founded in 1996, formed by senior officials from the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs who have held two meetings per year since it was first launched. Furthermore, the inter-consultation meeting between the Joint Chiefs of Argentina and the General Staff of National Defence of Chile has been held annually since 1997. In addition, both armies have developed bilateral conferences on a biennial basis between their staff in order to coordinate specific joint activities. With the same purpose, the military has been developing annual staff meetings, which take place alternately in each country. The natural consequence of this thick military relation was the creation of a binational force: the 'Cruz del Sur', whose main task has been United Nations peacekeeping missions.

The Andean region has also experienced a process of interaction, although less intensive than the one of the Southern Cone. Interaction among Andean countries has not only taken place in hemispheric and regional forums, such as the OAS, but also at the subregional level. This latter interaction can be illustrated by the signing of the Andean Chart for Peace and Security and the Guidelines for an Andean Common Security Policy. In addition, in the Conferences of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers' framework, there has been a regular interaction. Moreover, the armed forces of the Andean region have developed bilateral conferences that have included the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

The increasing number of CBMs and the addition of White Papers on National Defence are clear examples of the transformation of previous understandings regarding the importance of secrecy about national military power. The publication of military data before 1995 was considered a matter of national security and therefore subject to the strictest secret in every country in the region. However, the intense process of interaction and socialization contributes to shape a new shared understanding of the value of publishing White Books, which has come to be seen as a mechanism of transparency and as a method to reduce uncertainty about neighbouring countries' intentions. Thus, the first White Book was published in 1997 by Chile, and was followed by most of the countries in the subsequent years.

This intense process of interaction contributes to the consolidation of a new community of practice that is circumscribed to South America in its understanding of a new relation between autonomy and cooperation. This is a pragmatic response to post-hegemonic politics as it not only contests the role of the United States in the region but also reproduces a new dialogue in search for understanding about what defence is for. This interaction helps to create a regional network of politicians, members of the armed forces and academics that developed a new understanding concerning the importance of common solutions to defence matters. Largely, the most important shared understanding that emerged from this process of interaction is that national defence cannot any longer be maintained only through unilateral policies: instead, coordination with other countries in the region has been perceived as increasingly important in a complex and changing regional scenario.

5.3.1 *Securing Zones of Peace: Realpolitik Meets Community of Practice*

The militarization of the US agenda and the intensification of interstate tensions have incited a response from Brazil, the regional power. Brazilian diplomats and academics alike have long regarded regional leadership as a springboard to global recognition and influence. Brazil's elites consider this subregion to be within its natural sphere of influence.¹² In this way, South American instability is perceived by Brazilian elites as an obstacle to international aspirations. For this reason, Brazil has constantly criticized US intervention, especially through Plan Colombia. Moreover, the reactivation of the 4th Fleet provoked a strong response: President Lula speculating that American naval forces constituted a threat to Brazil's offshore oil reserves. Similarly, Lula sharply criticized the US-Colombia basing deal signed in 2009, which allowed the deployment of US troops and sophisticated surveillance systems in Colombian bases. Brazil was concerned that Colombian bases would be used as a platform to increase US military control over the region. Brazilian elite believe that the Amazonia and the newly discovered oil reserves could be sought by foreign powers. In fact, the Defence Strategy, published in 2008, stated that the defence of Amazons from a great power invasion is a possible scenario.¹³ It holds that the military should be prepared 'for an asymmetrical warfare, especially in the Amazon region, to be held against an enemy of superior military power' (Government of Brazil 2008).

The plan of the establishment of the SADC was announced by Lula in March 2008 (Saint-Pierre and Castro 2008), a few days after the Colombian-Ecuadorian crisis. The regional behaviour of Brazil is in line with the regionalist literature which sustains that change in both international and regional contexts function as the basic incentives for the foundation of regionalism in defence and security matters. Institutional development in those areas begins when regional powers perceive that unilateral policies are ineffective at protecting national interests in an environment where the distribution of world power brings growing asymmetries (Keohane 1984; Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Brazilian elites perceive that both the arrival of the 'War on Terror' to the region and interstate conflict have the potential power of affecting its regional leadership, that is, its platform for international projection. For the first time, South America has become crucial for Brazil's international aspirations. For this reason, regionalism in defence and its institutional manifestation, the SADC, is conceived as a tool to maintain South America as a zone of peace, which is an essential platform for Brazilian international projection as much as a way of securing a cooperative environment in support of politically sensitive arrangements in other areas such as energy, infrastructure and the management of natural resources.

¹² See Chapter 9.

¹³ In fact, 82.6% of the Brazilian military and 72.7% of the civilian believe that the Amazonas could be militarily occupied by a foreign power (Bitencourt and Costa Vaz 2009).

5.4. INSTITUTIONALIZING NEW DEFENSIVE AND NON-DEFENSIVE FUNCTIONS: THE ROLE OF SADC

5.4.1 Defensive Functions: Political Coordination, Normative Dissent and Self-Organization of Defence

The above analysis provided an overview of the factors, context and motivations that allowed for the restructuring of new mechanisms and practices governing defence in South America since the last decade. This section now concentrates on the actual nature of the SADC as the main institution governing defence in the region. Three main functions are identified as defence in character: (i) new forms of political coordination, (ii) alternative normative definitions; and (iii) organizations.

Political coordination: SADC's first goal is the consolidation of peace in South America. Although the mere existence of UNASUR and the SADC do not prevent the break out of interstate crisis, it can contribute to the development and institutionalization of dynamics that facilitate their prevention and management through the political coordination among South American countries. Political coordination includes rapid summons to presidential meetings for confronting regional crises and a fast-track agreement approval mechanism between states. Political coordination in the framework of SADC could be interpreted as a new manifestation of the South American tradition to resolve disputes peacefully, which has been essential in maintaining peace in the region (Kacowicz 1998, 2005). Political coordination is a crucial function for region formation, since it could not only help to limit external intervention, but also to manage regional turmoil, which can be a pull factor for foreign powers.

In this way, the practice of political coordination developed within the framework of both UNASUR and the SADC have been fundamental in the resolution of various regional crises during the past five years. UNASUR and the SADC are institutional settings for regional negotiation with members who can be quickly summoned and also have the flexibility to deal with a wide range of defence-related issues. These features have become more apparent since the attempt to deploy US troops in Colombian bases in March 2009. Neighbouring nations were concerned that Colombian bases would be used as a platform to increase US military control over the region. Venezuela sustained that a plan could be designed to provide a cover for a later invasion of Venezuela by US forces in order to obtain oil. Venezuela also threatened to nationalize Colombian companies and seal the border. The rest of the countries made clear their vehement opposition to the decision of Colombia to expand cooperation with the United States.

As a reaction to that future deployment, South American presidents, defence and foreign relations ministers quickly cancelled prior commitments and within a few days organized two consecutive meetings. The first in Argentina included all the UNASUR presidents, while the second in Ecuador called the defence and foreign affairs ministers of the SADC. The final document of the meeting includes a rejection of foreign military threats to the sovereignty of the member nations. This dynamic

contributed not only to the de-escalation of the crisis, but also to the establishment of a system of defence consultation, discussion and negotiation that could become a precedent in dealing with crises to come.

UNASUR and SADC intervention was critical for the release of the secret agreement that Colombia had signed with its northern partner affording the latter use of its bases. The disclosure of the agreement considerably reduced the level of regional tension since it revealed that the US troops would not be operating outside of Colombia.

Normative dissent: South American nations are undergoing a process of redefinition of regional consensus contesting, and in cases rejecting, the wisdom of neoliberal politics in the region. The idea of autonomy is building in this context and is affecting the ways states and non-state actors redefine cooperation and solidarity in the management of important political and economic resources. Contesting external views and doctrines is part of a reformulation of what the region is and is for. This process of normative dissent is placing limits to doctrines, interests and views that are rooted extra-regionally. Foreign normative intervention is perceived by the region as a threat to peace in two different ways: (i) by fostering the regional adoption of military doctrines that favour military conflict (ii) by encouraging the participation of the military in domestic missions such as the fight against organized crime or drug trafficking.

South America has experienced many instances of normative dissent with the United States. The United States has attempted on several occasions to foster the incorporation of the armed forces in the fight against terrorism or organized crime. During the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Defence (2004), held in Quito (Ecuador), the United States insisted on the proposal. However, the meeting culminated with the rejection, by most of the participant countries, of the proposition that the armed forces be turned into a security agency with police functions. Regarding the adoption of the war on terror approach in South America, most countries, except Colombia, neither recognized the presence of terrorist groups in the region, nor accepted the denomination of some guerrillas as terrorist groups. At the Conference on Hemispheric Security in Mexico (2003), for example, several South American countries refused to include terrorism as a threat to national defence (Chillier and Freeman 2005). South American countries maintain that violent conflict in South America should be interpreted as a problem rooted in social issues. As a conflict stemming from development gaps and social and political inequality, their resolution cannot be found in the military sphere (Duarte Villa and Trindade Viana 2010).

The creation of SADC is itself a manifestation of normative dissent, since it was launched a few days after the Colombian attack to an FARC camp in Ecuador in March 2008. This attack was interpreted by the region as the arrival of the preventive attack doctrine to South America and, as such, most countries strongly rejected it since it broke two crucial regional norms: sovereignty and non-intervention. The regional condemnation of the attack has had an important political effect as it has signalled to Colombia that a similar action in the future would severely affect its relations with the rest of the South American countries. In fact, this course of action, a

preventive attack, was dismissed by Colombia when President Uribe denounced in July 2010 the presence of at least 30 FARC camps and 1500 guerrillas on Venezuelan territory, near the Colombian border.

Self-organization of defence: If the function of normative dissent is designed to limit external normative influences, the self-organization of defence is an attempt to restrict extra-regional material influences by developing endogenous capacities such as new weapons and technology. Thus, the main goal of this function is to reduce the distance between South America and the great powers in the realm of defence technology.

The global arms trade sheds light on the current distribution of global power. The United States imports less than 1% of their military equipment, while its military research budget is four times larger than all of the European Union countries combined. Thus the rising costs of research and development, which in some cases reach up to 70% of the total, provide a strong incentive for regional cooperation (Neuman 2006).

South America currently faces a high level of both external and internal constraints to the acquisition of such weapons in the new millennium. External restrictions are decisions of great powers regarding the commercialization of advanced weaponry. For instance, a state may decide not to export advanced weaponry to avoid regional imbalances of power, to sanction a specific nation or to prevent the diffusion of advanced technology. Restrictions may also be internal, when the high cost of equipment makes it difficult to afford them or when countries cannot produce such weaponry because they lack the necessary technology. The lowest level of external and internal restrictions occur when the full range of weapons are available for exportation and when states have the resources to both acquire them and fabricate them domestically.

The growing technological gap between advanced countries and the South American nations is perceived by the region as a factor that reduces state autonomy in two different ways. First, South American countries are highly dependent on arms imports, since they produce few weapons systems domestically. Second, the high level of external and internal restrictions severely constrain the incorporation of sophisticated weapons, therefore, it increases considerably and exponentially the technological gap, which is perceived, in the long term, as an incentive for a direct foreign military intervention.

In this way, Brazil's National Defence Strategy gives central importance to the development of a national defence industry and proposes strengthening its space, cyber and nuclear industries. It also recognizes that the SADC action is essential to increasing the scale of the regional arms market in order to incentivize the necessary investment which would allow for greater strategic autonomy (Government of Brazil 2008). The Brazilian Defence Minister Nelson Jobim has said that the technological modernization of South American armed forces needs an endogenous and autonomous arms industry. This would require the joint development of regional capabilities that favour technological modernization (Jobim 2008).

In this sense, the third goal of the SADC is designed to foster the development of material capacities, such as new weapons and technology. The new SADC Action Plan encourages the development of a survey of the regional arms industry and the identification of common areas of potential strategic partnership in research, technology transfer and cooperation. This is intended to fulfil one main objective: the reduction of the military gap between South America and the great powers. In this view, the increase of the regional military power will raise the cost of an extra-regional military intervention.

5.4.2 Non-defensive Functions: Socialization and Uncertainty Reduction

Socialization: Socialization is understood here as a process that fosters the progressive transformation of views about the other, contributes to the construction of new shared understandings through regular interactions between civilians and the military from all over the region (see Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Through socialization actors transform their social and political perceptions by creating a new regional language on defence issues and by identifying those elements that are crucial for building a shared defence vision, that is, a new identity in defence. The impact of practices of socialization has been studied in relation to the NATO enlargement. In this connection, NATO relied extensively on mechanisms of socialization to project a set of liberal-democratic norms of security into the former Eastern bloc. NATO conducted a socialization process that targeted not simply the behaviour of Central/East European societies, but also their definitions of national identity and interests. This shared ideational framework, established via socialization, also empowered subsequent appeals launched in the name of different liberal-democratic norms (Gheciu 2005).

The SADC can play an important role as a framework to socialize political officials and state bureaucracies. It is an institutional space in which senior military and civilian officials working both in defence and foreign relations interact regularly. This interaction can favour the building of trust, which is crucial to overcoming the traditional scepticism that typically surrounds negotiations related to defence issues. If government officials rely on their counterparts with the goal of fostering positive expectations regarding their future actions, they are more likely to reach compromises and keep them in the future. In this way, regular contacts between members of the civilian and military elite help to modify perceptions and previous values.

Previous studies have found that a lack of interaction between groups encourages distrust (Allport 1954). Other research shows that groups that are in dispute but still interact with each other are much more likely to avoid precarious situations than those parties who maintain disputes yet choose not to interact. Thus the interaction between conflicting groups significantly reduces the level of hostility between them (Brewer and Miller 1996). This interaction should be regular and structured, rather

than sporadic, in order to achieve better results. Other authors suggest that, in general, increased contact between leaders itself encourages the peaceful resolution of conflict (Indorf 1984).

Socialization could be a crucial function to advance in the building of a common identity in defence issues (second goal of the SADC). The interaction in the defence realm in the region is based on the increasing importance of cooperation between states, while excluding any substantial progress on the integration side of the process. This is due to the diversity of missions assigned to the South American armed forces and to the different priorities granted to those missions by the states. In other words, the absence of a common regional threat makes states less likely to push for integration.

The region's soldiers perform several missions. In recent decades they have adopted new ones, such as the participation in peacekeeping operations or asymmetric defence strategies, but that change has not led to a devaluation of their traditional purpose, such as engaging in conflicts with neighbouring countries or military involvement in maintaining internal order (Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux 2000).

Brazil has declared regarding this diverse picture of regional military roles, that 'now is the time to deepen our South American identity in defence (. . .) It must articulate a new vision in the region based on common values and principles such as respect for sovereignty, self-determination, territorial state integrity and the promise to abstain from intervening in the internal affairs of our regional neighbours'.¹⁴ It is clear then, that one of the main goals of the SADC is 'to build a South American identity on defence, taking into account sub-regional and national interests'. To this end, the SADC created the South American Centre for Strategic Studies for Defence (CSEED) in Buenos Aires, whose only aim is to 'promote the building of a common defence vision'.¹⁵ It will work towards the definition and identification of a 'regional interest in defence' conceived as the sum of the various national interests that are common to UNASUR countries.

The new SADC plan for 2010–2011 includes four activities related to the construction of a common defence identity: (1) development of a digital network that serves to exchange information on defence policies; (2) organization of a combined peacekeeping regional exercise in 2011 to promote military interoperability, also on the table is the possible creation of an inventory of national defence capabilities to support humanitarian operations; (3) construction of a database containing information on military and civilian defence specialist training centres in order to establish a network of academic centres in member countries; (4) and finally the development of

¹⁴ Speech of President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva during an extraordinary meeting of the Unión Sudamericana de Naciones, Brasilia, 23 de mayo de 2008.

¹⁵ See South American Defence Council, *Action Plan 2010–2011*, available at <http://www.cdsunasur.org/es/plan-de-accion/formacion-y-capacitacion>.

a South American Defence training programme specifically designed for SADC state representatives.¹⁶

Reducing uncertainty: Uncertainty about the military capabilities and intentions of states is one of the main obstacles to a regional project in the realm of defence. The lack of information on defence equipment, military doctrine and troop deployment most often increases the threat perception between states in a region. In this way, the adoption of CBMs in the SADC framework contributes to the reduction of uncertainty and to the building of cooperative relations that eventually replace visions of competition and rivalry (Briones 2008). The SADC can serve to provide information to its members about the military capabilities and intentions of their neighbours, helping to reduce tensions associated with uncertainties. From this perspective, SADC 2010–2011 plan envisages different actions establishing a mechanism for consultation and providing instant information about situations that put regional peace at risk, as well as the development of a common methodology for measuring UNASUR defence spending, and common procedures for the implementation of CBMs.¹⁷

What the above suggest, ultimately, is that this novel institution created in South America and for South America arose from identity and material changes in a region that has redefined physical and ontological understandings of what security is and is for. A new shared understanding of defence and the rise of Brazil as a regional power have fostered more regional activism in a context undeniably affected by the transnationalization of the US-led ‘War on Terror’. Yet, SADC is proposing not only defensive mechanisms to face the new challenges but also non-defensive functions designed to manage a defence scenario defined beyond material factors. SADC therefore complements and fosters a process of reregionalization of consensus where the region became the platform for contestation to the established rule. Even when it would be an overstatement to define SADC as a post-hegemonic regional mechanism what is certain is that it represents the reterritorialization of what defence means for a new regional order emerging in South America.

5.5. FINAL REMARKS

The arguments developed in this chapter suggest that the importance of analysing the creation of regional mechanisms of defence governance must be seen in terms of physical and ontological redefinition. South American defence practices are part and parcel of a broader political economic transformation since the early 2000s that, in the area of defence, is manifested as the result of the interaction between ideational and material dimensions. The establishment of the SADC reveals new politics at odds with the regional defence order established in rejection of US power and influence in

¹⁶ See South American Defence Council, *Action Plan 2010–2011*, available at <http://www.cdsunasur.org/es/plan-de-accion/plan-de-accion-2010-2011>.

¹⁷ See South American Defence Council, *Action Plan 2010–2011*, available at <http://www.cdsunasur.org/es/plan-de-accion/politicas-de-defensa>.

inter-American relations. The creation of the SADC paradoxically occurs in the midst of a growing and sustained US intervention in South America. However, responses from the region are now challenging traditional engagement vis-a-vis the hegemonic power. This suggests that in contrast to what has been predicted by some, great powers need not mystify. It is not simply the result of US disinterest that allows for the SADC to emerge but a reaccommodation of political, economic, military and ideological resources in the management of sovereign decisions in the South.

Nonetheless, the SADC has challenges that could affect its continuity. The first one is related to the balance between defensive and non-defensive functions. In this sense, the development of non-defensive functions may be essential to compensate for the inherent weakness of any defensive strategy. The main shortcoming of the latter is that changes in the contextual conditions that fostered its design may threaten institutional continuity. It is therefore important that the SADC develop other functions beyond those that are strictly defensive. Essentially, the non-defensive function of socialization is crucial for this purpose, since it encompasses a deliberate process of building a shared understanding of the value of coordinated and unified political action to deal with regional defence challenges. In this way, the stronger this shared identity the less the likelihood that the SADC will vanish if extra-regional involvement increases or decreases.

The second challenge concerns the potential damage that might provoke US bilateral penetration, in particular, because of the close relations between Colombia and the United States. US relations with Colombia or Peru could fragment the bloc and therefore disrupt one of the main goals of the SADC, which is the autonomy of the South American defence agenda. Colombia, for instance, has insisted that OAS constitutes the appropriate forum to discuss issues related to regional security. Noticeably, the success of the SADC will depend on its capacity to socialize those countries on the advantages of a regional approach to national defence problems.

The third challenge is related to the role of Brazil in the SADC framework. The regionalist project of SADC will survive as long as South American countries do not see it just as an instrument for furthering Brazil's interest. For a middle power to be accepted as a regional leader, it must provide meaningful benefits to the smaller countries whose support it desires to enlist. As several political scientists have noted, region formation is inherently an expensive and burdensome undertaking.

Finally, although institutionally and politically the SADC represents a form of transformative regionalism, it has not assumed yet the form of a post-hegemonic project, that is, it does not position itself as anti-United States. In this way, the degree to which the US rule will be challenged is still to be seen, as the United States is still an important player in the region. As the editors of this book hold 'how transformative and political resilient these projects are will depend not only on policy style but on the extent to which they can transit from a hybrid model. . . . to a coherent, post-neoliberal program across the region'. Whether SADC will be able to overcome these challenges or succumb to the weight of the past is an exciting dilemma still to be seen.

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